Corruption, Party Leaders, and Candidate Selection: Evidence from Italy[*]

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Abstract

We use a newly-assembled dataset to study renominations of senators and deputies implicated in wrongdoing in two back-to-back pairs of Italian legislatures: Legislatures X and XI (1987–1982 and 1982–1994) and Legislatures XV and XVI (2006-08 and 2008–2013). Statistical analysis shows that renominations at the end of each set's second legislature are negatively associated with the number of times the incumbent's name appears in the press in connection with corruption allegations. No similar relationship obtains in the first legislature in each set. We argue that the difference stems from the growing awareness by party elites of the need to protect the party brand as the public salience of corruption rises. Results highlight the importance of party leaders in forcing malfeasant legislators out of office — and thereby reducing corruption — and redirects attention from the actions of voters to the actions of political elites as a critical mechanism for democratic accountability.

Keywords: political parties, candidate selection, corruption, Italy, Clean Hands

1   Introduction

A large literature studies whether voters punish politicians implicated in scandals, especially scandals involving political corruption. The central question is whether voters switch electoral support to other candidates in place of those incriminated in wrongdoing. Examining publications (in English) reveals mixed findings across countries and events (Anduiza, Aina and Muñoz, 2013; Ares and Hernández, 2017; Barbera, Fernández-Vázquez and Rivero, 2016; Carlson and Reed, 2018; Chang, Golden and Hill, 2010; Chong et al., 2015; Costas-Perez, Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro, 2012; Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Hamel and Miller, 2018; Jiménez and Caínzo, 2006; Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2016; Peters and Welch, 1980; Riera et al., 2013; Weitz-Shapiro and Winters, 2013; Welch and Hibbing, 1997). Summarizing, this literature finds that while scandal-tainted politicians often experience a modest drop in their vote shares, voters are not particularly effective in forcing corrupt politicians out of office. Instead, corrupt politicians often win reelection.

This presents a theoretical and normative dilemma. The theory of democratic accountability draws on the idea that the fundamental role of voters is to threaten elected politicians with loss of office if they do not perform adequately (Ferejohn, 1986; Przeworski, Stokes and Manin, 1999). This view underlies the lively research agenda currently investigating governance and responsiveness in developing and developed countries, from the studies just referenced above that are narrowly focused on corruption to the even more numerous studies of governance in Africa and Asia. Both sets of studies are informed by a bottom-up perspective that sees the evolution of democratic practices unfolding through the increasingly effective work of an informed, educated, and vigilant citizenry. In this account, democracy operates largely through channels of *vertical* accountability. That the empirical evidence shows that these channels are only occasionally effective throws doubt on this entire intellectual enterprise, and introduces the suspicion there may be major, chronic accountability failures even in the developed world. And if democracy fails to operate as intended even there, what hope is there for the obviously poorly performing democracies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America?

In this paper, we attend to an alternate route for achieving accountability: the role of political elites in checking malfeasance among their own or, more generally, *horizontal* accountability. We draw theoretically on an institutional literature that identifies political elites and elite competition as consequential in the rise and operation of democracy (Cox, 2017; Lizzeri and Persico, 2004; North and Weingast, 1989; Schumpeter, 1962). This is of course not a new idea — but corruption research in particular and the governance agenda more generally have been so attuned to issues of vertical accountability that they have all but ignored horizontal accountability. Our goal in this paper to introduce into discussion the importance of political elites in checking behavior among their own.

To illustrate our ideas, we assemble data from two back-to-back legislative periods in Italy: Legislatures X and XI (1987–92 and 1992–94) and Legislatures XV and XVI (2006–08 and 2008–13). Our analysis shows that twice in the span of as many decades, Italian political parties forced Senators and Deputies implicated in malfeasance off party lists by failing to renominate them. More specifically, in the *second* of each set of legislatures, the more that an individual's name was publicly associated with corruption, the more likely he was to be deselected by his party. This stands in stark contrast to the *first* legislature in each paired set, where increased public association with corruption had no statistically distinguishable effect on the likelihood of renomination.

Why did political parties that had previously tolerated visible evidence of wrongdoing by legislators turn on these legislators and force them out of public life? We contend that party elites sought to protect the party brand by removing incriminated legislators as the public salience of corruption rose. We produce evidence that shows a significant growth in media attention to corruption in the period just before the crucial elections when incriminated incumbents were removed from party lists. At the same time, survey evidence shows growing intolerance of corruption by the public. These two factors interacted to set the stage for elite decisions to repudiate legislators whose reputations were most publicly tarnished. Our findings support the argument that media scrutiny leads to the electoral punishment of corrupt officials — but that media scrutiny operates

via the elite process of candidate selection and renomination rather than through voting behavior. The contribution of our article is to bring into focus the importance of political parties and, more broadly, *political elites*, in reducing corruption.

