Post-electoral promises, performance and trust in government
Evidence from a Survey Experiment[*]

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Abstract

Providing information is a well-known tool to increase trust and empower citizens. To understand how citizens react to transparency initiatives, we conducted a randomized survey experiment in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where the government made a set of post-electoral promises. We interpret this initiative as a signal that an incumbent politician is willing to send to complement the information already provided by visible government performance. Our results show that post-electoral promises matter for shaping citizens' perceptions about trustworthiness of the government. The content of the information also matters: a treatment showing that the government was fulfilling its promises had more impact than a treatment that only showed that the government had made the promises, but the differences are not statistically significant. We find strong heterogeneity in how citizens process this information. One group, not familiar with the policy and with the lowest trust priors, was impervious to treatment: they seem to react to deeds, not words. The rest are more alike and can be broken down into those vaguely familiar with the promises, with intermediate trust priors, and those familiar with the promises, with the highest trust priors. The treatment effects are entirely through the middle group, and they close the gap in trust with the group familiar with the promises. More generally, our study suggests that transparency initiatives may be an effective signal in a setting with high trust priors, but their informational value is more limited than visible public good provision.

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JEL codes: D02, D7, D82, H41

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1 Introduction

Trust can be defined as the belief that others will not act opportunistically given a chance. Mistrust, both political and interpersonal, plays a significant role in shaping public policy preferences for public spending (Keefer and Scartascini, 2022). Citizens who lack trust prefer politicians who prioritize transfers over public goods and who promise immediate and certain benefits, even if they do not yield long-term growth (Yamamura, 2014; Anderson, 2017; Keefer et al., 2018; Cai et al., 2020; Keefer et al., 2020, 2022).[1]

The ability of people, firms, or governments to take advantage of others is more prevalent when there are information and power asymmetries (Keefer and Scartascini, 2022). As a result, reforms aimed at fostering trust must both inform and empower. Improved communication and information strategies about policy outcomes, for example, can boost trust (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012; Alessandro et al., 2021; Butler et al., 2021). Reliable information directly related to citizens' well-being is more likely to increase their willingness to hold the government accountable (Khemani et al., 2016). Voters' access to information can also empower citizens by bolstering their power to reward or censure elected officials for their performance in office (Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Kendall et al., 2015). That is why transparency initiatives have been at the forefront of efforts to improve individuals' perception of a trustworthy government.

This paper contributes to the literature on transparency and trust theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, little is known about the conditions under which policymakers have an incentive to introduce trust-building initiatives. We conceptualize transparency initiatives as a signal of the trustworthiness of incumbent governments, because trustworthy types have no problem opening up to show what they are doing. Transparency initiatives, which are easier to implement now with the revolution in information technology, can complement the provision of visible public goods, a classic signal of government performance used by voters to hold incumbents accountable. Since trustworthiness is a valence issue, incumbents that are seen as more trustworthy will have an advantage over challengers (see Ansolabehere and Snyder, 2000).

Empirically, while there are examples of successful transparency initiatives (Alessandro et al., 2021; Ardanaz et al., 2022; Keefer and Scartascini, 2022), evidence on the particular conditions

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[1] In this regard, public expenditure in developing countries is inefficient and biased towards current spending. Latin America and the Caribbean have the greatest gap in long-term public investment, as well as high transfers and subsidies that redistribute little (Izquierdo et al., 2018).

under which transparency fosters trust is scant, especially in the context of developing countries and young democracies (Blanco and Ruiz, 2013; Evans et al., 2019). The empirical analysis is based on a survey experiment carried out in an actual policy setting in the City of Buenos Aires (henceforth CABA, for its acronym in Spanish), Argentina, a developing country, in which we provided information about the government's post-electoral promises and performance. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three different informational treatments and a control group. Treatment 1 provides information about a series of pledges made by the Mayor of Buenos Aires at the beginning of the government period. Treatments 2 and 3 supplement the general information provided in Treatment 1 by providing information about compliance with the pledges at the aggregate (city), or local level (commune).The treated and control individuals were asked about their perceptions regarding the city government's degree of trustworthiness using a multi-dimensional approach that includes the components of trust listed by Grimmelikhuijsen (2012): competence, benevolence and honesty, and questions regarding trust in government members that we developed for previous work (Keefer et al., 2018, 2020).[2]

Our framework leads to expect a two-way relationship between trust and transparency. With Bayesian updating, the treatment's impact on posteriors, i.e., final trust, will depend on priors, i.e., initial trust. Since most people from the control group consider the government somewhat trustworthy, when asked directly about this feature of local government, we expect that treatments will have positive and significant effects on trust ($T^1 > 0$, $T^2 > 0$, $T^3 > 0$), and that informing about the compliance with commitments should have a more substantial effect than informing only about the commitments ($T^2 \geq T^1$, $T^3 \geq T^1$). Results show that disclosing information (T^1) indeed increases trust in government by about 0.1 standard deviations (SD). Effects tend to be relatively uniform across the different subcomponents of our main index. The coefficients for T^2 and T^3 are positive and statistically significant, and they tend to be larger than those of T^1 but are not statistically different from it.

We first analyze average treatment effects, but respondents have very heterogeneous prior beliefs. In a Bayesian framework, those who do not trust the government at all should be unaffected by the transparency initiative. We expect the most substantial effect of the transparency

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[2]Since dependent variables are measured shortly after the treatment, we acknowledge that there is potential for social desirability bias. However, results are not uniform across the three treatments and the dependent variables, as will be shown in the Results and Discussion sections, which provides reassurance that respondents did not simply rate the government more favorably after getting the treatment due to a bias, but in response to the information we provided through the vignettes.

treatment to be on those with intermediate trust priors, because those with the highest trust face a ceiling effect. We examine this prediction in the data in two ways. First, looking at how trust changes along the full spectrum of priors. Second, looking at the effect of treatments conditional on the perceived quality of government, a variable that is very closely related to initial trust. People with intermediate priors are indeed more responsive to information about the commitments and their fulfillment than those at the extremes.

Additionally, the framework predicts that the effect of the signal is conditional on an individual's starting knowledge of municipal government plans and actions. Since the information set of the group already aware of the government's plans does not change with the treatment, information should only affect individuals unfamiliar with the commitments. While the data confirm our framework's prediction that those who were already aware of the post-electoral promises would be unaffected by the treatment, it did not predict the existence of two very distinct subgroups among people not wholly familiar with the government's ex ante plans. A subgroup vaguely familiar with the post-electoral promises, i.e., those that had heard about it, reacted strongly to the treatment assignment. A second subgroup, completely unaware of the promises, showed no response at all to the informational treatment. A possible interpretation of this second subgroup response is that these individuals acquire knowledge through direct observation rather than third-party information (Hertz et al., 2021). While we cannot prove causality in our setting, there is suggestive evidence that this group of people does not rely on others (family, social, or traditional media) and even less on the government to acquire information about the government's performance.

This empirical finding feeds back into our signaling model. The model can accommodate these dynamics by differentiating among individuals according to their preferred learning modes. This feature of the data implies that transparency initiatives are a signal that is less effective than visible government performance, because a subgroup of the population ignores it. However, in our sample it seems that the median respondent was affected by the initiative, so it may still be very effective in terms of the median voter.

Finally, the treatment effects on people who had only heard of the program, but were not well familiarized with it, are of the same magnitude as the initial gap in trust between people aware of the commitments and people who had only heard of them. It suggests that the impact of the vignettes is not only short-term: the effects are between 0.14 and 0.19 SD. Hence, unlike

Marvel (2016), the effects of the treatment (here, post-electoral promises) seem to be long-lasting, perhaps because they are backed by government performance that is seen as good by most respondents.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 introduces a framework to analyze the interconnection between information and trust. In Section 3 we describe the survey experiment that explores the effect of a transparency initiative on political trust. Section 4 describes the data and empirical strategy. Section 5 introduces a model to formally examine the role of transparency reforms when voters face incomplete information. Finally, we present a discussion on the results in Section 6, and section 7 concludes.

2 Information and Political Trust

Access to information allows citizens to update their expectations about the government (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012). But while information sometimes matters for trust, sometimes it does not. Why? Using a Bayesian framework, we explore three reasons: the content of the informational treatments, initial trust priors, and the prior knowledge of the respondents about the transparency initiative. Although it would be interesting to understand how partisanship affects the level of trust individuals have in government, our survey experiment lacks information on respondents' ideological preferences. We use Bayes' rule to understand how trust priors affect information internalization, but motivated reasoning might also be at play, something we turn to in the discussion section. However, ideological differences might be captured by heterogeneous priors, reflecting the affective dimension emphasized by Grimmelikhuijsen (2012, pp. 56-7). For instance, positive affective cues among citizens who voted for the incumbent may lead to more favorable initial beliefs about the government's trustworthiness.

A first reason for the impact of transparency initiatives to differ is the content of the informational vignettes. The effect of transparency on trust depends on whether the government is successful or not in its plans (Sances, 2021). Alessandro et al. (2021), for instance, show that people who received a treatment indicating that the government was over-performing on its promises had higher trust in the government than those who received a treatment showing that the government was under-performing. This paper finds that information about good performance increases trust (treatments 2 and 3 of the experiment), though reporting on the pledges

themselves also has a positive, though slightly smaller, effect. If, instead, there is nothing good to show, more transparency could instead hurt the incumbent. Indeed, empirical evidence not only shows that transparency might not affect governmental perceptions, in some cases it can even have detrimental effects (Piotrowski et al., 2019).

The content of the information is important in a more fundamental sense: what the government says might be accurate or not. Respondents in our experiment live in the city, so they have personal information on government performance that they can use to assess whether the government promises are fulfilled or not. When the government makes and keeps promises regarding highly visible projects that all respondents are familiar with, respondents can rely on their direct experience to see that the government actually keeps its promises. This second point suggests that both good performance and honesty contribute to successful transparency initiatives.

Second, there is a circular relationship between transparency initiatives and trust in the government, because initial trust affects how people process this verbal information. Increasing access to information may not be enough to reduce citizens' mistrust : if people believe they are receiving fake news from an untrustworthy government, the impact of information will be nil. Our experiment allows us to control for the endogeneity of trust by discriminating between initial trust (the priors) and final trust (the posteriors). We expect our experiment to affect trust because we are looking at a relatively high-trust environment (Alessandro et al., 2021).

However, even in a relatively high trust environment, one would not expect either the low or high-trust groups to react strongly to new information. New information might be disregarded in the first group due to no initial trust, and a ceiling restriction limits the effect in the second group. Instead, one would expect the individuals with intermediate priors to react most strongly to the experiment. Thus, we explore the differential responses by taking advantage of the information on the heterogeneous priors of the respondents.

Third, information has heterogeneous effects due to the differences in the reaction of respondents to the vignettes. The respondents can be classified into three groups according to their prior knowledge of the promises: "Familiar", "Somewhat familiar", and "Unfamiliar".[3] We do not expect the group who already knows to react to the experiment because that information

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[3]The familiarity level is determined by the answer to the question "Are you familiar with the Buenos Aires Elige program?" Individuals could respond "I know it (familiar)", "I have heard of it (somewhat familiar)", or "I am unfamiliar with it".

is already in their information set, so it should be redundant. That is indeed what we find: in this group, the effects of the treatments are not significant. How the other two groups react to information is more of an open question.

Surprisingly, the treatment effects basically only lead the group "Somewhat familiar" to update their priors, and close the gap in trust with the group "Familiar". On the other hand, the group "Unfamiliar", which one would expect to potentially react the most to the vignettes, since it is the group for which this information is most novel, does not react to any treatment. As a possible explanation, this group might not care about what the government says, trusting deeds rather than words, only responding to direct evidence they collect themselves.

We develop a model in which the incumbent has two signals, visible public goods and a transparency initiative that can increase information on the provision of less visible public goods, to explore how transparency can complement performance in enhancing trust in government. Since the group "unfamiliar" is not responsive to the transparency initiative, it seems that they may be less effective as a signal than the provision of visible public goods, but they also may be more efficient for incumbents if the responsive groups are large enough and the signal reaches the median respondent.

3   Survey Experiment

We study an actual transparency initiative in Buenos Aires City to assess the value of information about post-electoral promises on political trust.[4] The city has been steadily increasing transparency over the last two decades (Alessandro et al., 2021).[5] Complementing the city's ongoing efforts, Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, the mayor of Buenos Aires, made a series of promises to residents upon taking office as part of his transparency promotion strategy. These promises are specific and quantifiable objectives that span government sectors and are based on citizens' interests and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN). Over 50 goals are outlined and progress toward their compliance is reported on the local government's website.[6]

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[4]The City of Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital and most populous city, is subdivided in fifteen *comunas* that work as territorial, administrative and political entities, and include 48 neighborhoods (SM, Figure B15).

