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Abstract

Participatory programs can reduce the informational and power asymmetries that engender mistrust. These programs, however, cannot include every citizen. Hence, it is important to evaluate if providing information about those programs could affect trust among those who do not participate. We assess the effect of an informational campaign about these programs in the context of a survey experiment in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Results show that providing detailed information about citizen involvement and outputs of a participatory budget initiative marginally shapes voters' assessments of government performance and political trust. Effects are larger for individuals with ex ante more negative views about the local government's quality and differ according to respondents' beliefs about the ability of their communities to solve the type of collective-action problems the program seeks to address. This paper complements the literature that has examined the effects of participatory interventions on trust, and the literature that evaluates the role of information. The results suggest that participatory budget programs could directly affect budget allocations and trust for those who participate, and those that are well-disseminated could also affect trust in the broader population. Because mistrustful individuals tend to shy away from demanding the government public goods that increase overall welfare, well-disseminated participatory budget programs could affect budget allocations directly and through their effect on trust. Investing in these programs and their dissemination may be worthwhile.

JEL classifications: C90, D70, D90, H72, P16
Keywords: Participatory governance, Collective decision-making, Trust, Survey experiment, Local governments, Political economy

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1 Introduction

Developing countries present low efficiency of public spending and low trust in governments. The quantity and quality of public spending are not independent of levels of trust: only trusting individuals are willing to support higher public spending and demand long-term public goods (Keefer, Scartascini, & Vlaicu, 2018, 2022). Decentralizing decision-making to subnational units has been an institutional reform implemented in many countries to increase allocative efficiency and improve government responsiveness and accountability by bringing decisions closer to citizens. In other words, it is seen as an opportunity for strengthening democracy and improving development outcomes. Latin America has seen a steady growth of institutions, mechanisms, and processes aimed at enhancing democratic participation by increasing decentralization and opening opportunities for citizens to have an opinion in decision-making (Pogrebinschi, 2021). Participatory budgeting programs at the local level are one of the innovations that have been introduced in tandem with decentralization reforms over the last 30 years.[1] By providing citizens with tools to participate in resource allocation decision-making, such programs promise to allow voters to voice their policy preferences directly and thus affect policy outcomes.[2] Those participation platforms may also increase confidence in the political system by opening the black box of decision-making and reducing principal-agent problems. If trust is defined as the belief that others (including the government) will not act opportunistically (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022), initiatives that reduce informational and power asymmetries should increase trust, and even more so if, at the same time, they bring policy decisions closer to citizens preferences. In this paper, we evaluate whether providing information about these types of initiatives increases trust.

The impact of participatory programs, including participatory budgets, community-driven development programs (CDD), and social accountability mechanisms, on policy or welfare outcomes, such as changes in budget allocations, the extent of elite capture, public good provision, or citizen's quality of life, has been mixed at best (Molina, Carella,

[1] Numerous innovations have been created and implemented since 1990 in Latin America to strengthen democracy, responding to needs in governments' responsiveness, accountability, rule of law, political inclusion, and social equality Pogrebinschi (2021). Since the launch of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989, participatory budgeting has been adopted in one form or another in over 2,500 cities worldwide (Schroedel, 2019).

[2] Participatory budgeting is part of a broader set of institutional reforms promoting citizen engagement in the design and implementation of public policies and service delivery at the local level. Various forms of participatory governance have been advocated in recent decades, including community-driven development programs (Mansuri & Rao, 2013) and social accountability mechanisms that promote direct engagement between service users and providers (World Bank, 2003). In all of these interventions, in-person public meetings are at the core of the resource planning process. Yet, over the past 15 years, governments have begun to experiment with using digital technologies to increase the scope of participation as well as to reduce the costs in terms of time and resources for facilitating public meetings (Coleman & Cardoso Sampaio, 2017; United Nations, 2020). One concern with moving citizen engagement initiatives onto information & communication technology (ICT) platforms is that it is not clear whether the use of those platforms will encourage further citizen participation or exacerbate preexisting inequalities (Aldieri, Bruno, & Vinci, 2021).

Pacheco, Cruces, & Gasparini, 2017). In particular, while some studies find positive effects of participatory governance in the provision of specific public goods in the short term (Björkman & Svensson, 2009; Madajewicz, Tompsett, & Habib, 2021), others find no effects on outcomes correlated with well-being (Arkedis et al., 2021; Banerjee, Banerji, Duflo, Glennerster, & Khemani, 2010; Beath, Christia, & Enikolopov, 2017; B. Olken, 2010). There is also limited evidence that some forms of participatory programs affect local institutions or decision-making practices in sustainable ways (Casey, 2018; Casey, Glennerster, & Miguel, 2013; Humphreys, Sanchez de la Sierra, & Van der Windt, 2019).

These initiatives are more effective at improving outcomes when they create direct contact between citizens and politicians (or public service providers), offer tools to evaluate their performance (Gaventa & Barrett, 2012), and increase social capital (Avdeenko & Gilligan, 2015). Moreover, their effectiveness is governed by the dynamics of the participation process itself: i) its scope, i.e., the number of people who take part in the initiative (Arkedis et al., 2021; Schaaf, Topp, & Ngulube, 2012); ii) people's social capital accumulation, in particular, their networks and trust levels ((Akanksha) Patnaik, 2021; Avdeenko & Gilligan, 2015; Gaventa & Barrett, 2012; Suebvises, 2018), and; iii) the type of people who participate (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013; Sheely, 2015). Transaction costs naturally bound the scope of the initiatives that would be entailed by asking the overall population. In many situations, deliberation and deep engagement can only occur when the number of citizens participating is limited. Who participates is affected by the usual constraints for collective action: high opportunity costs of participation, inadequate information or lack of information about how to participate, and beliefs about others' participation (Banerjee et al., 2010; Molina, 2014; Molina et al., 2017; B. A. Olken, 2007). The type of participants and the way they engage is determined by social norms ((Akanksha) Patnaik, 2021) and the distribution of power (e.g., whether elites or those with stronger collective action ability can act as gatekeepers) (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013; Sheely, 2015). The provision of information about participatory processes can reduce participation costs, change beliefs about participation, modify social norms, and reduce the gate-keeping power of minorities.

Previous literature has greatly advanced in identifying the direct effects of participatory programs where they are implemented. Still, there is limited understanding regarding how these interventions may affect the broader population.[3] Even though prior work has studied the effects of some forms of participatory interventions such as community-driven development programs on generalized trust (Avdeenko & Gilligan, 2015; Labbone & Chase, 2011), evidence on how these programs affect citizens' views of government and trust in politicians is still limited. Extending the evaluation of participatory programs to their impact on political trust is crucial because trust matters for collective action, broad participation, and allocative decisions beyond the confines of these specific programs (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022; Keefer et al., 2018, 2022). Given the rather limited share of citizens participating in these programs, providing information about their existence

[3]People who engage in participatory processes frequently exhibit noticeable differences from those who do not. Thus, participants are not necessarily representative of the population at large.

and results can help extend the benefits of trust to larger swaths of the population. Of course, providing information about the results of these programs may affect people's beliefs differently (Alessandro, Cardinale Lagomarsino, Scartascini, Streb, & Torrealday, 2021). Some may see participatory programs as a way to legitimize government actions and improve allocation. Others may see the results as a way for the most active citizens to gain influence in the political process.

This paper evaluates the effects of providing citizens with information about an existing participatory budget initiative on political trust by exploiting a survey experiment conducted on a sample of more than 1,500 individuals in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina (henceforth CABA, for its acronym in Spanish). The participatory program, called *Buenos Aires Elige* ("BA Elige," subsequently) launched in 2017, provides public funding for community-led projects. Citizens participate in the program by proposing projects and voting for the ones they like the most. Such projects can range from installing security cameras in a neighborhood to building running tracks or installing other types of recreational equipment in city parks. By January 2020, the amount of the program represented about 1 percent of the city's public investment budget (equivalent to more than 3,000 yearly minimum wages.) The way the program has been designed attempts to increase participation by making the process relatively simple and online. Yet, it reduces interactions and close contact between policymakers and the citizenry, and it does not necessarily foster social cohesion and the creation of networks. Therefore, on the one hand, the government presents itself as transparent, accountable, and provides easy ways of participation; on the other, it lacks some of the features that have proven successful in other contexts (such as those identified in White, Menon, and Waddington (2018).)

Participants in the experiment were assigned randomly to two different informational treatments and a control group. Treatment 1 describes the program, while Treatment 2 provides more detailed information about the program's scope, the extent of participation, and level of execution (projects proposed in total and by area, projects approved, number of citizens who voted, etc.).[4] Treated and control individuals were then asked a set of questions about: (1) overall evaluation of the city government's performance, (2) trust in local government members and politicians, and (3) value of citizenry participation. The set of questions is based on Keefer and Scartascini (2022) trust analytical framework. Trust is understood as the belief that others will not act opportunistically. It means that governments will not make promises they cannot keep, renege on the ones they can keep, or violate norms to take advantage of those who respect them. Therefore, it incorporates the notion that trust depends on the ability of the government and government officials to respond to implicit or explicit demands from citizens, and its competence, benevolence, and honesty/transparency.[5] It also incorporates notions of citizen participation and the creation of social capital, as highlighted by ((Akanksha) Patnaik, 2021; Avdeenko & Gilligan, 2015;

[4] All the material we use for constructing the vignettes presented in the treatments is publicly available on the web page of the city government `https://baelige.buenosaires.gob.ar/`

[5] The questions and the grouping of the questions follows the framework introduced by Grimmelikhuijsen (2012); Grimmelikhuijsen and Welch (2012) and implemented by Alessandro et al. (2021) in CABA.

Gaventa & Barrett, 2012; Suebvises, 2018). Information about participatory initiatives, and their outcomes, can affect citizens' beliefs about those aspects and hence, trust.

Using standard both OLS and matching estimation, along with a censored sample, results show that providing detailed information about the participatory initiative and the budget allocation positively affects assessments of local government performance and trust in politicians. In particular, providing detailed information increases, although not significantly in the matching estimation, the overall evaluation of the city government's performance by about 0.07 standard deviations (SD) by increasing the perception that the government is responsive (0.11 SD) and honest or transparent (0.15 SD). Citizens who receive detailed information about the program have a 0.12 SD higher perception of a trustworthy government than those who do not receive any information. The treatment improves the perception of the local government's trustworthiness, as a whole, by four percentage points (pp) (7.8% increase relative to the control mean). While providing detailed information (T2) matters, even in the context of a relatively low-intensity treatment (offering information that is already available on the website), providing only information about the existence of a program (T1) does not.[6] One possibility for the divergence could be that the effect of T1 is highly contingent on existent levels of trust. T2 may have a broader appeal by showing that the program is actually running and has tangible outputs. It may also be the case that T1 does not offer the individual any information that would make them change their priors about the ability to strengthen networks and social capital (the program takes place online and they have no information about how many people participate and who participates). T2, on the contrary, shows that the number of people who participate is more than only a few, and projects are distributed across the whole city and in different areas, which should reduce concern about capture by the few.

The more favorable evaluations the treatments generate for the government just described translate into improved beliefs about politicians, but not about civil servants. When people are informed about the initiative in general (T1), they are 7 and 11 percentage points more likely to believe that politicians will keep their promises and care for the population, respectively, but results are not significant for civil servants. None of the treatments affect people's responses on whether the government listens to the population or whether neighbors should decide on public policies. Finally, individuals assigned to either treatment indicate lower agreement with the statement that the government spends its budget appropriately. It may be the case that they think that assigning sizeable government budget to the participatory program may be wasteful or that citizens' allocations are better than the government's, so the government should allocate more resources to it. Unfortunately, we cannot identify the mechanisms behind those effects.

Importantly, we find relevant heterogeneous results that help us disentangle some

[6]It is important to note that, every time T2 is significant and T1 is not, the coefficients are not always statistically different between them. They are different for the dependent variables for which results have shown to be stronger: honesty or transparency and trustworthiness. They are also marginally significantly different for the overall index. Moreover, the differences are large and more of them are significant when we restrict our analysis to the time-censored sample.

potential mechanisms by which information may promote belief updating. In particular, ex ante beliefs about the government's capacity, prior but limited knowledge of the initiative, and beliefs about the ability to solve collective action problems in the community play an important role in the direction people update their assessments of the government. Treatment effects are larger for individuals with ex ante more negative views about the local government's capacity and for those who had heard about the initiative or its website but did not have specific knowledge of them. Treatment effects are also stronger among individuals who believe in their communities' ability to solve collective-action problems.

This paper complements the literature that looks at the impact of participatory governance and evaluates the role of information about government actions and performance on outcomes such as political accountability and trust. On political accountability, several studies find that voter access to information can strengthen their ability to reward or sanction elected politicians for their performance in office (Besley & Burgess, 2002; Ferraz & Finan, 2008; Kendall, Nannicini, & Trebbi, 2015). Experts and governments agree that transparency-promoting measures that go beyond revealing preferences through voting are needed (Pogrebinschi, 2018). In particular, information with a clear connection to voters' well-being from a credible and widely available source, especially if people are not able to participate directly, is more likely to have an impact (Khemani et al., 2016). Providing information about the existence of commitments made by the government also matters for trust (Otálvaro-Ramírez, Scartascini, & Streb, Unpublished). Providing information about compliance with those commitments increases trust more than providing information indicating that goals have not been reached (Alessandro et al., 2021).[7] Both strands of the literature suggest that the details or type of information disclosed to citizens matter for changing political outcomes and trust. Therefore, participatory budget programs could directly affect budget allocations, and those that are well-disseminated could also do so through their effect on trust, countering political disillusionment and improving people's perceptions of the quality of democracy. Investing in these programs may thus be worthwhile.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents the survey experiment design. In Section 3 we lay out our identification strategy. Section 4 presents and discusses the results, and Section 5 concludes.

2 The Survey Experiment

2.1 Background

The City of Buenos Aires is the capital and most populous city of Argentina.[8] Since 2011, the city has been subdivided into 15 communes, which work as territorial, administrative

[7] Reducing informational and power asymmetries is fundamental for increasing trust (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022).

[8] About 3 million inhabitants according to data from the 2010 National Census.

and political entities and include 48 neighborhoods (see Figure D4 for details).[9] The city has also been engaged in a steady process for increasing transparency (Alessandro et al., 2021) and participatory governance by increasing information about government actions and including citizens in decision-making.[10] In 2001, the city government undertook a participatory budgeting initiative to *restore citizens' trust in the government* (Pogrebinschi, 2021; Schroedel, 2019). This initiative involved the formation of neighborhood committees that identified investment priorities in their communities and submitted such proposals to the General Direction of Participatory Budget to obtain resources. "BA Elige," the participatory platform examined in this paper, is an initiative launched by the CABA government in 2017 that proposes a modern form of citizen participation: any citizen can propose projects to improve their neighborhoods, communes, and the city through an online platform, and every citizen can vote on the allocation of those resources. This platform establishes a binding relationship between the government and the citizens, i.e., the citizenry's most voted projects are included in the budget to be executed the following year.[11] By late 2020, almost 200,000 citizens had participated and cast more than 6 million votes on participatory projects, but there has been no rigorous evaluation of the impact of those programs.[12]

2.2 About the Survey

We conducted an online randomized survey to evaluate whether information about a participatory program that allows citizens to propose and decide how to allocate public monies affects trust in the government.[13] Data collection took place December 6-27, 2019, and was carried out by a renowned Argentine polling firm.[14] The company recruited individuals online. The sample was stratified by gender, age (18 to 60 years old), and socioeconomic status quotas. Once individuals accepted the invitation to participate, they were randomized into the control group or one of the treatment groups within each stratum before starting to answer the survey.[15] Many individuals who clicked the invitation and were assigned to a treatment or control then decided not to participate once presented with

[9] The distribution of the geographical and political divisions within the city, labeled as communes herein, is presented in Figure D4 in the Appendix.

[10] According to LATINNO, the first comprehensive and systematic source of data on citizen participation initiatives in Latin America, there are 63 projects associated with urban planning and local development in Argentina, three of them implemented in the City of Buenos Aires. Most of those initiatives focus on increasing responsiveness (72%) and accountability (41%).

[11] All the programs and initiatives on participatory governance are available at `http://bapc.buenosaires.gob.ar/`.

[12] Pogrebinschi (2021) argues that deliberative and participatory spaces comprise a sizable portion of Argentina's democratic innovations. The citizen monitoring initiatives, in particular, have culminated in the creation of web platforms and mobile phone apps intended to monitor compliance with public policies, map areas of insecurity, and combat corruption.

[13] Appendix D presents the survey module. The full questionnaire in Spanish is available upon request.

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

[15] While in the questionnaire there are three treatments, one of them was designed with a different objective (evaluating how people select what information to look at). Therefore, we only refer to two treatment arms in this paper, and we present the results of the remaining treatment in a separate paper.

the consent form and the introductory survey interface (acceptance, defined as people who started the survey once recruited, was between 7% and 14% for the different treatment groups). About 80% of those who started the survey finished it.

