

# **No More Bread and Circus: The Effects of Revealed Corruption on Local Finances**

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## **Abstract**

In this paper we study how the revelation of local corruption affects public finances. We use data from Spain during the period 2003-2010. We match municipalities that suffer a corruption scandal with a control sample of similar municipalities. We use two identification strategies. The first one matches each municipality in which a scandal has been revealed to a corrupt municipality in which the scandal has not been revealed yet. The second strategy matches municipalities with corruption scandals to similar municipalities without corruption scandals and then implements a differences-in-differences regression to isolate the causal effect. We find that after corruption is revealed revenues decrease by approximately 8% in corruption ridden municipalities compared to the counterfactual group. Expenditures also decrease but to a lesser extent. The effect comes mostly from other economic agents' unwillingness to fund or start new infrastructure projects in corruption-ridden municipalities.

**Keywords:** Revealed Corruption, Public Expenditures, Public Revenues, Differences in Differences, Propensity Score Matching

**JEL Codes:** D72, D78,

*“... Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties; ..., now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses” (Juvenal, Satire 10.77–81)*

## **1. Introduction**

A fundamental pillar of well-functioning economies and political institutions is the ability to detect and penalize corrupt behavior<sup>1</sup>. A well-known mechanism through which democracies penalize such behavior is through voting corrupt politicians out of office, which requires an appropriate dissemination of information among voters (e.g. Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Costas-Pérez et al., 2012). The dissemination of information about corruption, however, is likely to affect not only voters but other economic and political agents as well. For example, other politicians may react to news about corrupt peers by avoiding interaction with them or by cutting funds to projects promoted by politicians charged with corruption. Similarly, other economic agents such as firms may also react by choosing to start new projects in areas not affected by corruption.

Taxpayers may also increase tax evasion in the presence of corruption, or may choose to relocate to pay taxes in a different place. Even corrupt politicians may react to the dissemination of information about their corrupt behavior by stopping their corrupt practices or by changing their public policies in a way that reduces the negative electoral impact of the scandal. These effects, however, have scarcely been studied before. This paper contributes to fill the gap by being the first one to study how the revelation of corruption affects the finances of corruption-ridden municipalities.

As we are interested in the causal effects of revealed corruption on fiscal outcomes and fiscal outcomes are endogenous to corruption, we use an identification strategy that

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<sup>1</sup> One of reasons is that corruption decreases economic growth and affects the political process by diminishing people’s trust in the system (e.g. Mauro, 1995, Bowler and Karp, 2004).

avoids this problem. Corrupt politicians are likely different than non-corrupt politicians in aspects other than corruption itself such ability levels, biases towards deficits or surpluses, or biases towards certain types of spending. Similarly, municipalities in which corruption scandals occur may have different characteristics than those in which corruption is absent (e.g. location, population, socio-economic situation, etc). This means that a simple comparison of the fiscal behavior of corrupt versus non-corrupt municipalities would yield differences in fiscal outcomes that would not be informative to identify the causal effects of revealing the scandal itself. We avoid this by using two different identification approaches based on matching. Our first approach uses only corrupt municipalities and matches each observation corresponding to a municipality in which corruption has already been discovered to an observation from the same year corresponding to a similar municipality for which corruption has not been revealed yet. Our second method combines a propensity matching estimator with a differences-in-differences-regression. We use propensity score matching to select a control group of municipalities that were not subject to corruption scandals during our period of study, but that were very similar to exposed municipalities at the beginning of the period. Then, to eliminate further biases and to control for unobserved differences and time effects, we estimate a differences-in-differences regression on the matched sub-sample.

The scarce attention of the literature to the non-electoral effects of revealed corruption may be due to lack of appropriate data to investigate these effects. We collected data on all corruption scandals that affected local politicians in Spain during the period between 2003 and 2010. Spain provides a good setting to study corruption because it provides a relatively large number of corruption cases at the municipal level during the period of study (see Costas et al., 2012; Jiménez, 2013). We define corruption scandals as a local politician being prosecuted due to corruption during the electoral term. As we have the

exact date in which the politician was first accused, we observe the behavior of the municipalities before and after the corrupt behavior was known, which allow us to implement the matching and the differences-in-differences estimator.

We find that local finances are greatly affected by exposing politicians' corruption, both on the revenue and on the expenditure side. During the years right after the corruption scandal is revealed, both revenues and expenditures decrease by approximately 8 per cent. We also find that the decrease in revenues is due mostly to a reduction in "non-autonomous" revenues, which are those that depend on other economic agents' willingness to fund new projects in the municipality, such as revenues obtained to fund new infrastructure projects from either other levels of government (e.g. discretionary grants), or the private sector (e.g. license fees, real estate purchases). On the expenditures side the reduction is concentrated mostly on infrastructure projects, for which no more funds are available. Combined the results show that after the corruption scandal is released, public administrations and private economic agents are reluctant to participate in economic transactions with the corruption-ridden municipality, particularly in the areas more prone to corruption such as construction and infrastructure projects. To our knowledge this paper is the first to document this effect empirically.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 is devoted to providing some background and relating the contribution of the paper with previous literature. Section 3 provides a brief overview of the Spanish case. Section 4 explains the identification strategy and the econometric model. Section 5 presents the data. Section 6 presents and discusses the results. Finally, Section 7 is devoted to concluding remarks.

## **2. Background**

Most of the previous work on corruption has looked at its effect on economic variables. Corruption negatively affects growth by detracting resources from their most efficient uses (Mauro, 1995). Corruption has also been found to be correlated with an increase in public expenditure (Tanzi and Davoodi, 1997, 2000) and deficits (Arin et al., 2011); and to lead to a reallocation of resources from items such as education or health to infrastructure construction in which it is easier to extract funds (Mauro, 1998). Most of this literature has used cross-country data and perceived corruption as a measure of corruption. However, recent research such as Liu and Mickesell (2014) using state level data from within the U.S. and an objective measure of corruption such as the number of convictions, reaches a similar conclusion: corruption increases public spending, and changes the allocation of public money favoring construction projects and capital spending. We also use within country evidence and an objective measure of corruption but we focus on what happens to economic outcomes, and in particular to local finances, once corruption is publicly revealed.

Some other papers have studied the effects of revealed corruption but they have focused on electoral outcomes. Earlier papers find that the electoral effects of revealing corruption are modest (Peters and Welch, 1980). However, more recent work using stronger identification strategies has found that the electoral effects of corruption scandals are quite large. For example Ferraz and Finan (2008) use random audits to Brazilian municipalities to identify corrupt municipalities and find that incumbents in corrupt municipalities lose between 10% and 30% of their vote share and that their election probability decreases by 17%. Similarly, Costas-Perez et al. (2012) use a matching procedure and find that in the case of Spain incumbents pressed with corruption charges lose around 12% of the vote share. Costas-Perez et al. (2012) also find that both the intensity of news covering and the type of scandal covered (charges

pressed or not) affect electoral outcomes. Our paper is related to this literature because it also studies the reaction of agents to the release of corruption scandals, and because we use quasi-experimental strategies that try to identify the causal effects of revealed corruption. However, we focus on economic outcomes instead of on electoral outcomes, which can help us gain a broader understanding of how agents react when they learn about corruption and how it affects policies.