[5]All the city government initiatives for increasing transparency are listed here: https://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/ministerio-de-gobierno/transparencia.

[6]These promises, which the city government calls *compromisos* (i.e., commitments), are available at http://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/compromisos. For example, Rodríguez Larreta said in public statement after election as Mayor of the city: "We are committed to ensuring that, during this term of office, 20,000 families will be able to fulfill their dream of owning their home". Another example was building eight educational centers, mainly

We designed an online questionnaire to elicit information about trust in the government. It includes questions that attempt to capture individuals' perceptions about the competence, benevolence, and honesty of the government, and their confidence in politicians and public servants, following Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) and Keefer et al. (2018, 2020) – questions are available in Supplementary Material (SM) B.[7] A total of 2,375 complete interviews were carried out in December 2019 by a company that specializes in collecting online survey data.[8] The sample was stratified with quotas by gender, age group (18 to 60 years old), and socioeconomic status. Within strata, individuals were assigned at random in one of four possible treatment categories: three informational vignettes, or a control group. Treated individuals answered the battery of questions on trust in the government after receiving the informational pieces. Figure A1 presents a description of the timeline of the survey experiment.

We use a simple design, as recommended by Bouwman and Grimmelikhuijsen (2016), to evaluate the importance of information regarding promises and their impact on trust. Each treatment presents information about the promises made by the government. Treatment 1 mentions the existence of the mayoral promises, their relevance, and gives four examples at the city level, without any details on level of compliance (see Figure B12). Treatment 2 provides the same information as Treatment 1, and it also shows the government's performance fulfilling the promises it had made (see Figure B13). Treatment 3 provides the same general information about the promises, but it presents a map with dots for all the achievements at the *comuna* level, highlighting three specific examples of promises fulfilled at such level. It is important to note that individuals in Treatment 3 received an infographic designed for the specific *comuna* they report living in (see Figure B14) – individuals were asked in the characterization module about the *comuna* they live in; then, the survey program selected the infographic that matched it. Unfortunately, by the nature of the implementation of the experiment, there are differences between Treatments 2 and 3 beyond the fact that the first provides examples of fulfillment at the city level and the latter at the *comuna* the respondent lives in level. On the one hand, the number of promises displayed is four in Treatment 2 and three in Treatment 3. On the other, the type of promises is also different and does not necessarily align with the policy area disclosed in Treatment 2 (infrastructure investments, mainly).

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located in vulnerable neighborhoods of the city.

[7]See Alessandro et al. (2021) for additional details. The full questionnaire in Spanish is available upon request.

[8]For details about the company, visit http://www.isonomia.com.ar/en/.

4 Data and Empirical Analysis

4.1 Data Description

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the main observable characteristics of the respondents and balance on covariates measured before presenting the experimental vignette to participants. The first column shows the sample average and the standard deviation for the control group. The average respondent is female (57%), completed secondary education (nearly 85% of surveyed individuals have completed high school), and is employed (52%).[9] Despite the existence of a dedicated website and the public announcement of post-electoral promises, only 22% of the sample were familiar with them before the intervention took place, while another 42% found them vaguely familiar (see Figure A6).

The groups are well balanced; only 4 out of 45 differences are statistically significant at the 10% level, consistent with chance. Based on the balance on observable characteristics, we consider the randomization was successful.[10] Additionally, p-values of tests of equality of coefficients identify there are no systematic differences in sample composition across treatment groups. There are minor disparities between people assigned to the first and second treatment groups regarding gender and educational attainment, with more women in the first treatment arm and more educated individuals in the second one.

Dependent variables are classified into two encompassing groups: (1) Trust in the Government and (2) Trust in Actions made by politicians and public servants.[11] For the first set of questions that evaluate trust in the government, we work with the individual responses to a series of 11 questions that inquired the participant to show her position on different statements about the Government of the City of Buenos Aires, ranging from *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*. Those questions attempt to identify how the respondent feels about the competence (is capable? does what is best for the city? is innovative? thinks in the long term? plans and informs its plans?), benevolence (acts in the interests of residents? helps those in need? pursues

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[9]The sample is not necessarily representative of the overall population of the city. In particular, it is slightly more educated, older (average age in city is about 40 years), and has a higher share of women than the city's population –which is about 53% according to the 2010 census data.

[10]We estimate an OLS regression with clustered errors at the *comuna* level to assess balance across treatment assignment. In this specification, observable characteristics act as dependent variables and treatment variables as independent. We also conducted randomization inference procedures over the difference in means between treated and control units to assess balance. Adjusted p-values from a thousand Montecarlo simulations of the OLS regressions provide similar conclusions.

[11]Descriptive statistics on dependent variables are shown in Table A1 in the Supplementary Material.

policies my family cares about?), and honesty (is sincere? is transparent? fulfills its promises?) of the city government.

To reduce the dimensionality of the information provided by the eleven questions, we construct summary indexes.[12] We also have the perception of trustworthiness, which we do not include in the estimation of the indexes but rather use as a direct measure of trust. To construct the indexes, we exploit a principal component analysis methodology (PCA henceforth) in which the first component explains at least 80 percent of the variance regardless of the index (see Table A2 in the SM).[13] We build three sub-indexes (Competence, Benevolence, and Honesty) and one global index that summarizes all questions on perceptions.[14]

Citizens have relatively high trust in the city government to begin with. Figure 1 provides a first glimpse at the perceptions of the respondents. It looks at the control group's responses on each aspect of government competence, benevolence and honesty. In general, there is a positive assessment of the government. Respondents consider the government to be capable and innovative, among the top attributes. However, they grade the government lower regarding how much it helps those in need and pursues programs that are beneficial to families. The remaining dependent variables will be explored in the discussion section.

4.2 Empirical Strategy

We first estimate the following model to understand the effect of providing information about government promises and their fulfillment on government trust:

$$Y_{ic} = \alpha + \beta_1 T_i^1 + \beta_2 T_i^2 + \beta_3 T_i^3 + \lambda X_{ic} + \epsilon_c, \tag{1}$$

where T^n is the treatment assignment, $n = 1, 2, 3$, depending on the treatment individual i from *comuna c* was exposed to. The treatment arms are as follows: (1) Promises at the city level, (2) Promises and their fulfillment at the city level, and (3) Promises and their fulfillment at the *comuna* level. A respondent was exposed to one treatment arm only, and individuals in

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[12]The aggregation improves statistical power to detect effects that are consistent across specific outcomes when these specific outcomes also have idiosyncratic variation.

[13]We also applied a factor analysis methodology and consistently found that the first factor explains a significant proportion of the variation. Furthermore, in a parallel analysis, we see that we should stay with a single factor under a decision rule of thumb of one. However, we report results for indices constructed for each dimension of trust, namely, competence, benevolence, and honesty, for interpretation purposes.

[14]Robustness exercises include running the regressions with the individual questions. Conclusions on statistical inference remain the same when we correct p-values using the Westfall and Young procedure (Jones et al., 2019).

each treatment arm were compared against those who did not receive any information. X_{ic} is a vector of controls that includes all observable characteristics available from the survey: age, gender, education (completed high school or college), labor status (employed or unemployed), socioeconomic level (ABC1 describes the group with the highest income), revealed preferences for public budget allocation between education and infrastructure, and pre-treatment beliefs on government quality. We also include *comuna* fixed effects for political divisions within the city.

Sixty percent of respondents in the control group consider that the government is transparent. Since most respondents consider that the government is truthful, our expectation is that providing information about post-electoral promises and their fulfillment matters. Since trust depends on the expectations that other people will act in good faith and comply with what they promise, providing information about what the government is doing and its compliance should increase trust: $\beta_n > 0$, $n = 1, 2, 3$. City residents can of course compare the information received with their personal experience. Thus, promising, if the government is not expected to comply with those promises, is not good policy in equilibrium; as such, promises by themselves already carry a load of information (Alessandro et al., 2021).[15] Still, because individuals may feel more comfortable in updating their perceptions if they are also shown information on fulfillment, we expect $\beta_2 \geq \beta_1$.

Targeted information could have added value for the recipient ("the government is not only doing what they promise but they are doing it in my *comuna*").[16] Although showing information on the achievement of the goals at a more local level could be more informative than presenting the promises alone, we do not have a strong prior on the differentiated effect of T^3 compared to T^1. First, because T^3 shows fewer promises than those presented in T^1 due to logistical issues in the implementation phase. Second, T^3 does not consistently present promises in policy areas comparable to those shown in treatments 1 and 2. While promises in T^1 and T^2 mainly concentrate on urban mobility and infrastructure issues, the ones presented in T^3 include health and education, in addition to infrastructure projects. And third, some of the displayed vignettes in T^3 contain information that may not be informative for all citizens from

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[15]This project is carried out with political will and in conjunction with the City of Buenos Aires' local government. The government is aware that having made promises and reminding citizens of them has a meaningful information load.

[16]There is evidence that individuals update their priors more when the information they receive refers to a group closer or more homogeneous. See, for example, Miranda et al. (2020) for the case of water consumption. Still, that evidence may not travel well because the information is not about individuals in the *comuna* but government action that affected the *comuna*.

those *comunas*. Imagine the case of information about a public school extended schedule; this exclusively affects those individuals with school-aged children who could be potential beneficiaries of such improvement. Our hypothesis is, therefore, that $\beta_3 \geq \beta_1$. We do not have strong priors regarding the relationship between β_3 and β_2.[17]

4.3   Unconditional Effects

We start by evaluating the effect of the different vignettes on indices that approximate the trust components we attempt to explain: a general composite index of trust in government and three sub-indexes that capture its perceived competence, benevolence, and honesty. We then estimate the effect on a direct measure of trustworthiness.

Average Effect

Figure 2 presents a graphical first approximation to the overall results of the intervention. Differences between the control and treated groups (pooled) are of about 0.10 standard deviations (SD) for the composite index and its sub-indices (referred herein as dimensions). Table 2 presents the compound index results, and each of the dimensions of trust identified by Grimmelikhuijsen (2012), looking at the disaggregated treatment arms level.[18] We do not observe significant differences between providing performance information or just informing about the promises.[19] Further, when we compare people who received information on performance at the aggregate -city- versus the local -*comuna*- level we do not observe differences in trust perceptions. However, the effect of Treatment 2 is consistently higher than the remaining two treatment arms. Results on each dimension of the index are very similar to those of the composite index. The last column of Table 2 depicts the results of providing information on the direct measure of trustworthiness.

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[17]Table A9 shows the results by *comuna*, considering the third treatment arm nature. There is no regular pattern in the relationship between treatments 2 and 3. As expected, the influence of tailored information on individuals' beliefs about the government is systematically stronger than generic information about the promises. However, we do not observe statistically significant changes in treatment allocations (except for *comunas* 5 and 14). Because mixed results within communes could be explained by the fact that families living in different communes may have characteristics that cause them to respond differently to treatment, we offer in Table A10 a selection analysis that evaluates whether socio-demographic traits and ex-ante perceptions of the government are more widespread in particular communes than others.

[18]The table is constructed progressively, including control variables and *comuna* fixed effects.

[19]We conducted Wald tests of equality of coefficients in each estimation. We did not find statistically different results with any of the informational treatments.

Table 3 shows the results for each of the three component dimensions. The same conclusions as in Table 2 prevail. In general, information about *compromisos* and government performance at the city level lead to higher increases in perceptions, with no statistically differences within treatment arms, except for the case of the perception of a government that plans and informs its plans, where information on fulfillment at the city level increases the perception of competence to a greater extent than promises themselves.

These results indicate that in our sample: (i) providing information about promises is valuable for increasing trust, i.e., $\beta_1 > 0$ in terms of equation 1; (ii) providing information about the fulfillment of those promises seems to add some but little additional information, i.e., $\beta_2 \geq \beta_1$; (iii) providing information at the *comuna* level does not increase trust more than providing information at the city level, i.e., $\beta_2 \geq \beta_3$, but we can not interpret these results given the caveats about the experiment design discussed earlier. Supplementing information about fulfillment either at the city or comuna level perhaps does not add significantly more to trust than simply providing information about the government promises because many of the respondents have already acquired much of that information first hand, by personal experience in the city streets. Besides the government transparency initiative, another signal is at work: government performance. The model below analyzes how both pieces of information may interact as signals of government quality.