The timeline of the survey experiment is depicted in Figure A1. Individuals assigned to the control group are not informed about the "BA Elige" participatory effort; instead, they submit their perceptions of the city administration in many dimensions immediately following their response to the characterization module. Individuals undergoing treatment can be classified into one of two categories: i) those provided a vignette that gives an overview of the program, its relevance, and general information about it (see Appendix Figure D1) or ii) those provided a vignette that summarizes the program and includes statistics on citizens' participation, the number of people who made proposals, the project areas (e.g., security or education), and the number of projects proposed by commune, among other statistics (see Appendix Figure D2). In Treatment 2, individuals could identify, for example, that around 30% of proposals were related to urban mobility, 24% to security, and so on (Appendix Figure D3).

Participants completed the survey on government perceptions at the end of the vignette display. After receiving the informational treatment, treated individuals answered the battery of questions on perceptions about the government's competence and responsiveness/benevolence, and honesty. This module consists of six sets of questions designed to elicit information about the components of trust in the government following the analytical framework in Keefer and Scartascini (2022) and the questions developed in Grimmelikhuijsen (2012), the AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), and Keefer et al. (2018).

2.3 Data Description

The dataset includes responses from 1,668 individuals distributed in the 15 communes.[16] It includes respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, their perceptions of government quality and performance, their perceived trustworthiness of government members (politicians and public servants), and citizens' participation in decision-making at the city/commune level. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the main observable characteristics of respondents in the control and treatment groups and their balance. The first column provides basic descriptive statistics. The average respondent is female (55%), is around 43 years old, has completed secondary education (about 80% of the individuals in our sample have completed at least secondary education), has a full-time job (50%), and has an internet connection at home (89%). The population in our sample is slightly younger and more educated than the city's population.[17] As such, the contacting method may be under-sampling older and less educated individuals who may be less likely to use computers or smartphones.

[16] Cluster size is between 92 and 120 individuals per commune.

[17] According to the 2010 Census, the average age was 46 years old, excluding minors, and 49% of the population, between 15 and 80+ years old, completed at least secondary education.

Concerning pre-treatment perception variables, citizens consider that the city government is of mid-to-high quality. They gave a score of 6.9 out of 10 points, on average, to the government's perceived quality. About 91% of the surveyed individuals consider it important that citizens propose and choose the projects they want to see carried out in their communities. Respondents also tend to present a high level of interpersonal trust: 59% of the surveyed people indicated that most people are trustworthy or very trustworthy. It is a higher percentage than that found for Argentina by the Latinobarometer in 2018 (18.6%) but similar to the figures found by LAPOP (69.7% for 2018/19) coming from a four-category variable.[18,19] Regarding the likelihood of gathering signatures to support a request to the government, i.e., the collective action capacity, around 78% of the respondents indicated it was likely or very likely they would be able to collect 500 signatures in their neighborhoods. Note that, despite the existence of a dedicated website and the public announcement of the "BA Elige" Initiative, only 11% of the sample knew about it and had visited the website before the intervention took place, while an additional 28% knew about the website or the program but not the other (Figure 1). Nearly half of the surveyed individuals indicated that they did not know about the website or the program at all.

Dependent variables are classified into three groups: (1) overall assessments of the performance of the city government, (2) trust in institutions, the government as a whole, and in its members individually, and (3) citizen participation.[20] For the assessment of the city government, citizens provided their perceptions by responding to seven questions (following Grimmelikhuijsen (2012).) Those questions attempt to identify views about the local government's competence (is it capable? does it do what is best for the city? does it spend its budget appropriately?), responsiveness/benevolence (does it act in the interests of neighbors? does it helps those in need? does it pursue policies my family cares about?) and honesty (is it transparent?).[21] We also construct summary indices to reduce

[18]The average levels of trust differ markedly according to whether the original question is binary or a multi-value Likert scale. When the trust measure is originally binary, as in the World Value Survey and Latinobarometer, the proportion of people who trust others is around 11%. However, when trust is measured using a four-category scale and transformed into a binary (trust is equal to 1 if respondents answers "Very" or "Somewhat" trustworthy to the following question *"Generally speaking, how likely is it that most people are trustworthy?"* and 0 otherwise), trust can go up to over 50% in Latin America (Scartascini & Valle-Luna, 2020).

[19]Nearly 20 percent of Latin Americans trust the government (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022). However, these figures are higher for Argentina. The latest LAPOP report shows that on a scale from 1 to 7 (none to very much), 40% Argentinians trusted their local government more than 4, and 42% of the people who responded to the survey trusted that the government was doing what was right. Latinobarometer presents lower values for trust in the Government in the past two decades (23% for Argentina). However, as in the case of generalized trust, figures for political trust are lower when measured by the Latinobarometer than LAPOP. Our initial levels of trust in the government and its members are comparable to those provided by LAPOP.

[20]Table A3 in the Appendix presents descriptive statistics on dependent variables.

[21]Each component is asked as: *"Using a scale from 1 to 7, where one is "Completely disagree" and seven is "Completely agree," show your position on the different statements about the Government of the City of Buenos Aires".*

the dimensionality of the information.[22] We report evidence from principal component analysis (henceforth PCA) in which the first component explains around 80 percent of the variance. Results are the same when using alternative index definitions (see Table A4 in the Appendix).[23] We construct two intermediate indexes: Competence and Benevolence. The first attempts to measure the city government's management capabilities, while the second measures citizens' perception of the government's responsiveness to citizens' preferences and needs. We also standardized the honesty dimension to make it comparable to competence and benevolence. Further, we have a global index that summarizes perceptions of competence, benevolence, and honesty.[24]

Trust in institutions is evaluated using two types of questions: i) the direct measure of how much people agree that the city government (as a whole) is trustworthy,[25] and ii) indirect measures of government members' trustworthiness that capture whether politicians or civil servants can keep their promises and care about people like the surveyed individuals (following Keefer et al. (2018) and Keefer et al. (2022).)[26] For citizens' participation in decision-making, we construct two indicator variables. The first takes the value of 1 when people express they would prefer that neighbors rather than public servants decide on investments. The second indicates whether people think it is probable that the government will listen to neighbors if they request it.

Figure 2 presents citizens' evaluations of the city government's performance. It presents the share of the control group's who agrees with each statement regarding government competence, responsiveness/benevolence, and honesty. In general, individuals report relatively positive assessments of the government's performance (all items have a score greater than 0.5). Among the top attributes, respondents consider the government capable of doing what is best for the city. Lower scores are observed in how much it benefits and helps those who are most in need.[27] Figure 3 shows a high percentage of control

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

[23]Robustness exercises include regressions with the individual questions in its original scale, normalized variables between zero and one, and count models. In all cases, results remain the same.

[24]Honesty is measured in terms of transparency, and since it has only one component, it is standardized in order to make it comparable with the Competence and Benevolence sub-indices, not estimated through a PCA method. In a broader sense, the overall index, which incorporates the components of the competence, benevolence, and honesty dimensions, refers to the most general indirect measure of trustworthiness of the government following Grimmelikhuijsen et al. (2012). Given that it is an indirect version of trust, we do not include the "it is trustworthy" component in the estimation of this index.

[25]We use both the standardized and normalized versions of this variable. As in each sub-indices component, people were asked to provide their level of agreement with the statement "The City Government of Buenos Aires is trustworthy." Levels of agreement ranged from 1 to 7. To make the direct measure of trustworthiness comparable to the results on trust in specific members of the government: politicians and public servants, we normalized it on a scale of zero to one.

[26]We use responses regarding the assessment of family members and neighbors for robustness checks in Appendix Table A9

[27]Although all responses are categorical, between 1 and 7, we standardized them between zero and one for interpretation purposes. As an example, around 69% of the people in the control group scored the city government's capability greater than 4.14 on a scale from 1 to 7.

individuals who indicate it is likely or very likely that public servants keep their promises (48%) or care about people like them (41%). However, there is a low percentage who assess politicians in the same manner, 23% and 29%, respectively. Regarding citizens' participation, we find a high proportion of surveyed individuals who consider it relevant that neighbors can propose and choose what investments should be carried out in their communes (61%). It highlights that, while a large share of people believes that citizens inputs are important, more than a third of the sample would prefer decisions being made by the government. Simultaneously, a lower percentage in the control group thinks it is likely or very likely that the city government will listen if they present a request (55%)–see Figure 4.

Table 1 also displays the balance on covariates between each treatment assignment and the control group. Treatment 1 is considerably well balanced; only two out of 20 differences are statistically different at the 5% level ($p<0.05$). Treatment 2 presents a larger number of imbalances when compared with the control group or treatment 1. In particular, we observe that people in the control group are younger than the treated, and there is lower unemployment among those assigned to the second treatment group. There is a higher likelihood of knowing the initiative and having checked the website before taking the survey for people treated with information on statistics. Additionally, there are few differences in the perception of government quality between treatment assignments. These imbalances are not solved when using Multiple Hypotheses Testing (see Appendix Table A1). Therefore, to overcome the unbalance and ensure the consistency of the results, we follow the standard practice: i) control for unbalanced characteristics, ii) conduct a matching technique, and iii) assess coefficient stability and explained variance following the recommendation of Oster (2019) (see Appendix Table A6). In any case, estimations of the effect of the informational treatments on all dependent variables control for respondents' unbalanced characteristics. According to the work we have done and the consultations with the polling company, the imbalances were caused by the low response rate, the size of the sample requested, and the project's timeline. Because survey collection had to be done near the end-of-year holiday season, it started in a context of a low response rate; thus, the polling firm concentrated on filling the treatment bins even if it implied creating some imbalances. If we censor the sample to the first third of the collected sample (Dec 6 to 12), the imbalances disappear (see Appendix Tables A2 and A8 balance tests and estimations in the censored sample). We deal with the implications of the imbalances in the empirical analysis section.

3 Empirical Strategy

To understand the effect of providing information about the initiative to enhance citizens' participation in decision-making, we estimate an OLS model controlling for unbalanced characteristics. We also use a propensity score weighting for multiple treatments technique to address the issue of treatment group imbalance. The equation we estimate is:

$$Y_{ic}^{v} = \alpha + \beta_1 T_i^1 + \beta_2 T_i^2 + \lambda X_i + \eta_c + \epsilon, \tag{1}$$

where T_i^n is the treatment assignment for individual i, $n = 1, 2$, depending on the treatment arm the individual was exposed to. The treatment arms are as follows: T^1 provides general information about the "BA Elige" initiative, and T^2 includes the information presented in T^1 plus specific information about the extent of citizen participation and scope of investment projects proposed in the 2019 version of the initiative. A respondent was assigned to one treatment only, and individuals in each treatment arm were compared to individuals who received no information at all (the control group - T^0). Y^v corresponds to one of three possible sets of dependent variables ($v = 1, 2, 3$). The first is associated with individuals' perception of government performance ($v = 1$) in three broad dimensions: competence, benevolence, and honesty (altogether, they sum up to an indirect measure of trust in the government, following Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) approach), as described in Section 2.3. The second relates to trust in the government and its members ($v = 2$), particularly with the trustworthiness and benevolence of public officials and politicians. The final group addresses citizens' participation perceptions ($v = 3$). X is a vector of control variables that includes all observable unbalanced socio-demographic characteristics and relevant political context variables available from the survey (age, pre-treatment beliefs on government quality, previous knowledge of the initiative, regulatory burden preferences, generalized trust, preferences for citizen participation in decision-making and perception of local collective action).[28] We also include commune fixed effects (η_c) and estimated robust standard errors (Abadie, Athey, Imbens, & Wooldridge, 2017).

As shown in Tables 1 and A1, there are some significant differences in observable characteristics across the treatment groups. For that reason, we also reweight the treatment samples to match the covariate distribution of any other treatment group (control) to estimate the effect of information on the various dependent variables. Weights equal the reciprocal of the probability that a respondent received a given treatment assignment. This approach to estimating the population means of potential outcomes is a form of Inverse Probability of Treatment Weighting (IPTW). We use IPTW to estimate the mean of the outcomes for each treatment assignment group and use these estimates to obtain treatment effects, as described by McCaffrey et al. (2013). Let $p_\tau(X)$ denote the propensity score, the probability that an individual with pre-treatment characteristics X receives treatment τ ($p_\tau(X) = Pr(T[\tau] = 1|X)$). A consistent estimate of the outcome mean for individuals assigned to treatment τ ($\hat{\mu}_\tau$) is given by the weighted mean:

$$\hat{\mu}_\tau = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} T_i[\tau] Y_i w_i[\tau]}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} T_i[\tau] w_i[\tau]} \tag{2}$$

where weights satisfy

[28] Given that we assigned the treatment at random, we choose to control only for the variables that do not meet the balance condition to preserve the highest possible number of observations.

$$w_i[\tau] = \frac{1}{p_\tau(X_i)} \tag{3}$$

The average treatment effect of general information would be therefore $\beta_1 = \hat{\mu}_1 - \hat{\mu}_0$, while the effect of detailed information $\beta_2 = \hat{\mu}_2 - \hat{\mu}_0$. Because our matched results are consistent with those obtained using OLS estimation with controls, the IPTW results will be addressed throughout the paper. The OLS results are presented in Appendix Table A7.

The literature suggests that providing information about government performance matters for belief updating among citizens (Alessandro et al., 2021; Khemani et al., 2016; Piotrowski & Van Ryzin, 2007). Thus, we expect that providing information on how the government makes resources available for citizens to make their needs visible and addressed, matters for shaping citizens' attitudes: $\beta_n > 0$. We also forecast that giving specific details on participation and citizens' proposals in such initiatives would have larger effects than only providing general information about the program itself: $\beta_2 \geq \beta_1$. Of course, these effects could vary across the distribution of beliefs. For example, the effects should be greater for those who have worse expectations about the work the city carries out, those who believe that collective action is possible (i.e., those who think that citizen participation in programs like this one is going to be broad and not monopolized by the few), and those who trust their fellow citizens to make decisions for the community and commit to them.

4 Results

We evaluate how information provision about participation in decision-making shapes citizens' evaluations of the city government's performance and trustworthiness. We start by assessing the effect of the vignettes on indexes that capture an overall assessment of the government's performance and its perceived competence, benevolence, and honesty, which we argue are good proxies for the levels of trust according to the analytical framework in Keefer and Scartascini (2022). We then explore the effect of information on trust in the government using the direct measure of trust, both standardized (to make it comparable to the indexes) and normalized (to make it comparable to trust in government members' measures), and trust in politicians and public servants. This last set of questions considers two crucial components of trust: whether government agents can keep their promises and whether they care about people like the respondent. Finally, we estimate the effect on respondents' perceptions about participatory processes: Does the government listen? Should neighbors decide allocations?

4.1 Overall Perceptions of the City Government's Performance

Table 2 presents the treatment effects on citizens' assessment of the local government's performance measured through an overall index and its specific components. The first three columns display the results with controls and fixed effects. Since treatment assignment

is not balanced in some observable characteristics, Columns (4) to (7) summarize the results of the Inverse Probability of Treatment Weighting model. It employs a Multinomial Propensity Score Matching technique to match the covariate distribution of any other treatment group to assess the effect of information on the various dependent variables.[29] We present some additional specifications to account for the imbalance in Appendix Table A7.[30]

The evidence indicates that T_1, which provides general information about the program's existence, does not significantly effect on perceptions, but T_2 affects some of the perceptions citizens have about government. Providing detailed information, including participation statistics, tends to improve the city government's performance evaluations by about 0.07 SD, although non-significantly. Columns (5) to (8) show the results for each of the indexes used to create the overall government assessment index: competence, benevolence, and honesty. These regressions control for politically relevant variables and include commune fixed effects. Again, we find no significant effects for T_1. However, T_2 affects attitudes through the responsiveness/benevolence and honesty/transparency dimensions, with effect sizes of 0.11 SD and 0.15 SD, respectively. We do not find a significant effect on the competence dimension, i.e., individuals assigned to any treatment group did not increase their assessment of the city government's capabilities and efficient management with respect to the control group. A first reading of the results would indicate that providing detailed information about participation and results of the program matters, while providing information only about the program's existence does not. It is a relevant finding, particularly for a relatively low-intensity treatment (i.e., a simple informational treatment). Additionally, the impact seems to be higher on honesty/transparency and benevolence than competence. Note that this finding is mostly seen in the dimension of honesty; we reject the null hypothesis of equal coefficients T1 and T2. This result indicates that people are not just increasing their evaluations indiscriminately. The differential effect could be affected by citizens' notion of competence and how the information supplied during the experiment connects with it. Competence differs from benevolence and honesty in that it refers to the tangible outcomes of policymaking. We examined the transparency of a policy process (participatory budget) and showed performance based on citizens' engagement rather than policy outcomes. Not reading about the government's actual

[29] Huppler-Hullsiek and Louis (2002) and Bang and Robins (2005) have advocated for combining propensity score and additional covariate adjustment to minimize mean square error. While linear regression is prone to model misspecification when the treatment and comparison groups are dissimilar, propensity score weighting has brought them closer together, possibly sufficiently, so that additional modeling with covariates can account for any remaining differences.