Our paper is also closely related to the literature on the determinants of trust in government, which has recently started to focus on the effects of revealed corruption on trust (Bowler and Karp, 2004, Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro, 2014). In particular, Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro (2014) find that revealed corruption in Spanish municipalities has a negative impact on trust in local governments. This result is important to understand the mechanisms through which people may punish corrupt politicians at the polls and why electoral participation decreases. Here, we study an additional dimension through which the decreased trust in government will lead economic agents to punish corrupt governments. Similarly to voters running away from corrupt incumbents, other economic agents such as firms or other levels of government will be more reluctant to deal with corruption-ridden municipalities once the scandal is out on the news. This, will likely have a negative impact on local finances, which is the main hypothesis tested in this paper.

There are several reasons why local expenditures and revenues will be affected by the release of the corruption scandal. On the one hand, if corrupt politicians were using fiscal policy strategically to obtain rents or to distract voters with visible expenditure – bread and circus strategy-, they will have no incentives to do so after the scandal is out. Secondly, other levels of government may decrease their discretionary transfers to a corrupt municipality –e.g. capital grants-, which reduces revenues, and prevents

municipalities from being able to fund new projects. Thirdly, even if funds for new projects were available, firms will be less likely to start new projects in the municipality either because they will not be able to obtain extra rents from the corrupt politician anymore, or because they do not want the name of the firm to be associated with corruption. Therefore, revenues due to new projects being developed in the municipality, such as land development fees or funds obtained by the selling of real estate will likely decrease. Finally, as suggested by the recent working paper by Timmons and Garfias (2014), the corruption scandal may also affect tax compliance if trust in government erodes enough and fraud is possible, which will decrease revenues on certain types of local taxes.

Building upon all these research, this paper extends previous findings by being the first one to study the overall effect of revealed corruption on deficit, its effects on total revenues and expenditures, and its effects on the composition of both revenues and expenditures.

### **3. Institutional framework**

In this section we describe some characteristics of the Spanish system that are required to understand the construction of the database and the interpretation of the results.

#### *Electoral system*

Spanish local elections take place in May every four years. Municipalities are one of the three levels of government in Spain (the other two are the national government and the seventeen regional governments). The municipality council is elected through a proportional representation system that uses D'Hondt rule. The municipality council consists on a different number of councilors depending on the size of the municipality.



Parties with less than 5% of the vote share are excluded from being part of the council. The mayor of the municipality is then elected by the municipality council.

The party system is similar at the national and at the local level. There are two main parties that dominate each side of the left-right scale. The Popular Party is the main rightwing party while the socialist party is the main leftwing party. The Popular Party does not face much competition on the right while the socialist party faces competition from the left mostly from IU. In addition, in several regions and particularly in Catalonia and Basque Country there are several nationalist parties that receive large support in their regions of influence. Table 1 presents a summary of electoral results in local elections during the two elections that we analyze in this paper (2003 to 2006 and 2007 to 2010) and the two elections before (1995-1998 and 1999-2002). According to this table, the combined support to both PSOE and PP has remained fairly constant at around 70% during the last few elections.<sup>2</sup>

### *Local Public Finances*

Municipalities have powers over different policy areas depending on their size. Generally, they have to manage services such as waste collection, water supply or pavement repair. In addition, larger municipalities have to provide services in other areas of policy such as social care, security and environment protection. Most importantly for our purposes, all municipalities have powers over land use regulations. This means that they decide about the urbanization of the land. This implies that they can decide which areas are devoted to agriculture, which ones are devoted to industrial use and which ones to housing. There is some supervision by regional governments over the urbanization plan but in general municipalities have a lot of freedom to pass the

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<sup>2</sup> This may change in future elections, as newly created parties such as Podemos or Ciudadanos are expected to do well according to recent CIS polls.

plan or to amend it later. As we explain below, this is important to understand the type of corruption most frequently observed in Spanish local politics, which is bribes in exchange of land use amendments.

From the revenue side, municipalities have some taxation powers in areas such as economic activity, real estate assets, and vehicle taxes. One of the main sources of revenues is the real estate tax (I.B.I), which is paid by property owners. Municipalities have freedom in deciding the rate of the real estate tax within a certain range.<sup>3</sup> In addition they obtain additional funds through transfers from other levels of governments, through fees and licenses, and from the selling of their own real estate. Some of these transfers are non-discretionary (mostly current transfers) and they depend on municipalities' size. Other transfers are discretionary and are used mostly to finance infrastructure projects. Usually municipalities present a project to an open call published by the higher level of government and then the regional or federal governments decide which projects receive the transfer. As there is a fair amount of discretion in these transfers (see Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro, 2007), we would expect them to be one of the sources of revenues to be affected by the revelation of corruption.

During the period of analysis, there were no balanced budget rules on local finances. Municipalities were able to borrow both long and short-term credits. This, combined with the expenditures and revenue regulations means that municipalities had a relatively high level of autonomy to increase or decrease their taxes and expenditures.

Finally, Table 2 shows the distribution of different types of revenues and expending during the period of analysis used in this paper. From the revenue side, the larger source

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<sup>3</sup> The range is between 0.4% and 1.1% according to article 72 of the Local Finances Statute (*Texto Refundido de la Ley de Haciendas Locales*)

of revenues are current transfers from other levels of government (27.7%), tax revenues (indirect and direct taxes add up to 27.3%) and revenues from capital transfers (17.19%). From the expenditure side, current spending (Wages+Goods and Services+Financial Expenses+Current Transfers) represents 64%, while investment and other capital spending amounts 32%.

### *Local Corruption in Spain*

Several research papers and databases have reported a significant increase in the number of corruption cases at the local level in Spain (Fundación Alternativas, 2007, Rivero and Fernandez Diaz, 2011, Jerez et al., 2012). For example, Costas-Perez et al. (2012), using data from scandals reported on the news collected by the Fundación Alternativas finds that before 1999 only 46 cases of corruption scandals were reported on the news, while the numbers skyrocketed to 288 scandals during the 1999-2002 electoral term and to 408 during the 2003-2006. Parallel to the increase in cases reported on the news, corruption has also become one of the most relevant problems in Spain according to sentiment surveys. For example, in 2012 CIS Barometer corruption appeared as the fourth most relevant problem. This increase in perceived corruption is not just due to scandals at the local level, but to scandals involving also institutions such as the monarchy, the political parties, the judiciary, the worker's and the employer's union representatives. The increase in corruption scandals, their coverage in the news and the widespread opinion of this being a very relevant problem has given rise over the last few years to several legal initiatives to make it easier for judges to investigate and prosecute corrupt behavior, and, as a consequence, the number of corruption cases investigated by the courts and the number of cases that resulted in politicians being formally prosecuted has also increased.

The most frequent type of corruption found in Spanish local politics is bribing related to urban planning or to the adjudication of contracts to manage certain public services.<sup>4</sup> A paramount example is the “Malaya Case”, which involved the municipality of Marbella. The major and several members of the municipality council of Marbella were accused and found guilty of accepting bribes in exchange of authorizing a variety of construction projects. Some them were also found guilty of authorizing the selling of real estate property of the municipality to private firms at discount prices in exchange of bribes. Similarly, in a recent scandal involving the city of Alicante, the major of the city was formally charged with corruption after making several amendments to the urban plan to favor a local construction company. The police found evidence that the major accepted different presents such as a yacht, a car and several trips in exchange of re-zoning several areas of land at the construction company’s request. Although our database includes several other types of corruption, these cases provide a good account of the type of corruption usually found in Spanish local politics<sup>5</sup>.

#### **4. Empirical strategy**

Our purpose is to identify the causal effect of revealed corruption. The identification problem is that although we observe the outcome (fiscal behavior) of corrupt municipalities once corruption is discovered, the counterfactual is not observed. We do not know what the outcome would have been should corruption not had been revealed. Therefore, in order to be able to make causal inferences we need to find a good counterfactual.

