

The Perception of Corruption and Political Orientations: A Study of University Students (UAM)*

(English Version)

La percepción sobre corrupción y las orientaciones políticas: un caso de estudio en jóvenes universitarios (UAM)

Percepções de corrupção e orientações políticas: um estudo de caso de jovens estudantes universitários (UAM)

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Abstract

Objective: The goal was to examine how a group of students from the Universidad Autónoma de Manizales saw political corruption and determine if they had a tendency to accept or reject it. **Methodology:** A typology of perceptions/orientations was constructed based on the most relevant bibliography on the subject, which made it possible to characterize five types of perceptions/orientations: cynical, conformist, fugitive, renovator, and rebel. In addition, criteria such as political effectiveness, interest in politics, affiliation with political groups, and exposure to various media were taken into consideration. Also, a survey was conducted for a display of 586 freshman students in the 2018 academic year. The SPSS program was used to analyze the survey's responses, and through regressions, frequency

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analyses, and percentage calculations, a relationship between the responses and perceptions and orientations was established. **Results:** In contrast to popular belief, young people tend to be interested in political issues. They believe that even though the corruption phenomenon makes them unpopular, things will get better from within their own environment. **Conclusion:** The young people in the exhibit oscillate between conformists and innovators; yet, the university should foster students' interest in political issues to foster discussion and the development of opinions based on democratic principles.

Keywords: perception; orientations; political corruption; political efficacy; interest in politics.

Resumen

Objetivo: el objetivo fue analizar cómo un grupo de estudiantes de la Universidad Autónoma de Manizales percibían la corrupción política y validar si presentaban una tendencia de aceptar o rechazar la corrupción. **Metodología:** se construyó una tipología de percepciones/orientaciones soportadas en la bibliografía más relevante en la materia, lo cual permitió caracterizar cinco tipos de percepciones/orientaciones: cínico, conformista, fugitivo, renovador y rebelde. Adicionalmente, se tomaron como variables la *eficacia política*, *el interés en la política*, *la asociación a grupos políticos* y *la exposición a distintos medios de comunicación*. También se realizó una encuesta para una muestra de 586 estudiantes de pregrado en el año 2018. Las respuestas del cuestionario fueron corridas en el software SPSS y por medio de regresiones, análisis de frecuencia y porcentajes se consolidó un marco de relaciones entre respuestas y percepciones/orientaciones. **Resultados:** contrario a lo que se piensa, los jóvenes tienden a interesarse por los temas políticos. Aunque el fenómeno de la corrupción les genera rechazo, piensan que la situación mejorará desde el propio entorno. **Conclusión:** los jóvenes de la muestra se oscilan entre conformistas y renovadores; sin embargo, la universidad debe promover el interés por los temas políticos para el debate y la construcción de opiniones fundadas en principios democráticos.

Palabras clave: percepción; orientaciones; corrupción política; eficacia política; interés por la política.

Resumo

Objetivo: o objetivo era analisar como um grupo de estudantes da Universidade Autônoma de Manizales percebeu a corrupção política e validar se eles demonstravam uma tendência a aceitar ou rejeitar a corrupção. **Metodologia:** uma tipologia de percepções/orientações foi construída com base na literatura mais relevante sobre o assunto, o que permitiu caracterizar cinco tipos de percepções/orientações: cínica, conformista, fugitiva, renovadora e rebelde. Além disso, a eficácia política, o interesse pela política, a associação com grupos políticos e a exposição a diferentes meios de comunicação foram tomados como variáveis. Também foi realizada uma pesquisa para uma amostra de 586 estudantes de graduação em 2018. As respostas ao questionário foram executadas no software SPSS e através de regressões, análises de frequência e percentuais foi consolidada uma estrutura de relações entre respostas e percepções/orientações. **Resultados:** Ao contrário da crença popular, os jovens tendem a se interessar por questões políticas. Apesar de serem repelidos pelo fenômeno da corrupção, eles acreditam que a situação irá melhorar a partir de seu próprio ambiente. **Conclusão:** os jovens da amostra oscilam entre conformistas e renovadores; entretanto, a universidade deve promover o interesse pelas questões políticas para o debate e a construção de opiniões baseadas em princípios democráticos.

Palavras chave: percepção; orientações; corrupção política; eficácia política; interesse em política.

Introduction

The perception of corruption is strongly correlated with political ideologies (Arkehede, 2014). The aforementioned statement supports the notion that, in general, when one thinks about a political issue, one could act in ways that are allusive to that issue. These issues relating to perception and behavior are significant because they help understand the context in which various behaviors, whether critical, passive, aligned with political institutions, or hostile, develop. For example, why does the juvenile agitation over public issues emerge? How is high or low electoral participation understood? Why is there a widespread rejection of some political institutions? Etc. The relationship between perception and orientation can be used to explain the above questions.