Effect by Trust Scale

The initial beliefs of the respondents are very heterogeneous. A Generalized Ordered Logit specification considers all categories of the agreement scale for each component of the trust dimensions (see Table 4 and Figures A2 to A4 in the SM). Treatment 2 stands out because, unlike the other two treatments, it has a significant positive effect on all the components of trust (including innovation, where the average effect was insignificant). People move to higher levels of the trust distribution with all the treatments: category 1 (strongly disagree) falls in 32 out of 33 cases, with a significant fall in 25 cases, while category 7 (strongly agree) always rises, significantly so in 27 cases.

As to the intermediate categories, if the treatments push people up from one category to the next (instead of, say, going up two or three categories), then the effects are cumulative and the biggest jumps in trust are led by the net changes in the middle part of the distribution:

when we single out the highest category with a significant fall, there is one case in category 3 (somewhat disagree), six in category 4 (neutral), sixteen in category 5 (somewhat agree), and five in category 6 (agree). This suggests that greater levels of trust might be led by positive impacts in the middle part of the distribution. We now look into this issue using initial perceptions about quality of government.

4.4 Conditional Effects

To try to understand better how the treatments effects may depend on initial trust, we ask how trust differs in the treatment and control groups for different priors on government quality. This takes advantage of the fact that we have information on initial beliefs on quality of government from all respondents, and that perceptions of quality of government and trust priors are very closely correlated in the control group.

We then explore the model's prediction that individuals who have ex-ante information about post-electoral promises will respond very differently to the informational treatments than those that do not. We separate two categories of those unfamiliar with the pledges: those who are completely unaware of the post-electoral promises ("Unfamiliar") and those who are only slightly familiar with the transparency program ("Somewhat familiar").

Finally, we examine the interaction of prior knowledge with perceived quality of government, attempting to disentangle the impacts of initial information on the transparency program from that of a proxy of initial trust in government.

Perceived Quality of the Government

Our sample thinks highly of the city government's quality. People in the control group gave an average rating of 7.2 points on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest perceived quality and 10 being the highest. Considering the sample sizes in each of the initial variable's categories and for interpretation purposes, we have narrowed the spectrum of perception of government quality to three categories to evaluate heterogeneous effects: low, medium, and high quality. Categories were constructed ad hoc to reflect their definition. Those who ranked the government quality between 1 and 3 were classified as low, 4 to 7 as intermediate, and 8 to 10 as high.

People appear to respond differently to the informational treatments across the perceived quality distribution. Figure 3 shows the effects on trust vary with the perceived quality of

the government (see Table A3 in the SM for further details in a simplified version considering a general treatment condition). People who had a very high assessment of the government quality ex-ante do not significantly respond to the information provided through the vignettes, which is consistent with a ceiling effect. Participants who had an intermediate evaluation of the government's quality, on the other hand, were highly receptive to information. Individuals with the lowest assessments of the government quality have wide confidence intervals that do not reject the null hypothesis of no effect; however, they also show a positive response to information, although lower than those who have an intermediate evaluation of the government quality. If the perception of quality of government is a good proxy for initial trust, then these results lend support to our interpretation of Table 4. These results also go in line with the predictions of the signaling model below, where the most remarkable changes happen in the intermediate categories of the trust priors.

Familiarity with Transparency Program

The participants vary a lot in their familiarity with the transparency initiative, despite the existence of a dedicated website and its public announcement: 22% of the participants were familiar (F) with the promises before implementing the survey experiment, 42% were somewhat familiar (S), and 36% were unfamiliar (U).

People who knew about the promises before taking the survey had different opinions of the local government than those who did not. Although we observe balance across treatment assignments among people with diverse levels of knowledge of the policy, there still remains huge heterogeneity in the assertions of the government's competence, benevolence and honesty among them. Figure A7 shows a positive gradient in the relationship between prior knowledge of the policy and assessments of the city government. Individuals within the control group who are unaware of or have never heard of the policy start with a lower level of trust in government and each of its components. This level increases as people acquire information about the promises. Another way of looking at this is using preceived quality of government as a proxy of initial trust. Figure A8 depicts the distribution of the perceived quality scores by each level of knowledge. The distribution of people who previously knew about the pledges is skewed right in comparison to those who had heard of it, while those who did not know about the pledges are marginally

shifted to the left.[20]

Prior knowledge of the policy was not randomly assigned, yet from Table 1 we observe that the proportion of people who have previously known about the policy is not statistically different among treatment status (which was randomly assigned). People who received information about promises and their fulfillment at the city level are marginally more aware of the policy's existence. Considering that treatment arms have roughly the same proportion of people who know the policy ex-ante, and they are assigned at random, we explore how differing levels of previous knowledge of the policy modify trust in the government. We assess whether there were heterogeneous responses to the treatment among people who were not familiar with the promises, people who had heard of them, and those already familiar with them. Our framework leads us to anticipate that previous knowledge of the post-electoral promises can strongly affect the response to informational treatments. In particular, if someone already was familiar with the promises and the government's performance in fulfilling them before taking the survey, their information set $I(t = 0)$ should remain unchanged with the vignettes. We observe that people who previously knew the promises already have high assessments of the city government's competence, benevolence, and honesty; thus, they may have already incorporated this information into their trust perceptions (see Figures 4 and A7). Compared to those who knew 'Compromisos', we expect that people who did not know the policy at all and those who had heard about it but were not very familiar with it respond to the informational treatment to a greater extent.

Figure 5 shows the heterogeneous effects of previous knowledge of the governmental promises. As before, we observe that the second treatment arm had a slightly higher impact on trust than T1 and T3, although the difference is not statistically significant. However, this result is heterogeneous depending on the initial information set. Table A4 in the SM provides the regression findings of a simplified version interacting previous knowledge with ever been treated, regardless of the information received, which shows that the treatment closes the average gap in trust between the groups somewhat familiar and familiar with the pledges. Figure A9 additionally shows that the distribution of the intermediate group is the only one that significantly shifts

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[20]The two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for equality of distributions reject the null hypothesis of no difference between distributions. Instead, it indicates that perceptions of the quality of the government are shifted left for people unfamiliar with the pledges compared both to those familiar with them and to those who have heard something about them. Similarly, there is a difference between the distribution for those who had heard about the policy and those familiar with it.

to the right, though not enough to match the distribution of those already familiar with the initiative.

The fact that people who previously knew about the 'Compromisos' policy do not significantly respond to the information provided through the vignettes confirms our framework's prediction that those familiar with the pledges would be unaffected by the treatment. Surprisingly, participants who were exposed to information about the transparency policy for the first time were much less receptive to the vignettes than those who had already heard something about the policy. While in Table A4 we do not reject the null hypothesis that all treatments close the gap in the initial perception of trust between those familiar with the pledges and those vaguely familiar with them, on the contrary we reject the null hypothesis that the treatment closes that gap in trust perceptions for individuals who are first exposed to the pledges through the survey. [21]

Joint Interaction with Familiarity and Perceived Government Quality

We now look at the treatment effects conditional on familiarity with the transparency initiative and perceived government quality.

When one looks at the treatment effects of the experiment on trust, conditional on the priors of perceived quality of government, the only distribution that shifts to the right is that of the intermediate group that had only heard of the policy. This confirms that this is the only group receptive to the treatment, and that the key variable is type of prior knowledge, rather than priors on quality of government, that at most are important for individuals at the polar extremes.

Table A5 presents a triple interaction identification strategy of treatment, previous knowledge and initial perceptions of quality of government. Table 5 summarizes the conditional treatment effects implied by Table A5. Ceiling effects are apparent (the effects on individuals with high perceived government quality are the smallest in absolute value). The biggest effects again show up in the people only somewhat familiar with the transparency initiative, though in this group it seems that the effects not only in those with intermediate perceptions of government quality, but also low government quality, have significantly positive effects. The effects on

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[21]Figure A9 in the SM shows how initial levels of confidence are distributed differently according to the previous knowledge of the policy, and that the treatments only have a relevant effect for the group that is vaguely knowledgeable about the policy, being irrelevant for the extremes .

the group unfamiliar with the initiative seem to be smaller (though have to check significance). Interestingly, the group familiar with the initiative seems to have a large negative effect when initial perceptions are low (are they irritated by what they already know and dismissed?), but a positive effects when they are intermediate.

5 Performance and post-electoral promises as signals

We set up a work-horse model to analyze how the information provided by government performance and transparency initiatives can affect trust in government. Government performance is the most basic signal. The transparency initiative provides additional information on performance and plans, post-electoral promises made by the mayor and referred to as "commitments" by the city government. According to the model below, only new information provided by the transparency initiative can affect beliefs.[22]

To capture why governments may be interested in showing that they are trustworthy, we use a two-period model in which a good reputation increases the chances of reelection. The literature on rational retrospective voting that starts with Rogoff and Sibert (1988) already shows that information on government performance matters.[23] Why may transparency initiatives matter too? Our explanation is that they may act as an additional signal about the government type.

In this study, political trust is a multidimensional concept composed of government benevolence, honesty, and competence. These traits go together naturally in our setting: a benevolent government does not divert resources to its own pockets, so it has nothing to hide, and hence can be open and honest about what it does; furthermore, it can provide more public goods with a given budget, so citizens will perceive it as more competent. Respondents in the control group, who are unfamiliar with the post-election promises, already have a strong association between the direct measure of trustworthiness and its three components, benevolence, honesty, and competence.[24] We formalize this in a signaling model where governments differ in benevolence, and the provision of public goods works as a signal of government type. If a better reputation improves reelection chances, non-benevolent incumbents are tempted to send the

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[22]In the experiment, we control for the previous knowledge of the survey participants, since we only expect the treatment to affect those who did not already know the commitments.

[23]Ashworth (2012) summarizes theoretical and empirical literature to support this fact.

[24]In terms of the influence of government performance on beliefs, our sample's responses are driven by a single factor, according to parallel and factor analyses. However, we present the results for each dimension to understand the dynamics behind it.

same signal as benevolent governments in the first period.

We include a second signal to incorporate the impact of the transparency reform and post-electoral promises on respondents in the treatment group, who trust the government more, and see it as more benevolent, honest, and competent.[25] We model post-electoral promises as a costly signal linked to these traits: post-electoral promises increase transparency, revealing information about government goals and performance, but they require cover-up costs for dishonest government types.[26]

5.1 Voters and Government

We divide public goods into more and less visible classes. While visible public goods are immediately observed by the voter, non-visible public goods are observed later. Visible public goods g_v go from varieties 0 to v, while non-visible public goods g_{nv} go from v to 1. The utility is the same for each variety, so governments will want to provide the same quantity within each group:

$$u(g_{vt}, g_{nvt}) = vu(g_{vt}) + (1 - v)u(g_{nvt}).$$

The per-period utility u is concave in the consumption of public goods. We further assume that utility is logarithmic in consumption, $u(.) = \ln(.)$, leading to an explicit analytical solution.

Each individual voter i is subject to a political shock σ_i that has an idiosyncratic component identically and independently distributed over time. It represents the relative preferences for the opposition party in relation to the incumbent party.

$$u_{it} = u(g_{vt}, g_{nvt}) + \sigma_{it}.$$

We take this shock to reflect differences in the utility of visible public goods due to differences in the perceptions of their provision. In the model, differences in the provision of public goods turn out to reflect differences in benevolence, so these shocks will affect how trustworthy the government is seen to be. We know from the data that perceptions of trustworthiness and its components in the control group are heterogeneous; this additive shock is a way to capture the

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[25]Effects vary systematically according to prior knowledge of government promises, something we turn to below.

[26]Since post-electoral promises involve an administrative reform that can improve the monitoring of the public administration, this might enhance the provision of public goods. We abstract from this issue in what follows.

different priors in the population, which may be related to motivated reasoning. We assume the shock is uniformly distributed around zero, thus the median voter $i = m$ is not affected by the idiosyncratic shock.[27] A voter's expected utility is given by the discounted sum $\mathbb{E}_t[U_{it}] = \mathbb{E}_t[\sum_{t=1}^{2} \delta^{t-1} u_{it}]$.

