

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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**Media Coverage of Corruption and Renomination:
Evidence from Italian Parliamentary Elections**

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of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Media Coverage of Corruption and Renomination: Evidence from Italian Parliamentary Elections

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Professor Miriam A. Golden, Chair

This dissertation uses Italian data to investigate why parties nominate for reelection incumbents accused of corruption. In some elections, Italian parties renominated incumbent parliament members (MPs) regardless of whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary. Once they were renominated, accused MPs were reelected to office. In other elections, parties refrained from nominating accused MPs. Non-renominated MPs were then unable to reenter parliament. To explain this variation, I argue that media coverage of corruption decreases the chances of allegedly corrupt incumbents being renominated. Based on two dimensions of media coverage, I develop two hypotheses. By giving prominence to the issue of corruption, the media increases its public salience, discouraging party leaders from nominating legislators accused of corruption. Prominence of corruption in the media lowers the renomination chances of allegedly corrupt legislators. Then, by reporting on corruption accusations against specific legislators, the media enables voters to identify them and punish their party. When corruption is salient to voters, media mentions of corruption allegations against

specific legislators decrease their chances of being renominated. To test the first hypothesis, I analyze how the Italian media covered corruption before each election. I find a negative correlation between media prominence of corruption and the renomination rates of MPs accused of corruption. For the second hypothesis, I conduct a statistical analysis of MPs' renomination probabilities in two elections. Controlling for relevant confounders, newspaper mentions of corruption allegations against MPs appear to decrease their renomination chances. These findings indicate that media scrutiny promotes electoral accountability by influencing candidate selection.

The dissertation of Raffaele Asquer is approved.

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To my family. I have moved and changed paths a few times, but you have always believed in me. We have found ways to remain connected, and we will find more in the future. Thanks for all your love, support, and guidance over the years.

To Didem. Before I started, I knew it would be hard. Now, I know that it would have been impossible without you, and definitely not worth it.

I look forward to our new life together.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Incumbent Renomination and Accountability

In many countries across the world, parties nominate for reelection incumbent officials accused of corruption. Mayors charged with corruption are as likely to seek reelection as non-charged peers (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Pereira et al., 2009). In Italy, parties used to renominate incumbent parliament members regardless of corruption allegations (Chang et al., 2010). In the United States, corruption accusations rarely prevent House representatives from running and winning primary races (Welch and Hibbing, 1997). In India, parties routinely nominate candidates accused of various crimes, including corruption (Aidt et al., 2011; Vaishnav, 2011).

Reelection-seeking incumbents need to be nominated by their party in order to remain in office. Winning reelection with another party, though theoretical possible, is not always feasible or easy.¹ By switching to another party, incumbents may lose the vote of core party supporters. Independent candidates are rare and usually unsuccessful in national-level elections and established democracies (Müller, 2000, 313–316). Parties can influence incumbents' electoral fortunes in many ways. Under closed-list proportional rules, parties can rank the incumbents high on the party list, and/or field them in their stronghold districts. Under plurality, parties can field incumbents in safe districts, virtually guaranteeing that they will be reelected.

Indeed, allegedly corrupt incumbents running for reelection often manage to retain their seat. Studies conducted in both wealthy and developing democracies

¹See Jones et al. (2002) (Argentina), Patzelt (1999) (Germany), and Di Virgilio and Reed (2011) (Italy). For exceptions to this pattern, Ames (2001) (Brazil) and Di Virgilio and Reed (2011) (Japan).

show that corruption allegations carry little, if any, electoral penalty (de Sousa and Moriconi, 2013; Golden, 2012). Incumbents accused of corruption are as likely to be reelected as their non-accused peers (Chang et al., 2010; Nyblade and Reed, 2008; Peters and Welch, 1980; Welch and Hibbing, 1997; Reed, 1999).

The fact that parties enable allegedly corrupt politicians to win reelection has substantively important implications. If they are indeed corrupt, keeping them in office will contribute to the persistence of corruption. If, instead, they turn out to be innocent, the lack of electoral punishment may still work as an incentive for corrupt politicians. Knowing that corruption accusations bring no punishment, some will keep extracting bribes. In the long run, the lack of electoral punishment may negatively affect political selection. Assume that there are two types of potential candidates for office: the “honest” and “corrupt” types (Besley, 2005; Caselli and Morelli, 2004). The corrupt types realize that they can extract rents from office with little (or no) risk of being punished. Hence they have an incentive to enter politics. The honest types, in turn, realize that the system is “broken” and abstain from entering politics. The ultimate result is a predominantly corrupt political class and an increase in corruption.

The electoral success of allegedly corrupt politicians also raises a number of theoretically interesting questions. 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 abused his or her office for private gain.² Indeed, most people around the world claim to disapprove of political cor-

²Banerjee et al. (2014) provide empirical evidence for this assumption. Reviewing the litera-

ruption (e.g. Swamy et al., 2001). Compared to unseated candidates, incumbents should be more visible to voters—another reason to keep them off the ballot. It is especially puzzling that also in wealthy, Western democracies corruption allegations have no effect on political careers. Factors commonly associated with lower corruption, such as an educated citizenry, a vibrant free media, and rule of law (Treisman, 2000), do not necessarily lead to electoral punishment of corruption.

Ultimately, the reelection of allegedly corrupt incumbents challenges the notion that democratic selection improves the quality of the political class. In theory, democratic elections keep politicians accountable for their policies as well as their conduct in office (Ferejohn, 1986; Przeworski et al., 1999). Over time, electoral accountability should lead to better outcomes than, say, hereditary selection (Besley, 2005). Indeed, voters do hold incumbents accountable for economic performance (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2000). When it comes to misconduct in office, however, electoral accountability does not seem to work. Parties keep allegedly corrupt incumbents on the ballot, and citizens fail to punish them at the ballot box.

Why do parties *renominate*, i.e. nominate for reelection, incumbents accused of corruption? This dissertation will study the question using 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 and Chang, 2001; Vannucci, 2012). Corruption scandals are frequent among national- and subnational-level politicians (see Chapter 2). Newspapers,

ture on accountability, Pande (2011) finds that voters do keep politicians accountable for their performance in office.

intellectuals, and non-governmental associations blame parties for nominating politicians accused of corruption, who sometimes end up being elected. Besides provoking public indignation, such cases occasionally become an issue of political debate and mobilization. The *Movimento Cinque Stelle*, currently the second largest party in parliament, originated from a campaign to ban from parliament politicians with a criminal record—usually for corruption charges.³

In Chapter 2, I will show how, in two separate instances, Italian parties changed their behavior vis-à-vis corruption allegations between one election and the next. Due to data availability limitations, I study two pairs of back-to-back legislatures: Legislatures X (1987–1992) and XI (1992–1994), and Legislatures XV (2006–2008) and XVI (2008–2013). I refer to corruption accusations levied by the judiciary against sitting parliament members (henceforth, MPs). In 1992, parties did not consider potentially corrupt MPs as a liability, and ended up nominating most of them for reelection. In 1994, by contrast, parties removed almost all accused incumbents from the ballots. The 2008 and 2013 elections show a similar pattern. In 2008, most of the MPs accused of corruption were renominated, whereas in 2013 only a few of them were. Statistical analysis shows that, in 1992 and 2008, accused and non-accused MPs had the same chances of being renominated. In 1994 and 2013, by contrast, allegedly corrupt incumbents were significantly less likely to be renominated.

Parties' decisions to renominate or not renominate MPs accused of corruption had important consequences. As explained in the next chapter, de-nominated

³Mello, Federico, "Parlamento pulito, 350mila firme dimenticate dalla Casta," *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 8 April, 2011.

incumbents had virtually no chance of being reelected. In 1992 and 2008, when parties renominated incumbents regardless of corruption accusations, 54% and 74% of accused MPs were reelected to the next legislature. In 1994 and 2013, when parties punished allegedly corrupt incumbents, only 6% and 24% of them, respectively, were able to retain their seats. Having failed to secure nominations, accused MPs lost their parliamentary immunity, and some were arrested or indicted by the judiciary.⁴ Because party nominations play a large role in determining the quality of the Italian political class, I set out to understand why parties renominate legislators accused of corruption.

I argue that media coverage of corruption decreases the chances of allegedly corrupt legislators being renominated. The media influences candidate selection through two channels. By focusing on the issue of corruption, the media increases its public salience. The more salient corruption is to voters, the higher the electoral penalty for renominating corrupt incumbents. To protect the party's reputation, party leaders drop them from the ballot. Thus, prominence of corruption in the media lowers the renomination chances of legislators accused of corruption (Hypothesis 1). Next, by reporting on the accusations against specific legislators, media outlets enable voters to identify them. When corruption is salient to voters, party leaders drop from the ballot legislators who are widely reported to be accused. Therefore, when corruption is salient to voters, more media mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators decrease their chances of being

⁴“Retata di ex deputati. Di Donato in carcere,” *Corriere della Sera*, April 17, 1994; “Parlamentari indagati, fine dell’immunità: Per quattro “onorevoli” scatta l’arresto,” *La Repubblica*, Accessed April 24, 2015 http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2013/03/15/news/scade_immunit_arresti-54618376/.

renominated (Hypothesis 2).

In my argument, electoral accountability is a two-step process, in which parties decide whether to renominate incumbent MPs based on expected voters behavior. The media influences how voters might vote if parties were to renominate incumbents accused of corruption. If parties expect to suffer electoral losses due to media coverage of corruption, they will refrain from nominating allegedly corrupt incumbents. If, instead, they expect the choice of candidates to have little or no impact on voter behavior, they will renominate accused MPs. Thus, while the media influences voters, it is parties that take on the task of driving allegedly corrupt incumbents out of office.

1.2 Contributions to existing literature

This dissertation contributes to the literature on accountability by identifying an avenue to the electoral punishment of political malfeasance: party renomination. Also, the findings confirm that media scrutiny promotes accountability. Next, my research sheds light on the important, yet understudied, topic of candidate selection. I argue that party leaders choose candidates based on whether they expect them to damage the party's reputation. Finally, this dissertation finds that, contrary to widespread perceptions, Italian politicians are not always able to get away with corruption—at least, not in the electoral arena. Sometimes, parties do remove allegedly corrupt MPs from the ballot, practically driving them out of office.

This dissertation finds support for the argument, proposed by several stud-

ies, that media scrutiny contributes to the electoral punishment of (potentially) corrupt officials. If voters do not know that candidates may be corrupt, they will (re)elect them to office (Banerjee et al., 2014; De Figueiredo et al., 2011). By providing voters with information, media outlets enable voters to punish corrupt politicians at the polls (Chang et al., 2010; Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Larreguy et al., 2014). More generally, studies argue that, by inducing reelection-seeking incumbents to adapt to voter preferences, the media promotes democratic accountability. Incumbents respond to the issues highlighted by the media (Besley and Burgess, 2002; Eisensee and Strömberg, 2007; Reinikka and Svensson, 2005), and they vote in line with constituency preferences when they are monitored by local media (Snyder and Strömberg, 2010). Similarly, I find that media coverage of corruption leads to allegedly corrupt legislators being driven out of office, thus promoting accountability.

My argument differs from these studies in two respects. First, the media promotes accountability by influencing party nominations. Existing studies consider how incumbents and voters respond to media coverage, whereas I focus on how parties, and party leaders in particular, react to changes in the informational environment. The only study in the literature that makes a similar claim is Larcinese and Sircar (2012). They find that newspaper coverage of embezzlement allegations made British MPs less likely to stand for reelection.⁵ Their theoretical argument, however, does not focus on the role of parties, nor does it distinguish between de-nomination and retirement. In Italy, as in other European countries, it is party

⁵In a related study, Cámara-Fuertes and Bobonis (2015) find that the release of municipal audit reports does *not* affect the incumbent's decision to retire or stand for reelection.

organizations and leaders who decide whether incumbents get to run for reelection. I argue that, when voters receive information on corruption from the media, party leaders *anticipate* voters' behavior and refrain from renominating corrupt incumbents.

Second, I argue that the media leads to the electoral punishment of corruption through two distinct mechanisms. Besides reporting on the accusations against specific legislators, as the literature recognizes, the media drives attention to the issue of corruption, thus making it more salient to voters. When corruption becomes more salient, renominating allegedly corrupt incumbents becomes more costly, thus inducing party leaders to remove them from the ballot.⁶

Next, my dissertation contributes to the literature on candidate selection. Studies have long recognized the importance of candidate selection. According to Gallagher and Marsh (1987, 1), the quality of candidates determines the quality of the legislators elected, of the resultant legislature, and sometimes of a country's politics. However, because this process is normally less transparent than the election, sometimes even happening behind closed doors, we have a limited knowledge of how parties choose candidates. This study sheds light on a part of the candidate selection process, i.e. how parties decide whether to renominate their current incumbents. I argue that party leaders base their decisions on whether nominees will hurt the party's reputation and lead to electoral losses.

Finally, my findings shed a positive light on electoral accountability in the

⁶Reflecting on the electoral punishment of allegedly corrupt Italian MPs in 1994, Chang et al. (2010) propose a similar mechanism. However, they only find limited empirical support, and they do not consider parties' nominations.

Italian context. Italian journalists, citizen groups, and political leaders often denounce that politicians accused of corruption by the judiciary are renominated by their parties and reelected to office. As a result, the public is under the impression that corruption accusations carry no electoral penalty at all. The data indicate that such concerns are only partly justified. While I do not have data for all recent elections, I document that, on at least two occasions, i.e. 1994 and 2013, Italian parties did punish MPs accused of corruption by failing to renominate them. Because de-nominated, potentially corrupt MPs were generally unable to reenter parliament, the parties' decisions resulted in greater electoral accountability.

One important qualification to these results is that only occasionally does the media focus on the issue of corruption, thus inducing parties to “clean up” their lists. In the case of Italy, specific pre-conditions pushed corruption high on the media agenda in 1994 and 2013. In both cases, the parties that had been in government over the previous decades had lost their legitimacy in the eyes of voters, opening unprecedented opportunities for contestation. In the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union undermined the stability of the postwar party system. In the early 2010s, the economic recession and the European debt crisis fueled dissatisfaction with the political class. Opposition to the establishment was so widespread that the media had an incentive to denounce political malfeasance. By highlighting corruption, media outlets were aligning themselves with the audience, and seeking to be more independent from parties.

1.3 Plan of Dissertation

The dissertation will proceed as follows. In Chapter 2, I present the empirical puzzle that motivates this dissertation. As previously mentioned, the fate of Italian MPs accused of corruption appears to have changed dramatically between one election and the next. In 1992, most of the incumbents accused of corruption were renominated, whereas, in 1994, only a few of them were. Similarly, in 2008, most of the accused MPs were renominated, whereas, in 2013, a minority of them were. Also, in all the four elections studied, renomination was key to reelection. De-nominated incumbents had few chances of being reelected, either by running with another party or as independents. Once they were renominated, corrupt and non-corrupt incumbents were equally likely to be reelected. Because the reelection of allegedly corrupt incumbents appears to have depended on renomination, I set out to investigate why parties renominate legislators accused of corruption.

In Chapter 3, I develop a theoretical argument for why parties nominate for reelection legislators accused of corruption. I base my argument on a review of two threads of research. The literature on candidate selection finds that party leaders are key actors in the candidate selection process, especially in Italy. The literature on corruption and voting behavior suggests that, by delivering information to voters, the media enables voters to drive (potentially) corrupt politicians out of office. Based on this research, I argue that media coverage of corruption influences party leaders' decisions to renominate legislators accused of corruption. I derive two testable hypotheses from this argument. First, the more prominent is corruption as a general issue in the media, the lower the renomination chances of

the average legislator accused of corruption (Hypothesis 1). Second, media mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators decrease their chances of being renominated (Hypothesis 2).

In Chapter 4, I test Hypothesis 1 by analyzing how the Italian media covered the issue of corruption during the four legislatures studied. I rely mostly on measures of front-page newspaper coverage, corroborating them with television coverage data. I find that the media devoted little attention to corruption in the period directly preceding the 1992 election, whereas they gave greater prominence to corruption in the period before the 1994 election. Similarly, corruption was more prominent in the media in the period preceding the 2013 election than in the period preceding the 2008 election. Public opinion data indicate that, as the media focused on corruption, voters became more concerned with corruption. To strengthen my argument, I rule out a series of rival hypotheses by analyzing secondary sources and related datasets. In the last section, I speculate why the media turned corruption into a nationally prominent issue prior to the 1994 and 2013 elections.

In Chapter 5, I test Hypothesis 2 using data from two legislatures, Legislature XI (1992–1994) and Legislature XVI (2008–2013). I use statistical analysis to study the likelihood of corrupt MPs being renominated. I measure media mentions by the number of newspaper articles that mentioned corruption allegations. To deal with potential selection bias, I adopt a Heckman, two-stage selection model. I find that mentions of corruption in the media are negatively and significantly associated with renomination.

In the Conclusion, I discuss how this dissertation contributes to our under-

standing of electoral accountability and candidate selection. Overall, the findings suggest optimism for democratic selection. Under certain conditions, parties are indeed discouraged from nominating allegedly corrupt incumbents for reelection. Media scrutiny keeps politicians accountable, and a more informed citizenry ultimately achieves higher-quality political representation. Regarding the case of Italy, the message of this dissertation is also (cautiously) optimistic. Contrary to widespread perceptions, politicians accused of corruption sometimes face electoral punishment.

CHAPTER 2

Corruption Allegations and Renomination

2.1 Introduction

Corruption scandals have rocked Italian politics over the last few decades. Three-time prime minister Silvio Berlusconi has faced approximately 30 criminal proceedings, some of which related to corruption and abuse of office (Sberna and Vannucci, 2013, 579). Scores of subnational- and national-level politicians have been accused of corruption by the judiciary. Some of these cases may appear relatively trivial. Regional legislators, for example, routinely used the public subsidies intended for their parties to pay for personal expenses, such as DVDs, traffic tickets, or vacations.¹ A deputy was convicted for having an army helicopter deliver freshly caught fish to his dinner table.² Other cases are more worrisome. A senator was accused of exploiting his position as party treasurer to pocket public funds, and he was later ordered to reimburse the state for €22.8 million.³ In 2014, investigations revealed connections between Rome’s municipal government and a notorious, former far-right terrorist. By offering bribes and protection, the latter steered lucrative public contracts to allied firms and co-operatives.⁴

Journalists, intellectuals, and concerned citizens often denounce that parties nominate candidates accused of corruption, sometimes enabling them to win

¹See for example “Spese folli, la grande abbuffata delle Regioni. Indagini in tre su quattro,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 14 December 2013.

²Carlo Bonini, “Ponte aereo per le spigole, condannato Speciale,” *La Repubblica*, 14 May, 2010. “Spigola gate, Speciale deve risarcire 200mila euro,” *La Repubblica*, 24 July, 2013.

³“La Corte dei Conti condanna Lusi a pagare 22 milioni per danno erariale,” *La Repubblica*, 30 December, 2013.

⁴“Mafia in the middle,” *The Economist*, 27 June, 2015. “Roman carnival,” *The Economist*, 13 December 2014.

(re)election (Gomez and Travaglio, 2006, 2008).⁵ The case of Silvio Berlusconi, of course, has received wide coverage from domestic and international media. Before each election, major newspapers such as *La Repubblica* and *Il Fatto Quotidiano* publish the criminal records of incumbent officials, speculating whether their parties will nominate them.⁶ In May 2015, Roberto Saviano, the author of the international bestseller *Gomorra*, revealed that some of the candidates in the upcoming regional-level election were connected to mafia-type criminal organizations.⁷ Such exposés typically raise public indignation on newspaper websites, blogs, and social media (Ceron, 2014).

The presence of “criminal candidates”, whether accused of corruption or other crimes, occasionally becomes an issue of political debate and mobilization. In 2007, the comic actor and blogger Beppe Grillo promoted a referendum, called *Parlamento Pulito* (“Clean parliament”), to ban from parliament the legislators who had received a final conviction. After collecting about 350,000 signatures from private citizens, the bill was discussed by parliament, but never became a

⁵See also Umberto Rosso, “Questione morale, la sfida del Pd, Destra piena di deputati inquisiti,” *La Repubblica*, 8 December, 2008; Dacia Maraini, “Quelle giustificazioni sui costi della politica,” *Corriere della Sera*, 26 July, 2011, 33; Massimo Giannini, “Al di sotto di ogni sospetto,” *La Repubblica*, 13 April, 2012; Aldo Grasso, “Report stana i politici indagati,” *Corriere della Sera*, 2 October, 2012, 55.

⁶The following are only a few examples from recent elections. “Tutti i guai con la giustizia degli aspiranti onorevoli,” *La Repubblica*, 16 March, 2008; Sergio Rizzo, “Tra i reati dei portatori di voti,” *Corriere della Sera*, 14 October, 2010; Giuseppe Pipitone, “Voto in Sicilia, un esercito d’inquisiti in lista. Dal falso in bilancio alla corruzione,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 30 September, 2012; Carlo Tecce, “Europee, vincono indagati e condannati: in 21 totalizzano 1 milione e 242mila voti,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 29 May, 2014.

⁷“Saviano: Nelle liste di De Luca c’è tutto il sistema Gomorra,” *Il Corriere del Mezzogiorno*, 7 May 2015.

law.⁸ This campaign was the stepping stone to Grillo’s own political party, the *Movimento Cinque Stelle*, which became Italy’s second most-voted party within a few years. Since its foundation, the *Movimento Cinque Stelle* has pledged to nominate only “clean” candidates, i.e. without a criminal record, and has criticized the other parties for not doing the same (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013). In fact, parties often accuse each other of recruiting potentially criminal or corrupt candidates. To defend their choices, party leaders respond that everyone is innocent until proven guilty or, in case of convicted candidates, that popular approval trumps judicial decisions.

Despite the attention of the media and public opinion, there is virtually no systematic research on the electoral fate of allegedly corrupt politicians in Italy.⁹ To fill this gap, this chapter presents cross-time statistics on the renomination and reelection of Italian parliament members accused of corruption by the judiciary. Due to data availability limitations, however, I can only study two pairs of back-to-back legislatures (1987–1992 and 1992–1994; 2006–2008 and 2008–2013), for which I can find systematic data on MPs’ criminal records. I exclude previous legislatures, which are already studied by Chang et al. (2010).

This chapter introduces the empirical puzzle that motivates this dissertation. The fate of Italian MPs accused of corruption changed dramatically between one election and the next. In 1992 and 2008, corruption accusations do not seem to

⁸Federico Mello, “Parlamento pulito, 350mila firme dimenticate dalla Casta,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 8 April 2011.

⁹Chang et al. (2010) have studied this phenomenon during Italy’s so-called First Republic (1946–1994). As for the following period, journalistic exposes and newspaper articles offer only anecdotal evidence.

have affected the chances of MPs being reelected to the next legislature. In 1994 and 2013, by contrast, MPs accused of corruption appear to have been penalized compared to their non-accused peers. Why were most corrupt incumbents reelected in 1992 and 2008, but not in 1994 or 2013?¹⁰ Combining statistical analysis and qualitative sources, I show that the party’s decision to nominate for reelection allegedly corrupt MPs determined their chances of being reelected. In 1992 and 2008, parties *renominated*, i.e. nominated for reelection, incumbent MPs regardless of corruption allegations, whereas, in 1994 and 2013, they removed corrupt incumbents from the ballot.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In Section 2.2, I discuss cross-time statistics on the reelection of Italian parliament members, grouping them according to whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary or not. In Section 2.3, I analyze the frequency with which accused and non-accused MPs were renominated by their respective parties. In Section 2.4, I study whether corruption accusations affected the reelection chances of the renominated MPs. In Section 2.5, I discuss the historical context of the 1994 and 2013 elections. In Section 2.6, I summarize my findings and I lay down the foundations of the analysis contained in the following chapters.

¹⁰To avoid repetition, henceforth I will use the terms “MPs,” “legislators,” and “incumbents” interchangeably. For the same reason, I will refer to them as “allegedly corrupt” or “corrupt,” even if they have not been found guilty. While this is a simplification, I want to emphasize that my research deals with the impact of corruption *allegations* on renomination chances.

2.2 Corruption Allegations and Reelection

In this section, I begin to examine the electoral fortunes of Italian MPs accused of corruption. Again, I study parliament members because I can collect data on criminal records consistently over time, though only for a few legislatures. Analyzing two pairs of consecutive legislatures, I discover that the rate at which allegedly corrupt MPs were reelected changed quite dramatically between one election and the next.

Data show that a relatively large proportion of parliament members have been accused of corruption by the judiciary.¹¹ For Legislature X (1987–1992) and Legislature XI (1992–1994), I used data on the requests to lift parliamentary immunity, issued by the prosecutors, to identify the Chamber (i.e. Lower House) MPs investigated for corruption.¹² For Legislature XV (2006–2008) and Legislature XVI (2008–2013), I used press sources to identify the Chamber deputies who, as of the end of the legislature, were under investigation or on trial for corruption, or had avoided a final judgment thanks to the statute of limitations (*prescrizione*).¹³ During Legislature X, 39 MPs (6%) were investigated for corruption. During

¹¹My coding of corruption refers 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. For information on data sources and coding, see Appendix A.4.

¹²This source is not available for later periods because, in the final months of Legislature XI, a reform was passed to allow the judiciary to prosecute MPs without prior authorization.

¹³Under 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). Because my focus is on corruption accusations, I include the MPs convicted at the trial or appeal stage, because the *Corte di Cassazione* had not yet finalized the conviction. For the same reason, I do not count the MPs convicted by the *Corte di Cassazione*.

Legislature XI, this number jumped to 162 (26%).¹⁴ This was the result of a nationwide wave of investigations that, starting with the *Mani Pulite* (Clean Hands) operation in Milan, disclosed a vast system of corruption and illegal party funding (Della Porta, 2001; Rhodes, 1997; Ricolfi, 1993). During Legislature XV, 23 MPs (4%) were accused of corruption, versus 37 (6%) during Legislature XVI.¹⁵

Did allegedly corrupt MPs manage to retain their seats? Descriptive statistics suggest that their electoral success changed dramatically between one election and the next. Figure 2.1 shows the proportion of corrupt and non-corrupt Chamber MPs who were reelected to the next legislature. In 1992, 54% of corrupt MPs were reelected. In 1994, by contrast, only a tiny 6% retained their seats. In 2008, 74% of the allegedly corrupt MPs were reelected, versus only 24% in the following election of 2013.

Both the 1994 and 2013 elections had exceptionally high rates of turnover and electoral volatility.¹⁶ Between 1992 and 1994, the governing parties lost voters' support and either split apart, dissolved into other parties, or disappeared (Diamanti and Mannheim, 1994; Di Virgilio, 1995). Meanwhile, Berlusconi's newly-founded party, *Forza Italia*, grew very quickly thanks to a well-organized campaign on his television network (Sani, 1995; Durante et al., 2013). As a result of these changes, 71% of the MPs elected in 1994 entered parliament for their first

¹⁴During Legislature XI, 54 senators (17%) were also investigated. I do not have data for senators of Legislature X.

¹⁵For the Senate, the respective numbers are 12 (4%) during Legislature XV, and 18 (6%) during Legislature XVI.

¹⁶For more information, see Section 5.2.

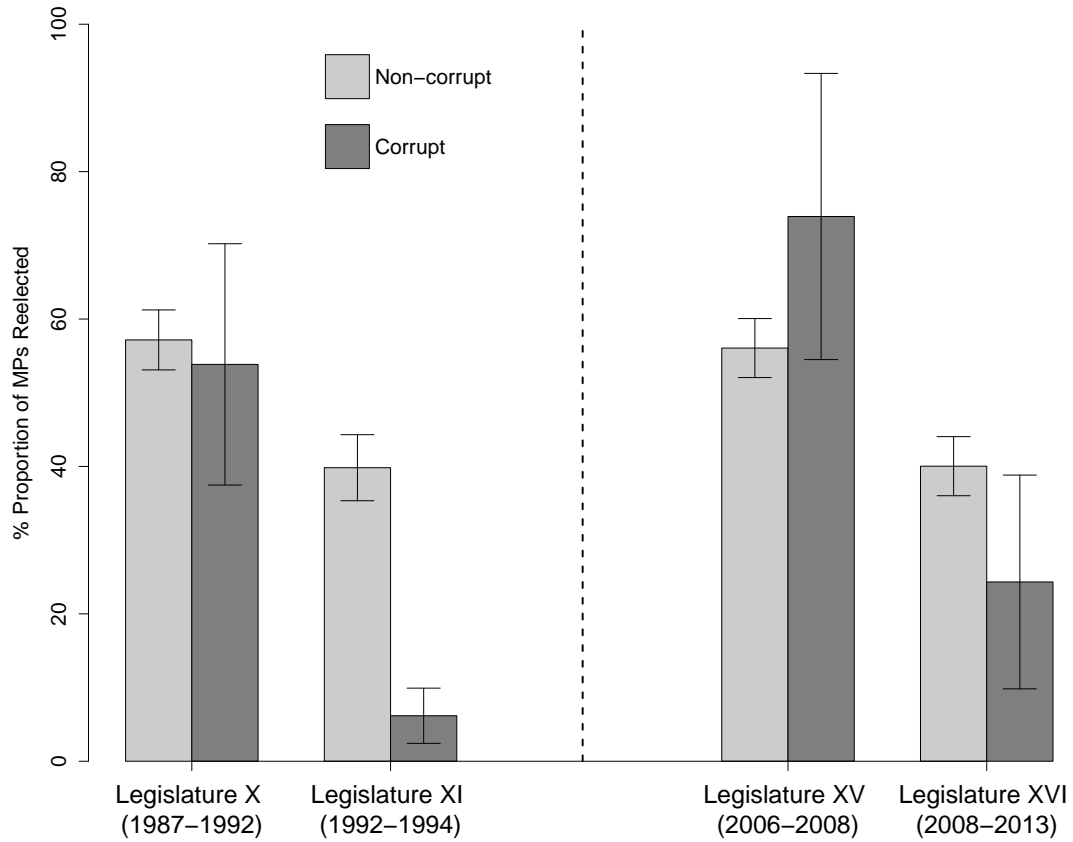
time (Verzichelli, 1995, 403).¹⁷ Similarly, in 2013, voters punished the governing parties and switched en masse to a new, anti-establishment party, the *Movimento Cinque Stelle* (De Sio et al., 2013). Two thirds of the MPs elected in 2013 had not served in the previous legislature. Overall, the 1994 and 2013 elections were the most volatile in Italy's postwar history. In the history of Western democracies, only a few elections have had higher volatility rates (Chiaramonte and Emanuele, 2013).

Even considering the high turnover, however, in 1994 and 2013 corrupt MPs appear to have been penalized *more* than their non-corrupt peers (Figure 2.1). In 1992, the two groups do not show statistically significant differences. In 1994, the fraction of non-accused MPs that were reelected also decreased from 53% to 40%. However, the drop was not nearly as dramatic as their accused peers.¹⁸ In 2008, again there is no statistical difference between the two groups. In fact, a greater proportion of corrupt MPs (74%) than non-corrupt MPs (56%) were reelected. The 2013 election exhibits the opposite pattern, with a smaller proportion (24%) of corrupt MPs being reelected than non-corrupt peers (40%). Due to the small sample size, the difference is significant only at the 0.10 level. Compared to 2008, I observe a small drop in the reelection rates of non-corrupt MPs (about 16 percentage points), versus a much larger drop in the case of corrupt MPs

¹⁷In the previous three elections, the proportion of newly-elected MPs with no experience in parliamentary office had been 41% (1992), 31% (1987), and 32% (1983) (Cotta and Verzichelli, 2008, 113).

¹⁸In fact, the 1994 data contrast sharply with historical trends, thus bringing further support to the argument. Throughout the entire postwar era, Chang et al. (2010) find that allegedly corrupt MPs were equally likely to win reelection as their non-corrupt peers. Corruption scandals were neither unusual nor trivial, yet voters consistently reelected to office politicians accused of corruption.

Figure 2.1: Corruption Allegations and Reelection, Chamber of Deputies



The graph plots the percentage proportions of Italian Chamber members who were reelected to the subsequent legislature, grouping MPs according to whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary during the legislature (“corrupt”) or not (“non-corrupt”). MPs are coded as reelected regardless of whether they were elected to the Chamber or the Senate. For instance, 53% of the corrupt MPs of Legislature X won a Chamber or Senate seat in 1992, versus 58% of their non-corrupt peers. The whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals around the mean. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see Appendix A.4.

(approximately 50 percentage points). For Legislatures XI, XV, and XVI, I can repeat the analysis pooling together Chamber and Senate members. The results are essentially the same (Figure 2.6).

These patterns pose an interesting empirical puzzle. On the one hand, in 1992 and 2008, corruption accusations do not seem to have affected the chances of MPs being reelected. This finding is in line with studies showing that incumbents accused of corruption, whether they be legislators or mayors, are as likely to be reelected as their non-accused peers (Chang et al., 2010; Fernández-Vázquez et al., 2013; Nyblade and Reed, 2008; Peters and Welch, 1980; Welch and Hibbing, 1997; Reed, 1999). The success of allegedly corrupt politicians challenges the assumption that, everything else being equal, voters prefer a “clean” candidate to one that may have abused his/her office for private gain. It also stands in contrast to the finding that most people around the world claim to disapprove of political corruption (e.g. Swamy et al., 2001). Ultimately, the reelection of corrupt incumbents contradicts the idea that democratic selection improves the quality of the political class and leads to electoral accountability (Besley, 2005; Caselli and Morelli, 2004).

On the other hand, in 1994 and 2013, MPs accused of corruption appear to have been penalized compared to their non-accused peers. Why were most corrupt incumbents reelected in 1992, but not in 1994? One explanation could be that the 1992 election was held under proportional representation, whereas the 1994 election was held under a mixed-member system, in which most seats were contested in single-member districts.¹⁹ Some authors argue that plurality rules lead

¹⁹See Appendix A.6 for details.

to greater electoral accountability, because politicians are held personally responsible for their performance (Persson et al., 2003; Kunicová and Rose-Ackerman, 2005). I will address this explanation in Section 2.3.1. At any rate, the argument cannot explain the difference between Legislature XV and Legislature XVI. Both the 2008 and 2013 elections were held under the same, closed-list PR rules. Electoral rules, therefore, do not explain the patterns observed in *both* pairs of elections.

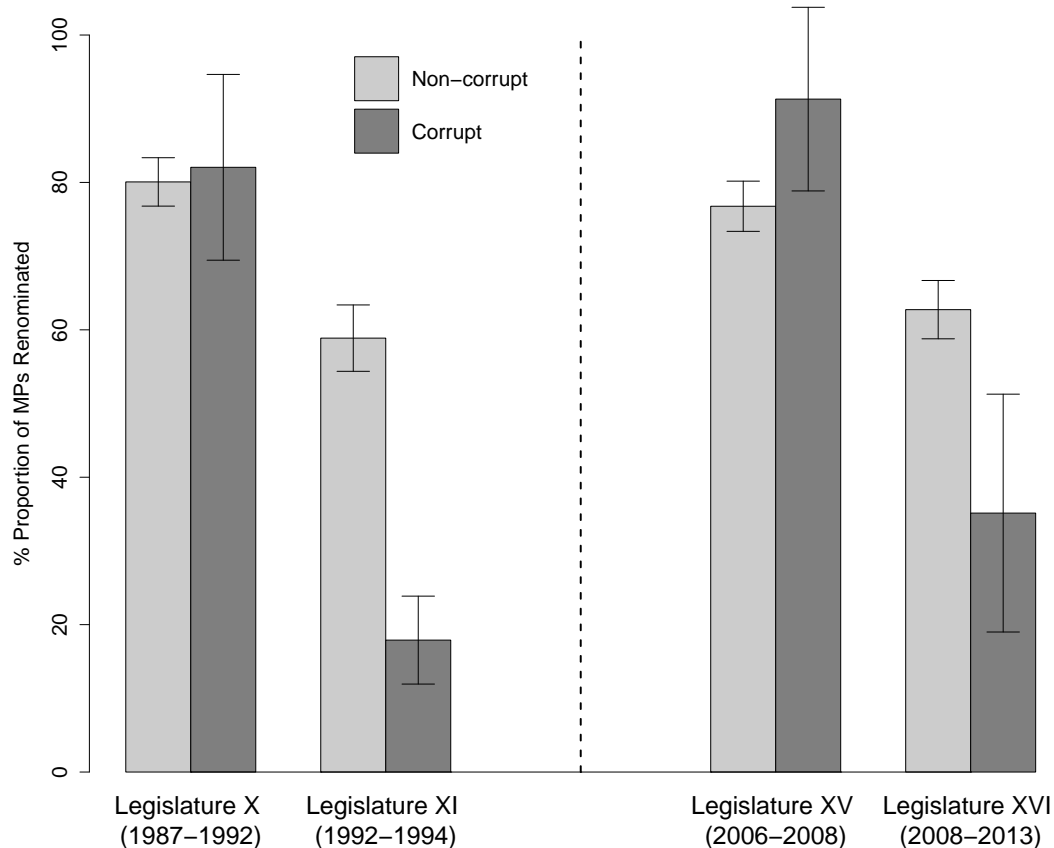
2.3 Corruption Allegations and Renomination

To start addressing this puzzle, I look at how many MPs were renominated by their respective parties. Being nominated by a party is often a necessary condition to be (re)elected. This is especially the case in national-level legislative elections, in which independent candidates are rare, and in established democracies (Müller, 2000, 313–316). An incumbents can be nominated by his/her own party, or can be nominated by another party. Italian MPs lack the organized local support necessary to win reelection as candidates for another party (Di Virgilio and Reed, 2011).²⁰ Thus, the political fate of Italian MPs depends first of all on whether their own parties nominate them for reelection.

The proportion of allegedly corrupt MPs that were renominated dropped sig-

²⁰Under the open-list PR system in place until 1993, parliament members did use bribes and illegal contributions to expand their local clienteles and win reelection (Golden, 2003). However, the fact that party switching was very rare (Heller and Mershon, 2005, p. 241), combined with the strength of partisan and ideological identities among Italian voters (Bellucci, 2007), suggests that MP’s clienteles were not sufficient to be reelected with another party. I provide further evidence later in Section 2.4.

Figure 2.2: Corruption Allegations and Renomination, Chamber of Deputies



The graph plots the percentage proportions of Italian Chamber members who were nominated for reelection by their party (or a successor of their party), grouping MPs according to whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary during the legislature (“corrupt”) or not (“non-corrupt”). MPs are coded as renominated regardless of whether they were nominated for the Chamber or the Senate. For instance, 82% of the corrupt MPs of Legislature X were renominated, versus 80% of their non-corrupt peers. The whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals around the mean. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see Appendix A.4.

nificantly between 1992 and 1994, and then again between 2008 and 2013. For each legislature, Figure 2.2 shows the proportion of corrupt/non-corrupt MPs nominated for reelection by their respective parties. In 1992, 82% of the MPs accused of corruption were renominated, versus 18% in 1994 – a difference of 64 percentage points. In 2008, 91% of the accused MPs were renominated, versus 35% in 2013 – a difference of 56 percentage points. I obtain very similar results pooling together Chamber and Senate members (Figure 2.7 in the Appendix).

One potential concern with this finding is that MPs accused of corruption may be (dis)advantaged in seeking reelection. For example, elite MPs, having more political influence than backbenchers, are more likely to receive bribes, and hence more likely to be accused of corruption. But because they have additional incentives and resources to seek reelection (Golden and Picci, Forthcoming), they should also be more likely to be renominated. Simply looking at renomination rates could be misleading.

The analysis of covariate balance in Figures 2.8-2.10 reveals that accused MPs systematically differ from their non-accused peers, although the direction of the bias is unclear. MPs elected in the south, MPs with cabinet experience, and those with a longer tenure in office are more likely to be accused.²¹ In Legislatures X-XI, incumbents affiliated with governing parties and those with larger clienteles, as proxied by preference votes, are more likely to be investigated for corruption.²² It is unclear whether these characteristics gave an advantage to accused MPs.

²¹Peters and Welch (1980, p. 704) find a similar relationship between seniority and corruption charges among U.S. House representatives.

