

# Media Coverage of Corruption and Incumbent Renomination<sup>1</sup>

Raffaele Asquer, University of California, Los Angeles<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Why do parties nominate allegedly corrupt legislators for reelection? I argue that media coverage of corruption influences party leaders' decision to renominate legislators accused of corruption. When the media focus on the issue of corruption, thus increasing its public salience, party leaders do not to renominate corrupt legislators to avoid electoral losses. In addition, higher media coverage of the corruption allegations against legislators decreases their chances of being renominated. I use data from Italian parliamentary elections to test these hypotheses. Results of a matching analysis show that corruption allegations do not affect renomination when corruption receives little media coverage, whereas they decrease renomination chances when corruption receives wide media coverage. Using a Heckman selection model, I find that the number of newspaper articles mentioning corruption allegations is negatively and significantly associated with renomination. The results suggest that the media promote electoral accountability by influencing candidate nominations.

Keywords: corruption, candidate selection, Italy, accountability, media

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<sup>2</sup> raffasquer@ucla.edu

## 1 Introduction

In January 2013, Silvio Berlusconi, as the leader of Italy's largest party, publicly announced that his party would not nominate for reelection the deputies who were under investigation, or on trial, for corruption.<sup>3</sup> Coming from a leader often involved in criminal proceedings, it was an unexpectedly harsh decision. Five years earlier, for example, Berlusconi's party had nominated for reelection several parliament members (henceforth, MPs) accused of corruption by the judiciary (Gomez & Travaglio, 2008). For a long time, in fact, Italian parties used to renominate incumbent MPs regardless of whether they were investigated for corruption (Chang, Golden, & Hill, 2010). This phenomenon is not limited to Italy. In the United States, corruption charges do not discourage Congressmen from seeking reelection (Welch & Hibbing, 1997). Similar findings have been reported for Japan (Reed, 2005). In India, parties routinely select candidates charged with major crimes, including corruption (Aidt, Golden, & Tiwari, 2011).

These cases raise the question of why parties renominate corrupt legislators, i.e. nominate them for reelection.<sup>4</sup> Assuming that parties would not nominate candidates for whom voters would not vote, it is puzzling that they would field candidates accused of corruption. Everything else being equal, voters should prefer a "clean" candidate to one that may have used his/her office for private gain.<sup>5</sup> It is especially puzzling that parties would nominate corrupt *incumbents*, who are more visible to voters than unseated candidates. In addition, in countries with an established rule of law such as Italy, the accusations levied by an independent judiciary cannot be immediately dismissed as politically motivated. This phenomenon contradicts the idea that

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<sup>3</sup> Berlusconi molla Cosentino (2013, January 10), *La Repubblica*.

<sup>4</sup> To avoid repetition, henceforth I will refer to them as either "allegedly corrupt" or "corrupt", even if they have not been found guilty. While this is a simplification, I want to emphasize that my study deals with the impact of corruption *allegations* on renomination.

<sup>5</sup> Banerjee et al. (2014) provide empirical evidence for this assumption.

democratic selection improves the quality of the political class and promotes electoral accountability (Besley, 2005; Caselli & Morelli, 2004). At the same time, the opening anecdote shows that, sometimes, parties do refrain from renominating allegedly corrupt incumbents.

I argue that media coverage determines whether party leaders renominate legislators accused of corruption. Corrupt incumbents guarantee certain benefits to party leaders, such as access to their clienteles and illegal funding. However, nominating them may damage the party brand, or reputation, and lead to electoral losses. The reputational costs offset the benefits under two conditions. First, when the issue of corruption becomes salient to voters, voters will be less likely to vote for parties associated with corruption, which should discourage party leaders from renominating corrupt legislators. Because the media can shape public opinion by driving attention to certain issues (Wanta & Ghanem, 2007), I hypothesize that, when the level of media coverage of corruption is high, corrupt legislators have lower chances of being renominated than non-corrupt ones. Second, because voters need to identify corrupt legislators in order to punish their parties, party leaders should not renominate legislators who are widely known to be corrupt. Therefore, higher media coverage of corruption allegations should decrease the chances of corrupt legislators being renominated.

I test these hypotheses with data from the Italian parliamentary elections of 1992, 1994, 2008, and 2013, for which MP criminal records are available. I proceed as follows to analyze the data. First, I examine the relationship between media coverage of corruption and incumbent renomination. I use a nonparametric matching technique to identify the impact of corruption allegations on renomination. Then, I study the likelihood of corrupt MPs being renominated in 1994 and 2013, using a two-stage Heckman model to deal with selection bias. I measure media coverage by the number of newspaper articles that mentioned corruption allegations.

The empirical evidence supports the two hypotheses. Consistent with the first hypothesis, corruption allegations had no impact on incumbent renomination in the 1992 and 2008 elections, when the media were not focusing on corruption. By contrast, corruption allegations decreased renomination chances in 1994 and 2013, when corruption was a prominent issue in the media. Confirming the second hypothesis, media coverage of corruption allegations is negatively and significantly associated with the chances of corrupt MPs being renominated.

These results suggest that the media promote electoral accountability by influencing candidate selection. Because legislators need to be renominated in order to be reelected, the nomination phase is key to accountability. When selecting candidates for election, party leaders consider the potential reputational costs associated with renominating corrupt incumbents. The media influence the leaders' decisions by making it more or less costly to renominate them. If leaders expect that renominating corrupt incumbents will lead to electoral losses, they will remove them from the ballot, essentially punishing them on behalf of voters.

The paper proceeds as follows. In Section 2, I discuss previous research and present two hypotheses on the effect of media coverage on renomination. In Section 3, I justify the choice of Italian data and explain how I test the two hypotheses. In Section 4, I present the results of the empirical analysis. Finally, in Section 5, I discuss the implications of my findings for the study of electoral accountability.

## **2 Party Leaders, Media Coverage, and Corrupt Incumbents**

The question of why parties renominate corrupt legislators is related to two strands of literature. The first one deals with how parties nominate candidates for legislative elections. The second

one explains why voters vote for corrupt candidates. In this section, I review these two threads of the literature and I present my theoretical framework.

Studies classify candidate selection methods along two dimensions (Gallagher & Marsh, 1987; Hazan & Rahat, 2006, 2010; Lundell, 2004; Shomer, 2012). The first dimension is the size of the selectorate. At one end of the spectrum, the party president or party secretary personally picks the candidates. At the opposite end of the spectrum, all party members, or even all (registered) voters, participate in primary elections. Between these two extremes lie, for example, nomination committees and party conventions. The second dimension is the degree of centralization, i.e. whether candidates are chosen at the national or local/constituency level.

Local- and national-level party leaders have a great deal of influence over nominations. In some cases, as members of nomination committees or as delegates at party conventions, they directly choose candidates. In other cases, they pre-select the candidates for which party members will be voting. In the British Labour Party, for example, primary candidates are first screened by party agencies, and can be vetoed by a national committee afterwards (Hazan & Rahat, 2010, p. 43). Leaders can influence the outcome of primary elections (Jones, Saiegh, Spiller, & Tommasi, 2002). When candidates are selected through a multi-stage process, leaders can threaten to exercise their veto power. To avoid a conflict, a local party committee or a lower-ranking official will probably consider the leaders' preferences when proposing their candidates.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the second question, i.e. why voters vote for allegedly corrupt candidates, there is strong support for the role of voter information and media coverage.<sup>7</sup> The basic intuition is that, if voters do not know that candidates may be corrupt, they will (re)elect them to office.

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<sup>6</sup> Indeed, incumbent legislators appear to recognize whether their own nomination depends on party leaders. When it does, they vote with their party rather than focusing on constituency service (Hazan & Rahat, 2006; Müller, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> For a review of this literature, see Sousa and Moriconi (2013)

(e.g. Banerjee et al., 2014; De Figueiredo, Hidalgo, & Kasahara, 2011).<sup>8</sup> Because voters usually learn about political malfeasance from media outlets, the media enable them to punish corrupt politicians (Chang, Golden, & Hill, 2010; Costas-Pérez, Solé-Ollé, & Sorribas-Navarro, 2012; Ferraz & Finan, 2008). More generally, studies demonstrate that voter information and media coverage promote political accountability (e.g. Ashworth, 2012; Pande, 2011).

However, even well-informed voters, if they consider other factors more significant than corruption allegations, may vote for corrupt candidates. Among those factors, the literature discusses party identification (Anduiza, Gallego, & Muñoz, 2013; Eggers, 2014; Peters & Welch, 1980), the candidates' ethnic identity (Banerjee and Pande, 2009; Vaishnav, 2011), or their perceived competence (Fernández-Vázquez, Barberá, & Rivero, 2013). Corrupt candidates may be better at distributing patronage goods to their clientele (Manzetti & Wilson, 2007). In India, criminal candidates intimidate voters (Aidt, Golden, & Tiwari, 2011) and finance their campaigns through criminal activities (Vaishnav, 2012).

Based on the discussion of the literature, I analyze the interaction between party leaders and the media to explain why allegedly corrupt legislators are renominated. In the nomination phase, a small group of top party officials ("party leaders") decides whether to renominate incumbent legislators. Afterwards, an election is held in which, by casting a ballot for a party, voters determine the seat share controlled by each party in the next term. I assume, as the literature often does, that legislators want to be reelected, and that they prefer to be nominated by their own party rather than trying to be nominated by another party or running as independents.

During the term, some legislators are accused of having abused their office for private gains, i.e. corruption. In order to be credible, the accusations should be made publicly by a non-

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<sup>8</sup> The credibility, quality, and timing of the information also matter (Bobonis, Fuertes, & Schwabe, 2010; Pereira, Melo, & Figueiredo, 2009; Winters & Weitz-Shapiro, 2013)

partisan actor at a cost. Allegations made by another party do not qualify, given their source, nor do allegations made only by media outlets, which can accuse politicians at little cost. Accusations levied by audit agencies or the judiciary, by contrast, meet the two requirements. Auditors and judges are non-partisan actors, who are required to follow lengthy bureaucratic procedures and collect enough evidence to make a credible case.

I consider two aspects of media coverage. I call the first aspect “overall media coverage of corruption”. Every day, the media – which for simplicity I consider as a unitary actor – prioritize certain issues at the expense of others, which receive little or no space. Rather than covering corruption scandals, for example, they may focus on foreign-policy crises, or economic news. Over the course of the legislature, corruption receives a certain amount of media coverage. The second aspect, “media coverage of corruption allegations”, refers to the accusations against individual legislators. Consider a legislator investigated for pocketing bribes. The coverage given by a newspaper, for example, can vary from a single, brief mention to a month-long series of articles dealing with the specifics of the case. Throughout the term, media outlets together mention the legislator as corrupt a certain number of times.

In the nomination phase, party leaders weigh the benefits and costs of renominating corrupt incumbents.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, corrupt legislators may use illegally collected funds to finance their campaigns or they may collect funds on behalf of the party. In addition to that, corrupt legislators may mobilize their clientele to vote for the party.

On the other hand, renominating corrupt legislators may hurt the party brand and lead to electoral losses. Starting with Stokes (1963), scholars have distinguished two components of a party’s brand, or reputation (Butler & Powell, 2014). The positional component refers to the

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<sup>9</sup> I assume that it is legal for parties to nominate candidates that are accused of corruption by judicial or auditing agencies. As to my knowledge, no study in the literature mentions similar limitations.

party's stance on certain policy dimensions. The valence component takes on a positive or negative value depending on whether voters associate the party with positively or negatively valued issues. When voters associate a party with positive conditions, such as economic growth, they are more likely to vote for it (Butler & Powell, 2014). Following Stokes (1963, p. 374) and Curini and Martelli (2013), I consider corruption as a valence issue because voters should prefer an honest party to a corrupt one. If Party A fields candidates accused of corruption, whereas Party B does not, voters will associate the former with corruption.