[30] We incorporate the strategy developed by Altonji, Elder, and Taber (2005) and synthesized by Oster (2019) to estimate the treatment effects by adjusting for unobservable selection. Columns (1) to (3) indicate low coefficient stability, and that the inclusion of controls increases the outcome variance explained, implying a randomization issue. To address it, we augment the coefficient stability approach by estimating the treatment effect that accounts for both coefficient stability and explained variance change after correcting for observable factors. Oster (2019) estimates and their associated delta bounds are shown in Table A6. Delta estimates indicate that unobservable characteristics are half as important as observables in generating a treatment effect of zero.

performance on the policies chosen to be implemented may not have generated any belief updating about the government's ability to convey what residents had decided, but rather about its capacity to hear the demands of the population.[31]

The results for the indexes are consistent but become richer once we look at the individual components and the distribution of the responses using a Generalized Ordered Logit model. Table A5 shows that the average effect at the index level masks some interesting distributional effects. In the components of benevolence, T2 generates a consistent reduction (increase) in the share of individuals who disagree (agree), strongly disagree (agree), or somewhat disagree (agree) with the statement that the government helps those in need and with the statement that the government pursues programs that are beneficial to the individual and his/her family. Results are weaker and not as consistent for the statement about whether the government acts in the neighbors' interests. Regarding honesty/transparency, the main effect of T2 comes from a stark reduction in the share of individuals who strongly disagree that the government is transparent. Interestingly, the null effect in the competence dimension seems to hide some positive changes in answers to the statement about whether the government is capable but also negative changes on whether the government spends its budget appropriately. Again, an important finding is that individuals react to the information and discriminate how they respond to the different questions. Additionally, there seems to be consistency in their evaluation of the government as more transparent and responsive once they are provided with the information.

Looking at some heterogeneities in the results may provide additional insights regarding how belief updating occurs. Participatory initiatives succeed when citizens trust that others will participate and hold the government accountable for those or other programs. The effects should be greater for those who believe that collective action is possible, i.e., those who think that citizen participation in these types of programs will be broad and not monopolized. When the bonds of citizenship are weak and confidence in fellow citizens to comply with the social contract is low, individuals settle for limited social contracts that offer sparse rights and create few obligations; they do not support broad rights for others and shirk their civic responsibilities (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022). However, it could also be the case that when collective action is not possible, more transparency may be a trigger to mobilize individuals. Therefore, we expect that for people who believe in the possibility of collective action, information about a participatory action promoted by the local government that enables citizens to demand the public goods they want to see implemented in their communes will play a significant role in reinforcing their opinions about the government's trustworthiness, except potentially for the case of transparency.

The effects of interventions conditional on having lower priors about the government should be more pronounced when confronted with information that opposes initial percep-

[31] These results are similar to Grimmelikhuijsen (2009). Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) shows that providing actual information about government performance increases the perception of competence to a greater extent than the perceived benevolence and honesty.

tions. The vignettes should be more informative about the government's participation initiatives for those who initially do not believe the government is performing well than for those who already believe the government is doing so. As a result, we expect that those with lower priors may react more to the treatments.

Figure 5 presents the results for the overall government perceptions index and each of its dimensions (regression results are presented in Appendix Table B1); we show the results for T_2 for simplicity. The first row shows the effects of the informational treatment conditional on ex ante perceived quality of government. The second shows how people with differing priors about collective action capacity in the community respond to the vignettes. The third provides an insight into how responsive to the informational treatment are people with differing previous knowledge of the initiative. As expected, those with worse priors about the government react more to the informational treatment, especially in the benevolence and honesty dimensions. It may be because only people with lower priors can improve their perceptions of the government. It can also be that the information set of individuals in the group of lower perceptions is expanding, given that people whose initial assessment of the city government is low are less likely to know the program (see Appendix Figure A2). Regarding collective action, the treatment effect tends to be marginally higher for individuals who believe that it is more likely that the neighborhood can cooperate to address a local issue by gathering signatures and requesting the city government to solve the problem. This result is congruent with priors. Information about participatory programs has positive effects only on those who think that other citizens are willing to play their part in the social contract, make good decisions, and hold governments accountable. Importantly, it is exactly the opposite in the honesty/transparency dimension. It seems that for those who do not think the government will be held accountable, it is more important for transparency that citizens allocate the budget. Furthermore, we observe that the results are weakly heterogeneous depending on the initial information set. Individuals aware of the program's presence, i.e., those who have heard about it, are slightly more receptive to information. For people who already had information about the initiative in their information set before taking the survey $I(t = 0)$, although the magnitude of the effect is positive, its non-significance could be a signal of redundant or irrelevant information provided by the vignettes. Those having a fuzzy idea of "BA Elige," on the other hand, could alter their information set using the facts provided in the vignette, regardless of its content, as discussed by Butler, Hughes, Volder, and Wiseman (2021).

4.2 Trust in Government

Does sharing information about the participatory program affect the evaluation respondents make of the trustworthiness of governments, politicians, and public servants? We use different measures that attempt to capture trust in the government's actions to answer this question. As described above, we look at these answers following the Keefer and Scartascini (2022) trust framework. Hence, we rely on a question that asks respondents how much they agree with the statement that the government is trustworthy. We also rely upon a set of questions that ask people whether politicians and public employees do

what they promise or care about people like them (questions are based on a questionnaire designed for Keefer et al. (2018) and Keefer et al. (2022)). If citizens consider that public officials can keep their promises and care for people like them, they should also have higher trust in those two groups of people.

Table 3 presents the results for the variable that measures the overall trustworthiness of the government and the perceived trustworthiness of government officials.[32] Columns (1) and (2) present the results for the overall question about the city government's trustworthiness, both standardized and normalized to make it comparable to the overall index of government performance, in Table 2 and the remaining columns of Table 3. Columns (3) and (4) present the effect of information on citizens' perceptions of politicians, and columns (5) and (6) do the same for public servants. Consistent with previous results, detailed information about the initiative's scope (T_2) moves perceptions of trust in government upwards by nearly 4 pp, representing a hike of 6.4% with respect to the average in the control group (an increase of about 0.12 SD, which is consistent with the results of the benevolence and honesty dimensions of the government perception index).

The effect of the treatment on the trustworthiness of the government does not translate one-to-one to politicians and public servants. First, we find no effect on public servants' evaluations. Second, the effect on politicians is driven by T_1 instead. The provision of general information on the "BA Elige"initiative, which encourages citizens to participate actively in decision-making, increases by 7.5 pp the percentage of people who think it is likely or very likely that politicians would keep their promises. This effect implies an increase of 33% from the percentage of people from the control group that perceives that politicians keep their promises (23%). Similarly, general information increased the perception that politicians care about people like the respondent by 11.6 pp, i.e., an increase of nearly 40% with respect to the control average (29%).

Regarding the null treatment effect on trust in public servants, note that individuals from the control group had an initial higher assessment of their trustworthiness than politicians'. Around 48% of people in the control group indicated that it was (very) likely that public servants keep their promises and care for the people. Thus, information may not significantly increase the favorable perception of such government members. Overall, the results in this section pose an interesting question about how much and what type of information is necessary to improve perceptions of trustworthiness. Detailed information may play an important role when people consider that the government is somewhat trustworthy. Still, any type of information may be relevant to update prior beliefs when trust levels are relatively low to begin with.

As expected, Table 3 shows that the ex ante perceived quality of government and the beliefs about collective action capacity play an important role in explaining trust levels. Having a positive opinion about the government is a prerequisite for trust, as is

[32] Appendix Table A9 presents the overall results, including relatives and neighbors. As expected, we do not find that any informational treatment changed family members' or fellow citizens' perceived trustworthiness and benevolence.

believing that collective action to hold the government accountable is possible. Figure 6 presents heterogeneous treatment effects by interacting the treatments with each one of these variables.[33] Again, we observe stronger marginal effects among individuals with relatively low esteem for the local government. Among such individuals, the trustworthiness perception increased by around 17 pp. In contrast, the treatment did not meaningfully change in trust levels among individuals with already relatively higher priors about government quality. We also find that providing confirmatory information for people who had heard about the program's existence increases the perception that city officials keep their promises. However, it does not affect other perceptions about the government's members (see Table B4 in the Appendix). When we consider the perceived capacity for collective action, the treatment marginal effects are higher for those who believe it is likely or very likely that neighbors can act collectively to demand government accountability. Providing more participation when individuals have the prior that others would not hold the government accountable does not have the same effect as in a context of high social accountability.

4.3 Importance of Citizen Participation in Decision-Making

One of the purposes of the survey's informational treatments was to inform people about the government's participatory actions, showing that the city government had created mechanisms through which citizens could propose and decide on the projects they would like to see carried out in their communes and the city. We asked respondents to consider i) whether the city government would listen to the neighbors if they presented a claim to solve a problem in their neighborhood, and ii) whether they preferred citizens, rather than public servants, to decide on the investment projects that should be carried out in the city. Table 4 shows that, once we control for relevant covariates and make treatment groups comparable in observable characteristics, the treatments have no effects. One possibility is a ceiling effect that prevents finding significant results. Sixty-one percent of the people in the control group already consider that citizens should decide the investment projects that the government ought to carry out in their commune, and almost 92% consider citizens' participation in proposing and choosing investments (very) important before receiving any informational treatment. As shown in the table, political context characteristics play an important role in perceptions and preferences about participation. In particular, collective action capacity and the importance of citizens proposing and choosing the projects to carry out are relevant explanatory variables of perceptions and participation preferences, respectively. Importantly, those with better priors about the government's quality are less likely to respond that they would like neighbors to decide.

Participatory initiatives are aimed at giving citizens influence. Thus, prior beliefs about collective action and citizen participation can be critical in updating citizens' perceptions and preferences when providing information about local government-led initiatives. Regression results shown in Appendix Table B3 present those potential transmission mechanisms. As has been consistent in the analysis, higher priors about

[33] All estimations are presented in Appendix Table B2

citizens' ability to engage in collective action generate a higher marginal effect of the treatment. Likewise, priors of the importance of neighborhood participation in decision-making, i.e., proposing and choosing the projects they want to see carried out in their communes, play a relevant role in the preference for citizens' participation. However, receiving information on the participatory program does not affect the preference for public participation for people with differing priors. On the contrary, the evidence shows that those who already believed that it was important to give citizens a voice and vote tend to marginally reduce their likelihood to indicate that citizens should be the ones to choose once they receive information about the citizen participatory project.

4.4 Discussion of Results

The evidence presented in this article shows that citizens of the City of Buenos Aires have an overall positive assessment of government. In particular, most people believe the government is competent, benevolent, honest, and trustworthy (Figure 2). These beliefs may be supported by an ever-growing reliance by the government on transparency and participation initiatives. Survey respondents who have higher priors about the quality of the government, who believe in participatory programs, or believe that citizens can band together to petition authorities, have a prerequisite for social capital accumulation (trust in others), and are aware of the existence of participatory programs in the city rate better the government in every dimension and consider it more trustworthy. Given that participation is relatively limited to a small number of individuals and that not everybody knows about the existence of these programs, the randomized treatments attempt to evaluate whether providing information matters to change beliefs and whether it is enough only to provide information about the program or the information should include details about the effective implementation of the program (e.g., how many people participated, how much money was allocated, etc.). Results indicate that providing detailed information matters, even in the context of a relatively low-intensity treatment (offering information that is already available on the website), but providing information about the program does not. One possibility for the divergence could be that the effect of T1 is highly contingent on existent levels of trust. Only those who trust the government believe the treatment information, while those who do not trust others do not incorporate that information. T2, however, by showing that the program is running and has tangible outputs, may have a broader appeal. It may also be the case that T1 does not offer the individual any information that would make them change their priors about the ability to strengthen networks and social capital (the program takes place online and they have no information about how many or who participates). T2, on the contrary, shows that the number of people who participate is not negligible, and projects are distributed across the whole city and in different areas, which should reduce the concern about capture by the few. It is worth noting, however, that the differences between T1 and T2 are not always statistically significant.

Providing citizens with tools to participate in resource allocation should increase legitimacy by participating in the decision-making process, increasing confidence in the political system by opening the black box of decision-making, and reducing principal-agent

problems. Importantly, they should lessen the informational and power asymmetries that hinder trust and provide citizens with evidence that governments comply with their promises (Keefer & Scartascini, 2022). Providing information about those programs could increase the scope of the benefits to the general population. As we show in this article, the detailed information increases trust and the overall evaluation of the government. It increases benevolence/responsiveness and honesty/transparency perceptions, and it does not greatly affect perceptions of the government's competence. In other words, providing information increases the perception of transparency and the ability of the government to provide the goods and services that help those in need and are beneficial to the individual more than they increase the perception of government abilities. These results are driven particularly by those who did not have high priors about the quality of the government, which could be affected by the intensity of the treatment according to priors (those with positive priors are not as swayed by the information as those with lower priors).

The informational treatment is more effective when favorable conditions are present for a sense of collective action and social capital, and basic knowledge of the engagement activities. However, it is especially encouraging that those who respond positively to the initiative previously had a negative impression of the government, and those who have little trust in others see a government that encourages participation and provides information about it as more honest. Of course, the encouraging results also hide that many people are still not being swayed by the information. Moreover, the positive effects for the government as a whole do not directly translate into higher trust in individual members of the city government. It may be the case that citizens separate government from politicians and public servants, and it may also be the case that the treatments are somewhat orthogonal to how the questions were asked. The treatments are also not significant for the questions about whether the government listens and whether neighbors should decide. More work is needed to understand the mechanisms involved and fine-tune the treatments.

It is important to note that our results may be affected by the characteristics of the treatment–low intensity intervention–and by power constraints because of the sample size. Following McKenzie and Ozier (2019) recommendations for ex post power calculations, we set power to 80% and significance levels to 5% to estimate Minimum Detectable Effects (MDE), including stratification co-variates to reduce variance as we do in the estimation process (see details in the Appendix). Table C1 presents the MDE considering the survey experiment design for the main results, i.e., overall perceptions about the city government. Only an effect greater than 0.17 SD for the indexes, on average, would reject the hypothesis of null effect. Similarly, the current sample size imposes high demands on the effects on citizens' participation variables in order to be significant. Effects of at least 8 pp for any of the trust components or the perceptions and preferences on citizens' participation would also reject the null hypothesis of no effect. Further work may be needed to separate the effect or lack thereof of the intervention from the restrictions generated by the sample size (which would not be of concern if the intervention was scaled up to the city's millions of inhabitants).

5 Conclusions

Participatory governance reforms are usually advocated to improve policy and welfare outcomes and increase transparency about procedures, hence political trust. Participatory innovations may enhance the quality of democracy by shifting citizens' perceptions of government if the new forms of participation provide citizens with means of expressing their preferences and having a say in the policy process in forms other than voting. Informational and power asymmetries fuel mistrust because they reduce accountability. Individuals cannot hold others accountable for opportunistic or uncivil behavior if they cannot observe it or, even if they observe it, cannot do much about it. Participatory programs can reduce informational and power asymmetries by putting citizens in the driver's seat. Because transaction costs grow rapidly as the size of the group increases, not everybody can participate. Still, knowing that other fellow citizens can and do participate could have positive spillovers for the whole population. Having these programs may not be enough to change perceptions among most people; because direct participation tends to be limited, it is only through active information provision that citizens become knowledgeable of most government actions. The details or type of information disclosed to citizens could be significant for changing trust, at least in some dimensions.

This paper shows that providing detailed information about a participatory mechanism can positively affect citizens' beliefs about the government's responsiveness, transparency, and trustworthiness at the local level. These effects are stronger for those with worse priors about the government and those who believe collective action (hence, accountability) is possible. The results have important policy implications. First, they highlight the relevance of actively providing information to citizens to enhance political trust, which has been declining over recent decades in the region. Secondly, since low trust is associated with lower participation and demand for common-interest public goods, our results suggest that fostering interventions to increase trust among voters could lead to changes in the types of policies that citizens demand. Combining participatory programs with broad informational campaigns may increase participation, social cohesion, and political trust. Because participation in the programs is limited and there could be self-selection, the direct impact of the programs may be limited. Our findings suggest that information campaigns can be used in addition to participation initiatives to build trust among citizens. Hence, participatory programs could have a direct (through allocations) and an indirect (through trust) positive effect on welfare.

Many questions remain unanswered and are worthy of further research. First, future research should identify the mechanisms behind the results and answer why results differ across dependent variables that capture similar traits. In particular, it would be relevant to understand why the gains in trust in the government as whole do not seem to translate into gains in trust for the individuals who constitute the government. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to understand why there is a positive effect on people answering that the government does not spend its budget appropriately. Is it that the government does not spend it appropriately when they use or when they do not use participatory programs?

Second, future work should also test different messages to elicit whether people care more about the number or type of individuals participating or the program's outputs. Evaluating the program's impact and separating it from the informational treatment may also provide a better understanding of the impact of these initiatives. That way, we could understand how the change in perceptions differs between those who participate and those who learn about others' participation. Finally, it would be preferable to conduct the intervention in a larger sample to reduce power limitations.