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<sup>4</sup> According to papers such as Jerez et al. (2012) or Jimenez (2013), approximately 70% of corruption cases at the local level are related to urban planning.

<sup>5</sup> A brief description of many other corruption cases can be found in the Appendix tables reported in Fundación Alternativas (2007).

Past behavior of municipalities in which corruption has been revealed is not a good counterfactual because there may be changes in observable or unobservable variables that may have led those municipalities to change their fiscal behavior regardless of the revelation of corruption<sup>6</sup>. Present behavior of non-corrupt municipalities is not a good counterfactual either, because non-corrupt politicians may be fundamentally different to corrupt ones in ability levels, managerial skills, or biases towards certain types of spending.

Our strategy consists instead on using a matching method to select a counterfactual group of municipalities similar to those affected by corruption. As we have panel data, we use two different matching alternatives to choose the counterfactual and to estimate the treatment effect.

Our first choice is to estimate a non-parametric matching model using only municipalities that at some point during our period of study were subject to a scandal. This way the counterfactual group for the behavior of municipalities already found to be corruption-ridden is the group of municipalities that are revealed to be corrupt at some point in our period of analysis, but have not been discovered in the year in which they serve as control in our matching model. Analytically this is done through performing an exact matching on year so that each treatment observation (municipalities in which corruption has been revealed already) is paired with a control observation of the same year but for which corruption has not been revealed yet. This is equivalent to including fixed year effects. If we denote  $Y$  as the fiscal outcome of interest (e.g. expenditures or revenues per capita),  $X$  as the vector of covariates,  $d(\cdot)$  as the distance function, and  $t$  as the year, our estimator of the average treatment effect can be summarized as:

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<sup>6</sup> This within strategy, however, leads to results that are similar to the ones obtained in our preferred specifications. The results of this set of regressions are available from the authors.

$$ATE_t = E[Y_1 | Tr=1, d(X), t] - E[Y_0 | Tr=0, d(X), t] = E[Y_1 - Y_0 | d(X), t], \quad [1]$$

We estimate this effect using nearest neighbor matching and the Mahalanobis distance to determine which control observation is closest to each treatment observation in terms of  $X$ . The distance is calculated using as covariates measures of economic activity at the local level such as unemployment and previous debt, political controls such as ideology, and other socio-demographic covariates. Unemployment is defined as the number of people registered as unemployed in the municipality's unemployment office. Monetary variables such as Debt are measured in real euros per capita. Ideology is captured by the vote share of rightwing and leftwing parties in the electoral term corresponding to the year in which observations are matched and by the vote share of the two main parties (PSOE and PP) which captures the peculiarities of party competition in the municipality<sup>7</sup>. Finally, the additional socioeconomic controls are the population size of the municipality, the percentage of population between 15 and 65 (which captures the need for schooling and health services), and the population density, which is a proxy for urbanization. We included linear and quadratic terms to assure that a good balance was achieved<sup>8</sup>. As the matching method is not consistent when matching on two or more covariates, we use the bias correction algorithm suggested in Abadía and Imbens (2011)<sup>9</sup>.

Overall this non-parametric approach has several advantages. First, as we are using only corrupt municipalities in both the treatment and the control group, we do not have to worry about unobserved differences between corrupt and non-corrupt municipalities driving the results. Second, as we match each treatment observation to a corrupt

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<sup>7</sup> In some regions, and particularly in the Basque Country and Catalonia, the two main parties at the national level are not the main parties.

<sup>8</sup> We do not lag ideology measures because as they only change every four years, the lagged measure is the same as the current measure.

<sup>9</sup> This estimator is easily implemented in Stata using the `teffects nnmatch` command and the bias correction option.

municipality in which corruption has not been revealed yet, our model allows us to isolate the effects of the *revelation* of corruption, which is our treatment of interest, instead of capturing the effects of corruption itself. Third, as we perform an exact match on year, common shocks to all municipalities such election cycle effects or other economic shocks, are accounted for. Fourth, as this approach is non-parametric, it does not require us to specify a formal model for neither the treatment status nor the calculation of the treatment effects (Abadía and Imbens, 2011).

A potential drawback of this approach, however is that as we restrict the universe of potential controls to corruption-only municipalities, it is harder to find controls that are a good match in terms of observables than if our potential controls included also municipalities with no corruption scandals over the period. This is particularly true for observations in the later years of our sample, in which most corruption-ridden municipalities have already been revealed as corrupt. While our definition of corruption allows to find them a match among municipalities that were corrupt on the first electoral term but not on the second, the number of potential controls is limited. To check to what extent this could be a problem, we performed caliper matching restricting the estimation to pairs that lie within a variety of caliper distances with no significant change in the results. In addition, several balancing tests show a good balance of observable characteristics across treatment and control groups.

Our second approach complements the previous one by using a different identification strategy as well as a parametric model. This approach allows us to use as potential controls the whole sample of municipalities that were not found to be corrupt at any time during our period of analysis, which includes more than 3,000 municipalities. We match each of the corrupt municipalities in the treatment group to one of the control group of non-corrupt municipalities. We perform the matching at the beginning of the

period (in 2003). That is, we match observations before corruption has occurred in any of the corrupt municipalities, and then we follow them and their controls throughout the whole period of study.

We match using a parametric propensity score. We use a logit model to estimate the propensity score. The covariates in the logit model are the same as in the non-parametric model, except that we include a one year lag of the variables that capture ideology so that we incorporate the political structure of the previous electoral period<sup>10</sup>. After the estimation of the logit model, we define the missing counterfactual of each treatment observation using nearest-neighbor matching. As this matching strategy only allows us to balance covariates on observables, and municipalities that did not suffer a corruption scandal may have different unobserved characteristics, we complement matching with the following differences in differences regression performed on the matched sample.

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Corrupt} + \alpha_2 \text{After} + \alpha_3 \text{Corrupt} \cdot \text{After} + \beta X + \theta_{cycle} + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad [2]$$

The dependent variable in this model,  $Y$ , is the fiscal outcome of interest (revenues, expenditures or deficit). The coefficient of interest is  $\alpha_3$ , which captures the causal effect of revealing corruption in a corruption-ridden municipality on the outcome variable.  $\alpha_3$  identifies a causal effect because we control for unobserved differences between treatment and controls and for common shocks through the variables *Corrupt* and *After*. The variable *Corrupt* takes value 1 for corruption-ridden municipalities and 0 otherwise. *After* takes value 1 in the years after corruption is revealed and 0 otherwise. For each control observation, the “after” years are determined by the treatment municipality to which they are matched. Therefore, *After* controls for shocks that are

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<sup>10</sup> In the non-parametric model this is not needed because the ideology variables are constant within electoral term.



common to treatment and control municipalities.  $\theta_{\text{cycle}}$ ,  $\gamma_t$  and  $\lambda_i$  are electoral cycle, time and individual fixed effects that allow to capture the effects of each year of the electoral cycle, each year overall and remaining unobserved idiosyncratic differences across municipalities. The vector of controls includes the variables included in the matching model (unemployment, size, population density, percentage of population between 15 and 65 and the ideology variables). Strictly speaking these controls are not needed because they are balanced across treatment and controls. Including them, however, improves precision and removes potential remaining biases.

Note that in equation [2], identification arises from two sources. First from the fact that due to matching our group of controls is very similar on observables to corruption-ridden municipalities. Second, due to the differences-in-differences regression, we are removing unobserved differences and common shocks. The model, therefore, is likely to estimate the causal effect of revealed corruption on fiscal outcomes with no bias.