Analyzing how political corruption affects perception and how it later shapes attitude and behavior in university students is extremely important in the current situation of Colombia. This, first, because Colombia appears in some statistics¹ as a country with a high level of corruption; and second, because university environments train professionals to address the general problems of society.

The goal of this article is to analyze and provide the findings from research on perception-related topics related to corruption. Due to the increasing level of corruption present in government institutions, the analysis therefore focuses on how students perceive and behave in a crisis-related environment.

The theoretical proposals made by Hirschman (1970), Paige (1971), Woolcock and Narayan (2000), and Mierina are evaluated in the article to a significant extent (2014). Based on the previous authors, a typology is constructed that characterizes perception/orientation in five types: cynical, conformist, renovator, fugitive, and rebel. Regarding the most problematic behavioral types, educational environments can provide solutions. From this point on, academia assumes a significant role in reflecting on the availability of complementary courses.

The data related to the population of the statistical display are shown throughout this work in relation to their perceptions of political corruption.

1. Data from Transparencia Internacional Colombia (2012), which measures citizens' perceptions of a country's corruption, show that the region of Latin America as a whole is worrisome. Given that its citizens perceive the Colombian State negatively, the case in question never stops receiving attention. In addition, a number of newsworthy cases and ongoing legal investigations might be mentioned, including the health care cartel, Reficar, Odebrecht, and the toga cartel, among others. What stands out the most is the study by the Comptroller's Office, which shows how in Colombia corruption costs the State between 40 and 50 billion a year (El Tiempo, 2017).

Data are collected based on questions that include variables such as media exposure (referred to as "media"), political effectiveness (referred to as "EFIPOL"), interest in politics (referred to as "IAPOL"), and citizen support networks and participation in political institutions (referred to as "networks"). It is important to note that the study's most important variables are the ones mentioned above because they are related to the sociopolitical environment in which the participants are embedded. To put it another way, it emphasizes who individuals establish relationships with or the various community organizations in which they participate. It also shows the information sources individuals choose, identifies the institutions they think are not very helpful to the community (or, conversely, those they trust), and emphasizes the general interest that people have in political issues.

The first section of this article demonstrates how the concepts guiding the investigation have been conceptualized in relation to perception, corruption, and political behavior. The findings and discussions from the investigation on the perceptions and orientations held by Universidad Autónoma de Manizales (UAM) undergraduate students are presented in a second appendix. The most critical university environment variables are highlighted in this section. Finally, some conclusions are drawn.

Conceptual Framework: Perception of Corruption and Disposition to Political Behavior

Almond and Verba's contributions set the stage for the discussion of political perception as a research avenue (1963). In general terms, the evolution of the analysis of political culture went from being understood as a set of values, perceptions, and representations that individuals have about the political system to a broader consideration conditioned to the contexts in which it is analyzed.

For instance, according to Morán and Benedicto (1995), political culture is understood in four dimensions: 1. The individual as a political actor; 2. The relationship between the citizen and the political; 3. Citizens' perceptions of the political system; and 4. Conclusive assessments of the institutional framework. The focus of the previous categories was on perceptions, with a particular focus on those that are related to the phenomenon of political corruption in the public sphere.

The diverse body of literature has made it possible to support the idea that perception should be understood as a sensory process by which people choose and interpret environmental information (Coren *et al.*, 2001). As a result, the

sensory messages transform into something understandable and provide the person with an action function (Wittig, 1979). In other words, individuals have the ability to think about and make decisions that will allow them to behave in their immediate circumstances. Although internal factors affect perception, it is essential to comprehend the external, or environmental, factors.

According to Coren *et al.* (2001), the analysis of perception should not be done by analyzing isolated units, but should take into account global configurations. The above idea leads to the understanding that individuals are immersed in dynamic environments in which there is an interaction between the individual and society. In that sense, it is recognized that through different experiences people build their particular perceptions and it is there where the preferences, priorities, and motivations of the individual about what he/she perceives are evidenced. Therefore, perception involves ideological and cultural references that help to explain reality.

According to Vargas (1994), perception involves the "[...] recognition of everyday experience that makes it possible to evoke experiences and knowledge previously acquired throughout life" (p. 49). On the other hand, it relates its performance with the environment:

Perception must be understood as relative to the social-historical situation because it has a spatial and temporal location and depends on changing circumstances and the acquisition of new experiences that incorporate other elements into the previous perceptual structures, modifying and adapting to the conditions. (Vargas, 1994, p. 50).