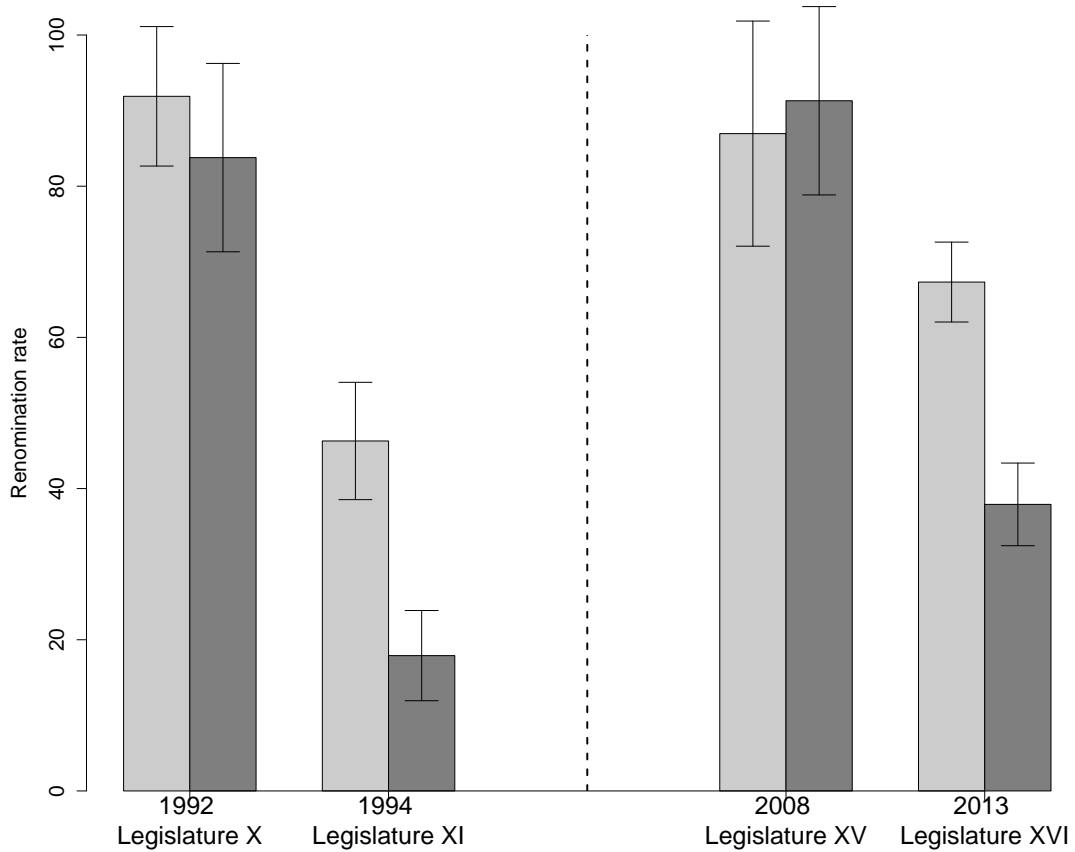
²²Ricolfi (1993) and Chang et al. (2010) report similar findings. On the relationship between corruption and clientelism, see Section 4.4.2.

Clientele size is probably associated with higher renomination chances. Because personal relationships between voters and politicians, sometimes degenerating into clientelism, are more common in Southern Italy, parties may have had an incentive to renominate incumbents in the south. Seniority and affiliation with governing parties, by contrast, should decrease renomination chances. In Italy, seniority has historically had a negative impact on renomination (Chang et al., 2010, 191). Because governing parties were expected to suffer electoral losses in all these elections, their MPs should have preemptively withdrawn their names.

In order to deal with selection bias, I estimate the effect of corruption allegations on renomination using a nonparametric matching technique. For each legislature, I select MPs who are similar to each other on a number of observable aspects, or covariates, but who vary on whether or not they are accused of corruption (Imbens, 2004). As covariates, I use characteristics plausibly related to both treatment (corruption accusations) and outcome (renomination). A genetic matching algorithm iteratively checks and improves the covariate balance across matched treated and control cases, until an acceptable balance is achieved (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013). In Appendix 2.C, I discuss the choice of covariates and I analyze pre- and post-matching balance.

The results of the matching procedure indicate that the effect of corruption allegations on renomination varied greatly between one election and the next. For each election, Figure 2.3 displays the proportion of corrupt/non-corrupt MPs who were renominated by their respective parties. In 1992, the two groups do not exhibit statistically significant differences. In 1994, by contrast, corruption

Figure 2.3: Effect of Corruption Allegations on Renomination, Matching Results



The graph plots the results of a matching procedure on members of the Italian Chamber of Deputies for four legislatures (X, XI, XV, XVI). MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”) are matched with non-accused peers (“non-corrupt”). The matching procedure is described in Appendix 2.C. For each legislature, the bars indicate the percentage proportion of corrupt/non-corrupt MPs who were nominated for reelection by their party (or a successor of their party) in the next parliamentary election. The whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals around the mean. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see Appendix A.4.

allegations decreased renomination chances by 28%.²³ In 2008, corrupt and non-corrupt MPs were renominated with approximately the same frequency. In 2013, corruption accusations are associated with a 29% decrease in renomination rate. I obtain similar results by running fully-specified probit models (see Appendix 2.D).

A survey of the Italian press confirms that parties considered allegedly corrupt MPs as a liability in 1994, but not in 1992. I conducted a keyword search on the archives of the two main Italian newspapers, *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica*, during the election campaigns of 1992 and 1994.²⁴ For 1992, I was unable to find any article discussing corruption allegations alongside candidate nominations. Either parties ignored such allegations when discussing candidate nominations, or newspapers failed on the issue. In 1994, by contrast, the leaderships of the main parties publicly discussed candidates' criminal records, and announced that, as a general rule, the MPs investigated for corruption would not be renominated. For example, the leaders of the *Partito Popolare Italiano*, which had succeeded the Christian Democratic Party, reportedly disagreed on whether to remove from the ballot all the investigated MPs, or to make an exception for popular party figureheads.²⁵ The secretary of the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* declared that his party would not make any exception, and urged his coalition partners to

²³The 1992 result is consistent with historical trends. Throughout the entire postwar period, accused and non-accused MPs were equally likely to be nominated for reelection (Chang et al., 2010). In 1994, allegedly corrupt MPs appear to have been penalized for the first time.

²⁴ I searched for the following strings: “*corruzione* (corruption) AND *candidati* (candidates)”; “*indagati* (investigated) AND *candidati* (candidates)”. The timeframe is the 30-day period preceding the deadline for the submission of candidate lists, party names, and symbols.

²⁵Maurizio Caprara, “Segni Martinazzoli, scontro sugli inquisiti,” *Corriere della Sera*, 9 February 1994. Stefano Marroni, “Il gran carnevale di Segni e Martinazzoli,” *La Repubblica*, 12 February 1994. See also Massari (1995).

do the same.²⁶

The analysis of press sources reveals a similar shift between 2008 and 2013.²⁷ In 2008, the two main parties, the *Partito Democratico* (PD) and *Popolo della Libertà* (Pdl), did discuss whether to renominate MPs accused of corruption, but opted for a relatively flexible policy. The former pledged not to renominate the MPs who had been *convicted* for corruption or other crimes.²⁸ In turn, the central leadership of the Pdl reportedly recommended the regional-level organizations not to renominate the MPs involved in criminal proceedings, except for “those proceedings that, as we all know, are political in nature” – which left ample room for discretion.²⁹ In 2013, the two parties took a more radical approach to the issue. The *Partito Democratico*, which for the first time selected its candidates through primary elections, reserved the right to reject primary winners with a criminal record (De Lucia and Cataldi, 2013). Shortly before the election, a party committee retroactively disqualified three MPs accused of corruption – a decision that attracted much media attention.³⁰ Appearing on a popular television talk show, the Pdl leader, Silvio Berlusconi, announced that his party would not renominate the MPs currently investigated for corruption, although he claimed

²⁶“Le liste di Occhetto a prove di inquisito,” *La Repubblica*, 29 January 1994.

²⁷Data collection procedure described in footnote 24.

²⁸Gianluca Luzzi, “Parte la sfida sulle liste pulite Veltroni: escludere i condannati,” *La Repubblica*, 22 February, 2008.

²⁹“Fi: No a inquisiti nelle liste tranne vittime di processi politici,” *La Repubblica*, 21 February, 2008.

³⁰“Dal Partito Democratico alla Lega Nord, i casi più scottanti,” *Il Giorno*, 22 January, 2013. “Liste Pd, esclusi gli impresentabili Crisafulli, Papania e Caputo,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 26 January, 2013.

to be convinced of their innocence.³¹

2.3.1 Renomination under Mixed-Member Electoral Rules

In this section, I address the concern that a change in the electoral rules might be responsible for the 1994 renomination patterns. In 1993, parliament replaced the open-list PR system with a mixed-member majoritarian system.³² Under the new rules, 75% of parliament seats were allocated through plurality single-member districts (SMDs). The remaining seats were assigned through closed-list PR rules.³³ In SMDs, where voters vote on individual candidates, voters should be more informed on candidates' backgrounds than in multimember PR districts, where they vote for party lists.³⁴ Indeed, Kunicová and Rose-Ackerman (2005) and Persson et al. (2003) argue that plurality rules decrease corruption, compared to PR rules. Because most seats were now contested in SMDs, parties might have been discouraged from renominating MPs accused of corruption. If so, it would be misleading to compare 1992 renomination rates with 1994 renomination rates.

However, there are reasons to dismiss the impact of the 1993 electoral reform.

³¹"Berlusconi molla Cosentino," *La Repubblica*, 10 January, 2013; "Cosentino e gli impre-sentabili," *Corriere della Sera*, 15 January, 2013; "Il sondaggio elettorale di Berlusconi: Gli impre-sentabili? Una zavorra per il Pdl," *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 20 January, 2013.

³²Parliament passed the reform after voters approved a referendum proposal to change the electoral rules for the Senate (see Section 4.2).

³³For a detailed description of Italy's electoral systems during this period, see Appendix A.6).

³⁴With an average population of 110,000 (Chamber) and 220,000 (Senate), the SMDs were relatively small. To give a term of comparison, the average size of US Congressional districts is 710,000 (US Census Bureau, 2011). On average, there were about five candidates in each district. Therefore, it is plausible that voters knew, or at least had the possibility to learn, whether a candidate was currently investigated. If they did not, the other candidates had an incentive to disclose this information for electoral purposes.

To begin with, the literature disagrees on the effect of electoral rules on corruption. The argument that plurality systems lead to higher accountability than proportional systems has weak empirical support (Treisman, 2007, p. 232). Faller et al. (2013) find evidence in the opposite direction. The differences between open-list and closed-list PR rules might explain such divergent findings (Chang and Golden, 2007).

Historical evidence indicates that Italian parties publicly broke ties with the investigated MPs *before* the electoral reform was passed. At the beginning of 1993, both the Christian Democratic Party and the Socialist Party replaced their top officials, who were either investigated or were expected to be in the near future. The new DC secretary practically suspended from the party the MPs investigated for corruption crimes.³⁵ The new PSI leadership adopted similar rules.³⁶ In adopting this unconventional policy, which many in the party ranks opposed, the leaders appeared concerned with restoring the reputation of their parties. The electoral reform was approved months later, in August 1993.

Next, I study how corruption allegations affected the renomination chances of subnational-level legislators, who were elected under open-list PR rules.³⁷ Lacking a cleaner procedure to control for the 1993 electoral reform, I use subnational-level elections to understand how parties dealt with corruption allegations in an open-list PR setting. I analyze the regional councils of Italy's two highest-populated

³⁵"Inconciliabile essere DC e massoni. Gli inquisiti sospesi dal partito," *Corriere della Sera*, 14 February, 1993.

³⁶"Benvenuto vince tra le macerie," *Corriere della Sera*, 5 May, 1993).

³⁷For a description of electoral rules in municipal and regional elections, see Appendix A.7).

regions, Lombardy and Campania, and the municipal councils of their respective capitals, Milan and Naples, which are second- and third-largest cities in Italy.³⁸ The composition of these four subnational councils is similar to the composition of the national parliament. In all of them, the Christian Democratic Party (DC) and the Socialist Party (PSI) were the main partners in the government coalition.³⁹ With minor variations, the same coalition had governed Italy, Lombardy, Campania, Milan, and Naples since at least 1980.

I analyze the probability of being renominated through probit regression, controlling for a number of biographical and political characteristics. The dependent variable indicates whether the legislator was nominated for reelection by his or her party in 1993 or 1995, depending on whether it was a municipal or regional election. The key explanatory variable, *Corrupt*, indicates whether the legislator was investigated for corruption while in office. For the Lombardy and Milan councils, I used the judicial records compiled by two *Corriere della Sera* journalists to code the variable (Biondani and Ferrarella, 2002). For the Campania and Naples councils, I conducted a keyword search on the archive of ANSA, Italy's leading press agency.⁴⁰ Probit results are reported in Table 2.1.

³⁸Lacking a centralized, openly accessible dataset of judicial investigations, I can only study a small number of subnational legislatures. Given the well-understood North-South divide in Italian society, economy, and politics (Agnew, 2002; Putnam et al., 1994; Trigilia, 1992), I chose to analyze a region (city) in Northern Italy, Lombardy (Milan) and one in Southern Italy, Campania (Naples). Lombardy and Campania had the highest concentration of corruption investigations in the 1990s (Davigo and Mannozi, 2007, 65–77). As a result, in the 1992–1994 legislature, most of the corruption-related requests to lift parliamentary immunity were issued by the Court of Milan (25%) and the Court of Naples (16%).

³⁹More detailed information can be found in Table A.1.

⁴⁰For variable description, data sources, and collection procedures, see the Appendix A.5.

The statistical analysis indicates that subnational-level legislators investigated for corruption were less likely to be renominated than their non-investigated peers. First, I run a basic model with the focal explanatory variable, *Corrupt*, and controls for age and education (Model 1). Then, I add legislators' political characteristics, such as affiliation with a governing party, seniority, and preference votes (Model 2), and party vote share (Model 3). Finally, I control for region and municipal/regional government (Model 4). Across all specifications, the coefficients of *Corrupt* are negative and statistically significant. The effect of corruption investigations is substantively large. Based on the fully-specified model, for example, I estimate that a Campania regional legislator investigated for corruption was 25% less likely to be renominated than a non-investigated peer.

The evidence presented in this section suggests that the 1993 electoral reform did not play a major role in the renomination of allegedly corrupt MPs. Theoretically, the new, mixed-member system may have dissuaded party leaders from renominating MPs accused of corruption. However, it appears that parties “punished” them well before the reform was passed, possibly in an effort to restore their reputations with voters. The same parties chose not to renominate allegedly corrupt incumbents in municipal and regional elections, which were held under open-list proportional rules.

2.4 Renomination and Electoral Accountability

In this section, I examine the relationship between renomination and reelection. So far, I have shown that, in two elections, MPs accused of corruption were not

Table 2.1: Effect of Corruption Allegations on Renomination, Subnational Legislatures

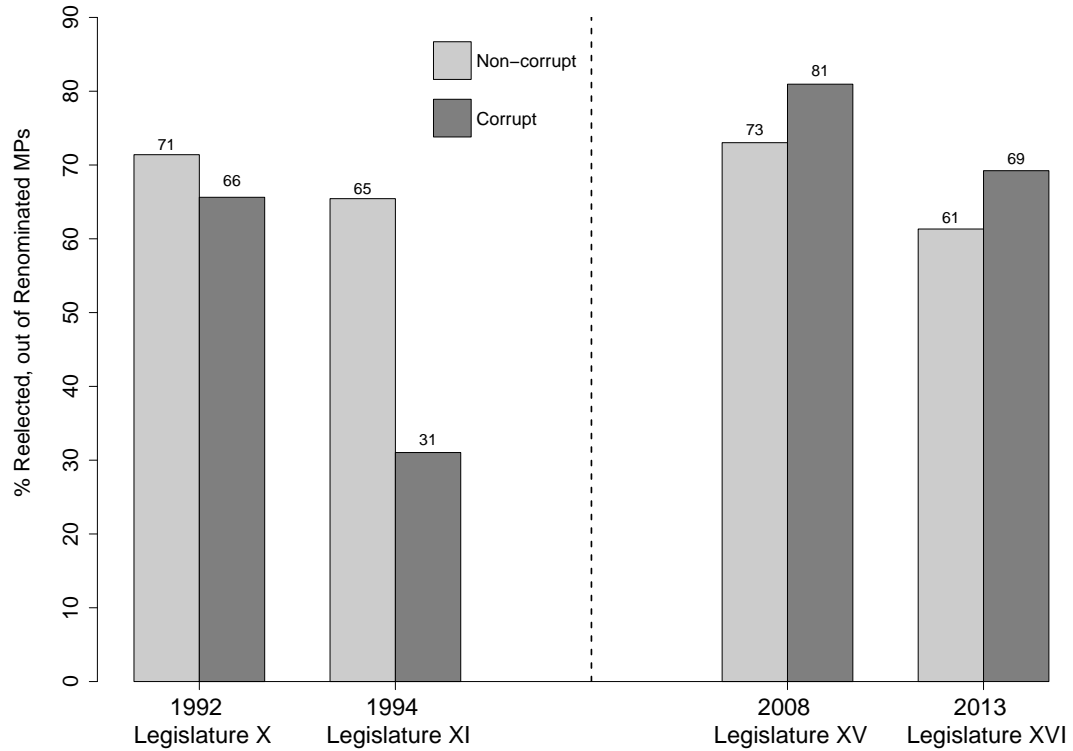
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Corrupt	-0.91*** (0.22)	-0.69*** (0.23)	-0.69*** (0.23)	-0.70*** (0.23)
Age	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.03*** (0.01)
College	-0.39** (0.17)	-0.35* (0.18)	-0.34* (0.18)	-0.37** (0.18)
GoverningParty		-0.60*** (0.18)	-0.62*** (0.20)	-0.52** (0.21)
Seniority		-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)
(log)Preferences		-0.07 (0.08)	-0.08 (0.09)	-0.28** (0.13)
PartyShare			0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Municipal				-0.46* (0.24)
Lombardy				-0.50** (0.20)
Constant	1.60*** (0.41)	2.34*** (0.77)	2.41*** (0.78)	4.59*** (1.28)
Observations	291	288	288	288

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

Probit estimation coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable indicates whether the legislator was nominated for reelection by her party, or a successor of her party. Models estimated on members of the regional councils of Lombardy and Campania (1990–1995 Legislature) and the municipal councils of Milan and Naples (1990–1993 Legislature).

Corrupt indicates whether the MP was investigated for corruption-related crimes during the legislature. Controls: age (*Age*); education (*College*); affiliation with a governing party (*GoverningParty*); cumulative tenure in office (*Seniority*); logged number of preference votes received in the previous election (*(log)Preferences*); party vote share in the previous election (*PartyShare*); dummy for municipal-level legislators (*Municipal*); and dummy for Lombardy region (*Lombardy*). For variable definition, coding, and sources, see Appendix A.5.

Figure 2.4: Reelection Rates of Renominated MPs, Chamber of Deputies



Data on members of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, grouped according to whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary during the legislature (“corrupt”) or not (“non-corrupt”). The graph shows the percentage proportion of MPs renominated by their party that were reelected to the next legislature. MPs are coded as renominated (reelected) regardless of whether they were nominated for (elected to) the Chamber or the Senate. For instance, for Legislature X, 66% of the corrupt MPs renominated by their party won a Chamber or Senate seat in the 1992 election, versus 72% of their non-corrupt peers. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see Appendix A.4.

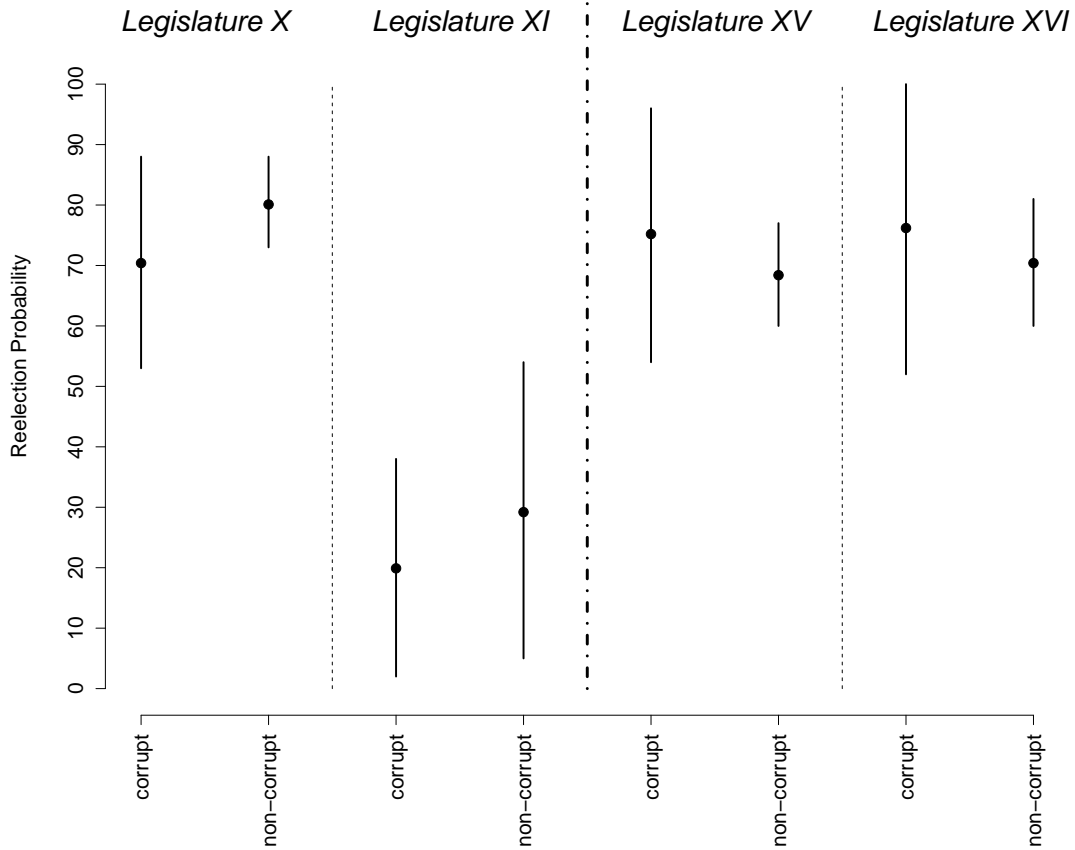
reelected. In those two elections, MPs accused of corruption were less likely to be renominated. What is left to determine is whether voters punished allegedly corrupt MPs at the polls or, instead, they voted regardless of corruption accusations. In other words, were parties the only responsible for the punishment of allegedly corrupt officials, i.e. accountability, or did voters contribute to drive them out of office?

Descriptive statistics suggest that, *once* they were renominated, allegedly corrupt MPs did not suffer strong electoral penalties. Figure 2.4 shows the reelection rates of corrupt/non-corrupt Chamber MPs, i.e. the percentage ratio between reelected MPs and renominated MPs.⁴¹ In 1992, the reelection rate of corrupt MPs was 66% – only slightly lower than the non-corrupt MPs’ reelection rate (71%). For 1994, the two groups do show significantly different reelection rates. Compared to 65% of the non-corrupt MPs, only 31% of the renominated, corrupt MPs were reelected. Most of them were affiliated with the governing parties, which won very few seats (see Section 2.2). Hence, this difference should not be interpreted as evidence that voters punished allegedly corrupt MPs at the polls. Considering only MPs affiliated with the governing parties, the reelection rates of corrupt and non-corrupt MPs are 28% and 21%, respectively. In the last two legislatures, the reelection rates of corrupt MPs are actually higher than their non-corrupt peers.

Moving beyond descriptive statistics, I now estimate the effect of corruption allegations on reelection through a Heckman selection model. Reelection can be

⁴¹I obtain similar results pooling together Chamber and Senate members in the three legislatures for which I have data. In 1994, the reelection rates of corrupt and non-corrupt MPs are 33% and 67% respectively. In 2008, the respective numbers are 83% and 73%. In 2013, the reelection rates of corrupt and non-corrupt MPs are 68% and 57%.

Figure 2.5: Effect of Corruption Allegations on Reelection, Heckman Selection Results



Data on four legislatures of the Italian Chamber of Deputies. For each legislature, the graph plots the MPs' estimated reelection probabilities, conditional on their being renominated by their party, according to whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary ("corrupt") or not ("non-corrupt"). MPs are coded as renominated (reelected) regardless of whether they were nominated for (elected to) the Chamber or the Senate. Whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals. For example, for Legislature X, "corrupt" MPs had a 75% probability of winning a Chamber or Senate seat, conditional on being renominated, whereas "non-corrupt" MPs had an 80% probability. I use a two-stage, Heckman model accounting for renomination (selection equation) and reelection (outcome equation), with both equations including a dummy for corruption accusations and a vector of control variables (see Appendix 2.E). Estimates based on the models in Table 2.8. The estimates refer to a college-educated, male deputy, affiliated with a governing party, member of an elite party body and elected in the south. Other variables are kept at their means.

thought of as a two-stage process. In the first stage, some incumbents are renominated by their party. In the second stage, some of the renominated incumbents are reelected. Because corruption allegations determine who is selected for the second stage (Figure 2.3), using data on renominated incumbents to study the effect of corruption allegations on reelection would lead to biased estimates. To deal with non-random assignment to treatment, the Heckman selection procedure models selection into treatment and outcome through two equations (Heckman, 1979). Applying this procedure to my problem, I estimate a selection equation, explaining why some MPs are renominated, and an outcome equation, explaining why some of the renominated MPs are reelected. Both equations include a dummy variable for corruption accusations and a vector of control variables (see Appendix 2.E).

The results of the analysis indicate that, conditional on being renominated, allegedly corrupt MPs are as likely to be reelected as their non-corrupt peers. Based on the models displayed in Table 2.8, Figure 2.5 plots the predicted reelection probabilities of corrupt/non-corrupt MPs affiliated with governing parties. The model does not find statistically significant differences between the two groups. The reelection probabilities are in the range between 70% and 80%. Reelection probabilities are much lower for Legislature XI, in which the governing parties suffered heavy electoral losses (see Section 2.2). One concern with these estimates is the size of the confidence intervals, which is due to the small number of corrupt MPs. To alleviate this problem, I repeat the analysis pooling together the two parliament chambers (only in Legislatures XI, XV, and XVI). The results, reported in the Appendix (2.9), are substantially similar.

Before proceeding, I consider the possibility that incumbents might have been reelected with a different party than the one with which they were originally affiliated. Incumbents with a strong personal following may win reelection regardless of which party nominates them.⁴² In Italy, the “personal vote” usually takes on the form of clientelistic exchanges, which are, in turn, historically related to corruption (Allum, 1973; Cartocci, 1990; Golden, 2003).⁴³ At least until the early 1990s, MPs used illegal contributions and bribes to expand their clienteles (see also Section 4.4.2). Theoretically, MPs accused of corruption may have “migrated” with their clienteles to another party and win reelection.⁴⁴ If corrupt incumbents did not *need* to be renominated in order to be reelected, focusing on renomination as the key dependent variable would be ill-advised.

The evidence, however, shows that the incumbents who failed to be renominated had virtually no chance of being reelected. In 1994, only seven MPs were reelected with another party. Of these, only one had been accused of corruption. Interestingly, some of the non-renominated MPs did try to mobilize their local clienteles, by creating ad-hoc parties that competed in a few, geographically concentrated districts. Through these “personal parties”, as newspapers described them, discredited Christian Democratic and Socialist MPs were essentially nominating themselves for reelection.⁴⁵ None of the MPs accused of corruption, how-

⁴²In Japan, for example, popular legislators can “bargain” with parties and credibly threaten to switch to another party if they do not gain a nomination (Di Virgilio and Reed, 2011).

⁴³On the relationship between “personal vote” and corruption, see Carey and Shugart (1995); Chang and Golden (2007).

⁴⁴Garrido de Sierra (2014) discusses “clienteles migration” in the context of Mexico.

⁴⁵“Qualche inquisito ci riprova e nascono le liste fai da te,” *Corriere della Sera*, 4 February, 1994; “L’orso che ride contro il partito patrigno,” *Corriere della Sera*, 28 February, 1994. See

ever, won reelection by self-nominating.⁴⁶ In 2013, only nine MPs were reelected with a party different than their original party of affiliation. Of these, none had been accused of corruption. The features of the electoral system (proportional rules, with large district magnitude and thresholds) prevented incumbents from self-nominating (see Appendix A.6).

Overall, the findings in this section suggest that renomination is crucial for electoral accountability. In 1994 and 2013, a much smaller proportion of allegedly corrupt MPs were reelected than in the respective previous elections (Figure 2.6). These two elections did screen out legislators suspected of corruption – arguably a desirable outcome. However, it was parties – rather than voters – that punished allegedly corrupt MPs. In 1994 and 2013, unlike in the respective previous elections, allegedly corrupt MPs were less likely to be renominated than their non-corrupt peers (Figure 2.3). Conditional on being renominated, corrupt and non-corrupt incumbents had the same reelection chances. What seems to have determined the fate of MPs accused of corruption is whether parties nominated them for reelection.

also Anastasi (1997).

⁴⁶I use the following procedure to code self-nominated MPs. I calculate the number of single-member districts in which each party competed (for a description of the electoral system, see Appendix A.6). Based on a natural threshold in the data, I define the parties competing in fewer than ten districts as “personal parties.” Similarly, I code the parties with fewer than 11 candidates in the PR tier as “personal parties”. While other cutoff values are theoretically possible, I believe it is relatively easy for an incumbent to create an ad-hoc list with ten or fewer candidates. Incumbents running with one of these parties are considered as self-nominated. In fact, some of them fielded only one candidate across the entire country, i.e. the MP himself/herself.

2.5 Discussion

To understand why Italian parties changed their approach toward corruption allegations in 1994 and 2013, I briefly overview the historical context of these two elections (see Section 5.2 for more detail). As mentioned earlier, both appeared to be “exceptional” elections, in which voters turned en masse against the political establishment (Chiaramonte and Emanuele, 2013). Between 1992 and 1994, the parties that had governed Italy throughout the postwar era suffered a dramatic decline in consensus both at national and subnational level (Diamanti and Mannheimer, 1994; Sani, 1995). They either split apart, dissolved into other parties, or disappeared altogether (Di Virgilio, 1995). This historical shift was complete by 1994, when the remnants of the Christian Democracy and the Socialist Party were almost wiped away from parliament. The 2008–2103 legislature followed a similar dynamics. All the major parties suffered losses in subnational-level elections during the legislature, and were then punished in 2013, although they retained enough seats to form a new government. The 2013 election represented a historical realignment. Whereas in the previous four elections the two major coalitions had captured more than 85% of the votes, now they only had 58% (Chiaramonte and Emanuele, 2013).

The electoral success of of recently-created, anti-establishment parties represents another similarity between 1994 and 2013. In 1994, *Forza Italia* attracted millions of voters only a few months after its creation, partly thanks to the popularity of its founder, Silvio Berlusconi, and the power of his media organization (Sani, 1995; Durante et al., 2013). By applying modern advertising and market-

ing techniques to political campaigning, he reached out to former Socialist and Christian Democratic voters, and anti-Communist voters in general, thus filling the political vacuum left by the crisis of the traditional parties. In the meantime, the *Lega Nord*, which openly called for the secession of the north, confirmed the strong electoral performance of 1992. In 2013, the *Movimento Cinque Stelle*, founded only three years before, subtracted millions of votes from the parties of the left, center, and right. With its ideology and its distrust of representative democracy (see Section 4.3), the M5S challenged the entire political establishment, and came close to becoming Italy's first party.

It was not only corruption that led to electoral realignments in 1994 and 2013. In 1994, investigations had indeed revealed appallingly high levels of corruption. Whereas corruption scandals had occasionally shaken the establishment before, the size of the Clean Hands campaign and other similar operations was truly unprecedented. As mentioned earlier, 25% of Italy's MPs were investigated for corruption crimes between 1992 and 1994, compared to 6% between 1987 and 1992. A scandal of such proportions, one might say, should have led voters to repudiate the governing parties. In 2013, however, corruption scandals were much smaller in size than in 1994, and yet they seem to have undermined the support for the existing parties. Only 6% of the MPs of Legislature XVI were accused of corruption—a slight increase from the 4% of the previous legislature.⁴⁷

Compared to the early 1990s, the corruption cases of the 2010s also appeared

⁴⁷These statistics suggest that corruption has decreased since the early 1990s. Acconcia and Cantabene (2008) find support for this claim in judicial data. Other scholars disagree, mainly on the basis of corruption perception data (Vannucci, 2012).

to be less significant, sometimes even trivial. In 1994, the investigations had implicated prominent party officials at both subnational and national level. Prosecutors had looked into the main public and private enterprises of the country, as well as the largest public contracts assigned in the previous decade or so. In 2013, most corruption accusations had to do with the abuse of public party subsidies, which were used instead for personal expenses, and only some were related to bribery. Aside from Silvio Berlusconi, the politicians accused were not as high-profile as those investigated in the early 1990s. Overall, the size and nature of corruption do not fully explain why voters turned against the political class in 2013.

Rather, in 1994 and 2013 exogenous shocks generated the pre-conditions for electoral realignment, and corruption scandals triggered the realignment itself. In the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union turned the post-Communist parties, for the first time, into a viable electoral and political alternative. What was once the largest Communist party in the Western world could now appeal to progressive voters and assemble a large, credible center-left electoral coalition. Even Italy's international allies came to accept the transition from a "blocked democracy", in which the Christian Democracy and its partners were practically guaranteed participation in government, to a system based on political competition and government alternation, much like in the rest of Western Europe.

In the early 2010s, a severe economic recession and the Eurozone debt crisis undermined the credibility of the entire political class. Between 2008 and 2012, Italy's GDP declined approximately by 12%. Unemployment rose up to 13% in

2013.⁴⁸ Due to its high public debt, Italy faced a strong rise in interest rate spreads on the government bond market. Investors were concerned that the country would soon need a bailout program, such as those adopted by Ireland and Portugal. At the peak of the debt crisis, Silvio Berlusconi was induced to resign as a prime minister. The President of the Republic then appointed a technocratic, “emergence” cabinet, headed by Mario Monti with the external support of center-left, center, and center-right parties. In order to restore public finances, the new government imposed spending cuts and other “austerity” measures, which might have prolonged the recession. Overall, the political class appear to have been overwhelmed by the economic and financial crisis. In 2013, the election gave voters the opportunity to express all their dissatisfaction towards the main parties.

In 1994 and 2013, exogenous factors opened up unprecedented political alternatives. Voters could credibly threaten to switch from the parties for which they had traditionally voted. In 1994, voters would not reelect Socialists and Christian Democrats as a bulwark against Communism. In 2013, voters would rather give a chance to the *Movimento 5 Stelle*, founded by a comedian only a few years before, than reelecting the same parties that had handled the economic crisis so poorly. But why did parties drop from their ballots legislators accused of corruption? The remainder of the dissertation will explain why, in the context of these two elections, corruption accusations affected parties’ nomination decisions.

⁴⁸Source: World Bank Indicators.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have studied the electoral (mis)fortunes of Italian parliament members accused of corruption. Commentators, intellectuals, and citizens groups often lament the lack of accountability in current Italian politics. The impression is that, despite being accused of corruption, politicians are nominated for reelection and reelected to office. By analyzing two pairs of parliament legislatures, I find that such concerns are only partly justified. In 1992, indeed, a large proportion of the MPs accused of corruption were reelected. In 1994, however, only few of them were. Similarly, in 2008, most of the MPs accused of corruption won reelection, whereas, in 2013, only a minority did. The fate of allegedly corrupt MPs thus appears to have changed quite dramatically between one election and the next.

Why were most corrupt incumbents reelected in 1992 and 2008, but not in 1994 or 2013? To better understand the relationship between corruption accusations and reelection, I have looked at how many MPs were renominated, i.e. nominated for reelection, by their respective parties. Generally speaking, incumbents that are not nominated by their parties are unable to win reelection (Section 2.4). I have found that the proportion of allegedly corrupt MPs that were renominated dropped between 1992 and 1994, and then again between 2008 and 2013. Consistent with qualitative evidence, statistical analysis has revealed that corruption allegations had no impact on renomination in 1992 and 2008, whereas they had a negative effect in 1994 and 2013. In 1992 (2008), parties renominated incumbents regardless of corruption allegations, whereas, in 1994 (2013), they practically removed them from the ballot.

Parties, rather than voters, appear to be responsible for the observed cross-time variation in electoral accountability. Across all four elections, MPs accused of corruption had the same reelection chances as their non-accused peers, conditional on being renominated. Only the 1994 and 2013 elections screened out (most) legislators suspected of corruption, producing what is arguably a desirable outcome. In those two cases – and only in those two – parties had de-selected most of the allegedly corrupt incumbents, who then found it difficult to even run for reelection. On election day, by contrast, voters appear to have overlooked corruption accusations. These findings suggest that renomination is crucial for electoral accountability.

In the remainder of this dissertation, I will seek to understand why parties renominate legislators accused of corruption. In Chapter 3, I argue that media coverage of corruption discourages party leaders from nominating allegedly corrupt legislators. I consider two dimensions of media coverage, which leads me to formulate and test two hypotheses. In Chapter 4, I test the hypothesis that prominence of corruption in the media lowers the renomination chances of legislators accused of corruption. To do so, I analyze the correlation between media prominence of corruption and the renomination patterns described in this chapter. In Chapter 5, I use statistical analysis to test the hypothesis that media mentions of specific legislators' corruption allegations decreases their renomination chances. In the Conclusion, I summarize my findings and I discuss their implications for the study of electoral accountability and candidate selection.