The costs of renominating corrupt incumbents offset the benefits under two conditions. First, the issue of corruption must be salient to voters. While voters may oppose corruption in principle, they need to perceive corruption as an urgent and important issue to consider it in their voting calculus. If voters perceive corruption to be very important, party leaders will have an incentive to remove corrupt incumbents from the ballot.

Overall media coverage of corruption should increase the public salience of corruption. By driving attention to certain issues, mainstream media can shape public opinion (McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Wanta and Ghanem, 2007). If media outlets give wide coverage to corruption stories during the legislature, corruption will become more salient in the public mind. Under this condition, renominating allegedly corrupt incumbents would hurt the valence component of the party brand. Assuming that leaders are aware of the increased salience of corruption, they should not renominate corrupt legislators. I derive the following testable hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: When media coverage of corruption is high, legislators accused of corruption are less likely to be renominated than their non-accused peers.*



Second, the costs of renominating corrupt incumbents offset the benefits when voters are able to identify potentially corrupt legislators. If party leaders renominate legislators who are widely known to be implicated in corruption investigations, for example, voters will associate the party with corruption and will be less likely to vote for it. By contrast, renominating legislators whose criminal records are known only to a minority of voters should cause limited damage to the party brand.

Media coverage of corruption allegations should increase voters' ability to identify corrupt legislators. If the media provide more information on the investigations involving Legislator X than those involving Legislator Y, voters will be more likely to identify Legislator X as potentially corrupt and to associate his/her party with corruption. In order to protect the party brand, party leaders should not renominate Legislator X.

*Hypothesis 2: Higher media coverage of corruption accusations decreases the chances of corrupt legislators being renominated.*

These two hypotheses together suggest that the media promote electoral accountability by influencing candidate selection. In the first case, party leaders decide whether to take corruption allegations into consideration *at all* when they select the candidate pool. The overall level of media coverage, I argue, affects their decision. In the second case, the amount of information on individual legislators distributed by the media determines whether some corrupt incumbents will be renominated, while others will not.

### 3 Data and Empirical Strategy

#### 3.1 Background Information on the Italian Case

I test my argument with data from Italian parliamentary elections. Italy has a high level of corruption for an industrialized, established democracy, thus providing an appropriate setting for this research (Golden & Chang, 2001, p. 591; Vannucci, 2012). Next, legislators accused of, or convicted for, corruption have sometimes been reelected to the Italian parliament.<sup>10</sup> Finally, as a wealthy democracy with a highly educated public, Italy has a vibrant free media sector. Although the television market remains, to a certain extent, subject to government influence (Durante & Knight, 2012; Hibberd, 2007), the press is recognized as independent, ideologically diverse, and quick to denounce political malfeasance.

I focus on two pairs of consecutive elections, 1992-1994 and 2008-2013, for which I have data on criminal proceedings against incumbent MPs. Because the two parliament chambers (Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Republic) have equal constitutional powers and are elected by similar electoral rules, I study the Chamber and the Senate together, when data are available. Otherwise, I study only the Chamber of Deputies. For the elections of 1992 and 1994, I use data on the requests to lift parliamentary immunity, issued by the judiciary, to identify MPs investigated for corruption during Legislature X (1987-1992) and Legislature XI (1992-1994).<sup>11</sup> For the elections of 2008 and 2013, I use press sources to identify the MPs who, as of the end of Legislature XV (2006-2008) and Legislature XVI (2008-2013), were under investigation or on trial for corruption, or who had avoided a final judgment thank to the statute of limitations

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<sup>10</sup> For the 1946-1992 period, see Chang, Golden, and Hill (2010). For the following period, anecdotal evidence can be found in Barbacetto, Gomez, and Travaglio (2012) and Gomez and Travaglio (2008).

<sup>11</sup> See the Appendix for data sources (A1). For the procedure to lift parliamentary immunity, see Ricolfi (1993). Chang, Golden, and Hill (2010) discuss measurement issues and exclude that the requests to lift immunity reflect judicial activism or prejudice.

(*prescrizione*).<sup>12</sup> In both the 1992-1994 and 2008-2013 datasets, I code corruption with reference to charges of bribery (*corruzione*), extortion by a public official (*concussione*), abuse of office, embezzlement, illegal party funding, and fraud against the State or the regional government.

Figure 1 illustrates the historical background of the four elections under consideration. Between 1946 and 1994, the Christian Democratic Party (DC) governed in coalition with smaller parties, chiefly the Socialist Party (PSI). This equilibrium was first undermined by the end of the Cold War, which turned the Communist Party (later PDS) into a viable governing alternative. Then, starting in 1992 with the Clean Hands operation in Milan, judicial investigations disclosed a vast system of corruption and clientelism (Della Porta, 2001; Rhodes, 1997; Ricolfi, 1993). In the 1994 election, the governing parties, deeply implicated in the investigations, retained only a handful of seats. The center-right coalition assembled around Berlusconi's new party, *Forza Italia*, emerged as victor, whereas the center-left coalition dominated by the post-Communist PDS came second (Bartolini & D'Alimonte, 1994). With some modifications, these two coalitions contested the following five elections, with the incumbent coalition getting ousted from power at each election.<sup>13</sup> In 2008, the center-left coalition, dominated by the *Partito Democratico* (PD), was defeated by the successor party to *Forza Italia*, the *Popolo della Libertà* (PDL). Starting in late 2011, when Berlusconi resigned under the pressure of the sovereign debt

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<sup>12</sup> Data sources listed in the Appendix (A1). I cannot use the requests to lift parliamentary immunity, because, in the final months of Legislature XI, a constitutional reform was passed to allow the judiciary to prosecute MPs without prior authorization. Under Italian law, criminal proceedings normally go through four stages: *indagini preliminari* (investigations); *tribunale* (trial); *Corte di Appello* (Court of Appeal); and *Corte di Cassazione* (Court of Cassation). The MPs who had received a conviction at the trial or appeal stage are considered as “allegedly corrupt” because the *Corte di Cassazione* had not yet finalized the conviction.

<sup>13</sup> On the left, the PDS first formed an electoral cartel with various post-DC parties and movements, Greens, and former Socialists. Later on, these forces merged into the *Partito Democratico*. On the right, *Forza Italia* established an electoral coalition with the post-Fascist *Alleanza Nazionale* and some post-Christian Democratic and post-Socialist parties. Together, they later founded the *Popolo della Libertà* (People of Freedom). With the exception of 1996, *Lega Nord* (LN), a regionalist party based in northern Italy, also participated in the center-right coalition.

crisis, Mario Monti’s “technocratic” cabinet governed with the external support of both coalitions. In 2013, voters rewarded an anti-establishment party, the recently founded Five Star Movement (M5S), and severely punished both the PDL and PD (De Sio, Cataldi, & De Lucia, 2013; Garzia, 2013). However, these two parties won enough seats to continue governing.

**Figure 1. Governing Parties of Legislatures X-XI and Legislatures XV-XVI**



**Note:** Each block represents a different governing coalition. Governing parties are parties represented in the cabinet (or giving external support to the Monti cabinet, Nov. 2012 – Feb. 2013). Parties below 5% are not reported. Parties listed in decreasing order of vote shares.

Abbreviations: Christian Democracy (DC); Socialist Party (PSI); *Partito Democratico* (PD); Communist Refoundation Party (PRC); *Popolo della Libertà* (PDL); *Lega Nord* (LN); *Unione di Centro* (UDC).

Consistent with my theoretical framework, throughout this period party leaders have enjoyed a great deal of discretion over candidate nominations. Italian parties adopt relatively exclusive and centralized candidate selection procedures. Historically, regional or national organs would propose candidates, add names to the lists, exercise veto power, and/or approve local-level nominations (Wertman, 1987). After the 1993 reform, which established a mixed-

member electoral system, party leaders retained significant discretion over candidate selection (Di Virgilio and Reed, 2011; Hazan and Rahat, 2010; Vignati, 2004). For instance, the central leadership of the PDS directly nominated the candidates for the safest seats and approved the candidates proposed by the local organizations. Center-right parties adopted more centralized and exclusive procedures, with the parties' top officials picking all the candidates. The extreme case was *Forza Italia*, whose founding leader, Berlusconi, was in charge of selecting candidates. In 2005, the introduction of closed-list PR rules further empowered central party leaderships vis-à-vis local party organizations and party members (Pasquino, 2007).

In the four legislatures under consideration, a relatively large proportion of legislators was accused of corruption. In Legislature X, 97 Chamber deputies (15%) were investigated for corruption. During Legislature XI, which coincided with the peak of the Clean Hands operation and similar anti-corruption probes, this number jumped to 163 (26%).<sup>14</sup> During Legislature XV, 44 MPs (5%) are coded as 'corrupt', versus 55 (6%) in Legislature XVI. Because these statistics include indictments and convictions at the trial or appeal stage, corruption allegations in the 2000s were arguably more serious than in the 1990s, though less frequent.

### **3.2 Overall Media Coverage of Corruption and Renomination**

I first examine the relationship between media coverage of corruption and incumbent renomination across the four legislatures. If Hypothesis 1 is correct, parties should have renominated incumbents regardless of corruption allegations when overall media coverage of corruption was low. By contrast, when media coverage was high, parties should have refrained

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<sup>14</sup> During the same period, also 55 Senate members (17%) were investigated. I do not have data on Senators of Legislature X.

from renominating corrupt incumbents. Due to data limitations, I can only test this hypothesis with data from the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>15</sup> The results are presented in Section 4.1.

My main measure of media coverage of corruption is the frequency with which newspapers discussed corruption on their front page. I complement this evidence with data from other media (see Section 4.1). For Legislatures X-XI, I rely on the daily news summaries of ANSA, Italy's leading wire service, which reports the topics discussed on the front page of the main newspapers.<sup>16</sup> By searching for corruption-related keywords, I determine whether, on each day, corruption was discussed on the first page of at least one newspaper.<sup>17</sup> I aggregate daily data to construct monthly indexes. For Legislatures XV-XVI, when the ANSA summaries are not available, I use the electronic archive of *La Repubblica*, Italy's second-most widely read newspaper.<sup>18</sup> Again, I code whether, on each day, at least one front-page article contained a corruption-related keyword.<sup>19</sup> Daily data are aggregated by month.

To assess the impact of corruption allegations on renomination, I adopt a nonparametric one-to-one matching technique. If certain characteristics typical of corrupt incumbents made them less (or more) likely to be renominated, running a regression on the full sample would lead to biased results. To address selection bias, within each legislature I select MPs who are similar to each other on a number of observable aspects, or covariates, but who vary on whether the

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<sup>15</sup> While I have investigation data for both Chamber deputies and Senators in Legislature XI, I only have data on the deputies of Legislature X. For Legislatures XV-XVI, the matching results obtained with data on the Chamber and Senate are substantially the same as those obtained with the Chamber data only.

<sup>16</sup> Each summary focuses on three to five topics. The sample of newspapers includes at least five of the most widely read dailies, spanning the ideological range from left-wing (*L'Unità*) to right-wing (*Il Giornale*).

<sup>17</sup> Keywords include *corruzione* (bribery), *concussione* (extortion by a public official), *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office), *peculato* (embezzlement), and terms commonly used in corruption stories: *corrott\** (corrupted); *tangent\**; *bustarell\**; and *mazzett\** (bribe, kickback).

<sup>18</sup> *Corriere della Sera*, as the national "newspaper of record," might be considered an obvious choice. However, its online archive does not allow to easily isolate front-page articles within the publication.