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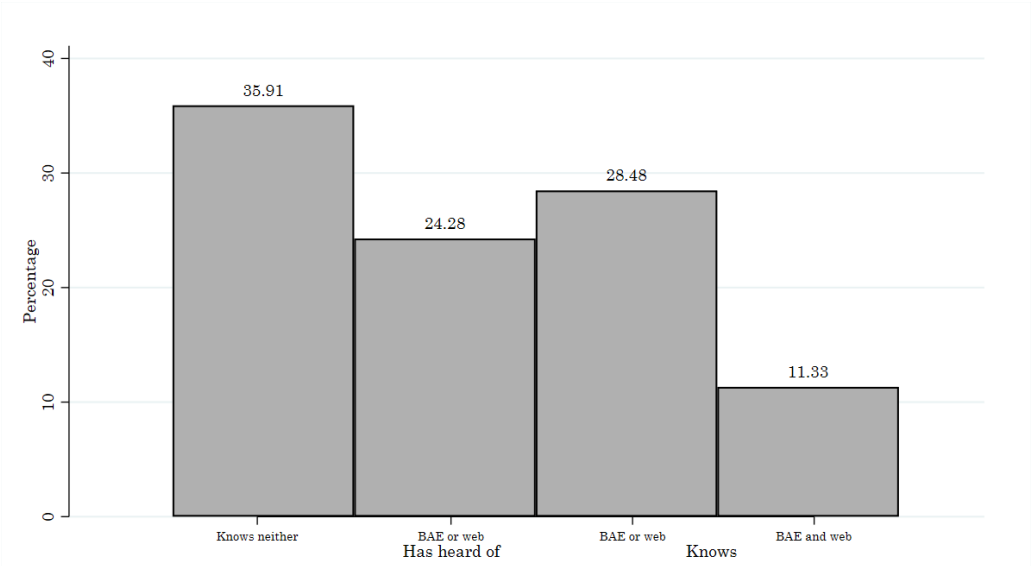
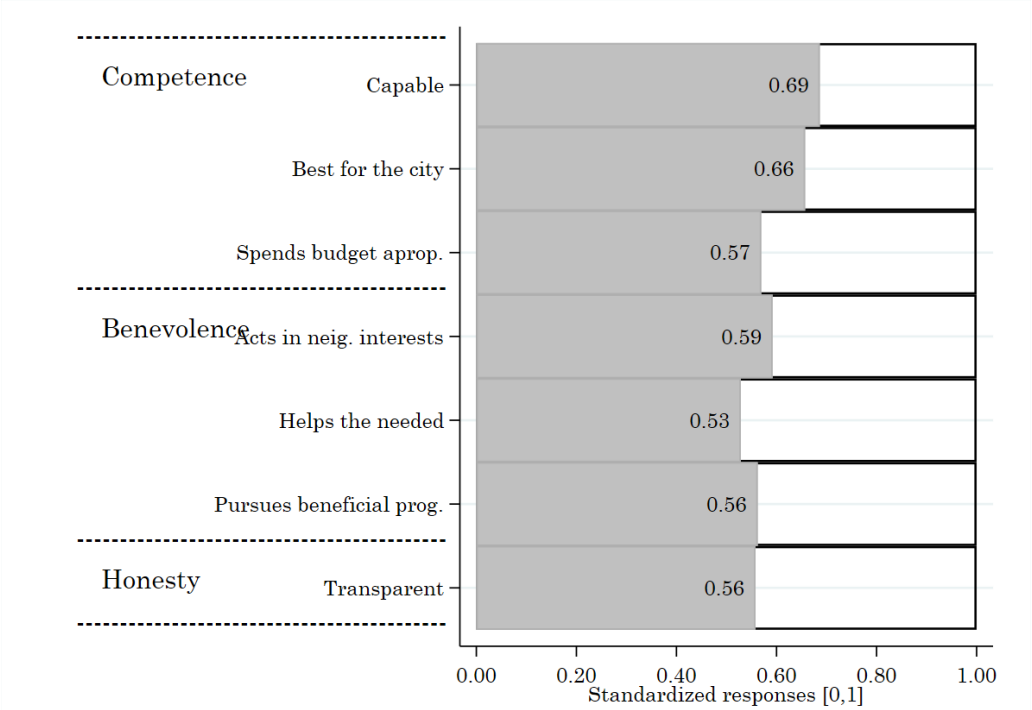
Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Knowledge of the BA Elige initiative



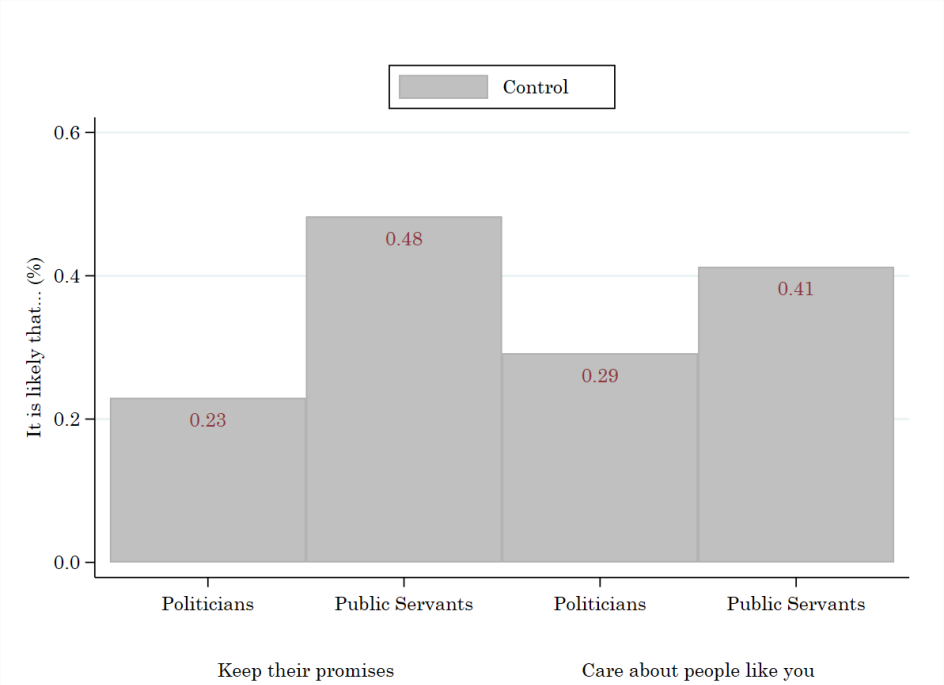
Notes: The figure presents the combination of categories of questions: *The CABA Government has an initiative called BA ELIGE where the city residents can present proposals and those with the most votes are executed after a feasibility analysis. Do you know the initiative or have heard of it? Do you know its website?* To make categories complete and have a well-defined order of the options we collapsed them: (1) Knows nothing, nor the initiative neither its website, (2) Has heard of BA Elige or its website, (3) Knows BA Elige, but does not know its website (or viceversa), (4) Knows both the initiative and its website

Figure 2: Components of Government Performance Index



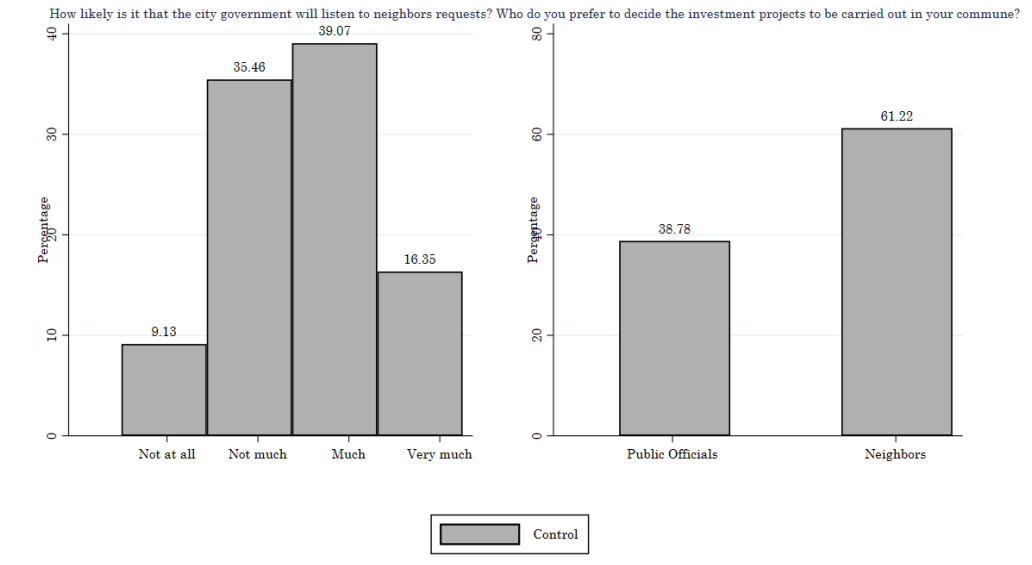
Notes: The figure presents categorical variables that assess citizens' perception of the city government, standardized between zero and one. Variables account for each of the characteristics asked in the question: *Using a scale from 1 to 7, where one is "Completely disagree," and seven is "Completely agree," please show your level of agreement with the following statements about the Government of the city of Buenos Aires.* "Pursues beneficial prog" indicates that *The CABA Government pursues programs that are beneficial for your community.* The interpretation of each bar goes as follows: *69%* of the surveyed individuals in the control group consider that the CABA Government *is capable*

Figure 3: Trust in Institutional Agents



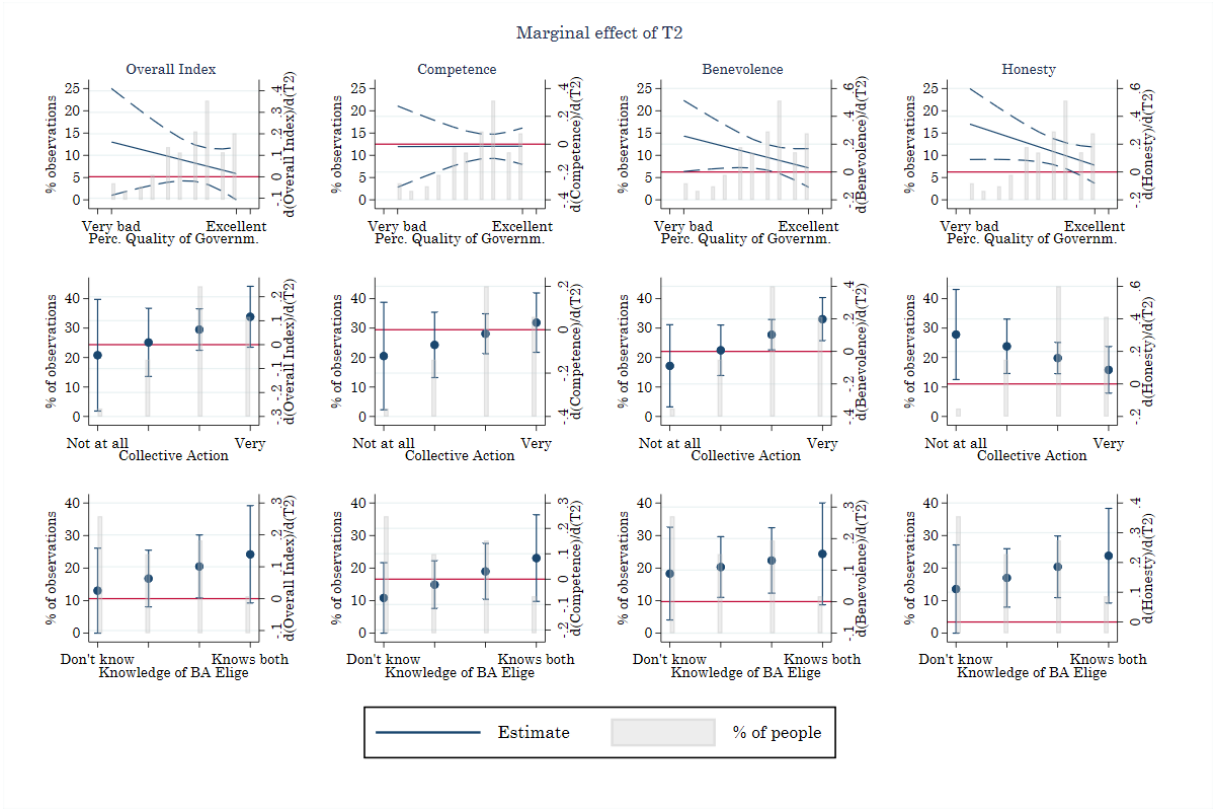
Notes: The figure presents a binary version of a categorical variable. Dependent variables take the value of one if the respondent indicated that it was likely or very likely that ***politicians/public servants*** *keep their promises/care for the people.*

Figure 4: Citizens participation perceptions and preferences



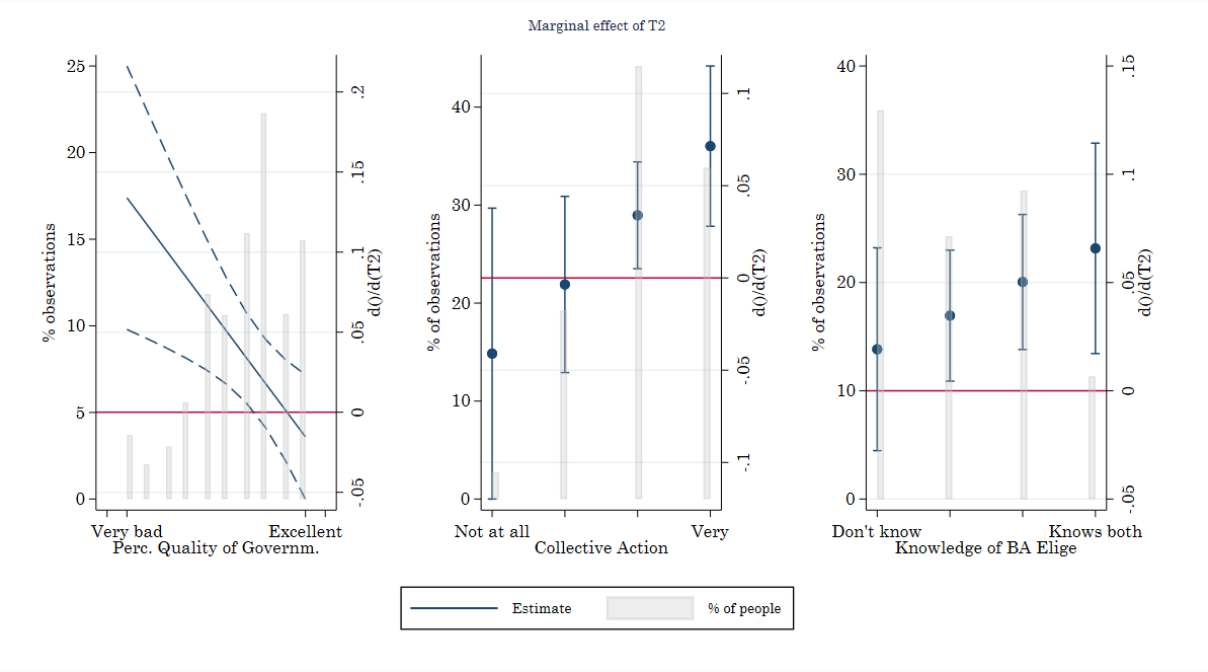
Notes: Dependent variables are categorical. In the case of ***"government will listen"***, people is inquired to indicate the level up to which they think it is likely that the government will listen to a neighbors requests. In the case of who is preferred to make decisions over investments, people were given only two options: public servants or neighbors, we code neighbors with one and public officials with zero Therefore, results are interpreted as higher preferences for neighbors involved in decision making.