However, as we are discarding the observations that did not serve as controls, unbiasedness comes at the price of losing precision. For comparison purposes, we will also show the results of a similar differences-in-differences model that has the opposite strength (e.g. more bias more precision). To this aim, we estimate the following regression on the whole sample of municipalities and not just on the matched sample:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Corrupt} + \alpha_3 \text{Corrupt} \cdot \text{After} + \beta X + \theta_{\text{cycle}} + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad [3]$$

In this model the variable *After* is not included separately because as we use the whole sample, each treatment observation is not paired to a specific municipality in the treatment group. Common shocks to treatment and control municipalities for each period after corruption, are captured by the time fixed effects. If the set of observables included in the model is adequate, and given that we have individual and time fixed

effects and the variable *Corrupt* to control for unobservables, the coefficient  $\alpha_3$  should also identify the causal effect of interest with no bias and with more precision, as we are using the whole sample. Otherwise, we would have a precise but more biased estimate. In the results section we present the results of this model to show that results hold when using the whole sample as well.

## **5. Data and measurement issues**

### *Data*

We test our hypothesis using a database of Spanish municipalities from 2003 to 2010. This period includes two complete electoral terms (2003-2006 and 2007 to 2010). We use these two electoral terms because public finance data at the municipal level are only available since 2001 and because those are the only two electoral terms completely covered in our corruption database.

We obtained financial data for each Spanish municipality from the *Ministerio de Administraciones Publicas*. The database includes not only aggregate expenditures and revenues in each municipality but also the composition of revenues and expenditures according to standard accounting categories.

We collected data on political results from the *Ministerio del Interior*, and socio-economic variables from *La Caixa* database. Political variables included in the database are the vote count of each party obtaining representation in each municipality, the size in terms of population, and the seats obtained by each party. *La Caixa* database provides us with information on unemployment levels, the percentage of population between 15 and 65 years old, and population density, which we use as a proxy for urbanization. This database only includes information on municipalities larger than 1,000 inhabitants, so those are the ones used in the analysis.

Corruption data were compiled by the authors using published information about corruption scandals. The data include all corruption scandals in Spain affecting local politicians (instead of those affecting the regional or national government) from 2003 to 2010. We define a municipality as corruption-ridden if either the mayor or a member of the municipality was formally charged with corruption during the electoral term. This is different than other measures of corruption typically used such as perceived corruption or the number of news counts about a given scandal. Both of these alternative measures have the advantage of providing a measure, even if subjective, of the coverage of the scandal, but they are subject to some strategic manipulation. For example, a newspaper may inflate the number of news affecting a politician of the opposite ideological wing, or may not cover stories affecting politicians they favor. In addition, news counts do not filter scandals by their relative importance (e.g. formal criminal accusations versus mere administrative infractions or even rumors). Our measure takes into account only objective facts (formal accusation) and selects cases of enough relative importance because in Spain to be formally accused of corrupt behavior by the judiciary there has to be a preliminary investigation to confirm that initial evidence is strong enough to support the presumption that there may have been an unlawful behavior.

The corruption variables were compiled using information from a variety of sources including published reports about corruption, information available in different corruption blogs and, mostly, a thorough online searches of corruption cases reported on the news. We gathered information on the date in which the courts officially pressed charges, what decision was finally made (if any), when was the decision made, the partisanship of the politician involved, the type of corrupt behavior and the source from which we obtained the information. We identified 306 corruption cases in which the mayor or a member of the municipality council was formally accused of corruption by

the judiciary, and for which we could reliably identify the date in which the formal accusation took place.<sup>11</sup>

### *Measurement issues*

After merging and cleaning the data from missing and implausible values, our final sample is a panel containing 22,142 observations corresponding to 3,151 municipalities observed during the period 2003 to 2010. Table 3 presents the summary statistics of the whole sample, the sub-sample of municipalities that suffered a corruption scandal during the period and the sub-sample of municipalities that were not subject to a corruption scandal. Several comments regarding the sample and the variables are in place.

First, Table 3 includes two corruption variables. *Corruption over the period* is defined as 1 for observations that correspond to a municipality that faced a corruption scandal at some point during the period, and is the variable used to calculate the propensity score in the parametric matching. According to this variable, approximately 10% of the observations correspond to municipalities that suffered a corruption scandal during the period. *Corrupt* adjusts for whether corruption occurred in the first or in the second electoral term. This variable takes value 1 if an observation corresponds to municipalities that suffered a corruption scandal in a given electoral term and 0

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<sup>11</sup> Our corruption database is similar in content but different to other databases compiled in other independent research efforts (Fundación Alternativas, 2007, Costas-Perez et al., 2012, Rivero and Fernandez Diaz, 2011, and Jerez et al., 2012). These databases also use online searches as the main source of information but differ in the type of cases included and in the periods and regions covered. The most complete of them is the one by Fundación Alternativas (2007), extended later in Costas-Pérez (2012) and Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro (2014). We differ from them in the coverage (2003-2010 vs. 1999-2009) and in that we only consider corruption cases those in which the politician was formally accused with corruption charges after a criminal investigation was performed by the judiciary. Our inclusion criteria is exactly the same used in Rivero and Fernandez Diaz (2011). Their database, however, covers only one electoral term instead of two (which is important to control for economic and electoral cycle effects), two regions instead of all, and has no information on accusation dates. Finally, Jerez, Pérez y García (2012) differs from ours in that it includes a different study period (2000 to 2008), focuses only on scandals related to urban planning, includes all cases reported on the news and not only formal accusations, and has no information about dates in which charges were pressed.

otherwise. *Corrupt* is thus the variable used in the non-parametric matching and in the estimation of the differences-in-differences model. Approximately 5% of all observations in the database are considered as corrupt according to this definition. Note that on the second period of our study we consider that municipalities that suffered corruption in the previous electoral term start clean. An alternative is to consider that only those municipalities in which the incumbent party changes do have a clean start on the second period. The estimation of the models using this alternative definition yields similar conclusions.

Second, the variable *After* has a value of 0.16, which implies that approximately 16% of the observations corresponding to corrupt municipalities are from years strictly after the corruption is revealed. It is arguable whether we should define the after years including also the year in which corruption occurs, because many effects may already occur during that year, particularly if the scandal is revealed at the beginning of the year. In our preferred specifications we use the more restrictive definition because it is a more conservative approach. If the effects of the revelation start happening already in the year in which the scandal is out, our control group would include observations in which some effects are already happening, which would go against finding an effect. Consequently, the estimation of the model using the alternative, more inclusive definition does not change the results.

Finally, it is worth explaining why the leftwing and rightwing vote share variables in Table 3 do not add up to 1. There are some parties that are difficult to classify as left or right either because they are center parties, or because they are local parties for which we do not have enough knowledge to classify them into the standard left-right scale. These parties are approximately 20% of the sample. They constitute the excluded category in the regressions that control for ideology measures.

## 6. Results<sup>12</sup>

We start this section describing the results of the non-parametric matching model. Then we describe the results of the parametric matched differences-in-differences model. We then show the robustness of results by presenting several falsification exercises. Finally, we investigate the mechanisms by estimating our preferred model on the different types of revenues and expenditures.