To identify perception, four unchangeable elements are proposed by the earlier authors. One is the sensory process of organizing information; the other, the existence of an environment that delivers the information; the third, the relationship between past and present; and finally, action. On this final topic, it is suggested that in order to fully understand perception, one must also consider how people might behave in the future in light of their beliefs.

The term "corruption" has also been the subject of a lengthy dispute, particularly in studies of corruption in Colombia (Neuman and Engel, 2017; Lindarte, 2017). This research defines corruption as:

The violation of a duty by a decision-maker with the aim of obtaining extra-legal personal benefits for the offender or victim in exchange for the grant of benefits to the offender or victim that outweigh the costs of the offence or of the offended payment or service. (Garzón, 1997, p. 47).

Or, to put it more simply, it is understood as: "the abuse of public power for private gain."

It is important to note that the idea of "corruption" is not what is important, but rather its unique adjective,² in this case, "perception about corruption." The latter is defined as a sensory process³ by which an individual interprets, defines, and qualifies the information received from the environment about the unethical actions of those operating in political institutions. The previous idea tries to address the environment as a place where things like school, family, and friends/groups, among others, collide.

Regarding "orientations," the contributions of Albert Hirschman (1970), Jeffrey Paige (1971), Woolcock and Narayan (2000), and Mierina (2014). They forced one to take into account the analytical elements that can help understand how UAM students perceive corruption. First, the relationship between perception and behavior orientation was established. Next, a typology specific to the university setting was developed. Finally, the responses were examined to determine whether they were representative of a democratic environment or whether they accepted corrupting conditions. The university⁴ students as future professionals and social leaders thus voiced criticisms of how the Colombian political system functions (specifically, their views on its legitimacy). The key is to analyze whether their perception/orientation reinforces support for or rejection of corruption.

Perception/Orientation Model

In Hirschman's model (1970) there are three types of behavior regarding perception called citizen responses. According to the author, the citizen's perception of the political system can be classified into three categories: "withdrawal," "voice" and "loyalty." The first response occurs when citizens feel powerless and distrustful, but their behavior is passive. It is there that apathy, indignation, rejection and alienation can be seen. In other words, citizens are not encouraged to vote because they think that they do not make

2. According to Sartori (1984), a commensurable concept can be constructed by adapting it according to the research approach. That is to say, in a research process it is possible to construct one's own concept, which must be coherent in terms of meaning and adequacy to the context of study.

3. According to Wittig (1979), sensory processes are what translate messages into actionable information that may be understood.

4. According to the update booklet of the youth policy of the department of Caldas 2018-2028, young people are less interested in political issues and there is an institutional challenge regarding the political culture in the department (Salazar [i] *et al.*, 2018).

any difference and that everything will continue to be the same. The second response is the voice. In this, citizens are active, but their activity is divided between those who propose reforms and those who propose changes from an extreme or non-institutionalized path. Finally, the third response is that of loyalty. Here the citizens are conformists because they present two types of situations: one, that they benefit from the system; or another, that they are committed to it from values of continuity, even if they do not perceive benefits. That is, they develop a conformist response as long as they go with the flow, even when they conceive it as harmful.

The previous proposal was one of the pioneers, since it showed the relationship between perception and political behavior. However, advances in these studies led to reconsider these ideas involving more characteristics of the phenomenon being discussed.

For its part, Paige's model (1971) supports four attitudes: the first, loyalty, in which the citizen actively supports the government structure; the second, dissident, when the citizen is interested in politics, but distrusts the leaders; the third, of subordination, when the citizen is not interested in politics, but trusts that the leaders can change things eventually; and finally, that of alienated, when he/she does not trust the institutions or the political leaders.

As can be seen, Paige adds another criterion to the typology with respect to the one constructed by Hirschman, complementing the analysis. However, it is Mierina (2014) who manages to focus on a more general typology regarding the political environment, for which she takes up the ideas of David Easton (1992) on the entry and exit processes⁵ that the political system has. In this model, it is argued that each type of orientation corresponds to how the citizen identifies the political system in the face of its inputs and outputs. In this sense, efficacy is related to the input process; and confidence, with the output. The first occurs when citizens feel that they can influence the most important government decisions (internal effectiveness) and when they observe that the government responds to citizen influence (external effectiveness). For its part, trust is the good performance of the Government that can lead to social welfare.

When the performance of the State is deficient, it can lead to *coping*, which consists of the social construction of informal private networks of cooperation and reciprocity that allow covering what the State does not do (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). This can also be understood as alternative networks. Therefore, Mierina builds four types of attitudes directly connected to the State actions.