Incumbents have the same preferences as voters, as in the citizen-candidate models (Besley and Coate, 1997). They differ in benevolence, which is captured by whether the per-period utility u of the incumbent is only determined by what is best for voters, or it also depends on an additional term r of personal rents:

$$u_{jt} = u(g_{vt}, g_{nvt}) + \alpha_j r_t,$$

where a benevolent government, $j = b$, has $\alpha_b = 0$, while a non-benevolent government, $j = nb$, has $\alpha_{nb} = \alpha > \underline{\alpha}$, where $\underline{\alpha} > 0$ is the threshold level beyond which personal rents are positive, as shown below. The expected utility of the incumbent is given by $\mathbb{E}_t[U_{jt}] = \mathbb{E}_t[\sum_{t=1}^{2} \delta^{t-1} u_{jt}]$.

Public expenditure determines the provision of public goods:

$$g_{st} = \gamma_{st} \quad \text{for} \quad s = v, nv.$$

The transparency initiative can provide information on government plans and performance regarding all varieties ω in the interval $[0, 1]$. We adopt a simple specification by which revealing information is not costly until variety $\nu + \lambda$, where $\lambda > 0$ when it is possible to inform about some non-visible goods, else $\lambda = 0$. Beyond variety $\nu + \lambda$, we assume on the contrary that the transparency initiative imposes a prohibitively high information cost that leads the incumbent to prefer as signal a greater provision of visible public goods. Our motivation is that some things are easier to communicate than others, e.g., certain maintenance costs are hard to report, certain expenses may be hard to explain (for instance, the city government has been criticized for stockpiling vaccines that later expired). With this assumption, transparency initiatives are limited to the interval $\omega \in [0, \nu + \lambda]$.

Nothing forces an incumbent to reveal true information, but lying introduces cover-up costs. We assume that if incumbents act honestly, $l = h$, the transparency reform imposes no costs. On

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[27]This makes voting deterministic, because candidates have complete information about the median voter that is decisive in choosing between the incumbent and the challenger. If there were also a common component in the political shock, it would make voting probabilistic.

the other hand, if they act dishonestly, $l = nh$, while a proportion q_{low} face no costs, a proportion $q_{high} = 1 - q_{low}$ face a cover-up cost of $K + \kappa(\omega - \nu)$, i.e., a fixed cost of $K_{nh,high} = K$ plus a variable cost of $\kappa_{nh,high} = \kappa > 0$ per unit times the proportion $\omega - \nu$ of non-visible public goods on which the transparency initiative provides additional information, because a more transparent public administration system makes it harder to hide the diversion of resources for personal rents.

By the per-period budget constraint, in per-capita terms, government expenditures γ_s, for $s = v, nv$, plus rents r appropriated by the incumbent, net of fixed and variable cover-up costs, equal tax revenues τ:

$$\nu\gamma_{vt} + (1 - \nu)\gamma_{nvt} + r_t - (K_l + \kappa_l(\omega - \nu)) = \tau \qquad \text{for} \qquad l = h; nh, low; nh, high.$$

5.2 Visible public goods

The basic signal to voters is the provision of visible public goods. This setup characterizes the control group that has not been exposed to the post-electoral promises.

Incumbents differ in the degree of benevolence. The priors are that there is a proportion β of benevolent incumbents and a proportion $1 - \beta$ of non-benevolent ones. Benevolence turns out to be closely tied to perceptions of honesty and competence. While benevolent governments share the objectives of voters, so that they can be honest, non-benevolent incumbents cannot be honest once they deviate resources from the public treasure to their own pockets. Though incumbents do not differ in intrinsic competence, voters will perceive benevolent governments as more competent because they provide more public goods for a given level of tax revenues.

In the second period there are no reputational concerns, so each type picks its preferred level of public goods provision. Benevolent types pick $\left(\gamma_{vt+1}^b, \gamma_{nvt+1}^b\right) = (\tau, \tau)$, since they do not appropriate any personal rents. With log utility, non-benevolent types pick instead $\left(\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb}\right) = \left(\frac{1}{\alpha}, \frac{1}{\alpha}\right)$, given that α is the constant marginal utility of private rents for non-benevolent incumbents, and, for $s = v, nv$, the level of public goods that provides that marginal utility is $\frac{1}{\alpha} = u_{g_{st+1}}^{-1}(\alpha)$.[28]

In the first period, voters will want to reelect a benevolent incumbent and replace a non-

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[28] Above the threshold $\underline{\alpha}$, the higher α is, the lower the provision of public goods. With log utility, the threshold is determined by $\underline{\alpha} = \frac{1}{\tau}$; at or below that threshold, rents are null.

benevolent one. This introduces reputational concerns in the model, since a good reputation is important to get reelected. In this setup, announcements are cheap talk. Though a benevolent government, which shares the objectives of voters, has no problem in announcing what it actually plans to do, because it has nothing to hide, a non-benevolent government must be willing to lie if it deviates resources from the public treasure to its own pockets. Hence, only the provision of visible public goods counts. The equilibrium can be either pooling or separating.

In a pooling equilibrium, the non-benevolent type mimics the provision of visible public goods by the benevolent type, and rents are extracted from the under-provision of non-visible public goods, as discussed in the Appendix. The median voter will be indifferent between the incumbent and the challenger in a pooling equilibrium. Expected utility in the second period is the same with either candidate: there will be a proportion β of benevolent incumbents and a proportion $1 - \beta$ of non-benevolent ones. Hence, the probability of reelection $P(\gamma_{vt}^b) \in [0, 1]$.

If $P(\gamma_{vt}^b) = \frac{1}{2}$ when the median voter is indifferent, besides the equilibrium where the pooling signal is $\gamma_{vt} = \tau$, there can also be an equilibrium with a separating signal $\gamma_{vt} > \tau$ in which the benevolent incumbent provides an extraordinary amount of visible public goods. However, a separating equilibrium may not exist if future reputation is sufficiently important. Furthermore, even if a separating equilibrium exists, the drawback for benevolent governments is that a separating signal has a welfare cost, because it strongly distorts the optimal provision of public goods. An alternative way for benevolent governments to signal their type is by using a transparency initiative with post-electoral promises.

5.3 Post-electoral promises

Rather than increasing the provision of visible public goods, what happens if the government can launch a transparency initiative to reveal part of its plans and performance? Unlike public good provision that has to do with the direct experience of citizens, the provision of verbal information is a very different kind of signal. Citizens indeed react very heterogeneously towards it: as the control group shows, some respondents knew of the government promises, others had heard of it, and some knew nothing at all.

After the government decides its budget, but before the voters observe government performance, the government can announce an administrative reform that increases transparency by publicly announcing specific goals and promising to report about their fulfillment. This

characterizes the scenario faced by individuals assigned to the treatment group in our experimental design. These post-electoral promises can be formalized as a signal that has differential costs for benevolent and non-benevolent governments. Post-electoral promises allow honesty to have a bite, insofar as this signal is costlier if a government must cover up what it is actually doing. Honest governments face no costs in this regard, since they do not have to cover up anything. Hence, they will not have problems launching a transparency initiative. Non-benevolent governments do face a cost of being dishonest, so these announcements are not cheap talk: cover-up costs negatively affect their rents. This reform thus works as a potential signal of trustworthiness.

In the second period, there are no reputational concerns, so each type picks its preferred level of public goods provision. As before, benevolent types pick $\left(\gamma_{vt+1}^{b}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{b}\right) = (\tau, \tau)$, since they do not appropriate any personal rents, while non-benevolent types pick $\left(\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb}\right) = \left(\frac{1}{\alpha}, \frac{1}{\alpha}\right)$.

A benevolent type assigns the full budget in the first period to the provision of public goods, $\left(\gamma_{vt+1}^{b}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{b}\right) = (\tau, \tau)$. A benevolent incumbent will always be willing to launch the reform, because the reform has no current costs but future benefits, raising its reputation of trustworthiness (in the model, it brings a higher probability of reelection).

While benevolent types will always want to implement the reform, the Appendix shows that the choice of non-benevolent types depends on their cover-up costs if they act dishonestly. There will be a semi-separating equilibrium if non-benevolent incumbents that face cover-up costs ($B^{nb,high} < 0$) do not want to implement the reform. This semi-separating equilibrium will be characterized by either a transparency reform and a high provision of visible public goods γ_{vt}^{b}, or no transparency reform and a low provision of visible public goods γ_{vt}^{nb}.

5.4   Relating the signaling model to the experimental data

The evidence above shows that the posteriors regarding trust and its components improve with the treatment, so the transparency initiative is not a pooling signal, but it is not a separating signal either.[29] The partial updating of beliefs observed in the data points instead to a semi-separating equilibrium that falls in between both these cases. This reasoning extends to our setup with heterogeneous priors, where the effects depend on the initial priors of each re-

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[29]If the equilibrium were pooling, the treatment group would have the same posteriors as the control group. If the equilibrium were instead separating, then the treatment group would have completely updated its beliefs.

spondent: except for respondents with priors that either show no trust or complete trust in the government, there will be a partial updating of beliefs. [30]

Bayes' law gives the following posterior for the trustworthiness of the incumbent, i.e., the belief that the incumbent is benevolent when a reform is carried out:

$$\mu(b|\Pi) = \frac{p_b}{p_b + (1 - q_{high})(1 - p_b)} > p_b, \quad \text{if } q_{high} > 0.$$

According to this equation, the impact of the treatment on beliefs will depend on the priors and the parameter q_{high}, which gives the probability that a non-benevolent government has high cover-up costs and will not launch the administrative reform. The experiment shows that the effects of the transparency initiative depend on initial priors, which may be affected by ideological inclinations, among other things. The Generalized Ordered Logit model results indicate that political trust gains are mainly obtained through belief updating of individuals who have intermediate priors.

We calibrate the model to the data in the survey to see how well it can replicate this pattern in the sample (Table 6). Using the assumption that the responses are uniformly distributed within each category, we find that the model can indeed explain part of the pattern in the whole sample. When q_{high} equals 0.14, the model correctly predicts that categories 5 to 7 increase, and categories 1 to 4 decrease, with one exception: the miss is that it predicts that category 2 will increase, when in fact it decreases. The model implies that the impact of the signal is greatest for the intermediate categories, especially categories 3 and 4: the percentage that shifts to the next category, for $q_{high} = 0.14$, is $0.122, 0.208, 0.255, 0.261, 0.221, 0.136, 0$.

However, this does not capture the informativeness of the transparency initiative. Initial priors vary systematically with the prior information individuals have about the transparency initiative. A way of relating this to the model is that each group of individuals has a different way of incorporating the verbal information provided by the initiative: $q_{high}^{familiar} > q_{high}^{sfamiliar} > q_{high}^{unfamiliar}$. Once we distinguish the degree of prior knowledge among the respondents, there is a high degree of heterogeneity: the parameter $q_{high} = 0.20$ for the group "Somewhat Familiar", which doubles the value of $q_{high} = 0.10$ for "Familiar" and of $q_{high} = 0.11$ for "Unfamiliar".

This calibration is a lower bound for the effects of the transparency initiative, because

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[30]This resembles the interpretation in Alessandro et al. (2021), but that paper has no formal signaling model.

individuals who already know the promises (which we call "Familiar") should not be affected by the experimental treatment, but they certainly have been affected by the transparency initiative through their own prior experience. The group "Somewhat Familiar". where the treatment effect is concentrated, might also have been partially affected by the transparency initiative before the experimental treatment because they were vaguely familiar and thought they had hear of it. The group "Unfamiliar", where surprisingly for us there is no significant treatment effect, has the lowest trust levels. Though it may differ from the other two groups for a variety of reasons, it can be taken as a reference point to calculate an upper bound on the effect of the transparency initiative. The group of individuals that is the most politically informed (but does not react in the treatment group, because this is not new information for them) has the highest trust levels. The intermediate group that has heard something about the initiative has an intermediate level of trust in the control group, and in the treatment group it basically closes the gap with the mean trust level of the politically informed. Finally, the group that has never heard of the initiative has no significant reaction to the treatment, so it can be interpreted as the most distrustful of verbal information. This might indicate that this last group reacts overwhelmingly to observed performance, not to transparency initiatives that they basically ignore. If we calibrate the effect of the transparency initiative against the control group of "Unfamiliar", we thus obtain a view of the total effects of the initiative, experimental and non-experimental; though this is very speculative, it can provide an upper bound of its effect (Table 7).