2.A Descriptive Statistics: Chamber of Deputies

Table 2.2: Legislature X (1987–1992), Chamber of Deputies

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Reelected	611	0.6	0.5	0	1
Renominated	611	0.8	0.4	0	1
Corrupt	611	0.1	0.2	0	1
GoverningParty	611	0.6	0.5	0	1
Seniority	597	1.6	1.9	0	9
PartyElite	597	0.2	0.4	0	1
Preferences(log)	611	10.3	0.9	6.5	12.3
South	597	0.4	0.5	0	1
ParliamentPost	597	0.1	0.3	0	1
CabinetPost	611	0.2	0.4	0	1
PastSubnationalOffice	611	0.5	0.5	0	1
PastCabinetPost	597	0.2	0.4	0	1
PastParliamentPost	597	0.1	0.3	0	1
College	611	0.6	0.5	0	1
Age	597	49.2	9.2	25	76
Job	611	0.5	0.5	0	1

Table 2.3: Legislature XI (1992–1994), Chamber of Deputies

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Reelected	624	0.3	0.5	0	1
Renominated	624	0.5	0.5	0	1
Corrupt	624	0.3	0.4	0	1
GoverningParty	624	0.5	0.5	0	1
Seniority	621	1.4	1.8	0	10
PartyElite	621	0.2	0.4	0	1
Preferences(log)	618	9.6	0.9	7.0	12.4
South	624	0.4	0.5	0	1
ParliamentPost	621	0.1	0.3	0	1
CabinetPost	621	0.1	0.2	0	1
PastSubnationalOffice	624	0.5	0.5	0	1
PastCabinetPost	621	0.2	0.4	0	1
PastParliamentPost	621	0.1	0.3	0	1
College	624	0.7	0.5	0	1
Age	624	49.6	9.4	26	82
Job	624	0.5	0.5	0	1

Table 2.4: Legislature XV (2006–2008), Chamber of Deputies

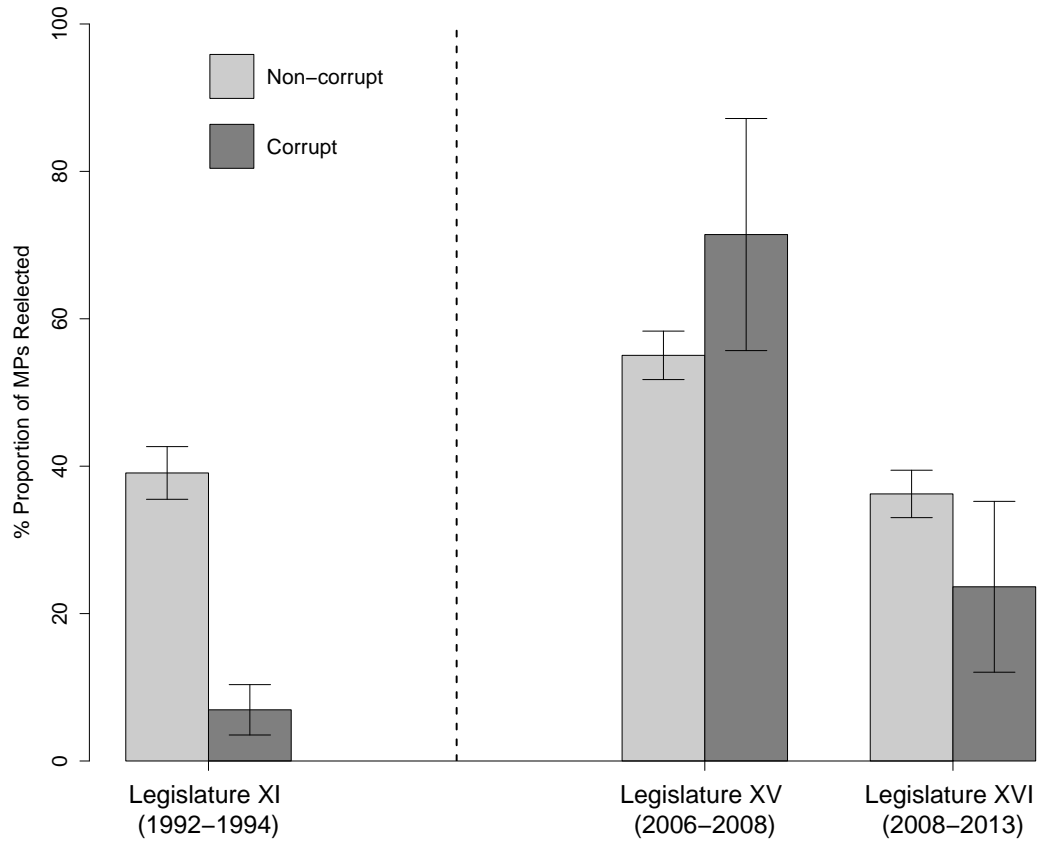
Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Reelected	617	0.6	0.5	0	1
Renominated	617	0.8	0.4	0	1
Corrupt	617	0.04	0.2	0	1
GoverningParty	617	0.5	0.5	0	1
Seniority	617	1.2	1.5	0	10
PartyElite	617	0.5	0.5	0	1
South	617	0.4	0.5	0	1
ParliamentPost	617	0.1	0.3	0	1
CabinetPost	617	0.05	0.2	0	1
PastSubnationalOffice	617	0.6	0.5	0	1
PastCabinetPost	617	0.1	0.3	0	1
PastParliamentPost	617	0.1	0.3	0	1
College	602	0.7	0.5	0	1
Age	617	52.0	9.0	28	80
Job	607	0.6	0.5	0	1

Table 2.5: Legislature XVI (2008–2013), Chamber of Deputies

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Reelected	614	0.4	0.5	0	1
Renominated	614	0.6	0.5	0	1
Corrupt	614	0.1	0.2	0	1
GoverningParty	614	0.9	0.3	0	1
Seniority	614	2.2	1.5	1	10
PartyElite	576	0.3	0.5	0	1
South	614	0.4	0.5	0	1
College	579	0.7	0.5	0	1
Age	614	55.5	9.6	31	82
Job	576	0.5	0.5	0	1

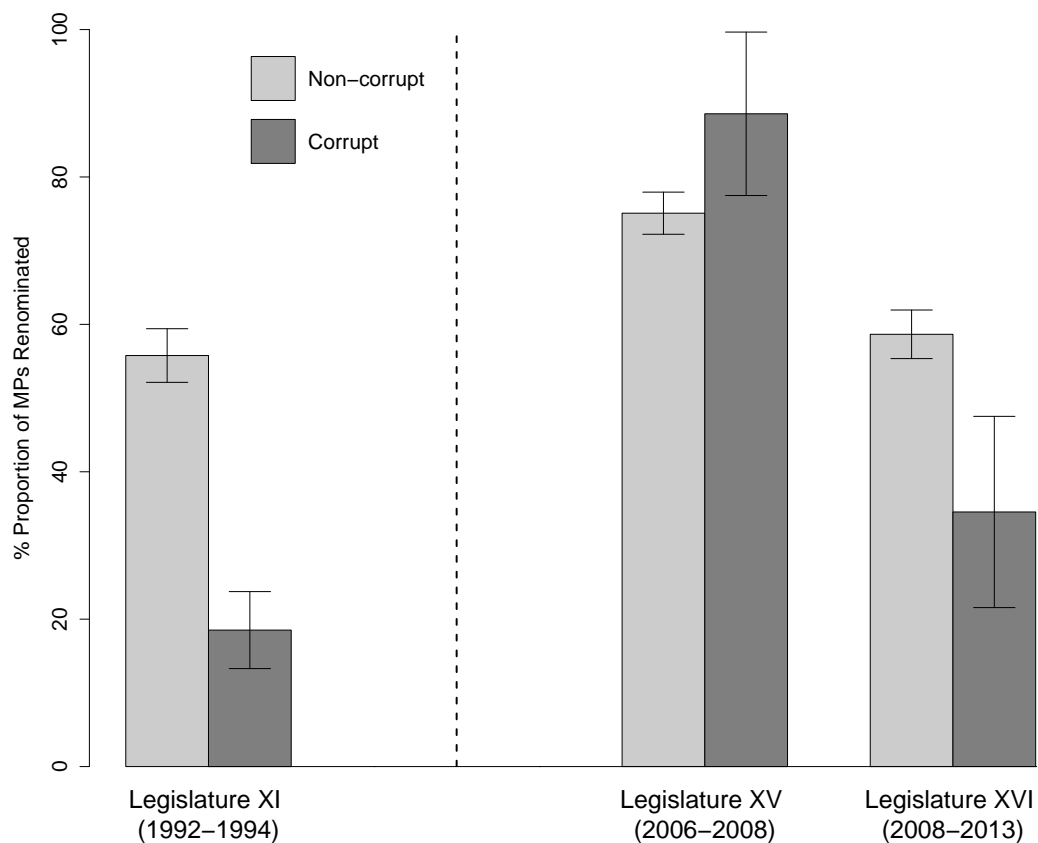
2.B Descriptive Analysis, Parliament Data

Figure 2.6: Corruption Allegations and Reelection, Parliament Data



The graph plots the percentage proportions of Italian Parliament members (Chamber and Senate) who were reelected to the next legislature, grouping MPs by whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary during the legislature (“corrupt”) or not (“non-corrupt”). MPs are coded as reelected regardless of whether they were elected to the Chamber or the Senate. For instance, 7% of the corrupt MPs of Legislature XI won a Chamber or Senate seat in 1994, versus 39% of their non-corrupt peers. The whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals around the mean. Data not available for Legislatures X, XII, XIII, and XIV. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see Appendix A.4.

Figure 2.7: Corruption Allegations and Renomination, Parliament Data



The graph plots the percentage proportions of Italian parliament members (Chamber and Senate) who were nominated for reelection by their party (or a successor of their party), grouping MPs according to whether they were accused of corruption by the judiciary during the legislature (“corrupt”) or not (“non-corrupt”). I code renomination regardless of whether MPs were nominated for the Chamber or the Senate. For instance, 18% of the corrupt MPs of Legislature XI were renominated, versus 56% of their non-corrupt peers. The whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals around the mean. Data not available for Legislatures X, XII, XIII, and XIV. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see Appendix A.4.

2.C Matching Procedure

To estimate the effect of corruption allegations on renomination, I apply a one-to-one, genetic matching technique to data on the Chamber of Deputies in the Legislatures X, XI, XV, and XVI. The genetic matching algorithm iteratively checks and improves covariate balance across treated and control cases, until an acceptable balance is achieved (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013). The treatment is being accused of corruption by the judiciary (variable *Corrupt*, see Appendix A.4 for details). In each legislature, the algorithm selects MPs who are as similar to each other as possible on a number of observable aspects, or covariates, but who vary on whether they are accused of corruption. As matching covariates, I choose a series of characteristics plausibly related to both treatment and outcome, i.e. renomination. I discuss the choice of covariates below. For analysis of pre- and post-matching covariate balance, see Figures 2.8- 2.10.

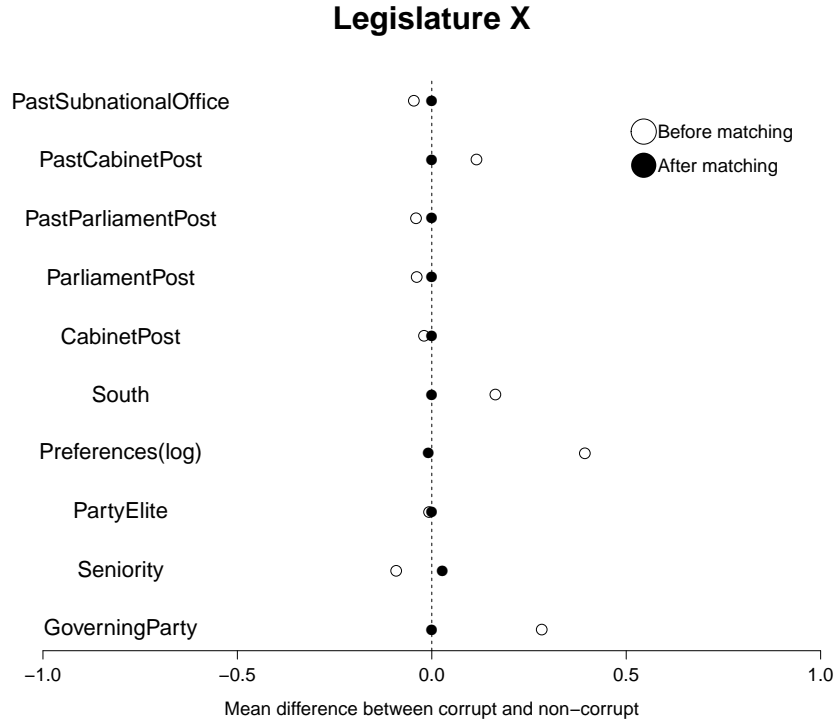
The following characteristics should affect the probability of being accused of corruption. Because they control more political resources, incumbents with longer tenure in office (*Seniority*), incumbents affiliated with parties in the governing coalition (*GoverningParty*), and members of elite party bodies (*PartyElite*) are more likely to receive bribes, thus having higher chances of being accused. Government ministers and undersecretaries (*CabinetPost*) and incumbents with top parliamentary offices (*ParliamentPost*) might be less vulnerable to judicial inquiries due to their status. I include dummy variables for previous cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*) and experience in subnational office (*PastSubnationalOffice*), expecting more experienced incumbents to be more exposed to corruption

accusations. 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*). Anecdotal evidence and qualitative research suggest that politicians used illegal contributions and bribes to expand their clienteles, who would reward them with preference votes (Allum, 1973; Golden, 2003). Finally, being elected in the south (*South*), where political malfeasance is more widespread (Golden and Picci, 2005; Golden, 2003), should increase the chances of being investigated for corruption.

The same characteristics should influence renomination chances. In Italy, seniority has historically had a negative impact on renomination (Golden and Picci, Forthcoming). In 1994 and 2013, party leaders had an additional incentive to exclude more senior incumbents (*Seniority*), who were perceived by the public as an entrenched elite. *GoverningParty* should also be negatively associated with renomination. In each of these four elections, governing parties were expected to suffer electoral losses. Therefore, those MPs should have preemptively withdrawn their names. Elite legislators (*PartyElite*), who have additional incentives and political resources to seek reelection, should have higher renomination chances (Golden and Picci: Forthcoming). Similarly, government ministers and undersecretaries (*CabinetPost*) and incumbents with top parliamentary offices (*CabinetPost*) should be better suited to secure a nomination. Assuming that incumbent popularity influences candidate selection, government experience at the local level (*PastSubnationalOffice*) and clientele size, as proxied by *Preferences*, should increase renomination chances. Because personal relationships between voters and politicians, sometimes degenerating into clientelism, are more common in Southern Italy, party leaders had an incentive to renominate the MPs elected in the

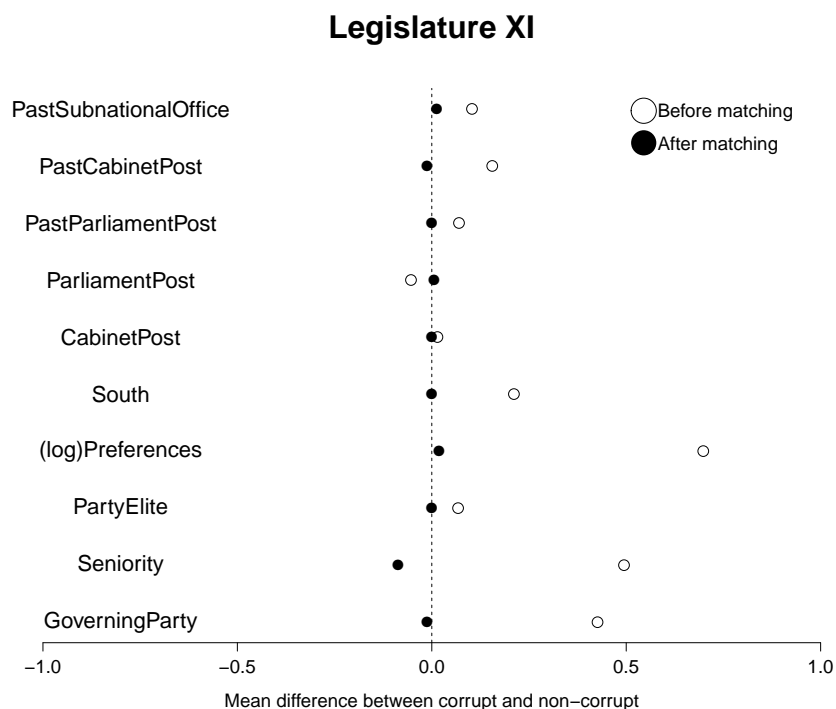
south (*South*).

Figure 2.8: Covariate Balance: Legislature X



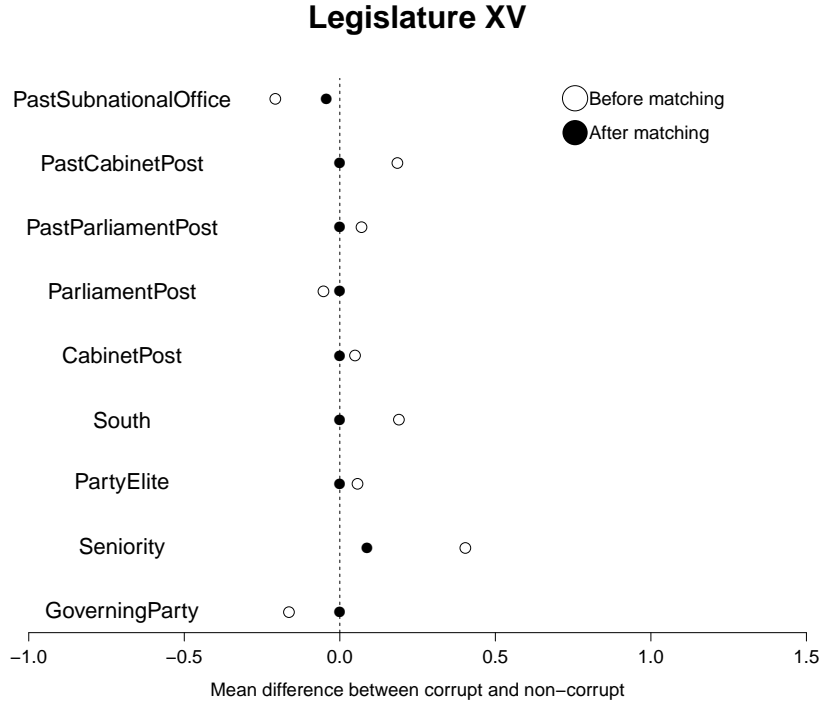
Data on the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The graphs show pre- and post-matching covariate balance between MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”) and non-accused peers (“non-corrupt”). I use one-to-one, genetic matching (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013). For each variable, the graph plots the difference between the mean value of the “treatment” group (corrupt) and the mean value of the “control” group (non-corrupt) in the original, pre-matching 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 (*PastSubnationalOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). All variables are dummies except for Seniority and Preferences. For a description of the variables, data sources, and coding, see the Appendix (A.4).

Figure 2.9: Covariate Balance: Legislature XI



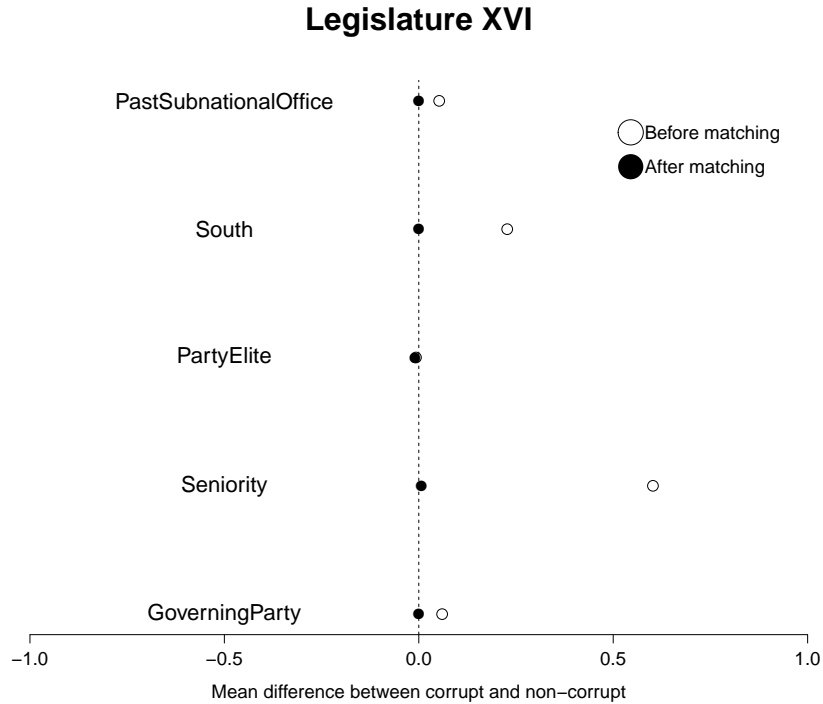
Data on the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The graphs show pre- and post-matching covariate balance between MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”) and non-accused peers (“non-corrupt”). I use one-to-one, genetic matching (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013). For each variable, the graph plots the difference between the mean value of the “treatment” group (corrupt) and the mean value of the “control” group (non-corrupt) in the original, pre-matching 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 (*PastSubnationalOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). All variables are dummies except for *Seniority* and *Preferences*. For a description of the variables, data sources, and coding, see the Appendix (A.4).

Figure 2.10: Covariate Balance: Legislatures XV



Data on the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The graphs show pre- and post-matching covariate balance between MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”) and non-accused peers (“non-corrupt”). I use one-to-one, genetic matching (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013). For each variable, the graph plots the difference between the mean value of the “treatment” group (corrupt) and the mean value of the “control” group (non-corrupt) in the original, pre-matching 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*), 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 (*PastSubnationalOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). All variables are dummies except for *Seniority*. For a description of the variables, data sources, and coding, see the Appendix (A.4).

Figure 2.11: Covariate Balance: Legislatures XVI



Data on the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The graphs show pre- and post-matching covariate balance between MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”) and non-accused peers (“non-corrupt”). I use one-to-one, genetic matching (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013). For each variable, the graph plots the difference between the mean value of the “treatment” group (corrupt) and the mean value of the “control” group (non-corrupt) in the original, pre-matching 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*), 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 (*PastSubnationalOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). All variables are dummies except for *Seniority*. For a description of the variables, data sources, and coding, see the Appendix (A.4).

2.D Corruption and Renomination, Probit Analysis

Table 2.6: Probit Results for the Effect of Corruption Allegations on Renomination, Chamber of Deputies

	(1) Legislature X	(2) Legislature XI	(3) Legislature XV	(4) Legislature XVI
Corrupt	-0.06 (0.26)	-1.07*** (0.15)	0.76* (0.43)	-0.46* (0.25)
Female	-0.29 (0.19)	-0.00 (0.21)	0.15 (0.17)	0.10 (0.15)
Job	0.21 (0.15)	0.17 (0.13)	0.07 (0.14)	0.20 (0.13)
Age	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
College	0.32** (0.14)	0.13 (0.13)	-0.07 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.13)
GoverningParty	0.62*** (0.17)	-0.86*** (0.15)	-0.66*** (0.14)	0.31 (0.20)
Seniority	0.00 (0.04)	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.14*** (0.05)
PartyElite	0.24 (0.15)	0.14 (0.14)	0.24* (0.13)	0.28** (0.14)
Preferences (log)	0.21** (0.09)	0.26*** (0.09)		
CabinetPost	0.35 (0.22)	-0.43* (0.25)	0.58** (0.28)	
ParliamentPost	0.17 (0.23)	-0.44** (0.18)	0.09 (0.21)	
South	-0.15 (0.16)	0.31** (0.13)	-0.21 (0.13)	-0.05 (0.12)
PastSubnationalOffice	-0.01 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.11)	0.21* (0.13)	0.17 (0.12)
Constant	0.28 (0.98)	-1.19 (0.82)	3.15*** (0.50)	2.60*** (0.42)
Observations	597	615	593	563

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 his/her own party. Models estimated on members of the Chamber of Deputies. *Corrupt* identifies MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see the Appendix (A.4).

Table 2.7: Probit Results for the Effect of Corruption Allegations on Renomination, Parliament

	(1) Legislature XI	(2) Legislature XV	(3) Legislature XVI
Corrupt	-0.91*** (0.12)	0.53 (0.34)	-0.38* (0.20)
Female	0.07 (0.16)	0.21 (0.15)	0.11 (0.12)
Job	0.12 (0.10)	0.11 (0.11)	0.15 (0.10)
Age	-0.01** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)
College	0.24** (0.10)	0.01 (0.12)	-0.08 (0.11)
GoverningParty	-0.61*** (0.10)	-0.63*** (0.11)	0.32** (0.16)
Seniority	-0.15*** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.04)	-0.10*** (0.03)
PartyElite	0.08 (0.11)	0.25** (0.11)	0.26** (0.13)
CabinetPost	-0.34* (0.20)	0.26 (0.25)	
ParliamentPost	-0.17 (0.14)	-0.01 (0.16)	
South	0.34*** (0.10)	-0.31*** (0.10)	-0.05 (0.10)
PastSubnationalOffice	-0.14 (0.09)	0.13 (0.10)	0.18* (0.10)
Constant	0.97*** (0.28)	2.92*** (0.40)	2.57*** (0.36)
Observations	932	843	811

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

Probit estimation coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by his/her own party or a successor of that party. Models estimated on members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. *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*), holding cabinet office (*CabinetPost*) or high parliament appointment (*ParliamentPost*) during the legislature, being elected in Southern Italy (*South*), and having experience in subnational-level office (*PastSubnationalOffice*). All variables are dummies except for *Age* and *Seniority*. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see the Appendix (A.4).

2.E Heckman Selection Models

My goal is to estimate the effect of corruption allegations (*Corrupt*) on the likelihood of being reelected. Because incumbent characteristics, including corruption allegations themselves, affect the chances of being renominated (see Table 2.D), using data on renominated incumbents would lead to biased estimates. I adopt a Heckman selection model (Heckman, 1979) that estimates two equations: (1) the selection equation accounting for the legislator's renomination (dependent variable: *Renominated*) and (2) the outcome equation explaining the reelection of the renominated legislators (dependent variable: *Reelected*). Since the two dependent variables are dichotomous, I estimate both equations through probit regression.

The two equations include the dummy *Corrupt* and vectors of control variables, which are discussed below. For more information on variable definition and coding, see Appendix A.4.

Selection equation:

- *GoverningParty*: Because the governing parties were expected to suffer electoral losses, to a different degree, in all these elections, these MPs may have preemptively withdrawn their names. This variable should be negatively associated with renomination.
- *Seniority*: Historically, seniority has a negative impact on renomination in Italy (Chang et al., 2010, 196).
- *PartyElite*: Compared to backbenchers, elite legislators have more incentives and political resources to seek reelection. Elite status in the party apparatus

should increase the chances of being renominated.

- *Preferences(log)*: MPs with a large personal following are more valuable to parties. The size of the deputy's voter base should be positively correlated with renomination.
- *South*: Personal relationships between voters and politicians are more common in Southern Italy. Hence, parties have an incentive to renominate MPs elected in the south.
- *College*: Because college-educated MPs have better outside professional options, college education should have a negative effect on renomination.
- *Age*: Older MPs have an incentive to retire. This variable should be negatively correlated with renomination.
- *Job*: MPs with better professional background have an incentive to leave office. High-status previous occupation should have a negative impact on renomination.

Outcome equation:

- *GoverningParty*: Voters tend to punish the incumbent parties. Being affiliated with the governing parties should be negatively correlated with reelection.
- *Seniority*: I cannot determine a priori the impact of seniority. Voters are more likely to recognize and vote for seasoned MPs than rookies. However,

when voters turn against the political establishment (as they did in 1994 and 2013), a longer tenure in office may hurt reelection chances.

- *PartyElite*: Members of the party elite are ranked high on the party list, or are nominated in safe districts. Membership in the party elite should increase the chances of being reelected.
- *Preferences(log)*: MPs with a larger personal following find it easier to mobilize voters and be reelected. Deputy's voter base should be positively correlated with reelection.
- *College*: I use college education as a proxy for candidate quality. Higher-quality candidates campaign more effectively, which increases their chances of being reelected.

Table 2.8: Heckman Results for the Effect of Corruption Allegations on Reelection, Chamber of Deputies

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Legislature X	Legislature XI	Legislature XV	Legislature XVI
— <i>Reelected</i> —				
Corrupt	-0.29 (0.23)	-0.03 (0.98)	0.08 (0.32)	0.31 (0.36)
GoverningParty	-0.06 (0.13)	-1.56 (1.05)	-0.49*** (0.16)	0.42** (0.20)
College	-0.16 (0.12)	-0.02 (0.22)	0.10 (0.14)	0.06 (0.14)
PartyElite	0.23 (0.14)	0.18 (0.22)	0.23* (0.14)	-0.01 (0.16)
Preferences(log)	0.31*** (0.07)	0.28 (0.25)		
Seniority	0.01 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.15)	0.03 (0.05)	0.15** (0.06)
— <i>Renominated</i> —				
Corrupt	-0.12 (0.27)	-1.03*** (0.15)	0.73* (0.43)	-0.42* (0.25)
Female	-0.37** (0.17)	-0.01 (0.20)	0.11 (0.17)	0.11 (0.13)
Job	0.28** (0.13)	0.19 (0.13)	0.08 (0.13)	0.12 (0.12)
Age	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.01** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)
College	0.34** (0.13)	0.09 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.14)	-0.09 (0.13)
GoverningParty	0.70*** (0.15)	-0.91*** (0.15)	-0.61*** (0.14)	0.28 (0.19)
Seniority	0.04 (0.04)	-0.17*** (0.04)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.14*** (0.04)
PartyElite	0.25* (0.15)	0.13 (0.15)	0.26** (0.13)	0.26* (0.14)
Preferences(log)	0.20** (0.08)	0.26*** (0.10)		
South	-0.27* (0.15)	0.30 (0.20)	-0.24* (0.13)	-0.12 (0.12)
N (Uncensored N)	597 (478)	614 (293)	593 (459)	571 (349)

Heckman probit selection model with robust standard errors in parentheses

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

Models estimated on members of the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The dependent variable in the first stage indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by his/her own party or a successor of that party. The dependent variable in the second stage indicates whether the MP won a Chamber or Senate seat in the next legislature. *Corrupt* identifies MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary. Controls: gender (*Female*), age (*Age*), university education (*College*), high-status previous occupation (*Job*), affiliation with an governing party (*GoverningParty*), cumulative tenure in parliament (*Seniority*), elite status in the party apparatus (*PartyElite*), logged preference votes (*Preferences*), and being elected in Southern Italy (*South*). All variables are dummies except for *Age*, *Seniority*, and *Preferences*. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see the Appendix (A.4).

Table 2.9: Heckman Results for the Effect of Corruption Allegations on Reelection, Parliament

	(1) Legislature XI	(2) Legislature XV	(3) Legislature XVI
— <i>Reelected</i> —			
Corrupt	-0.24 (0.37)	0.04 (0.26)	0.28 (0.28)
GoverningParty	-1.41*** (0.20)	-0.46*** (0.14)	0.46*** (0.18)
College	0.08 (0.17)	0.21* (0.12)	0.12 (0.12)
PartyElite	0.04 (0.17)	0.13 (0.12)	0.08 (0.14)
Seniority	-0.02 (0.07)	0.04 (0.04)	0.11** (0.04)
— <i>Renominated</i> —			
Corrupt	-0.90*** (0.12)	0.50 (0.34)	-0.37* (0.20)
Female	0.07 (0.16)	0.19 (0.15)	0.10 (0.11)
Job	0.14 (0.10)	0.13 (0.11)	0.11 (0.10)
Age	-0.01** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)
College	0.21** (0.10)	0.02 (0.12)	-0.10 (0.11)
GoverningParty	-0.65*** (0.10)	-0.61*** (0.11)	0.29* (0.16)
Seniority	-0.15*** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.03)
PartyElite	0.05 (0.11)	0.25** (0.11)	0.25** (0.12)
South	0.33*** (0.10)	-0.32*** (0.10)	-0.06 (0.09)
N (Uncensored N)	930 (437)	843 (633)	830 (475)

Heckman probit selection model with robust standard errors in parentheses

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

Models estimated on members of the Italian Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Republic. The dependent variable in the first stage indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by his/her own party or a successor of that party. The dependent variable in the second stage indicates whether the MP won a Chamber or Senate seat in the next legislature. *Corrupt* identifies MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary. Controls: gender (*Female*), age (*Age*), university education (*College*), high-status previous occupation (*Job*), affiliation with an governing party (*GoverningParty*), cumulative tenure in parliament (*Seniority*), elite status in the party apparatus (*PartyElite*), and being elected in Southern Italy (*South*). All variables are dummies except for *Age* and *Seniority*. For variable description, data sources, and coding procedures, see the Appendix (A.4).

2.F Descriptive Statistics: Subnational Legislatures

Table 2.10: Milan City Council (1990–1993)

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Renominated	78	0.3	0.5	0	1
Corrupt	78	0.2	0.4	0	1
Age	78	48.4	10.8	24	78
College	78	0.7	0.5	0	1
GoverningParty	78	0.6	0.5	0	1
Seniority	78	3.8	2.0	0	7
Preferences(log)	78	8.2	1.1	5.6	11.0
PartyShare	78	14.7	7.8	1.3	21.8

Table 2.11: Naples City Council (1992–1993)

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Renominated	74	0.4	0.5	0	1
Corrupt	74	0.3	0.4	0	1
Age	74	46.0	10.2	30	88
College	74	0.8	0.4	0	1
GoverningParty	74	0.7	0.4	0	1
Seniority	74	2.1	2.5	0	7
Preferences(log)	74	8.7	0.6	6.9	10.4
PartyShare	74	19.5	11.8	1.4	33.8

Table 2.12: Lombardy Regional Council (1990–1995)

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Renominated	80	0.4	0.5	0	1
Corrupt	80	0.2	0.4	0	1
Age	80	45.4	8.5	22	65
College	80	0.5	0.5	0	1
GoverningParty	80	0.5	0.5	0	1
Seniority	80	4.3	2.1	0	7
Preferences(log)	77	9.3	1.0	6.6	11.1
PartyShare	80	19.4	9.9	1.3	31.3

Table 2.13: Campania Regional Council (1990–1995)

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Renominated	59	0.3	0.5	0	1
Corrupt	59	0.4	0.5	0	1
Age	59	49.6	8.6	32	74
College	59	0.7	0.4	0	1
GoverningParty	59	0.7	0.5	0	1
Seniority	59	4.1	2.1	0	7
Preferences(log)	59	10.3	0.7	7.7	11.2
PartyShare	59	26.6	16.4	1.7	44.1

CHAPTER 3

Party Leaders, Media Coverage, and Renomination

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I have shown that, in two separate instances, the fate of Italian MPs accused of corruption changed dramatically between one election and the next. In 1992, 82% of the MPs investigated for corruption were nominated for reelection, whereas in 1994 only 18% of them were renominated. A similar pattern could be observed two decades later. In 2008, 91% of the MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary were renominated, versus 35% in 2013. Through statistical analysis, I have found that corruption allegations had no impact on renomination chances in 1992 and 2008, whereas they had a negative impact in 1994 and 2013. Anecdotal evidence confirms that, in both 1994 and 2013, party leaders decided to remove corrupt incumbents from the ballot.¹

Although the question of why corrupt legislators are *reelected* might be considered substantively more important, I choose to focus on why corrupt legislators are *renominated*.² Because, chronologically, nomination precedes election, it seems reasonable to study the nomination process first. Being nominated is sometimes the de facto equivalent of being elected, such as when parties nominate candidates for safe seats (Patzelt, 1999). Even when this is not the case, the outcome of the nomination process (e.g. whether one is ranked higher or lower on the party list) greatly impacts the chances of being elected.

¹To avoid repetition, henceforth I will use the terms “MPs,” “legislators,” and “incumbents” interchangeably. For the same reason, I will refer to them as “allegedly corrupt” or “corrupt,” even if they have not been found guilty. While this is a simplification, I want to emphasize that my research deals with the impact of corruption *allegations* on renomination chances.

²Although candidates can run as independents, they usually need to get nominated by a party to have a chance of winning a seat. This is especially the case in national-level elections, in which independent candidates are rare, and in established democracies (Müller, 2000, 313–316).

In the case of Italy, the chances of MPs being reelected appear to depend, to a large degree, on whether their parties *renominate* them, i.e. nominate them for reelection. As discussed in Section 2.4, incumbents who fail to be renominated have very low chances of being reelected with another party. Once they are renominated, though, corrupt and non-corrupt MPs are equally likely to be reelected (see Section 2.3). Because in 1994 and 2013 most corrupt incumbents had been screened out, the proportion of corrupt MPs who retained their seat was very small. By contrast, in 1992 and 2008, a relatively high proportion of the corrupt MPs managed to retain their seats. Thus, the variation in electoral accountability between one election and the next did not derive from voter behavior, but rather from party nominations.

To explain why parties renominate legislators accused of corruption, this chapter develops a theory of incumbent renomination in which party leaders and the media are key actors. Having control over the choice of candidates, party leaders evaluate the costs and benefits of renominating allegedly corrupt incumbents. On the one hand, assuming that corruption is a valence issue (Stokes, 1963), nominating corrupt incumbents for reelection may damage the party reputation and cause electoral losses. On the other hand, corrupt incumbents can benefit the party, for example, by providing party funding and mobilizing their clienteles. The costs of renominating corrupt incumbents exceed the benefits, thus inducing party leaders to remove them from the ballot, under these two conditions. The issue of corruption has to be salient to voters, otherwise renominating corrupt incumbents will not significantly damage the party reputation. When voters care about corruption, they also need to recognize corrupt incumbents in order to punish their

party.

Media coverage of corruption influences renomination through two mechanisms, which leads me to formulate two empirical predictions. As demonstrated by agenda-setting research (McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Wanta and Ghanem, 2007), when the media focuses on an issue, that issue becomes more salient to voters. In the case of corruption, this should increase the electoral penalty for renominating corrupt incumbents. I hypothesize that prominence of corruption in the media decreases the likelihood of allegedly corrupt legislators being renominated (Hypothesis 1). Next, by covering specific corruption cases involving incumbents, the media enables voters to identify potentially corrupt officials (e.g. Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Larreguy et al., 2014). I expect that, when corruption is a prominent issue in the media, mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators decrease their chances of being renominated (Hypothesis 2).

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I review the two threads of research relevant to my question, i.e. the literature on candidate selection (Section 3.2) and the literature on corruption and voting behavior (Section 3.3). In Section 3.4, I develop a theory that explains why parties renominate corrupt incumbent legislators, and I derive two testable hypotheses. In Section 5.5, I summarize the argument and discuss its implications.

3.2 Literature Review: Candidate Selection

The question of why parties renominate allegedly corrupt legislators can be broken down into two parts. The first part of the question refers to how parties nominate

candidates for legislative elections. To clarify this aspect, this section reviews the literature on candidate selection. The second part of the question refers to why voters may vote for corrupt candidates. I will address that part in Section 3.3.

The literature shows a large variation in how parties nominate candidates for legislative office (Gallagher and Marsh, 1987; Hazan and Rahat, 2006, 2010; Lundell, 2004; Shomer, 2012). Studies classify candidate selection methods along two dimensions. The first dimension is the size of the selectorate, i.e. the group of people who are in charge of selecting candidates. The second dimension is the degree of territorial centralization, i.e. whether candidates are chosen at the national or local/constituency level. I will address these two dimensions in turn.³

In terms of selectorate size, candidate selection methods can be classified along the exclusive–inclusive spectrum (Hazan and Rahat, 2010). At the exclusive end of the spectrum, the selectorate coincides with a single individual, e.g. the party president or secretary, sometimes in cooperation with high-ranking party officials. A less exclusive method involves nomination committees and other small party agencies. Alternatively, the selectorate can be a convention, or a smaller committee, of delegates chosen by party members. Moving toward the inclusive end of the spectrum, party members sometimes vote to select candidates. In recent years, an increasing number of Western parties have adopted this method, often referred to as the “closed primary.” Finally, all registered voters select the party candidates, as in the case of party primaries in the United States. Aside from this

³With a few notable exceptions, such as the United States and Germany, candidate selection is generally not regulated by law (Gallagher and Marsh, 1987, 257). Parties are free to adopt their preferred selection method.

classification, however, candidates are often selected through a multi-stage process involving multiple actors. In the British Labour Party, for example, candidates are first screened by party agencies and then selected by party members, but can still be vetoed by a national committee (Hazan and Rahat, 2010, 43).

On the centralization scale, candidate selection methods can be ranked from centralized to decentralized (Lundell, 2004). In the former case, national-level organs – the party leader(s), a party committee, or primaries at the national level – control the nomination process. In the latter case, subnational-level organs select the candidates in each locality/district without any intervention from the national organs. In this case, local selection committees or voters in the locality/district choose the candidates. At intermediate levels of centralization, national- or regional-level organs influence the choices made at the local level, whether by prescreening the candidates or exercising a veto power. To some extent, the centralization dimension overlaps with the selectorate dimension. A very exclusive selection process, completely controlled by a single party agency, is also a centralized one.

Considering the two dimensions together, it becomes apparent that local- and national-level party leaders often have a great deal of discretion over candidate selection. In some cases, as members of nomination committees or as delegates at party conventions, leaders are in charge of directly selecting candidates. In other cases, they can influence the choice either by pre-selecting the candidates for which party members will be voting, or by threatening to exercise their veto power. Particularly influential leaders can even affect the outcome of primary elections (Jones et al., 2002). Indeed, when incumbents know that their careers

depend on party leaders, they tend to vote the party line rather than focusing on constituency service (Hazan and Rahat, 2006; Jones et al., 2002; Müller, 2000; Patzelt, 1999).⁴

In Italy, candidate selection is usually exclusive and fairly centralized. Throughout the postwar era, regional or national organs would propose candidates, add names to the lists, exercise veto power, and/or approve local-level nominations (Lundell, 2004). For example, Christian Democratic candidates were selected by subnational-level party organizations, and were subject to approval by the national executive committee (Wertman, 1987). After the 1993 electoral reform, which replaced an open-list PR system with a mixed-member system, party leaders retained significant discretion over candidate selection (Di Virgilio and Reed, 2011; Hazan and Rahat, 2010; Vignati, 2004).⁵ For instance, the central leadership of the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra*, Italy's largest left-wing party, 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 directly picking all the candidates. The extreme case was *Forza Italia*, whose founding leader, Silvio Berlusconi, was personally 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 (Merlo et al., 2010; Pasquino, 2007).

In the context of my research, it seems appropriate to focus on party leaders as

⁴Shomer (2009), by contrast, does not find a relationship between candidate selection procedures and vote-seeking behavior by individual legislators.

⁵For a detailed description of Italy's electoral systems, see Appendix A.6.

key actors in the candidate nomination process. Even when they do not intervene directly, leaders can influence the process through their veto power. A local party committee or a lower-ranking official can probably anticipate whether leaders are going to veto their nominees. To avoid a conflict, they should consider the leaders' preferences when proposing their candidates. The focus on party leaders is especially justified in the case of Italian parties, which in the period of study have generally adopted exclusive and centralized selection methods.

3.3 Literature Review: Corruption Allegations and Voting Behavior

In this section, I examine the literature on corruption allegations and voting behavior. Adopting the standard definition of corruption as “the abuse of public office for private gain,” I assume that, everything else being equal, voters prefer a “clean” candidate to one that may have used his/her office for personal gain.⁶ Individual-level surveys, indeed, show that most people around the world disapprove of political corruption (see, among others, Swamy et al., 2001). However, corruption allegations usually do not make incumbent officials less likely to win reelection, although they may decrease their vote share. This phenomenon has been observed among legislators (Bagenholm, 2013; Chang et al., 2010; Nyblade and Reed, 2008; Peters and Welch, 1980; Welch and Hibbing, 1997; Reed, 1999) and mayors (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Fernández-Vázquez et al., 2013). In India, scholars have studied the effect of criminal charges (including corruption charges)

⁶Banerjee et al. (2014) provide empirical evidence for this assumption.

on the success of *candidates*, i.e. not just incumbents. They find that criminal candidates are more likely to be elected than non-criminal candidates (Aidt et al., 2011; Vaishnav, 2011).

3.3.1 The Information–Media Hypothesis

To explain why, despite widespread condemnation of corruption, there is only limited electoral punishment of corrupt politicians, several studies have proposed what I call the “information–media hypothesis.” The basic intuition is that, if voters do not know that candidates may be corrupt, they will (re)elect them to office. The more informed voters are, the more likely they will be to punish corrupt politicians at the polls. The role of information has found strong support in both observational studies (Chang et al., 2010; Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Ferraz and Finan, 2008) and experimental research (Banerjee et al., 2014; Chong et al., 2015; De Figueiredo et al., 2011). The credibility, quality, and timing of the information also appear to matter (Bobonis et al., 2013; Muñoz et al., 2012; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2013). For example, information released close to the election date has a larger impact on voters’ decisions (Pereira et al., 2009).

