

Abstract of Master's thesis

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Corruption and electoral institutions:

is compulsory voting accountable for higher corruption?

This paper focus on a particular electoral institution: compulsory voting, which is the enforced requirement on citizens to vote in elections. We hypothesize that a compulsory voting system in effect generates higher levels of corruption. By introducing political corruption into a maximizing framework, and analyzing voters' behavior in a strategic voting game, we established a theoretical linkage between compulsory voting and corruption in a framework of economic rationality. The empirical results support our theoretical findings. In a cross country study, we used a perception index as a proxy for corruption, which we regressed against a dummy on compulsory voting, controlling for some of the most relevant variables suggested as determinants of corruption in the literature, such as GDP per capita, level of education, freedom of press, democracy and some regional dummies. The coefficient of compulsory voting turned out to be positively correlated with corruption and highly significant. The results prove to be robust to many different specifications.