We are aware of two other papers that analyze the effects of corruption allegations on candidate selection. In a study using data from Puerto Rico, Camára-Fuertes and Bobonis (2015) finds a relationship between the release of municipal audit reports and the incumbent's decision to seek reelection. Similarly, Larcinese and Sircar (N.d.) reports that newspaper coverage of embezzlement allegations made British Members of Parliament less likely to stand for reelection. In both cases, it appears that incriminated incumbents decided not to run again in order to avoid probable defeat. Neither of these studies examine how party leaders might approach the renomination of corrupt incumbent legislators. Additionally, neither study considers how the public salience of corruption influences the decision-making process of these political elites. We show that, in Italy, legislators charged with wrongdoing — who are mentioned in the press in reference to malfeasance and who are up for reselection when corruption is an important political issue — are much more likely to be deselected by the party. We argue that these individuals were deselected in order to protect the reputations of their parties.

We proceed as follows. Section 2 explicates our thinking on why party leaders may decide to remove an incumbent from the ballot due to public involvement in scandal. Section 3 provides background information on the two legislative periods analyzed. Section 4 describes the empirical strategy we use, and presents the variables and measures used in the analysis. Section 5 presents results of statistical tests, and Section 6 explores the importance of our findings for understanding corruption in Italy and anti-corruption campaigns more generally. Section 7 provides some additional theoretical speculations about how to interpret our findings in light of previous work on corruption and democratic accountability.

2 Theory: Voters, Party Elites, and the Party Brand

Previous studies of how voters react to revelations of corruption by their elected officials have conceptualized voters as independent decision makers who assess an incumbent on the basis of prior performance in office. The real political environment is obviously more complex; in particular, candidates for national public office are affiliated with political parties, and party leaders may exercise considerable control over candidate selection (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Hazan and Rahat, 2010). Party leaders seek to balance multiple considerations in their selection of candidates for office, including that of protecting the party "brand." The party brand is a summary of actions and beliefs that serves as a heuristic for voters. It is thus primarily important because it solves the collective action problem of information for voters (Aldrich, 2011). The brand has two components: the policy (or content) brand, and the valence brand. Here, we focus on party valence.

The valence component reflects a party's legislative accomplishments and reputation while in office (Cox and McCubbins, 2005). The valence component will be viewed positively when the party performs well while in office by passing its agenda. If the congressional party is marred in scandal or is unable to pass basic legislation, its valence value is diminished. In the context of the United States, these claims have been tested empirically. Results document that voters care about the valence component of the brand (Butler and Powell, 2014) and that legislators are sensitive to how their party is viewed on non-policy lines. Specifically, through a series of experiments, Butler and Powell (2014) shows that voters overwhelmingly support the candidate whose party is viewed as ethical and that passes the budget on time. At least in this context, these components tend to be even more important to voters than ideological proximity. The authors go on to experimentally examine how legislators behave in office, and find that legislators tend to vote in ways that would improve the party valence brand in the eyes of the public. Conceptually related work has considered the establishment of the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) in 2008, an independent board tasked with receiving and reviewing allegations of wrongdoing against members

of the U.S. Congress. Dancey (2018) shows how leaders from both parties have been central in the establishment and protection of the OCE over the last 10 years, working to convince reluctant rank-and-files members to support the work of the commission. That study thus suggests that party leaders are cognizant of the need to maintain the appearance of ethical behavior and are prepared to invest in institutional mechanisms to promote it.

There is no reason to think that the results based on U.S. data do not generalize: legislators and especially party leaders generally understand the importance of the valence component and seek to protect it. In our thinking, individual incumbents seek reelection, but may do so even while weakening the party brand through involvement in illegal activities or political scandal. The incumbent may accurately calculate that these activities do not compromise his own reelection chances. Individual legislators embroiled in scandal may damage the party brand without compromising their own reelection chances if, for instance, their vote margin in the last election was so large that they can afford to lose the votes of those electors who refuse to endorse an incriminated politician. Party leaders, by contrast, seek to protect the party brand, including by distancing the party from scandal. In these kinds of situations, party leaders may decide not to renominate an incumbent caught up in scandal — even though the individual might have won the seat if his name had remained on the ballot. We might conceptualize this as incorporating into decision making a concern for the party's national vote share rather than only the vote share of a single candidate in a particular electoral constituency.