Most of these studies argue that, by delivering information to voters, the media enables voters to drive corrupt politicians out of office. Experiments expose voters to corruption-related vignettes or leaflets. In real-world settings, however, it is normally media outlets that inform voters about political malfeasance. In Mexican municipal elections, for example, exogenous variation in television and radio coverage decreased the vote share of parties associated with corruption scandals

(Larreguy et al., 2014). Similar findings are reported in Spain (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Fernández-Vázquez et al., 2013) and Brazil (Ferraz and Finan, 2008). As for legislative elections, Larcinese and Sircar (2012) found that newspaper coverage of embezzlement allegations made British MPs less likely to stand for reelection, which can be considered a first step towards accountability.

More generally, studies demonstrate that voter information and media coverage promote political accountability (Ashworth, 2012). The question of how voters can keep corrupt politicians out of office, in fact, is related to the more general question of how voters can keep their representatives accountable. Starting with Ferejohn (1986), voter information has been recognized as a key factor. Providing voters with information about incumbent performance, for example, enables them to reward good performers at the polls (Pande, 2011). Because voters usually receive information from media outlets, election-seeking incumbents respond to the issues highlighted by the media (Besley and Burgess, 2002; Eisensee and Strömberg, 2007; Reinikka and Svensson, 2005). Also, incumbents vote in line with constituency preferences when they are closely monitored by local media (Snyder and Strömberg, 2010).

Cross-national and historical studies find additional support for the relationship between media and accountability. If media outlets are discouraged from reporting on political malfeasance, e.g. because of anti-defamation laws or government control, voters cannot monitor their representatives, who, in turn, have an incentive to extract rents from office. As a result, press freedom around the world is negatively associated with corruption (Adsera et al., 2003; Brunetti and Weder, 2003). In a related study, Djankov et al. (2003) report an adverse effect

of government media ownership on a range of good governance indicators. In the case of the United States, Gentzkow et al. (2006) argue that the rise of the informative, nonpartisan press between the 1870s and the early 1900s led to wider, more objective coverage of political scandals, and ultimately decreased corruption.

Indeed, the “information–media hypothesis” seems compatible with the evidence presented in Chapter 2. Theoretically, media coverage can vary relatively quickly over time. Studying school board elections in the United States, for example, Berry and Howell (2007) found that media attention on a specific issue (student learning) changed dramatically in the space of two years. In the case of Italy, an increase in media coverage of corruption during the 1992–1994 and 2008–2013 periods could have provided voters with more information. Anticipating that better-informed voters would punish corrupt incumbents, parties might have kept them off the ballot. Consistent with this argument, Chang et al. (2010) argue that, throughout the postwar era, Italian voters reelected MPs accused of corruption because the media hardly reported on corruption stories. Between 1992 and 1994, a spike in newspaper coverage of corruption enabled voters to drive malfeasant legislators out of office.⁷ I consider these results as *prima facie* evidence that the “information–media hypothesis” may explain the renomination patterns observed in 1992 and 1994.

⁷Giglioli (1996), Kenny and Crepaz (2012), and Vannucci (2009) report similar trends in television and newspaper coverage.

3.3.2 The Tradeoff Hypotheses

Other studies argue that even well-informed voters, if they consider other factors more significant than corruption allegations, may still vote for corrupt candidates. I group these explanations under the label of “tradeoff hypotheses.” Among the factors leading voters to vote for corrupt politicians, party identification is often mentioned (Anderson and Tverdova, 2003; Anduiza et al., 2013; Eggers, 2014; Peters and Welch, 1980; Rundquist et al., 1977). Alternatively, voters may disregard corruption accusations because of a candidate’s ethnic identity (Banerjee and Pande, 2009; Vaishnav, 2011), or his/her perceived competence (Fernández-Vázquez et al., 2013; Muñoz et al., 2012). In India, criminal candidates win elections because they use the profits of their criminal activities to finance their campaigns (Vaishnav, 2012) or because they intimidate voters through violence (Aidt et al., 2011). Finally, corrupt politicians may be better at distributing patronage goods through their clientelistic networks (Manzetti and Wilson, 2007).

In the context of Italy, however, the “tradeoff hypotheses” lack *prima facie* credibility. First of all, it seems implausible that voters disregarded corruption allegations out of partisan attachment, especially in the late 2000s. The strength of party identification has constantly decreased since the early 1990s (Bellucci, 2007, 2012). Nor could ethnic identification be an explanation. As one of the most ethnically and linguistically homogenous countries in the world, Italy is an unlikely setting for ethnic politics (Fearon, 2003). Next, candidates’ perceived competence can hardly explain the renomination patterns of 2008 and 2013. To reward competent incumbents, voters should be able to easily identify them on

the ballot. The introduction of closed-list PR rules in 2005, by contrast, virtually severed the accountability link, establishing high-magnitude districts and allowing candidates to run in as many districts as they wanted (Pinto and Di Virgilio, 2014).⁸ Under these conditions, parties had little incentive to “purge” their ballots of corrupt legislators. Finally, although mafia organizations sometimes intimidate voters and rival candidates (Moro et al., 2014; Sberna and Olivieri, 2014), the frequency and intensity of political violence in Italy are nowhere near the levels reported in India.

Lastly, clientelism cannot explain why Italian parties renominated corrupt incumbents in 1992 and 2008, but not in 1994 or 2013. Indeed, under the open-list PR system in place until 1993, Italian MPs used illegal contributions and bribes to expand their clienteles, who then rewarded them with preference votes (Cartocci, 1990; Golden, 2003).⁹ In 1992, parties may have renominated corrupt incumbents to attract votes from their clienteles. However, the argument does not apply to the subsequent period. First, preference votes were abolished by the 1993 electoral reform. As for the 2008 and 2013 elections, the closed-list PR rules did not allow voters to reward individual candidates. Second, starting in the early 1990s, MPs had fewer resources to deliver to their constituencies because, as a result of

⁸In 2008 (2013), in each of the 27 Chamber districts, voters chose from among approximately nine (ten) party lists, considering only parties that obtained more than 1% of the vote, each featuring an average of 23 candidates (Chiaramonte and Emanuele, 2013). Candidates’ names were posted at the polling station, rather than being printed on the ballot. See Appendix A.6 for details on Italy’s electoral system.

⁹Until the early 1990s, subnational-level legislative elections were also conducted under open-list PR rules, which made it imperative for office-seeking politicians, at any level of government, to amass preference votes. In order to do that, politicians often delivered (or promised to deliver) individualized benefits in exchange for preferences. See Section 4.4.2 for a discussion of clientelism and corruption.

privatizations and deficit-reducing measures backed by the European Union, the sphere of state economic intervention shrank significantly (Vesperini and Battini, 1998). Finally, unlike the investigations of the 1990s, the corruption cases of the late 2000s had little to do with clientelism (see Section 4.4.2). Although clientelism and outright vote-buying are occasionally reported at the local level, these phenomena appear to play a much smaller role in Italy's national politics than in the past.

3.4 Theory

This section presents a theory for why parties renominate allegedly corrupt legislators, based on the two main points that have emerged from the literature review. First, party leaders are key actors in the candidate selection process, especially in Italy. Therefore, I examine the incentives of party leaders in the nomination phase. Second, the “information–media hypothesis” is potentially compatible with the renomination data in Chapter 1, whereas the various “tradeoff hypotheses” lack *prima facie* plausibility. For this reason, I analyze how information from media sources affects the decisions of voters and party leaders.

I consider a legislature composed of a certain number of legislators (or incumbents), each affiliated with a party. In the nomination phase, which takes place at the end of each legislative term, party leaders decide whether to nominate incumbents for reelection. By party leaders, I mean a small group of top party officials, who may or may not be serving in the legislature. After the nomination phase, an election is held in which voters cast a ballot for a party. The election determines

the seat share controlled by each party in the next term.

During the term, some legislators are accused of having abused their office for personal gains, i.e. corruption. I assume that accusations are relatively credible and cannot be easily dismissed as politically motivated.¹⁰ In order for this to be true, accusations should be made publicly by a non-partisan actor at a cost. Allegations made exclusively 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, and are usually required to follow lengthy bureaucratic procedures and collect enough evidence to make a credible argument. Corruption allegations may well refer to previous offices, e.g. when legislators held office in local government before entering parliament. What matters is that the allegations lead voters to suspect that legislators may be corrupt.

The media, which for simplicity I consider as a unitary actor, covers corruption in two ways. First, the media prioritizes the issue of corruption at the expense of other issues, thus signifying its urgency. Rather than covering corruption scandals, for example, newspapers or newscasts may focus on foreign policy or the economy. Kiouisis and McCombs (2004) distinguishes between *attention*, i.e. the sheer volume of stories or space devoted to a topic, and *prominence*, i.e. the posi-

¹⁰Fernández-Vázquez et al. (2013) argue that two conditions are necessary for electoral retribution. The accusations need to have some credibility, stressed by the involvement of judicial authorities, and they have to produce extensive media coverage, thus raising public awareness on the issue. Because I use judicial proceedings to identify corruption accusations, my research automatically meets the first condition. As for the second condition, Chapter 4 reports ample evidence of media coverage.

tioning of the topic within a media text to communicate its importance. Following the conceptualization, I will refer to this type of media coverage as “prominence of corruption in the media.” Second, the media reports on the corruption accusations against specific legislators. Consider the case of a legislator investigated for pocketing bribes. The coverage given by a single newspaper can vary from, say, a brief mention on the day when the investigation becomes public, to a month-long series of articles dealing with the specifics of the case. I will call this type of coverage “media mentions of corruption allegations against legislators”

Next, I assume that legislators want to be reelected. This assumption, which is common in the literature, is especially justified in the case of Italy. Italian MPs have strong economic incentives to remain in office. According to recent estimates, their parliamentary wages are the highest in the developed world (The Economist, 2013). In 1994, the annual parliamentary wage was six times larger than the average earnings of a private-sector worker, and the gap has widened ever since (Merlo et al., 2010). Unlike U.S. Congressmen, Italian MPs are allowed to keep their outside jobs, unless they are employed by the government or have full-time occupations. For example, lawyers, who, on average, composed 15% of parliament between 1996 and 2006, normally continue practicing law (Gagliarducci et al., 2010). Also, Italian MPs are granted partial immunity from criminal prosecution. Until the end of 1993, judges needed parliament’s permission to investigate, try, or convict a sitting MP. Since then, parliament’s permission has remained necessary for wiretapping, arrests, and searches of MPs’ properties.¹¹ If their request is denied, as was often the case throughout the postwar era (Ricolfi, 1993), judges

¹¹Giovanni Maria Bellu, “Immunit  parlamentare, addio,” *La Repubblica*, October 29, 1993.

cannot proceed as intended. Obviously, MPs involved in criminal proceedings have an incentive to remain in office.

Another key assumption is that legislators prefer to be renominated by their own party rather than trying to be renominated by another party, or founding a new party and self-nominating. In both of these alternative cases, their reelection chances would be lower than if they were renominated by their own party. Assuming that they do find another party willing to nominate them, incumbents may have to join a relatively new/small party, in which the internal competition is low, or a well-established/large party, in which the competition is high. Within a new/small party, incumbents will probably be ranked high on the list. However, they may not be elected because the party itself is not very competitive. By contrast, a well-established/large party, having to accommodate its existing cadres, will rank incumbents low on the list. Therefore, their reelection chances will be low. Alternatively, incumbents can found a party and self-nominate for reelection. However, they will probably not have the time or the economic and political resources to mount a successful campaign.

In the case of Italian MPs, being renominated by one's own party does appear to be the safest way to be reelected. In 1994, for example, some of the non-renominated MPs founded new parties and ran for reelection, counting on the support of their local clientele. These attempts, however, were largely unsuccessful (see Section 2.4). Overall, 20% of the MPs nominated by another party were reelected, including those who joined already existing parties, versus 64% of the MPs nominated by their own party. According to Di Virgilio and Reed (2011), Italian MPs lacked the established, personal consensus necessary to support an

effective campaign as independents or as candidates for other parties. In 2013, in turn, 30% of the MPs nominated by another party won reelection, versus 60% of the MPs nominated by their own party. In absolute terms, only nine MPs in the entire Chamber were reelected when they had moved on from their previous party.

In the nomination phase, party leaders weigh the benefits and costs of renominating corrupt incumbents. On the one hand, they may benefit from fielding corrupt legislators as candidates. Corrupt legislators may use illegally collected funds to finance election campaigns, thus improving the party's electoral prospects at no cost for the party, or they may collect funds on behalf of the party. Such cases are well documented in Italy (Rhodes, 1997) as well as other countries. In addition to that, corrupt legislators may mobilize their clienteles to vote for the party. In Italy, subnational- and national-level legislators used illegal contributions and bribes to expand their clienteles, so that legislators investigated for corruption had significantly larger clienteles than non-investigated ones (Section 4.4.2). Finally, corrupt legislators may threaten leaders with the disclosure of compromising information on other party members, who may be involved in the same corruption scandals. To avoid such an eventuality, party leaders may find it convenient to nominate corrupt incumbents for reelection.

On the other hand, renominating allegedly corrupt legislators may hurt the party reputation and lead to electoral losses.¹² Starting with Stokes (1963), schol-

¹²I assume that it is legal for parties to nominate candidates that are currently investigated or facing a trial. As to my knowledge, no study in the literature mentions similar limitations, which leads me to believe that it is a fair assumption. In Italy, the only legal limitation is the so-called Severino law, introduced in January 2013, which prohibits those who have been

ars have distinguished two components of a party's reputation, or brand (Butler and Powell, 2014). The *positional* component refers to the 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. When, by contrast, they associate a party with negative outcomes, such as absence of legislative accomplishment, they are less inclined to vote for it (Butler and Powell, 2014; Clarke et al., 2009). Following Stokes (1963, 374) and Curini and Martelli (2010, 2013), I consider corruption as a valence issue because all voters should prefer an honest party to a corrupt one, other things equal.

I assume that party nominations influence voting behavior. After they observe nominations, voters decide which party they are going to vote. Voters consider a number of issues when deciding their vote. Besides corruption, they care about the state of the economy, national security, or the environment. Because no party can tackle all the issues effectively, voters rank issues in terms of priority. The most salient issues, the issues of the day, will rank high on their minds and will bear greater influence on their voting decision. If Party A nominates candidates accused of corruption, voters infer that it will not do a great job at tackling corruption.¹³ If corruption ranks high on their minds, they will be less likely to

sentenced to more than two years from running for office. The conviction must be finalized, at the third stage of the criminal proceeding, by the *Corte di Cassazione* (Court of Cassation). More stringent rules exist for subnational-level legislative elections.

¹³Because incumbents are relatively visible and well known, voters should be able to identify accused incumbents running for reelection. Otherwise, a competing may prime them for electoral purposes.

vote for it. However, they may decide to disregard this information and still vote for Party A, if they do not consider corruption as an important problem.

The case of Nicola Cosentino illustrates the benefits and costs of renominating legislators accused of corruption. An influential member of Berlusconi's party, *Popolo della Libertà* (Pdl), Cosentino was implicated in two corruption investigations between 2008 and 2010, when he was serving as undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy. In 2012, prosecutors accused him of colluding with the *Camorra*, the criminal organization based in his home region of Campania, but the parliament denied the authorization to arrest him.¹⁴ In 2013, when discussing nominations, Berlusconi and the other Pdl leaders recognized that Cosentino could mobilize thousands of voters in Campania, where the Pdl could achieve a crucial victory. However, a survey commissioned by the party apparently revealed that fielding Cosentino and other investigated candidates would harm the reputation of the party at the national level, and cost even more votes. Eventually, the Pdl leadership took him off the ballot.¹⁵

The costs of renominating corrupt incumbents offset the benefits under the following two conditions. First, the issue of corruption must be salient to voters. When voters do not consider corruption as a priority, fielding corrupt incumbents should not excessively damage the party reputation.¹⁶ When, by contrast, voters

¹⁴Fulvio Bovi, "Cosentino referente dei Casalesi. Chiesto di nuovo l'arresto del parlamentare del Pdl," *Corriere della Sera*, July 12, 2011.

¹⁵"Cosentino e gli impresentabili," *Corriere della Sera*, January 15, 2013; "Il sondaggio elettorale di Berlusconi: Gli impresentabili? Una zavorra per il Pdl," *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, January 20, 2013.

¹⁶Caínzos and Jiménez (2000) and Jiménez and Caínzos (2004) propose a similar explanation for why Spanish voters did not punish the governing party after a series of corruption scandals.

consider corruption very important, party leaders will have an incentive to exclude corrupt incumbents from nomination to minimize electoral losses. Second, when voters consider corruption as an important issue, they need to identify potentially corrupt legislators to punish their parties. If parties renominate legislators who are widely known to be investigated for corruption, for example, voters will associate the party with corruption and will be less likely to vote for it. If, by contrast, no one knows about the accusations, renominating them will not damage the party reputation.

Regarding the first condition, prominence of corruption in the media should increase the public salience of corruption. Research on agenda-setting shows that, by focusing on certain issues, mainstream media shapes public opinion (McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Wanta and Ghanem, 2007). If, in the period directly preceding the election, media outlets highlight corruption at the expense of other issues, corruption will become more salient in the public mind.¹⁷ Under this condition, renominating incumbents accused of corruption would hurt the valence component of the party reputation. Assuming that party leaders are aware of the increased prominence of corruption, they should refrain from renominating allegedly corrupt legislators. I derive the following testable hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Media prominence of corruption in the pre-election period decreases the chances of allegedly corrupt legislators being renominated.

They suggest that, at the time of the election, the state of the economy had replaced corruption as the most urgent problem for voters.

¹⁷Palau and Davesa (2013) finds evidence of this mechanism in the context of Spain.

As for the second condition, voters' ability to identify potentially corrupt legislators depends on how frequently media outlets publish corruption stories involving them. Concerned voters need to be aware of corruption accusations against the incumbents to punish their parties. For example, if the media publishes 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. When voters care a lot about corruption and know who, among their representatives, is accused of corruption, the party reputation is greatly damaged. To protect the party reputation, party leaders will not renominate Legislator X. It follows that:

Hypothesis 2: When corruption is salient to voters, media mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators decrease their chances of being renominated.

These two hypotheses together point to the accountability-promoting role of the media, which influences the decisions of party leaders in the candidate nomination phase. In the first case, party leaders decide whether to take corruption allegations into consideration when selecting the candidate pool. Party leaders' decisions, I argue, depend on the degree to which the media focuses on the issue of corruption. In the second case, the amount of information on specific legislators distributed by the media determines whether some corrupt incumbents will be renominated, while others will not.

3.5 Conclusion

Analyzing two pairs of Italian parliamentary elections, Chapter 2 showed that the fate of allegedly corrupt incumbents changed significantly between one election and the next. In 1992, most of the MPs investigated for corruption were renominated, whereas in 1994 only a few of them were. Similarly, parties renominated most of the MPs accused of corruption in 2008, but renominated only a small proportion of them in 2013. Corruption allegations had no impact on renomination in 1992 or 2008, but they decreased renomination chances in 1994 and 2013. As explained in the previous chapter, electoral accountability largely depended on party nominations, rather than voter behavior. Because in 1994 and 2013 most of the corrupt incumbents were not renominated, only a few corrupt MPs were reelected to parliament.

In this chapter, I have examined two threads of literature relevant to the question of why parties nominate allegedly corrupt incumbents for reelection. From a review of the literature on candidate selection, I conclude that party leaders are key actors in the candidate nomination process, especially in the case of Italian parties. Considering the studies of corruption and voting behavior, I speculate that the “information–media hypothesis” fits the data in Chapter 2 better than any alternative hypothesis. The extensive literature on information, media, and accountability leads me to believe that media coverage of corruption may have influenced the decisions of Italian party leaders.

I have argued that media coverage of corruption dissuades party leaders from renominating allegedly corrupt incumbents through two mechanisms. As the me-

dia highlights corruption vis-à-vis other issues, corruption becomes more salient to voters. Hence, the electoral penalty for renominating corrupt incumbents increases. I hypothesize that, the more prominent is corruption in the media, the lower the renomination chances of legislators accused of corruption. Next, because voters need to identify potentially corrupt legislators in order to punish their parties, party leaders have an incentive to remove from the ballot legislators frequently reported as corrupt. Media mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators should decrease their chances of being renominated.

This argument contributes to the literature by highlighting the role of parties and media in punishing corrupt incumbents on behalf of voters. Because incumbents need to be renominated in order to be reelected, the nomination phase is crucial to electoral accountability. In the nomination phase, party leaders consider the potential reputational costs associated with renominating corrupt incumbents. If they expect that renominating them will hurt the party reputation and lead to electoral losses, they will refrain from doing so. The media influences the leaders' decisions by making it more or less costly to renominate incumbents accused of corruption.

In the remaining part of the dissertation, I will test the two empirical implications of my theory. To test the first hypothesis, Chapter 4 will analyze prominence of corruption in the Italian media during the 1992–1994 and 2008–2013 periods. Chapter 5 will use data on the 1994 and 2013 elections to test the second hypothesis. Focusing on incumbents accused of corruption, I will study how newspaper mentions of corruption allegations relate with their chances of being renominated.

CHAPTER 4

Media Prominence of Corruption and Renomination

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 illustrated a puzzle in the recent history of Italian parliamentary elections. In two separate instances, the fate of MPs accused of corruption changed quite dramatically between one election and the next. In 1992, parties nominated for reelection 82% of the MPs investigated for corruption. In 1994, only 18% of the investigated MPs were renominated.¹ A similar pattern could be observed two decades later. In 2008, 88% the MPs accused of corruption were renominated, whereas, in 2013, only 35% of them were.² Statistical analysis showed that, in 1992 and 2008, parties renominated MPs regardless of whether they were accused of corruption. In 1994 and 2013, by contrast, parties refrained from renominating allegedly corrupt parliament members.

Consistent with the statistical results, anecdotal evidence suggests that parties considered allegedly corrupt MPs as a liability in 1994 and 2013, but not in 1992 or 2008 (see Section 2.3). During the 1992 election campaign, corruption accusations against sitting MPs did not appear to be an issue. By contrast, in 1994, the leaderships of the main parties publicly discussed candidates' criminal records, and pledged not to renominate the MPs investigated for corruption. In 2008, parties did debate whether to renominate MPs accused of corruption, but did not firmly commit to exclude them from the ballots. For example, Silvio Berlusconi's party,

¹Henceforth, I will use "renominate" and "nominate for reelection" interchangeably. To avoid repetition, I will also use "MPs," "legislators," and "incumbents" interchangeably.

²Corruption accusations are coded differently in the two pairs of elections. In 1992 and 1994, I refer to MPs investigated for corruption crimes during the previous legislature. In 2008 and 2013, I refer to the MPs who, as of the end of the previous legislature, were under investigation or on trial for corruption, or had avoided a final judgment thanks to the statute of limitations. Further information on data sources and coding procedure can be found in the Appendix A.4.

the *Popolo della Libertà*, announced that it would consider each case separately, claiming that some judicial proceedings were politically motivated.³ In 2013, by contrast, the same parties took a much stronger stand. Appearing on a television talk show, Berlusconi himself announced that, this time, his party would not renominate the MPs investigated for corruption.⁴

Why did parties refrain from nominating allegedly corrupt incumbents in 1994 and 2013, after they had renominated them in the immediately preceding elections? This finding appears to contradict the notion, often circulated by the Italian and international media, that Italian politics is irredeemably corrupt.⁵ According to rankings such as Transparency International's CPI, Italy's level of corruption is indeed anomalously high for a wealthy, established democracy. Corruption scandals have been making headlines for the past thirty years. However, on at least two occasions, Italian parties seem to have taken a stand against corruption. In 1994 and 2013, having failed to secure a nomination, most of the accused MPs lost their seat (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). Having lost parliamentary immunity, some were arrested or indicted by the judiciary.⁶ Under certain

³"Fi: No a inquisiti nelle liste tranne vittime di processi politici," *La Repubblica*, 21 February, 2008.

⁴"Berlusconi molla Cosentino," *La Repubblica*, 10 January, 2013.

⁵Some recent examples: Emilio Parodi, "Italy struggles to turn page on corruption," Reuters, May 23, 2014, Accessed June 5, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/23/us-italy-corruption-idUSBREA4M0DC20140523>; Lizzy Davies, "The six things wrong with Italy — and how to solve them," February 20, 2013, Accessed June 5, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/20/six-things-wrong-with-italy>. Michael Day, "Corruption in Italy 'worse than ever' as minister quits over links with gang accused of bribery," March 20, 2015, Accessed June 5, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/corruption-in-italy-worse-than-ever-as-minister-quits-over-links-with-gang-accused-of-bribery-10124024.html>.

⁶"Parlamentari indagati, fine dell'immunità," *La Repubblica*, Accessed April 24, 2015

conditions, then, Italian parties do “punish” corrupt incumbents on behalf of voters, thus promoting electoral accountability.

To explain why Italian parties changed their behavior vis-à-vis corruption accusations between 1992 and 1994, and then again between 2008 and 2013, Chapter 3 argued that media coverage of corruption influences candidate selection through two mechanisms. First, when corruption becomes more salient to voters, voters are less likely to vote for parties associated with corruption, which discourages party leaders from renominating corrupt legislators. Drawing on the literature on the media agenda-setting power (McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Wanta and Ghanem, 2007), I hypothesized that prominence of corruption in the media, increasing its public salience, lowers the renomination chances of legislators accused of corruption (Hypothesis 1). Second, by publishing corruption stories involving specific legislators, the media enables voters to identify them as potentially corrupt. When corruption is salient to voters, party leaders refrain from renominating the legislators more frequently reported to be corrupt. Therefore, mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators decrease their chances of being renominated (Hypothesis 2).

In this chapter, I test the first empirical implication of my argument (Hypothesis 1). I will test the second implication, i.e. Hypothesis 2, in the next chapter. If Hypothesis 1 is correct, I should observe that corruption was more prominent in the Italian media in the period directly preceding the 1994 election than in the period directly preceding the 1992 election. Similarly, corruption should be more

http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2013/03/15/news/scade_immunit_arresti-54618376/.

prominent in 2013 than in 2008. In other words, before the 1994 and 2013 elections, I should find that newspapers and television channels focused on corruption more than before the 1992 and 2008 elections, respectively. Because, according to Hypothesis 1, media prominence of corruption affects renomination by increasing its public salience, I should also observe that corruption was more salient to voters in 1994 (2013) than in 1992 (2008).

To test Hypothesis 1, I analyze how the Italian media covered corruption in the 1992–1994 and 2008–2013 periods. I rely mainly on newspaper data, measuring how many days per month newspapers mentioned corruption on their front pages. By putting corruption on the front page, newspapers highlight its importance at the expense of other issues—which corresponds to the very definition of *prominence* (Kiousis and McCombs, 2004)—and likely influence how the public perceives the issue. Lacking similarly precise measures for other media, I use secondary sources and indirect measures to study broad patterns of television coverage of corruption. To corroborate my argument, I use survey data to study how the public salience of corruption varied between 1992 and 1994, and between 2008 and 2013. Due to the small number of cases, I cannot rule out alternative explanations using conventional statistical procedures. To bring further support to my argument, I address a series of plausible rival hypotheses through secondary sources and the analysis of related datasets.

In this chapter, I find that prominence of corruption in the Italian media was significantly higher in the months preceding the 1994 election than in the months preceding the 1992 election. Similarly, corruption was more prominent in the media in the period before the 2013 election than in the period before the 2008

election. Also, the public salience of corruption appears to have increased between 1992 and 1994, and then again between 2008 and 2013. Overall, the data support the hypothesis that the media discouraged party leaders from renominating incumbents accused of corruption. As I am going to show later in the chapter, the alternative explanations do not fit the data as well. In particular, I will reject the hypothesis that an increase in actual corruption made voters more sensitive to the issue, thus inducing party leaders to drop accused incumbents from the ballot.

The rest of the chapter proceed as follows. In Section 4.2, I analyze the prominence of corruption in the Italian media in the 1992–1994 period. In Section 4.3, I perform a similar analysis of media prominence of corruption in the 2008–2013 period. Then, in Section 4.4, I address alternative explanations for the renomination patterns discussed in Chapter 2. Section 4.5 discusses why the Italian media focused on corruption in 1994 and 2013. Section 5.5 summarizes the main findings and links them to the next chapter.

4.2 Media Prominence of Corruption, 1992–1994

In this section, I test Hypothesis 1 by analyzing how the Italian media covered the issue of corruption in the 1992–1994 period. According to my argument, allegedly corrupt MPs had lower chances of being renominated in 1994 than in 1992 because corruption was more prominent in the media (Hypothesis 1). If the argument is correct, I should observe that the media gave more prominence to corruption in the period preceding the 1994 election than in the period preceding the 1992 election. In my argument, the media affects renomination by increasing

the public salience of corruption. Therefore, I should also observe an increase in the public salience of corruption between 1992 and 1994.

To study media prominence of corruption, I measured how often newspapers discussed corruption on their front pages. I used the online archive of the *Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata* (ANSA), Italy's leading wire service. Between 1982 and 2000, ANSA released a daily news summary reporting the topics discussed on the front pages of the country's main newspapers.⁷ By searching for corruption-related keywords, I determined whether, on each day, corruption was discussed on the front page of at least one newspaper.⁸ I aggregated the daily data to construct monthly indexes of corruption prominence.

Consistent with my hypothesis, newspapers gave more prominence to corruption in the period directly preceding the 1994 election than in the period preceding the 1992 election. For each election, I calculate the frequency of corruption mentions in the two months preceding the deadline for the submission of candidate lists.⁹ In 1992, corruption received front-page coverage, on average, one day per month. As shown by Figure 4.1, corruption stories began to appear in March 1992, shortly before the election, and increased dramatically in May, i.e. one month *after* the election. In the two months preceding the 1994 election, by contrast, corrup-

⁷Each release 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*).

⁸Keywords include *corruzione* (corruption), *concussione* (extortion by a public official), *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office), *peculato* (embezzlement), and terms commonly used in corruption stories, such as *corrott** (corrupted), *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

⁹The deadline is approximately thirty days before election day. I retrieved the date from the ANSA archive.

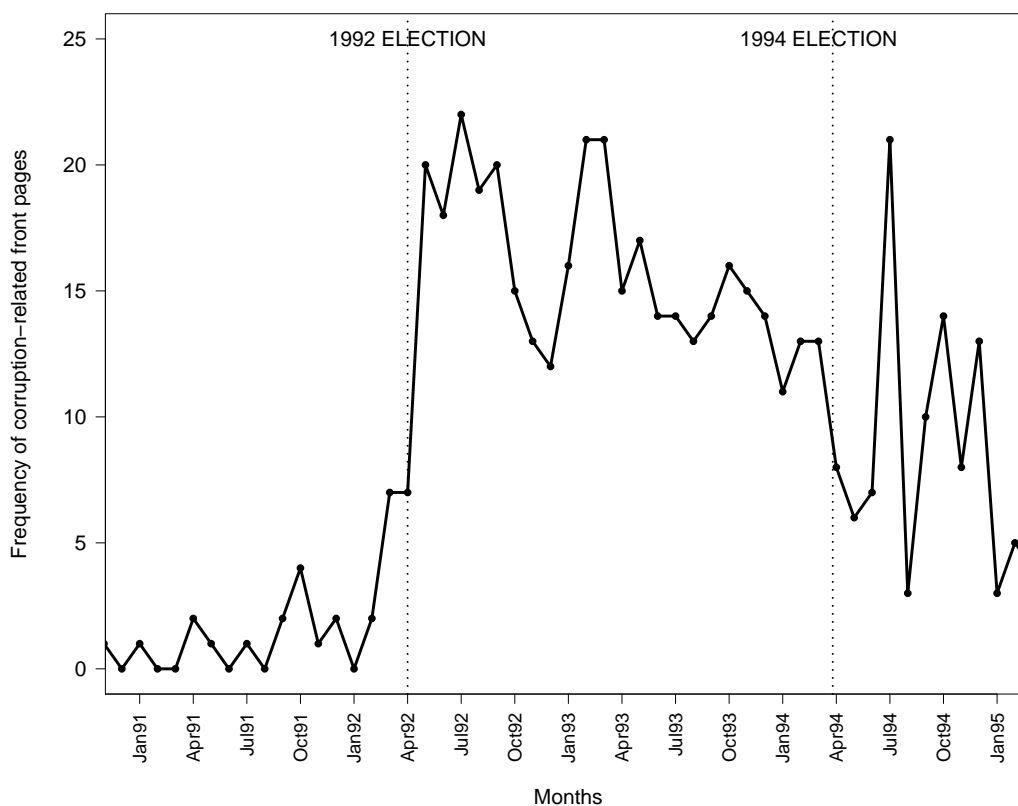
tion received front-page coverage 12 days per month.¹⁰ Earlier in the legislature, corruption-related items had appeared on the front page every other day, if not more frequently. Corruption prominence reached a peak in May–September 1992 and in February–March 1993, with around 20 corruption-related front pages per month (Figure 4.1).

In line with other studies, I find that, between 1992 and 1994, newspaper coverage of corruption reached historically unprecedented levels. Data from the ANSA daily news summaries show that, between 1982 and 1991, corruption was mentioned on the front page, on average, only ten days per year. In 1992, by contrast, corruption-related items appeared for 155 days, and in 1993 this number increased to 190. In other words, in the year preceding the 1994 election, corruption occupied the front pages every other day. Other studies report a similar jump in corruption coverage. As shown in Figure 4.6, yearly-aggregated ANSA data are highly correlated ($R = 96\%$) with the number of corruption-related articles published in *Corriere della Sera*, Italy’s major newspaper (Chang et al., 2010). Vannucci (2009) finds that, between 1989 and 1991, *La Repubblica*, Italy’s second most-read newspaper, reported 90 different cases of corruption every year. Between 1992 and 1994, this number increased to 220. Giglioli (1996) and Kenny and Crepaz (2012) also report similar patterns.

This sudden increase followed a series of judicial investigations that, starting with the so-called Clean Hands operation, implicated thousands of elected offi-

¹⁰Adopting a different timeframe does not substantially change the results. In the six months preceding the 1992 deadline, corruption-related articles appeared two days per month, versus 14 per month in the six months preceding the 1994 deadline.

Figure 4.1: Prominence of Corruption in the Media, 1991–1994



Frequency of corruption-related front pages is the number of days per month in which at least one major Italian newspaper highlighted corruption stories on the front page. Source: Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (ANSA) daily press reviews. Keywords used for this search: *corruzione* (corruption); *concussione* (extortion by a public official); *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office); *peculato* (embezzlement); *corrott** (corrupted); *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick). Dates of parliamentary elections marked on x-axis

cials, party officials, and businesspeople nationwide. Although the Clean Hands investigations started shortly before the 1992 election, with the arrest of a local-level politician in Milan, it was only after the election that they expanded beyond the Milanese context. Prosecutors around the country disclosed a well-established corruption system in which firms paid bribes to all government parties, and sometimes also opposition parties (Nascimbeni and Pamparana, 1992; Pizzorno, 1993). As of February 1993, about one third of the regional governments and one third of the provincial governments were rocked by anti-corruption probes.¹¹ Compared to previous corruption scandals, this wave of investigations was exceptionally wide and long-lasting. Between 1991 and 1993, the number of people investigated for corruption and the number of reported corruption crimes increased by four and six times respectively (Vannucci, 2009). During the 1992–1994 legislature, 26% of the Chamber MPs, including national party leaders and cabinet secretaries, were investigated for corruption crimes, versus 6% during the 1987–1992 legislature.¹²

As the investigations unfolded, the press focused more and more on corruption. Initially, newspaper coverage of the Clean Hands operation was sporadic (Giglioli, 1996, 383). Later on, as the Milan investigations expanded and other prosecutorial offices launched similar probes, newspapers began to cover corruption investigations on a daily basis.

¹¹A. Giannuli, “Tangentopoli? Siamo appena agli inizi,” *Avvenimenti*, 24 february 1993. Italy is divided into 20 regions, each one composed of several provinces, for a total of 110 provinces. Each region (province) is governed by a legislative council (*consiglio*) and an executive body (*giunta*), located in the region (province) capital.

¹²Data from the requests to remove parliamentary immunity (*richieste di autorizzazione a procedere*) issued by the Italian judiciary. For a description of the data and coding procedure, see Appendix A.4.

Due to lack of data, I cannot measure prominence of corruption in television newscasts. However, secondary sources suggest that, before 1992, corruption was hardly discussed on television. At the time, the Italian broadcasting system was a duopoly in which three private channels, all owned by Silvio Berlusconi's Fininvest, competed with the three public channels of *Radiotelevisione Italiana* (RAI).¹³ Public television gave little or no space to corruption stories. As a result of informal agreements between the main Italian parties, the managers and journalists working for each channel were usually affiliated with the Christian Democratic Party (RAI 1), the Socialist Party (RAI 2), and the Communist Party (RAI 3) (Hibberd, 2007; Monteleone, 1992). Because most corruption cases implicated Christian Democratic or Socialist politicians (Cazzola, 1988; Chang et al., 2010), RAI programs had no incentive to highlight these cases. Private television channels, in turn, devoted little airtime to news. The first newscast on a Fininvest channel was launched in 1991, followed the year after by the other two channels. As of 1991, Fininvest channels devoted only 15% of their airtime to news and educational programming, compared to 43% of RAI (Durante et al., 2013). Although the private networks had a greater incentive to report on corruption, they had yet to become common news sources for the Italian public. Therefore, their coverage of corruption must have been very limited before 1992.

Between 1992 and 1994, by contrast, television networks bombarded the public with corruption reports. As judicial investigations unfolded, the private channels gave wide coverage to corruption stories in order to gain an audience. The recently-

¹³In 1987, the Fininvest channels together had a share of viewing time of 44.7%, compared to 48.3% of RAI (Durante et al., 2013). I have not been able to find data for later years.

launched Fininvest newscasts, with their daily coverage of the Clean Hands investigations, rapidly obtained high audience ratings (Giglioli, 1996, 387).¹⁴ In what would be a turning point in the history of Italian media, the scandals of the early 1990s enabled journalists, especially those working in private media, to take on the role of “watchdog,” standing for the citizens against powerful and corrupt political elites (Giglioli, 1996; Mazzoleni, 1995). Even public channels, despite the aforementioned political constraints, ended up including a large amount of corruption reports in their news programming. For example, one of the first trials resulting from the Clean Hands operation, the so-called “Cusani trial” was broadcast during prime time by a public channel, thus giving viewers the opportunity to see prominent politicians testifying before judges.

As newspapers and television channels shifted their focus to corruption, the issue of corruption became more salient in the public mind. I use data from the nationally representative, post-election surveys conducted by the Italian National Election Studies (ITANES).¹⁵ In 1985, when citizens were surveyed about the most urgent problem faced by the nation, almost no one mentioned corruption. In 1990, corruption ranked sixth (out of eight) in a ranking of the most important social problems. Unfortunately, ITANES did not ask these questions in 1992 or 1994. However, other surveys conducted between 1992 and 1994 suggest that most citizens recognized corruption as a national emergency, and sided with the judges against the political establishment, which they considered as irredeemably

¹⁴In the meantime, the share of airtime devoted to information on Fininvest channels increased from 15% in 1991 to 25% in 1994 (Durante et al., 2013).

¹⁵All the following statistics are an elaboration on ITANES data from the 1985, 1990, and 1996 surveys.

corrupt.¹⁶ In 1996, when ITANES surveys re-included questions on corruption, corruption ranked second as the most serious problem in the country after unemployment. If anything, corruption should have been at least as salient to voters in 1994, i.e. at the peak of the investigation campaign.

On several occasions between 1993 and 1994, political actors and concerned citizens mobilized around corruption. In March 1993, the government issued an executive decree (“*Decreto Conso*”) that would have granted amnesty to hundreds of politicians. Newspapers and citizen groups raised objections, which induced President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to refuse to sign the decree into law—a rather unconventional gesture (Bianconi, 2001). Later, the April 18, 1993 referenda, promoted by the libertarian Radical Party and dissident Christian Democratic members, asked citizens if they wanted to reform electoral rules and abolish state subsidies to political parties. Although the referenda did not deal with corruption per se, voters appeared to use this opportunity to voice their dissatisfaction with the political establishment (Pappalardo, 1995). With a significantly higher turnout than previous referenda (77%, versus 43% in 1990 and 62% in 1991), the two proposals were approved with 83% and 90% of the votes respectively.¹⁷ Two weeks later, the Chamber of Deputies refused to lift the parliamentary immunity of Socialist leader Bettino Craxi, thus saving him from prosecution. The PDS

¹⁶“Per Di Pietro in 5 milioni davanti alla TV,” *La Repubblica*, 21 February, 1993; “Italiani senza dubbi - i giudici fanno bene,” *Corriere della Sera*, 28 February, 1993; “Gli italiani si schierano con Di Pietro,” *La Repubblica*, 17 July, 1993. In the summer of 1993, Antonio Di Pietro, the most visible of the Clean Hands prosecutors, was the most widely-recognized public figure in Italy, ranking higher in terms of popularity than TV hosts and Christian Democratic leaders (“Di Pietro superstar. Castagna il piú bello,” *La Repubblica*, 5 August, 1993).