Figure 5: Heterogeneous Effects on Perceptions of the government - Perceived Quality of the Government, Collective Action Capacity and Previous knowledge



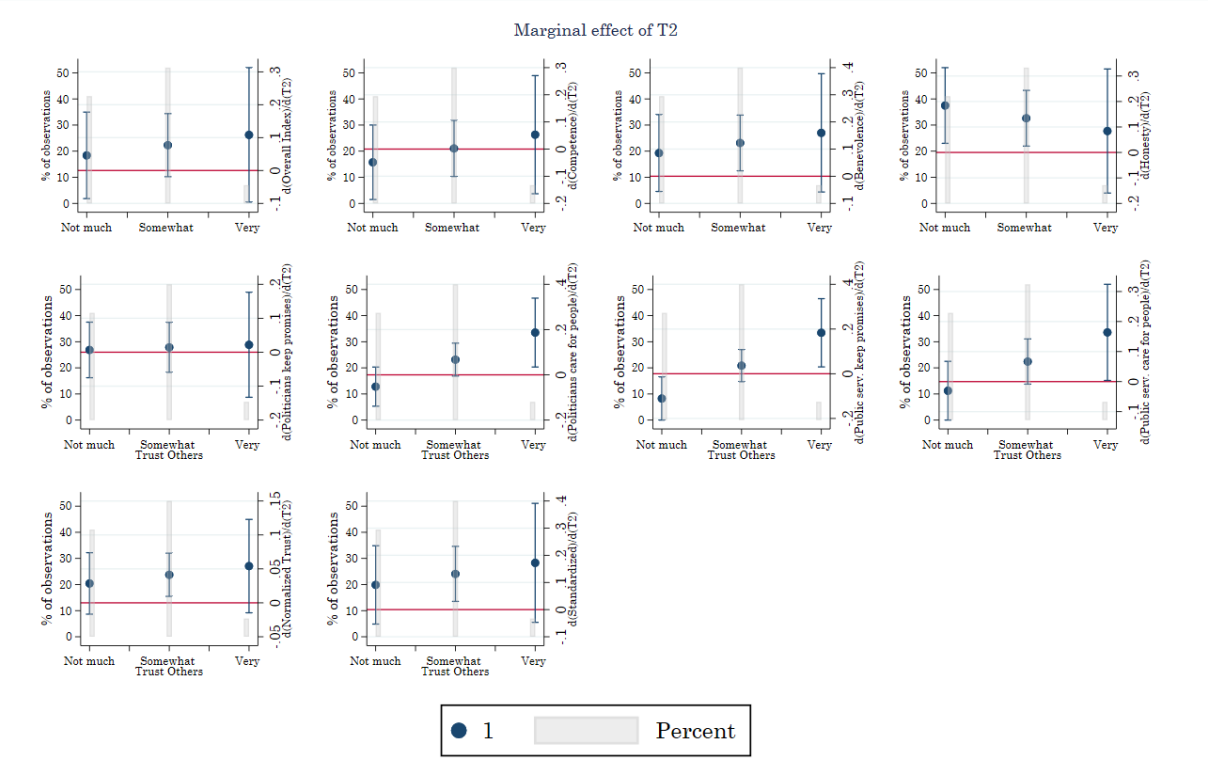
Notes: The first row of the graph presents the heterogeneous effect regarding the pre-treatment assessment of the government quality. The second row presents the effect interacted with the collective action capacity expressed by the citizenry. And the third one presents the heterogeneous effects by previous knowledge of the initiative

Figure 6: Heterogeneous Effects on Trustworthiness of City Government- Perceived Quality of the Government and Collective Action Capacity



Notes: The first panel of the graph presents the heterogeneous effect regarding the pre-treatment assessment of the government quality. The second panel presents the effect interacted with the collective action capacity expressed by the citizenry.

Figure 7: Heterogeneous Effects on Perceptions of the government - Generalized Trust



*Notes:*All graphs presents the heterogeneous effect regarding the pre-treatment generalized trust. The first row shows the effect on perceptions about the government performance, the second row on perceptions of trustworthiness of politicians and public servants and the last one shows the effect on a direc measure of trustworthiness in the city government.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Balance - Control variables

Variable	Sample Average (1)	Control (av. & s.e.) (2)	Diff wrt. Control T1 (3)	Diff wrt. Control T2 (4)	Wald test T1=T2 (5)	Sample Size (6)
Gender (Female==1)	0.546	0.499	0.059*	0.072**	0.645	1668
	[0.498]	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.030)		
Age	42.761	36.375	5.120***	12.608***	0.000	1668
	[17.050]	(0.712)	(0.990)	(0.977)		
High school	0.801	0.799	0.001	0.006	0.830	1668
	[0.399]	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.024)		
College	0.354	0.344	0.022	0.007	0.589	1668
	[0.478]	(0.022)	(0.030)	(0.029)		
Employed	0.491	0.495	-0.014	0.004	0.533	1668
	[0.500]	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.031)		
Unemployed	0.215	0.249	-0.021	-0.073***	0.025	1668
	[0.411]	(0.020)	(0.026)	(0.025)		
Socio-economic level (high)	0.178	0.157	0.035	0.024	0.621	1668
	[0.383]	(0.017)	(0.023)	(0.023)		
Credit Card	0.537	0.486	0.045	0.096***	0.080	1668
	[0.499]	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.030)		
Internet at home	0.885	0.878	0.003	0.015	0.533	1668
	[0.319]	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.020)		
Voluntary Health Insurance	0.391	0.361	0.048	0.039	0.764	1668
	[0.488]	(0.022)	(0.030)	(0.030)		
One or more cars	0.351	0.344	0.010	0.010	0.992	1668
	[0.477]	(0.022)	(0.029)	(0.029)		
Perc. Quality of Governm.	6.930	6.708	0.280**	0.340**	0.658	1648
	[2.322]	(0.105)	(0.141)	(0.144)		
Knows neither	0.359	0.405	-0.036	-0.090***	0.047	1668
	[0.480]	(0.022)	(0.030)	(0.029)		
Has heard of BAE or its web	0.243	0.237	0.015	0.002	0.584	1668
	[0.429]	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.026)		
Knows BAE or its web	0.285	0.264	0.024	0.034	0.718	1668
	[0.451]	(0.020)	(0.028)	(0.027)		
Knows BAE and its web	0.113	0.094	-0.003	0.055***	0.002	1668
	[0.317]	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.020)		
Generalized Trust	0.590	0.592	-0.009	0.002	0.714	1562
	[0.492]	(0.023)	(0.032)	(0.031)		
Collective Action	0.780	0.798	-0.016	-0.033	0.480	1629
	[0.414]	(0.019)	(0.025)	(0.026)		
Importance of part. in dec. making	0.912	0.916	-0.007	-0.003	0.821	1668
	[0.283]	(0.013)	(0.017)	(0.017)		
Prefers to increase reg. burden	0.154	0.174	-0.021	-0.034	0.528	1597
	[0.361]	(0.018)	(0.024)	(0.023)		

Notes: Each row shows statistics for a different observable variable we have. Column [1] shows the sample average and the standard deviation in parenthesis for the complete sample and column [2] does the same for the control group -in this case, individuals in T0. Columns [3]-[4] show the regression coefficient and the standard error in parentheses corresponding to OLS regressions -observable is the dependent variable and the treatment variables are the independent ones (T1-T2). Column [5] shows the p-value of a Wald test of equality of coefficients. Column [6] shows the sample size for each regression. *Gender* is a binary variable that takes the value of one when the respondent is a woman. *Age* is a continuous variable from 18 to 100 years. *College* takes the value of one when the individual has at least college, and *High school* is read in the same way. *Employed* and *Unemployed* are binary variables for those who have full-time employment or work in their house 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 Governm.* 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. *Knows the BAE or its web* and similar, are binary variables that take the value one if the participant responded she knows/has heard of/knows nothing about the policy. *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 answer VERY LIKELY OR LIKELY or not to the following question *Suppose there is a problem in your neighborhood for which you would like to find a solution and you decide to petition the city government. How likely do you think it is that the neighborhood where you live will be able to collect 500 signatures that support said petition?* Standard errors are robust. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 2: Perceptions about the City Government

Variables	Overall Index				Dimensions		
					Competence	Benevolence	Honesty
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
T1	0.010	0.013	0.014	-0.003	-0.065	0.067	-0.023
	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.051)
T2	0.079*	0.086**	0.082*	0.066	-0.016	0.110**	0.152***
	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.048)
Political Context (controls)							
Perc. Quality of Governm.		0.289***	0.289***	0.298***	0.293***	0.286***	0.255***
		(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)
Imp. neigh. proposing and choosing		0.038**	0.038**	0.036**	0.053***	0.025	0.011
		(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)
Collective Action		0.110***	0.110***	0.102***	0.101***	0.107***	0.061**
		(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.027)
Previous knowledge of the initiative							
Had heard about BAE or its web		0.157***	0.157***	0.151***	0.135***	0.161***	0.119**
		(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.053)
Knows BAE or its website		0.187***	0.181***	0.194***	0.147***	0.229***	0.162***
		(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.049)
Knows BAE and web		0.147***	0.150***	0.150***	0.130**	0.164***	0.120**
		(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.060)
Constant	-2.322***	-2.927***	-2.719***	-2.760***	-2.666***	-2.695***	-2.352***
	(0.077)	(0.121)	(0.144)	(0.152)	(0.156)	(0.165)	(0.167)
Observations	1,648	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520
R-squared	0.533	0.554	0.562	0.578	0.545	0.533	0.480
Unbalanced controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commune FE	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multinom. Propensity Score	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wald test	0.090	0.081	0.107	0.106	0.260	0.346	0.000

Notes: All dependent variables are constructed using a PCA method, and standardized with mean zero and standard deviation one. Column (2) incorporates controls and commune fixed effects, it is equivalent to the results of column (3) in Table A2. Columns (3) to (6) display the results after a multinomial propensity score matching technique, for the overall index and each of its dimensions. We use the complete set of control variables, both socio-demographic and politically relevant in the matching process. We also control for characteristics directly related to the political perceptions, collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative in the model. The baseline category for the knowledge of BA Elige is 'Knows nothing, not the initiative or the website'. Standard errors shown in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3: Trustworthiness' perception of Politicians and Public Servants

	Trustworthiness		Politicians		Public Servants	
Variables	Standardized	Normalized	Keep promises	Care for the people	Keep promises	Care for the people
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
T1	0.042	0.013	0.075**	0.116***	-0.031	0.027
	(0.047)	(0.015)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)
T2	0.117**	0.037**	0.012	0.026	-0.015	0.033
	(0.047)	(0.015)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.034)
Political context (controls)						
Perc. Quality of Governm.	0.272***	0.085***	0.016***	0.019***	0.067***	0.071***
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Imp. proposing and choosing (Continuous)	0.024	0.007	0.000	-0.004	-0.024**	-0.004
	(0.018)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Collective Action	0.058**	0.018**	0.032**	0.050***	0.050***	0.022
	(0.025)	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Previous knowledge of the initiative						
Had heard about BAE or its web	0.072	0.023	0.066**	0.038	0.075**	0.054
	(0.050)	(0.016)	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Knows BAE or its website	0.122**	0.038**	0.018	0.047	0.073**	0.112***
	(0.048)	(0.015)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)
Knows BAE and web	0.099*	0.031*	0.023	-0.021	0.101**	0.100**
	(0.058)	(0.018)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.043)
Constant	-2.545***	-0.178***	-0.015	0.111	-0.263**	-0.279**
	(0.157)	(0.049)	(0.100)	(0.107)	(0.113)	(0.111)
Control mean	-0.142	0.577	0.230	0.292	0.483	0.413
Wald test	0.093	0.093	0.027	0.002	0.575	0.823
Observations	1,520	1,520	1,500	1,488	1,499	1,485
R-squared	0.520	0.520	0.071	0.084	0.197	0.165

Notes: All estimations use a MNPS matching technique to make treatment groups more comparable, given the balance issue found in Table 1.They also include unbalanced and politically relevant controls, and commune fixed effects. Column (1) presents the results on a standardized trust measure ("Is the city government trustworthy?") to make it comparable to standardized measures of competence, benevolence and the overall index, which refers to an indirect measure of trustworthiness following Grimmelikhuijsen (2012). We do not include the "it is trustworthy" component in the estimation of the global index. Given that levels of agreement ranged from 1 to 7, we normalized them on a scale of zero to one to make it comparable to the results of dummy variables in the case of trust in specific members of the government: politicians and public servants. It is therefore what we call normalized trust in column (2). Columns (3) to (6) presents the results on trust in government members (politicians and public servants), following Keefer et al. (2018). Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment (gender, age, unemployment, having credit card) and those directly related to the political perceptions (perceived quality of the government, collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative). Standard errors presented in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: Treatment Effect on Citizenry Perception of Participation

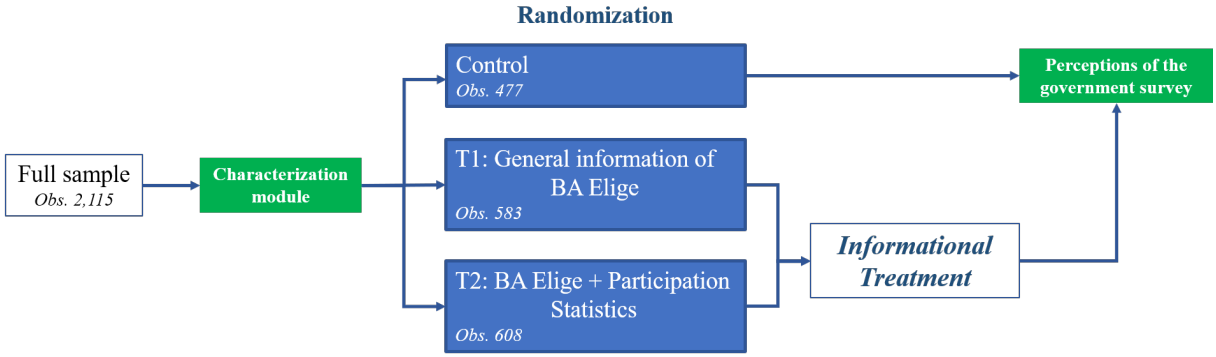
Variables	Government listens (1)	Neighbors should decide (2)
T1	0.020	-0.001
	(0.027)	(0.033)
T2	-0.012	-0.004
	(0.026)	(0.034)
Political Context (controls)		
Perc. Quality of Governm.	0.041***	-0.045***
	(0.004)	(0.006)
Imp. citizens participation	0.015*	0.072***
	(0.009)	(0.013)
Generalized Trust	0.036*	-0.054**
	(0.019)	(0.022)
Collective Action	0.065***	0.016
	(0.012)	(0.018)
Previous knowledge of the initiative		
Had heard about BAE or its web	0.038	-0.012
	(0.026)	(0.034)
Knows BAE or its website	0.012	-0.004
	(0.025)	(0.033)
Knows BAE and web	0.105***	0.073*
	(0.039)	(0.044)
Constant	-0.435***	0.385***
	(0.088)	(0.116)
Control mean	0.163	0.612
Wald test	0.164	0.926
Observations	1,498	1,520
R-squared	0.164	0.086

Notes: All estimations use a MNPS matching technique to make treatment groups more comparable, given the balance issue found in Table 1. They also include unbalanced and politically relevant controls, and commune fixed effects. Column (1) presents dichotomous version of a categorical variable that asks participants how likely is it that the government would listen to a neighbors petition if filed, it takes the value of 1 if the respondent indicated that she thinks it is very likely, and zero otherwise. Column (2) takes the value of 1 when people indicated they would prefer neighbors to make decisions over investments rather than public officials, and zero if the opposite was true. Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment (gender, age, unemployment, having credit card) and those directly related to the political perceptions (perceived quality of the government, collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative). Standard errors presented in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Appendix

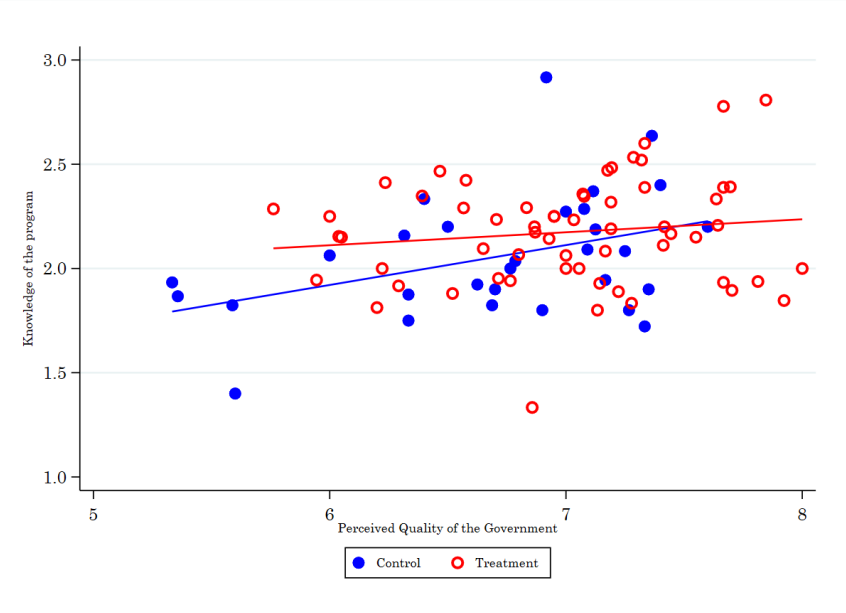
A Tables and Graphs

Figure A1: Randomization Process



Source: Authors' design.

Figure A2: Correlation between previous knowledge of the program and perceived quality of the government



Notes: Both variables are categorical and higher values of them depict greater valuations of the city government or more previous knowledge of the participatory initiative. Knowledge of the program takes values between 1 and 5, being 1 "Knows nothing about the program or its website" and 5 "Knows the program and has visited the website". For perceived quality of the government, values go from 1 to 10, being 1 the lowest perception and 10 the highest.