There is a part of the population that does not seem to react to this information. In the group unfamiliar with the initiative, both median belief on of Trustworthiness of the city government in both the control and the treatment subgroups is 4. In the other two groups, somewhat or very familiar with the post-electoral promises, the median is 5 in both the control and treatment subgroups. Since these last two groups comprise two-thirds of the sample, this suggests that the transparency initiative may have potentially been able to move with the post-electoral promises the median's evaluation in the whole sample from 4 to 5, i.e., to above average.

In summary, the transparency reform with post-electoral promises expands the range of visibility of public good provision, and can be a more efficient signal than the over-provision of visible public goods. However, this signal does not seem to work equally well with all kinds of respondents. While only the most politically informed fully incorporated it to their information

set, it seems to have been somewhat effective with the people active on social media, so in this sense it is quite a potent signal.[31]

6 Discussion

Trust is a multidimensional state in which individuals rely on the integrity, ability, and surety of a person or institution. Providing information about the mayor's commitments at the beginning of his mandate and their fulfillment have been shown to induce important changes in citizens' perceived trustworthiness of the city government as an institution. However, trust is also grounded in the belief that state members can deliver what they promise and commit to it. Citizens rely upon government officials to carry out the investments they promised while in the campaign. Hence, individuals expect public servants and politicians to care about the population and act accordingly.

Following Keefer et al. (2018) and Keefer et al. (2020), we consider two important trust components: whether others can keep their promises and whether they care about people like the respondent to assess how much do people trust those who develop public policy and commit to achieving the city's goals when shown with relevant information about their management. Citizens can update their beliefs about government members' trustworthiness and benevolence when presented with relevant information on what they have done for the city.

We do not find that information on commitments marginally affects politicians' and public servants' perceived trustworthiness. However, we observe that people are 5 pp more likely to express that public servants care about people like the respondent when they receive general information, regardless of whether it is supplemented by accomplishments at the city or commune level (see Table 8). The management model developed in recent years in CABA is based on transparency, both internal and external. Although this study focuses mainly on how information affects citizens' trust in government (external transparency), this result shows us that internal management perceptions are also changing. In particular, we observe that individuals consider public servants to be more empathetic with society.

We have identified that respondents to the experiment make a sharp distinction between

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[31]Under some parameter values (especially when future reputation is not that important), it can go hand in hand with a higher provision of visible public goods, if that is necessary to assure a semi-separating equilibrium. The combination of both signals is a straightforward exercise.

"politicians in general" and the "city government." This is reflected in the high initial perception of *government* quality, and the low perception of the politicians ability to keep their promises in the control group (21.5%). Treatments have less impact on the more personalized evaluation of politicians and public employees than on institutional evaluation of the city government. The non-significance of the effect on politicians may be explained in part by relatively low statistical power.[32,33]

7 Conclusions

Since trust and initiatives to promote transparency are endogenous variables, it is difficult to disentangle their causal relationships. To study this, we developed a theoretical model and conducted an empirical experiment in Buenos Aires City to evaluate how a transparency initiative influenced and was affected by trust in the government and its agents (politicians and public servants). The transparency initiative entailed not only revealing the achievements of the local administration but also the plans that had been initially made. These promises are what the city government calls "commitments".

Our framework suggests that the effect of transparency initiatives is critically dependent on priors, i.e., baseline trust levels. People at the extremes of no trust and complete trust will not be affected by the initiatives; only those in the middle will be impacted. Furthermore, the framework predicts that the treatment will mainly affect those unfamiliar with the transparency policy.

The experimental results corroborate both predictions, showing that the impact of the policy is greatest for intermediate levels of trust, and that there is no effect whatsoever on people who are already familiar with the project (our interpretation is that they are not receiving new

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[32]Following McKenzie and Ozier (2019) recommendations, we conduct ex-post Minimal Detectable Effect (MDE) calculations. As we use the estimated standard error to calculate ex-post MDE, it may present some variation from sample to sample. However, this imprecision is lower than the one obtained with ex-post power. Power is set to 80%, the significance level to 5%, and we correct for baseline correlation given that randomization conducted over blocks of age and gender. We conduct pairwise power calculations considering the binary nature of dependent variables, as in Hemming and Marsh (2013), and do not compare two different informational treatments in any case. MDEs are significantly higher than the coefficients we observe in our regressions, which suggest that a greater sample size would have avoided both type I and II errors. An effect lower than 8 pp would not be detected on average.

[33]Our experimental design has three treatment arms, therefore, we also calculate Cohen's δ, which defines the effect size for a one-way analysis of variance, as the square root of the contrast variance to the error or within-group variance. According to Cohen's rule of thumb, we find a small treatment effect. Cohen (2013) indicates that an effect size of 0.2 is small, 0.5, medium, and 0.8 large. This means that if two groups' means do not differ by 0.2 standard deviations or more, the difference is trivial, even if it is statistically significant.

information).

However, the experimental results go beyond our framework's predictions. When we control for prior knowledge, the data show a stark difference between people who did not know at all about the commitments and those who had heard something about them, so they seemed vaguely familiar. All the effect of the treatment is through this group that had heard of the treatment. While the "Somewhat familiar" group had higher initial trust levels than the "Unfamiliar" group, this is not enough to explain the difference, because even individuals with higher initial trust do not react to the treatment. This might have to do with different learning styles: some people only trust what they observe directly, not what others say. The experiment thus suggests that post-electoral promises may be useful as a complementary tool to solid performance and efficient administrative management. Transparency reforms on their own may be less effective in changing citizens' perceptions than performance, as there is a group of people, those unaware of the pledges, that is not affected by words, only by deeds.

8 Appendix

8.1 Pooling Equilibrium

The text first considers what happens if visible public goods are the only available signal. Let the pooling signal be $\gamma_{vt} = \tau$, the optimal signal for the benevolent type. Then $\left(\gamma_{vt}^b, \gamma_{nvt}^b\right) = (\tau, \tau)$, $\left(\gamma_{vt}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}\right) = \left(\tau, \frac{1}{\alpha}\right)$. Plugging the optimal $t+1$ solutions derived above in the utility function $U(.)$, in a pooling equilibrium the expected indirect utility of the non-benevolent type has to be larger if it mimics the benevolent type:

$$\mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb}(\gamma_{vt}^b, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb})\right] > \mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb}(\gamma_{vt}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb})\right]. \tag{2}$$

If the non-benevolent type mimics the benevolent type in the first period, it will have a positive probability of reelection $P(\gamma_{vt}^b)$:

$$\mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb}(\gamma_{vt}^b, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb})\right] = u(\gamma_{vt}^b, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}) + \alpha(\tau - \upsilon\gamma_{vt}^b - (1-\upsilon)\gamma_{nvt}^{nb})$$
$$+ \delta P(\gamma_{vt}^b)\left[u(\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb}) + \alpha(\tau - \upsilon\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb} - (1-\upsilon)\gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb})\right]$$
$$+ \delta(1 - P(\gamma_{vt}^b))\left[\beta u(\gamma_{vt+1}^b, \gamma_{nvt+1}^b) + (1-\beta)u(\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb})\right].$$

If it instead separates out, $P(\gamma_{vt}^b) = 0$:

$$\mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb}(\gamma_{vt}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb})\right] = u(\gamma_{vt}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}) + \alpha(\tau - \upsilon\gamma_{vt}^{nb} - (1-\upsilon)\gamma_{nvt}^{nb})$$
$$+ \delta\left[\beta u(\gamma_{vt+1}^b, \gamma_{nvt+1}^b) + (1-\beta)u(\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb})\right].$$

Rearranging terms, a non-benevolent incumbent resigns some utility from rents today (net of utility gain from more visible public good provision now) if this opens the door to even more utility from rents in the future (net of utility loss from lower future provision of both types of public goods):

8.2 Semi-separating equilibrium

We here consider what happens when the benevolent type can launch a transparency reform, to supplement the information provided by visible public goods. If a non-benevolent type nb mimics the provision of visible public goods undertaken by a benevolent type, the benefits of a reform for types who act dishonestly and have type $l = nh, low$ are not affected, but types $l = nh, high$ are negatively affected by the cover-up costs of the rents extracted from the under provision of public goods in the first period:

$$B^{nb,high} = -K - \kappa(\omega - \nu)$$

The reform can work as a semi-separating signal if it is only adopted by benevolent types and by non-benevolent types that face no cover-up costs. Using the indirect utility function $V(.)$, the expected utility for the non-benevolent type that faces cover-up costs by mimicking the visible expenditure of benevolent types and adopting the reform, Π has to be smaller than if it does not, $\sim \Pi$,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb,high}\left(\gamma_{vt}^{b}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}, \Pi\right)\right] \leq \mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb,high}\left(\gamma_{vt}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}, \sim \Pi\right)\right] \tag{3}$$

Combining the results from the signal γ_{vt}^{b} with the additional term that captures the impact of the reform, these conditions imply that

$$\mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb,high}\left(\gamma_{vt}^{b}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}, \Pi\right)\right] - \mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb,high}\left(\gamma_{vt}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}, \sim \Pi\right)\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb}\left(\gamma_{vt}^{b}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}\right)\right] - \mathbb{E}\left[V^{nb}\left(\gamma_{vt}^{nb}, \gamma_{nvt}^{nb}\right)\right]$$
$$+ B^{nb,high} \leq 0$$

$$\alpha \upsilon(\gamma_{vt}^{b} - \gamma_{vt}^{nb}) - \upsilon\left[u(\gamma_{vt}^{b}) - u(\gamma_{vt}^{nb})\right] < \delta P(\gamma_{vt}^{b})\alpha\left(\tau - \upsilon\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb} - (1-\upsilon)\gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb}\right)$$
$$- \delta P(\gamma_{vt}^{b})\beta\left[u(\gamma_{vt+1}^{b}, \gamma_{nvt+1}^{b}) - u(\gamma_{vt+1}^{nb}, \cdot\gamma_{nvt+1}^{nb})\right]$$

9 Tables and Graphs

Table 1: Summary statistics and randomization balance

Variable	Control (av. & s.d.) (1)	Diff wrt. Control			p-value Wald test equality coefficients				Sample Size (9)
		T1 (2)	T2 (3)	T3 (4)	T1=T2=T3 (5)	T1=T2 (6)	T1=T3 (7)	T2=T3 (8)	
Gender	0.570 (0.021)	0.042 (0.036)	-0.011 (0.024)	0.005 (0.033)	0.197	0.084	0.168	0.538	2,375
Age	47.656 (1.399)	-1.829 (1.165)	-2.155** (0.956)	-2.146* (1.099)	0.942	0.740	0.780	0.992	2,375
College	0.404 (0.042)	0.007 (0.032)	0.015 (0.037)	-0.011 (0.034)	0.615	0.747	0.426	0.366	2,375
High school	0.846 (0.016)	-0.022* (0.011)	0.025 (0.021)	-0.001 (0.017)	0.047	0.041	0.250	0.395	2,375
Employed	0.522 (0.021)	0.039 (0.030)	0.017 (0.026)	0.009 (0.031)	0.630	0.449	0.366	0.765	2,375
Unemployed	0.152 (0.018)	-0.018 (0.022)	0.010 (0.024)	-0.008 (0.028)	0.307	0.133	0.557	0.413	2,375
Socio-economic level (high)	0.244 (0.025)	-0.025 (0.020)	-0.040** (0.017)	-0.038 (0.027)	0.656	0.463	0.557	0.938	2,375
Voluntary Health Insurance	0.430 (0.026)	-0.007 (0.028)	-0.013 (0.021)	0.011 (0.015)	0.768	0.843	0.584	0.483	2,375
Internet at home	0.526 (0.023)	0.000 (0.025)	0.000 (0.022)	-0.013 (0.021)	0.908	0.986	0.666	0.734	2,375
Credit Card	0.347 (0.027)	0.016 (0.019)	-0.010 (0.025)	0.006 (0.017)	0.697	0.411	0.687	0.520	2,375
One or more cars	0.175 (0.018)	0.005 (0.021)	-0.015 (0.018)	0.001 (0.025)	0.625	0.354	0.877	0.483	2,375
Perc. Quality of Governm.	7.200 (0.103)	-0.142 (0.154)	-0.055 (0.098)	0.197 (0.126)	0.088	0.616	0.068	0.064	2,331
Knowledge of 'Compromisos'	0.219 (0.016)	-0.001 (0.015)	0.047 (0.030)	0.005 (0.020)	0.289	0.123	0.728	0.205	2,375
Trust Others	0.662 (0.021)	0.003 (0.028)	-0.026 (0.027)	-0.022 (0.020)	0.589	0.333	0.396	0.867	2,265
Collective Action	0.671 (0.020)	0.010 (0.030)	-0.009 (0.029)	0.012 (0.032)	0.603	0.444	0.936	0.344	2,261