¹⁷Following the referendum, parliament replaced the open-list PR electoral system with a mixed-member majoritarian system, as discussed in Section 4.4.

and the Green Party protested by withdrawing their ministers from the cabinet, only two days after its inauguration. Opposition parties and student organizations took to the streets, and Craxi himself faced an angry crowd in Rome.¹⁸

The evidence presented in this section has shown that, in the period directly preceding the 1994 election, the media gave greater prominence to corruption than in the period preceding the 1992 election. Various data sources indicate that newspapers highlighted corruption on their front pages *after* the 1992 election. Television coverage appears to have followed a similar pattern. Corruption was arguably the single most important issue discussed in the national media between mid-1992 and early 1994. Between 1993 and 1994, corruption was also more salient to Italian citizens than it had been at least since the 1980s.

4.3 Media Prominence of Corruption, 2008–2013

This section tests Hypothesis 1 by analyzing media coverage of corruption in the 2008–2013 period. In 2008, 90% of the MPs accused of corruption were renominated, versus 35% in 2013. To explain this shift, I hypothesized that media prominence of corruption discourages party leaders from renominating corrupt incumbents, thus reducing their renomination chances (Hypothesis 1). If the argument is correct, I should observe that the Italian media gave greater prominence to corruption in the period directly preceding the 2013 election than in the period

¹⁸“Il Paese scende in piazza e dice no,” *Corriere della Sera*, 1 May, 1993; “Italians rise up as Rome falls in a day,” *The Sunday Times*, 2 May, 1993. On several other occasions, crowds of citizens were seen cheering and chanting in support of the Hands prosecutors. See, for example, Alessandra Arachi, “Milano piange, applaude, inveisce,” *Corriere della Sera*, 31 July, 1993.

directly preceding the 2008 election. Also, because I assume that media focus on corruption increases the public salience of corruption, I should observe that corruption was more salient to voters in 2013 than in 2008.

To study prominence of corruption in the media, I first look at the frequency with which newspapers discussed corruption on their front page. The ANSA news summary archive used in Section 4.2 is not available for this period. Instead, I used the archive of *La Repubblica*, Italy's second-most widely read newspaper.¹⁹ Replicating the procedure used with the ANSA archive, I checked whether, on each day, at least one article on *La Repubblica* front page contained a corruption-related keyword.²⁰ I aggregated daily data to construct monthly indexes of corruption prominence.

Figure 4.2 shows that *La Repubblica* gave greater prominence to corruption in the period immediately preceding the 2013 election than in the period preceding the 2008 election. Again, for each election I calculate the frequency of corruption mentions in the two months preceding the deadline for the submission of candidate

¹⁹<http://ricerca.repubblica.it/>. While *Corriere della Sera*, as the national “newspaper of record,” might be considered an obvious choice, *La Repubblica* is a more appropriate source in this context. Similarly to what I did in Section 4.2, I need to measure front-page corruption mentions. The online archive of *Corriere della Sera* is not suitable because, unlike *La Repubblica*, it does not allow to easily retrieve the article page number. One potential concern is that *La Repubblica* is known to give wider-than-average coverage to political malfeasance (Cazzola, 1988; Vannucci, 2009). However, using *La Repubblica* data does not bias my conclusions. Rather than the absolute level of corruption coverage, I am interested in the *change* in corruption coverage between 2008 and 2013.

²⁰Keywords include *corruzione* (corruption), *concussione* (extortion by a public official), *peculato* (embezzlement), and terms commonly used in corruption stories, such as *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick). The only difference with the search on ANSA data is that I cannot include *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office) due to the limited functionality of the website search engine (see note 8).

lists.²¹ In the two months before the 2008 election, corruption mentions appeared, on average, for 5 days per month. In the two months before the 2013 election, corruption was mentioned on the front page for 11 days per month. Using a six-month timeframe, I obtain a frequency of 6.5 days per month before the 2008 election, versus 15 per month before the 2013 election.

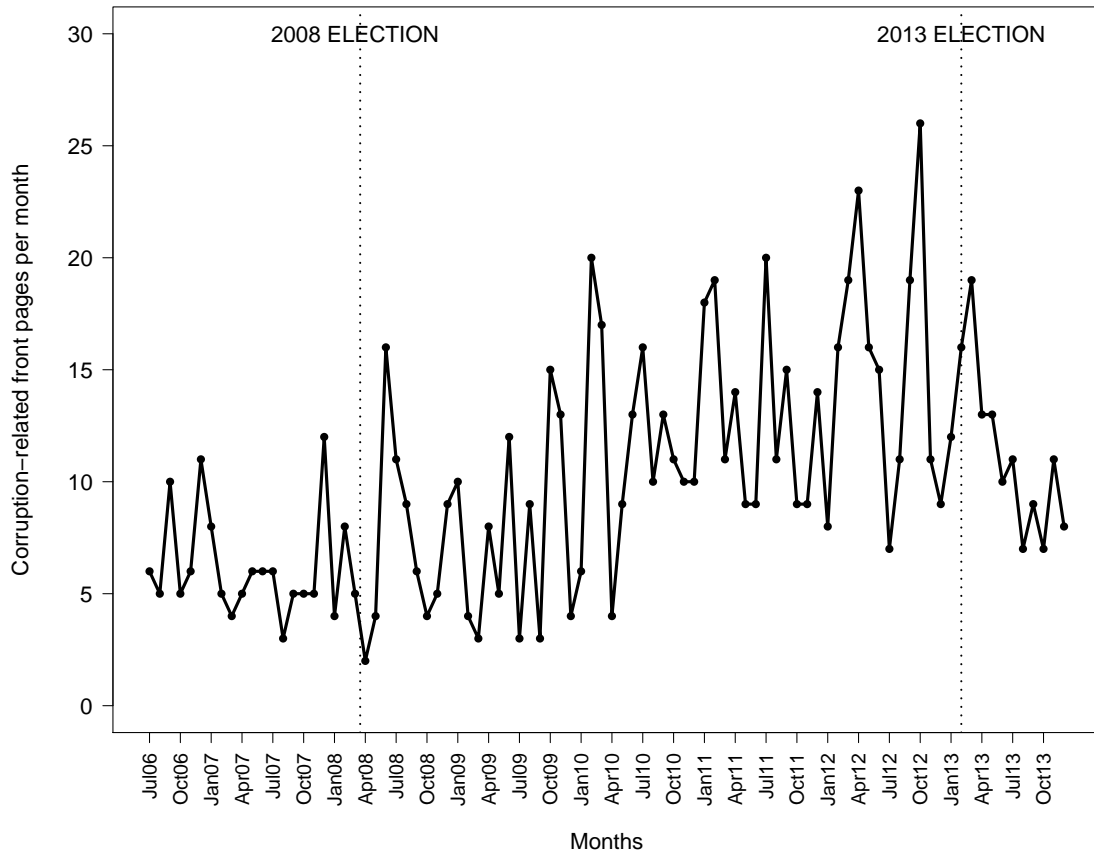
Indeed, corruption gained prominence between 2008 and 2013, as it had between 1992 and 1994. Using yearly-aggregated data, I find that, in the two years preceding the 2008 election, corruption-related articles were published on *La Repubblica* front page for 100 (2006) and 70 (2007) days (see Figure 4.7). While these numbers appear high, they would only increase over the next few years. References to corruption reached a new historical peak in 2012, when corruption-related items appeared for 180 days, i.e. every other day. In the year before the 2013 election, corruption was 2.5 times more prominent than in the year before the 2008 election.

Similar to *La Repubblica*, the other main newspapers also gave greater prominence to corruption in the period directly preceding the 2013 election than in the period directly preceding the 2008 election. In the two months before the 2008 election, *Corriere della Sera* published 11 articles containing at least one corruption keyword, versus 33 in the two months preceding the 2013 election.²² I conduct a similar search on the twelve most widely read newspapers available on Factiva

²¹See note 9.

²²I search the online archive of *Corriere della Sera* for the same keywords used with *La Repubblica* (see footnote 20). Adopting a six-month interval, I retrieve 25 and 85 articles respectively.

Figure 4.2: Prominence of Corruption in the Media, 2006-2013



Corruption-related front pages per month is number of days per month in which at least one corruption-related article was published on the front page of *La Repubblica*. Dates of parliamentary election marked on x-axis.

Source: *La Repubblica* online archive. Keywords used: *corruzione* (corruption); *concussione* (extortion by a public official); *peculato* (embezzlement); *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

(excluding *La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera*).²³ Taken together, these newspapers published 693 corruption-related articles in the two months preceding the 2008 election, versus 1710 in the two months preceding the 2013 election.²⁴ Depending on how I measure them, corruption mentions were two to four times more frequent before the 2013 election than before the 2008 election.

This increase is related to a series of scandals that hit the Italian political establishment. At the subnational level, a large number of regional legislators were accused of using the public subsidies intended for their parties for personal expenses, such as DVDs, traffic tickets, or vacations. Most of the regional councils, and almost all parties, were involved in embezzlement investigations.²⁵ The case of Lombardy, Italy's biggest and richest region, attracted the most attention. Out of its eighty council members, thirty-five (43%) were investigated for corruption, illicit party funding, or embezzlement. When one of them was accused of trading votes with *'ndrangheta*, a mafia-type criminal organization, the governor – himself under investigation – finally agreed to dissolve the council.²⁶ In Sicily, one out of three council members were under investigation, on trial, or had been convicted,

²³ See Appendix A.3 for the list of newspapers. In Factiva, I can use a larger number of keywords. Besides those already mentioned, I include *corrott** (corrupted), *corruptor** (i.e. person who corrupts), *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office), *finanziamento illecito* (illicit party funding), *truffa ai danni dello stato* (fraud against the State), *truffa ai danni della regione* (fraud against the regional government).

²⁴ Adopting a six-month pre-election interval, I retrieve 2300 articles in 2008, and 4722 in 2013.

²⁵ See for example “Spese folli, la grande abbuffata delle Regioni. Indagini in tre su quattro,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 14 December, 2013.

²⁶ “L'ultimo atto di Formigoni nel palazzo dei 33 indagati,” *La Repubblica*, 12 December, 2012. As a matter of fact, other twenty council members were investigated for embezzlement right after the council was dissolved.

mostly for corruption crimes and association with the mafia.²⁷

At the national level, most of the cases involving parliament members regarded bribery or embezzlement accusations (Costa, 2013, pp. 10–12). Unlike in the 1992–1994 period, when local- and national-level politicians were implicated in the same investigations, the national-level corruption cases of the 2008–2013 period developed separately from those at the subnational level. The most widely-covered case was that of prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who has faced several criminal proceedings, some of which for bribery and abuse of office, since he entered politics (Sberna and Vannucci, 2013, 579). In 2011, a court indicted him for having abused his power to avoid charges of underage prostitution. Other members of his party, the *Popolo della Libertà*, were accused of bribery. Investigations related to the abuse of public party subsidies implicated members of both governing and opposition parties. A senator of *Partito Democratico*, for instance, was accused of having pocketed €22.8 million worth of public funds.²⁸ A government under-secretary was involved in a broader embezzlement scandal together with other members of the *Lega Nord*.²⁹

How did television cover these scandals? Theoretically, television coverage of corruption should be correlated with newspaper coverage. Compared to the early 1990s, when patronage-riddled and government-controlled RAI channels monop-

²⁷“La Sicilia dei record: uno su tre è indagato,” *La Repubblica*, 22 July, 2011.

²⁸“La Corte dei Conti condanna Lusi a pagare 22 milioni per danno erariale,” *La Repubblica*, 30 December, 2013.

²⁹For an overview of the criminal charges against parliament members of Legislature XVI, see “Gli 84 sotto accusa,” *La Repubblica*, 22 July, 2011; “I cento parlamentari condannati, imputati, indagati o prescritti,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 30 September, 2012.

olized television information (see Section 4.2), the supply and political diversity of information outlets had increased greatly. Technological advancements (e.g. introduction of satellite and digital terrestrial television) and government policies had allowed other private channels to enter the market (Hibberd, 2007).³⁰ Together, private channels eroded RAI monopoly on television information.³¹ As market incentives, rather than political constraints, increasingly shaped the supply of television information, channels should have highlighted corruption similarly to the printed press.³²

Indeed, indirect evidence suggests that television programs discussed corruption more frequently before the 2013 election than before the 2008 election. Lacking access to a direct source, such as a newscast archive, I measure how often corruption was mentioned in ANSA's daily summaries of television programming.³³ The search retrieves 30 entries in the two months leading up to the 2013 election, versus 12 entries in 2008.³⁴ Thus, I estimate that corruption-related TV programs

³⁰While in 1987 the combined daily audience share of RAI and Mediaset (formerly Fininvest) was 93%, it declined to 73% in 2012 (Durante and Knight, 2012).

³¹In 2011, for example, the three main evening newscasts of RAI had an average viewing share of 16%, compared to 12% of Mediaset and 10% of La7, another private network (AGCOM, 2013).

³²Even for public channels, political constraints were probably not as strong as in the past. Unlike in the early 1990s, when most investigations targeted the governing parties, the corruption scandals of the late 2000s and early 2010s also implicated many members of the opposition parties, as was the case with embezzlement investigations in the regional councils. This made it easier for public television channels to cover corruption, as they could do so without necessarily mentioning the ruling parties.

³³From the ANSA online archive (described in Section 4.2), I select the articles in the *Spettacolo* database, which deal with the show schedule of the following day or describe a program broadcast the day before. I search for corruption-related keywords as in footnote 20.

³⁴Adopting a six-month pre-election interval, I retrieve 37 and 77 entries respectively.

were 2.5 times more frequent in 2013 than in 2008.³⁵

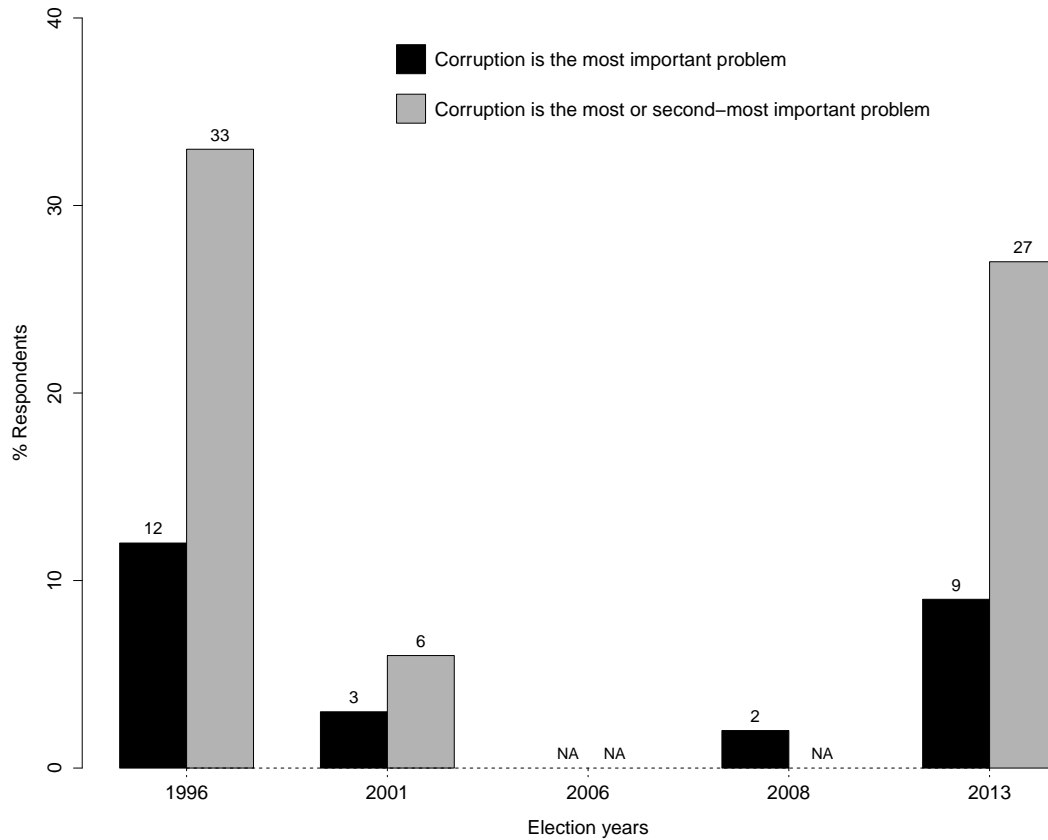
Based on the findings in Ceron (2014), coverage by online news sources was likely correlated with newspaper coverage. Unlike in the early 1990s, the Internet was an important source of information for the Italian public in the 2000s. Ceron (2014) analyzes how traditional newspapers, news websites, and social media covered corruption scandals and the debate on party funding in 2012. The study finds that mentions of corruption on news websites and Twitter posts followed the publication of corruption-related materials on hardcopy newspapers. These results suggest that, as newspapers gave greater prominence to corruption between 2008 and 2013, online newspapers and social media should have also highlighted the issue of corruption.

As the national media focused on corruption between 2008 and 2013, corruption became a more important issue for the Italian public. According to data from ITANES, the salience of corruption steadily decreased between 1996 and 2008 (Figure 4.3). In 2008, only 2% of voters considered corruption the most important problem in the country. In the 2013 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 (ITANES 2013).³⁶ As citizens became more concerned with

³⁵I obtain similar results by measuring how often newspapers mentioned that corruption had been (would be) discussed on television the previous (following) day. Using Factiva, I search for corruption-related keywords (see footnote 23), alongside the names of major TV stations, in the fifteen most widely read newspapers (for the newspaper list, see Appendix A.3). I find three (five) corruption mentions in the two (six) months before the 2008 election, versus nine (26) mentions in the two (six) months before the 2013 election. Although this measure obviously underreports television coverage of corruption, the results are consistent with the ANSA data.

³⁶Not surprisingly, given the ongoing economic recession, a greater proportion of voters men-

Figure 4.3: Salience of Corruption to Voters, 1996–2013



% Respondents is the percentage of survey respondents who mentioned corruption as the country's most important problem, or one of the two most important problems. In the 2008 survey, answers are aggregated into a category that includes corruption and distrust of politics. In the 2013 survey, answers are aggregated into a category called "political ethics" that includes corruption and politicians' honesty. Question not asked in 2006 wave.

Source: Nationally representative post-election surveys of the Italian adult population, conducted by Italian National Election Studies (ITANES).

corruption, they grew increasingly dissatisfied with the political class. In 2008, 58% of respondents expressed little or no trust in parliament, versus 78% in 2013. Similarly, 76% had little or no trust in political parties in 2008, versus 89% in 2013 (ITANES 2013).³⁷

Data from the Eurobarometer surveys confirm that corruption became a more salient issue to citizens over the course of Legislature XVI.³⁸ In the 2007 and 2009 waves of the survey, 84% of respondents agreed with the statement that corruption was a major problem for Italy. In 2011, the proportion went up to 88%. The proportion of those who “strongly agreed” went from 38% to 46%. Unfortunately, the question was not included in the 2013 wave. In 2011, 60% of respondents thought that corruption had increased over the previous three years, whereas, in 2013, 76% of respondents thought that corruption had increased. In 2013, 96% thought that corruption was either very widespread or fairly widespread in the country. The increase in perceived corruption is at odds with the finding that personal experiences with corruption became less frequent over the same period (Section 4.4.1). Media accounts, rather than personal experiences, appear to have driven public perceptions of corruption.

The rise of the *Movimento 5 Stelle* (M5S) demonstrates that, starting in the late 2000s, corruption again became a mobilizing issue. Founded by comic ac-

tioned unemployment (63%) and economic growth (12%) as the most important problems in the country.

³⁷A further demonstration of popular resentment against political elites is the success of exposes of political malfeasance and politicians’ undeserved privileges, such as Rizzo and Stella’s 2007 bestseller *La Casta* (“the caste”) (Metz, 2010).

³⁸The following statistics are based on Eurobarometer data, waves 68.2, 72.2, 76.1, and 79.1.

tor and blogger Beppe Grillo in 2009, the M5S promised to fight the corruption and the waste of taxpayers' money associated with the political establishment (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013). With an ideology described as partly anarchic, partly ecological (Corbetta, 2012), Grillo's movement appealed to popular distrust of parties and politicians. By streaming their meetings online, disclosing all their expenses, and allowing citizens to vote on their proposals, the M5S leaders promised to be always accountable to voters. Despite scarce resources, the movement attracted an increasing number of voters in a series of local elections between 2010 and 2012 (Paparo and Cataldi, 2013). In the 2013 parliamentary election, with a surprising 25.6% of the vote, the M5S became the second most-voted party.³⁹ The increasing prominence of corruption in the media during this period probably led many voters to support Grillo's party.

Consistent with my hypothesis, I have shown that corruption was more prominent in the media in the period directly preceding the 2013 election than in the period directly preceding the 2008 election. References to corruption in the printed press were two to four times more frequent, depending on the metric used, and corruption-related TV programs were 2.5 times more frequent. Corruption also became more salient to voters between 2008 and 2013. In this context, it is easy to see why parties refused to renominate incumbents accused of corruption.

³⁹Data on the Chamber election, excluding abroad voters (i.e. *circostrizione estero*) and region of Valle d'Aosta. The Democratic Party (PD) obtained 25.4% of the votes. In the Senate election, the M5S obtained 23.8% of the votes (excluding abroad voters and the regions of Valle d'Aosta and Trentino), while the PD had a 27.4% vote share. Source: Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (<http://elezionistorico.interno.it/>).

4.4 Alternative Explanations

While Sections 4.2 and 4.3 have presented evidence consistent with my hypothesis, this section discusses and critiques alternative explanations. Up to this point, I have shown an inverse correlation between prominence of corruption in the media and the renomination of legislators accused of corruption. However, other factors could explain the outcome. Given the small number of observations, I cannot test all rival hypotheses at once through quantitative methods. Instead, I address and reject them individually by analyzing secondary sources and related datasets. I conclude that Hypothesis 1 explains the renomination of corrupt legislators better than any of the alternative explanations.

4.4.1 Increase in Corruption

One potential explanation is that an increase in objective corruption may have driven both media coverage and party nominations. Following Klašnja et al. (2014), I distinguish between personal experience with corruption (what they call “pocketbook corruption”) and perceptions of corruption at a societal level (“sociotropic corruption”). If voters experience an increase in corruption between time t and time $t+1$, parties will have an incentive to respond, at least symbolically, to their concerns. One way to do that could be to publicly “break ties” with their members accused of corruption. At the same time, given voters’ increased sensitivity to the issue of corruption, the media will focus on corruption stories. If this explanation is correct, I should observe an increase in the actual level of

corruption between 1992 and 1994, and between 2008 and 2013.⁴⁰

Measuring corruption objectively across time is notoriously difficult. Commonly used indexes of perceived corruption, such as Transparency International's CPI, are not suitable for two reasons. First, because they measure perceptions, they may be influenced by media coverage of corruption. Second, studies advise against using such indexes in cross-time analysis. (Treisman, 2007, 220). Data on citizens' experiences with corruption, in turn, exist only for recent years.⁴¹ In order to tackle this issue, I rely on a combination of data sources.

Regarding the 1992–1994 period, there is no evidence of an increase in corruption. Rather, judicial inquiries shed light on corrupt practices that had developed unchecked for years, if not decades (Della Porta and Vannucci, 1994). In some sectors, corruption was so well-established and widespread as to be considered the “normal” way of doing business (Nascimbeni and Pamparana, 1992). Using data on prosecutors' requests to lift parliamentary immunity, Figure 4.4 shows that almost all corruption investigations referred to crimes committed well before 1992. In one third of the cases, MPs were accused of having committed irregularities earlier in their careers, while holding subnational-level offices (e.g. mayor).⁴²

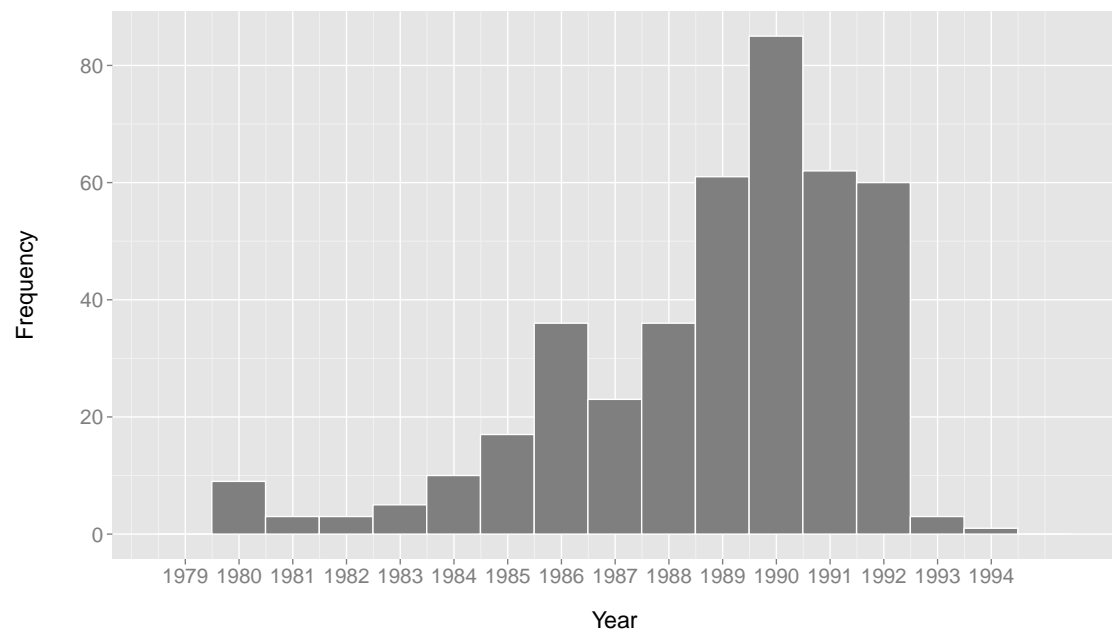
As for the 2008–2013 period, the data point to a decrease in corruption. Survey data from the Global Corruption Barometer indicate that the percentage of

⁴⁰Theoretically, however, such an increase appears unlikely. The literature agrees that corruption tends to be stable over time (Aidt, 2003; Bardhan, 1997; Rothstein, 2011).

⁴¹Commonly used surveys of corruption experiences are conducted in developing countries or specific regions (e.g. Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey), or at a single point in time (e.g. World Bank's World Business Environment Survey).

⁴²Elaboration on data from Ceron (2014). I include in the definition executive or legislative offices at the municipal, provincial, or regional level.

Figure 4.4: Dates of Italian MPs' Corruption Crimes, 1992–1994 Legislature



The graph aggregates the dates of the corruption crimes allegedly committed by members of the Italian Lower House (*Camera*) of the Eleventh Legislature (1992–1994). The units of observations are the judicial requests to lift parliamentary immunity. Each observation corresponds to the earliest date in which the deputy had allegedly committed a crime.

Source: Data on requests to lift parliamentary immunity coded by Ceron (2014). For variable definitions and data sources, see Appendix A.4.

citizens who reported having paid a bribe decreased from 13% in 2010 (the earliest available data point) to 5% in 2013. Data from the Eurobarometer show the same pattern. In 2009, 80% of respondents declared that they had not paid any bribe in the previous 12 months. In 2011, this proportion increased to 85%. In 2013, 90% of respondents claimed that they had not paid a bribe in the previous year. Only 7% had either experienced or witnessed a case of corruption.⁴³ Therefore, I reject the hypothesis that an increase in corruption induced parties to remove from the ballot allegedly corrupt incumbents, by making voters more sensitive to the issue.

4.4.2 Clientelism

In 1992, clientelism probably helped MPs accused of corruption secure a nomination. Under the open-list PR system in place until 1993, MPs used illegal contributions and bribes to expand their clienteles, who then rewarded them with preference votes (Allum, 1973; Cartocci, 1990; Golden, 2003; Musella, 2000).⁴⁴ In Naples, for example, prosecutors investigated for corruption Alfredo Vito, a deputy reelected in 1992 with a record number of preferences. As it turned out, Vito owed his popularity to the ability to handle all sorts of demands from his constituents (jobs in the public sector or affiliated private businesses, construction permits, public contracts), either personally or through local-level politicians in

⁴³Elaboration on Eurobarometer data, waves 72.2, 76.1, and 79.1.

⁴⁴On the relationship between open-list PR and corruption, see Carey and Shugart (1995); Chang and Golden (2007).

his circle (Barbagallo, 1997; Musella, 1999).⁴⁵ It is thus plausible that, in 1992, parties renominated allegedly corrupt incumbents to attract votes from their clienteles.⁴⁶

However, I exclude the possibility that corrupt MPs were renominated in 2008 because of their clientelistic networks. First, the institutional conditions were different. Whereas the open-list PR system had encouraged “personal” relationships between candidates and voters, often promoting clientelistic practices, the closed-list PR system in place in 2008 did not present such incentives.⁴⁷ Rather than persuading voters, who could *not* cast a vote for their preferred candidate, reelection-seeking incumbents would court their party leaders to be ranked high on the ballot. Second, MPs had fewer resources to deliver to their constituents than in the past. The sphere of public economic intervention had significantly shrunk, as a result of privatizations and deficit-reducing measures backed by the European Union (Simoni, 2012; Vesperini and Battini, 1998). As part of a decentralization process initiated in 2001, the central government had relinquished powers and resources to regional governments (Amoretti, 2002). Finally, unlike the investigations of the early 1990s,, clientelism seems to have played a limited

⁴⁵In a similar case at the local level, prosecutors disclosed the “electoral archive” of Naples city councilman Augusto Alterio, detailing what each voter in his clientele had received, or had been promised, before the 1992 election (“Alterio, ecco i segreti del floppy-disk,” *Il Mattino*, 12 June, 1992. “Caro assessore, che cosa hai promesso?,” *Il Mattino*, 18 June, 1992).

⁴⁶Indeed, MPs investigated for corruption had significantly more preference votes than their non-investigated peers in both Legislature X and Legislature XI. For the analysis of parliament data, see Section 2.3. The same pattern holds across the four subnational-level legislatures studied in Section 2.3.1, although the difference is not always statistically significant. Subnational-level legislative elections were also conducted under open-list PR rules (see Appendix A.7).

⁴⁷For a description of the electoral rules adopted throughout the period studied, see Appendix A.6.

role in the corruption cases of the late 2000s. Generally speaking, allegations of embezzlement, bribery, or abuse of office made no mention of funds being used to buy off voters or provide jobs in exchange for votes (see Section 4.3).⁴⁸

Even assuming that corrupt legislators were renominated because of their clientelistic networks, it remains unclear why most of them failed to secure a nomination in 1994 and 2013. In 1994, expecting poor electoral results (Sani, 1995), the parties successor to the Christian Democratic Party had an incentive to renominate their MPs accused of corruption, so as to retain their large clientele. Nonetheless, Christian Democratic MPs with larger clienteles were renominated less often than those with smaller clienteles.⁴⁹ As for the 2013 election, if allegedly corrupt incumbents did have large clienteles, parties had a strong incentive to retain them. All parties represented in parliament were expected to lose votes. The fact that they removed from the ballot allegedly corrupt MPs casts further doubt on the clientelism argument.

4.4.3 Electoral Competition

Alternatively, parties may have refrained from renominating corrupt incumbents in 1994 and 2013 because electoral competition was higher than in the previ-

⁴⁸Overall, while the diffusion of the “personal vote” and clientelism is well documented for the pre-1994 period, it is unclear to what degree these phenomena have survived since then. De Luca (2001, 2011) and Sampugnaro (2004) document the “personal vote” in recent subnational-level elections in the south. See also Piattoni (2005).

⁴⁹Among the investigated DC legislators with higher-than-median preference votes, 22% were renominated. Among the investigated DC legislators with lower-than-median preference votes, 27% were renominated.

ous election.⁵⁰ Indeed, the data lend preliminary support to this hypothesis. In 1994, the electoral environment was more fluid and competitive than in 1992. As revealed by the local elections held in 1993, long-standing partisan loyalties were dissolving rapidly (Diamanti and Mannheimer, 1994; Di Virgilio, 1995; Sani, 1995). In the months leading up to the election, the governing parties either split apart, dissolved into other parties, or disappeared altogether. Meanwhile, Berlusconi's newly-founded party, *Forza Italia*, attracted former Socialist and Christian Democratic voters. Similarly, the degree of electoral competition was higher in 2013 than in 2008. Between 2011 and 2013, all but two parties provided external support to the government.⁵¹ According to surveys, the two main governing parties (*Popolo della Libertà* and *Partito Democratico*), now competing with each other, would both lose votes, mainly to the *Movimento 5 Stelle* (De Sio et al., 2013). In fact, surveys underestimated the size of their electoral losses.⁵²

Rather than being an independent cause, the increase in electoral competition derived in part from the increased prominence of corruption in the media and public debate. Between 1992 and 1994, corruption investigations and media revelations destroyed the reputations of the governing parties (Chang et al., 2010; Sberna and Vannucci, 2013). Voters first turned against them in the April 1993 referenda (see Section 4.2), at the peak of the wave of corruption investigations, then in the municipal elections of June and December 1993, and finally

⁵⁰On the relationship between electoral competition and candidate quality, see (Galasso and Nannicini, 2011).

⁵¹The two exceptions were *Lega Nord* and *Italia dei Valori*, which together controlled 12% of the seats.

⁵²For the 2013 election results, see Table 5.2.

in the 1994 parliamentary election. Similarly, between 2008 and 2013, another series of corruption scandals, along with the recession and unpopular “austerity” measures, increased disaffection with the main parties and the political system in general (De Sio et al., 2013; Russo and Verzichelli, 2012). As discussed in Section 4.3, the M5S attracted disaffected voters by promising to fight corruption (Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013; Paparo and Cataldi, 2013). On both occasions, voters had become disillusioned with the political establishment due to widely covered corruption scandals, and decided either not to turn out or to switch to new parties.

4.5 Corruption and the Media

In 1994 and 2013, rather than simply reporting on corruption investigations, the Italian media played an independent role in making corruption a salient issue to voters. This qualification is important for my argument. If the media had done nothing but to report on the corruption investigations as they unfolded, and had given more attention to the issue of corruption simply because there was no other newsworthy issue, media coverage would not have had an independent effect on voting behavior. Hence, it would have had no effect on party nominations. Rather, voters and parties would simply be responding to the corruption investigations themselves. To the contrary, I will show that the media framed corruption stories within a powerful, coherent narrative that turned corruption into a salient issue.

In 1994, I find evidence of the independent role of the media in the timing of corruption coverage. To isolate media prominence of corruption from corruption

investigations, I plot data on front-page newspaper coverage of corruption against data on the timing of corruption investigations against parliament members.⁵³ Figure 4.5 shows that, as of the summer of 1992, only a few MPs were under investigation, and that the investigations reached a peak in the spring of 1993. As early as May 1992, however, the national newspapers were already devoting their headlines and op-eds to corruption. In July 1992, corruption received front-page coverage 22 days per month – the highest frequency of the entire period. The lack of a correlation with the investigation data suggests that newspapers increased the magnitude of judicial inquiries, driving public attention to the issue of corruption.

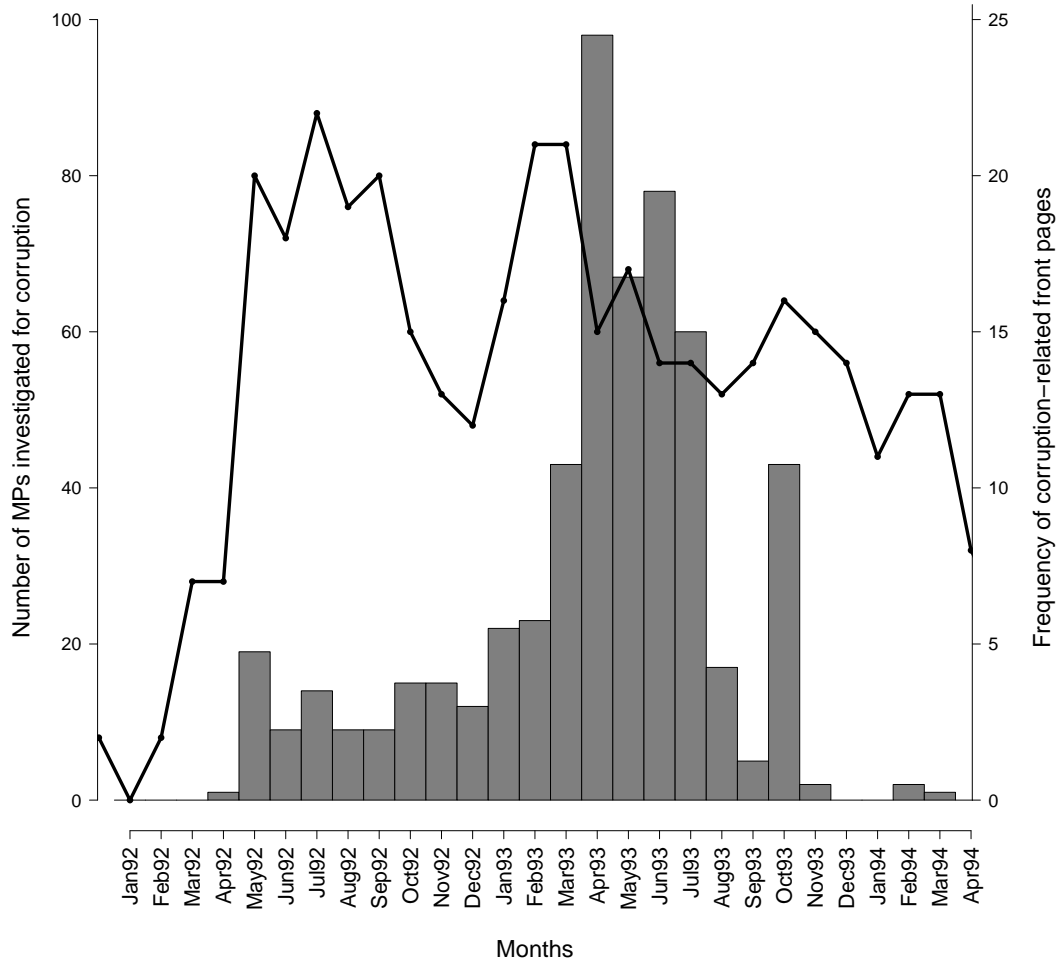
Newspapers did not just publish a lot of articles related to corruption investigations. They also created a coherent narrative out of those corruption stories, representing corruption “an essentially moral issue that violated the basic covenant between rulers and rules, delegitimizing both majority and, to a lesser extent, minority parties, that is, the whole political system.” (Giglioli, 1996) Articles and op-eds portrayed the prosecutors as tenacious, independent, and even heroic champions of ‘the people’ fighting against self-serving political elites.

In the 2010s, there was no corruption scandal of the scale of *Tangentopoli*. Compared with Legislature XI, a relatively small number of parliament members were accused of corruption. 216 MPs were accused between 1992 and 1994, versus 55 between 2008 and 2013.⁵⁴ The number in Legislature XVI was bigger than in the previous legislature (36). However, because Legislature XVI and Legislature

⁵³Newspaper coverage data from ANSA archive, as described in Section 4.2. Investigation timing refers to the date in which prosecutors issued a request to lift parliamentary immunity related to corruption crimes (see note 12).

⁵⁴Data presented in Section 2.2.

Figure 4.5: Investigation Timing and Media Prominence of Corruption



The graph presents monthly-aggregated data on prominence of corruption in the media and corruption investigations of Italian parliament members of Legislature XI (1992–1994). For *Number of MPs investigated*, each observation corresponds to a request to lift parliamentary immunity. *Frequency of corruption-related front pages* is the number of days per month in which at least one major Italian newspaper highlighted corruption stories on the front page.

Sources. Newspaper coverage measure based on the Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (ANSA) daily press reviews. Data on requests to lift parliamentary immunity from Parliament records, coded by Ceron (2014) and myself.

XV last five and two years respectively, those cases were distributed over a longer period of time.

Why, then, did the media give such prominence to corruption during Legislature XVI? A few corruption cases involving prominent politicians indeed received much press attention. Prime minister Silvio Berlusconi faced several criminal proceedings. In 2011, for example, a court indicted him for having abused his power to avoid charges of underage prostitution. Two top officials of his party, Claudio Scajola and Nicola Cosentino, were implicated in much-covered bribery scandals during this legislature.