<sup>19</sup> See note 16.

judiciary accused them of corruption (Imbens, 2004). I apply a genetic matching algorithm that iteratively checks and improves covariate balance across matched treated and control cases, until acceptable balance is achieved (Diamond & Sekhon, 2012; Sekhon, 2011).<sup>20</sup>

As matching covariates, I choose characteristics plausibly related to both treatment assignment (i.e. corruption accusations) and the outcome (i.e. renomination).<sup>21</sup> Because they control more political resources, incumbents with longer tenure in office (*Seniority*), those affiliated with parties in the governing coalition (*GoverningParty*), and members of elite party bodies (*PartyElite*) should have higher chances of being implicated in corruption cases (Ricolfi, 1993).<sup>22</sup> By contrast, government ministers and undersecretaries (*CabinetPost*) and incumbents with top parliamentary offices (*ParliamentPost*) might be less vulnerable to judicial inquiries due to their status.<sup>23</sup> I include dummy variables for previous cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*) and experience in subnational office (*PastSubnatOffice*), expecting more experienced incumbents to be more exposed to corruption accusations.<sup>24</sup> For Legislatures X-XI, I proxy the size of the MP clientele by the (logged) number of preference votes received in the previous election (*Preferences*). Much anecdotal evidence and qualitative research suggest that politicians used illegal contributions and bribes to expand their clienteles, who would reward them with

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<sup>20</sup> For an analysis of pre- and post-matching covariate balance, see the Appendix (A5).

<sup>21</sup> Data sources listed in the Appendix (A1).

<sup>22</sup> *Seniority* is measured as the number of previous parliamentary terms served. I do not distinguish between terms served in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate. Governing parties are those represented in the cabinet during the legislature, or those giving external support (Figure 1). *PartyElite* indicates legislators holding national-level offices within their party apparatus.

<sup>23</sup> *ParliamentPost* refers to appointment as (vice)president/secretary in parliament/committee. *PastSubnatOffice* includes executive or legislative offices at the municipal, provincial, or regional level. I do not have this data for Legislature XVI.

<sup>24</sup> I base these expectations on journalistic exposés and qualitative studies of the corruption investigations of the early 1990s. In fact, during Legislature XI, almost all allegations of corruption lodged against Chamber deputies referred to crimes predating the beginning of the legislature. One out of three investigated deputies was accused of committing irregularities while she were holding office at the subnational level. Source: Elaboration on data from Ceron and Mainenti (2012).

preference votes (Allum, 1973; Golden, 2003).<sup>25</sup> Finally, being elected in the south (*South*), where political malfeasance is more widespread (Golden & Picci, 2005; Golden, 2003), should increase the chances of being investigated for corruption.

The same characteristics should also influence the probability of being renominated. In Italy, seniority has historically had a negative impact on renomination (Chang, Golden, & Hill, 2010). In 1994 and 2013, party leaders had an additional incentive to exclude more senior incumbents, who were perceived by the public as an entrenched and self-serving elite. *Governing Party* should also be negatively associated with renomination. In each of the elections under consideration, the incumbent parties were expected to suffer electoral losses. Therefore, those MPs should have preemptively withdrawn their names.<sup>26</sup> Elite legislators, who have additional incentives and political resources to seek reelection, should have higher renomination chances (Golden & Picci, 2014). Similarly, incumbents who have served in parliament and cabinet positions should be better suited to secure a nomination. Assuming that incumbent popularity influences the candidate selection process, incumbents with government experience at the local level and those with a large clientele, as proxied by *Preferences*, should have higher chances of renomination. Because personal relationships between voters and politicians, sometimes degenerating into clientelism, are more common in Southern Italy, party leaders should have an incentive to renominate the MPs elected in the south.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> On the relationship between corruption and preference votes under open-list PR rules, such as those in place in Italy until 1993, see Chang and Golden 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Also, in 1994 and 2013, the leaders of the governing parties might have deselected incumbent MP in response to widespread anti-establishment feelings (De Sio, Cataldi & De Lucia, 2013; Russo & Verzichelli, 2012; Sani 1995). On the other hand, because the DC and PSI had split apart during Legislature XI (Morlino, 1996), those incumbents had actually more options to seek reelection, i.e. more parties that could have renominated them.

<sup>27</sup> While the diffusion of the ‘personal vote’ and clientelism in the south is well documented for the pre-1994 period (Cartocci, 1990) it is unclear to what degree these phenomena have survived since then. De Luca (2011) and Sampugnaro (2004) find that the ‘personal vote’ is still more widespread in the south.



I estimate the effect of corruption allegations on renomination by comparing the renomination rate of corrupt incumbents with that of the matched, non-corrupt incumbents.<sup>28</sup> The variable *Renomination* indicates whether incumbent MPs were nominated for reelection by their party, or a party successor to their original party of affiliation, regardless of whether they were nominated for the Chamber or the Senate.<sup>29</sup> Importantly, the variable reflects the changes in the electoral rules of the last two decades. Whereas elections through 1992 had been conducted under open-list PR rules, a reform passed in 1993 established a mixed-member system, in which 75% of the seats were allocated through SMD plurality rules and 25% through closed-list PR rules (D'Alimonte & Chiaramonte, 1995). Thus, in 1994, *Renomination* refers to incumbents running either in a single-member district, in one or more multi-member districts, or both. In 2005, another reform introduced a closed-list PR system (Pasquino, 2007). In 2008 and 2013, *Renomination* refers to incumbents running in one or more multi-member districts.

### 3.3 Media Coverage of Corruption Allegations and Renomination

To test Hypothesis 2, I study how media coverage of corruption allegations affects the probability of corrupt MPs being renominated. According to my hypothesis, corrupt incumbents mentioned more frequently in the media should have lower chances of being renominated than those mentioned less frequently. To test this prediction, I use data on both Chamber and Senate members in 1994 and 2013. The results are presented in Section 4.2.

To alleviate concerns about selection bias, I model the renomination process through a Heckman selection procedure. Systematic differences between corrupt and non-corrupt

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<sup>28</sup> I consider only MPs in office at the end of each legislature, i.e. excluding retired or dead legislators. For the data sources used to code this variable, see the Appendix (A1).

<sup>29</sup> This coding procedure is especially important for Legislature XI, when the governing parties split into new parties or changed their name (Di Virgilio, 1995; Sani, 1995).

incumbents may introduce bias in the estimates. The Heckman procedure deals with non-random assignment to treatment by modeling selection into treatment and outcome as two stages of the same process (Heckman, 1979). This econometric logic enables me to study how certain characteristics of corrupt MPs affect their chances of being renominated. This model involves estimating a selection equation, explaining why some MPs are accused of corruption, and an outcome equation, explaining why some allegedly corrupt MPs are renominated. Both equations are estimated through probit regression.

The selection equation takes the form:

$$Corrupt_i = b_0 + b_1 * Seniority_i + b_2 * GoverningParty_i + b_3 * PartyElite_i + b_4 * South_i + b_5 * PastSubnatOffice_i + LegislatureXI * (b_6 * Lombardy + b_7 * PastCabinetPost) + e_i$$

where  $i$  denotes the individual MP. *Corrupt* takes a value of one if the MP was accused of corruption by the judiciary, and zero otherwise. For the reasons discussed in Section 3.2, all the variables on the right-hand side should be positively signed. In 1994, I can also control for cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). Being elected in the Lombardy region (*Lombardy*), which had the highest concentration of corruption investigations during Legislature XI (Davigo & Mannozi, 2007, pp. 65–77), should increase the probability of being accused of corruption. I include the latter two variables in the 1994 model through the dummy *LegislatureXI*.

I then estimate the following outcome equation:

$$Renomination = b_0 + b_1 * PressMentions(log)_i + b_2 * BaseCoverage(log)_i + b_3 * X_i + e_i$$

where *Renomination* indicates whether the MP was renominated by his/her party (Section 3.2). Lacking data on television coverage (e.g. a newscast archive), I rely on press sources to measure coverage of corruption allegations. *PressMentions* counts the newspaper articles published during the legislature that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. I do not attempt to differentiate between positively or negatively slanted coverage. In the 1994 dataset, I choose *Corriere della Sera* as Italy's most widely read newspaper.<sup>30</sup> I count the articles that contained the names of investigated MPs alongside the string "*autorizzazione a procedere*", which refers to the required procedure for lifting parliamentary immunity (see Section 3.1). In the 2013 dataset, *PressMentions* measures the total number of articles published in the 15 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva.<sup>31</sup> I count articles containing the name of each corrupt MP alongside a corruption-related keyword.<sup>32</sup> Because the distribution of *PressMentions* is strongly skewed, I use a log-transformed version of this variable.<sup>33</sup>

To control for popularity, following Larcinese and Sircar (2012), I measure how many times each MP appeared in the press at the beginning of the legislature (*BaseCoverage*). For Legislature XI, I count *Corriere della Sera* articles mentioning the MP in the 30 days following the election of April 6, 1992.<sup>34</sup> For Legislature XVI, I count the articles published in the first

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<sup>30</sup> Databases such as Factiva or Lexis-Nexis do not cover this period. Traditionally a centrist newspaper, *Corriere* assumed a relatively impartial position on the corruption investigations of that period, whereas other publications emphasized or downplayed the involvement of certain parties (Kenny & Crepaz, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Sources are listed in the Appendix (A2).

<sup>32</sup> For the list of keywords, see note 16.

<sup>33</sup> In the 1994 dataset, 42% of the corrupt incumbents did not receive a single mention in *Corriere* (skewness= 3.6). In the 2013 dataset, 33% of the corrupt incumbents received fewer than ten mentions in the press, whereas 25% received more than one hundred (skewness= 2).

<sup>34</sup> The Clean Hands operation, i.e. the main anti-corruption probe of this period, expanded to a national dimension shortly after the 1992 election (Section 4.1). If I adopted a longer timeframe, I would include in the count articles that mentioned MPs *inasmuch* as they were implicated in the investigations.

three months of the legislature in the 15 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva.<sup>35</sup> Given its skewed distribution, I adopt a logged version of *BaseCoverage*.<sup>36</sup>

The control variable vector  $X$  accounts for MP biographical and socioeconomic characteristics. Older MPs should be more likely to retire. Therefore, an MP's age as of the election year (*Age*) should negatively affect renomination. In 1994, when women MPs are well represented among corrupt incumbents, I control for gender (*Female*). I also control for whether the MP has a university degree (*College*), although my theoretical expectations are mixed. While, on the one hand, highly educated incumbents have better professional options outside of politics, on the other hand party leaders may put more effort into retaining higher-quality politicians. Incumbents who had good jobs before entering parliament should have an incentive to retire.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the dummy variable *Job*, indicating whether the MP had a nonpolitical, high-status previous occupation in the private or public sector, should have a negative sign.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, to account for the MP political characteristics, I include some of the matching covariates. As explained in Section 3.2, tenure in office (*Seniority*) and affiliation with the governing parties (*GoverningParty*) should decrease the probability of nomination.<sup>39</sup> By contrast, I expect elite legislators (*PartyElite*) and those elected in the south (*South*), to be more likely to secure a nomination. As a proxy for party support, I use the vote share of the MP's party in the district in which he/she was elected (*PartyShare*).<sup>40</sup> Assuming that parties with a larger voter base can afford to renominate corrupt incumbents, this variable should be positively signed.

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<sup>35</sup> See Appendix (A2) for the list of sources.

<sup>36</sup> In both datasets, the distribution of *BaseCoverage* has a skewness of 3.5.

<sup>37</sup> However, Italian legislators are allowed to keep their jobs, unless they are employed by the government or have full-time salaried occupations (Merlo et al. 2010).