Notes: Column (1) shows the sample average and the standard deviation in parentheses for the control group. Columns (2)-(4) show the regression coefficient and the standard error in parentheses corresponding to an OLS regression - observable is the dependent variable and the treatment variables are the independent ones (T1-T3). Columns (5)-(8) show the p-value of a Wald test of equality of coefficients. Finally, column (9) shows the sample size. *Gender* is a indicator variable for women. *Age* is a continuous variable from 18 to 100 years old. *College* takes the value of one when the individual has a college degree at least, and *High school* is read similarly. *Employed* and *Unemployed* are binary variables for those who have full-time employment (or work from/at home) and those who are looking for a job at the time of the survey, respectively. *Socio-economic level (High)* is a binary variable for those with the highest category in socio-economic level. *Perceived Quality of the Government* is self-explanatory and takes values between 1 and 10, in which the lowest value reflects a very bad score while the greatest an excellent score. *Knowledge* is a binary variable and takes the value one if the participant knows the 'Compromisos' policy and zero otherwise. *Trust Others* is a binary variable that takes the value of one when participants indicate that others are reliable or very reliable. *Collective Action* is a dummy variable that indicates whether participants indicate that they would be able to collect 500 signatures to support a petition for the government among their neighbors. Robust standard errors shown in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Figure 1: Components of the index - PCA
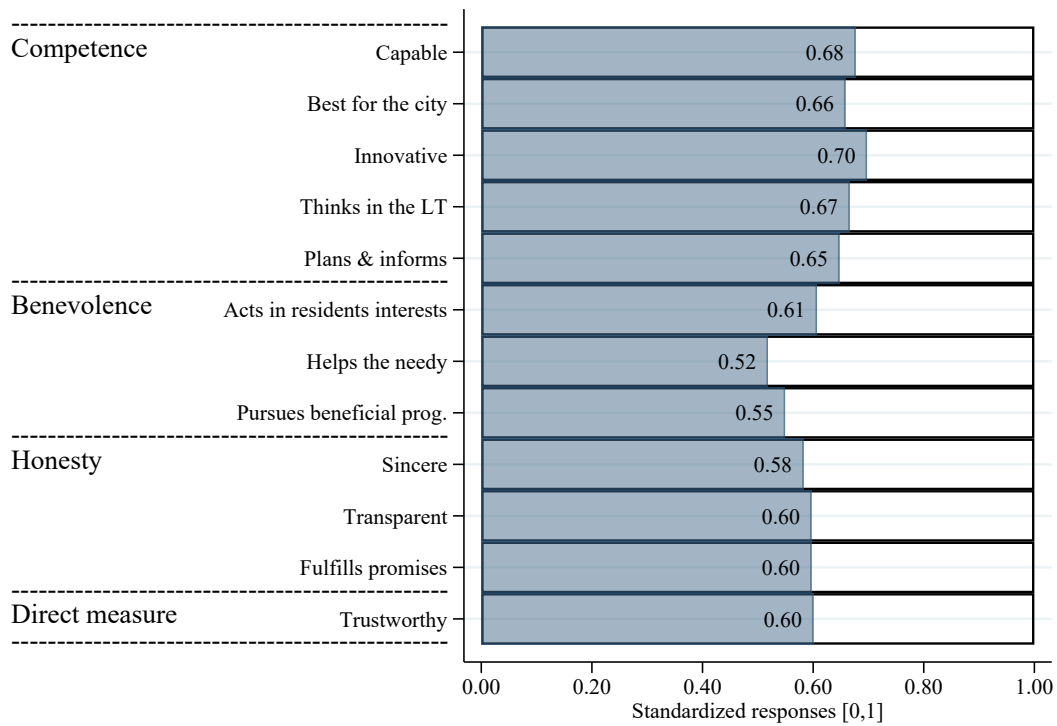
Notes: The figure presents categorical variables that assess citizens' perception of the Government, standardized between zero and one. They account for each of the characteristics asked in the question: *Using a scale from 1 to 7, where one is "Completely disagree," and seven is "Completely agree," please show your level of agreement with the following statements about the Government of the city of Buenos Aires.* The interpretation of each bar goes as follows, e.g.: *68%* of the surveyed individuals consider that the CABA Government *is capable.*

Figure 2: Information and trust perception - PCA
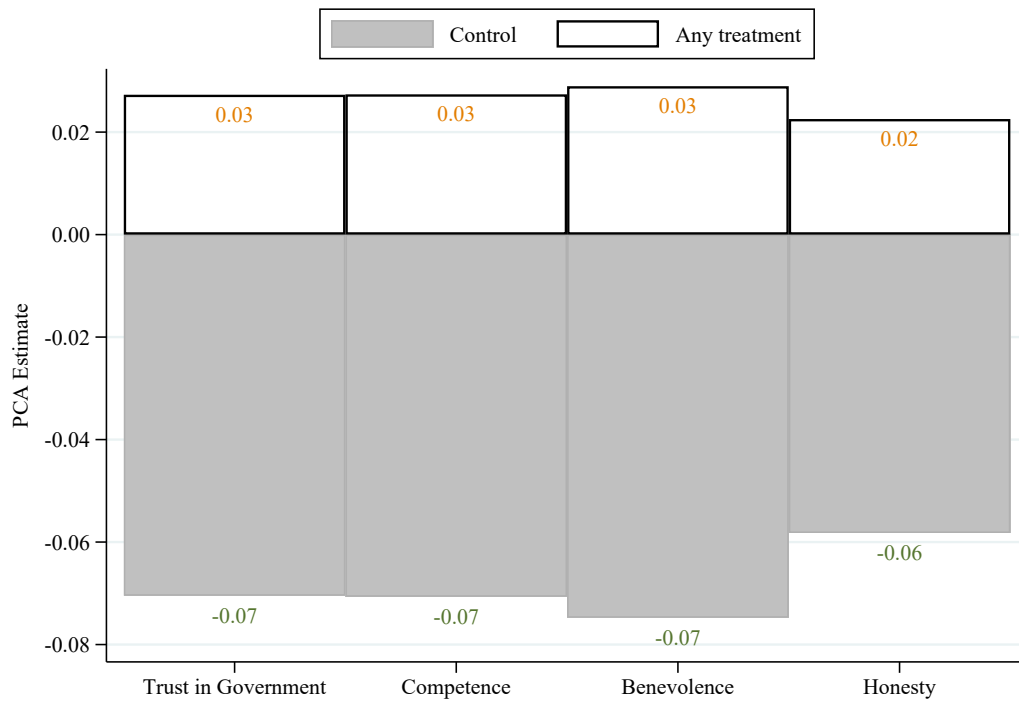
Notes: Dependent variables depicted in this figure are constructed using a PCA method, and standardized with mean zero and standard deviation one. They account for indices following Grimmelikhuijsen (2012). Bars are constructed both for the control and treated groups. For illustration purposes, we present the average result for all treatment arms as one. Values in orange correspond to the average of each index for the treated units, and green for their counterpart, the control group

Table 2: Treatment Effect on Trust in Government (by dimension)

VARIABLES	Trust in the Government Global Index			Dimensions of Trust Competence	Benevolence	Honesty	Direct measure Trustworthiness
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
T1: Commitments	0.051	0.095***	0.095***	0.083**	0.097**	0.099***	0.127***
	(0.053)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.028)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	0.116**	0.125***	0.124***	0.125***	0.119**	0.113***	0.114***
	(0.046)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.042)	(0.032)	(0.033)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	0.129**	0.104***	0.104***	0.107***	0.119***	0.073**	0.081*
	(0.056)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.034)	(0.039)
Constant	-0.070*	-2.233***	-2.206***	-2.187***	-1.922***	-2.242***	-2.191***
	(0.038)	(0.120)	(0.113)	(0.106)	(0.134)	(0.114)	(0.146)
Observations	2,375	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278
R-squared	0.003	0.663	0.665	0.639	0.594	0.625	0.606
Joint significance (p-value)	0.483	0.668	0.679	0.524	0.849	0.573	0.566
T1=T2	0.268	0.422	0.432	0.279	0.584	0.725	0.755
T1=T3	0.309	0.844	0.841	0.638	0.635	0.514	0.330
T2=T3	0.836	0.573	0.582	0.656	0.995	0.307	0.384
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comuna FE	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: All dependent variables are constructed using a PCA method, and standardized with mean zero and standard deviation one. The Competence dimension considers the assessments of the following characteristics, the government: is capable, does what is best for the city, is innovative, thinks in the long run, and plans and informs its plans; the Benevolence dimension considers the following: acts in the interests of its residents, helps those in need and pursues policies and projects beneficial for the families. Finally, the Honesty dimension takes into account: is sincere, is transparent, fulfills its promises. We also study the effect of information on a direct measure of trust in government that asks the respondents to indicate the degree in which she agrees that the city government is trustworthy. Control variables include: age, gender, socio-economic level, labor status, public policy preferences (revealed preferences for public budget allocation between education and infrastructure), being first exposed to information on , pre-treatment beliefs on government quality and the collective action dummy variable. Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3: Treatment Effect on Trust in Government (by component)

	Competence					Benevolence			Honesty		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
T1: Commitments	0.069*	0.053*	0.031	0.120***	0.102**	0.047	0.119***	0.106**	0.104***	0.063*	0.116***
	(0.035)	(0.027)	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.024)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	0.097***	0.095**	0.052	0.142***	0.177***	0.079**	0.148***	0.106**	0.084*	0.072**	0.169***
	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.041)	(0.030)	(0.030)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	0.107**	0.073*	0.053	0.134***	0.116***	0.056	0.123***	0.154***	0.063	0.033	0.113***
	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.055)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.034)	(0.031)
Constant	-2.103***	-1.929***	-2.060***	-2.057***	-1.658***	-1.838***	-1.787***	-1.738***	-2.001***	-2.133***	-2.285***
	(0.106)	(0.133)	(0.094)	(0.164)	(0.117)	(0.118)	(0.151)	(0.134)	(0.119)	(0.134)	(0.111)
Observations	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278
R-squared	0.556	0.596	0.509	0.501	0.441	0.560	0.493	0.499	0.566	0.565	0.581
Joint significance (p-value)	0.738	0.462	0.892	0.800	0.0401	0.659	0.707	0.443	0.667	0.537	0.415
T1=T2	0.543	0.228	0.641	0.549	0.0458	0.420	0.556	0.983	0.649	0.831	0.225
T1=T3	0.537	0.673	0.749	0.803	0.808	0.870	0.932	0.314	0.379	0.444	0.924
T2=T3	0.874	0.595	0.988	0.824	0.144	0.613	0.456	0.238	0.598	0.292	0.240

Notes: All regressions include controls and commune fixed effects. All dependent variables are standardized with mean 0 and standard deviation 1. Each column presents the result for perceived performance of the CABA government. The first column displays the global effect on the Index of Trust in the Government. Following Grimmelikhuijsen (2012), next five columns reflect Government Competence: (1) is capable, (2) does what is best for the city, (3) is innovative, (4) thinks in the long-term, and (5) plans and informs; following three columns show Benevolence: (6) acts in the interests of the residents, (7) helps those in need, (8) pursues policies and projects that are beneficial for families; next three, Honesty: (9) is sincere, (10) is transparent, (11) fulfills its promises. Control variables include: age, gender, socio-economic level, labor status, public policy preferences (revealed preferences for public budget allocation between education and infrastructure), first exposure to 'Compromisos' and pre-treatment beliefs on government quality. Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: Average Marginal Treatment Effect on Trust in Government - Generalized Ordered Logit