5. According to Easton (1992), the behavior of the political system can respond to the needs (output) and demands (input) of its citizens. This allows its stability or continuity.

The attitudes are:

1. Loyalty attitude: high efficiency and high trust.
2. Dissident attitude: high efficiency and low trust.
3. Subordinate attitude: low efficiency and high trust.
4. Alienated attitude: low efficiency and low trust.

The use of these models has highlighted that more educated young people are more inclined to attitudes of alienation; that is, young people think that their actions do not influence political decisions (Seeman, 1959), they feel powerless (Roberts, 1987), they show self-distancing behavior (Korzeniowski, 1994) and the lack of confidence in political institutions and inefficiency lead them to challenge the system (Bowler and Donovan, 2002).

The previous models are situated from the classic postures to the most contemporary ones. Mierina's orientation model is related to Hirschman's proposal, but connects more directly to the action of the State, in addition to proposing an additional category.

The model built for this research includes the advances of the authors previously highlighted; especially, considering two criteria: 1. There is a relationship between perception and disposition to political behavior; and 2. An additional category to Mierina's vision is necessary. This is the "critical subject to the system"; however, its action is the escape, for which the following categories are established: "cynical," "conformist," "renovator," "fugitive" and "rebellious."

The expansion of the categories allows understanding that the phenomena increasingly present distinctive elements, so it is significant to qualify the social aspects of the contemporary and particular context. The following proposed orientation model leads to the idea that in a context where individuals are permeated by the same problem—such as corruption—there are different perceptions/orientations: "cynical", "conformist", "renovator", "fugitive" and "rebellious". These types of perceptions make up, in turn, identities that go beyond social class, showing a motley crossover related to the different ways in which the personality of the social group is expressed. In this sense, the citizen takes advantage, conforms, transforms, flees, or is against the system.

Table 1. *Perception Regarding Corruption and Orientation to Political Behavior.*

Dependent Variable	Perception/Orientation Categories	Variables
UAM students' perception of corruption	Cynicism ⁶	Classified as a perception/orientation of negative nature. The citizen considers corruption as something bad, but tries to accommodate to this reality and take advantage of it.
	conformism	Classified as a perception/orientation of negative nature. The citizen considers corruption as something natural that exists in a society, recognizes that there are aspects that must be improved but their participation in change processes will be mediated by the level of importance of the fact.
	Renewal	Classified as a perception/orientation of positive nature. The citizen considers corruption as something serious; therefore, he/she is interested in political issues and proposes changes through participation in organizations, etc.
	Breakout	Classified as a perception/orientation of negative nature. The citizen considers corruption as something important to solve, but does not see him/herself as part of the changes, does not have any proposals and is not related to political issues.
	Rebellion	Classified as a perception/orientation of negative nature. The citizen considers corruption as something extremely serious and proposes root changes in the structure of the State through violent actions.

Source: Authors' Elaboration

6. Regarding cynicism, authors such as Schyns et al. (2005) state that it is the attitude of an individual who observes the political system with a deep-rooted conviction of evil, therefore, they believe that the government is irresponsible, does not respond to the interests of its citizens and that there is no way to transform the political situation for the better.

This model is based on operationalizing key concepts to build an association between perception and disposition to political behavior. The varied discussion of the sources employed is contained in the model, where the questions from the surveys prepared by Campbell and Thomas (2019) are rescued. For its part, the operationalization process indicated the importance of the following variables: “political efficacy,” “political participation networks,” “exposure to the media,” and “interest in political issues.”

The sources and their empirical studies show that the environment of participation networks influences political perceptions and these, in turn, condition forms of action. Also, the current forms of socialization of young people are mediated. Social changes have led to the use of the media on a more daily basis, which understands the individual as a receiver and producer of information (Castells, 2009). One of the assumptions about the media is its role in generating discontent regarding corruption issues in the country. Therefore, one of its effects is citizen criticism of political institutions in which they see corrupt action (Arkehede, 2014).

However, these conclusions are valued in the process of analyzing the results, which maintain consistency with previous studies, but in other cases indicate differences due to the particularities of the context where the sample is taken. The results show the relationship with respect to the questions and the construction of direct correlation matrices amongst the categories.

Methodology

To ascertain the type of perception about corruption of the UAM students and its relationship with the disposition to political behavior, a model of orientations was built based on the relationship between “perception” and “disposition to behavior,” for which the categories used in the survey allow identifying which answers are associated with a certain typology.