### 6.1 Non-parametric Matching

The results of the non-parametric matching are summarized in Table 4. Recall that in this model we only use observations from municipalities that suffer corruption scandals. We match observations corresponding to municipalities in which corruption has been revealed during the electoral term to municipalities that are subject to corruption scandals during the period of analysis but for which corruption has not been revealed yet on the year for which the observation serves as a control. We perform an exact matching by year using nearest neighbor and the Mahalanobis distance to calculate similarities between treatment and controls on a set of observables. The covariates used to calculate the distance are second order polynomials of debt at the beginning of the year, unemployment, population, population density, the percentage of people between 15 and 65 and the variables that measure ideology (to capture electoral results in the electoral period).

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<sup>12</sup> Although not shown to save space, the robustness of the results discussed in this section was tested through a battery of tests. In particular the results are generally robust to 1) including different subsets of the control variables, 2) Using a different definition of the variable Corrupt in which we did account for corrupt incumbents being re-elected, 3) using a different definition of After in which the year in which corruption is revealed is considered the first year of the treatment instead of excluded from the treatment; 4) constructing the matched sample using different polynomials of the control variables; 5) estimating the model eliminating the observations with values in the top and bottom of the distribution of the dependent variables; and 6) using lags of some of the control variables that one may be concerned that may be affected by corruption, such as unemployment.

Panel A in Table 4 shows a t-test of the differences of means between treatment and control groups after the matching. Panel B shows the t-tests results before the matching. This table shows that the matching model allows to achieve a good balance on observable characteristics, as only one of the differences of means performed on the matched sample is significant at the 5% level (PSOE share). In addition the magnitude of the difference is small for all variables (including PSOE share), confirming that treatment and control groups share similar observable characteristics. Panel B shows that matching is needed to achieve a balanced on observables, as in this case both the t-tests and the magnitudes show significant differences between the treatment and the unmatched sample of controls.

Table 5 shows the estimation of the average treatment effect using the nearest-neighbour method. For robustness, we show results using 1,2, 3 and 4 neighbours (M is the number of neighbours used). This table shows that the revelation of corruption has a significant causal effect on municipalities' finances. According to this table the estimated effect of revealing corruption on revenues per capita is a reduction of revenues of approximately 100 euros per capita (the estimates range between -98.1459 and -107.58). As the sample mean of revenues per capita is 1245.262 euros (see Table 3), the estimated reduction in revenues after the revelation of corruption is approximately 8% of total revenues. In the case of expenditures the effect of revealing corruption is a reduction of expenditures of approximately 70 euros per capita (estimates range between -58.9 and -75.8), or approximately 6% of total expenditures. The combined effect is an increase in deficit, although in this case the effect is not statistically significant.

## 6.2 Parametric matched Differences in Differences

The results of the previous model are confirmed by estimates from the parametric model. We start the discussion of the estimates from this model by describing first the results of the parametric matching and then the estimates of the treatment effects from the differences-in-differences model.

#### *Matching model*

Table 6 shows the results of the logit model used to calculate the propensity scores. This model estimates the probability of being corrupt at the beginning of the period of analysis (in 2003). The dependent variable is *Corruption over the period*, which is a dummy that takes value 1 if the municipality suffers a corruption scandal between 2003 and 2010. The covariates in the model are second order polynomials of the debt, unemployment, population, population density, and the percentage of people between 15 and 65; and second order polynomials and a one year lag of the variables that measure ideology (to capture electoral results in the prior election). Although many coefficients in this regression are non-significant, a Chi-Square test of the joint significance reveals that each of groups of variables included in the regression are jointly significant.

The model of Table 6 was then used to match each corruption-ridden municipality to the most similar control, according to their propensity scores. The results of the matching model are summarized in Table 7. In this table we present a t-test of the differences in means of both the control variables used in the matching model and the outcome variables that we use in the differences-in-differences. This table shows that before the matching (lower panel) both the control variables and the outcome variables differ significantly across treatment and control groups. After the matching (upper panel), the set of controls is balanced across treatment and control groups and none of



the differences of means are now statistically significant. Most importantly, the outcome variables, which were not used in the matching model, are also balanced. This implies that our matching model identifies a sample of controls that were alike in terms of socio-economic situation, that were also ideologically similar, and that had an undifferentiated fiscal behavior before corruption was revealed.

#### *Differences-in-Differences model*

Table 8 presents the results of the differences in differences model. The first three columns display the results of the model of equation [2], while columns 4 to 6 estimate the model of equation [3], which provides robustness.

The regressions of the first three columns are estimated on the matched sub-sample.

Each column estimates the effect of corruption on a different dependent variable.

Column 1 estimates the effects on Revenues per capita. Column 2 estimates the effects on Expenditures per capita. Column 3 estimates the overall effect on fiscal

deficits/surpluses as a percentage of revenues (the variable is defined as  $(\text{Revenues} - \text{Expenditures}) / \text{Revenues}$ ). The coefficient of interest is the interaction between *After*

and *Corrupt*, which measures the causal effect of the revelation of the scandal in the municipality. The coefficient has a value of 98.7321 in Column 1 and is significant at

the 1%. This number implies that after a corruption scandal is revealed, revenues decrease in the municipality by 98.7321 euros per capita, which is approximately an 8% decrease compared to what would have occurred had corruption not been revealed.

Column 2 shows that expenditures also decrease significantly as a consequence of the revelation of corruption. The decrease in expenditures is smaller (75.57 euros per

capita) and amounts approximately 7%. Again here, the combination of the decrease in both revenues and expenditures produces no significant effects on surpluses.

Columns 4 to 6 in Table 5 estimate the model using the whole sample. These regressions confirm the results of the first three columns. The revelation of corruption has a significant effect on revenues and expenditures. The magnitude of the coefficients of the effect on revenues and expenditures is slightly larger. As the effects on revenues are larger than those on expenditures the model finds a negative, although small and non-significant, effect on surpluses.

Overall, Table 8 confirms the results of the non-parametric model and show that the revelation of corruption has a quantitatively large effect on municipalities' finances both on the revenue and on the expenditure side. As a result, the revelation of corruption likely may have a negative effect on surpluses, although this effect is not very robust, and we cannot discard the possibility that the combined effects on revenues and expenditures are neutral to surpluses.

### 6.3. Falsification tests

We now discuss two falsification exercises that provide support to the causal interpretation of our results.

The first falsification exercise is presented in Table 9. In this table we estimate the same non-parametric model as in Table 5 but using a fake date for the revelation of corruption variable. To construct the fake revelation of corruption date we subtract a random number between 3 and 5 from the true revelation year. The idea of this test is that if our model truly captures the effects of revealed corruption, we should not find an effect when we consider as the revelation date one that is a few years earlier than the true date. As in this case our treatment and control samples are both formed by corrupt municipalities before corruption is revealed, there should be no differences between the two groups if the model is correctly specified. We construct the fake revelation date

using a random number instead of arbitrary fixing the lag at a given number to avoid results to be influenced by effects that may affect all corrupt municipalities before the revelation of corruption such as anticipation effects. Anticipation effects may occur, for example, if before the formal prosecution of the politician there are some other initial judiciary actions such as preliminary investigations or interrogations that are leaked to the public. By creating the fake revelation date sufficiently earlier than the true date (e.g. between 3 and 5 years) and by randomly choosing the lag from the true date, we avoid these effects. Consistent with the model of Table 5 correctly identifying a causal effect, Table 9 shows that our non-parametric model finds no effect of the fake treatment on public finances. As one would expect, the estimates of the “placebo” treatment are now small in magnitude, non-significant and change in signs from one specification to another.