We suggest that a party's valence brand — and in particular, the aspects of the valence brand related to ethics — is most likely to be damaged by revelations of corruption when the public and media are attuned to such allegations. It is under these particular conditions that party leaders will choose to deselect — that is, they will fail to renominate for office — legislators who are *most* tied to corruption in public political discourse, such as through media exposure. We suggest that party leaders would see failing to deselect these legislators as likely to weaken the party brand even further, thereby damaging the party nationally.

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3 The Context: Corruption in Legislatures X–XI and XV–XVI

We argue that when corruption is salient to the public, party leaders will respond by deselecting those legislators most closely tied to the allegations of wrongdoing. To demonstrate this, we study two sets of back-to-back legislatures where corruption was a "non-issue" immediately before becoming a major political issue in the subsequent legislative period: Legislatures X and XI (1987–1992 and 1992–1994) and Legislatures XV and XVI (2006–2008 and 2008–2013). We will measure how tied individual legislators are to allegations of wrongdoing by the number of corruption mentions they personally receive in the print media. Before undertaking this analysis, we first provide some information about the Italian political context during the two periods we study, with a particular emphasis on the prominence of corruption during the second legislature in both sets (relative to the first legislature).

Italy is the European country whose reputation for corruption is probably the greatest. In 2017, it was ranked by Transparency International the most corrupt nation in the European Union, with the exceptions of Greece and Bulgaria. The two periods we study were both characterized by major scandals involving local and national politicians in accusations of corruption. The first period we investigate — known for the Clean Hands investigations — received massive media publicity at the time and since then has been the subject of extensive scholarly analysis (Chang, Golden and Hill, 2010; della Porta and Vannucci, 1999). During Legislature XI, corruption investigations of unprecedented scale implicated thousands of local- and national-level Italian politicians. Globally, the only comparable scandal in the last half century or more has been the Brazilian Petrobras revelations that emerged in 2014 and that implicated dozens of politicians, including two former presidents. Originating in Milan, the Italian Clean Hands investigations uncovered widespread, systemic political corruption going up to the highest levels of government, as well as chronic illegal party funding (della Porta, 2001; Rhodes, 1997; Ricolfi, 1993).[1] Data on public prosecutors'

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[1] Our metric of corruption in this period is requests to parliament by the judiciary to remove the parliamentary immunity of members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in order to proceed with investigations into suspected wrongdoing. These have been studied in prior research by Chang, Golden and Hill (2010); Nannicini et al. (2013); Ricolfi (1993), among others. For details on the data, see the Appendix.

requests to lift parliamentary immunity shows that 218 deputies and senators (23 percent of the legislators in the two houses) were investigated for corruption during the legislative period, which ran only two years before the scandal precipitated early elections. Judicial investigations mainly implicated members of the governing parties, especially those affiliated with the Christian Democratic Party (*Democrazia Cristiana*, or DC) and the Socialist Party (*Partito Socialista Italiana*, or PSI), which had governed the country, in coalition with smaller parties, throughout the postwar era.[2]

For corruption to be prominent in the minds of voters — and as a consequence, in the minds of the party leaders tasked with candidate selection — it should be reflected in the content of media coverage. To assess this, we measure how often newspapers discussed corruption on their front pages. We examine the online archive of the *Agenzia Nationale Stampa Associata* (ANSA), Italy's leading wire service during the 1990s. Between 1982 and 2000, ANSA released a daily news summary reporting the topics discussed on the front pages of the country's main newspapers. We searched for corruption-related keywords and determined whether, on each day, corruption was discussed on the front page of at least one newspaper. We aggregated the daily data to construct monthly indexes of corruption prominence.

In Figure 1, we show a plot of these data. The plot shows that newspapers gave more prominence to corruption in the period directly preceding the 1994 election (the end of Legislature XI) than in the period preceding the 1992 election (the end of Legislature X). In 1992, corruption received front-page coverage, on average, one day per month. In the two months preceding the 1994 election, by contrast, corruption received front-page coverage 12 days per month. Earlier in the legislative period, corruption-related items had appeared on the front page every other day, if not even more frequently. These patterns are consistent with those reported by others (e.g. Chang, Golden and Hill (2010); Giglioli (1996); Kenny and Crepaz (2012); Vannucci (2009)).

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[2]Eighty-four percent of the deputies and senators investigated for corruption belonged to parties in the governing coalition. In the Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Party (*Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano*, or PSDI), also affiliated with the government, almost one out of two legislators was investigated.