The results of the research were taken from a representative survey applied to 586 students from each of the classroom courses⁷ that the Autonomous University of Manizales has. The sampled population was that of classroom students in undergraduate professional careers. This excluded students in

7. Business Administration, Culinary Arts and Gastronomy, Fashion Design, Industrial Design, Economics, Physiotherapy, Biomedical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, International Business, Political Science, Systems Engineering and Dentistry.

virtual programs, intermediate technological careers and postgraduate degrees (specializations, master's degrees, and doctorates).

The survey questions were based on analyses of extensive literature on the topic of perception. From there, the questions regarding the object of study were formulated and addressed. Focus groups were formed that allowed clarifying the questions and response options of the survey. The collection of information made it possible to operationalize the concepts and variables to later relate and explain the phenomenon studied.

The research was based on the quantitative and qualitative (mixed) methodological combination. Therefore, the applied survey started from a probabilistic and representative sample that incorporated a total of 51 questions concentrated in seven sessions according to the combination of variables. Finally, SPSS was used as a systematization strategy where the topic of the description of variables and their association with each other was explicitly addressed from frequency distributions, histograms, cross tables, correlation matrices, and regression analysis, among others. This methodology provides a better view of the degree of association between the perception of corruption and orientation to political behavior.

A considerable number of variables that are part of the student's environment were considered, however, the ones with the greatest association were included according to the following classifications: "IAPOL": current interest in politics; "media": exposure to media, "networks": political participation; and "EFIPOL": political effectiveness.

Discussion

Description of the Sample

The following table identifies general categories to describe the sample. These include data on place of residence, social stratification, age of students, biological sex and academic area to which they belong. General reflections on the percentage data are included at the end of the table.

Table 2. Emerging Category

Place of Residence before College			
Place	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Manizales	210	35.8%	35.8
Town or city of Caldas	58	9.9%	45.7
City or town of the country	281	48.0%	93.7
Rural area	24	4.1%	97.8
Abroad	13	2.2%	100
Total	586	100	100
Pre-university Social Class			
Place	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Stratum 1	121	20.6%	20.8
Stratum 2	139	23.7%	44.7
Stratum 3	172	29.4%	74.2
Stratum 4	73	12.5%	86.8
Stratum 5	33	5.6%	92.4
Stratum 6	42	7.2%	99.7
Don't know	2	0.3%	99.8
Abroad	4	0.7%	100
Total	586	100	
Student's Age			
Place	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
18 years old	85	14.5%	14.5
19 years old	190	32.4%	46.9
20 years old	112	19.1%	66.0
21 years old	84	14.3%	80.4
22 years old	46	7.8%	88.2
23 years old	26	4.4%	92.7
24 years old	19	3.2%	95.9
25 years old	7	1.2%	97.1
26 years old	7	1.2%	98.3
27 years old	1	0.2%	98.5

Place	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
28 years old	2	0.3%	98.8
29 years old	2	0.3%	99.1
30 years old or more	5	0.9%	100
Total	586	100	
Biological Sex			
Place	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Female	314	53.6%	53.6
Male	272	46.4%	100
Total	586	100	
Academic Area			
Place	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Engineering	221	37.7%	37.7
Health, 22(2), 84-98	170	29.0%	66.7
Social and Business	137	23.4%	90.1
Professional Arts and Crafts	58	9.9%	100
Total	586	100	

Source: Author's elaboration

The Autónoma University of Manizales is located in the interior of Colombia; however, it attracts young people from different regions of the country. According to the Registry and Registration Office indices, it appears that the percentage of undergraduate students belonging to Manizales and areas of Caldas constitutes 40%, while undergraduate students who are not from the city or the department represent 60% (these figures are general). In its initial part, the table above shows the places of residence of the sample members during their last year of high school. Almost half of them lived outside of Manizales and Caldas.

Compared to economic stratum data, it is interesting to note that, contrary to what is expected from a private university such as UAM, almost three quarters of the sample reported living in a home located in social strata 1-3 in the year prior to admission, with stratum 3 having the highest frequency. Of course, the classification by strata represents a very imperfect indicator of social level, since it only characterizes the area of residence. However, provide a gross indicator that reveals that the University currently has a dominant focus

of concentration in its undergraduate that could be termed "middle class," as almost two-thirds of its enrollment (66%) is in strata 2 to 4, with 21% in strata 1 and the remaining 13% in strata 5 and 6. Evaluating the above composition, it is worth taking into account the university programs of the Plan Estudia or the State program Ser Pilo Paga⁸.