Table 10 provides an additional falsification test that is in the same spirit of the one just described but is implemented using the parametric differences-in-differences model. In this case we use the same fake revelation of corruption date as in the previous falsification test, and in addition we eliminate from the estimation of the differences-in-differences model all truly treated observations (e.g. corrupt municipalities after the true revelation date). Note that in this case we do not change the matched sample. Instead, we artificially create a random date of assignment to the treatment and we remove truly treated observations from the estimation. As we do not have truly treated observations in this sample, we should not find any treatment effects. Table 10 shows that this is the case. The relevant interaction term of columns 1 to 6 is again small in magnitude and far from being significant, providing support to the interpretation of our results as causal.

## 6.4. Mechanisms

Once we have provided evidence that revealed corruption has a significant causal effect on municipalities' finances, we explore the mechanisms through which the effects happen. Table 11 shows the results on different types of revenues, while Table 12 explores the effects on different types of expenditures. To save space, we show the results using the non-parametric model.

Columns 1 to 7 of Table 11 estimate the effects on each revenue category separately. Results are consistent with corruption related to urban planning being the most common type in our database. We find that the categories of revenues in which revealed corruption has a statistically significant effect are: licenses and fees, current transfers, alienation of property and capital transfers. Except for the reduction in current transfers, which we did not expect to find, the reduction of the revenues found in the other three categories, which amount approximately 76% of the total estimated reduction, is explained by the reaction of economic agents to the revelation of corruption.

Firstly, the reduction on capital transfers shows that other levels of government reduce their discretionary transfers to corrupt municipalities. In this regard, note that as mentioned before, many capital transfers are assigned to municipalities through open calls to fund infrastructure projects, and, as a consequence, there is a large amount of discretion on the side of the regional governments to decide what projects to fund. We find that *ceteris paribus*, immediately after the scandal is out, municipalities involved in the scandal receive less of these funds (around a 12% reduction).

Similarly, municipalities receive less revenue from the selling of real estate (more than a 50% reduction). This is consistent with the municipality being less willing to initiate new construction projects after corruption is revealed (if this was part of the corruption

scheme), or with private firms being less willing to buy public property from corruption-ridden municipalities. This could be due to a reduction in trust in the local government, the inability to extract funds from the corrupt majors after the revelation (if for example buying at discount prices was part of the scheme) or to the increased opportunity cost of investing in a corrupt municipality, as firms do not want their names to be associated with corruption.

The decrease in revenues from licenses and fees (around a 15% reduction) is consistent with less construction happening in the municipality due to either less people interested in investing in places tainted with corruption, or with the municipality authorizing less projects. Although less likely, this result could also arise from the reduction of the license fees as an electoral strategy to mitigate the effects of corruption.

Additionally, we find no effect of revealed corruption on direct or indirect taxes (see columns 1 and 2). This result is different than the one found for Brazil in Timmons and Garfias (2014), which hypothesize that revealed corruption would reduce revenues from property tax due to reduced compliance by taxpayers. The differences between our finding and theirs are likely explained by the small incentives for tax fraud in the property tax in Spain, which has a very strict process to record property data.

Finally, Table 12 completes the picture by looking at the expenditure side. In this case, the effects occur mostly through a reduction of investment expenditures (e.g. infrastructure building). The coefficient of investment expenditures has a magnitude of 61.14 euros per capita in column 1, which represents approximately 80% of the total estimated reduction in expenditures (which was 77.39 in column 1 of Table 5). The implied reduction in investment is therefore quantitatively large and it amounts approximately a 12% decrease. This again, confirms the pattern detected in the revenue

side: the revelation of corruption has a significant effect on the areas of the public budget more related with construction activities.

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper finds that revealed corruption has a strong negative causal effect on public expenditures and revenues at the municipality level. Revenues and expenditures decrease by approximately 8%. We also find that the reduction is concentrated in the revenues and expenditure types most related to construction activity in the municipality. This is due to both a reduction of publicly funded projects (e.g. less capital grants to fund infrastructure projects) and privately funded projects (e.g. reduction in revenues from construction tax). Overall, the revelation of corruption leads other agents to reduce their economic transactions with the municipality, and likely reduces corrupt behavior.

These results contribute to expand our knowledge about the effects of corruption in several ways. On the one hand, previous literature has shown that corruption affects growth and changes the allocation of public resources to favor certain areas such as construction projects and capital spending (Mauro 1998, Liu and Mickesell, 2014). Our results show that that the revelation of corrupt behavior likely changes that pattern and that, after the revelation, spending in those areas is reduced.

Secondly, our results contribute to increase our knowledge about the effects of revealed corruption overall. Thus far, researchers working on the effects of revealed corruption have shown that the revelation of corruption has significant electoral effects and that corrupt incumbents obtain less electoral support once voters know about their corrupt behavior. This paper shows that the revelation of corrupt behavior has consequences that go beyond electoral effects and that directly affect municipalities finances' (and therefore public policies) even before elections take place.

Finally, the results of this paper are also interesting from the policy point of view. If one of the consequences of corruption is the inefficient allocation of funds to areas where corrupt politicians can extract more rents, our results show that the revelation of corrupt behavior reduces such inefficient expenditure and the revenues paid to fund it. The revelation of the corruption scandal, thus, frees up resources that can be used to fund activities with higher social return.

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Tabla 1. Summary of Electoral results in Spanish Local Elections

	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011
Election Date	May 28	June 13	May 25	May 27	May 22
Participation Rate	69.87	63.99	67.67	63.97	66.16
PSOE Vote Share	30.84	34.26	34.83	34.92	27.79
PP Vote Share	35.27	34.44	34.29	35.62	37.54
Others Vote Share	33.89	31.3	30.88	29.46	34.67

Note: Calculated from electoral data from Ministerio de Interior

**Table 2. Summary of Revenue and Expenditure categories**

Revenues			Expenditures		
Categories	Euros per capita	%	Categories	Euros per capita	%
Direct Taxes	269.763	22.29	Wages	340.640	28.96
Indirect Taxes	57.405	4.74	Goods and Services	336.887	28.64
Licenses and Fees	202.587	16.74	Financial Expenses	12.460	1.06
Current Transfers	335.546	27.73	Current Transfers	63.980	5.44
Property income	28.456	2.35	Investment	365.065	31.03
Revenues from Selling of Real Estate	43.684	3.61	Capital Transfers	12.566	1.07
Capital Transfers	207.988	17.19	Assets	2.640	0.22
Assets	2.116	0.17	Liabilities	42.174	3.58
Liabilities	63.364	5.24			
<b>Total Revenues per capita</b>	<b>1210</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total Expenditures per capita</b>	<b>1176.411</b>	<b>100</b>

Notes: All variables are defined in real euros per capita. The entries are calculated using the mean of each variable over the whole period of analysis (2003-2003)

**Table 3. Summary Statistics**

	Whole sample	Municipalities with corruption scandals	Municipalities with no corruption scandals
Revenues per capita	1245.261 [651.8416]	1272.087 [627.9699]	1242.285 [654.3836]
Expenditure per capita	1207.63 561.1238	1228.489 [526.2544]	1205.316 [564.8244]
Corruption over the period	0.0998 [.2998]	1 [0]	0 0
Corrupt	0.0506 [0.2191]	0.5066 [0.5001]	0 0
After	- -	0.3632 [0.481]	- -
Population	16.4708 [82.4495]	58.6131 [227.7301]	11.7959 [39.7797]
Unemployment	8.5626 [4.3751]	9.2013 [4.747]	8.4918 [4.3262]
Population Density	434.6945 [1383.887]	824.8198 [1930.112]	391.4169 [1302.211]
% People Between 15 and 65	0.343 [0.0459]	0.32 [0.0402]	0.3456 [0.0457]
Rightwing Vote Share	0.3738 [0.1777]	0.3751 [0.1691]	0.3736 [0.1786]
Leftwing Vote Share	0.4353 [0.2024]	0.4073 [0.1883]	0.4385 [0.2037]
PP	0.3049 [0.1976]	.3530 0.1763	0.2996 [0.1991]
PSOE	0.3567 [0.1752]	0.3398 0.1575	0.3586 [0.1769]
Log of Total Debt	55.8388 93.1565	64.1945 [82.3973]	54.9124 [94.2303]
Observations	22142	2211	19931