More than stories involving national-level politicians, however, the media gave great prominence to the embezzlement investigations launched into regional-level councils (see Section 4.3). These investigations were well-suited to capture public attention. First, the facts seemed rather straightforward and uncontroversial. Once it became clear that regional-level legislators were routinely reimbursed for their personal expenses, prosecutors and journalists would only have to examine the receipts to document the waste of public funds. Then, whenever prosecutors looked into a different regional council, the investigations followed a similar, predictable pattern, which made it easier for newspapers to cover the case. Finally, the very nature of the expenses provoked indignation. Trivial expenses—e.g. for DVDs, traffic tickets, toiletries, or books—were considered outrageous, given the politicians’ already generous salaries.⁵⁵ Spending public money on lavish parties

⁵⁵Ernesto Menicucci, “Pdl Lazio, spese pazze non solo di Fiorito. Ostriche e champagne con i fondi regionali,” *Corriere della Sera*, September 13, 2012, Accessed June 8, 2015. “I soldi dei rimborsi per cene, Iphone e gratta e vinci: 27 indagati tra i consiglieri di Pdl e Lega,” *Corriere della Sera*, December 14, 2012, Last modified December 15, 2012, Accessed

and vacations, then, was simply intolerable for a country in a deep recession.⁵⁶

The political context helps explain why, in the period preceding the 1994 and 2013 elections, the media turned corruption into a national issue. In both occasions, exogenous factors were undermining the stability of the party system (see Section 2.5). Voters were ready to switch from the parties for which they had traditionally voted. In fact, the opposition to the establishment was so widespread that the media had an economic incentive to cover corruption. The Italian public was eager to consume corruption stories, and the media was ready to publish them.

In the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Italy was transitioning from a “blocked democracy” to a system based on government alternation, in which the post-Communist left could legitimately aspire to govern the country. When the Clean Hands operation broke out, the newspapers and television channels that were traditionally close to the opposition parties (e.g. *La Repubblica* or *L’Unità* on the left, or *Indipendente* on the right) had an obvious incentive to cover the investigations. As for the media outlets closer to the governing parties, the political constraints under which they had previously operated had largely vanished. With the governing parties in a shambles, the political landscape was changing very rapidly, although nobody could really predict how. By highlighting corruption and putting the blame on Socialists and Christian Democrats, newspapers broke ties with the old establishment

June 7, 2015, http://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/12_dicembre_14/regione-lombardia-rimborsi-spese-indagati-quaranta-consiglieri-pdl-lega-2113155571451.shtml.

⁵⁶“Maiali e ancelle: ecco la festa del PdL romano,” *Panorama*, September 20, 2012, Accessed June 7, 2015, <http://www.panorama.it/news/maiali-e-ancelle-ecco-la-festa-del-pdl-romano/>

and started to position themselves in the new political environment.

Similarly, the economic recession and the European debt crisis of the 2010s undermined the legitimacy of the political establishment and opened unprecedented opportunities for contestation. Three years into the recession, having lost the support of European allies, Berlusconi's government appeared unable to lead the country out of the debt crisis of 2011, when panic spread on the financial markets about the sustainability of government debt. The next government introduced an "austerity" program to meet EU demands and restore public finances. Besides being widely unpopular, these policies did not seem to benefit the economy. In fact, GDP per capita dropped again by 2.3% in 2012, and unemployment kept going up to 11.7% in the first quarter of 2013.⁵⁷ Because all the major parties gave external support to the government, voters held the entire political class responsible for the enduring recession. By articulating such dissatisfaction with the establishment, a newly-created, scarcely-funded fringe movement such as the *Movimento 5 Stelle* came close to winning the 2013 election.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has tested the first empirical implication of my argument (Hypothesis 1). In Chapter 2, I found that, in 1992, Italian parties renominated incumbent MPs regardless of corruption allegations. In 1994, by contrast, they removed from the ballot allegedly corrupt MPs. A similar shift took place between the 2008 and 2013 elections. In Chapter 3, to explain these patterns, I argued that media

⁵⁷Sources: World Bank Indicators and OECD Data.

prominence of corruption increases public salience of corruption, thus discouraging party leaders from renominating incumbents accused of corruption. Consistent with this hypothesis, I have shown that, in the period directly preceding the 1994 and 2013 elections, the Italian media gave greater prominence to corruption than in the period preceding the 1992 and 2008 election respectively. As voters were exposed to more corruption stories on the media, they became more concerned about corruption. In this context, party leaders found it electorally convenient to “purge” their ballots of allegedly corrupt incumbents.

To support my hypothesis, I have ruled out a number of alternative explanations. The evidence suggests that the actual level of corruption has no relationship with parties’ behavior vis-à-vis corruption allegations. Clientelism, in turn, does not explain party nominations in 1994 and 2013. Alternatively, parties may have decided not to renominate corrupt incumbents because electoral competition was higher than in the previous election. However, rather than being an independent cause, electoral competition likely increased because the media had highlighted corruption over the previous period.

Explaining why parties renominated incumbents accused of corruption helps explain why the latter were reelected to office. As shown in Chapter 2, the political fate of allegedly corrupt legislators depended on renomination. In all the elections studied, once the accused MPs were renominated, they were equally likely to be reelected as their non-accused peers. It was only in 1994 and 2013 that parties refrained from nominating MPs accused of corruption, thus punishing them on behalf of voters. By dissuading parties from nominating corrupt incumbents, the media promoted electoral accountability.

The next chapter will explore another channel through which the media influences candidate selection and promotes accountability. The data presented so far suggest that, as the Italian media focused on corruption, parties excluded from nomination legislators accused of corruption. To corroborate this correlation, I will test another implication of my theory on a large number of observations. As discussed in Chapter 3, when voters care about corruption, I expect that media mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators decrease their chances of being renominated. Consistent with this hypothesis, Chapter 5 will show that, in 1994 and 2013, accused legislators who received more media attention were less likely to be renominated.

4.A Excerpts from ANSA News Summaries

This section illustrates how I coded the monthly and yearly frequencies of corruption-related front pages between 1983 and 2006 (Figures 4.1, 4.5, and 4.6). I used the daily news summaries published by ANSA, Italy’s leading press agency. Each summary presented the topics discussed on the front pages of the main Italian newspapers the day before. To establish when corruption received front-page coverage, I ran a keyword search on the ANSA online archive.⁵⁸ The following are some excerpts of summaries that contained corruption-related keywords (highlighted). Newspaper names are underlined.

- **News Summary: October 20, 1984**

“Ancora una volta è la cronaca non proprio politica a farla da padrona sulle prime pagine dei giornali. I titoli principali sono infatti dedicati all’arresto dell’ex “numero due” del SISMI e di cinque altre persone accusati di associazione per delinquere, **peculato** e detenzione di esplosivo, alla visita di Maria Fidia Moro, nel carcere di Rebibbia ai terroristi dissociati Valerio Morucci e Adriana Faranda, alle indagini per la strage mafiosa di Palermo.”
(RASSEGNA STAMPA: ATTUALITÀ ITALIANA, October 20, 1984)

- **News Summary: May 30, 1992**

“Altra notizia dall’interno cui i giornali di oggi dedicano ampio spazio è quella riguardante gli sviluppi dello scandalo delle **tangenti** a Milano. Il Messaggero

⁵⁸Keywords used: *corruzione* (corruption); *concussione* (extortion by a public official); *abuso d’ufficio* (abuse of office); *peculato* (embezzlement); *corrott** (corrupted); *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

scrive che “Si aggravava la posizione dell’amministratore della Cogefar Papi: Luigi Grando, braccio destro di Papi, arrestato ieri con l’accusa di **corruzione**, avrebbe ammesso di aver pagato **tangenti** per conto della sua azienda per un importo che si aggira intorno ai 500 milioni. Un brutto colpo per la Cogefar Impresit- commenta il quotidiano romano - bruttissimo anche per Enzo Papi che, pur essendo in carcere da quasi un mese con la stessa accusa di Grando, ha sempre rifiutato qualsiasi tipo di collaborazione con i magistrati. Intanto, sempre a Milano, i magistrati che indagano sulle **tangenti** hanno firmato altri sette mandati di cattura per la truffa dei corsi professionali fantasma. [...] Tra gli arrestati anche l’ex assessore regionale, Michele Colucci (psi), ex potente del Garofano milanese, fratello dell’onorevole Francesco, questore alla Camera. Michele Colucci - scrive sempre il Messaggero - è accusato di falso ideologico, truffa, **peculato**, **abuso d’ufficio.**” (RASSEGNA STAMPA: ATTUALITÀ ITALIANA, May 30, 1992)

- **News Summary: March 12, 1993**

“Sciacalli a Tangentopoli” scrive nel titolo il Giorno e parla delle voci di avviso di garanzia a Amato che hanno adto il via alla speculazione. Di Craxi dice che lascia la scena con un ruggito, mentre a Silvano Larini vengono concessi gli arresti domiciliari, secondo i magistrati ha detto tutto quello che sapeva. Molti giornali mettono invece Larini e Fiorini insieme allo sfogo di Di Pietro che chiede ai politici di trovare una via d’uscita. Ma intento l’elenco delle notizie sembra un bollettino di guerra: Roberto Formigoni querela un pentito affermano di non aver mai ricevuto **mazzette**, lo scandalo dell’Anas

si allarga coinvolgendo anche Pds e Psdi, Ancora guai per Vittorio Sbardella per appalti con **mazzetta**, per il caso Enimont dai giudici Gabriele Cagliari, tensione tra industriali e politici a Mantova.” (RASSEGNA STAMPA: ATTUALITÀ ITALIANA, March 12, 1993)

- **News Summary: December 11, 1993**

“Occhetto per due ore da Di Pietro – scrive il Corriere della Sera e sottolinea che secondo il leader è stato un colloquio cordiale, ha risposto a una serie di questioni irrisolte su presunti finanziamenti illeciti, in particolare sulla Metropolitana milanese, sulle cooperative e sull’oro di Mosca. [...] A centro pagina dà separatamente una notizia che altri danno sotto l’apertura l’inizio oggi del congresso della Lega. Bossi annuncia una svolta. Secondo il quotidiano dopo la batosta elettorale e il coinvolgimento nella storia della **mazzetta** Enimont, il ‘senatur’ si gioca la sua credibilità davanti agli elettori. [...] Occhetto interrogato da Di Pietro – scrive l’Indipendente ripreso sotto una foto di Gramsci con una mano nella tasca interna della giacca. Il leader ha ammesso di aver incontrato Gardini due volte. Secondo indiscrezioni Occhetto in un incontro con Gardini aveva preso una **tangente** di un miliardo per ammorbidire le sue posizioni sulla defiscalizzazione. A centro pagina l’Indipendente riporta le accuse di Craxi al Pds: è come la mafia, prese le **mazzette** sotto forma di appalti alle cooperative.” (RASSEGNA STAMPA: ATTUALITÀ ITALIANA, December 11, 1993)

4.B Excerpts from *La Repubblica* Front-page Articles

This section illustrates how I coded monthly and yearly frequencies of corruption-related front pages between 2006 and 2013 (see Figures 4.2 and 4.7). I used the electronic index of *La Repubblica*, limiting the search to articles published on the front page (<http://ricerca.repubblica.it>). For each day, I checked whether at least one article contained a corruption-related keyword.⁵⁹ The following are excerpts of articles that contained corruption-related keywords (highlighted).

- **November 16, 2009**

Con quali argomenti la maggioranza sosterrà un provvedimento che tratta i cittadini diversamente, dando ad alcuni - a quelli per giunta che hanno più possibilità di danneggiare la collettività - un sorprendente vantaggio rispetto ad altri? Con quali argomenti difenderà un ddl che presume una brevità dei processi che sarebbe utopistica anche in quei paesi dove la giustizia va più spedita che da noi? Difficile spiegare le ragioni di un provvedimento che di fatto manderebbe in prescrizione reati gravissimi come l'**abuso d'ufficio**, la **corruzione** semplice e in atti giudiziari, la rivelazione di segreti d'ufficio, la truffa semplice o aggravata... (Nadia Urbinati, "Il paradiso dell'illecito," November 16, 2009)

- **October 24, 2010**

Il premier è convinto che i suoi nemici, dal Quirinale a Fini, stiano esclusivamente lavorando per far bocciare il legittimo impedimento dalla Consulta

⁵⁹Keywords used: *corruzione* (corruption), *concussione* (extortion by a public official), *peculato* (embezzlement), *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

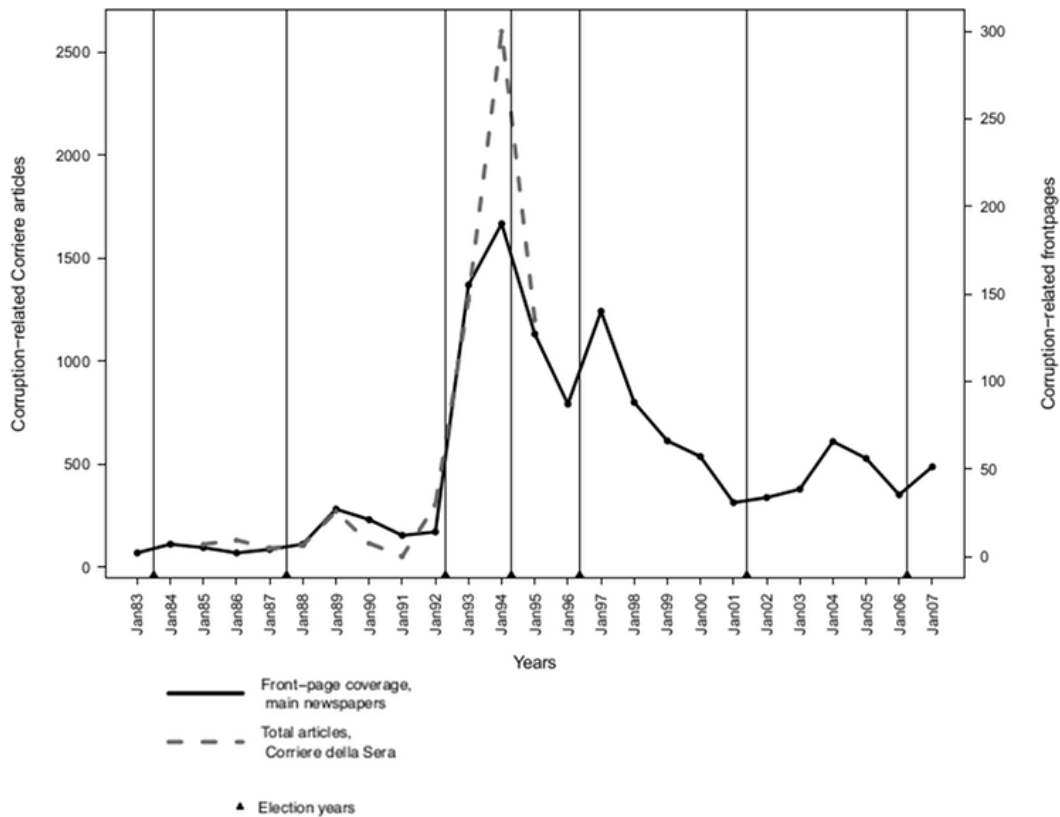
nell' esame che parte dal 14 dicembre. Gli ostacoli sul lodo, l'agitazione del Pd che si spinge a chiedere il referendum come Di Pietro, la mossa del Colle prima e quella di Fini poi, vengono "letti" come altrettanti segnali chiarissimi alla Corte per "consigliargli" di azzerare la legge-ponte. Soprattutto se, nel frattempo, il lodo non dovesse essere approvato al Senato per l'arrivo della sessione di bilancio. A quel punto riprenderanno i processi Mills, Mediaset e Mediatrade, e se Berlusconi dovesse essere condannato per **corruzione** nel primo, si aprirebbe inevitabilmente la via del governo tecnico per cambiare la legge elettorale e portare il Paese, con quella, a un nuovo voto. (Liana Milella, "Lo sfogo del Cavaliere: è l'ultimo voltafaccia," October 24, 2010)

- **October 18, 2012**

Nell'Italia dei Berlusconi e dei Formigoni, nel Paese dei Belsito e dei Fiorito, una legge contro la **corruzione** che vede la luce quasi vent'anni dopo Tangentopoli è un evento storico. [...] Dopo il devastante lavacro di Mani Pulite, e dopo diciassette anni di cultura dell'impunità scientificamente inoculata nelle vene del Paese dalla macchina del potere berlusconiano, il testo della Severino è il primo tentativo di rialzare in qualche modo la bandiera della legalità. Di rimettere mano a una strumentazione normativa logora, contraddittoria e comunque inadeguata ad arginare la nuova ondata di scandali che dalla Lombardia alla Sicilia sta ammorbandando la democrazia e soffocando l'economia. La **corruzione** "vale" 62 miliardi di giro d'affari, "pesa" per il 2.4% sul reddito nazionale e per il 3% sul fatturato delle imprese, riduce del 16% il volume degli investimenti esteri. [...] Lo stesso ministero della

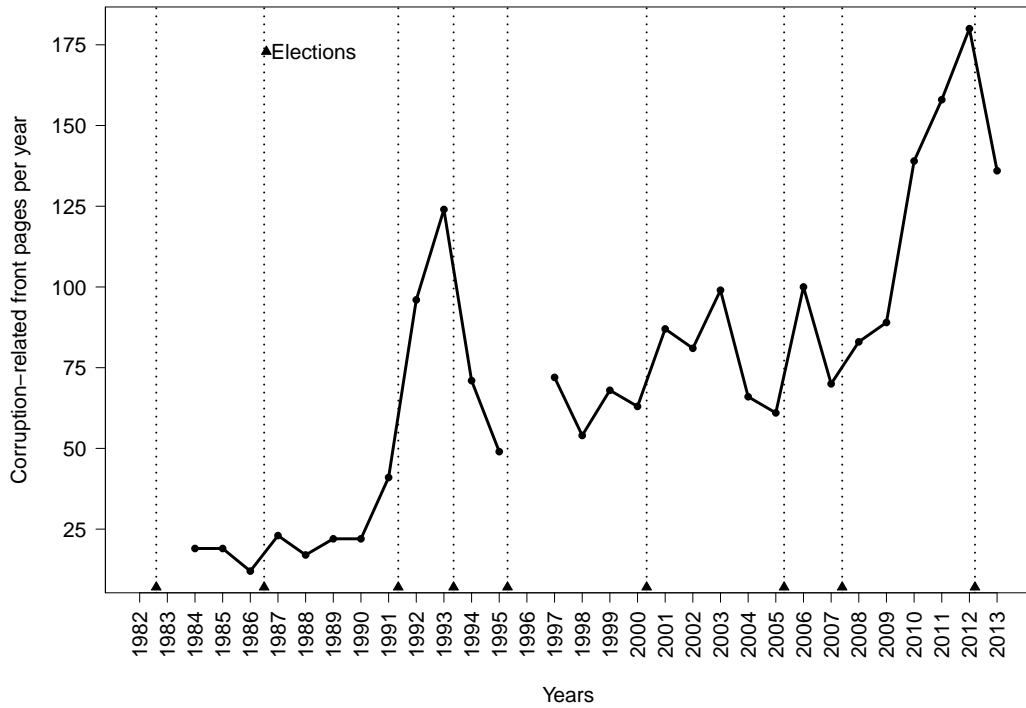
Giustizia stima che i processi per **concussione**, giunti al traguardo della sentenza definitiva in Cassazione prima della mannaia della prescrizione, sono stati 109 nel 2009, 121 nel 2010, 142 nel 2011. (Massimo Giannini, L'occasione mancata, October 18, 2012)

Figure 4.6: Media Prominence of Corruption, ANSA Yearly Data



Corruption-related front pages is the number of days per year in which at least one major Italian newspaper highlighted corruption stories on the front page. Source: Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (ANSA) daily press reviews. Keywords used for this search: *corruzione* (corruption); *concussione* (extortion by a public official); *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office); *peculato* (embezzlement); *corrott** (corrupted); *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick). *Corruption-related Corriere articles* is the number of articles, published each year in the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, dealing with corruption, bribe paying, and party financing. Source: Chang, Golden, and Hill 2010. Dates of parliamentary elections marked on x-axis

Figure 4.7: Media Prominence of Corruption, *La Repubblica* Yearly Data



Corruption-related front pages per year is number of days per year in which at least one corruption-related article was published on the front page of *La Repubblica*. Data is missing for 1996. Parliamentary elections marked on x-axis.

Source: *La Repubblica* online archive. Keywords used: *corruzione* (corruption); *concussione* (extortion by a public official); *peculato* (embezzlement); *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

CHAPTER 5

Media Mentions of Corruption Allegations and Renomination

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I showed that Italian parties changed their behavior vis-à-vis corruption allegations between 1992 and 1994, and then again between 2008 and 2013. In 1992, parties nominated for reelection most of the parliament members (henceforth MPs) accused of corruption. In 1994, by contrast, they renominated only a few of them.¹ A similar pattern could be observed two decades later. In 2008, most of the MPs accused of corruption were renominated, whereas only a minority of them were renominated in 2013. Statistical analysis showed that corruption allegations had no impact on renomination chances in 1992 and 2008, but they decreased renomination chances in 1994 and 2013.

In Chapter 3, I argued that media coverage of corruption decreases the chances of allegedly corrupt legislators being renominated. The media influences party nominations through two mechanisms. First, by focusing on corruption instead of other issues, the media increases its public salience. As corruption becomes more salient to voters, the electoral penalty for renominating corrupt incumbents increases, which induces party leaders have to take them off the ballot. Media prominence of corruption lowers the renomination chances of legislators accused of corruption (Hypothesis 1). Second, by reporting on the accusations against specific legislators, the media enables voters to identify them. Therefore, party leaders have an incentive to drop from the ballot legislators who are widely reported to be accused. When corruption is salient to voters, mentions of corruption

¹Henceforth, I will use “renominate” and “nominate for reelection” interchangeably. To avoid repetition, I will also use “MPs,” “legislators,” and “incumbents” interchangeably.

allegations against legislators in the media decrease their chances of being renominated (Hypothesis 2).

While the previous chapter has shown empirical support for Hypothesis 1, this chapter tests Hypothesis 2 using data from two legislatures of the Italian parliament, Legislature XI (1992–1994) and Legislature XVI (2008–2013). During these two legislatures, the media gave great prominence to corruption, thus increasing its public salience (Chapter 4). Hypothesis 2 implies that, if two legislators are accused of corruption, the legislator mentioned more frequently in the media should be less likely to be renominated, other things equal. To test this hypothesis, I study the likelihood of accused MPs being renominated through statistical analysis. I model the renomination process through a two-stage Heckman selection procedure in order to alleviate concerns about selection bias. To measure media mentions, I use the number of newspaper articles mentioning corruption allegations against the MP.

In this chapter, I will show that, consistent with Hypothesis 2, mentions of corruption allegations in the media are negatively correlated with MPs' renomination chances. Controlling for confounding factors, I find that media mentions have a considerable (negative) impact on renomination. In 1994, a one standard deviation increase in media mentions, which corresponds to about five articles in the country's main newspaper, is associated with a 28% decrease in renomination probability. In 2013, a one standard deviation increase in media mentions, corresponding to about 40 articles in a large sample of newspapers, is associated with a 6% decrease. Interestingly, the two elections were conducted under different rules (see Section 5.2).

The findings bring support to the argument that media scrutiny leads to the electoral punishment of (potentially) corrupt officials. Studies find that, the more information voters receive on politicians' malfeasance, the less likely they are to vote for them (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Larreguy et al., 2014). A large body of evidence indicates that voter information and media scrutiny keep incumbents accountable (Besley and Burgess, 2002; Reinikka and Svensson, 2005; Snyder and Strömberg, 2010). Cross-national and historical studies find additional support for the relationship between media coverage and corruption (Adsera et al., 2003; Brunetti and Weder, 2003; Gentzkow et al., 2006).

Departing from this literature, I argue that the media promotes accountability by influencing candidate selection. While existing studies focus on voters and/or the incumbents, I study how parties respond to media scrutiny.² In Italy, as in many other countries, party leaderships have a great deal of discretion over candidate selection (see Section 3.2). When the media gives wide coverage to corruption allegations against certain incumbents, party leaders anticipate voters' behavior and refrain from renominating them. Because incumbents need to be renominated to have good chances of being reelected, media scrutiny drives out of office potentially corrupt legislators.

The chapter proceeds as follows. Section 5.2 provides background information on the two legislatures analyzed. Section 5.3 describes the empirical strategy and

²Two studies analyze the effect of corruption allegations on candidate selection, but they do not focus theoretically on the role of parties. In the context of Puerto Rico, Cámara-Fuertes and Bobonis (2015) do not find a relationship between the release of municipal audit reports and the incumbent's decision to seek reelection. Larcinese and Sircar (2012) find that newspaper coverage of embezzlement allegations made British MPs less likely to stand for reelection.

the variables used in the analysis. Section 5.4 tests the hypothesis and presents robustness checks. Section 5.5 summarizes the main findings and links them to the broader argument of the dissertation.

5.2 Corruption Scandals in Legislatures XI and XVI

This section provides background information on Legislature XI (1992–1994) and Legislature XVI (2008–2013), and the elections of 1994 and 2013. The two legislatures display interesting similarities. In both cases, corruption investigations were a prominent issue in the media, and support for the governing parties dropped significantly. In the 1994 election, the governing parties, which in the meantime had split and reorganized, were virtually driven out of parliament. In the 2013 election, the governing parties, although severely punished by voters, won enough seats to remain in power. Figure 5.1 illustrates the composition of the governing coalitions in these two periods.

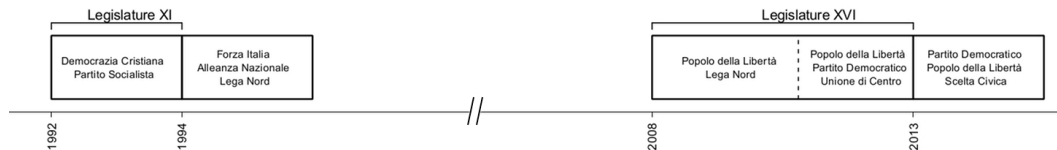
In Legislature XI, corruption investigations developed on an unprecedented scale, implicating at the same time local- and national-level politicians. Starting with the so-called Clean Hands operation, prosecutors disclosed systemic corruption and illegal party funding (Della Porta, 2001; Rhodes, 1997; Ricolfi, 1993).³ Using data on prosecutors' requests to lift parliamentary immunity, I find that 218 MPs (23% of the total) were investigated for corruption crimes during the legislature.⁴ Most investigations implicated members of the governing parties, mainly

³See also Section 4.2.

⁴I code corruption crimes with reference to charges of bribery (*corruzione*), extortion by

the Christian Democratic Party (DC) and the Socialist Party (PSI), which had governed the country, in coalition with smaller parties, throughout the postwar era.⁵

Figure 5.1: Timeline of Elections and Governing Coalitions



Each block represents a governing coalition. Governing parties are parties represented in the cabinet (or giving external support). Parties below 5% are not reported. Parties listed in decreasing order of vote shares. See Table A.1 for additional information.

During Legislature XVI, prosecutors investigated members of various regional-level councils for embezzlement.⁶ This wave of investigations developed separately from the proceedings against parliament members, most of which regarded bribery and embezzlement accusations (Section 4.3). Cross-checking various press sources, I find that, as of the end of the legislature, 55 MPs (6% of the total) were under investigation or on trial for corruption crimes, or had avoided a final judgment thanks to the statute of limitations.⁷ Two thirds of the MPs accused of corruption

a public official (*concussione*), abuse of office, embezzlement, illegal party funding, and fraud against the State or the regional government. For information on data sources and coding, see Appendix A.4.

⁵84% of the MPs investigated for corruption belonged to parties in the governing coalition. In the Socialist Party and the Socialdemocratic Party (PSDI), almost one out of two MPs was investigated.

⁶See for example “Spese folli, la grande abbuffata delle Regioni. Indagini in tre su quattro,” *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 14 December, 2013.

⁷See Appendix A.4 for data sources and coding.

belonged to parties in the center-right coalition, which held government between 2008 and 2011.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the media gave increasing prominence to corruption over the course of the two legislatures. Between 1992 and 1994, corruption was mentioned on the front page of the main newspapers almost every other day. In the previous years, it had been mentioned only ten days per year (Section 4.2). In the early 2010s, newspapers again put corruption on the front page. In 2012, corruption-related items appeared on the front page of *La Repubblica*, Italy's second-most widely read newspaper, every other day (Section 4.3). Television coverage appears to have followed similar patterns.

In both periods, voters turned against the governing parties. Between 1992 and 1994, the DC, PSI, and their government partners were discredited by corruption investigations and attacks by the media. Newspapers and television networks turned corruption into a salient public issue, representing the investigations as a moral struggle between the heroic prosecutors and the decadent, self-serving political elites (Giglioli, 1996). Opposition parties and citizen groups mobilized around the issue of corruption. The combined effect of investigations, media revelations, and protests was that the governing parties lost most of their electoral support throughout the legislature. Following negative performances in a round of local elections, the DC and PSI regrouped into new parties (Sani, 1995).

Between 2008 and 2013, the recession, combined with corruption scandals, fueled popular discontent with the governing parties. In late 2011, Silvio Berlusconi, who had led a center-right cabinet, resigned under the pressure of the sovereign debt crisis. A technocratic cabinet, headed by Mario Monti, governed with the

external support of center-left, center, and center-right parties until 2013. During this period, media focus on corruption seems to have influenced public opinion. Despite a decline in experienced corruption, citizens were more concerned with corruption than in the past, and became convinced that it had increased (see Section 4.3). In the meantime, unemployment reached historically high levels and the government cut public spending. The result, as demonstrated by polls and local-level elections, was resentment against the political class and increasing support for the *Movimento 5 Stelle*, an anti-corruption, anti-establishment party not yet represented in parliament (Paparo and Cataldi, 2013).⁸

In both 1994 and 2013, despite different electoral rules, candidate selection was in the hands of party leaders and select party agencies. The 1994 election was the first to be held under the mixed-member system introduced the year before. Three fourths of the seats were allocated through plurality single-member districts, whereas the remaining seats were assigned through closed-list PR rules.⁹ The new electoral rules gave party secretariats significant discretion over the choice of candidates (Di Virgilio and Reed, 2011; Hazan and Rahat, 2010; Vignati, 2004). Overall, candidate selection remained as exclusive and centralized as before (Lundell, 2004; Wertman, 1987). Later on, the introduction of closed-list PR rules further empowered party leaderships vis-à-vis local party organizations and party members (Merlo et al., 2010; Pasquino, 2007). Candidate selection was especially centralized and exclusive among center-right parties, whose top officials would

⁸In 2008, 58% of respondents expressed little or no trust in parliament, versus 78% in 2013. Similarly, 76% had little or no trust in political parties in 2008, versus 89% in 2013 (ITANES 2013).

⁹For a detailed description of Italy's electoral systems during this period, see Appendix A.6.

directly pick the candidates.

In 1994, the governing parties suffered a crushing defeat (Bartolini and D'Alimonte, 1995). The new, mixed-member system had encouraged parties to form pre-electoral coalitions in order to compete more effectively in the SMDs: a center-left coalition led by the post-Communist *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (PDS), a center-right coalition built around Silvio Berlusconi's newly-created party, *Forza Italia*, and a centrist coalition composed of parties successors to the DC (Di Virgilio, 1995; Sani, 1995). Other DC and PSI members had regrouped into new parties and joined one of the first two coalitions. At the polls, the electorate was split between the center-right coalition, which had a majority in one chamber and a plurality in the other, and the center-left coalition (see Table 5.2 for election results). Only a few months after its foundation, *Forza Italia* was the most-voted party.¹⁰ The centrist, post-DC coalition won some seats in the proportional tier, but fared very poorly in the SMD races. As a result of these historic changes, parliamentary turnover was very high. Seven out of ten newly-elected MPs entered parliament for their first time (Verzichelli, 1995, 403).¹¹

In the 2013 election, voters also punished the governing parties, although not as severely as in 1994 (De Sio et al., 2013; Garzia, 2013). The vote was fragmented among the center-left coalition, the center-right coalition, and the *Movimento 5 Stelle* (M5S). The M5S obtained a surprising 25.6% of the vote (see Table 5.3

¹⁰In the proportional tier of the Chamber election, *Forza Italia* won 21% of the votes, versus 20.4% for the PDS. Overall, Berlusconi's party controlled 134 out of 630 Chamber seats (21%).

¹¹In the previous three elections, the proportion of newly-elected MPs with no experience in parliamentary office had been 41% (1992), 31% (1987), and 32% (1983) (Cotta and Verzichelli, 2008, 113).

for election results). Italy's largest parties, the center-left *Partito Democratico* (25.4%) and center-right *Popolo della Libertà* (21.6%), lost 8% and 16% of the vote respectively, compared to 2008.¹² Still, because the center-left coalition led by the *Partito Democratico* won a plurality of the vote (29.6%), it automatically received a seat bonus, which gave it a majority in the Chamber.¹³ Despite electoral losses, the *Partito Democratico* and *Popolo della Libertà* had sufficient seats in both chambers to form a new government.¹⁴

Overall, these two elections provide an appropriate setting to test my hypothesis. Before each election, corruption was a prominent issue in the media and public debate. As newspapers and television newscasts highlighted cases of bribery and embezzlement, voters increasingly came to see corruption as an urgent problem—even though they were probably less personally affected by corruption. Parties could plausibly expect to be punished for renominating incumbents accused of corruption. Which incumbents should have they taken off the ballot? In the rest of the chapter, I will test the hypothesis that parties excluded from nomination the accused incumbents that were more frequently reported in the media.

¹²These results refer to the Chamber election, excluding abroad voters (i.e. *circostrizione estero*) and the region of Valle d'Aosta. In the Senate election, *Partito Democratico* was the most-voted party with a 27.4% vote share, followed by M5S with 23.8% of the votes.

¹³For a description of the electoral rules, see Appendix A.6.

¹⁴Because the electoral rules differ between the two chambers (see Appendix A.6), the *Partito Democratico* did not have a majority in the Senate. The government needs a vote confidence from both the Chamber and the Senate.

5.3 Empirical Strategy

I use statistical analysis to study the likelihood of allegedly corrupt MPs being nominated for reelection in 1994 and 2013. According to my hypothesis, more mentions of allegations in the media should be associated with lower chances of being renominated. To increase the number of observations, I pool together the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Republic. Unlike in most other democracies, the two chambers have equivalent powers and are elected concurrently with similar rules (See Appendix A.6). I will present the results in Section 5.4.

Systematic differences between corrupt and non-corrupt incumbents may introduce bias in the estimates. For example, in Legislature XI, MPs accused of corruption tend to be affiliated with the governing parties, and have more seniority than their non-accused peers (see Section 2.C).¹⁵ Because the governing parties were expected to suffer electoral losses, these MPs may have preemptively withdrawn their names. Historically, seniority has a negative impact on renomination in the Italian parliament (Chang et al., 2010, 196). Both factors, then, should decrease renomination chances.¹⁶

I adopt a Heckman selection procedure to alleviate concerns about selection bias. The Heckman procedure deals with non-random assignment to treatment by

¹⁵In Legislature XVI, accused MPs also have more seniority than non-accused peers. Peters and Welch (1980) report a similar pattern for the United States Congress.

¹⁶Other differences between the two groups may introduce bias in the opposite direction. For example, in Legislature XI, allegedly corrupt MPs have larger clienteles than their non-corrupt peers, which should increase their chances of being renominated. In the Chamber, MPs investigated for corruption had received, on average, about 30,500 individual preference votes, versus 18,700 for non-investigated MPs. The difference is statistically significant. On the relationship between preference votes and corruption, see Section 4.4.2.

modeling selection into treatment and outcome as two stages of the same process (Heckman, 1979). The econometric logic of the Heckman model fits my theoretical problem, which is how certain characteristics of corrupt MPs affect their chances of being renominated. In this context, the 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.¹⁷

The selection equation takes the form:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Corrupt}_i = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Seniority}_i + \beta_2 * \text{GoverningParty}_i + \beta_3 * \text{PartyElite}_i + \\
 & + \beta_4 * \text{South}_i + \beta_5 * \text{PastSubnationalOffice}_i + \\
 & \text{LegislatureXI}_i * (\beta_6 * \text{Lombardy}_i + \beta_7 * \text{PastCabinetPost}_i) + \epsilon_i \quad (5.1)
 \end{aligned}$$

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.¹⁸ Because they control more political resources, incumbents with a 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.¹⁹ Being elected in the south (*South*), where political malfeasance is more widespread (Golden and Picci, 2005; Golden, 2003),

¹⁷I use Stata's `heckprob` command.

¹⁸For the definition of this variable, see Section 5.2.

¹⁹*Seniority* is measured as the number of previous parliamentary terms served. Governing parties are those represented in the cabinet during the legislature, or giving external support. *PartyElite* indicates legislators holding national-level offices within their party apparatus.

should increase the chances of being accused of corruption. I include dummy variables for previous cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*) and experience in subnational office (*PastSubnationalOffice*), expecting more experienced incumbents to be more exposed to corruption accusations.²⁰ In Legislature XI, MPs elected in the Lombardy region (*Lombardy*), which had the highest concentration of corruption investigations Davigo and Mannozi (2007, 65–77), should have more chances of being accused.²¹ Because *Lombardy* applies only to Legislature XI and I do not have data on *PastCabinetPost* in Legislature XVI, I use these two variables only in the analysis of 1994 data.

I then estimate the following outcome equation:

$$Renominated_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * PressMentions(log)_i + \beta_2 * X_i + \epsilon_i \quad (5.2)$$

where *Renominated* indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by his/her party (or a successor to that party), *PressMentions* measures mentions of corruption allegations in the media, and *X* is a vector of control variables.²² I consider a Chamber deputy (Senator) as renominated regardless of whether she was nominated for the Chamber or the Senate. To construct the variable, I merged

²⁰I base these expectations on secondary sources (e.g. Ricolfi (1993, 119–134) and Chang et al. (2010, 201–204)) and descriptive statistics. During Legislature XI, for example, most of the allegations lodged against Chamber deputies referred to crimes predating the beginning of the legislature (see Section 4.4).

²¹As mentioned in Section 5.2, the nation-wide wave of investigations that implicated thousands of politicians and businesspeople between 1992 and 1996 originated from the Clean Hands operation in Milan, Lombardy.

²²During Legislature XI, the governing parties split into new parties or changed their name (Di Virgilio, 1995). Coding based on the original party names would lead to measurement error.

MP data with candidate records (see Appendix A.4 for data sources and coding). In 1994, *Renominated* refers to MPs being nominated either in a single-member district, in one or more multi-member PR districts (closed-list), or both. In 2013, *Renominated* refers to MP being nominated in one or more multi-member PR districts (closed-list).²³

The focal explanatory variable, *PressMentions*, counts the newspaper articles published during the legislature that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP.²⁴ I do not attempt to differentiate between positively or negatively slanted coverage. For Legislature XI, I chose *Corriere della Sera* as Italy’s most widely read newspaper.²⁵ I counted the articles containing the names of MPs investigated for corruption, alongside the string “*autorizzazione a procedere*”, which refers to the required procedure for lifting parliamentary immunity (see Section 5.2). In Legislature XVI, *PressMentions* measures the number of articles published in the 14 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva.²⁶ I counted articles containing the name of each accused MP alongside a corruption-related keyword.²⁷

²³See Appendix A.6 for a description of the two electoral systems.

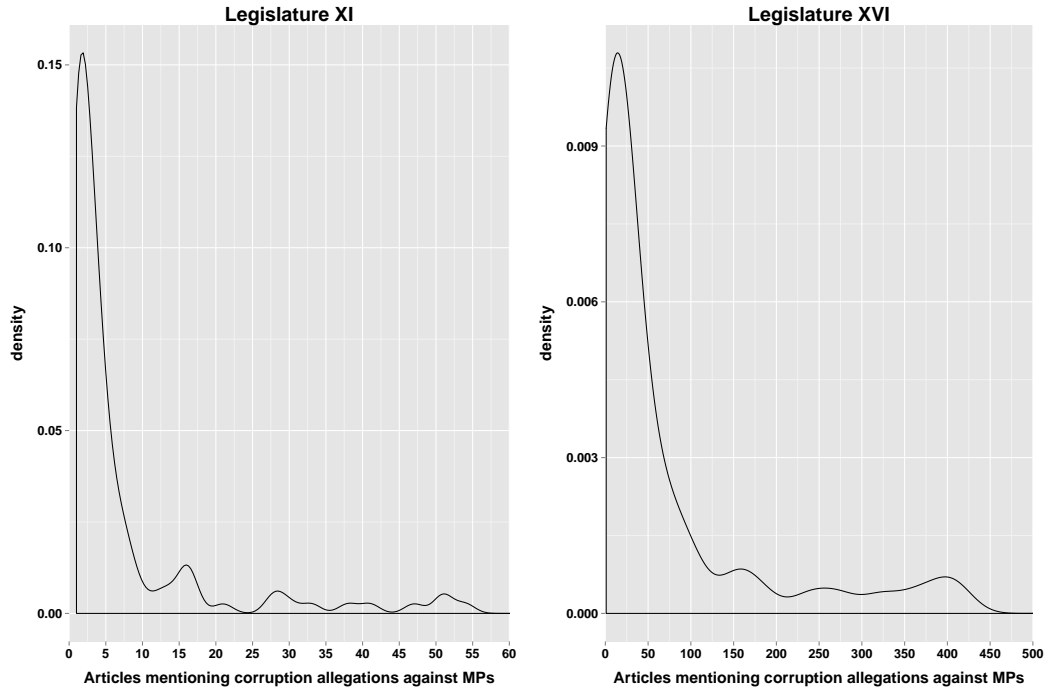
²⁴See Appendix A.4 for more detailed information on data sources and coding procedures. For illustrative purposes, Section 5.A reports some of the articles used to code the variable.