Panel A: Competence

The CABA Government...	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
Competence 1: is capable							
T1: Commitments	-0.009**	-0.004*	-0.005*	-0.007**	-0.007**	-0.003*	0.035**
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.017)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.011**	-0.005**	-0.006**	-0.008**	-0.009**	-0.004**	0.042**
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.017)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.013***	-0.006***	-0.008***	-0.010***	-0.011***	-0.005**	0.054***
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.017)
Competence 2: does what is best for the city							
T1: Commitments	-0.008*	-0.003*	-0.005*	-0.005*	-0.004*	0.000	0.025*
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.014)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.012***	-0.005**	-0.008**	-0.008***	-0.007**	0.000	0.040***
	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.015)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.010**	-0.004**	-0.006**	-0.007**	-0.006**	0.000	0.032**
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.014)
Competence 3: is innovative							
T1: Commitments	-0.007	-0.002	-0.003	-0.005	-0.004	-0.001	0.021
	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.017)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.010*	-0.003*	-0.005*	-0.007*	-0.006*	-0.001	0.033*
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.018)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.009	-0.002	-0.005	-0.006	-0.005	-0.001	0.028
	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.017)
Competence 4: thinks in the long term							
T1: Commitments	-0.018***	-0.003**	-0.009***	-0.012***	-0.010***	-0.005**	0.056***
	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.018)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.022***	-0.004***	-0.011***	-0.014***	-0.012***	-0.006***	0.068***
	(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.018)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.016	0.013	-0.041***	-0.013	-0.033**	0.027	0.063***
	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.022)
Competence 5: plans and informs its plans							
T1: Commitments	0.006	-0.013	-0.044***	-0.001	0.002	0.021	0.028
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.021)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.021***	-0.008***	-0.016***	-0.015***	-0.012***	0.003*	0.069***
	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.017)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.015***	-0.006***	-0.012***	-0.011***	-0.008**	0.002	0.049***
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.018)

Panel B: Benevolence

The CABA Government...	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
Benevolence 1: acts in the interests of neighbors							
T1: Promises	-0.004	-0.001	-0.002	-0.002	-0.001	0.001	0.009
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.013)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.010*	-0.004*	-0.005*	-0.006*	-0.003*	0.004*	0.025*
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.014)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.008	-0.003	-0.004	-0.005	-0.003	0.003	0.020
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.013)
Benevolence 2: does everything in its power to help those in need							
T1: Promises	-0.022***	-0.007***	-0.008***	-0.007***	0.000	0.010***	0.033***
	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.012)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.028***	-0.009***	-0.010***	-0.009***	0.000	0.013***	0.043***
	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.013)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.025***	-0.008***	-0.009***	-0.008***	0.000	0.012***	0.038***
	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.012)
Benevolence 3: pursues policies and projects that my family cares about							
T1: Promises	-0.022***	-0.009***	-0.006***	-0.010***	-0.002	0.009***	0.039***
	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.013)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.017**	-0.007**	-0.005**	-0.008**	-0.001	0.007**	0.031**
	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.013)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.030***	-0.013***	-0.009***	-0.014***	-0.003	0.013***	0.055***
	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.013)

Panel C: Honesty

| The CABA Government...	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
Honesty 1: is sincere							
T1: Commitments	-0.019***	-0.007***	-0.007***	-0.007***	-0.004**	0.003**	0.039***
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.014)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.013*	-0.005*	-0.005*	-0.005*	-0.003*	0.002*	0.028*
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.014)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.012*	-0.004*	-0.005*	-0.005*	-0.002*	0.002*	0.026*
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.014)
Honesty 2: is transparent							
T1: Commitments	-0.013**	-0.004**	-0.005**	-0.005**	-0.003*	0.002*	0.028**
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.014)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.015**	-0.005**	-0.006**	-0.005**	-0.003**	0.002*	0.032**
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.015)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.008	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.002	0.001	0.018
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.015)
Honesty 3: fulfills its promises							
T1: Commitments	-0.019***	-0.006***	-0.010***	-0.010***	-0.007***	0.006***	0.046***
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.013)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	-0.027***	-0.008***	-0.014***	-0.014***	-0.010***	0.009***	0.065***
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.014)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.017***	-0.005***	-0.009***	-0.009***	-0.006***	0.006***	0.042***
	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.013)
Observations	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278	2,278

Notes: Robust standard errors are shown in parenthesis. Control variables include: age, gender, socio-economic level, labor status, pre-treatment beliefs on government quality and pre-intervention preferences for public education and infrastructure. *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Figure 3: Treatment Effect on Trust in the Government by perceived quality of the government
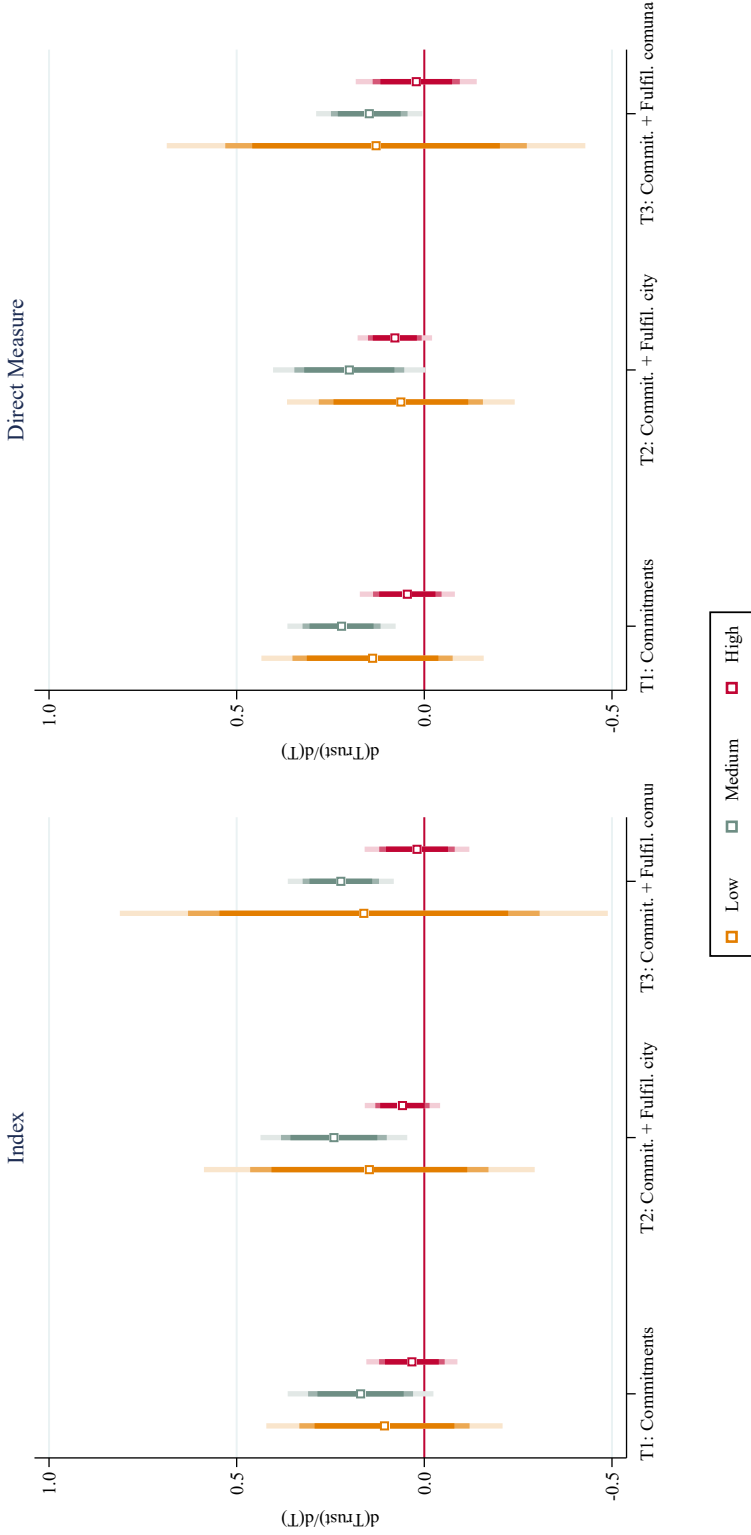
Notes: Perceived quality of the government is a categorical variable that takes values 1 to 10, with one meaning very low quality and 10 very high quality. We reclassified the participants assessments in three categories, low, med-high and high, given the sample composition. People who scored the government quality below 4 are part of the "Low" category, people who scored 4 to 7 in the "Mid" and people who scored 8 or more in the "High" category. The color intensity of confidence intervals represents the confidence level, from darker to lighter, 90%, 95%, and 99%.

Figure 4: Trust in the Government in the control group by previous knowledge of the policy
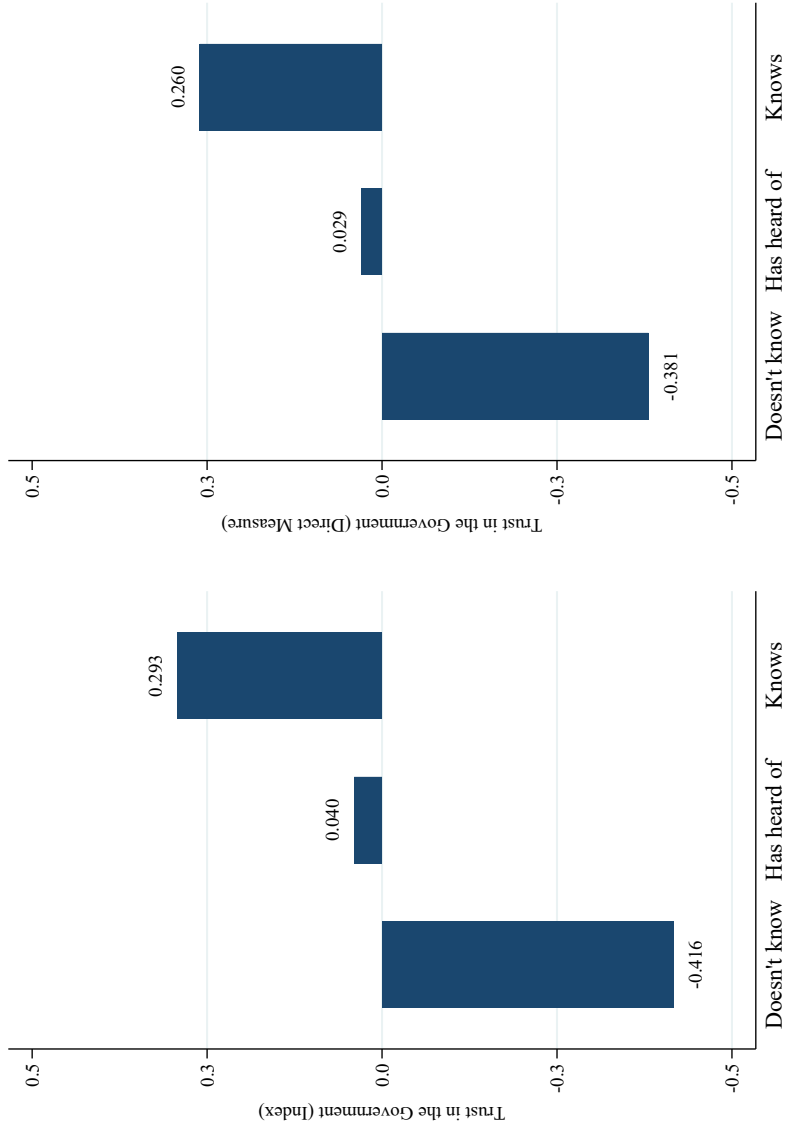
Notes: Dependent variables depicted in this figure are constructed using a PCA method, and standardized with mean zero and standard deviation one. The bars depict the level of trust in the government individuals from the control group have grouped by level of initial knowledge of the commitments policy.