Notes: All variables are defined in real euros per capita. The entries are calculated using the mean of each variable over the whole period of analysis (2003-2003)

**Table 4. T-Test of differences in means between treatment and control groups. Non-Parametric Matching**

Matched Sample				
	Mean Treatment	Mean Control	t-test	p-value
<b>Control Variables</b>				
Rightwing Vote Share	0.377	0.387	0.943	0.346
Leftwing Vote Share	0.370	0.384	1.373	0.170
PP share	0.372	0.381	0.885	0.376
PSOE share	0.310	0.331	2.382	0.017
%Between 15 and 65	0.315	0.317	1.453	0.147
Density	690.307	565.965	-1.737	0.083
Population	47415.750	43993.660	-0.637	0.524
Unemployment	11.069	10.607	-1.608	0.108
<b>Outcome variables</b>				
Revenues	1235.494	1222.187	-0.503	0.615
Expenditures	1213.577	1202.392	-0.428	0.669
Surplus	-0.024	0.138	0.164	0.870
Whole Sample				
	Mean Treatment	Mean Control	t-test	p-value
<b>Control Variables</b>				
Rightwing Vote Share	0.377	0.373	-0.574	0.566
Leftwing Vote Share	0.370	0.413	4.758	0.000
PP share	0.372	0.347	-3.035	0.002
PSOE share	0.310	0.346	4.706	0.000
%Between 15 and 65	0.315	0.321	3.244	0.001
Density	690.307	706.694	0.211	0.833
Population	47415.750	37467.760	-2.361	0.018
Unemployment	11.069	8.205	-12.753	0.000
<b>Outcome variables</b>				
Revenues	1235.494	1300.026	2.004	0.045
Expenditures	1213.577	1247.105	1.211	0.226
Surplus	-0.024	1.361	1.689	0.092

Notes: The means of the matched model are calculated using one neighbour. The treatment group are municipalities in which a corruption scandal has already been revealed. The Control group are municipalities in which a corruption scandal occurs over the period of study but for which such corruption has not been revealed on the year for which they serve as a match.

Table 5. Average Treatment Effect. Non-Paratric Matching.

	M=1	M=2	M=3	M=4
Revenue	-108.0825*** [30.6391]	-118.1162*** [31.5571]	-113.8589*** [30.9690]	-98.14937*** [30.7800]
Expenditures	-77.39879*** [29.0127]	-85.51254*** [29.8865]	-78.95157*** [29.1803]	-62.75888** [28.3316]
Deficit	-1.158182 [1.0933]	-1.171143 [1.0916]	-1.305735 [1.1055]	-1.414985 [1.1316]

M is the number of neighbours. Fiscal Variables are in real euros per capita. Robust Standard errors using Abadie and Imbens (2011) method in brackets.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 6. Logit Model. Dependent variable: Corruption over the period**

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Population	0.0118***	0.0022
Population squared	0.000***	0.0000
Debt	0.0015	0.0016
Debt squared	0.0000	0.0000
Unemployment	-0.2379***	0.085
Unemployment squared	0.0167***	0.006
Density	-0.0001	0.0001
Density squared	0.0000	0.0000
% Between 15 and 65	-11.9455	16.6111
% Between 15 and 66 squared	-2.4847	24.4388
Leftwing vote share	1.8041	2.4416
Leftwing vote share squared	-1.5131	2.2110
Leftwing vote share lagged	-0.1914	1.1478
Rightwing vote share	-6.7798**	3.1738
Rightwing vote share squared	4.9335	3.2023
Rightwing vote share lagged	-0.6265	1.4138
PSOE share	-3.6679	2.6724
Psoe share squared	2.7585	2.8862
PSOE share lagged	0.5907	1.2544
PP share	10.1840***	3.2449
PP share squared	-6.9512**	3.4373
PP share lagged	-0.8152	1.5780
Constant	2.6879	2.8061
Pseudo R2	0.1427	
Observations	2726	

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 7. T-Test of differences in means between treatment and control groups. Parametric matching.**

Matched Sample				
	Mean Treatment	Mean Control	t-test	p-value
<b>Control Variables</b>				
Rightwing Vote Share	0.373	0.361	-0.825	0.410
Leftwing Vote Share	0.402	0.400	-0.136	0.892
PP share	0.3495	0.338	-0.7594	0.448
PSOE share	0.335	0.338	0.220	0.826
%Between 15 and 65	0.324	0.319	-1.264	0.207
Density	775.479	696.048	-0.541	0.589
Population	56432.720	39756.810	-1.114	0.266
Unemployment	5.025	4.910	-0.557	0.578
<b>Outcome variables</b>				
Revenues	1235.416	1202.290	-0.591	0.555
Expenditures	1252.014	1197.598	-1.032	0.302
Surplus	-3.050	-0.713	1.8207	0.069
Whole Sample				
	Mean Treatment	Mean Control	t-test	p-value
<b>Control Variables</b>				
Rightwing Vote Share	0.373	0.379	0.516	0.606
Leftwing Vote Share	0.402	0.434	2.418	0.016
PP share	0.3494958	0.2971222	-4.1513	0.000
PSOE share	0.335	0.354	1.623	0.105
%Between 15 and 65	0.324	0.351	8.767	0.000
Density	775.479	372.877	-4.738	0.000
Population	56432.720	11332.160	-8.850	0.000
Unemployment	5.025	4.939	-0.559	0.576
<b>Outcome variables</b>				
Revenues	1235.416	1124.355	-2.927	0.004
Expenditures	1252.014	1125.942	-3.477	0.001
Surplus	-3.050	-1.458	1.718	0.086

Notes: The means are calculated for the year of the matching, which is 2003. The treatment group are municipalities that suffer at least one corruption scandal between 2003 and 2010. The Control group are municipalities with no corruption scandals during the period.