Figure 1: Prominence of Corruption in the Media, Monthly Totals for January 1991–January 1995
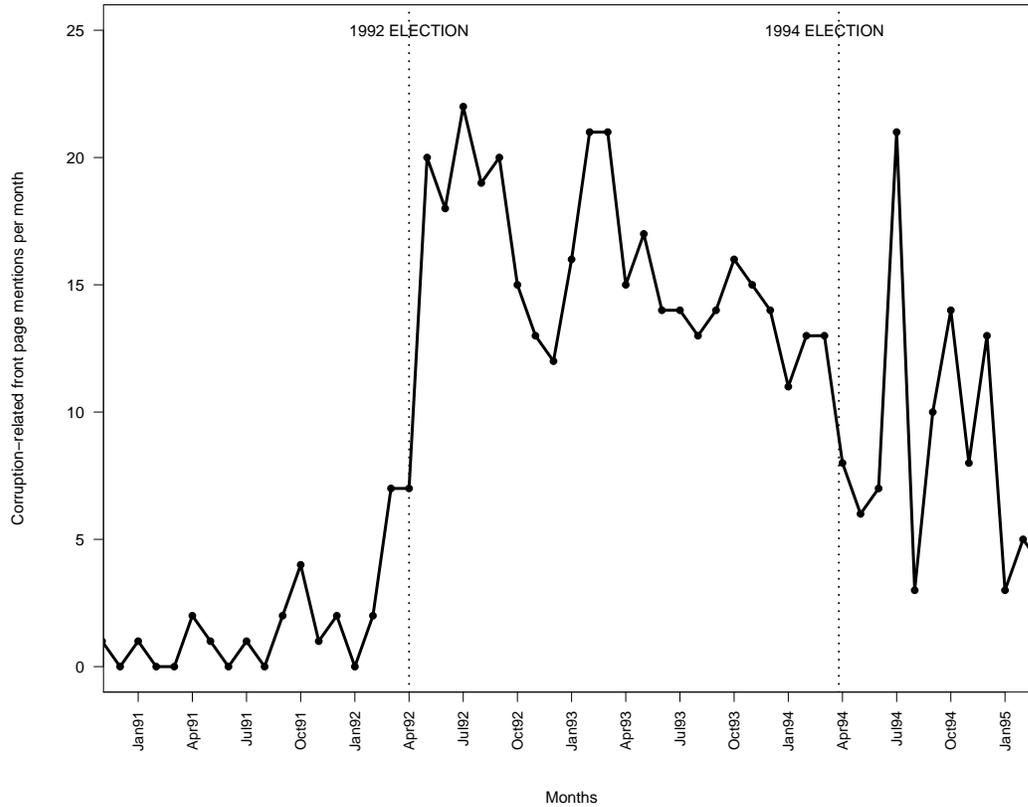
Note: Corruption-related front page mentions per month is the number of days per month in which at least one major Italian newspaper highlighted corruption stories on the front page. Source: *Agenzia Nationale Stampa Associata* (ANSA) daily press reviews. Search keywords: *corruzione* (corruption), *concussione* (extortion by a public official), *peculato* (embezzlement), *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office), *corrott** (corrupted), *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

The second set of scandals that we study were less sizable but of national importance nonetheless. During Legislature XVI, public prosecutors investigated members of most of Italy's regional governments for separate cases of embezzlement.[3] The wave of regional investigations developed independently of proceedings against national legislators, which then followed. Using multiple press sources, we find that as of the end of the legislature, 55 national deputies and senators (6 percent of the total) were under investigation or on trial for corruption, or had avoided a final judgment thanks to the statute of limitations.[4] Two-thirds of those accused of corruption belonged to

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[3]See for example "Spese folli, la grande abbuffata delle Regioni. Indagini in tre su quattro," *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, December 14, 2013.

[4]For details on the data, see the Appendix.

parties in the governing coalition.

As in the Clean Hands period, here too we find that the media gave more coverage during the second legislature than the first. Because the ANSA news summary archive is not available for this period, we instead use that of *La Repubblica*, Italy's second-most widely read daily newspaper. We replicated the procedure used with the ANSA archive: we determined whether, on each day, at least one article on *La Repubblica's* front page contained a corruption-related keyword. We aggregated daily data to construct monthly indexes of corruption prominence.

Figure 2 depicts data that 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. In the two months before the 2008 election, corruption was mentioned on *La Repubblica's* front page, on average, five days per month. In the two months before the 2013 election, corruption was mentioned on the front page 11 days per month. Using a six-month timeframe, we find that corruption was covered six-and-a-half days per month before the 2008 election and 15 days per month before the 2013 election.[5]

The data thus show that Italy's print media gave increasing prominence to corruption in the second of the two legislatures in each of the two periods that we study. And the extent to which corruption was presented in the press as a national problem appears to have affected public opinion. Data collected by Italian National Election Studies (ITANES) found that in 1990, corruption ranked sixth (out of eight) in a ranking of the most important social problems facing the nation. Unfortunately, ITANES did not ask these questions in 1992 or 1994. 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, we expect that corruption will have been at least as salient to voters in 1994, the peak of the Clean Hands investigation.