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix (A1) for coding procedure.

<sup>39</sup> *Seniority* is not strongly correlated with *Age* ( $R= 49\%$  in 1994;  $R= 37\%$  in 2013).

<sup>40</sup> In the 1994 dataset, to deal with the mismatch between pre- and post-reform districts (see Section 3.2), I use the vote share of the MP's party in the *region* in which he/she was elected in 1992.

## 4 Results

This section tests the two hypotheses derived from my theory. In Section 4.1, I analyze the relationship between media coverage of corruption and incumbent renomination across the four elections. In Section 4.2, I focus on allegedly corrupt legislators to study the relationship between media coverage of corruption allegations and renomination in 1994 and 2013.

### 4.1 Incumbent Renomination, 1992 -1994 and 2008-2013

The data from ANSA news summaries indicate that front-page coverage of corruption was much higher in the period directly preceding the 1994 election than in the period directly preceding the 1992 election. While corruption stories began to appear in March 1992, shortly before the election (April 5-6), they increased dramatically in May (Figure 2). In the two months preceding the 1992 election, corruption had received front-page coverage four days per month. In the two months preceding the 1994 election, by contrast, the number increased to 13. In the earlier part of Legislature XI, corruption-related items appeared on the front page every other day, if not more frequently. Other studies report a similar jump in corruption coverage (Chang, Golden, & Hill, 2010; Giglioli 1996).

Next, data from *La Repubblica* show that front-page coverage of corruption was higher in the months leading up to the 2013 election than in the months before the 2008 election (Figure 2). In the two months preceding the election of April 14, 2008, corruption mentions appeared, on average, for 6.5 days per month. In the two months before the election of February 24, 2013, by contrast, corruption was mentioned on the front page for 15.5 days per month, i.e. every other

day. In the year before the 2013 election, the frequency of corruption stories had reached a historically unprecedented level.<sup>41</sup> Similar to *La Repubblica*, the other main newspapers also gave wider coverage to corruption stories in the period directly preceding the 2013 election than in the period directly preceding the 2008 election.<sup>42</sup>

By and large, the other media followed similar patterns. Between 1992 and 1994, television coverage of corruption increased dramatically (Giglioli, 1996). As for the later period, indirect evidence suggests that television programs covered corruption more frequently before the 2013 election than before the 2008 election. I search the ANSA *Spettacolo* database, which contains daily summaries of television programming, for corruption-related keywords.<sup>43</sup> The search retrieves 12 entries in the two months leading up to the 2008 election, versus 30 entries in 2013. Finally, Ceron (2014) finds that mentions of corruption on news websites and Twitter posts followed the publication of corruption-related materials on hardcopy newspapers, which suggests that coverage by online sources should be strongly correlated with press coverage.

Consistent with trends in media coverage, corruption became more salient in the public mind over the course of the two legislatures. In the 1990 Italian National Election Studies (ITANES) survey, corruption ranked sixth (out of eight) in a ranking of the most important social problems. This question was not included in later surveys until 1996, when corruption ranked as the *second* most serious problem after unemployment.<sup>44</sup> If anything, corruption should have been

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<sup>41</sup> In 2012, corruption-related front-page articles appeared on a total of 180 days – the highest frequency over the entire 1984-2013 period. In 1993, i.e. in the midst of the Clean Hands investigations, the index was 124.

<sup>42</sup> I count the articles containing at least one corruption keyword (see note 16) published in: a) *Corriere della Sera*; b) the 13 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva (listed in the Appendix, excluding *La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera*). In the two months before the 2008 (2013) election, *Corriere* published 11 (33) corruption-related articles. Together, the other newspapers published 693 articles in the two months before the 2008 election, versus 1710 in the two months before the 2013 election.

<sup>43</sup> See note 16 for the list of keywords.

<sup>44</sup> Data from the nationally representative, post-election ITANES surveys of 1990 and 1996.

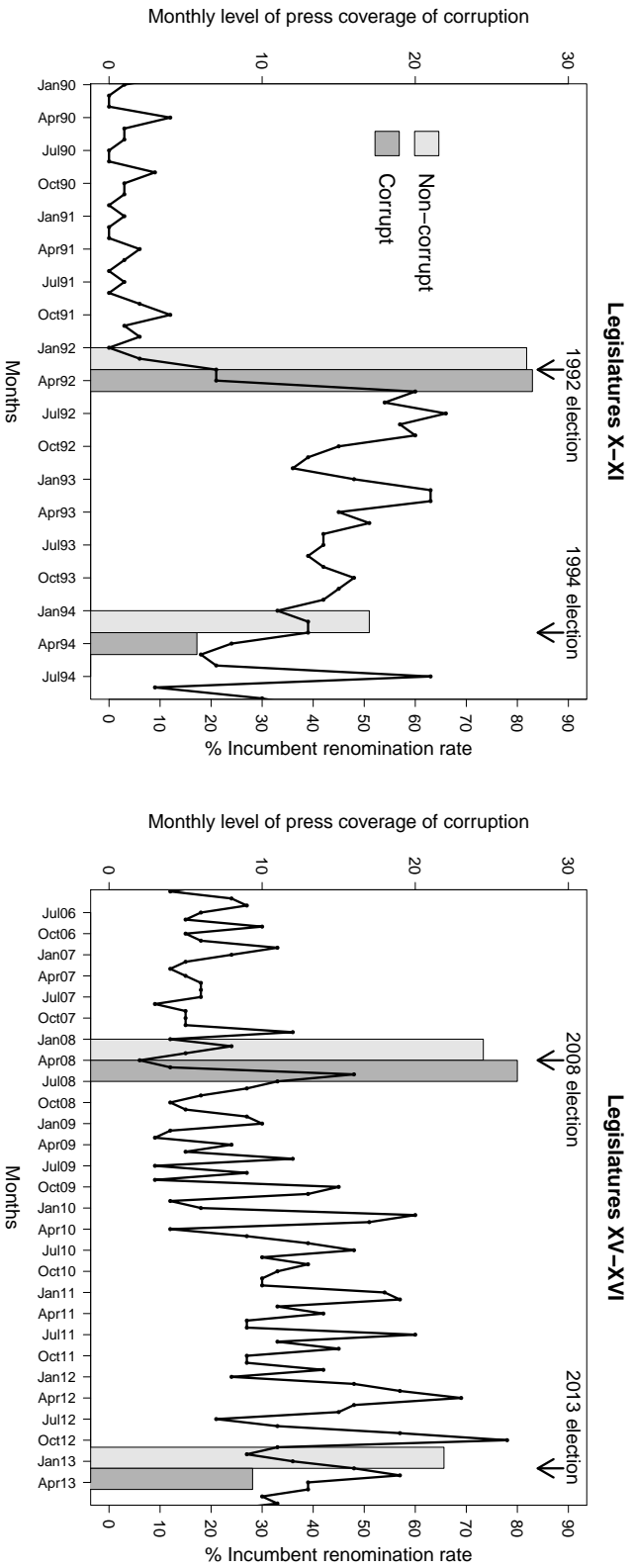
at least as salient to voters in 1994, given that corruption investigations had reached a peak in the immediately preceding period.<sup>45</sup> As for Legislature XVI, only 2% of respondents considered corruption the most important problem in 2008. In the 2013 ITANES survey, by contrast, 9% responded that “political ethics” (a category including corruption and politicians’ honesty in general) was the most important problem, with 18% calling this the second most important problem.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, the Five Star Movement (M5S), campaigning on an anti-corruption platform, became the second most-voted party merely four years after its foundation (Bordignon & Ceccarini, 2013; Paparo & Cataldi, 2013). The M5S may have benefited electorally from the increasing flow of corruption stories on the media.

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<sup>45</sup> Other surveys indicate that, between 1992 and 1994, most citizens were aware of the investigations, recognized corruption as a national emergency, and supported the judiciary (Per Di Pietro in 5 milioni davanti alla TV (1993, February 21), *La Repubblica*; Italiani senza dubbi - i giudici fanno bene (1993, February 28), *Corriere della Sera*; Gli italiani si schierano con Di Pietro (1993, July 17), *La Repubblica*).

<sup>46</sup> In 2013, given the ongoing economic recession, a much greater proportion of voters mentioned unemployment (63%) and economic growth (12%) as the country’s most important problems. Data from the 2008 and 2013 ITANES surveys.

**Figure 2. Media coverage of corruption and incumbent renomination, Legislatures X-XI and Legislatures XV-XVI**



**Note.** The x-axis plots the results of a matching procedure on Chamber deputies of Legislatures X-XI and Legislatures XV-XVI, which matches deputies accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”) with non-accused peers (“non-corrupt”). For each legislature, the bars indicate the proportion of corrupt/non-corrupt deputies nominated for reelection by their party in the next parliamentary election. Data sources: Bartolini & D’Alimonte (1995); CIRCaP (2013); Di Miceli (2012); Gagliarducci, Nannicini, and Naticchioni (2011); Golden (2007); Papavero (2006); Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior). On the y-axis is the number of days per month in which corruption was mentioned on the front pages of the main Italian newspapers (Legislatures X-XI), or *La Repubblica* (Legislatures XV-XVI). Data sources: ANSA and *La Repubblica* electronic archive.



Turning to the renomination data, the results of the matching procedure (displayed in Figure 2) lend support to Hypothesis 1.<sup>47</sup> When I compare the incumbents accused of corruption to their matched, non-accused peers, I do not find statistically significant differences in their renomination rates in 1992 and 2008, when the level of media coverage of corruption was low. By contrast, when media coverage of corruption was high, in 1994 and 2013, corruption allegations are associated with lower renomination probabilities. Figure 2 shows that, in 1994, corrupt MPs were 33% less likely to be renominated than their non-corrupt peers (mean difference significant at the .001 level). In 2013, corruption allegations are associated with a 37% decrease in the probability of being renominated (significant at the .001 level).

Although the 1993 reform, which replaced an open-list PR system with a mixed-member system (see Section 3.2), represents a confounding factor, it can hardly explain the differences in renomination rates observed in 1994. Because most seats were now contested in single-member districts, parties might have had a strong disincentive to nominate corrupt candidates. However, the literature disagrees as to whether plurality rules lead to greater accountability than PR (Faller, Glynn, & Ichino 2013). Parties did not exhibit a preference for non-corrupt incumbents in single-member district races. Among the renominated corrupt incumbents, 78% ran as SMD candidates, versus 72% of their non-corrupt peers. Also, in the same period, corruption allegations decreased the renomination chances of municipal- and regional-level legislators, who were elected under open-list PR rules (Asquer, 2015).

These results are consistent with anecdotal evidence and qualitative research. The criminal records of potential candidates were often discussed in the 1994 electoral campaign. Within the parties born from the ashes of the DC and PSI, whose reputation had been tarnished

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<sup>47</sup> See the Appendix for an analysis of the original, pre-matching dataset. A4 shows the renomination rates, while A6 reports the results of a probit regression.

by the Clean Hands investigations, there was a heated debate on whether to renominate investigated MPs (Massari, 1995).<sup>48</sup> In turn, the leaders of the brand-new party *Forza Italia* claimed that their candidates were not associated with the old, corrupt political elites, and instead represented Italy's vibrant, "healthy" civil society. In 2013, it was the *Popolo della Libertà*, i.e. the successor to *Forza Italia*, that faced the choice of whether to renominate allegedly corrupt incumbents. As mentioned in the opening section, its leader Berlusconi decided to keep most of them off the ballot, presumably to restore the party's reputation.<sup>49</sup> First among Italian parties, the *Partito Democratico* adopted primary elections, but reserved the right to reject primary winners with a criminal record (De Lucia, Cataldi, De Sio, & Emanuele, 2012). In fact, shortly before the election, a party committee retroactively disqualified three MPs accused of corruption crimes.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4.2 The Renomination of Corrupt Incumbents, 1994 and 2013

In order to test Hypothesis 2, I study the probability of corrupt incumbents being renominated in 1994 and 2013. Because the dependent and explanatory variables take on a different meaning in the two elections (see Section 3.2-3.3), the datasets are analyzed separately. I estimate a series of Heckman probit selection models, each one introducing additional controls. Results are shown in Table 1.