Table A1: Multiple Hypothesis Testing results - Balance

	Sample Means				OLS		RI		WY		BH		
	Total	Control	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	Obs.
Gender (Female==1)	0.55	0.50	0.56	0.57	0.058	0.019	0.013	0.002	0.120	0.010	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.498)	(0.501)	(0.497)	(0.495)							[0.033]	[0.033]	
Age	42.76	36.38	41.50	48.98	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.033	1668
	(17.050)	(15.554)	(16.610)	(16.487)							[0.050]	[0.050]	
High school	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.982	0.821	0.464	0.350	0.980	0.820	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.399)	(0.401)	(0.401)	(0.397)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
College	0.35	0.34	0.37	0.35	0.466	0.823	0.161	0.406	0.310	0.890	0.033	0.050	1668
	(0.478)	(0.475)	(0.482)	(0.477)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Employed	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.50	0.639	0.907	0.687	0.470	0.570	0.860	0.033	0.050	1668
	(0.500)	(0.500)	(0.500)	(0.500)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Unemployed	0.22	0.25	0.23	0.18	0.419	0.004	0.848	1.000	0.430	0.000	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.411)	(0.433)	(0.420)	(0.381)							[0.033]	[0.033]	
Socio-economic level (high)	0.18	0.16	0.19	0.18	0.136	0.301	0.053	0.123	0.120	0.340	0.033	0.050	1668
	(0.383)	(0.364)	(0.394)	(0.385)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Credit Card	0.54	0.49	0.53	0.58	0.142	0.002	0.048	0.000	0.110	0.000	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.499)	(0.500)	(0.499)	(0.494)							[0.033]	[0.033]	
Internet at home	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.89	0.872	0.453	0.420	0.192	0.930	0.590	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.319)	(0.327)	(0.323)	(0.309)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Voluntary Health Insurance	0.39	0.36	0.41	0.40	0.113	0.188	0.027	0.062	0.000	0.090	0.033	0.050	1668
	(0.488)	(0.481)	(0.492)	(0.490)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
One or more cars	0.35	0.34	0.35	0.35	0.746	0.737	0.347	0.321	0.710	0.780	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.477)	(0.475)	(0.478)	(0.478)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Perc. Quality of Governm.	6.93	6.71	6.99	7.05	0.048	0.018	0.008	0.001	0.040	0.010	0.050	0.033	1648
	(2.322)	(2.273)	(2.266)	(2.403)							[0.050]	[0.050]	
Knows neither	0.36	0.40	0.37	0.31	0.235	0.002	0.924	1.000	0.200	0.000	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.480)	(0.491)	(0.483)	(0.465)							[0.033]	[0.033]	
Has heard of BAE or its web	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.566	0.951	0.234	0.479	0.590	0.940	0.033	0.050	1668
	(0.429)	(0.426)	(0.435)	(0.427)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Knows BAE or its web	0.28	0.26	0.29	0.30	0.385	0.222	0.137	0.081	0.220	0.270	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.451)	(0.441)	(0.453)	(0.458)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Knows BAE and its web	0.11	0.09	0.09	0.15	0.848	0.005	0.555	0.000	0.850	0.000	0.050	0.033	1668
	(0.317)	(0.293)	(0.288)	(0.357)							[0.033]	[0.033]	
Trust Others	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.59	0.771	0.960	0.651	0.440	0.820	0.940	0.033	0.050	1562
	(0.492)	(0.492)	(0.494)	(0.492)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Collective Action	0.78	0.80	0.78	0.76	0.536	0.194	0.763	0.947	0.360	0.260	0.050	0.033	1629
	(0.414)	(0.402)	(0.413)	(0.425)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Importance of part. in dec. making	0.91	0.92	0.91	0.91	0.686	0.847	0.655	0.584	0.660	0.810	0.033	0.050	1668
	(0.283)	(0.277)	(0.288)	(0.282)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Prefers to increase reg. burden	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.14	0.383	0.141	0.885	0.957	0.410	0.210	0.050	0.033	1597
	(0.361)	(0.379)	(0.360)	(0.347)							[0.017]	[0.017]	
Survey duration (mins)	12.16	13.56	11.13	12.00	0.283	0.493	1.000	0.917	0.380	0.530	0.033	0.050	1289
	(24.617)	(43.762)	(6.111)	(8.244)							[0.017]	[0.017]	

Notes: Standard errors clustered by comuna are considered. All estimations use different inference or degrees of freedom correction methods to assess the significance of the difference in means between treated and control individuals. Column OLS presents the uncorrected p-value. RI contains the p-value from a randomization inference exercise with a thousand Montecarlo simulations of treatment assignment. WY presents the Westfall, Young, and Wright (1993) multiple hypothesis testing adjusted p-value, while BH presents the Benjamini and Hochberg (1995) version of such adjustment. Column BM shows the Bell and McCaffrey (2002) method of degrees Standard deviations are shown in parentheses and p critical values in brackets. Although we do consider that perceptions may be correlated for people living in the same commune, following Abadie et al. (2017) recommendation, we do not cluster standard errors at this level, neither the sample was selected, nor the experimental treatment was assigned based on clusters.

Table A2: Censored Sample - Balance

Variable	Sample Average (1)	Control (av. & s.e.) (2)	Diff wrt. Control T1 (3)	Diff wrt. Control T2 (4)	Wald test T1=T2 (5)	Sample Size (6)
Gender (Female==1)	0.519	0.489	0.112**	-0.014	0.050	532
	[0.500]	(0.030)	(0.050)	(0.059)		
Age	32.094	31.144	2.732*	0.866	0.342	532
	[14.360]	(0.793)	(1.518)	(1.677)		
High school	0.773	0.777	0.040	-0.084	0.027	532
	[0.420]	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.053)		
College	0.340	0.349	0.037	-0.101*	0.019	532
	[0.474]	(0.029)	(0.049)	(0.052)		
Employed	0.479	0.471	0.019	0.014	0.938	532
	[0.500]	(0.030)	(0.051)	(0.059)		
Unemployed	0.246	0.255	-0.020	-0.018	0.966	532
	[0.431]	(0.026)	(0.043)	(0.050)		
Socio-economic level (high)	0.150	0.144	0.013	0.015	0.974	532
	[0.358]	(0.021)	(0.036)	(0.042)		
Credit Card	0.457	0.428	0.043	0.087	0.493	532
	[0.499]	(0.030)	(0.050)	(0.058)		
Internet at home	0.876	0.871	0.012	0.011	0.978	532
	[0.330]	(0.020)	(0.033)	(0.038)		
Voluntary Health Insurance	0.376	0.349	0.043	0.077	0.598	532
	[0.485]	(0.029)	(0.049)	(0.057)		
One or more cars	0.321	0.306	0.041	0.021	0.747	532
	[0.467]	(0.028)	(0.048)	(0.055)		
Perc. Quality of Governm.	6.571	6.694	0.118	-0.814***	0.003	520
	[2.345]	(0.136)	(0.241)	(0.278)		
Knows neither	0.414	0.432	-0.020	-0.065	0.470	532
	[0.493]	(0.030)	(0.050)	(0.057)		
Has heard of BAE or its web	0.250	0.241	0.007	0.036	0.613	532
	[0.433]	(0.026)	(0.044)	(0.052)		
Knows BAE or its web	0.252	0.248	0.000	0.019	0.738	532
	[0.435]	(0.026)	(0.044)	(0.052)		
Knows BAE and its web	0.085	0.079	0.012	0.010	0.948	532
	[0.279]	(0.016)	(0.029)	(0.033)		
Trust Others	0.531	0.538	0.032	-0.078	0.098	488
	[0.500]	(0.031)	(0.053)	(0.060)		
Collective Action	0.782	0.775	0.024	0.003	0.697	519
	[0.413]	(0.025)	(0.042)	(0.049)		
Importance of part. in dec. making	0.897	0.917	-0.041	-0.046	0.916	532
	[0.305]	(0.017)	(0.032)	(0.038)		
Prefers to increase reg. burden	0.184	0.199	-0.038	-0.022	0.746	495
	[0.388]	(0.025)	(0.040)	(0.047)		
Survey duration (mins)	10.991	10.989	-0.493	0.834	0.326	415
	[7.711]	(0.527)	(0.680)	(1.385)		

Notes: Each row shows statistics for a different observable variable we have. Column [1] shows the sample average and the standard deviation in parenthesis for the complete sample and column [2] does the same for the control group -in this case, individuals in T0. Columns [3]-[4] show the regression coefficient and the standard error in parentheses corresponding to OLS regressions -observable is the dependent variable and the treatment variables are the independent ones (T1-T2). Column [5] shows the p-value of a Wald test of equality of coefficients. Column [6] shows the sample size for each regression. *Gender* is a binary variable that takes the value of one when the respondent is a woman. *Age* is a continuous variable from 18 to 100 years. *College* takes the value of one when the individual has at least college, and *High school* is read in the same way. *Employed* and *Unemployed* are binary variables for those who have full-time employment or work in their house 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 Governm.* 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. *Knows the BAE or its web* and similar, are binary variables that take the value one if the participant responded she knows/has heard of/knows nothing about the policy. *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 answer VERY LIKELY OR LIKELY or not to the following question *Suppose there is a problem in your neighborhood for which you would like to find a solution and you decide to petition the city government. How likely do you think it is that the neighborhood where you live will be able to collect 500 signatures that support said petition?* Standard errors are robust. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A3: Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables - Control group

Variable	Obs.	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Components of the Overall Perception of the Government. It...					
is capable	477	0.687	0.277	0.0	1.0
does what is best for the city	477	0.657	0.297	0.0	1.0
spends budget appropriately	477	0.570	0.287	0.0	1.0
acts in the interests of neighbors	477	0.592	0.304	0.0	1.0
helps those in need	477	0.529	0.309	0.0	1.0
pursues proj. beneficial for fam.	477	0.563	0.299	0.0	1.0
is transparent	477	0.558	0.318	0.0	1.0
Dimensions of the Overall Perception of the Government					
Competence	477	-0.055	0.966	-2.5	1.3
Benevolence	477	-0.156	0.981	-2.2	1.4
Honesty	477	-0.144	1.019	-1.9	1.3
Global Index	477	-0.117	0.968	-2.4	1.4
Trust in Institutions					
Trust in the city government	477	0.577	0.313	0.0	1.0
Keep their promises					
Politicians	466	0.230	0.421	0.0	1.0
Public Servants	466	0.483	0.500	0.0	1.0
Care for people like you and your family					
Politicians	466	0.292	0.455	0.0	1.0
Public Servants	458	0.413	0.493	0.0	1.0
Citizenry Participation					
Government listens to citizens	471	0.554	0.498	0.0	1.0
Neighbors should decide	477	0.612	0.488	0.0	1.0

Notes: This table presents information on the average, standard deviation, minimum and maximum for each dependent variable; it only considers the control group to properly assess the magnitude of the effects.

Table A4: Principal Component Analysis

	Eigenvalue (1)	Proportion (2)	Std. Err. (3)	Cumulative (4)	Std. Error (5)	Bias (6)
Overall Index						
Component1	5.27	0.75	0.007	0.75	0.007	0.001
Component2	0.38	0.06	0.002	0.81	0.006	0.003
Component3	0.31	0.04	0.002	0.85	0.005	0.005
Component4	0.29	0.04	0.002	0.89	0.003	-0.000
Component5	0.27	0.04	0.002	0.93	0.002	-0.002
Component6	0.25	0.04	0.002	0.97	0.001	-0.003
Component7	0.22	0.03	0.001	1.00	0.000	-0.003
Competence						
Component1	2.39	0.80	0.007	0.80	0.007	0.000
Component2	0.36	0.12	0.005	0.92	0.004	0.000
Component3	0.25	0.08	0.004	1.00	0.000	-0.001
Benevolence						
Component1	2.45	0.82	0.006	0.82	0.006	0.000
Component2	0.29	0.10	0.004	0.91	0.004	0.001
Component3	0.26	0.09	0.004	1.00	0.000	-0.001
Honesty						
Component1		1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000	0.000

Notes: The table shows eigenvalues from the principal component analysis (PCA) eigen decomposition (column 1). The underlying eigenvectors are orthonormal (uncorrelated and normalized). First eigenvalue is our index for each category because the first component explains 80% of the variance in each index (columns 2 and 4). Under PCA assumptions, the first principal component is the best synthetic indicator (in the least square sense) of the range of variability of variables considered. The index can be considered a sort of synthetic index that combines or condenses, in a single variable, the consistent information originally dispersed over different measurements. Heteroskedastic robust bootstrap confidence intervals are computed (columns 3 and 5).

Table A5: Average Marginal Treatment Effect on Perceptions about the Government (by component) - Generalized Ordered Logit

Panel A: Competence

	Scale from one to seven						
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
The CABA Government...	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat disagree**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
Competence 1: is capable							
T1	0.008	-0.014	-0.031**	0.003	0.059***	-0.020	-0.006
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.024)
T2	-0.005	-0.002	-0.005	-0.010	-0.006	0.001	0.027
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.021)
Competence 2: does what is best for the city							
T1	0.004	0.002	0.003	0.005	0.003	-0.001	-0.015
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.019)
T2	-0.001	-0.000	-0.000	-0.001	-0.000	0.000	0.002
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.019)
Competence 3: spends its budget appropriately							
T1	0.028***	0.012***	0.017***	0.012***	-0.006***	-0.019***	-0.045***
	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.013)
T2	0.016**	0.007**	0.010**	0.007**	-0.003*	-0.011**	-0.026**
	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.013)

Panel B: Benevolence

The CABA Government...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Benevolence 1: acts in the neighbors' interests							
T1	-0.011*	-0.006*	-0.007*	-0.009*	-0.003	0.005*	0.030*
	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.016)
T2	-0.003	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.001	0.001	0.008
	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.016)
Benevolence 2: helps those in need							
T1	-0.012	-0.006	-0.008	-0.006	0.003	0.008	0.021
	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.013)
T2	-0.029***	-0.013***	-0.018***	-0.015***	0.007***	0.019***	0.048***
	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.014)
Benevolence 3: pursues programs that are beneficial for you and your family							
T1	0.006	0.003	0.003	0.003	-0.001	-0.004	-0.010
	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.013)
T2	-0.017**	-0.009**	-0.010**	-0.009**	0.002	0.012**	0.031**
	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.005)	(0.013)

Panel C: Honesty

The CABA Government...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Honesty 1: is transparent							
T1	0.004	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.000	-0.002	-0.008
	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.000)	(0.004)	(0.015)
T2	-0.065***	-0.021	-0.014	0.049**	0.053**	-0.006	0.004
	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.020)

Notes: *p <0.10, **p <0.05, ***p <0.01. Robust standard errors are shown in parenthesis. Control variables include: age, gender, socio-economic level, labor status, if the respondent has known the initiative previously, pre-treatment beliefs on government quality and a dummy variable for collective action.

Table A6: Estimated bounds following Oster (2019)

Dependent variable	β^* T2 (1)	se (2)	δ (3)
Global Index	-0.1457	0.1346	0.53
Competence	-0.3631	0.1900	-0.004
Benevolence	-0.0207	0.2214	0.94
Honesty	-0.7861	0.3903	0.42
Standardized Trust	-0.2542	0.2535	0.62
Normalized Trust	-0.0798	0.0767	0.62

Notes: Columns (1) and (2) present the estimates of a treatment effect adjusting for unobservable selection and coefficient stability following Oster (2019) bootstraping strategy to estimate the standard errors of the coefficients. Column (3) presents the estimated δ with R^2_max of 1 and a treatment effect of zero. All corrections lead to a non-significant decrease in perceived trustworthiness of the government when people receive information on the statistics of participation at the city level (T2). Delta estimates indicate that unobservable characteristics are half as important as observables to generate a treatment effect of zero, on average.

