

# Election Aggregates and the Choice of Electoral Manipulation Strategies\*

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*Work in progress. Comments welcome*

## Abstract

Corrupt politicians use a variety of manipulation strategies to win elections. How do politicians choose among them? Using a new dataset of reports of electoral crimes and survey data from Colombia, I identify the level of aggregation of electoral results, and the electorate size as important determinants of the relative incidence between vote buying, turnout suppression, and fraud. The data reveal a robust negative correlation between the size of the average polling station and vote buying. I provide evidence that such correlation can be attributed to the increased ability of brokers to sustain compliance of bribed voters when electoral results of small groups are available. I also find a negative association between electorate size and each method of manipulation that is stronger for vote buying than for turnout suppression and fraud. The result is consistent with vote buying having larger marginal costs of implementation than other methods.

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