²⁵Databases 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 and Crepaz, 2012). Being based in Milan, *Corriere* had both the incentive and the opportunity to report on corruption, given that most investigations were conducted by the Milan prosecutors.

²⁶Sources are listed in the Appendix A.3.

²⁷Keywords used: *corruzione* (corruption), *concussione* (extortion by a public official), *peculato* (embezzlement), *abuso d’ufficio* (abuse of office), *finanziamento illecito* (illicit party funding), *truffa ai danni dello stato* (fraud against the State), *truffa ai danni della regione* (fraud against the regional government), *corrott** (corrupted), *corruttor** (i.e. person who corrupts),

Figure 5.2: Media Mentions of Corruption Allegations, Legislatures XI and XVI



Density plots of the variable *PressMentions*, which counts the number of articles, published during the legislature, that mentioned corruption allegations against members of the Italian parliament during Legislature XI (1992–1994) and Legislature XVI (2008–2013). Each observation correspond to a parliament member (MP). Only MPs investigated for corruption-related crimes (Legislature XI), or investigated or on trial for corruption-related crimes (Legislature XVI) are represented.

Sources: *Corriere della Sera* electronic index (Legislature XI); the 14 most widely read Italian newspapers (see Appendix A.3), searched through Factiva (Legislature XVI). See Appendix A.4 for information on data sources and coding.

Because, as shown in Figure 5.2, the distribution of *PressMentions* is strongly skewed, I use a log-transformed version of this variable.

5.3.1 Control Variables

- *BaseCoverage*: Some MPs may be mentioned as corrupt more frequently than others simply because they have a higher profile. To control for popularity, following Larcinese and Sircar (2012), I measured how many times each MP appeared in the press at the beginning of the legislature. For Legislature XI, I counted *Corriere della Sera* articles mentioning the MP in the 30 days following the election of April 6, 1992. For Legislature XVI, I counted the articles published in the first three months of the legislature in the 14 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva. Given its skewed distribution, I log-transformed this variable.
- *Age*: Older MPs should be more likely to retire. Therefore, an MP's age as of the election year (*Age*) should negatively affect renomination.
- *Female*: I cannot predict a priori the effect of gender on renomination. On the one hand, women are traditionally at a disadvantage in Italian politics.²⁸ On the other hand, because their parties have already selected them to be in parliament, they should not discriminate against female MPs in their renomination decisions. I control for gender (*Female*) only in Legislature

*tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

²⁸Between Legislature XI and Legislature XVI, the proportion of female MPs increased from 9% to 21%. Still, in 2012, Italy had the lowest rate of women's parliamentary representation in the Eurozone (Source: World Bank Indicators).

XI, when women are well represented among corrupt incumbents.

- *College*: Highly educated incumbents, having better professional options outside of politics than their colleagues, should have had an incentive to retire from office. At the same time, party leaders may put more effort into retaining higher-quality politicians.²⁹ To control for education, *College* indicates whether the MP has a university degree.
- *Job*: Incumbents who had relatively good jobs before entering parliament should have an incentive to retire.³⁰ The dummy variable *Job*, indicating whether the MP had a nonpolitical, high-status previous occupation in the private (e.g., manager, business owner) or public sector (e.g., university professor, judge) should have a negative sign.³¹
- *GoverningParty*: Because the governing parties were expected to suffer electoral losses in both 1994 and 2013 (see Section 5.2), their MPs may have preemptively withdrawn their names. Hence, the variable *GoverningParty* should be negatively associated with renomination.³²

²⁹Also, the college premium in Italy is lower than in most developed countries (OECD 2005). Therefore, highly-educated incumbents do not necessarily have a strong incentive to leave politics, for example to work in the private sector.

³⁰Unlike their U.S. counterparts, 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, 43–44). For example, lawyers, who compose 15% and 12% of Legislature XI and Legislature XVI respectively, normally continue working in their law firms.

³¹I coded the variable following the criteria in Golden (2007).

³²Another reason is that, in order to respond to anti-establishment feelings (De Sio et al., 2013; Sani, 1995), the governing parties had an incentive to nominate non-incumbents. In 1994, *Patto Segni*, one of the post-DC parties, chose not to renominate most of its incumbents, in an effort to win back disaffected Christian Democratic voters (Di Virgilio, 1995; Mattina, 1995).

- *Seniority*: Historically, seniority had a negative impact on renomination in Italy (Chang et al., 2010, 196). In 1994 and 2013, party leaders had an incentive to exclude more senior incumbents, who were perceived by the public as an entrenched and self-serving elite.³³ Incumbents with longer tenure in office (*Seniority*) should have lower renomination chances.³⁴
- *PartyElite*: Compared to backbenchers, elite legislators should have more incentives and political resources to seek reelection. I identify elite MPs based on whether they hold any office within their parties at the national level.³⁵ I expect *PartyElite* to be positively associated with renomination.
- *PartyShare*: 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*).³⁶ In both datasets, the variable refers to a multimember PR district. Assuming that parties with a larger voter base can afford to renominate MPs accused of corruption, this variable should be positively signed.
- *South*: Personal relationships between voters and politicians, sometimes degenerating into clientelism, are more common in Southern Italy³⁷ Therefore,

³³In 2013, for example, the *Partito Democratico* for the first time excluded from renomination the incumbents who had already served three terms in parliament (De Lucia and Cataldi, 2013).

³⁴*Seniority* is not strongly correlated with *Age* ($R = 49\%$ in 1994; $R = 37\%$ in 2013).

³⁵Up until 1992, members of elite party bodies had experienced a large advantage in being renominated (Golden and Picci: Forthcoming). Such advantage should have carried over at least to 1994.

³⁶In the Legislature XI dataset, to deal with the mismatch between pre- and post-reform districts (see Section A.6), I use the vote share of the MP's original party in the region in which he/she was elected in 1992. For details, see Appendix A.4.

³⁷While the diffusion of the "personal vote" and clientelism in the south is well documented for

MPs elected in the south should find it easier to secure a nomination.³⁸

5.4 Results

In this section, I present the results of the analysis of renomination chances. Because the explanatory variable is measured differently in the two datasets (see Section 5.3), I analyze them separately. I estimate a series of Heckman probit selection models, each introducing additional controls. Results are shown in Table 5.1. Section 5.4.1 presents robustness checks.

The results of the selection equation, reported in the lower panel of Table 5.1, largely confirm my theoretical expectations. In the 1994 dataset, all variables except for *Seniority* and *Lombardy* are statistically significant in the expected direction. Being affiliated with a governing party, having served in the cabinet or in local government, and being elected in the south are positively associated with corruption accusations. In the 2013 analysis, more senior MPs and those elected in the south are more likely to be accused, as expected, whereas the other variables are not significant.

In both datasets, mentions of corruption allegations are negatively and significantly correlated with renomination. In the base models (Models 1 and 4), con-

the pre-1994 period (Golden, 2003; Cartocci, 1990), it is unclear to what degree these phenomena have survived since then. De Luca (2001, 2011) and Sampugnaro (2004) find that the “personal vote” is still more widespread in the south.

³⁸Additionally, in 1994, the emergence of the *Lega Nord*, a regionalist party based in Northern Italy (Agnew, 2002; Golden, 2004), may have induced other parties in the region to replace their political cadres. The *Lega Nord* claimed to represent Northern small- and medium-size enterprises, opposed the redistribution of tax revenues from north to south, and denounced the corruption and inefficiency of the political class (Passarelli and Tuorto, 2012).

Table 5.1: Effect of Media Mentions of Corruption Allegations on Renomination

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	<i>LegXI</i>	<i>LegXI</i>	<i>LegXI</i>	<i>LegXVI</i>	<i>LegXVI</i>	<i>LegXVI</i>
DV: <i>Renominated</i>						
(log)PressMentions	-0.40***	-0.39***	-0.35**	-0.16*	-0.15*	-0.37***
(log)BaseCoverage	-0.22*	-0.20	-0.07	0.00	0.00*	0.00*
Age		-0.01	-0.01		-0.04*	-0.05**
Female		-0.32	-0.18			
College		0.12	0.05		0.18	0.64
Job		-0.21	-0.15		0.08	0.08
GoverningParty			-0.90***			-0.18
Seniority			-0.08			-0.18
PartyElite			0.12			1.52**
PartyShare			0.02**			0.03
South			0.34			-0.48
Constant	0.53***	1.28**	1.47***	-1.39*	0.79	3.18
DV: <i>Corrupt</i>						
Seniority	-0.06*	-0.06*	-0.05	0.12***	0.12***	0.10**
GoverningParty	0.91***	0.90***	1.00***	0.00	0.01	0.03
PartyElite	0.22**	0.23**	0.21*	-0.17	-0.15	-0.02
South	0.48***	0.50***	0.36***	0.38**	0.40***	0.41***
Lombardy	0.15	0.16	0.12			
PastSubnationalOffice	0.33***	0.32***	0.29***	0.02	0.08	0.09
PastCabinetPost	0.33**	0.35**	0.35**			
Constant	-1.80***	-1.80***	-1.79***	-2.01***	-2.07***	-2.09***
Constant	-1.16***	-1.26***	-1.62***	1.12	1.11	-0.07
N (Censored N)	914 (714)	914 (714)	914 (714)	834 (782)	833 (782)	832 (782)

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

Two-stage Heckman probit model with robust standard errors (omitted for visualization purposes).

Models 1-3 estimated on Italian MPs of Legislature XI (1992–1994). Models 4-6 estimated on Italian MPs of Legislature XVI (2008–2013). The first-stage dependent variable identifies MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary. The second-stage dependent variable indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by her party. *(log)PressMentions* is the logged number of articles, published during the legislature in *Corriere della Sera* (Legislature XI), or in the 14 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 governing party (*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*), party vote share in the district of election (*PartyShare*), having experience in subnational-level office (*PastSubnationalOffice*), and having cabinet experience (*PastCabinetPost*). For variable definition, coding, and sources, see Appendix A.4.

trolling only for MP popularity with the press, *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, which incorporates MP political characteristics, the coefficient remains stable (Model 3) or increases in size (Model 6).

Mentions of corruption allegations appear to have a substantively significant impact. Based on the fully specified Models 3 and 6 (Table 5.1), I calculate the renomination probability of a college-educated, non-elite MP, affiliated with a governing party, conditional on being accused of corruption. Other variables are kept at their mean value. Figures 5.3-5.4 plot renomination probabilities against the number of articles mentioning corruption allegations. In 1994, each article is associated with a 7% decrease in renomination probability, versus a 0.2% 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 28% decrease in renomination probability. In 2013, a standard deviation in *PressMentions*, corresponding to about 40 articles, is associated with a 6% decrease.

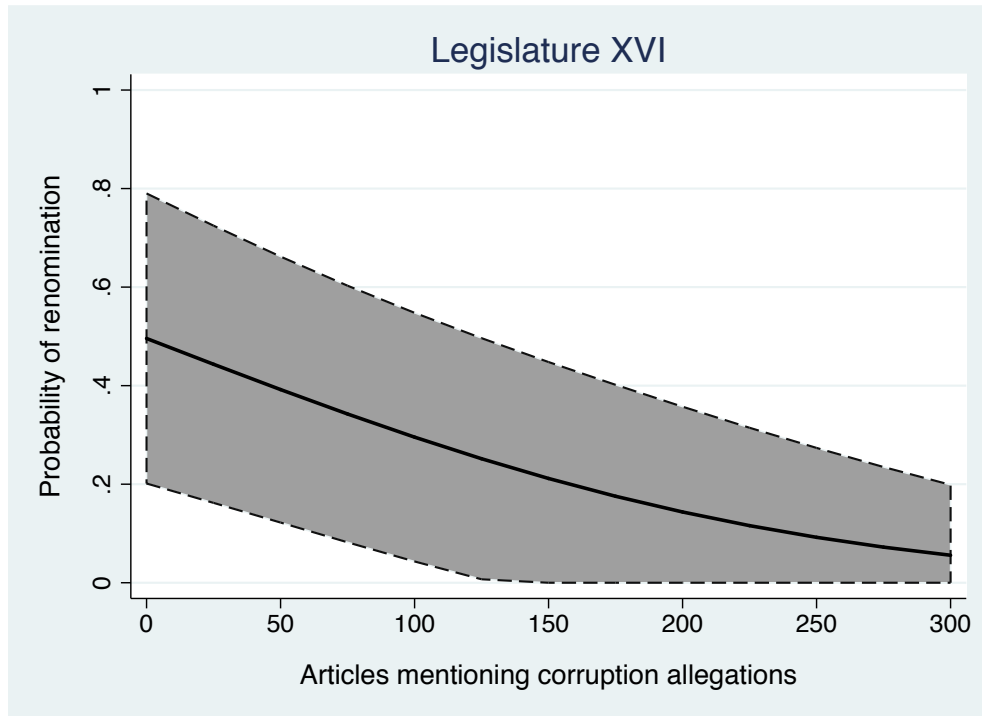
The effect of media coverage on renomination decays with the number of mentions. Figures 5.5-5.6 plot the marginal effect of *PressMentions*. In 1994, one *Corriere della Sera* article mentioning corruption allegations is associated with a 7% decrease in renomination probability for a legislator already mentioned in one article. For a legislator mentioned in four articles, each additional article is associated with a 5% decrease. For a legislator already mentioned 11 times, there

Figure 5.3: Effect of Media Mentions of Corruption Allegations on Renomination, 1994: Heckman Selection Results



The line represents the probability of renomination of allegedly corrupt incumbent MPs in 1994, based on Model 1 in Table 5.1. On the x-axis is the number of articles, published during the previous legislature in *Corriere della Sera* that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. Estimates refer to a college-educated, male, non-elite MP that was affiliated with a governing party and elected in the south. Other variables at their means. The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.4: Effect of Media Mentions of Corruption Allegations on Renomination, 2013: Heckman Selection Results



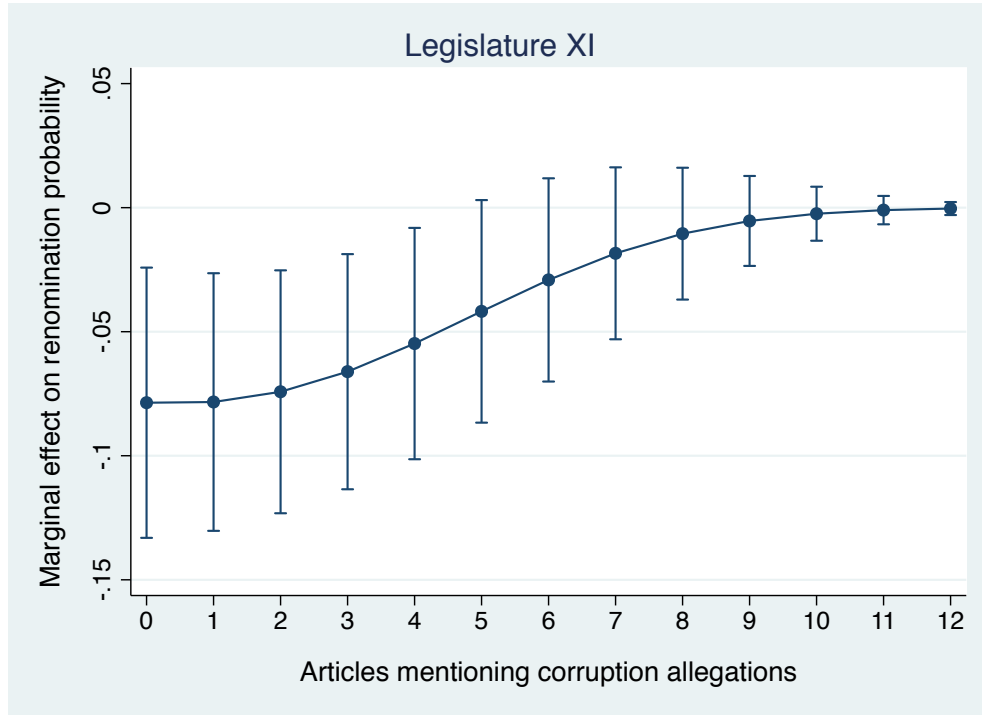
The line represents the probability of renomination of allegedly corrupt incumbent MPs in 2013, based on Model 4 in Table 5.1. On the x-axis is the number of articles, published during the previous legislature in the 14 most widely read newspapers, that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. Estimates refer to a college-educated, male, non-elite MP that was affiliated with a governing party and elected in the south. Other variables at their means. The shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals.

is virtually no marginal effect. In 2013, one single article is associated with a .2% decrease in renomination probability for a parliament member mentioned in 50 articles. For an MP mentioned in 150 articles, one article is estimated to decrease renomination chances by .15%. The effect ultimately disappears for MPs with hundreds of mentions. Due to the small number of corrupt MPs, however, these standard errors are quite large.

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. In 2013, *GoverningParty* is negative but not significant. However, because in 2013 all but two parties were in the governing coalition, there may not be enough variation in this variable to correctly estimate its effect.³⁹ As expected, party elite status (in 2013) and party vote share (in 1994) are positively associated with renomination.

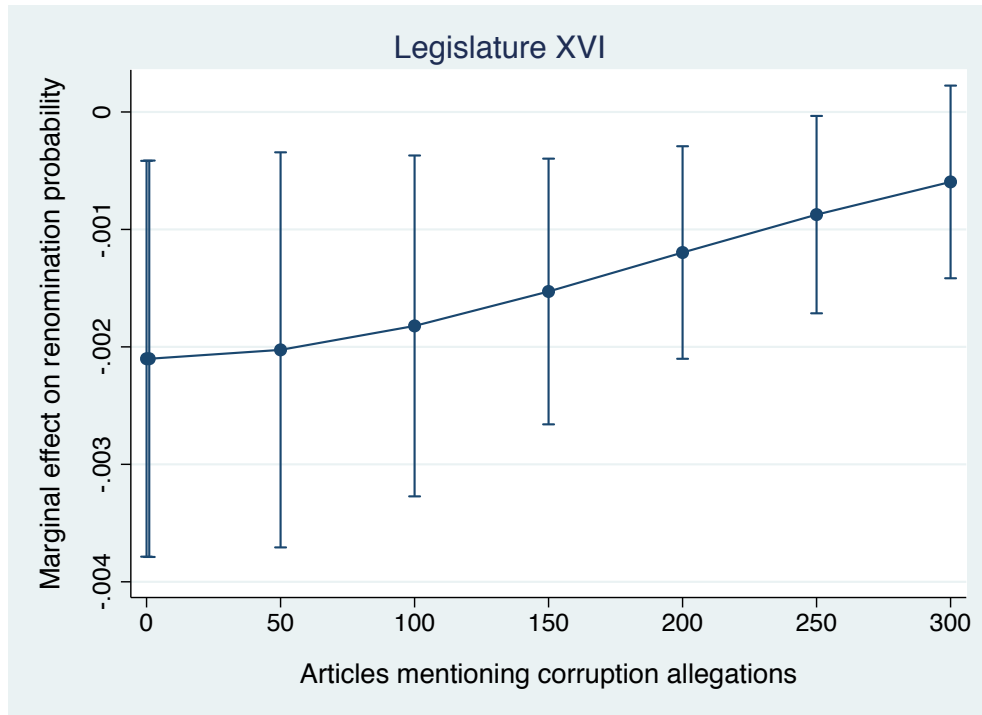
³⁹The coefficient appears to depend on coding choices. Until November 2011, government was controlled by the center-right coalition, then by a “grand coalition” of center-left, center, and center-right parties (see Section 5.2). Because the center-right coalition had been in power for a longer period, their MPs had more opportunities to extract rents. For the same reason, voters may have considered the center-right parties more accountable for government performance during the term. Once I recode *GoverningParty* with reference to the center-right coalition, I find a positive and statistically significant relationship with *Corrupt*. The relationship with *Renominated* is positive and significant.

Figure 5.5: Marginal Effect of Media Mentions of Corruption Allegations on Renomination



The graph plots the marginal effect of one additional newspaper mention of corruption allegations on the probability of MPs being renominated, conditional on their being accused of corruption. Data from Legislature XI of the Italian parliament. Estimates based on Model 1 in Table 5.1. On the x-axis is the number of articles, published during the previous legislature in *Corriere della Sera* that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. Estimates refer to a college-educated, male, non-elite MP, affiliated with a governing party and elected in the south. Other variables at their means. The whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5.6: Marginal Effect of Media Mentions of Corruption Allegations on Renomination



The graph plots the marginal effect of one additional newspaper mention of corruption allegations on the probability of MPs being renominated, conditional on their being accused of corruption. Data from Legislature XVI of the Italian parliament. Estimates based on Model 4 in Table 5.1. On the x-axis is the number of articles, published during the previous legislature in the 14 most widely read newspapers, that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. Estimates refer to a college-educated, male, non-elite MP, affiliated with a governing party and elected in the south. Other variables at their means. The whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals.

5.4.1 Robustness checks

The results in Table 5.1 have shown a negative relationship between media mentions of corruption allegations and renomination. In this section, I conduct a series of robustness checks to confirm these findings. First, I analyze the two datasets through standard probit regression. Then, I add controls for the timing and gravity of accusations to the Heckman model. Finally, to address some concerns specific to the 2013 election, I replicate the analysis on a subset of the data. Results are reported in Section 5.D. Overall, I find further support for the hypothesis that mentions of legislators' corruption allegations decrease their chances of being renominated.

As a robustness check, I study renomination probabilities through standard probit regression (Table 5.6). First, I pool together accused and non-accused MPs (Models 1 and 3). To isolate the effect of media coverage from criminal allegations per se, I control for whether the MPs had a criminal record (dummy *Crime*), and for whether he/she was accused of corruption (dummy *Corrupt*).⁴⁰ If voters dislike criminal candidates, regardless of the charges, MPs with a criminal record may have lower chances of being renominated. Then, I use the subset of MPs accused of corruption (Models 2 and 4). All these models include the biographical, socioeconomic, and political controls described in Section 5.3.1.

The results of the probit analysis largely confirms the negative relationship

⁴⁰In Legislature XI, *Crime* identifies the MPs investigated during the legislature, whereas in Legislature XVI it identifies the MPs that were under investigation, were facing trial, or had avoided a final judgment thanks to the statute of limitations. I exclude charges such as libel or slander, which can be considered related to political activity and campaigning. For data sources and coding, see the Appendix A.4.

between mentions of corruption allegations and renomination. In 1994, the coefficient on *PressMentions* is negative and statistically significant (Table 5.6, Models 1-2). Regardless of media coverage, corruption allegations (*Corrupt*) appear to negatively affect renomination. In 2013, the coefficients on *PressMentions* and *Corrupt* are not significant (Model 3). My interpretation is that, given the small number of accused MPs, these coefficients are imprecisely estimated. Once I drop the non-accused MPs, *PressMentions* becomes again negative and significant (Model 4).

Next, I extend the Heckman selection analysis by controlling for the timing of the allegations (Table 5.7). Voters are more easily influenced by corruption news published shortly before an election (Pereira et al., 2009). If so, incumbents who are investigated for corruption later in the legislature should cause more damage to the party reputation, which may discourage party leaders from renominating them. In the 1994 dataset, I 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 (see Section 5.2).⁴¹ The timing of allegations (*InvestigationTiming*) turns out to be non-significant, while the main results are unchanged (Table 5.7, Model 1).

A further concern is that media coverage 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

⁴¹I do not have relevant data to code this variable in 2013.

corruption crimes, such as embezzlement and abuse of office are punished with shorter sentences, and might be considered trivial by voters.⁴² As shown in Table 5.7 (Models 2-3), *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, I repeat the analysis on a subset of Legislature XVI incumbents. I drop the members of the *Partito Democratico*, which introduced primary elections in 2013. Although party leaders retained some discretion over candidate nominations, it may be inaccurate to model the selection process as if it was fully controlled by party leaders.⁴³ I also 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 because they had received a final conviction. The analysis conducted on this subset of the data confirms that *PressMentions* is negatively and significantly associated with renomination (Table 5.7, Model 4).

⁴²In the Italian Criminal Code, *corruzione* (bribery) and *concussione* (extortion by a public official) 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.

⁴³Primary candidates were selected by the party's national leadership, which reserved the right to reject primary winners who had a criminal record (De Lucia and Cataldi, 2013).

5.5 Conclusion

Analyzing the elections of 1994 and 2013, this chapter has found a negative and statistically significant relationship between newspaper mentions of corruption allegations and the likelihood of incumbent MPs being renominated. This finding supports the hypothesis that, when corruption is salient to voters, mentions of corruption allegations in the media decrease renomination chances (Hypothesis 2). The results are robust to alternative model specifications and variable definitions. Using a Heckman selection procedure to deal with selection bias, I find that an increase in media mentions corresponding to one standard deviation is associated with an 28% (6%) decrease in renomination probability in 1994 (2013).

My empirical strategy has some limitations. Although the Heckman procedure helps with selection bias, this identification strategy does not allow me to make causal claims. However, in the context of the two elections, described in Section 5.2, it is very plausible that party leaders considered the amount of media coverage when deciding whether to renominate incumbents accused of corruption. Another limitation is that I rely exclusively on newspaper sources to measure media coverage. In Chapter 4, however, I presented evidence that television coverage was correlated with newspaper coverage (Sections 4.2- 4.3). Ceron (2014) find that mentions of corruption on Italian news websites and Twitter posts followed the publication of corruption-related materials on hardcopy newspapers. This suggests that coverage by online sources should also be correlated with newspaper coverage.

The findings of this chapter point to the role of the media in ensuring elec-

toral accountability. Chapter 2 showed that, in all the elections studied (1992, 1994, 2008, and 2013), MPs accused of corruption were as likely to be reelected, once they were renominated, as their non-accused peers. In other words, allegedly corrupt MPs had a chance to be reelected *as long as* they secured a nomination. In this chapter, I have argued that media coverage of legislators' corruption allegations affected their chances of winning nomination. If the media frequently mentions legislators as (potentially) corrupt, their parties recognize them as a liability and take them off the ballot. By enabling voters to identify incumbents accused of corruption, the media contributes to drive them out of office.

My research contributes to the studies of media and accountability by highlighting the importance of candidate selection. The literature finds that, the more information on incumbents' malfeasance voters receive from the media, the more likely they are to vote them out of office (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Larreguy et al., 2014). These studies usually assume a *direct* accountability mechanism between voters and representatives. Before voters get to vote, however, parties choose whether to nominate the incumbent for reelection. Oftentimes, incumbents who fail to be renominated have a hard time resuming their career with another party (see Chapter 2). I have shown that the media also influences candidate selection. The more often incumbents are mentioned as potentially corrupt, the less likely parties are to renominate them.

5.A *PressMentions*, Data Sources (Legislature XI)

This section illustrates how I coded the variable *PressMentions*, which counts the newspaper articles mentioning corruption allegations against MPs during Legislature XI. Running a keyword search on the electronic archive of *Corriere della Sera* (<http://archiviostorico.corriere.it>), I retrieved articles containing the names of MPs investigated for corruption alongside the string “*autorizzazione a procedere*”, which refers to the procedure for lifting parliamentary immunity. I counted only the articles published within the timeframe of the investigations, defined as 15 days before the earliest request to lift immunity was issued and 15 days after the last request was issued.

The following are excerpts from some of the retrieved articles. MP names and keywords are highlighted.

- **Antonio Gava**

ROMA – La giunta per le immunità del Senato ha deciso, senza voti contrari, di proporre la concessione dell’**autorizzazione a procedere** nei confronti dei senatori **Antonio Gava** e Vincenzo Meo per il reato di associazione a delinquere di stampo mafioso (camorristico). Sia Gava che Meo avevano sollecitato l’*autorizzazione*.

(“Autorizzazione per Gava,” *Corriere della Sera*, 22 July, 1993, 3)

- **Calogero Mannino**

PALERMO – Dice di essere andato a casa di **Mannino** con duecento milioni in contanti per Citaristi. Di avere ammirato un quadro dell’Ottocento

Table 5.2: Coalitions and Parties in the 1994 Election, Chamber of Deputies

Coalition (leader)	Parties	Vote Share (PR tier)	SMDs Won	Total Seats
Center-right (Silvio Berlusconi)	<i>Forza Italia</i> <i>Alleanza Nazionale</i> <i>Lega Nord</i> <i>Lista Pannella</i> Others – Coalition Total	21% 13.5% 8.4% 3.5%	302	366 (58%)
Center-left (Achille Occhetto)	<i>Partito Democratico della Sinistra</i> <i>Rifondazione Comunista</i> <i>Federazione dei Verdi</i> <i>Partito Socialista</i> <i>Rete-Movimento Democratico</i> Others – Coalition Total	20.4% 6.1% 2.7% 2.2% 1.9%	164	213 (34%)
Center (Mario Segni)	<i>Partito Popolare Italiano</i> <i>Patto Segni</i> – Coalition Total	11.1% 4.7%	4	46 (7%)
Others		3.6%	5	5 (1%)
Total		100%	475	630 (100%)

Results refer to the election for the Chamber of Deputies. Parties below 2% are not reported. I group together the two center-right electoral cartels, *Polo delle Libertà* and *Polo del Buon Governo*, into the center-right coalition.

Sources. Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (<http://elezionistorico.interno.it/>); (Di Virgilio, 1995; Verzichelli, 1995)

Table 5.3: Coalitions and Parties in the 2013 Election, Chamber of Deputies

Coalition (leader)	Parties	Vote Share	Total Seats
Center-left (Pier Luigi Bersani)	<i>Partito Democratico</i>	25.4%	292
	<i>Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà</i>	3.2%	37
	Others		
	– Coalition Total	29.6%	340
Center-right (Silvio Berlusconi)	<i>Popolo della Libertà</i>	21.6%	97
	<i>Lega Nord</i>	4.1%	18
	<i>Fratelli d'Italia</i>	2%	9
	Others		
	– Coalition Total	29.2%	124
- (Beppe Grillo)	<i>Movimento 5 Stelle</i>	25.6%	108
Center (Mario Monti)	<i>Scelta Civica</i>	8.3%	37
	<i>Unione di Centro</i>	1.8%	8
	Others		
	– Coalition Total	10.6%	45
Others		5%	0
Total		100%	617 *

* Results refer to the election for the Chamber of Deputies, excluding the district of Valle d'Aosta and Italian citizens living abroad (i.e. *circostrizione estero*), which separately elect the remaining 13 representatives. Parties below 2% are not reported.

Sources. Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (<http://elezionistorico.interno.it/>).

siciliano nello studio di Mattarella mentre gli lasciava quaranta milioni in contanti e dieci in buoni benzina. [...] L'imprenditore Filippo Salamone, dopo venti giorni di carcere e quindici di arresti domiciliari, ieri se ne è potuto andare in montagna, finalmente libero, mentre dal palazzo di Giustizia di Palermo partivano otto richieste di **autorizzazione a procedere** per sette deputati e un senatore. [...]

Alle 16 esatte si è presentato davanti ai giornalisti e ha annunciato sorridendo la propria sofferenza, le dimissioni, l'innocenza, non un grido, niente accenni di ribellione, ha sussurrato che qualcuno gli vuol male, la voce persino più bassa del solito... Puntuale, diligente, abile, Sergio Matterella maneggia la politica e probabilmente anche la vita con molte precauzioni, nasconde bisogni e sentimenti, rinvia, evita. [...] Ammette: "So di avere dei nemici, so di avere seminato dei rancori", ma è un esercizio senza nomi, nessuno riuscirebbe a fargli dire che il suo grande avversario si chiama **Calogero Mannino**, il quale adesso deve rispondere di corruzione aggravata benchè fosse come un fratello per quell'imprenditore che oggi accusa entrambi, **Mannino** e Mattarella.

(Cavallaro, Felice, "Mattarella 'avvisato' lascia tutto. Sergiuzzo, creatura indecifrabile," *Corriere della Sera*, 7 August, 1993, 3)

- **Carlo Merolli**

ROMA – Quindici miliardi. Sarebbe questa l'entità della tangente incassata dal senatore dc **Carlo Merolli** per facilitare l'iter delle procedure amministrative per l'acquisto dello stabile di Roma dove ora è ospitato il Catasto.

A sborsare la somma sarebbe stato il defunto marchese Alessandro Gerini. Ieri il procuratore aggiunto, Ettore Torri, ha inoltrato la richiesta di **autorizzazione a procedere** per **Merolli** ipotizzando i reati di corruzione, concussione e abuso in atti d'ufficio.

(“Merolli, chiesta l'autorizzazione,” *Corriere della Sera*, 27 September, 1992, 12)

- **Felice Iossa**

NAPOLI – Continua la "bufera" per le tangenti della metropolitana. I sostituti Rosario Cantelmo, Nicola Quatrano e Giuseppe Lucantonio hanno presentato alla procura generale otto richieste di **autorizzazione a procedere** per abuso d'ufficio, corruzione e violazione della legge sul finanziamento pubblico dei partiti. Riguardano l'ex ministro pli Francesco De Lorenzo; i psi Giulio Di Donato, Carlo D'Amato e **Felice Iossa**; i dc Ugo Grippo e Vincenzo Meo, il pds Berardo Impegno e il pri Giuseppe Galasso. Secondo l'accusa, le tangenti accertate (tre miliardi) sarebbero state versate tra l'83 e l'87.

(“Onorevoli nei guai,” *Corriere della Sera*, 30 May, 1993, 11)

5.B *PressMentions*, Data Sources (Legislature XVI)

This section illustrates how I coded the variable *PressMentions*, which counts the newspaper articles mentioning corruption allegations against MPs during Legislature XVI. Running a keyword search on the 14 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva (see Appendix A.3), I retrieved articles containing the names of MPs investigated for corruption alongside a corruption-related keyword. The search timeframe starts three months after the opening of the legislature (July 28, 2008), and ends with the resignation of Prime Minister Monti (December 21, 2012).

The following are excerpts from some of the retrieved articles. MP names and keywords are highlighted.

- **Lucio Barani**

IL GIP di Massa, Giuseppe Laghezza ha rinviato a giudizio l'onorevole livornese **Lucio Barani** e l'allora responsabile dell'ufficio urbanistica del Comune di Aulla, architetto Franco Testa. Per entrambi l'ipotesi di reato è **abuso d'ufficio**, commesso quando il deputato era sindaco.

(“TRIBUNALE IPOTESI DI REATO **ABUSO D'UFFICIO**; Barani rinviato a giudizio,” *La Nazione*, 4 November, 2011, 21)

- **Roberto Castelli**

LIVIGNO – C'è anche un livignasco tra le persone indagate nell'inchiesta ... [...] Pasquale Pedana, costruttore e consigliere dell'Unione nazionale sindacati autonomi, aveva ottenuto ampie assicurazioni da Giuseppe Cantoni,

livignasco, segretario nazionale del sindacato ed esponente della Lega Nord, che è indagato per **corruzione**. "Cantoni - scrive nell'ordinanza il Gip Egle Pilla - ha avanzato ai vertici della Lega, suo partito di riferimento, la candidatura di Angelo Palazzo a nuovo provveditore interregionale alle opere pubbliche per la sede di Napoli e, pur non potendo assicurare la nomina di Palazzo con assoluta certezza, fornisce ampie rassicurazioni in merito a Pasquale Pedana. Anche Cantoni sembra trarre un vantaggio da tale nomina, convenendo proprio con Pasquale Pedana sulla convenienza di avere un proprio uomo di riferimento in quell'incarico strategico". Il senatore della Lega Nord, **Roberto Castelli**, ex viceministro per le Infrastrutture, ha riferito di conoscere Giuseppe Cantoni "che venne al Ministero accompagnato da una persona di cui non rammento il nome, raccomandandolo come possibile candidato a provveditore. Ovviamente non diedi alcun seguito a questa richiesta di raccomandazione".

(“INCHIESTA CANTONI (LEGA) AVREBBE RACCOMANDATO UNO DEGLI ARRESTATI,” *Il Giorno*, 22 February, 2012, 3)

- **Vladimiro Crisafulli**

PALERMO – "A Enna vengo eletto col proporzionale, col maggioritario e pure per sorteggio", dice di sè, senza esagerare in modestia, **Vladimiro Crisafulli**, detto Mirello, senatore del Partito democratico, personaggio sui generis del partito e anche della politica siciliana. A questo ex comunista un pò anomalo, che detesta i suoi compagni di partito "giustizialisti", come Beppe Lumia e Antonello Cracolici, e annovera tra i propri migliori amici

Totò Cuffaro, anche nei palazzi di giustizia, fino all'altro ieri, era sempre andata bene. Già indagato per concorso esterno e sfuggito all'imputazione di mafia con un'archiviazione che comunque gli lasciò addosso qualche ombra, "Mirello" è scivolato sulla classica buccia di banana, finendo sotto processo, nella sua Enna, con l'accusa di **abuso d'ufficio**: l'ormai deserta Procura del capoluogo di provincia più alto d'Italia, in cui è rimasto solo il capo dell'ufficio, Calogero Ferrotti, lo accusa di aver fatto pavimentare a spese della Provincia la strada di contrada Mugavero in cui c'è la sua villa. [...] Come siano andate veramente le cose, adesso dovrà stabilirlo il Tribunale di Enna, che dall'1 dicembre processerà **Crisafulli**, un funzionario della Provincia, Mario Scinardi, il caposquadra Marcello Catalfo e l'imprenditore Carmelo Sultano, di Gela. [...]

(Arena, Riccardo, "L'ASFALTOPOLI DI ENNA Processo alla strada della Casta: Senatore Pd a giudizio," *La Stampa*, 27 September, 2010, 19)

- **Francesco Saverio Romano**

ROMA – Soddisfatto per la prova della maggioranza che alla Camera ha respinto il voto di sfiducia sul ministro proposto dalle opposizioni, ma allo stesso tempo amareggiato per la "persecuzione" giudiziaria nei suoi confronti al punto che sta meditando di "sfogarsi andando in tv e di spiegare agli italiani cosa sta accadendo". Silvio Berlusconi non commenta ufficialmente la pronuncia dell'Aula di Montecitorio, fa circolare la propria opinione attraverso la voci riportate da altri: "Abbiamo dimostrato che la maggioranza c'è ed è molto forte e abbiamo i numeri per fare le riforme". Il premier

abbraccia **Romano**. [...]

Nel 2003 **Francesco Saverio Romano** viene indagato dalla Procura di Palermo per concorso esterno in associazione mafiosa e **corruzione**. Nel 2005 il gip accoglie la richiesta di archiviazione, ma in seguito la Procura riapre l'indagine. Lo scorso luglio il gip chiede l'imputazione coatta e di conseguenza la Procura avanza la richiesta di rinvio a giudizio. Per i pm, "da esponente politico di spicco, Romano avrebbe consapevolmente e fattivamente contribuito al sostegno e al rafforzamento dell'associazione mafiosa". Il 25 ottobre, davanti al gup di Palermo, si terrà l'udienza preliminare che dovrà decidere l'eventuale rinvio a giudizio di **Romano**. L'opposizione ha posto la mozione di sfiducia al ministro. Ieri il voto alla Camera: la mozione stata bocciata con 315 voti a 294.

(Fuccaro, Lorenzo, "Alla Camera con i suoi parla di "persecuzione giudiziaria e calunnie",” *Corriere della Sera*, 29 September, 2011, 9)

5.C Descriptive Statistics, Parliament

Table 5.4: Legislature XI (1992–1994)

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Renominated	940	0.5	0.5	0	1
PressMentions	925	1.1	4.9	0	157
BaseCoverage	939	3.2	6.2	0	83
Corrupt	940	0.2	0.4	0	1
Crime	940	0.3	0.5	0	1
Bribes	940	0.1	0.3	0	1
InvestigationTiming	217	421.0	139.5	151	713
GoverningParty	940	0.5	0.5	0	1
Seniority	937	1.4	1.9	0	10
PartyElite	937	0.2	0.4	0	1
Female	940	0.1	0.3	0	1
Age	940	51.4	9.4	26	82
College	940	0.7	0.5	0	1
Job	940	0.3	0.5	0	1
PartyShare	940	19.5	12.9	1.9	60.0
PastSubnationalOffice	940	0.6	0.5	0	1
PastCabinetPost	937	0.2	0.4	0	1
South	940	0.4	0.5	0	1
Lombardy	940	0.2	0.4	0	1

Table 5.5: Legislature XVI (2008–2013)

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

5.D Robustness Tests

Table 5.6: Effect of Media Mentions of Allegations on Renomination, Probit Analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	<i>LegXI</i>	<i>LegXI - corrupt</i>	<i>LegXVI</i>	<i>LegXVI - corrupt</i>
(log)PressMentions	-0.60*** (0.16)	-0.66*** (0.19)	-0.11 (0.10)	-0.36*** (0.13)
(log)BaseCoverage	0.09 (0.06)	-0.11 (0.22)	0.03 (0.03)	0.26* (0.16)
Corrupt	-0.65*** (0.20)		-0.18 (0.42)	
Crime	-0.03 (0.16)		0.01 (0.25)	
Age	-0.01** (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.06** (0.03)
Female	0.00 (0.16)	-0.43 (0.66)		
College	0.20* (0.10)	0.13 (0.27)	-0.10 (0.11)	0.39 (0.49)
Job	0.15 (0.11)	-0.31 (0.26)	0.14 (0.11)	0.35 (0.45)
GoverningParty	-0.93*** (0.12)	-0.27 (0.39)	0.50*** (0.18)	-0.90 (1.02)
Seniority	-0.18*** (0.03)	-0.14 (0.09)	-0.11*** (0.04)	-0.17 (0.15)
PartyElite	0.17 (0.11)	0.55* (0.30)	0.27** (0.13)	1.48** (0.60)
PartyShare	0.02*** (0.00)	0.03** (0.01)	-0.01* (0.00)	0.03 (0.02)
South	0.31*** (0.10)	1.16*** (0.29)	0.04 (0.11)	-0.45 (0.56)
Constant	0.56* (0.29)	-0.88 (0.86)	2.85*** (0.36)	3.52* (2.05)
Observations	912	200	751	50

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

Probit estimation coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by her party. Models 1 and 3 are estimated on MPs of Legislature XI (1992–1994) and Legislature XVI (2008–2013). Models 2 and 4 are estimated on MPs of Legislatures XI and XVI accused of corruption by the judiciary (“corrupt”).