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<sup>48</sup> In fact, similar debates had already taken place during the legislature. In May 1993, the PSI secretary practically suspended from the party the MPs investigated for corruption (Benvenuto vince tra le macerie (1993, May 5), *Corriere della Sera*). The DC leadership adopted similar rules (Inconciliabile essere DC e massoni. Gli inquisiti sospesi dal partito" (1993, February 14), *Corriere della Sera*).

<sup>49</sup> Cosentino e gli impresentabili (2013, January 15), *Corriere della Sera*. Il sondaggio elettorale di Berlusconi: Gli impresentabili? Una zavorra per il Pdl (2013, January 20), *Il Fatto Quotidiano*.

<sup>50</sup> Liste Pd, esclusi gli impresentabili Crisafulli, Papania e Caputo (2013, January 26), *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. Dal Partito Democratico alla Lega Nord, i casi più scottanti (2013, January 22), *Il Giorno*. By contrast, when selecting their candidates for the 2008 election, all parties appeared to focus on getting their MPs reelected (Wilson, 2008, p. 221).

The results of the selection equation largely confirm my theoretical expectations. In the 1994 estimations, all variables except for *Seniority* are statistically significant in the expected direction. Being affiliated with a party in the governing coalition, having served in the cabinet or in local government, and being elected in the south are positively associated with corruption allegations. In the 2013 analysis, more senior incumbents and those elected in the south are more likely to be accused, as expected, whereas the other variables are not significant.<sup>51</sup>

In both datasets, the measure of media coverage of corruption allegations is negatively and significantly correlated with renomination. In the base models (Models 1 and 4), controlling only for MP popularity with the press at the beginning of the legislature (*BaseCoverage*), *PressMentions* has the expected negative coefficient. As I add biographic and socioeconomic controls (Models 2 and 5), the coefficients on *PressMentions* remain negative and statistically significant. In the fully specified model, incorporating MP political characteristics, the coefficient either remains stable (Model 3) or increases in size (Model 6). Analyzing the two datasets through standard probit regression gives substantially similar results.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The coefficient on the variable *GoverningParty* appears to depend on the coding. Until November 2011, government was controlled by the center-right coalition, then by a “grand coalition” of center-left, center, and center-right parties (see Figure 1). Having been in power for a longer period, MPs affiliated with the center-right coalition might have had more opportunities to extract rents. Once I recode *GoverningParty* with reference to the center-right coalition, in fact, I find a positive and statistically significant relationship with corruption allegations.

<sup>52</sup> See Appendix (A7).

**Table 1: Effect of Media Coverage of Corruption Allegations on Renomination**

	1994 election			2013 election		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<b>Second stage: renomination</b>						
<i>PressMentions (log)</i>	-0.40 <sup>***</sup>	-0.40 <sup>***</sup>	-0.36 <sup>**</sup>	-0.16 <sup>*</sup>	-0.14 <sup>*</sup>	-0.37 <sup>***</sup>
<i>BaseCoverage (log)</i>	-0.22 <sup>*</sup>	-0.20	-0.07	0.00	0.00 <sup>*</sup>	0.00 <sup>**</sup>
<i>Age</i>		-0.01	-0.01		-0.04 <sup>**</sup>	-0.06 <sup>**</sup>
<i>Female</i>		-0.32	-0.18			
<i>College</i>		0.12	0.05		0.17	0.64
<i>Job</i>		-0.21	-0.15		0.09	0.36
<i>GoverningParty</i>			-0.90 <sup>***</sup>			-0.20
<i>Seniority</i>			-0.08			-0.20
<i>PartyElite</i>			0.12			1.68 <sup>***</sup>
<i>PartyShare</i>			0.02 <sup>**</sup>			0.02
<i>South</i>			0.35			-0.53
Constant	0.53 <sup>***</sup>	1.29 <sup>**</sup>	1.46 <sup>***</sup>	-1.43 <sup>**</sup>	0.61	3.28 <sup>*</sup>
<b>First stage: corruption allegations</b>						
<i>Seniority</i>	-0.05 <sup>*</sup>	-0.05	-0.05	0.12 <sup>***</sup>	0.12 <sup>***</sup>	0.10 <sup>**</sup>
<i>GoverningParty</i>	0.92 <sup>***</sup>	0.90 <sup>***</sup>	1.00 <sup>***</sup>	-0.01	-0.02	0.00
<i>PartyElite</i>	0.23 <sup>**</sup>	0.24 <sup>**</sup>	0.23 <sup>*</sup>	-0.16	-0.14	-0.00
<i>South</i>	0.48 <sup>***</sup>	0.50 <sup>***</sup>	0.36 <sup>***</sup>	0.37 <sup>**</sup>	0.40 <sup>***</sup>	0.41 <sup>***</sup>
<i>Lombardy</i>	0.17	0.18	0.14			
<i>PastSubnatOffice</i>	0.34 <sup>***</sup>	0.33 <sup>***</sup>	0.30 <sup>***</sup>			
<i>PastCabinetPost</i>	0.31 <sup>**</sup>	0.33 <sup>**</sup>	0.33 <sup>**</sup>			
Constant	-1.82 <sup>***</sup>	-1.82 <sup>***</sup>	-1.80 <sup>***</sup>	-1.99 <sup>***</sup>	-2.01 <sup>***</sup>	-2.02 <sup>***</sup>
N (Censored N)	915 (714)	915 (714)	915 (714)	857 (805)	856 (805)	855 (805)

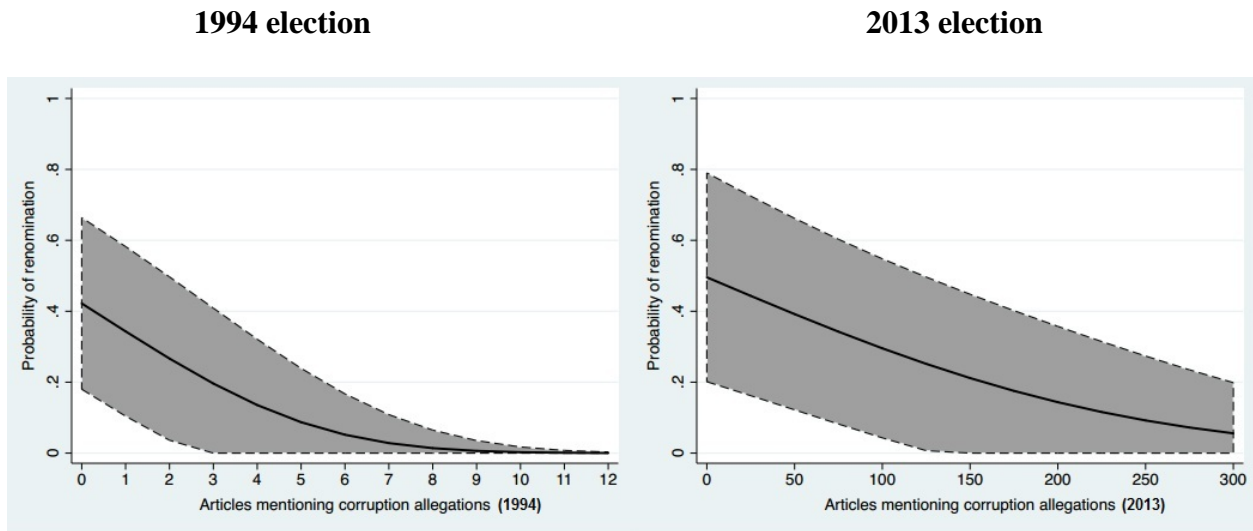
Two-stage Heckman probit model with robust standard errors (not reported for visualization purposes)

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The first-stage dependent variable identifies MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary. The second-stage dependent variable indicates whether the MP was renominated by her party in the next election. Models 1-3 estimated on Italian MPs of Legislature XI (1992-1994). Models 4-6 estimated on Italian MPs of Legislature XVI (2008-2013). *PressMentions* is the logged number of articles, published during the legislature in *Corriere della Sera* (Legislature XI) or in the 15 most widely read newspapers (Legislature XVI), that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. *BaseCoverage* counts the newspaper articles simply mentioning the MP published in the first month (first three months) of Legislature XI (Legislature XVI). Other controls: gender (*Female*), age (*Age*), education (*College*), high-status previous occupation (*Job*), affiliation with a party in government (*GoverningParty*), cumulative tenure in parliament (*Seniority*), elite status in the party apparatus (*PartyElite*), being elected in Southern Italy (*South*) or in the Lombardy region (*Lombardy*), having experience in subnational-level office (*PastSubnatOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*)

The effect of media coverage of corruption allegations appears to be substantively significant, though due to the small number of corrupt MPs the standard errors of these estimates are quite large. Based on the fully specified Model 3 (Table 1), I calculate the renomination probability of an allegedly corrupt, college-educated non-elite legislator, keeping other variables at their mean value. Figure 3 plots the estimated probabilities of being renominated, against the number of articles mentioning corruption allegations. In 1994, each article is associated with a 5% decrease in renomination probability, versus a 0.4% decrease in 2013. Because the explanatory variable is measured differently in the two datasets, I use the standard deviation to compare the size of the effect. In 1994, a standard deviation in *PressMentions*, which corresponds to about five *Corriere della Sera* articles, is associated with a 16% decrease in renomination probability. In 2013, a standard deviation in *PressMentions*, corresponding to about 100 articles, is associated with a 22% decrease.

**Figure 3: Renomination Probabilities of Incumbents Accused of Corruption**



**Note:** The line represents the probability of renomination of allegedly corrupt incumbent MPs in 1994 and 2013, based on Models 1 and 4 in Table 1 (Heckman probit selection). On the x-axis is the number of articles, published during the previous legislature in *Corriere della Sera* (1994) or in the 15 most widely read newspapers (2013), that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. Estimates refer to a college-educated, male, non-elite MP that was affiliated with an incumbent party and was elected in the South. Other variables at their means. The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals.

Most of the coefficients on the control variables align with my predictions, although they are rarely statistically significant. Older incumbents are less likely to be renominated. High-status occupation is negatively associated with renomination, whereas college education has a positive sign, though neither variable is significant. In 1994, members of governing parties are less likely to be renominated than members of opposition parties, whereas, contrary to my expectations, they are more likely to be renominated in 2013. However, because in 2013 all but

two parties were in the governing coalition, there may not be enough variation in the variable *GoverningParty* to correctly estimate its effect. As expected, party elite status (in 2013) and party vote share (in 1994) are positively associated with renomination.

As a robustness check, I control for the timing of the allegations. Voters could be more easily influenced by corruption news published shortly before an election (Pereira, Melo, & Figueiredo, 2009). If so, incumbents who are investigated for corruption later in the legislature should cause more damage to the party reputation, which should discourage party leaders from renominating them. In the 1994 dataset, I can control for the timing of allegations by counting the days between the election and the date in which prosecutors issued a request to lift parliamentary immunity (*InvestigationTiming*). This variable turns out to be non-significant, while the main results are unchanged (see Appendix).