Table A7: Main results controlling for unbalanced characteristics

VARIABLES	Overall Index				Dimensions			Trustworthiness (Direct)		Trust in Politicians		Trust in Public Servants		Perceptions and preferences	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Competence (5)	Benevolence (6)	Honesty (7)	Standardized (8)	Normalized (9)	Keep prom. (10)	Care for people (11)	Keep prom. (12)	Care for people (13)	Gov. listens (14)	Neigh. decide (15)
T1: General info	0.118*	0.010	0.013	0.014	-0.051	0.082*	0.001	0.063	0.020	0.089***	0.120***	-0.033	0.040	0.018	-0.005
	(0.061)	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.053)	(0.047)	(0.015)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.031)
T2: T1 + Stats. Participation	0.248***	0.079*	0.086**	0.082*	-0.001	0.128***	0.159***	0.147***	0.046***	0.013	0.024	-0.021	0.047	-0.002	-0.023
	(0.060)	(0.042)	(0.043)	(0.044)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.049)	(0.047)	(0.015)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.024)	(0.032)
Political context (controls)															
Perc. Quality of Governm.			0.289***	0.289***	0.283***	0.279***	0.244***	0.258***	0.081***	0.013**	0.016***	0.068***	0.067***	0.041***	-0.045***
			(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Generalized Trust			0.013	0.010	-0.020	0.054*	-0.032	0.025	0.008	0.085***	0.079***	0.081***	0.080***	0.037**	-0.040*
			(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.021)
Collective Action			0.110***	0.110***	0.111***	0.111***	0.072***	0.065***	0.021***	0.025*	0.044***	0.059***	0.038**	0.064***	0.012
			(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.025)	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.012)	(0.016)
Import. proposing and choosing			0.038**	0.038**	0.054***	0.029	0.013	0.028	0.009	0.001	-0.002	-0.018	-0.002	0.015*	0.071***
			(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)
Trust Others			0.013	0.010	-0.020	0.054*	-0.032	0.025	0.008	0.085***	0.079***	0.081***	0.080***	0.037**	-0.040*
			(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.021)
PPrevious knowledge of the initiative															
Has heard of BAE or its web			0.157***	0.157***	0.135***	0.167***	0.136**	0.075	0.024	0.068**	0.058*	0.053*	0.051	0.032	-0.015
			(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.051)	(0.016)	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.024)	(0.033)
Knows BAE or its website			0.187***	0.181***	0.130***	0.217***	0.161***	0.125***	0.039***	0.039	0.062**	0.064**	0.114***	0.039	-0.006
			(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.046)	(0.014)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.031)
Knows BAE and its website			0.147***	0.150***	0.135**	0.154**	0.130**	0.112*	0.035*	0.048	0.037	0.074*	0.089**	0.111***	0.066
			(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.060)	(0.019)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.035)	(0.042)
Constant	-0.117***	-2.322***	-2.927***	-2.719***	-2.636***	-2.642***	-2.329***	-2.500***	-0.164***	0.063	0.172*	-0.321***	-0.267**	-0.435***	0.405***
	(0.044)	(0.077)	(0.121)	(0.144)	(0.150)	(0.158)	(0.157)	(0.155)	(0.049)	(0.097)	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.104)	(0.085)	(0.106)
Observations	1,668	1,668	1,668	1,668	1,668	1,668	1,668	1,668	1,668	1,632	1,618	1,629	1,617	1,640	1,668
R-squared	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.023	0.018	0.023	0.036	0.027	0.027	0.033	0.033	0.015	0.011	0.016	0.012
Unbalanced controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commune FE	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wald test	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.027	0.056	0.129	0.000	0.003	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.108	0.789	0.647	0.769

Notes: Dependent variables from column (1) to (8) are constructed using a PCA method, and standardized with mean zero and standard deviation one. Column (9) depicts a normalized version of the trustworthiness direct measure between zero and one. The remaining columns depict dependent dummy variables. Columns (1) to (4) incorporate controls and commune fixed effects progressively. Columns (5) to (7) display the results by each dimension of the trust index. Columns (8) and (9) show results on a direct measure of trustworthiness, while columns (10) to (13) indirect measures of trust in members of the government. The last two columns show results over perceptions and preferences of participation. Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment and those directly related to the political perceptions, collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative. Robust standard errors presented in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A8: Main results with censored sample

	Overall	Dimensions			Trustworthiness (Direct)		Trust in Politicians		Trust in Public Servants		Perceptions and preferences	
VARIABLES	Index	Competence	Benevolence	Honesty	Standardized	Normalized	Keep prom.	Care for people	Keep prom.	Care for people	Gov. listens	Neigh. decide
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
T1	-0.105	-0.219***	0.022	-0.114	-0.036	-0.011	0.082	0.133**	-0.141***	0.029	-0.055	0.023
	(0.079)	(0.084)	(0.081)	(0.094)	(0.083)	(0.026)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.053)	(0.052)	(0.041)	(0.051)
T2	0.130	0.020	0.181**	0.252***	0.235**	0.074**	0.045	0.082	-0.047	0.094	-0.043	0.022
	(0.085)	(0.091)	(0.089)	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.030)	(0.055)	(0.060)	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.038)	(0.060)
Political context (controls)												
Perc. Quality of Governm.	0.282***	0.271***	0.276***	0.243***	0.273***	0.086***	0.031***	0.031***	0.070***	0.076***	0.028***	-0.032***
	(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.010)
Generalized Trust	-0.004	-0.054	0.053	-0.026	0.040	0.013	0.039	0.028	0.039	0.060	0.002	0.033
	(0.057)	(0.060)	(0.059)	(0.069)	(0.064)	(0.020)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.039)	(0.043)	(0.030)	(0.042)
Import. proposing and choosing	0.031	0.037	0.036	-0.009	0.030	0.009	0.001	-0.014	-0.020	-0.008	-0.003	0.082***
	(0.027)	(0.030)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.010)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.013)	(0.021)
Collective Action	0.092**	0.118***	0.066	0.070	0.014	0.004	0.049*	0.050*	0.065**	0.046	0.074***	-0.006
	(0.041)	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.051)	(0.046)	(0.014)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.030)
Previous knowledge of the initiative												
Has heard of BAE or its web	0.123	0.078	0.141	0.150	0.016	0.005	-0.009	0.057	-0.046	0.033	0.010	0.020
	(0.090)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.102)	(0.096)	(0.030)	(0.055)	(0.061)	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.039)	(0.059)
Knows BAE or its website	0.174**	0.064	0.229***	0.258***	0.143*	0.045*	-0.021	0.032	0.076	0.124**	0.051	0.039
	(0.077)	(0.083)	(0.082)	(0.090)	(0.084)	(0.027)	(0.053)	(0.059)	(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.043)	(0.057)
Knows BAE and its website	0.127	0.137	0.095	0.152	0.071	0.022	0.042	-0.054	0.038	0.063	0.064	0.117
	(0.119)	(0.124)	(0.121)	(0.149)	(0.129)	(0.040)	(0.081)	(0.078)	(0.088)	(0.080)	(0.060)	(0.079)
Constant	-2.445***	-2.298***	-2.448***	-2.090***	-2.407***	-0.134	-0.157	0.170	-0.146	-0.118	-0.169	0.169
	(0.262)	(0.284)	(0.290)	(0.304)	(0.293)	(0.092)	(0.187)	(0.206)	(0.188)	(0.205)	(0.153)	(0.195)
Observations	472	472	472	472	472	472	462	460	468	456	465	472
R-squared	0.549	0.494	0.519	0.429	0.490	0.490	0.121	0.091	0.235	0.204	0.138	0.121
Unbalanced controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commune FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wald test	0.019	0.026	0.126	0.001	0.010	0.010	0.570	0.450	0.138	0.305	0.790	0.991

Notes: Dependent variables from column (1) to (8) are constructed using a PCA method, and standardized with mean zero and standard deviation one. Column (9) depicts a normalized version of the trustworthiness direct measure between zero and one. The remaining columns depict dependent dummy variables. Columns (1) to (4) incorporate controls and commune fixed effects progressively. Columns (5) to (7) display the results by each dimension of the trust index. Columns (8) and (9) show results on a direct measure of trustworthiness, while columns (10) to (13) indirect measures of trust in members of the government. The last two columns show results over perceptions and preferences of participation. Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment and those directly related to the political perceptions, collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative. Robust standard errors presented in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A9: Trustworthiness' perception of different agents

Variable	Keep their promises				Care about people like you			
	Politicians	Public Servants	Family	Neighbors	Politicians	Public Servants	Family	Neighbors
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
T1	0.075**	-0.031	0.038	-0.062*	0.116***	0.027	0.033	-0.023
	(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.036)
T2	0.012	-0.015	0.030	0.003	0.026	0.033	0.008	-0.016
	(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.036)
Political context (controls)								
Perc. Government Quality	0.016***	0.067***	0.012**	0.028***	0.019***	0.071***	0.015**	0.025***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Generalized Trust	0.084***	0.068***	0.080***	0.137***	0.086***	0.083***	0.071***	0.079***
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.023)
Collective Action	0.032**	0.050***	-0.001	0.054***	0.050***	0.022	0.020	0.084***
	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.020)
Imp. neigh. proposing and choosing	0.000	-0.024**	0.015	0.021	-0.004	-0.004	0.017	0.026**
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)
Constant	0.055	-0.305***	0.361***	-0.224**	0.139	-0.274***	0.209**	-0.283***
	(0.084)	(0.082)	(0.106)	(0.092)	(0.080)	(0.083)	(0.095)	(0.079)
Previous knowledge of the initiative								
Had heard about BAE or its web	0.066**	0.075**	-0.022	-0.022	0.038	0.054	0.023	0.050
	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.030)	(0.037)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.037)
Knows BAE or its website	0.018	0.073**	-0.010	0.049	0.047	0.112***	0.046	0.066*
	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.036)
Knows BAE and web	0.023	0.101**	0.020	0.105**	-0.021	0.100**	0.027	0.055
	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.036)	(0.046)	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.048)
Constant	-0.015	-0.263**	0.369***	-0.201	0.111	-0.279**	0.217**	-0.284**
	(0.100)	(0.113)	(0.103)	(0.125)	(0.107)	(0.111)	(0.110)	(0.128)
Control mean	0.230	0.483	0.753	0.550	0.292	0.413	0.703	0.484
Wald test	0.027	0.575	0.756	0.039	0.002	0.823	0.380	0.843
Observations	1,500	1,499	1,486	1,458	1,488	1,485	1,476	1,457
R-squared	0.071	0.197	0.053	0.092	0.084	0.165	0.049	0.073

Notes: All estimations use a MNPS matching technique to make treatment groups more comparable, given the balance issue found in Table 1.They also include controls and commune fixed effects.Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment (gender, age, unemployment, having credit card) and those directly related to the political perceptions (perceived quality of the government, collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative). Standard errors presented in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

B Heterogeneous effects

Table B1: Heterogeneous Effects of Perceived Government Quality and Collective Action - Overall perceptions of the Government

Variables	Perceived Quality of the Government				Collective Action Capacity			
	Overall	Dimensions			Overall	Dimensions		
	Index	Competence	Benevolence	Honesty	Index	Competence	Benevolence	Honesty
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
T1	0.081	0.015	0.154	0.051	0.219	0.146	0.243	0.288
	(0.157)	(0.176)	(0.158)	(0.169)	(0.174)	(0.182)	(0.179)	(0.217)
T2	0.179	-0.018	0.284*	0.377**	-0.098	-0.173	-0.184	0.376*
	(0.144)	(0.169)	(0.148)	(0.147)	(0.169)	(0.180)	(0.182)	(0.201)
Perc. Quality of Governm.	0.308***	0.296***	0.299***	0.270***				
	(0.013)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.014)				
T1 × Perc. Quality of Gov.	-0.012	-0.011	-0.013	-0.011				
	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.021)				
T2 × Perc. Quality of Gov.	-0.016	0.000	-0.026	-0.033*				
	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.019)				
Collective Action					0.112***	0.110***	0.099**	0.118**
					(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.039)	(0.050)
T1 × Collective Action					-0.071	-0.068	-0.056	-0.100
					(0.054)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.067)
T2 × Collective Action					0.054	0.051	0.096*	-0.072
					(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.062)
Constant	-2.834***	-2.693***	-2.796***	-2.469***	-2.792***	-2.696***	-2.672***	-2.530***
	(0.169)	(0.187)	(0.180)	(0.189)	(0.175)	(0.183)	(0.189)	(0.216)
Observations	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520
R-squared	0.579	0.545	0.533	0.481	0.580	0.546	0.535	0.481
Wald test	0.541	0.847	0.435	0.048	0.074	0.080	0.023	0.643

Notes: All dependent variables are constructed using a PCA method, and standardized with mean zero and standard deviation one. All columns include controls and commune fixed effects. Columns (1) to (4) display the results of the heterogeneous effects of the perceived quality of the government, prior to the treatment, and columns (5) to (8) the heterogeneous effects of collective action perceptions. Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment and those characteristics directly related to the political perceptions: collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative. Standard errors shown in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table B2: Heterogeneous Effects of Perceived Government Quality and Collective Action - Trust in Government members

	Trust in the	Politicians		Public Servants		Trust in the	Politicians		Public Servants	
Variables	Government	Keep promises	Care for people	Keep promises	Care for people	Government	Keep promises	Care for people	Keep promises	Care for people
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
T1	0.101**	-0.007	0.125	-0.135	0.058	0.033	0.096	0.153	-0.178	-0.028
	(0.048)	(0.099)	(0.099)	(0.096)	(0.092)	(0.057)	(0.109)	(0.115)	(0.128)	(0.136)
T2	0.151***	-0.030	0.072	-0.080	0.103	-0.078	-0.152	-0.075	-0.347***	-0.054
	(0.048)	(0.098)	(0.096)	(0.090)	(0.089)	(0.057)	(0.107)	(0.112)	(0.128)	(0.142)
Perc. Quality of Governm.	0.096***	0.010	0.022*	0.059***	0.076***					
	(0.004)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.010)					
T1 × Perc. Quality of Gov.	-0.013**	0.012	-0.001	0.015	-0.005					
	(0.006)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)					
T2 × Perc. Quality of Gov.	-0.017***	0.006	-0.007	0.009	-0.010					
	(0.006)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.013)					
Collective Action						0.009	0.018	0.045*	0.002	0.008
						(0.013)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.032)	(0.034)
T1 × Collective Action						-0.006	-0.007	-0.012	0.047	0.018
						(0.018)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.042)
T2 × Collective Action						0.037**	0.053	0.033	0.108***	0.028
						(0.018)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.044)
Constant	-0.254***	0.030	0.089	-0.200	-0.319**	-0.151***	0.025	0.128	-0.112	-0.234
	(0.054)	(0.121)	(0.126)	(0.129)	(0.126)	(0.058)	(0.118)	(0.123)	(0.140)	(0.148)
Observations	1,520	1,500	1,488	1,499	1,485	1,520	1,500	1,488	1,499	1,485
R-squared	0.522	0.071	0.084	0.198	0.165	0.522	0.073	0.085	0.201	0.165
Wald test	0.346	0.795	0.568	0.513	0.591	0.0574	0.0213	0.0485	0.135	0.829

Notes: All dependent variables are either normalized between zero and one, or are dummies. All columns include controls and commune fixed effects. Columns (1) to (5) display the results of the heterogeneous effects of the perceived quality of the government, prior to the treatment, and columns (6) to (10) the heterogeneous effects of collective action perceptions. Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment and those characteristics directly related to the political perceptions: collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative. Standard errors shown in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table B3: Heterogeneous Effects of Collective Action and Importance of Citizens participation - Perceptions and Preferences for participation

Variables	Collective Action Capacity		Importance of Participation	
	Government listens	Neighbors should decide	Government listens	Neighbors should decide
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
T1	0.035	0.137	-0.096	0.310**
	(0.094)	(0.135)	(0.106)	(0.136)
T2	-0.170*	0.174	-0.099	0.329**
	(0.090)	(0.141)	(0.102)	(0.144)
Collective Action	0.052**	0.049		
	(0.023)	(0.033)		
T1 × Collective Action	-0.005	-0.044		
	(0.031)	(0.042)		
T2 × Collective Action	0.051*	-0.058		
	(0.030)	(0.044)		
Imp. neigh. propose and choose			0.076	0.194**
			(0.067)	(0.088)
T1 × Neigh. propose and choose			0.027	-0.073**
			(0.025)	(0.031)
T2 × Neigh. propose and choose			0.020	-0.079**
			(0.023)	(0.032)
Constant	-0.395***	0.282*	-0.213	0.364*
	(0.107)	(0.148)	(0.166)	(0.190)
Observations	1,498	1,520	1,498	1,520
R-squared	0.166	0.088	0.166	0.094
Wald test	0.0190	0.764	0.981	0.886

Notes: All columns include controls and commune fixed effects. Columns (1) and (2) display the results of the heterogeneous effects of the perceived collective action capacity, and columns (3) and (4) the heterogeneous effects of the importance of citizens participation in decision-making. Control variables include those found unbalanced after treatment assignment and those characteristics directly related to the political perceptions: collective action capacity, importance of citizens participation in decision-making and previous knowledge of the initiative. Standard errors shown in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table B4: Heterogeneous Effects of Previous Knowledge of the initiative - Perceptions and Preferences for participation