Regarding the age, the youth of the sample stands out. The age percentages are shown as follows: 45% are between 18-19 years of age; the second highest, at 33.8%, are between 20-21 years of age; while a smaller group between 22-29 years of age represents 20% of the sample. The data on biological sex show a slightly greater predominance of women (53%) compared to men (43%) in the composition of the sample. Finally, the University's academic offerings are distributed in three major academic areas, which are conformed by its deanships: social and business studies, engineering, and health. It is considerable that the health and engineering areas have the highest enrollment. This is due to the fact that they are the oldest academic programs at UAM and have consolidated a trajectory in the area.

The application of the survey allowed collecting extensive information on student perceptions of corruption. Despite the breadth of the information, the analysis has concentrated on variables that affect or are related to political behavior. The following is an analysis and reflection on the results obtained.

Variables Analyzed

The variables involved are: "EFIPOL" (political efficiency), "networks" (political participation), "IAPOL" (current interest in political issues) and "media" (media exposure), associated to a set of specific questions that, finally, indicate an orientation.

Political Efficiency (EFIPOL)

The political efficiency dimension indicates whether or not students trust the government's management. Also, if their concerns, interests and needs are taken into account, as well as if there is an affirmative response to their demands. In order to approach this topic, five questions were formulated to express the following themes: citizen influence on political issues, trust in the actions of

8. This program was sponsored by the Ministry of National Education between 2014 and 2018 with the purpose of giving access to higher education to young people from low socioeconomic status.

public employees, trust in electoral processes, and the government's effective response to citizen demands.

Table 3. *Percentage Efficiency*

Efficiency		
Variable (EFIPOL)	Percentage	
How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "People like me have no influence on what the government does."	Strongly disagree	22.0%
	Disagree	51.5%
	Irrelevant	12.6%
	Agree	11.4%
	strongly agree	2.4
	Total	100%
How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "The political figures we elect keep the promises they make."	Strongly disagree	42.3
	Disagree	46.1
	Irrelevant	7.8
	Agree	2.2
	strongly agree	1.5
	Total	100%
How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "Ordinary citizens have a significant influence on political decisions."	Strongly disagree	3.6
	Disagree	18.9
	Irrelevant	11.3
	Agree	43.3
	strongly agree	22.9
	Total	100%
How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "Most elected public officials can be trusted to do what is in the best interest of the country."	Strongly disagree	22.7
	Disagree	56.7
	Irrelevant	11.6
	Agree	8.2
	strongly agree	0.9
	Total	100%

Efficiency		
Variable (EFIPOL)	Percentage	
How transparent do you think the electoral processes are?	Little transparent	35.0
	Intermediate	55.0
	Very transparent	10.0
	Total	100%

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Regarding to this block of results, in terms of understanding political effectiveness it is important to note that a large proportion (72%) of the respondents indicate that they have some influence; this means, they consider that they can affect the government with their actions; on the one hand, a fact that highlights a high internal effectiveness. On the other hand, the question if the citizens influence on political decisions, again shows that they have a high external efficiency (66%), given that they expect decisions from the governmental level to be related to citizen influence.

However, the questions that directly target political leaders and public employees show a different trend. Noticed that with the second and fourth questions, 88% of the sample indicates that there is little trust in political leaders, since they consider leaders do not do what is in the best for the country and do not keep their promises. This dichotomous plane between a high confidence to influence institutions—as well as a positive response to their needs—versus a low confidence in leaders indicates that students distinguish two actions: one is the State institutions and the other the figures of political leaders, therefore, although they distrust the leaders, they identify that the processes within the institutions can respond to the needs of the citizenship.

Correlating “EFIPOL” with friends group conversations “networks” reveals that “EFIPOL” maintains a significant association with all the previous categories. Table 5 highlights the importance in political efficiency of discussing political issues with friends and also in political participation networks, which have a positive impact on 20% and indicate that those who have high efficacy show a high interest in political issues generating spaces for conversation in the groups to which they belong.

Table 4. "EFIPOL" Regression with "Networks."

Independent variables	Betas	Meaning
Networks	.109	.007
Circle	.396	.000
Equation		.000
R2 adapted	20.2	

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Political Participation ("Networks")

Participation in community spaces, sports, political, religious, cultural spaces among many others, evidence, on the one hand, the way in which a society develops its social structure. On the other hand, it shows that citizens generate coping alternatives through these institutions (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

The percentages of the variable "networks," show that a significant portion does not approach political parties (89%); however, in front of the question if they have attended a meeting with a political party, the percentage changes, but the trend of distancing themselves from this institution continues. From the sample, 37% said they had attended a meeting with a party and 62% said they had not. For its part, the question of whether they have mobilized or attended a protest on general issues remains low. Sixty-seven percent say they will not mobilize, while 32% say they will go out to protest. Regarding the question of whether the parties promote citizen participation, 65% disagreed, 33% agreed and the rest were indifferent. In response to the question of what estimate is thought to be lost from the national budget each year due to corruption? Half of the sample considers that between 50 and 70% is lost, while a quarter of the sample considers that between 10 and 40% is lost. The other quarter of the respondents consider that between 80 and 100% is lost.