**Table 8. Fixed Effects Differences-in-Differences Regressions.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Matched sample			Whole Sample		
VARIABLES	Revenues	Expenditures	Deficit	Revenues	Expenditures	Deficit
Corrupt	2.3373 [31.181]	2.447 [22.813]	-0.602 [0.942]	-22.6181 [29.549]	-14.0494 [19.677]	-0.3028 [0.626]
After	8.0858 [24.096]	9.7526 [25.172]	-0.4885 [0.800]			
Corrupt*After	-98.7321*** [35.897]	-75.5702** [32.771]	-0.2823 [1.371]	-106.2143*** [29.399]	-84.9539*** [23.750]	-1.3726 [1.009]
Population	-1.427 [1.846]	-1.2262 [1.493]	-0.0164 [0.028]	-6.0004 [3.785]	-5.1201 [3.170]	0.0030*** [0.001]
Unemployment	-17.8013** [7.003]	-13.0590** [5.055]	-0.2816 [0.189]	-11.7996*** [2.541]	-7.9423*** [2.009]	-0.0927*** [0.032]
Density	-0.3404** [0.161]	-0.2253 [0.142]	-0.0075* [0.004]	-0.5345*** [0.127]	-0.4128*** [0.100]	0 [0.000]
%Between 15 and 65	-2,099.8656* [1,183.597]	-1,908.6021* [971.646]	27.9213 [34.391]	-792.7210* [427.044]	-886.0554** [394.467]	-1.1293 [2.343]
Rightwing vote share	94.9586 [274.086]	6.4702 [199.935]	6.0835 [7.075]	77.0067 [95.736]	73.5058 [87.492]	0.0647 [1.092]
Leftwing vote share	772.7720* [425.100]	613.8494 [384.904]	12.4874 [8.806]	75.6715 [111.678]	98.0355 [94.402]	1.333 [0.937]
PP	-277.207 [334.638]	92.2058 [248.252]	-16.6599* [9.091]	-107.795 [128.726]	-85.3855 [111.229]	-1.4946 [1.278]
PSOE	-486.9071 [465.980]	-438.254 [423.535]	-10.2245 [9.504]	37.4006 [128.316]	-2.1221 [102.917]	-0.8369 [1.008]
Debt	11.9982 [19.117]	-3.36 [11.256]	0.0453 [0.446]	-2.623 [4.821]	-7.5474** [3.815]	0.0389 [0.080]
Constant	2,165.6452*** [367.400]	2,003.4179*** [318.216]	-1.1791 [11.465]	1,742.0522*** [155.754]	1,712.6405*** [142.617]	-0.2154 [1.061]
Regional effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Electoral term effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	4,270	4,270	4,270	22,142	22,142	22,142
R-squared	0.051	0.046	0.067	0.05	0.079	0.05

Fiscal variables are in real euros per capita. Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in brackets

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 9. Falsification Test. Non-Paratric Matching.**

VARIABLES	M=1	M=2	M=3	M=4
Revenue	-30.8346 [42.6633]	5.5039 [40.0372]	17.2944 [38.2052]	23.2909 [37.4616]
Expenditures	-31.0094 [39.4631]	7.9623 [37.1747]	14.8437 [34.8598]	17.2077 [33.9817]
Deficit	0.7714 [1.2086]	.7260 [1.1665]	0.3701 [1.1235]	0.5795 [1.1164]

Fiscal variables are in real euros per capita. Robust standard errors using Abadie and Imbens (2011) method in brackets

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 10. Falsification test. Fixed Effects Differences-in-Differences Regressions.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Matched sample			Whole Sample		
VARIABLES	Revenues	Expenditures	Surplus	Revenues	Expenditures	Surplus
Corrupt	-26.8041 [50.572]	20.6825 [34.824]	-0.5368 [1.306]	28.1524 [26.671]	49.6066** [19.926]	0.0192 [0.493]
After	16.4976 [31.229]	16.6979 [25.567]	0.6907 [0.903]			
Corrupt*After	21.9721 [51.543]	-13.9071 [41.267]	0.0112 [1.554]	-3.6011 [34.784]	-19.2759 [27.700]	0.3205 [0.950]
Population	-3.0301 [3.343]	-2.8885 [2.717]	-0.0454 [0.078]	-13.4794** [5.239]	-11.6614*** [4.336]	0.0047*** [0.001]
Unemployment	-8.2943 [9.042]	-6.4544 [6.458]	-0.2719 [0.236]	-8.9781*** [2.650]	-5.3798** [2.094]	-0.0862*** [0.033]
Density	-0.8549** [0.403]	-0.5563* [0.296]	-0.0114** [0.005]	-0.5109*** [0.141]	-0.3757*** [0.108]	0 [0.000]
%Between 15 and 65	844.3474 [1,652.136]	-170.1408 [1,174.689]	56.6047 [40.398]	-514.9705 [437.956]	-662.4660* [396.232]	-1.419 [2.549]
Rightwing vote share	-419.904 [399.296]	-298.9398 [401.565]	-0.1774 [8.062]	91.6729 [95.843]	84.4467 [88.094]	0.3208 [1.086]
Leftwing vote share	123.9956 [467.590]	188.9425 [461.500]	-11.6961 [9.271]	66.2239 [116.160]	106.5501 [97.462]	1.0099 [0.951]
PP share	486.7757 [515.391]	595.8938 [451.463]	-16.0235 [11.015]	-77.5588 [132.105]	-89.823 [113.362]	-1.6291 [1.273]
PSOE share	-17.7888 [492.289]	-110.2654 [472.414]	11.0534 [9.959]	30.719 [132.803]	-11.7913 [105.602]	-0.5457 [1.017]
Debt	11.6473 [16.610]	-6.5166 [11.019]	1.2517** [0.524]	-4.0152 [4.748]	-8.8215** [3.943]	0.0414 [0.080]
Constant	1,666.5668*** [408.302]	1,735.2833*** [317.786]	-7.1494 [12.428]	1,685.6703*** [160.597]	1,666.6336*** [144.413]	-0.0731 [1.125]
Regional effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Electoral term effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,243	3,243	3,243	21,134	21,134	21,134
R-squared	0.047	0.052	0.068	0.051	0.083	0.044

Fiscal variables are in real euros per capita. Robust standard errors clustered by municipality in brackets.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Table 11. Revenue categories. Average Treatment Effect. Non-Parametric Matching.

	M=1	M=2	M=3	M=4
Direct Taxes	7.6866 [11.2930]	7.0805 [10.6666]	11.7141 [10.1962]	16.8575* 9.9688
Indirect Taxes	-6.7829 [5.8521]	-8.7161 [5.6276]	-8.0197 [5.7143]	-8.2113 [5.8343]
Licenses and Fees	-30.3444** [13.9092]	-33.3862** [14.3976]	-33.0820** [14.0386]	-24.9616* [13.7770]
Current Transfers	-24.2901*** [6.4465]	-30.1304*** [6.0694]	-32.3697*** [5.9351]	-29.5502*** [5.9012]
Property income	-3.0313 [5.0509]	-3.1275 [5.0148]	-2.3663 [4.8834]	-0.8451 [4.9186]
Revenues from Selling of Real Estate	-27.2001*** [10.0082]	-27.9002*** [10.4088]	-27.4749*** [10.8174]	-28.8450*** [10.9909]
Capital Transfers	-25.5441*** [9.7310]	-24.6367*** [9.3572]	-25.8577*** [9.5214]	-27.1202*** [9.2711]

M is the number of neighbours used in the matching. Fiscal Variables are in real euros per

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Table 12. Expenditure categories. Average Treatment Effect. Non-Parametric Matching.

	M=1	M=2	M=3	M=4
Wages	15.1653 [9.3045]	14.0830 [9.0095]	15.8914* [8.4629]	20.6189** [8.1573]
Goods and Services	-9.8454 [8.7253]	-11.4988 [8.8772]	-7.9511 [8.7723]	-4.4239 [8.7484]
Financial Expenses	2.5467* [1.3035]	2.6373* [1.4024]	2.7726** [1.3244]	3.0508** [1.2944]
Current Transfers	-10.7935** [5.1047]	-12.0449** [4.8274]	-12.6065*** [4.7422]	-8.4436* [4.6416]
Investment	-61.1416*** [16.1152]	-66.8864*** [16.5540]	-65.3574*** [16.5712]	-61.7622*** [16.3716]
Capital Transfers	-1.0147 [2.9635]	-0.2921 [2.9165]	-0.3816 2.9468	0.2942 [3.0737]

M is the number of neighbours used in the matching. Fiscal Variables are in real euros per capita. Robust Standard errors using Abadie and Imbens (2011) method in brackets.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1