A further concern is that media attention depends on the gravity of corruption allegations. Media outlets may focus on serious crimes and disregard relatively trivial allegations. To account for this eventuality, I introduce a dummy variable for whether MPs were accused of receiving or extorting bribes (*Bribes*). Other corruption crimes, such as embezzlement and abuse of office are punished with shorter sentences, and might be considered trivial by voters.<sup>53</sup> The results, reported in the Appendix, show that *Bribes* is negatively and significantly related with renomination in 1994, and non-significant in 2013. The coefficients on *PressMentions* remain negative and statistically significant.

Finally, to address some concerns specific to the 2013 election, I repeat the analysis on a subset of data. First, I drop the members of the *Partito Democratico* (PD), which held partially

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<sup>53</sup> In the Italian Criminal Code, *corruzione* (i.e. receiving bribes) and *concussione* (i.e. extorting bribes) are punished with sentences ranging from four to eight years, and six to twelve years respectively. The sentences for *peculato* (embezzlement), *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office), *finanziamento illecito* (illicit party funding) range from four to ten years, one to four years, and six months to four years respectively, with some types of embezzlement being punished with much milder sentences.

open primaries, because it may be inaccurate to model the selection process as if it was controlled by party leaders (see Section 4.1). Second, I take into account the so-called Severino law, introduced in January 2013, which prohibited those who had been sentenced to more than two years from running for office. I drop the few incumbents who were disqualified, having received a final conviction for either corruption or non-corruption crimes. Again, the analysis shows that *PressMentions* is negatively and significantly associated with renomination.<sup>54</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

In this study, I have asked why parties nominate for reelection legislators accused of corruption. Over the last two decades, Italian parties appear to have twice changed their behavior vis-à-vis corruption allegations. In 1992, parties renominated incumbent MPs regardless of corruption allegations. By contrast, in 1994, they refrained from nominating allegedly corrupt MPs. Similarly, whereas corruption allegations had no impact on the likelihood of MPs being renominated in 2008, they had a negative impact in 2013.

I have developed an argument linking media coverage of corruption and incumbent renomination, and I have tested two empirical implications with data from Italian parliamentary elections. First, when the media focus on corruption, voters will perceive corruption as a salient issue and will be less likely to vote for parties associated with corruption. Under this condition, party leaders should remove from the ballot allegedly corrupt legislators. Indeed, I find that corruption allegations had no impact on renomination in 1992 and 2008, when the media were not focusing on corruption, whereas they had a negative impact in 1994 and 2013, when corruption was prominent in the media. Second, because voters need to identify corrupt

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<sup>54</sup> Results reported in the Appendix (A8).



legislators in order to punish their parties, party leaders should not renominate legislators who are widely known to be corrupt. Higher media coverage of corruption allegations should decrease renomination chances. Consistent with this hypothesis, the analysis shows that the number of newspaper articles mentioning corruption accusations is negatively and significantly associated with the chances of corrupt MPs being renominated.

My empirical strategy has some limitations. The dependent variable used in the analysis, (*Renomination*) may not precisely capture the outcome of interest, because an incumbent who is not renominated may be voluntarily retiring from office. However, the control variables included in the statistical models should account for the possibility of strategic retirement (Section 3.2-3.3). Next, because I use observational data, I cannot make causal claims. Nevertheless, the results of the matching procedure, together with the descriptive and qualitative evidence in Section 4.1, bring strong support to Hypothesis 1. As for Hypothesis 2, I have coped with the possibility of selection bias by adopting a Heckman selection model. Finally, I have relied exclusively on press sources to measure media coverage. However, the evidence suggests that trends in television coverage of corruption paralleled those in press coverage (Section 4.1), which makes my findings potentially generalizable.

Overall, these findings suggest that the media promote electoral accountability by influencing candidate selection. Studies argue that the media enable voters to punish malfeasant officials at the polls (e.g. Ferraz & Finan, 2008; Larreguy, Marshall, & Snyder Jr, 2014). Before voters get to vote, however, parties choose whom to nominate, thus making the nomination phase crucial to accountability. In my theoretical framework, party leaders decide whether to punish allegedly corrupt incumbents *before* voters do it, based on the expected damage to the

party's reputation. By increasing the public salience of corruption and enabling voters to identify potentially corrupt incumbents, the media contribute to drive corrupt politicians out of office.

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## **Media Coverage of Corruption and Incumbent Renomination**

### *Online Appendix*

#### **Abstract**

This Appendix provides additional materials that are also discussed in the paper. In Section A1, I describe the variables used in the analysis and the data sources. In section A2, I list the newspapers used to code some of the variables. Section A3 presents descriptive statistics for the Legislatures XI and XVI of the Italian parliament. Sections A4-A6 are related to the testing of Hypothesis 1 (see Section 4.1 of the paper). In particular, in Section A4, I plot the rates of renomination of corrupt and non-corrupt MPs in the four legislatures studied, using the original, unmatched data. In Section A5, to assess the quality of the matching procedure between corrupt and non-corrupt MPs, I show pre- and post-matching covariate balance. Section A6 provides probit regression estimates for the effect of corruption allegations on renomination. Next, Sections A7 and A8 are related to the testing of Hypothesis 2 (see Section 4.2 of the paper). Section A7 shows probit regression estimates for the effect of media coverage of corruption allegations on the renomination probability of corrupt MPs. Finally, Section A8 perform a series of robustness checks on the Heckman selection model used to test Hypotheses 2.

## A1 Data and Data Sources

This paper uses data on members of the Italian parliament (MPs) during Legislature X (1987-1992), Legislature XI (1992-1994), Legislature XV (2006-2008), and Legislature XVI (2008-2013).

Basic MP information (e.g. name, gender, start/end of term) drawn from:

- Legislatures X and XI: Golden (2007); Gagliarducci, Nannicini, and Naticchioni (2011)
- Legislature XV: Gagliarducci, Nannicini, and Naticchioni (2011)
- Legislature XVI: CIRCAP (2013); OpenPolis (2013)

<i>Variable</i>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source and coding</b>
<i>Renomination</i>	Indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by his/her own party, or a successor to the original party of affiliation, regardless of whether they were nominated for the Chamber or the Senate.	For Legislature X, the variable is coded by Golden (2007) with reference to MPs running for the House. I use the Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior ( <a href="http://elezionistorico.interno.it/">http://elezionistorico.interno.it/</a> ) to check if MPs ran for the Senate.  For the other three legislatures, I merge MP data with a dataset of candidates in the 1994, 2006, and 2008 elections, using first name, last name, year of birth, and province of birth as key variables. To assemble the candidate dataset, I integrate existing datasets (Bartolini & D'Alimonte, 1995; Di Miceli, 2012; Papavero, 2006) with data scraped through a Python script from the Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior ( <a href="http://elezionistorico.interno.it/">http://elezionistorico.interno.it/</a> ).
<i>Corrupt</i>	Indicates whether the MP was accused of corruption by the judiciary.  *Corruption crimes refer to	For Legislatures X-XI, <i>Corrupt</i> refers to MPs being investigated for corruption-related crimes*. To code this variable, I use data on the requests to lift parliamentary immunity issued by Italian prosecutors ( <i>richieste di</i>

	<p>charges of bribery (<i>corruzione</i>), extortion by a public official (<i>concussione</i>), abuse of office (<i>abuso d'ufficio</i>), embezzlement (<i>peculato</i>), illegal party funding (<i>violazione delle leggi sul finanziamento pubblico ai partiti</i>), and fraud against the State or the regional government (<i>truffa ai danni dello Stato/ ai danni della Regione</i>).</p>	<p><i>autorizzazione a procedere</i>), drawn from Golden (2007), Ceron and Mainenti (2012), and Parliament records.</p> <p>For Legislatures XV-XVI, <i>Corrupt</i> identifies the MPs who were under investigation or on trial for corruption-related crimes*, or who had avoided a final judgment thank to the statute of limitations (<i>prescrizione</i>). Criminal records are updated to mid-March 2008 and November 2012 respectively, i.e. one month and three months before the respective elections.</p> <p>For Legislature XV, criminal records are from Travaglio and Gomez (2008), integrated with Parise, L. (2008, March 16). Tutti i guai con la giustizia degli aspiranti onorevoli. <i>La Repubblica</i>. For Legislature XVI, I use: Gli 84 sotto accusa (2011, July 22), <i>La Repubblica</i>; Calapà, G., &amp; Perniconi. C. (2012, September 30); I cento parlamentari condannati, imputati, indagati o prescritti, <i>Il Fatto Quotidiano</i>; La lista dei parlamentari indagati e condannati (2012, November 5), <i>Il Fatto Quotidiano</i>.</p>
<i>Bribes</i>	<p>A dummy for whether the MP was accused of receiving or extorting bribes (in the Italian Criminal Code, <i>corruzione</i> or <i>concussione</i>).</p>	<p>Variables coded from Ceron and Mainenti (2012) and Parliament records.</p>
<i>InvestigationTiming</i>	<p>Counts the number of days between the March 27,1994 election and the date in which prosecutors issued the request to lift parliamentary immunity. When prosecutors issued more than one request for the same MP, I consider the earliest one.</p>	
<i>PressMentions</i>	<p>Counts the newspaper articles published during the legislature that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP.</p>	<p>For Legislature XI, I count the articles published on <i>Corriere della Sera</i> that contained the names of investigated MPs alongside the string “<i>autorizzazione a procedere</i>”, which refers to the required procedure for lifting parliamentary immunity (source: <a href="http://archiviostorico.corriere.it">http://archiviostorico.corriere.it</a>). To increase measurement precision, I count only the articles published within the timeframe of the investigations. The timeframe starts fifteen</p>

		<p>days before the earliest request to lift immunity was issued and ends fifteen days after the latest request was issued.</p> <p>For Legislature XVI, I count the total number of articles published in the 15 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva (see A2) that contained the name of each “corrupt” MP alongside a corruption-related keyword. The search timeframe starts three months after the opening of the legislature because I use the first trimester to measure legislator popularity in the press (see <i>BaseCoverage</i>). The timeframe ends with the resignation of Prime Minister Monti (December 21, 2012), after which newspapers started to discuss candidate nominations, to avoid miscounting press mentions of corruption allegations.</p>
<i>BaseCoverage</i>	Counts how many times the MP was mentioned in the press at the beginning of the legislature.	<p>For Legislature XI, I count <i>Corriere della Sera</i> articles mentioning the MP in the 30 days following the election of April 6, 1992.</p> <p>For Legislature XVI, I count the articles published in the first three months of the legislature in the 15 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva (see A2)</p>
<i>Age</i>	MP’s age as of the election year	For Legislatures X,XI, and XV, variables coded from Gagliarducci, Nannicini, and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislatures XVI, variable coded from CIRCaP (2013)
<i>College</i>	Indicates whether the MP had a university degree	
<i>Job</i>	Indicates whether the MP had a nonpolitical, high-status previous occupation in the private or public sector (e.g. private sector manager, business owner, university professor, or judge).	
<i>GoverningParty</i>	Indicates whether the MP was affiliated with a party in the governing coalition during the legislature	
<i>Seniority</i>	Number of previous parliamentary terms served. I do not distinguish between terms served in the Chamber of	



	Deputies and in the Senate.	
<i>PartyElite</i>	Indicates whether the MP held national-level offices within his/her party apparatus at the opening of the legislature.	
<i>Preferences</i>	Number of individual preference votes received by the MP in the previous election. Valid only for House deputies in the Legislatures X-XI.	Variable coded by Golden (2007).
<i>ParliamentPost</i>	Indicates whether the MP served as (vice)president/secretary in parliament, or in a parliament committee, during the legislature.	For Legislatures X,XI, and XV, variables coded from Gagliarducci, Nannicini, and Naticchioni (2011).
<i>CabinetPost</i>	Indicates whether the MP served as government minister or undersecretary during the legislature.	
<i>PartyShare</i>	Vote share of the MP's party in the district in which he/she was elected	For Legislature XI, the variable refers to the <i>region</i> in which he/she was elected in 1992. This is done to deal with the redistricting associated with the 1993 electoral reform. Before the 1993 reform, eight regions (out of Italy's twenty) were each divided into two or three Chamber districts, while each of the other twelve regions coincided with a single Chamber district. For Senate elections, each region coincided with one and only one district. The 1993 reform modified the boundaries of the old PR districts and created 707 SMDs (375 for the Chamber, 232 for the Senate), which were all nested within a single region. In the Chamber, the new PR districts largely coincided with the pre-reform districts. In the Senate, the new PR district coincided completely with the old ones (i.e. with the regions)  For Legislature XVI, the variable refers to the PR district in which the MP was elected in 2008. In case of MPs elected in multiple districts, it refers to the district that he/she chose to represent.
<i>South</i>	Elected in one of the following	For Legislatures X,XI, and XV, variables

	regions: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Apulia (Puglia), Sardinia (Sardegna), Sicily (Sicilia).	coded from Gagliarducci, Nannicini, and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislatures XVI, variable coded from CIRCaP (2013)
<i>Lombardy</i>	MP elected in the Lombardy region.	
<i>PastSubnatOffice</i>	Dummy for government experience at the subnational level. It refers to executive or legislative offices at the municipal, provincial, or regional level.	
<i>PastCabinetPost</i>	Dummy for cabinet experience. It indicates whether the MP ever served as government minister or undersecretary in the previous legislatures.	