In the same way, with respect to how many people are affected by corruption in the political sector, a high percentage indicated that "many" (95%). To the question of whether Colombians respect the rules, half of the respondents said "no" and only a quarter said "yes." The previous responses provide a frequency that indicates that the majority are removed from political parties and community institutions, in addition to expressing low trust in citizenship. However, when asked if they had voted, the frequency indicated that the majority had gone to the polls (79%). Once again, a major impasse has arisen. First, there is

a low relationship with respect to party and community trust, without affecting voting culture, given that it is high among respondents.

This aspect led to correlations between “networks” and current interest in politics (“IAPOL”). This category includes a set of broader variables; for example, the circle of friends (“circle”), the level to discuss political issues in networks (“issues 1”) and the level to discuss political issues with friends (“issues 2”).

Table 5. Correlation Matrix between Interest in Politics and Networks.

	IAPOL	Circle	Networks	Topic 1	Topic 2
IAPOL	1	.094*	.016	.279**	.487**
Circle	.094*	1	.142**	.069	.158**
Networks	.013	.138**	1	.113**	.038
Topic 1	.282**	.143	.093*	1	.390**
Topic 2	.491**	.159**	.031	.386**	1

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Note: on the unit diagonal, Pearson coefficients- under the diagonal Sperman coefficients

* The correlation is significant at level 0.05 (bilateral).

** The correlation is significant at level 0.01 (bilateral).

A high and positive correlation index shows the degree to which political issues are addressed among friends (Issues 2) with interest in politics. Therefore, this correlation accounts for 24%. On the other hand, the degree to which political issues are dealt with in the networks accounts for 8%; and to a lower degree, the amount of friends. What the matrix highlights is that the percentage of students interested in political issues increases the participation of social, civic and cultural organizations. It means that among those with a high interest in politics there is also a high percentage of their participation in networks. In general, the political aspect in the relationships with students is remarkable.

Media Exposure (Media) and Current Interest in Politics (IAPOL).

One of the hypotheses at present in research on perceptions/orientations is that the influence of media on the political orientations of citizens is very strong. This thesis is confirmed in this research results since it shows that the effect of the media by news and information affect the interest in political issues; however, the percentage of affectation is not as high as expected.

Metrics between networks and IAPOL indicate that about half of students maintain a high level of interest. And a quarter increases it and other decreases it; this, probably, is due to the processes of adaptation to the university (that is, students who have to do with socio-humanistic courses oriented to the ethical behavior of the profession and political history). The average interest in politics (IAPOL) was 57% for those in the first five semesters and 61.7 for the rest. These criteria are strongly related to the academic program and age. Therefore, students who are part of socio-administrative academic programs have a greater interest in politics than those who are part of engineering and, even lower, in health students. On the other hand, the variable age reported a low value (-.017); that is, age had no influence on interest in politics. The variables of exposure to the media (physical press, physical magazines, radio and television) were also examined.

Table 6. Regression of IAPOL with Media Type Categories..

Media type	Betas	Meaning
Television	-.196	.000
Digitals	.269	.000
Expomed (other news)	.168	.002
Equation		.000
R2 adjusted	12.6%	

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Digital media have the highest positive impact followed by Expomed while television shows a negative impact on interest in politics. According to the stated hypotheses, there was the signaling in the use of the media due to the high interaction with mobile devices, since with this type of devices political issues regarding corruption are reported, reproduced, or criticized. It is also important to note the low incidence of television use. That is, those respondents

who have a high interest in politics turn to other types of non-television sources of information. As a whole, the final equation accounts for 12.6% (adjusted R²) of the variation in IAPOL, a rather reduced incidence in general terms for the media.

The same exercise was used to check the type of news that the interviewee follows. Social, political, and fashion news are highlighted more frequently.

The Perception of Corruption by UAM Students

To analyze students' perception of corruption, involving the variables previously considered, in addition to other specific questions related to corruption was necessary (Campbell and Thomas, 2019). Therefore, other main questions are included that provide important information associated with the perception/orientation model.