VARIABLES	Overall	Dimensions			Trust in the	Politicians		Public Servants		Government	Neighbors
	Index	Competence	Benevolence	Honesty	Government	Keep promises	Care for others	Keep promises	Care for others	listens	should decide
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
T1	-0.059	-0.125*	0.026	-0.096	-0.003	0.111**	0.107**	-0.027	0.004	0.020	0.038
	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.079)	(0.086)	(0.026)	(0.046)	(0.052)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.041)	(0.055)
T2	-0.025	-0.117	0.054	0.012	0.010	0.078*	0.034	-0.006	0.055	0.022	0.018
	(0.077)	(0.079)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.027)	(0.047)	(0.053)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.041)	(0.058)
Has heard of BAE or its website	-0.001	0.004	0.038	-0.126	-0.010	0.109*	0.049	0.043	0.043	0.068	0.038
	(0.089)	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.099)	(0.029)	(0.059)	(0.064)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.053)	(0.067)
Knows BAE or website	0.168**	0.088	0.232***	0.145	0.024	0.076	0.075	0.095	0.100	0.009	-0.002
	(0.076)	(0.081)	(0.084)	(0.092)	(0.025)	(0.056)	(0.062)	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.049)	(0.063)
Knows BAE and web	0.101	0.073	0.133	0.051	0.006	0.096	-0.109*	0.150*	0.140*	0.146*	0.144*
	(0.097)	(0.111)	(0.102)	(0.099)	(0.033)	(0.084)	(0.065)	(0.080)	(0.082)	(0.081)	(0.086)
T1 × Has heard of	0.234*	0.201	0.209	0.315**	0.046	-0.025	0.014	0.068	0.058	0.016	-0.152*
	(0.121)	(0.124)	(0.127)	(0.137)	(0.039)	(0.079)	(0.084)	(0.086)	(0.087)	(0.070)	(0.086)
T1 × Knows BAE or web	-0.005	0.030	-0.031	-0.020	0.011	-0.096	-0.061	-0.048	0.045	0.014	0.036
	(0.107)	(0.112)	(0.114)	(0.123)	(0.035)	(0.073)	(0.080)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.064)	(0.080)
T1 × Knows BAE and web	0.012	0.027	-0.012	0.034	0.019	-0.021	0.212**	-0.060	-0.043	-0.083	-0.110
	(0.140)	(0.147)	(0.147)	(0.154)	(0.048)	(0.114)	(0.102)	(0.112)	(0.111)	(0.101)	(0.114)
T2 × Has heard of	0.208*	0.178	0.145	0.394***	0.048	-0.102	-0.048	0.021	-0.030	-0.107	0.010
	(0.123)	(0.130)	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.041)	(0.081)	(0.085)	(0.088)	(0.089)	(0.066)	(0.088)
T2 × Knows BAE or web	0.093	0.150	0.032	0.085	0.031	-0.070	-0.019	-0.012	-0.014	-0.006	-0.046
	(0.105)	(0.112)	(0.116)	(0.115)	(0.035)	(0.076)	(0.082)	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.063)	(0.084)
T2 × Knows BAE and web	0.128	0.135	0.094	0.167	0.052	-0.179*	0.068	-0.085	-0.081	-0.050	-0.101
	(0.128)	(0.142)	(0.136)	(0.133)	(0.043)	(0.098)	(0.086)	(0.098)	(0.102)	(0.096)	(0.106)
Constant	-2.701***	-2.602***	-2.654***	-2.277***	-0.162***	-0.049	0.103	-0.262**	-0.275**	-0.437***	0.356***
	(0.156)	(0.161)	(0.170)	(0.171)	(0.050)	(0.101)	(0.109)	(0.119)	(0.117)	(0.088)	(0.121)
Observations	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,520	1,500	1,488	1,499	1,485	1,498	1,520
R-squared	0.580	0.547	0.535	0.485	0.521	0.076	0.089	0.199	0.166	0.168	0.094
Wald test	0.661	0.919	0.735	0.173	0.601	0.496	0.155	0.672	0.328	0.958	0.706

Notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors shown in parentheses. Control variables include: age, gender, pre-treatment beliefs on government, generalized trust, collective action, generalized trust and importance of citizens participation in decision-making

C Power Analysis

Before implementing the survey experiment analyzed in this paper, we did not have a reference on the expected effects of providing information about a citizen participation program on citizen's trust levels, perceptions about government members, and participation preferences, which allowed us to design the sample size accordingly. We work with the largest possible sample size given our budget constraints. Thus, we consider whether the low significance and magnitude of some of the effects is associated with little power, given the number of interviews carried out. We analyze if our study was well-powered by carrying out *ex-post* power calculations following McKenzie and Ozier (2019) recommendations.[34] Power is set to 80%, the significance level to 5%, and we include stratification co-variates to reduce variance as we do in the estimation process. We also specify a comparison of proportions to properly estimate power when dependent variables are binary, following Hemming and Taljaard (2016). Although our experimental design has two different treatment arms, we conduct pairwise power calculations given that we estimate the effect of each of the informational treatments compared to the control group, independently. However, we show Cohen's δ estimation, which defines the effect size as the square root of the contrast variance to the error or within-group variance, for a one-way analysis of variance when more than one treatment arm is randomized (Cohen, 2013).

Table C1 presents the Minimum Detectable Effect -MDE- considering the survey experiment design for the main results, i.e., overall perceptions about the city government. These calculations show that the sample size imposes high demands on the effects to be significant. Only an effect greater than 0.17 SD in dimensions, and 8 pp in any of the trust components, on average, would reflect that the null hypothesis of no effect is rejected when the effect exists with a probability of 80%.

Table C1: Power calculations - Overall perceptions of the City Government, Dimensions and Components

	Trust in the Government				Components						
					Competence			Benevolence			Honesty
	Overall	Competence	Benevolence	Honesty	Capable	Best	Budget app.	Neighbors	Helps needed	Beneficial	Transparent
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Minimum Detectable Effect (MDE)											
T1	0.170	0.169	0.171	0.177	0.047	0.081	0.086	0.085	0.087	0.086	0.086
T2	0.168	0.170	0.170	0.166	0.047	0.080	0.085	0.084	0.086	0.085	0.086
Control mean	-0.117	-0.055	-0.156	-0.144	0.687	0.657	0.570	0.592	0.529	0.563	0.558
Control SD	0.968	0.966	0.981	1.019	0.277	0.297	0.287	0.304	0.309	0.299	0.318
Cohen's δ	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.075	0.075	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.076
Variances											
Between group	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.3	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Within group	1639.6	1641.9	1662.7	1599.4	120.4	142.3	158.1	150.3	151.4	157.5	155.5

Notes: All MDE estimations specify a comparison between the treated and control individuals in a pairwise fashion (T^n vs. C). Columns (5) to (11) consider the binary nature of the dependent variable. They use a normal approximation without continuity correction, following **?**. T1 has 583 respondents, T2 608 and the control group 477. Power is set to be 80% and significance 5%. Means and standard deviations of the control group are shown. Considering the RCT multi-armed design, we conduct power calculations considering the joint significance of the differences among treatment assignments. The Cohen's δ (Cohen, 2013) is computed as the square root of the ratio between the group's means variance and the error variance; between and within-group variance, respectively.

[34] Ex-post Minimum Detectable Effect (MDE) might present some variation from sample to sample, given that we use the estimated standard error to calculate it. However, this imprecision will be much less than with a calculation of ex-post power (see McKenzie and Ozier (2019)).

Table C2 shows the results for the remaining dependent variables. These calculations indicate that the sample size imposes high demands on the effects to be significant. In particular, an effect lower than 7.5 pp, on average, would not be detected when analyzing the effect on trust in government members, which is in line with our estimated effects. Given the lack of significance of informational treatments' effects on the beliefs about who should decide and whether the government listens to its neighbors, we also present ex-post power calculations for each dependent variable in columns (5) and (6) of Table C2. We aim to assess whether marginally increasing the sample size might conduct to statistically significant effects. The MDE found with the sample size of this survey experiment and the power level set at 80% is between 7 and 8 pp depending on the treatment arm chosen to compare with the control group, for both the perception of a local government that listens to its neighbors and the preference for citizens decision-making. We, therefore, face a great challenge to find statistically significant effects with the collected sample, even after adjusting the power estimation for the baseline correlation to reduce variance as described in Spybrook et al. (2011).

Table C2: Power calculations - Trust in Institutions and Citizens Participation

	Keep their promises		Care for the people		Citizens participation	
	Politicians	Public Serv.	Politicians	Public Serv.	Listens to its neigh.	Citizens' participation
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Minimum Detectable Effect						
T1	0.078	0.087	0.083	0.088	0.070	0.082
T2	0.077	0.086	0.082	0.087	0.069	0.081
Control mean	0.230	0.483	0.292	0.413	0.163	0.612
Cohen's δ	0.076	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.076
Variances						
Between group	1.8	2.4	2.1	2.4	1.5	2.3
Within group	309.1	406.4	346.5	400.4	256.2	396.9

Notes: All estimations of the Minimum Detectable Effect specify a comparison of proportions in a pairwise fashion, given the binary nature of the dependent variable. This method uses normal approximation without continuity correction, following **?**. T1 has 583 respondents, T2 608 and the control group 477. Power is set to be 80% and significance of the effect 5%. Means of the control group are shown. We conduct power calculations considering the joint significance of the differences among treatment assignments. The Cohen's δ (Cohen, 2013) is computed as the square root of the ratio between the group's means variance and the error variance; between and within-group variance, respectively.

D Survey Module

D.1 Treatment vignettes

Figure D1: Treatment 1 - General Information of BA Elige

Figure D2: Treatment 2 - BA Elige + Participation Statistics

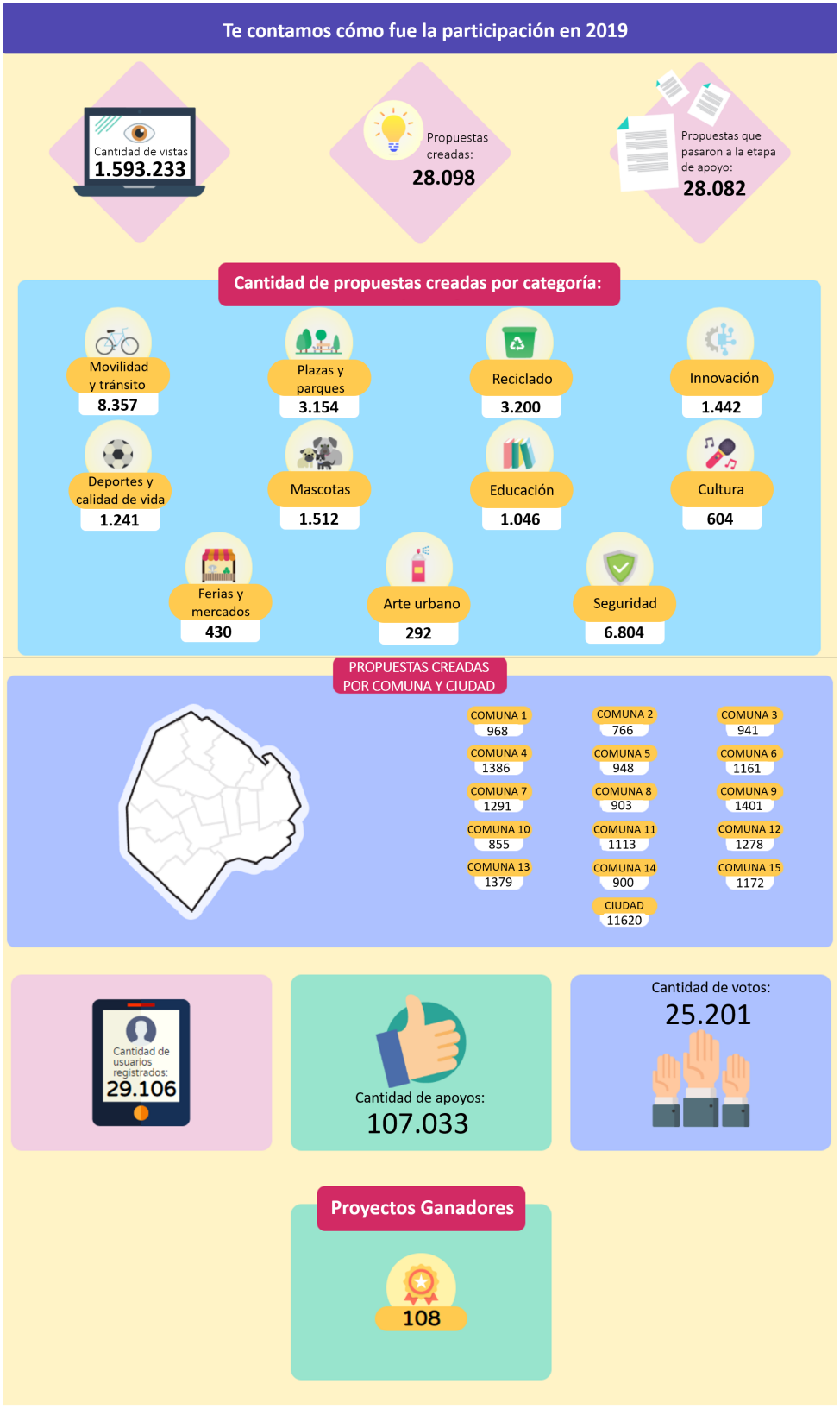
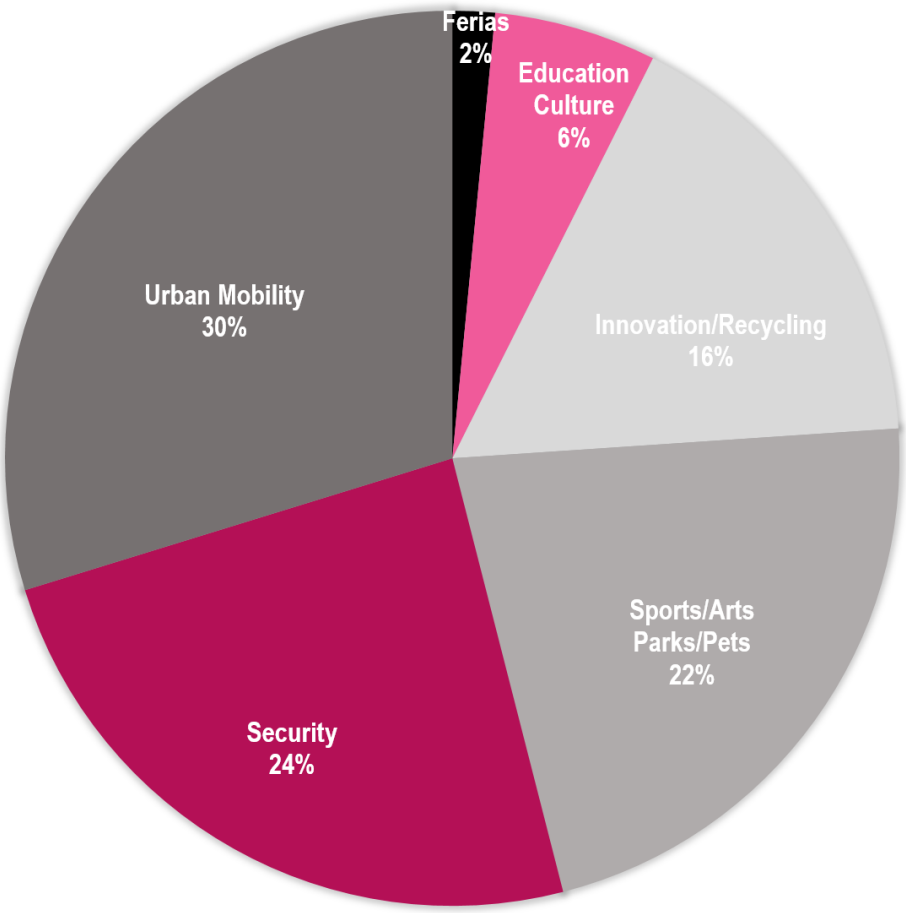


Figure D3: Proposals by policy areas



Notes: Proposals available at the web page were classified in six categories for simplification purposes, although initial classification consisted of 10 policy domains. Given that we analyze the effect of information on preferences for security and education, we highlight in dark and light pink such policy domains, respectively.

D.2 Perceptions of the Government

Items adapted from Grimmelikhuijsen (2012).

- Using a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is "Completely disagree," and 7 is "Completely agree," please show your level of agreement with the following statements about the Government of the city of Buenos Aires.

  The government of the city of Buenos Aires...

  Competence:

  ... is capable.

  ... does what is best for the city.

  ... spends the available budget appropriately.

  Benevolence:

  ... acts in the interests of neighbors.

  ... does everything in its power to help those in need.

  ... pursues policies and projects that my family cares about.

  Honesty:

  ... is transparent.

Trust in Institutions

- Using a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is "Completely disagree," and 7 is "Completely agree," please show your level of agreement with the following statement about the Government of the city of Buenos Aires: *it is trustworthy.*

Specific questions about the expectation that politicians(public officials) will do what they promise or care about the interest of people like you (following Keefer et al. (2018) and Keefer et al. (2022)).

- Now I am going to ask you about some groups of people, do you think it is (1) very common, (2) somewhat common, (3) uncommon, or (4) not common at all that they keep their promises?

  ... Politicians in general

  ... Public Servants of the CABA Government

  ... Members of your family

  ... Your neighbors

- And thinking about these groups of people, do you think it is (1) very common, (2) somewhat common, (3) uncommon, or (4) not common at all that they think of you and the interests of people like you when making decisions?

Citizens participation in decision making

Specific questions about the preferences over societal participation in decision making over investments and the likelihood that the government will listen to neighbors' needs and demands.

- If you find out that there is a problem in your neighborhood that needs to be solved by the city government and you meet with your neighbors to make a request, how likely do you think it is that the government will listen to them?

(1) Not likely at all	2	3	(4) Very likely

- Who do you prefer to decide what investment projects must be carried out in your commune your neighbors, or public officials of the CABA Government?

(1) Neighbors	(0) Public Officials

Figure D4: Map of communes and neighborhoods of CABA