## A2 List of newspapers

The following are the 15 most widely read Italian newspapers available on Factiva, excluding sports related newspapers. Newspapers are listed in descending order of circulation, as of 2013. Circulation data from *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa* (<http://www.adsnotizie.it>).

I use these newspapers to count: a) number of articles containing at least one corruption keyword, published in the two months preceding the 2008 and 2013 elections (see Section 4.1); b) the articles, published during Legislature XVI, that mentioned corruption allegations against the MPs (*PressMentions*); c) the articles mentioning the MPs, published in the first three months of Legislature XVI (*BaseCoverage*).

1. *Corriere della Sera*
2. *La Repubblica*
3. *La Stampa*
4. *Il Sole 24 Ore*
5. *Il Giornale*
6. *Il Resto del Carlino*
7. *Avvenire*
8. *La Nazione*
9. *ItaliaOggi*
10. *Il Fatto Quotidiano*
11. *Il Giorno*
12. *Il Secolo XIX*
13. *Il Tempo*
14. *Giornale di Sicilia*
15. *Corriere del Mezzogiorno*

## A3 Descriptive Statistics. Legislatures XI and XVI

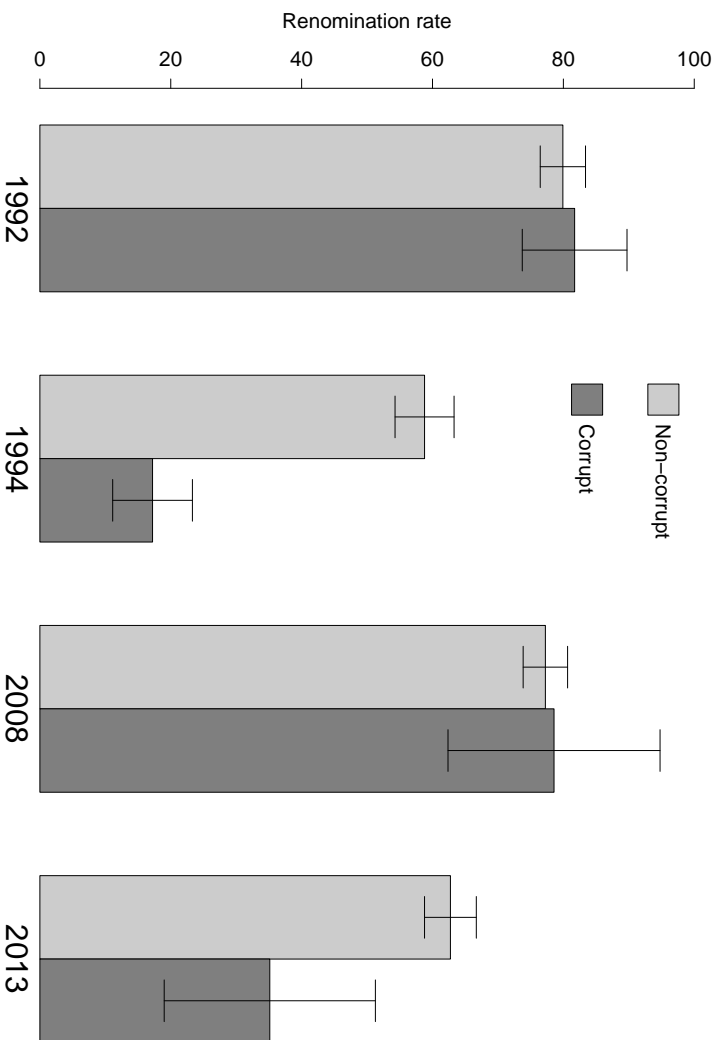
## Descriptive statistics: Legislature XVI

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Renomination</i>	916	0.6	0.5	0	1
<i>Corrupt</i>	916	0.1	0.2	0	1
<i>PressMentions</i>	916	5.2	40.7	0	617
<i>BaseCoverage</i>	889	34.2	106.1	0	1,410
<i>GoverningParty</i>	916	0.9	0.3	0	1
<i>Seniority</i>	916	2.4	1.6	1	10
<i>PartyElite</i>	859	0.2	0.4	0	1
<i>Female</i>	916	0.2	0.4	0	1
<i>Age</i>	916	57.2	9.5	31	90
<i>College</i>	845	0.7	0.5	0	1
<i>Job</i>	860	0.6	0.5	0	1
<i>PartyShare</i>	827	33.1	12.5	1.2	48.8
<i>PastSubnatOffice</i>	837	0.6	0.5	0	1
<i>Bribes</i>	916	0.03	0.2	0	1
<i>South</i>	916	0.4	0.5	0	1

## Descriptive statistics: Legislature XI

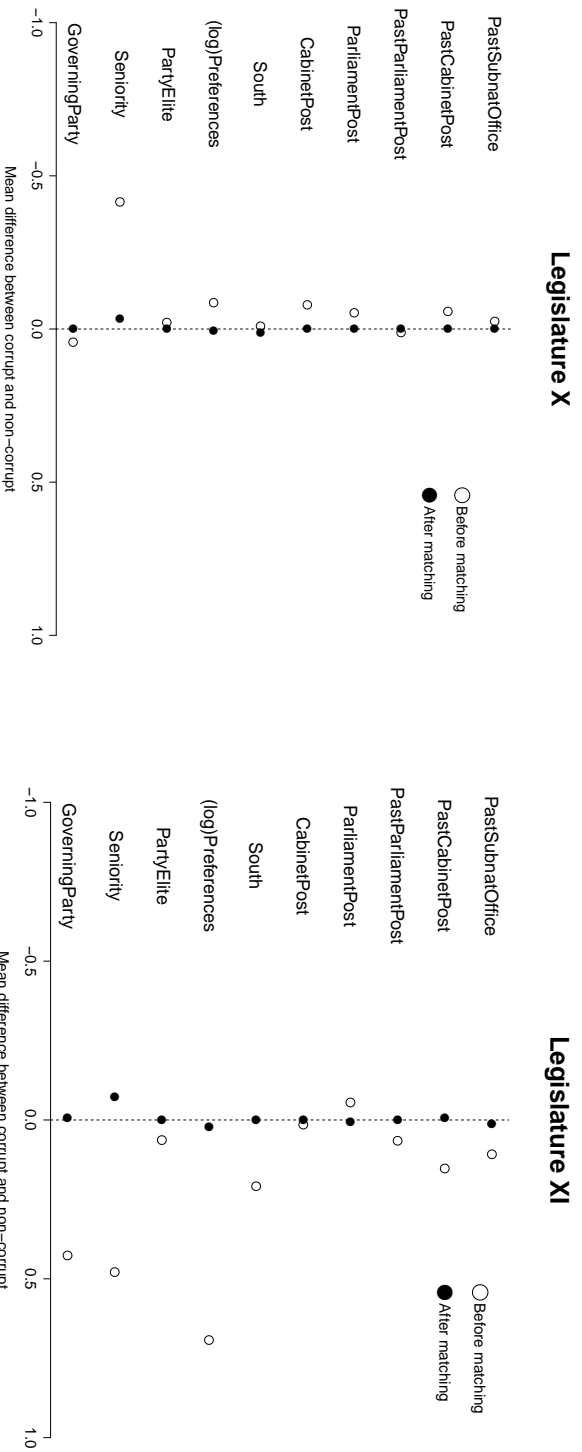
Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Renomination</i>	944	0.5	0.5	0	1
<i>Corrupt</i>	944	0.2	0.4	0	1
<i>PressMentions</i>	929	1.1	6.9	0	157
<i>BaseCoverage</i>	943	3.2	6.2	0	83
<i>GoverningParty</i>	944	0.5	0.5	0	1
<i>Seniority</i>	941	1.4	1.9	0	10
<i>PartyElite</i>	941	0.2	0.4	0	1
<i>Female</i>	944	0.1	0.3	0	1
<i>Age</i>	944	51.4	9.4	26	82
<i>College</i>	944	0.7	0.5	0	1
<i>Job</i>	944	0.3	0.5	0	1
<i>PartyShare</i>	942	19.7	13.4	1.9	100.0
<i>PastSubnatOffice</i>	944	0.6	0.5	0	1
<i>PastCabinetPost</i>	941	0.2	0.4	0	1
<i>Bribes</i>	944	0.1	0.3	0	1
<i>InvestigationTiming</i>	217	421.0	139.5	151	713
<i>South</i>	944	0.4	0.5	0	1
<i>Lombardy</i>	944	0.2	0.4	0	1

#### A4 Renomination Rates of Incumbent MPs: Legislatures X, XI, XV, and XVI



**Note.** Data on members of the Italian Chamber of Deputies in Legislatures X (1987-1992), XI (1992-1994), XV (2006-2008), and XVI (2008-2013). The bars indicate the proportion of deputies accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”) and non-accused peers (“non-corrupt”) who were nominated for reelection by their party in the next parliamentary election. Bars represent 95% confidence interval. Data sources: Bartolini & D’Alimonte (1995); CIRCaP (2013); Di Miceli (2012); Gagliarducci, Nannicini, and Naticcioni (2011); Golden (2007); Papavero (2006); Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior.