Figure 5: Treatment Effect on Trust in the Government by level of knowledge of 'Compromisos'
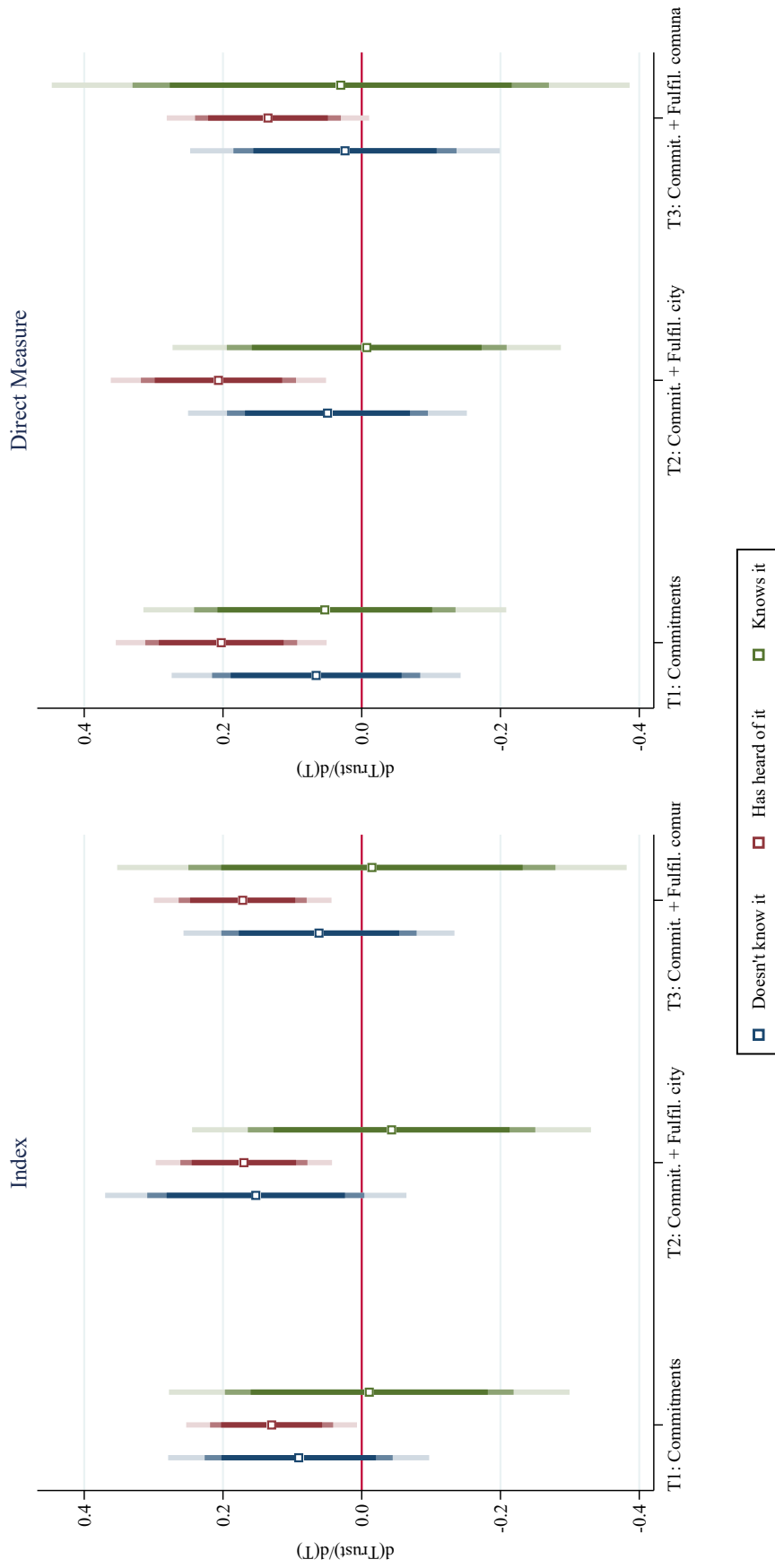
Notes: Dependent variables depicted in this figure are constructed using a PCA method, and a standardization with mean zero and standard deviation one. The estimate points correspond to the effect of each treatment in the level of knowledge indicated in the legend. For example, people who had heard of the commitments but did not know them for sure before the survey increase their trust in the government by a greater extent than people who did not know them at all or those who knew the policy, regardless of the trust measure used. The color intensity of confidence intervals represents the confidence level, from darker to lighter, 90%, 95%, and 99%.

Table 5: Treatment Effect on Trust in Government Conditional on Previous Knowledge of Transparency Initiative and Perceived Government Quality

Category Degree of Familiarity and Perceived Level of Government Quality	Trust in Government Global Index	Trustworthiness Direct Measure
Familiar, High Quality: T	-0.083	-0.030
Familiar, Medium Quality: T + T x M	0.200	0.277
Familiar, Low Quality: T + T x L	-0.226	-0.326
Somewhat Familiar, High Quality: T + T x S	0.091	0.105
Somewhat Familiar, Medium Quality: T + T x S + T x M + T x S x M	0.251	0.277
Somewhat Familiar, Low Quality: T + T x S + T x L + T x S x L	0.367	0.469
Unfamiliar, High Quality: T + T x U	0.089	0.024
Unfamiliar, Medium Quality: T + T x U + T x M + T x U x M	0.226	0.056
Unfamiliar, Low Quality: T + T x U + T x L + T x U x L	0.132	0.077

Notes: T stands for treatment with an informational vignette, F, S, and U stand for familiar, somewhat familiar and unfamiliar with the trasnparency initiative, and H, M, and L stand for high (8 to 10), medium (4 to 7) and low (1 to 3) perceived quality of government.

Table 6: Calibration of Treatment Effects on Trustworthiness

Category	All			Unfamiliar			Somewhat Familiar			Familiar		
	C	T	P	C	T	P	C	T	P	C	T	P
			$q_{high} = 0.14$			$q_{high} = 0.11$			$q_{high} = 0.20$			$q_{high} = 0.10$
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
1	0.149	0.129	0.131	0.207	0.207	0.188	0.108	0.075	0.089	0.131	0.114	0.120
2	0,068	0.058	0.072	0.087	0.093	0.093	0.069	0.044	0.067	0.034	0.032	0.041
3	0.075	0.070	0.070	0.100	0.092	0.094	0.065	0.056	0.061	0.055	0.062	0.050
4	0.131	0.126	0.116	0.170	0.161	0.156	0.137	0.125	0.108	0.055	0.077	0.055
5	0.143	0.145	0.146	0.137	0.159	0.148	0.159	0.162	0.159	0.124	0.094	0.115
6	0.179	0.189	0.187	0.183	0.126	0.187	0.209	0.245	0.219	0.117	0.176	0.125
7	0.253	0.284	0.278	0.116	0.162	0.135	0.253	0.293	0.296	0.483	0.444	0.494
Total	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Proportion of squared deviations explained			0.791			0.170			0.647			0.071

Notes: The direct measure of Trustworthiness is used. There are seven categories of trust that go from 1 (low) to 7 (high). C stands for Control, T for Treatment, and P for Prediction. The last line presents the proportion of the sum of the squared differences between the treatment group and the prediction that can be explained by using the parameter q_c that minimizes the sum of squared errors.

Table 7: Potential Effects of Transparency Initiative on Trustworthiness

| Category	Unfamiliar		Somewhat Familiar		Familiar	
	C	T P	C P	T P	C P	T P
		$q_{high} =$ 0.11	$q_{high} =$ 0.43	$q_{high} =$ 0.52	$q_{high} =$ 0.70	$q_{high} =$ 0.70
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	0.207	0.188	0.126	0.108	0.069	0.069
2	0.087	0.093	0.108	0.111	0.117	0.117
3	0.100	0.094	0.071	0.061	0.038	0.038
4	0.170	0.156	0.094	0.069	0.001	0.001
5	0.137	0.148	0.182	0.191	0.203	0.203
6	0.183	0.187	0.197	0.198	0.183	0.183
7	0.116	0.135	0.223	0.263	0.390	0.390
Total	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Proportion of squared deviations explained		0.170	0.836	0.784	0.797	0.768

Notes: The direct measure of Trustworthiness is used. There are seven categories of trust that go from 1 (low) to 7 (high). C stands for Control, T for Treatment, and P for Prediction. The last line presents the proportion of the sum of the squared differences between the treatment group and the prediction that can be explained by using the parameter q_c that minimizes the sum of squared errors.

Table 8: Treatment Effect on Trust in Institutional Agents

Dimension of Trust Agent	Keep their promises		Care about people like you	
	Politicians in General (1)	Public Servants from the City (2)	Politicians in General (3)	Public Servants from the City (4)
T1: Commitments	0.020	-0.003	0.036*	0.045***
	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.017)
T2: Commitments + Fulf. city	0.023	0.027	0.004	0.039
	(0.021)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.027)
T3: Commitments + Fulf. comuna	-0.001	0.007	-0.007	0.049**
	(0.023)	(0.035)	(0.022)	(0.023)
Constant	0.228***	0.531***	0.266***	0.513***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Observations	2207	2221	2192	2208
Joint significance	0.601	0.524	0.030	0.957
T1=T2	0.830	0.280	0.024	0.855
T1=T3	0.397	0.784	0.041	0.808
T2=T3	0.318	0.493	0.614	0.779

Notes: All regressions include controls and commune fixed effects. All dependent variables are binary and take the value of one when the individual scored 'Very common' or 'Somewhat common' to the question *Do you think it is very common, somewhat common, unusual, or not at all common that* ***the agent*** KEEP THEIR PROMISES/CARE ABOUT THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU? Control variables include: age, gender, socio-economic level, labor status, public policy preferences (revealed preferences for public budget allocation between education and infrastructure), first exposure to , pre-treatment beliefs on government quality and the collective action dummy variable. Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1

Figure 6: Treatment Effect on Trust in Government members - Heterogeneous effects
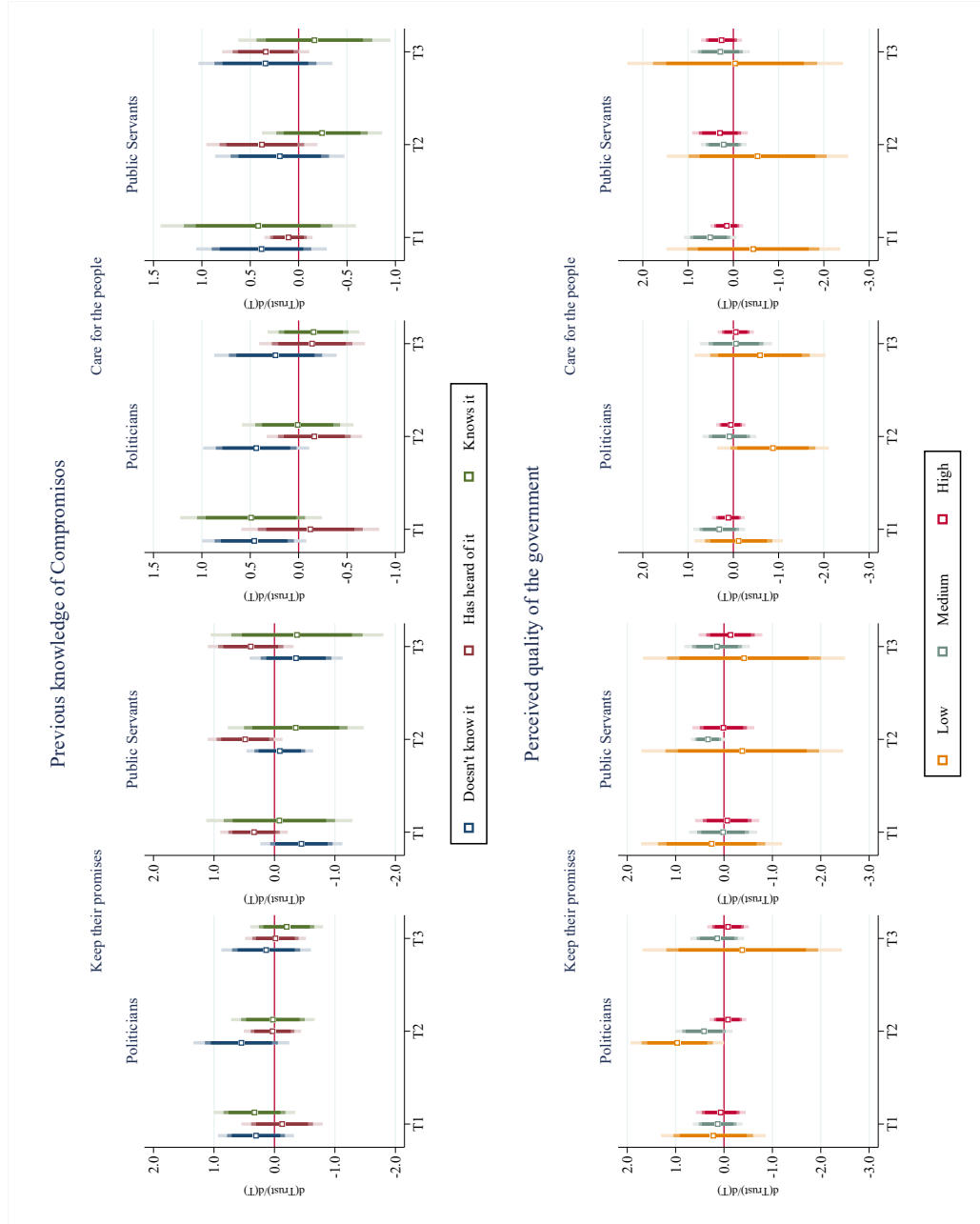
Notes: The color intensity of confidence intervals represents the confidence level, from darker to lighter, 90%, 95%, and 99%.

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