(log)PressMentions is the logged number of articles, published during the legislature in *Corriere della Sera* (Legislature XI), or in the 14 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). Variable definition, coding, and sources reported in the Appendix A.4.

Table 5.7: Effect of Media Mentions of Allegations on Renomination, Heckman Model

	(1) <i>LegXI</i>	(2) <i>LegXI</i>	(3) <i>LegXVI</i>	(4) <i>LegXVI</i>
DV: <i>Renominated</i>				
(log)PressMentions	-0.36** (0.15)	-0.22*** (0.08)	-0.34** (0.13)	-0.18** (0.07)
InvestigationTiming	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)		
Bribes		-0.28*** (0.09)	0.53 (0.48)	
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	1.20** (0.57)	1.60*** (0.30)	3.29* (1.99)	3.36*** (0.64)
DV: <i>Corrupt</i>				
Seniority	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.05* (0.03)	0.11*** (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)
GoverningParty	1.00*** (0.12)	1.00*** (0.12)	0.00 (0.25)	0.29 (0.27)
PartyElite	0.21* (0.12)	0.22* (0.12)	-0.02 (0.18)	-0.03 (0.21)
South	0.36*** (0.11)	0.36*** (0.11)	0.42*** (0.14)	0.36** (0.16)
Lombardy	0.11 (0.15)	0.09 (0.13)		
PastSubnationalOffice	0.28*** (0.11)	0.21** (0.08)		
PastCabinetPost	0.36** (0.14)	0.34*** (0.12)		
Constant	-1.78*** (0.13)	-1.73*** (0.12)	-2.05*** (0.23)	-2.04*** (0.25)
Constant	-1.73*** (0.65)	-12.25*** (0.83)	-0.12 (0.17)	-14.43*** (0.30)
N (Censored N)	914 (714)	914 (714)	856 (805)	559 (518)

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

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

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. The first-stage dependent variable identifies MPs accused of corruption by the judiciary. The second-stage dependent variable indicates whether the MP was nominated for reelection by her party.

(log)PressMentions is the logged number of articles, published during the legislature in *Corriere della Sera* (Legislature XI), or in the 14 most widely read newspapers (Legislature XVI), that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP. Bribes is a dummy for whether the MP was accused of bribery. 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. Additional controls in the first-stage equation: being elected in the Lombardy region (Lombardy), having experience in subnational-level office (PastSubnationalOffice), and having cabinet experience (PastCabinetPost). Variable definition, coding, and sources reported in the Appendix A.4.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary

In this dissertation, I have uncovered a puzzle in the politics of Italy. Italian parties, which are responsible for selecting candidates to parliamentary office, changed their behavior vis-à-vis corruption allegations between one election and the next—and this shift happened twice over the course of twenty years. Chapter 2 showed that, in 1992, parties renominated, i.e. nominated for reelection, incumbent MPs regardless of whether they were investigated for corruption. Indeed, such behavior was the norm in the prior elections (Chang et al., 2010). In 1994, by contrast, they refrained from renominating investigated incumbents. Similarly, in 2008, parties renominated incumbents regardless of corruption accusations, whereas, in 2013, they largely kept accused incumbents off the ballot. When parties failed to renominate allegedly corrupt incumbents, the latter were generally unable to reenter parliament. Thus, the parties' decisions appear to have played a key role in determining the quality of the Italian political class.

The case of Italy raises the question of why parties sometimes renominate allegedly corrupt legislators. This phenomenon is well documented around the world (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Pereira et al., 2009; Chang et al., 2010; Welch and Hibbing, 1997). Because renomination is usually necessary, and sometimes sufficient, to be reelected, incumbents are able to remain in office despite corruption allegations (Chang et al., 2010; Nyblade and Reed, 2008; Peters and Welch, 1980; Welch and Hibbing, 1997; Reed, 1999; de Sousa and Moriconi, 2013). In light of widespread popular disapproval of corruption, it is puzzling that parties would field candidates accused of corruption. Even in wealthy, established democ-

racies with a highly-educated population, corruption allegations seem to have no effect on political careers. Ultimately, these findings challenge the notion that democratic selection improves the quality of politicians.

While Chapter 2 illustrated data on the renomination of Italian MPs, Chapter 3 reviewed the literature and presented an argument for why parties renominate legislators accused of corruption. I argue that media coverage of corruption discourages party leaders from nominating legislators accused of corruption. I identify two dimensions of media coverage, and I derive two corresponding hypotheses. First, by focusing on the issue of corruption, the media increases its public salience. The more salient corruption is to voters, the higher the electoral penalty for nominating corrupt incumbents. Prominence of corruption in the media lowers the renomination chances of legislators accused of corruption (Hypothesis 1). Second, by reporting on the accusations against specific legislators, media outlets enable voters to identify them. When corruption is salient to voters, mentions of corruption allegations against specific legislators decrease their chances of being renominated (Hypothesis 2).

In Chapter 4, I tested the first empirical implication of my argument (Hypothesis 1), using data on four parliamentary elections. To measure prominence of corruption in the Italian media, I analyzed how often corruption received front-page coverage on the main newspapers. I complemented this analysis with data on television coverage. I found that the media devoted little attention to corruption in the period leading up to the 1992 election, whereas they gave wide coverage to corruption in the period preceding the 1994 election. Similarly, corruption was more prominent in the media before the 2013 election than before the

2008 election. Public opinion data show that, as the media focused on corruption, voters became more concerned with corruption. Under these conditions, party leaders had an incentive to take corrupt incumbents off the ballot. In the last section, I discussed secondary sources and related datasets to rule out alternative hypotheses.

In Chapter 5, I tested the second implication of the argument (Hypothesis 2) with data on the 1994 and 2013 elections. As discussed earlier, corruption was a prominent issue in the media and public debate before these two elections. I used statistical analysis to study the renomination chances of MPs accused of corruption. To measure media mentions, I counted the newspaper articles mentioning corruption allegations against parliament members. I adopted a Heckman, two-stage selection model to alleviate concerns with selection bias. Controlling for relevant confounders, I found that mentions of corruption in the media are negatively and significantly associated with renomination.

6.2 Discussion

The main contribution of this dissertation is to the literature on democratic accountability. Studies ask under what conditions elected officials respond to voters' needs. Among the other things, voters demand that politicians do not abuse their office for private gain. Political corruption, however, is common in democratic polities. One aspect of this problem is that officials accused of corruption, whether by the judiciary or an audit agency, are usually reelected to office. In fact, studies find little, if any, evidence of electoral punishment of corruption (de Sousa and

Moriconi, 2013; Golden, 2012). The most common explanation for this puzzle is that voters do not have enough information on politicians' malfeasance (Banerjee et al., 2014; De Figueiredo et al., 2011). The more information voters receive from media outlets, the less likely they are to vote for allegedly corrupt incumbents (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Larreguy et al., 2014). By providing voters with information, the media promotes accountability.

I find support for the argument that the media contributes to the electoral punishment of (potentially) corrupt officials. My argument differs from the literature under two respects. First, whereas existing studies consider how voters, or the incumbents themselves, respond to media coverage, I focus on how parties react to changes in the informational environment. I consider electoral accountability as a two-stage process in which parties renominate incumbent MPs based on expected voters behavior. I argue that the media influences how voters might vote if parties were to renominate incumbents accused of corruption. If parties expect to suffer electoral losses by renominating allegedly corrupt incumbents, they will refrain from doing so. If, instead, parties expect the choice of candidates to have little or no impact on voters behavior, they will renominate accused MPs. Thus, while the media influences voters, parties take on the task of driving allegedly corrupt incumbents out of office.

Second, the media promotes accountability through two distinct mechanisms. The literature refers to media outlets reporting on corruption accusations against incumbents (Costas-Pérez et al., 2012; Fernández-Vázquez et al., 2013; Larcinese and Sircar, 2012). Adopting the terminology proposed in Section 3.4, these studies consider media coverage in terms of *attention* rather than *prominence* (Kioussis and

McCombs, 2004). In addition to that, when corruption becomes a prominent issue in the media, voters grow more concerned with corruption. Because renominating allegedly corrupt incumbents becomes more costly, party leaders have an incentive to remove them from the ballot.

Overall, the results are encouraging for democracy and the media. Most studies find that officials accused of corruption are as likely to be reelected as their non-accused peers. By analyzing a series of elections, I document that parties' approach to corruption allegations can change quite drastically from one election to the next, and the fate of allegedly corrupt politicians can change accordingly. I argued that media coverage of corruption drives this change. By focusing on the issue of corruption, the media makes voters more aware of the problem. By giving wide coverage to the corruption cases involving elected officials, the media enables voters to identify them. These two mechanisms dissuade parties from renominating officials accused of corruption.

However, it is only occasionally that the media focuses on corruption, thus inducing parties to "clean up" their lists. In Section 4.5, I showed that, in two occasions, the Italian media played an active and independent role in making corruption a salient issue to voters. A combination of factors, both exogenous and endogenous to Italy's politics, pushed corruption high on the media agenda. In 1994 as well as in 2013, the main parties had lost a great deal of credibility among voters, who were ready to switch to newly-created, anti-establishment parties. By highlighting corruption, media outlets were aligning themselves with the audience, and seeking to be more independent from parties. Having grown dissatisfied and embittered with the political class, Italian citizens were eager to

consume corruption stories, and the media was quick to publish them.

My dissertation suggests optimism for electoral accountability in the context of Italy. Corruption scandals are a staple of Italian politics. Much to the surprise and chagrin of domestic and international observers alike, parties do not seem to consider corruption allegations when nominating incumbents for reelection. The cases of politicians reelected to office despite strong suspicions of corruption have generated the impression that, in Italy, there is no electoral punishment of corruption. Based on the analysis of systematic data, although limited to four elections, I demonstrated that such concerns are misplaced. In 1992 and 2008, a large proportion of the MPs accused of corruption were reelected. In 1994 and 2013, however, only few of them were. On two occasions, Italian parties refrained from renominating legislators accused of corruption. Because the latter needed to be renominated in order to be reelected, the parties' decisions practically drove them out of office.

One important qualification is in order. The elections of 1994 and 2013 may well be the *only* two cases in which Italian MPs accused of corruption were punished. Between 1948 and 1992, investigated MPs were as likely to be renominated (and reelected) as their non-investigated peers (Chang et al., 2010). In 1994, they were less likely to be renominated. I have no data on the elections between 1994 and 2008. In 2008, accused and non-accused MPs were, again, equally likely to be renominated. In 2013, accused MPs were less likely to be renominated. The elections of 1994 and 2013 were indeed “exceptional” under a number of aspects (see Section 5.2). In both cases, voters switched en masse to newly-created parties—*Forza Italia* in 1994, the *Movimento 5 Stelle* in 2013. Parliamentary turnover and

electoral volatility were historically high. Barring such unusual circumstances, incumbents may well be able to get away with corruption.¹

Interestingly, those two elections were held under different electoral systems.² The 1994 election was the first to be conducted under mixed-member rules. Three quarters of the Chamber and the entire Senate were elected in single-member plurality districts. Scholars argue that plurality leads to higher accountability than PR (Kunicová and Rose-Ackerman, 2005; Persson et al., 2003) (see Section 2.3.1 for a full discussion). If so, the fact that parties “cleaned up” their ballots may not come as a surprise. The 2013 election, however, was held under closed-list PR rules. Due to the large-magnitude districts and the possibility for the same candidate to run in multiple districts, party leaderships enjoyed wide discretion in the choice of candidates, and voters could not hold incumbents accountable (Pasquino, 2007; Pinto and Di Virgilio, 2014). Indeed, critics have long blamed this system for rewarding low-quality, even criminal candidates.³ In 2013, parties had no institutional incentive to remove accused MPs from the ballot, and yet they did.

My interpretation is that, in 2013, pressure from the media and public opinion was so strong to overcome institutional conditions. If they had really wanted, party leaders could have used various tools to get accused MPs reelected. For

¹Similarly, Golden (2012) argues that corruption goes unpunished except when exceptionally large-scale scandals, such as Clean Hands in Italy, break out.

²For a description of the electoral systems of 1994 and 2013, see Appendix A.6.

³Giovanni Guzzetta and Mario Segni, “Avanti il referendum, contro le liste bloccate,” *Corriere della Sera*, 12 March, 2008; Carmine Saviano, “No al Porcellum, ridateci la nostra democrazia. L’appello di Libertá e Giustizia e Valigia blu,” 6 September, 2010; Ernesto Galli Della Loggia, “La clientela del deputato,” *Corriere della Sera*, 11 July, 2011, 1.

example, they could have ranked them high on the party list, or field them in the party's core districts. By dropping their names altogether, instead, party leaders intended to communicate a change of direction—at least, symbolically. The decision not to renominate loyal, experienced incumbents represented a costly signal to voters.

Finally, this dissertation suggests that party reputation plays a role in candidate selection. The literature has focused on candidate selection methods (Gallagher and Marsh, 1987; Hazan and Rahat, 2006, 2010; Lundell, 2004), and their consequences on legislator behavior (Shomer, 2009). Some studies analyze the district-level determinants of candidate quality. Galasso and Nannicini (2011) argue that parties nominate “high-quality” candidates, i.e. highly-educated ones, in competitive districts. According to Aidt et al. (2011), parties nominate “low-quality” candidates, e.g. criminals, in constituencies with low literacy rates. I contribute to this research by pointing to the interaction between the characteristics of potential candidates (here, their criminal records) and media coverage. Unless the media makes voters aware of certain candidate characteristics, those characteristics do not affect the party's reputation.

6.3 Extensions

As an extension of this research, I ask what drives candidate selection in closed-list proportional representation systems. Under open-list PR rules, such as those in place in Italy until 1993, politicians have an incentive to build personal clienteles *Golden:2007*. Under closed-list PR, candidates have no such incentive. In the case

of Italy, certain features of the electoral system made it very difficult for voters to reward incumbents electorally. Party leaders, however, were not indifferent between incumbents. When deciding whether to renominate them, they appear to have considered both incumbent characteristics (i.e. corruption accusations) and the informational environment (i.e. media coverage of corruption). In this dissertation, I have focused on party reputation—rather, the candidate’s impact on party reputation—as one of the factors driving candidate selection.

I propose to test the hypothesis that parties nominate candidates with experience in office. Under closed-list PR rules, parties do not require candidates to personally reach out to voters, and voters are hardly familiar with candidates in their districts. Rather, *after* the election, parties need legislators that are familiar with the lawmaking process, and can navigate the politics of the country. If this is true, incumbents should be more likely to be nominated than non-incumbents. To test this hypothesis, I will apply a regression discontinuity design to the analysis of Italian national- and regional-level legislative elections. I will study whether candidates elected by a small margin to regional-level offices are more likely to be nominated in national-level elections than candidates who lost by a small margin. In advanced democracies, incumbents are more likely to be reelected than comparable non-incumbents (Eggers et al., 2015). I will contribute to this literature by analyzing whether incumbents are also advantaged in being nominated for higher offices.

Another avenue of further research could be to test the causal mechanism underlying Hypothesis 1. I hypothesized that, the more prominent corruption is in the media, the lower the renomination chances of legislators accused of corruption.

This hypothesis rests on the assumption that, by focusing on a certain issue, the media makes it more salient to voters. Indeed, a large literature finds that the media does have agenda-setting power (McCombs and Shaw, 1993; Wanta and Ghanem, 2007). Studies on the electoral punishment of corruption refer to media scrutiny as the amount of information available on incumbents, e.g. as the number of articles reporting on corruption accusations. Indeed, my very own Hypothesis 2 follows this approach. In addition to that, the media may influence voters' behavior through another channel, i.e. by priming voters on the importance of corruption.

While Chapter 4 showed a correlation between prominence of corruption in the media and public salience, a more satisfying test could be done by experimental methods. Such an experiment would involve three groups of voters. The first, i.e. control group, would receive a vignette about an incumbent legislator working on his reelection campaign. Voters in the second group would receive a vignette mentioning corruption accusations against the legislator. The third group would also receive background information, coming from different media outlets (e.g. newscasts, newspaper clips), on how corruption is widespread and dangerous for the country. Subjects would then be asked to indicate how likely they are to vote for the incumbent. The difference in the outcome between the first and second group represents the effect of incumbent-specific information (as in my Hypothesis 2). The difference between the second and third group, in turn, would indicate the impact of media focus on corruption.

More broadly, this dissertation invites further research on political selection and the quality of politicians. For a long time, the literature emphasized institu-

tional incentives vis-à-vis politicians' individual characteristics. Recently, studies have come to appreciate the role of identity in political representation, especially when it comes to gender (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004). The mechanisms through which competent and honest individuals are selected into top positions, whether in the private or public sector, are receiving scholarly attention (Besley, 2005; Caselli and Morelli, 2004). Viewed against the background of the literature, the Italian case suggests that parties and voters often tolerate low-quality politicians, yet sometimes they do punish them. Throughout the dissertation, I have investigated the conditions leading to higher-quality political representation.

Appendix A

Appendix

A.1 Legislatures Studied

Table A.1: Legislatures Studied

Govt level	Assembly	Size	Legislature	Governing parties
National	Chamber (<i>Camera</i>) Senate (<i>Senato</i>)	630 315	<i>Leg.X</i> (1987–1992)	DC, PSI, PRI, PSDI, PLI
National	Chamber (<i>Camera</i>) Senate (<i>Senato</i>)	630 315	<i>Leg.XI</i> (1992–1994)	DC, PSI, PLI, PSDI
National	Chamber (<i>Camera</i>) Senate (<i>Senato</i>)	630 315	<i>Leg.XV</i> (2006–2008)	DS, DL, RC, PdCI, FdV, UDEUR, plus others
National	Chamber (<i>Camera</i>) Senate (<i>Senato</i>)	630 315	<i>Leg.XVI</i> (2008–2013)	PdL, LN, FLI, PT PdL, PD, UDC, PT, FLI, plus others (external support)
Regional	Lombardy Council	80	1990–1995	DC, PSI, PLI, PRI, PSDI
Regional	Campania Council	60	1990–1995	DC, PSI, PLI, PRI
Municipal	Milan City Council	80	1990–1993	DC, PSI, PRI, PLI, PSDI
Municipal	Naples City Council	80	1992–1993	DC, PSI, PRI, PLI, PSDI

Governing parties are those represented in the cabinet during the legislature. Parties listed in decreasing order of seats.

Sources. Italian government website (<http://www.governo.it/Governo/Governi/governi.html>). Subnational-level office archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (<http://amministratori.interno.it/amministratori/AmmIndex6.htm>). Subnational- and national-level election results from the Italian Ministry of the Interior (<http://elezionistorico.interno.it>). For party acronyms, see Table A.2.

A.2 Party Abbreviations

Party (Italian)	Party (English)	Abbreviation
<i>Alleanza Nazionale</i>	National Alliance	AN
<i>Centro Cristiano Democratico</i>	Christian Democratic Centre	CCD
<i>Democratici di Sinistra</i>	Democrats of the Left	DS
<i>Democrazia Cristiana</i>	Christian Democratic Party	DC
<i>Democrazia è Libertà - La Margherita</i>	Democracy is Freedom - The Daisy	DL
<i>Federazione dei Verdi</i>	Federation of the Greens	FdV
<i>Forza Italia</i>	Go Italy!	FI
<i>Fratelli d'Italia</i>	Brothers of Italy	FdI
<i>Futuro e Libertà per l'Italia</i>	Future and Freedom	FLI
<i>Lega Nord</i>	Northern League	LN
<i>Lista Pannella</i>	Pannella List	
<i>Movimento 5 Stelle</i>	Five Star Movement	M5S
<i>Partito Comunista</i>	Italian Communist Party	PCI
<i>Partito dei Comunisti Italiani</i>	Party of the Italian Communists	PdCI
<i>Partito Democratico</i>	Democratic Party	PD
<i>Partito Democratico della Sinistra</i>	Democratic Party of the Left	PDS
<i>Partito Liberale</i>	Liberal Party	PLI
<i>Partito Popolare</i>	Italian Popular Party	PPI
<i>Partito Repubblicano</i>	Republican Party	PRI
<i>Partito Socialista</i>	Socialist Party	PSI
<i>Partito Sociale Democratico</i>	Social Democratic Party	PSDI
<i>Patto Segni</i>	Segni Pact	
<i>Popolo della Libertà</i>	People of Freedom	PdL
<i>Popolo e Territorio (Iniziativa Responsabile)</i>	People and Territory	PT
<i>Rifondazione Comunista</i>	Communist Refoundation	RC
<i>Scelta Civica</i>	Civic Choice	SC
<i>Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà</i>	Left Ecology Freedom	SEL
<i>Unione Democratici per l'Europa</i>	Union of Democrats for Europe	UDEUR
<i>Unione di Centro</i>	Union of the Centre	UDC

A.3 List of Newspapers

The following are the 35 most widely read Italian newspapers, as of 2013, excluding sports related newspapers. The last column indicates whether the source is available on Factiva. Yearly circulation data from *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*, a company monitoring Italian press (<http://www.adsnotizie.it>).

Table A.2: Newspaper Yearly Circulation Data (2013)

Newspaper	Circulation	Available on Factiva
CORRIERE DELLA SERA	464,265	YES
REPUBBLICA (LA)	455,897	YES
STAMPA (LA)	303,092	YES
SOLE 24 ORE (IL)	252,325	YES
MESSAGGERO (IL)	190,086	
GIORNALE (IL)	188,580	YES
QN-II Resto del Carlino	159,377	YES
AVVENIRE	148,721	YES
LIBERO	133,230	
QN-La Nazione	131,690	YES
ITALIA OGGI	105,524	YES
FATTO QUOTIDIANO (IL)	104,364	YES
GAZZETTINO (IL)	85,241	
UNITA' (L')	75,921	
QN-II Giorno	75,760	YES
SECOLO XIX (IL)	75,374	YES
TIRRENO (IL)	71,514	
MATTINO (IL)	68,684	
UNIONE SARDA (L')	55,816	
TEMPO (IL)	52,793	YES
MESSAGGERO VENETO	52,770	
NUOVA SARDEGNA (LA)	50,861	
ECO DI BERGAMO (L')	50,760	
DOLOMITEN	50,639	
ARENA (L')	50,250	
GAZZETTA DEL SUD	47,404	
Continued on next page		

Table A.2 – continued from previous page

Newspaper	Circulation	Available on Factiva
GIORNALE DI SICILIA	45,545	YES
GIORNALE DI BRESCIA	45,063	
MANIFESTO (IL)	43,510	

A.4 Dataset Description: Parliament

This dissertation 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). I consider only MPs who were in office at the end of each legislature, i.e. dropping retired or dead legislators.

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

- Legislatures X and XI: Golden (2007), Gagliarducci et al. (2011)
- Legislature XV: Gagliarducci et al. (2011)
- Legislature XVI: CIRCαP (2013), OpenPolis (2013)

Table A.3: Parliament Dataset: Variables and Data Sources

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>Renominated</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. Incumbents nominated by other parties, or self-nominated, are coded as 0.	<p>For Legislature X, Golden (2007) codes whether MPs were nominated for the Chamber in the 1992 election. I use the Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (http://elezionistorico.interno.it/) to check if MPs were nominated for the Senate.</p> <p>For Legislatures XI, XV, and XVI, I merge MP data with a dataset of candidates in the 1994, 2006, and 2008 elections. I use first name, last name, year of birth, and province of birth as key variables to merge MP and candidate records. To assemble the candidate dataset, I integrate existing datasets (Bartolini and 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 (http://elezionistorico.interno.it/).</p>

Continued on next page

Table A.3 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<p><i>Corrupt</i></p>	<p>Indicates whether the MP was accused of corruption by the judiciary.</p> <p>In Legislatures X-XI, <i>Corrupt</i> refers to MPs investigated for corruption-related crimes* during the legislature.</p> <p>In Legislatures XV-XVI, <i>Corrupt</i> identifies the MPs who, as of the end of the legislature, were under investigation or on trial for corruption-related crimes*, or who had avoided a final judgment thank to the statute of limitations (prescrizione).</p> <p>*Corruption crimes are: 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>For Legislatures X-XI, I use data on the requests to lift parliamentary immunity issued by Italian prosecutors (<i>richieste di autorizzazione a procedere</i>), drawn from Golden (2007), Ceron and Mainenti (2015), and Parliament records (http://legislature.camera.it).</p> <p>For Legislature XV, criminal records are from Gomez and Travaglio (2008), integrated with “Tutti i guai con la giustizia degli aspiranti onorevoli,” <i>La Repubblica</i>, 16 March, 2008.</p> <p>For Legislature XVI, I use: “Gli 84 sotto accusa,” <i>La Repubblica</i>, 22 July, 2011; “I cento parlamentari condannati, imputati, indagati o prescritti,” <i>Il Fatto Quotidiano</i>, 30 September, 2012; “La lista dei parlamentari indagati e condannati,” <i>Il Fatto Quotidiano</i>, 5 November, 2012.</p>
Continued on next page		

Table A.3 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>PressMentions</i>	Counts the newspaper articles published during the legislature that mentioned corruption allegations against the MP.	<p>In Legislature XI, the variable counts the articles published in <i>Corriere della Sera</i> that contained the names of investigated MPs alongside the string “<i>autorizzazione a procedere</i>”, which refers to the procedure for lifting parliamentary immunity (source: http://archiviostorico.corriere.it). To increase measurement precision, the variable counts only the articles published within the timeframe of the investigations, i.e. 15 days before the earliest request to lift immunity was issued and 15 days after the latest request was issued.</p> <p>In Legislature XVI, the variable counts the number of articles published in the 14 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva (see Appendix A.3) that contained the name of each accused 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>

Continued on next page

Table A.3 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>BaseCoverage</i>	Counts how many times the MP was mentioned in the printed press at the beginning of the legislature.	In Legislature XI, it counts the <i>Corriere della Sera</i> articles mentioning the MP in the 30 days following the election of April 6, 1992. In Legislature XVI, it counts the articles published in the first three months of the legislature in the 14 most widely read newspapers available on Factiva (see Appendix A.3).
<i>Bribes</i>	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>).	Variable coded from Ceron and Mainenti (2015) and Parliament records.
<i>InvestigationTiming</i>	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.	Variable coded from Ceron and Mainenti (2015) and Parliament records.
<i>Age</i>	MP's age as of the election year	For Legislatures X,XI, and XV, variables coded by Gagliarducci et al. (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables coded by CIRCaP (2013)
<i>CabinetPost</i>	Indicates whether the MP served as government minister or undersecretary during the legislature.	
<i>College</i>	Indicates whether the MP had a university degree	
<i>GoverningParty</i>	Indicates whether the MP was affiliated with a party in the governing coalition during the legislature	
<i>ParliamentPost</i>	Indicates whether the MP served as (vice)president/secretary in parliament, or in a parliament committee, during the legislature.	

Continued on next page

Table A.3 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>PartyElite</i>	Indicates whether the MP held national-level offices within his/her party apparatus at the opening of 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>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)	Variable coded on data from Gagliarducci et al. (2011), following the criteria used by Golden (2007)
<i>Preferences</i>	Number of individual preference votes received by the MP in the previous election. It applies only to House deputies in Legislatures X and XI.	Variable coded by Golden (2007)

Continued on next page

Table A.3 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>PartyShare</i>	Vote share of the MP's party in the district in which he/she was elected	<p>For Legislature XI, the variable refers to the region 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)</p> <p>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.</p>
<i>Lombardy</i>	MP elected in the Lombardy region.	<p>For Legislatures X,XI, and XV, variables coded from Gagliarducci et al. (2011).</p> <p>For Legislature XVI, variables coded from CIRCAP (2013).</p>
<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.	

Continued on next page

Table A.3 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>PastCabinetPost</i>	Dummy for cabinet experience. It indicates whether the MP ever served as government minister or undersecretary in the previous legislatures.	
<i>South</i>	Elected in one of the following regions: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Apulia (Puglia), Sardinia (Sardegna), Sicily (Sicilia).	

A.5 Dataset Description: Subnational Legislatures

In this chapter, I have analyzed four subnational-level legislatures:

- Lombardy Regional Council, 1990–1995
- Campania Regional Council, 1990–1995
- Milan City Council, 1990–1993
- Naples City Council, 1992–1993

Table A.4: Subnational Legislatures: Variables and Data Sources

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>Renominated</i>	Indicates whether the legislator was nominated for reelection by his/her own party, or a successor to the original party of affiliation. Legislators nominated by other parties are coded as 0.	To construct the variable, I merged legislator records with candidate records, using first name and last name as key variables. I also used dates of birth for regional-level legislators. Data on candidates for regional elections (Lombardy and Campania) are scraped through a Python script from the Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (http://elezionistorico.interno.it/). Data on candidates for municipal elections are hand-collected from press sources. For Milan: “Venti le squadre in campo,” <i>Corriere della Sera</i> , 8 May, 1993, 37; “Ecco i sessanta eletti,” <i>Corriere della Sera</i> , 21 June, 1993, 32. For Naples: “Tutti gli eletti,” <i>Il Mattino</i> , 25 November, 1993; “Così il consiglio,” <i>Il Mattino</i> , 7 December, 1993.

Continued on next page

Table A.4 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>Corrupt</i>	<p>Indicates whether the legislator was investigated for corruption-related crimes* by the judiciary while in office.</p> <p>*Corruption crimes are: bribery (<i>corruzione</i>), extortion by a public official (<i>concussione</i>), abuse of office (<i>abuso d'ufficio</i>), embezzlement (<i>peculato</i>), and illegal party funding (<i>violazione delle leggi sul finanziamento pubblico ai partiti</i>).</p>	<p>For Milan and Lombardy, I relied on Biondani and Ferrarella (2002). While working at <i>Corriere della Sera</i>, the authors took records of the individuals investigated for corruption crimes by the prosecutor's office (<i>Procura</i>) of the Court of Milan between 1992 and 2000. I obtained a hard copy directly from Paolo Biondani. I cross-checked these records with information from ANSA press reports (https://mida.ansa.it/midagate/) to make sure legislators were investigated while in office.</p> <p>For Naples and Campania, I conducted a keyword search on the online archive of ANSA, Italy's leading press agency (https://mida.ansa.it/midagate/), restricting the search to the region of Campania. Based on the retrieved reports, I generated records of the corruption investigations against sitting municipal- and regional-level legislators. Keywords used: arrest/arrested (<i>arresto</i>, <i>arrestat*</i>), (notice of) end of investigations (<i>(avviso di) conclusione delle indagini</i>), indictment/indicted (<i>rinvio a giudizio/rinviat* a giudizio</i>), notice of investigation (<i>avviso di garanzia / informazione di garanzia</i>), and pre-trial custody (<i>custodia cautelare</i>).</p>
<i>Age</i>	Legislator's age as of the last year of the legislature	(Parigi and Bearman, 2008)
<i>College</i>	Indicates whether the legislator had a university degree	

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Table A.4 – continued from previous page

Variable	Description	Data Source and Coding
<i>GoverningParty</i>	Indicates whether the legislators was affiliated with a party in the governing coalition during the legislature	(Parigi and Bearman, 2008)
<i>Lombardy</i>	Dummy for region	
<i>Municipal</i>	Dummy for municipal council members	
<i>Seniority</i>	Number of terms served in subnational-level office	
<i>Preferences</i>	Number of individual preference votes received in the previous election	Collected from various press sources. For Lombardy: “Ecco gli ottanta consiglieri,” <i>Corriere della Sera</i> , 9 May, 1990, 33. For Milan: “I premiati nel valzer delle preferenze,” <i>Corriere della Sera</i> , 10 May, 1990, 38. For Naples: “Tutte le preferenze fra novità e conferme,” <i>Il Mattino</i> , 18 June, 1992.
<i>PartyShare</i>	Vote share of legislator’s party in the previous election	Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (http://elezionistorico.interno.it/)

A.6 Electoral Rules: Parliament

During the period studied, Italian parliamentary elections were conducted under three different electoral systems. The following is an overview of the electoral rules adopted in the Chamber (*Camera dei Deputati*) and Senate (*Senato della Repubblica*).¹ Throughout this period, the size of the two chambers remained fixed at 630 for the Chamber and 315 for the Senate respectively.

A.6.1 Open-list PR system, 1948–1993

Established with the *Legge 20 gennaio 1948, n.6* (Chamber) and *Legge 6 febbraio 1948, n.29* (Senate), later amended by *Testo Unico 30 marzo 1957, n. 361*.

Elections: 1948–1992.

A.6.1.1 Chamber

Chamber seats were assigned with open-list PR rules in 32 multi-member districts, each electing an average of 20 deputies. In each district, parties won seats in proportion to their vote share. Voters could give up to four preferences to candidates on their preferred party list.² Within each party, the candidates with the most preference votes were elected.

¹See Baldini (2011) for an overall discussion of the electoral reforms.

²In the 1992 election, as a result of the June 9, 1991 referendum, voters could only give one preference vote.

A.6.1.2 Senate

Out of 315 senators, 238 (75%) were elected in single-member districts if they obtained more than 65% of the votes. If no candidate passed this threshold, as was almost always the case, the votes obtained by the candidates of each party were summed together within each of Italy's 20 regions. Parties would then receive seats in proportion to their vote share. Within each party, the candidates with the highest vote shares in their respective districts were elected. The remaining 77 senators (25%) were assigned to each party according to their vote share in the region.

A.6.2 Mixed-member system, 1993–2005

Established in August 1993 with the *Legge 4 agosto 1993, n. 276* (Senate) and *Legge 4 agosto 1993, n. 277* (Chamber), usually referred to as “*Legge Mattarella*,” after the Christian Democratic deputy Sergio Mattarella who drafted the reform (Pappalardo, 1995; Chiaramonte and D’Alimonte, 1995).

Elections: 1994, 1996, 2001.

A.6.2.1 Chamber

In the Chamber, 475 out of 630 seats (75%) were allocated through plurality SMD.³ In each district, one representative was elected by first-past-the-post voting. The remaining 155 seats (25%) were assigned through closed-list PR. A

³For information on how the district were drawn, see Di Franco (1995).

special vote computing mechanism (*scorporo* penalized the parties that had won SMD races, assigning relatively more votes (and seats) to the remaining parties. On a separate ballot, voters voted for a party list. Parties reaching a threshold of 4% of the votes nation-wide received a number of seats proportional to their vote share. Within each party, candidates won a seat depending on their ranking on the party list. Candidates could run in one (and only one) SMD, in one SMD and in the PR tier, or only in the PR tier. No party could field more than one candidate in each SMD.

A.6.2.2 Senate

In the Senate, 232 out of 315 seats (75%) were assigned through plurality SMDs.³ The remaining 83 seats (25%) were distributed in fixed numbers among Italy's twenty regions, depending on the region population. The votes obtained by the losing candidates of each party (or coalition) in each region were summed together, and each party (or coalition) received a number of seats proportional to its vote share. Those seats were assigned to the non-elected candidates with the highest vote shares in their district ("best losers"). With some differences from the Chamber rules, the *scorporo* mechanism also governed seat allocation in the Senate (see above). Candidates for the Senate could only run in a SMD.

A.6.3 Closed-list PR system, 2005–2015

Established in December 2005 with the *Legge 21 dicembre 2005, n. 270* (Pasquino, 2007; Renwick et al., 2009). As of May 6, 2015, these rules only apply to the

Senate. Chamber elections will be held under the so-called *Italicum* system.⁴

Elections: 2006, 2008, 2013.

A.6.3.1 Chamber

Parties could compete independently, or in a coalition with other parties. Only the parties obtaining more than 2% of the votes (4% for parties not affiliated with a coalition) won seats. The coalition, or party, that obtained a plurality of the national vote automatically received 54% of the seats (seat bonus). The other parties received seats in proportion to their vote share. Seats were assigned in multi-member proportional districts. There were 26 districts in the national territory, plus a few districts for Italians living abroad, which together elected twelve deputies. The average magnitude of the domestic districts was 23. In each district, parties nominated and ranked as many candidates as there were seats. There was no limit to the number of districts in which candidates could run. Within each party, candidates were elected based on their respective ranking on the list.

A.6.3.2 Senate

The system for the Senate was slightly different. Parties could compete independently, or in a coalition with other parties. Only the parties obtaining more than 3% of the votes (8% for parties not affiliated with a coalition) received seats. The

⁴Roberto Landucci, "Italy parliament passes Renzi's electoral reform," Reuters, May 4, 2015, Accessed June 25, 2015, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/05/04/uk-italy-politics-idUKKBN0NP0TJ20150504>.

coalition, or party, that obtained a plurality of the vote in each district automatically received 54% of the seats available in that district (seat bonus). The other parties won seats in proportion to their vote share. Seats were assigned in multi-member proportional districts. The 20 districts on the national territory corresponded to Italy's 20 regions. A few districts abroad elected six senators. The average magnitude of the domestic districts was 15. In each district, parties nominated and ranked as many candidates as there were seats. There was no limit to the number of districts in which candidates could run. Within each party, candidates were elected based on their respective ranking on the list.

A.7 Electoral Rules: Subnational Legislatures

A.7.1 Municipal Councils

A.7.1.1 Pre-1993

Until parliament passed a reform in 1993 (*Legge 15 marzo 1993 n. 81*), the mayor was chosen by the municipal council after the election. Municipal legislators were elected with open-list proportional rules. Each party received a number of seats proportional to its vote share, following the d'Hondt method. Within each party, seats were assigned to candidates according to the number of preference seats.

A.7.1.2 Post-1993

After the 1993 reform, mayors are elected under a runoff majoritarian system. Legislators, i.e. municipal council members, are elected under open-list proportional rules.⁵ Each candidate mayor is supported by a party, or a coalition of parties. Voters can vote for a candidate mayor, for a party that supports him or her, or for a different party (split-ticket voting). Voters can also express a single preference vote for a candidate councilperson within that party list. If one of the candidate mayors obtains an absolute majority in the first round, he or she gets elected. Otherwise, a second round is held between the top two candidates. If the newly-elected mayor's party or coalition receives more than 50% but fewer than 60% of the votes for council seats, it is automatically allocated 60% of the council

⁵For a detailed description of the post-1993 system, see Baldini and Legnante (2000) and Di Virgilio (2005).

seats. With a higher vote share, the winning coalition receives the corresponding proportion of council seats. Within each coalition, parties receive seats in proportion to their vote share. Candidates on the party list are elected based on the number of preference votes.

A.7.2 Regional Councils

A.7.2.1 Pre-1995

Until parliament passed a reform in 1995 (*Legge Tatarella*), voters did not get to vote for president, i.e. region's chief executive. The president was chosen by the newly-elected regional council. Regional legislators were elected with open-list proportional rules. Each party received a number of seats proportional to its vote share, following the d'Hondt method. Within each party, seats were assigned to candidates according to the number of preference seats.

A.7.2.2 Post-1995

After the 1995 reform, regional presidents are elected under first-past-the-post plurality. One fifth of the regional council seats are assigned with majoritarian rules, and the remaining four fifths with open-list proportional rules (Parigi and Bearman, 2008). Each candidate president is supported by a party, or a coalition of parties, and presents a list of candidates for the regional council (*"listino"*). The candidate who obtains a plurality of the vote becomes president, and 20% of

council seats are assigned to the people on her list.⁶ The region is divided into electoral districts, each corresponding to a province. Within a district, voters vote for a party list and, optionally, for a candidate councilperson on the party slate (preference vote). The seats available in the district are assigned to parties in proportion to their vote share. Within each party, candidates are elected based on preference votes.

⁶Because the number of people on the list has to be equal to 20% of seats, all the candidates on the “winning” list are elected.

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