A5 Analysis of Covariate Balance: Legislatures X, XI, XV, and XVI

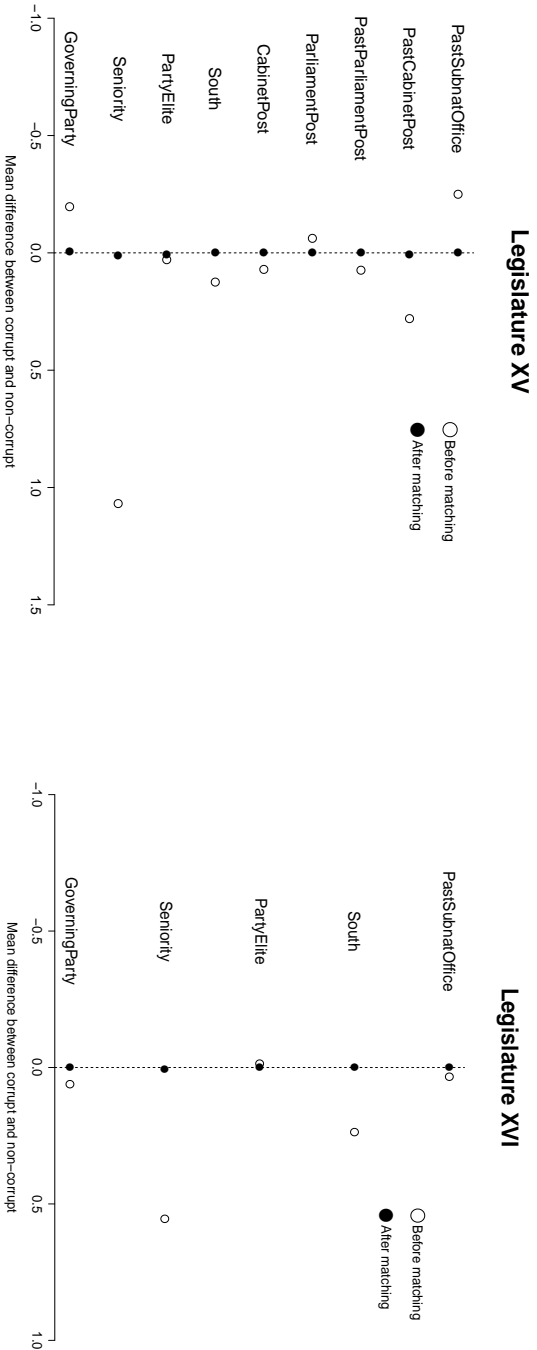


(Continued)

The graphs show pre- and post-matching covariate balance for the Italian Chamber of Deputies during Legislature X (1987-1992), Legislature XI (1992-1994), Legislature XV (2006-2008), and Legislature XVI (2008-2013). One-to-one, genetic matching between corrupt MPs (i.e. accused of corruption by the judiciary during the legislature) and non-corrupt peers. For each variable, the graph plots the difference between the mean of the 'treatment' group (corrupt) and the mean of the 'control' group (non-corrupt) in the unmatched, original dataset and the matched dataset.

Matching covariates are: affiliation with a party in government (*GoverningParty*), number of parliamentary terms served (*Seniority*), elite status in the party apparatus (*PartyElite*), logged preference votes (*Preferences*), holding cabinet office (*CabinetPost*) or high parliament appointment (*ParliamentPost*) in the current legislature, being elected in Southern Italy (*South*), having experience in subnational-level office (*PastSubnatOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). All variables are dummies except for *Seniority* and *Preferences*.

**A5 Analysis of Covariate Balance: Legislatures X, XI, XV, and XVI (Continued)**



The graphs show pre- and post-matching covariate balance for the Italian Chamber of Deputies during Legislature X (1987-1992), Legislature XI (1992-1994), Legislature XV (2006-2008), and Legislature XVI (2008-2013). One-to-one, genetic matching between corrupt MPs (i.e. accused of corruption by the judiciary during the legislature) and non-corrupt peers. For each variable, the graph plots the difference between the mean of the ‘treatment’ group (corrupt) and the mean of the ‘control’ group (non-corrupt) in the unmatched, original dataset and the matched dataset.

Matching covariates are: affiliation with a party in government (*GoverningParty*), number of parliamentary terms served (*Seniority*), elite status in the party apparatus (*PartyElite*), logged preference votes (*Preferences*), holding cabinet office (*CabinetPost*) or high parliament appointment (*ParliamentPost*) in the current legislature, being elected in Southern Italy (*South*), having experience in subnational-level office (*PastSubnatOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). All variables are dummies except for *Seniority* and *Preferences*.

## A6 Effect of Corruption Allegations on Renomination, Probit Analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Legislature X	Legislature XI	Legislature XV	Legislature XVI
<i>Corrupt</i>	0.15 (0.19)	-1.08*** (0.15)	0.11 (0.29)	-0.45* (0.24)
<i>Female</i>	-0.29 (0.19)	0.01 (0.21)	0.14 (0.17)	0.10 (0.14)
<i>Job</i>	0.20 (0.15)	0.17 (0.13)	0.08 (0.14)	0.17 (0.12)
<i>Age</i>	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
<i>College</i>	0.34** (0.14)	0.13 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.14)	-0.09 (0.13)
<i>GoverningParty</i>	0.61*** (0.16)	-0.86*** (0.15)	-0.66*** (0.14)	0.26 (0.19)
<i>Seniority</i>	0.00 (0.04)	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.14*** (0.04)
<i>PartyElite</i>	0.24 (0.15)	0.13 (0.14)	0.25* (0.13)	0.31** (0.13)
<i>(log)Preferences</i>	0.21** (0.09)	0.25*** (0.09)		
<i>CabinetPost</i>	0.35 (0.23)	-0.43* (0.25)	0.53* (0.28)	
<i>ParliamentPost</i>	0.18 (0.23)	-0.47*** (0.18)	0.06 (0.22)	
<i>South</i>	-0.15 (0.16)	0.31** (0.13)	-0.21* (0.13)	-0.06 (0.12)
Constant	0.24 (0.98)	-1.16 (0.82)	3.30*** (0.49)	2.73*** (0.39)
N	597	614	593	571

Probit estimation coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses

\* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01

The dependent variable indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by their party or a successor of their party. Models estimated on members of the Chamber of Deputies. *Corrupt* identifies MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary. Controls: gender (*Female*), age (*Age*), education (*College*), high-status previous occupation (*Job*), affiliation with a party in government (*GoverningParty*), cumulative tenure in parliament (*Seniority*), elite status in the party apparatus (*PartyElite*), logged preference votes (*Preferences*), holding cabinet office (*CabinetPost*) or high parliament appointment (*ParliamentPost*) in the current legislature, being elected in Southern Italy (*South*). All variables are dummies except for *Age*, *Seniority*, and *Preferences*.



**A7 Effect of Media Coverage of Allegations on Renomination, Probit Analysis**

	1994 election		2013 election	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>PressMentions (log)</i>	-0.660*** (0.19)		-0.358*** (0.13)	
<i>BaseCoverage (log)</i>	-0.114 (0.22)		0.261* (0.16)	
<i>PressMentions</i>		-0.242*** (0.08)		-0.005** (0.00)
<i>BaseCoverage</i>		-0.005 (0.05)		0.006** (0.00)
<i>Age</i>	-0.016 (0.02)	-0.015 (0.02)	-0.062** (0.03)	-0.056** (0.03)
<i>Female</i>	-0.434 (0.66)	-0.531 (0.67)		
<i>College</i>	0.127 (0.27)	0.117 (0.27)	0.393 (0.49)	0.298 (0.45)
<i>Job</i>	-0.309 (0.26)	-0.307 (0.26)	0.351 (0.45)	0.424 (0.43)
<i>GoverningParty</i>	-0.270 (0.39)	-0.265 (0.39)	-0.900 (1.02)	-0.510 (0.97)
<i>Seniority</i>	-0.144 (0.09)	-0.145* (0.09)	-0.166 (0.15)	-0.230 (0.16)
<i>PartyElite</i>	0.547* (0.30)	0.552* (0.30)	1.485** (0.60)	1.254** (0.52)
<i>PartyShare</i>	0.027** (0.01)	0.026** (0.01)	0.028 (0.02)	0.016 (0.02)
<i>South</i>	1.155*** (0.29)	1.167*** (0.29)	-0.454 (0.56)	-0.198 (0.52)
Constant	-0.878 (0.86)	-0.885 (0.86)	3.520* (2.05)	2.972 (1.94)
N	200	200	50	50

Probit estimation coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The dependent variable indicates whether the MP was renominated by her party. Models 1-2 estimated on MPs of Legislature XI (1992-1994) accused of corruption by the judiciary. Models 3-4 estimated on MPs of Legislature XVI (2008-2013) accused of corruption by the judiciary. *PressMentions(log)* is the (logged) number of articles, published during the previous legislature in *Corriere della Sera* (Legislature XI) or in the 15 most widely read newspapers (Legislature XVI), that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. (*BaseCoverage(log)* counts the newspaper articles simply mentioning the MP published in the first month (first three months) of Legislature XI (Legislature XVI). Other controls: gender (*Female*), age (*Age*), education (*College*), high-status previous occupation (*Job*), affiliation with a party in government (*GoverningParty*), cumulative tenure in parliament (*Seniority*), elite status in the party apparatus (*PartyElite*), party vote share in the district where the MP was elected (*PartyShare*), and being elected in Southern Italy (*South*).

**A8 Effect of Media Coverage of Allegations on Renomination, Robustness Checks**

	1994 election		2013 election	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b><i>Second stage: renomination</i></b>				
<i>PressMentions (log)</i>	-0.22 <sup>***</sup> (0.06)	-0.22 <sup>***</sup> (0.08)	-0.34 <sup>**</sup> (0.13)	-0.18 <sup>**</sup> (0.07)
<i>InvestigationTiming</i>		0.00 (0.00)		
<i>Bribes</i>	-0.31 <sup>***</sup> (0.08)	-0.28 <sup>***</sup> (0.09)	0.53 (0.48)	
<i>Controls</i>	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	1.76 <sup>***</sup> (0.26)	1.60 <sup>***</sup> (0.30)	3.29 <sup>*</sup> (1.99)	3.36 <sup>***</sup> (0.64)
<b><i>First stage: corruption allegations</i></b>				
<i>Seniority</i>	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.05 <sup>*</sup> (0.03)	0.11 <sup>***</sup> (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)
<i>GoverningParty</i>	1.00 <sup>***</sup> (0.12)	1.00 <sup>***</sup> (0.12)	0.00 (0.25)	0.29 (0.27)
<i>PartyElite</i>	0.22 <sup>*</sup> (0.12)	0.22 <sup>*</sup> (0.12)	-0.02 (0.18)	-0.03 (0.21)
<i>South</i>	0.36 <sup>***</sup> (0.10)	0.36 <sup>***</sup> (0.11)	0.42 <sup>***</sup> (0.14)	0.36 <sup>**</sup> (0.16)
<i>Lombardy</i>	0.10 (0.09)	0.09 (0.13)		
<i>PastSubnatOffice</i>	0.22 <sup>***</sup> (0.07)	0.21 <sup>**</sup> (0.08)		
<i>PastCabinetPost</i>	0.32 <sup>***</sup> (0.11)	0.34 <sup>***</sup> (0.12)		
Constant	-1.74 <sup>***</sup> (0.12)	-1.73 <sup>***</sup> (0.12)	-2.05 <sup>***</sup> (0.23)	-2.04 <sup>***</sup> (0.25)
N (Censored N)	914 (714)	914 (714)	856 (805)	559 (518)

Two-stage, Heckman probit selection model with robust standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The dependent variable in the first stage indicates whether the MP was accused of corruption by the judiciary. The dependent variable in the second stage indicates whether the MP was nominated by her party in the next election. Models 1-2 estimated on Italian MPs of Legislature XI (1992-1994). Models 3-4 estimated on Italian MPs of Legislature XVI (2008-2013). Model 4 excludes MPs affiliated with the *Partito Democratico* and those who had received a final conviction. *PressMentions(log)* is the logged number of articles published during the legislature mentioning corruption allegations. *Bribes* is a dummy for whether the MP was accused of bribery or other corruption crimes (e.g. embezzlement). *InvestigationTiming* is the number of days between the start of the criminal proceeding and the 1994 election. Controls used in the second-stage equation (omitted): *BaseCoverage(log)*, *Age*, *Female*, *Job*, *GoverningParty*, *Seniority*, *PartyElite*, *PartyShare*, and *South*.