Question: Choose the option that you most identify with:

- *This is the reality of the country. You have to be practical and I have to accommodate myself to it to take advantage of it. Favoritism is not bad in itself, but rather not participating in it. I will support the policy to the extent that I can take advantage of it.*
- *I think that corruption is greatly exaggerated, but, when necessary, we must also improve the policy from itself. It seems to me that we must reform the parties from within by encouraging the selection of better candidates and proposals and that is what I will support.*
- *Corruption is a terrible thing for society, it is important to change the system with totally new and independent and uncontaminated movements, parties and candidates. I will participate only in that way.*
- *Politics with its corruption is disgusting and I don't want to know anything about it. I'm not going to honor it by participating in it as long as that's the case. I have other, more important things to take care of.*
- *There is a lot of corruption in the country. The problem should be nipped in the bud, from the armed organizations, and by force. Only in that way will I participate in political processes.*

According to the results, students are mostly in the perception of renovators with 58%. In second place are the conformists with 21.7%; in third place, there are the rebels at 11.9%; and the last two with very low percentages: fugitive 4.9% and cynical with 3.4%.

The renewal aspect is not forceful if it relates to the variables: “Efipol,” “IAPOL,” “networks,” and “media.” The combined analysis of the above variables provides a perception that is more conformist than renewing. With “Efipol” it is highlighted that the answers given are more related to orientations of conformism and flight, while they place great hopes in the institutional processes, although they reject the political leaders, showing a high distrust in the rulers and their management. On the other hand, “networks” shows that the trend rebounds in the face of the character of conformism, because participation in community, sports, cultural institutions, among others is very low. These indicators show that they are individuals who are not very participatory, but that in their network of friends they generate conversations on political issues (IAPOL). This shows on the one hand that, although they are not interested in participating directly in community spaces, they can be mobilized in the face of an issue of their interest in a clear feature of conformism.

On the other hand, the proliferation of news about corruption (“media”) generates impacts on interest in politics (“IAPOL”), but exposure to the media did not show forcefulness in generating a negative effect regarding the rejection of corruption.

The most latent trend continues to be conformism, which indicates low participation in networks and very isolated from change projects. On the other hand, the orientation of renewal is evidenced in a slight way when the students recognize that there is a problem associated with corruption, while trusting in political processes such as participation in the electoral process.

In general terms, the perception/orientation of the surveyed students revolves between conformists and renovators. The perception indicates that, although they perceive corruption as having a major problem, it does not directly affect them as social subjects, but that corruption is part of a scheme of the state structure that permeates it indirectly. This may explain why even when they recognize the problem of corruption, they will not join any group to change this problem.

The combination of conformist and renewing perception indicates that if everything works well and there is no direct affectation, it makes no sense to mobilize, because even when there are problems it does not provide the feeling that they are deep and it is better to wait for it to be fixed on its own. The answers are indicative that a behavioral disposition of a subject accommodated to the system of corruption may be developing while waiting for something to change without carrying out direct activities that contribute to it. It expresses conformity, but it is not ruled out that in the face of problems that directly affect them, they can generate participation activity. Renewal is slight as they prefer changes and reject corruption, but participation with organizations is

low. Having this in mind, it is important to encourage interest in politics and the willingness to participate in democratic process, especially in social and community organizations. This is revealed by the loss of interest of those who indicated trends such as cynical, rebellious and fugitive, they isolate themselves from the democratic game.

Conclusions

These results have several conclusive aspects. One is that perceptions of corruption should be characterized on more inclusive categories than in literature, since it is important to involve elements of context, such as place and time. Moreover, the five types of perception/orientation (cynicism, conformism, renovation, escape and rebellion) are a typological construct for analysis.

The research results show that students' perception of corruption is a function mediated by interest in politics, political efficacy, media exposure and political participation in networks, although the most influential is interest in politics. Those students who showed a high interest in politics also tended to be more active in their community networks or groups, their exposure to media such as digital media, and their orientation to political and social news. On the contrary, those who were more tolerant to corruption show low tendencies of interest in political issues as well as low participation.

Digital media are the most used by UAM students to get information about political issues, disregarding information available on television. In addition, relating in groups is where issues are discussed and is what helps to generate a critical perception of the corruption scenario.

Although most of the students see corruption as negative, they have no participation or association with networks to propose change; this indicates a certain alienation from political efficiency and a tendency toward conformism, while at the same time they perceive confidence in democratic public institutions.

The context of corruption can generate conformist and renovationist orientations, but without spaces for discussion it is possible for renovators to become apathetic. As an academic space, UAM should provide platforms to discuss sensitive political issues, to update and propose courses on democracy and the role of professionals. The university should be committed to training in transformative political culture. It should also take advantage of the trend showing increased interest in politics as young people move through academic terms.

It is important for the university system to influence interest in politics. It would favor democratic participation in it. Those who lose this interest would turn to the use of violence or marginalize themselves from democratic participation. Strengthening the interest in politics will be the basis for political action, participation, and its renewal.

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