In 2008, ITANES reported that only two percent of respondents considered corruption the most important problem facing the country, a figure that rose to nine percent in 2013. By then, 27

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[5]Results are similar if we aggregate the data by year. In the year before the 2013 election, corruption was two-and-a-half times more prominent than in the year before the 2008 election.

Figure 2: Prominence of Corruption in the Media, Monthly Totals for July 2006–October 2013
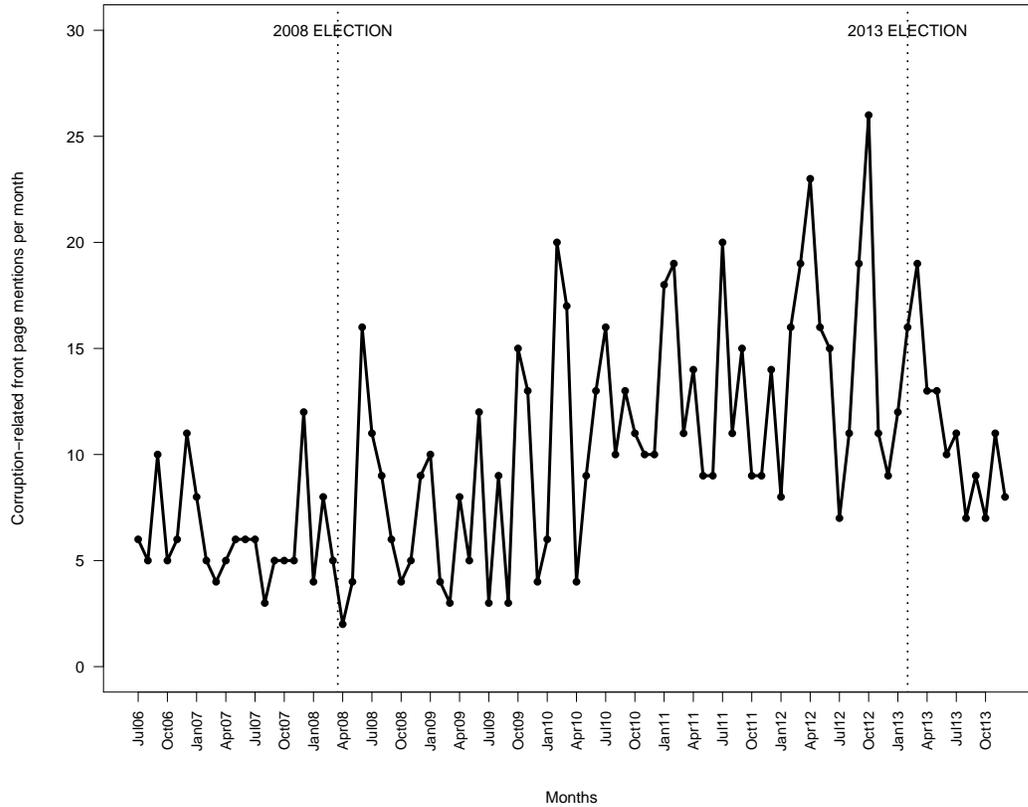
Note: Corruption-related front page mentions per month is the number of days per month in which at least one corruption-related article was published on the front page of *La Repubblica*. Source: *La Repubblica* online archive. Search keywords: *corruzione* (corruption), *concussione* (extortion by a public official), *peculato* (embezzlement), *abuso d'ufficio* (abuse of office), *tangent**, *bustarell**, and *mazzett** (bribe, sidekick).

percent of Italians considered "political ethics" either the first or second most important national problem. These changes also appeared to influence views about the political class in general. In 2008, 58 percent of respondents expressed little or no trust in parliament. The figure rose to 78 percent in 2013. Similarly, 76 percent had little or no trust in political parties in 2008 compared to 89 percent in 2013. Eurobarometer data also corroborate the increasing importance of corruption to the Italian public in this period. In the 2007 and 2009 waves of the Eurobarometer survey, 84 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that corruption was a major problem for Italy. In 2011, the proportion rose 20 percentage points, to 88 percent, and the proportion of those who indicate "strongly agree" went from 38 to 46 percent. In addition, in 2011, 60 percent of respondents

thought that corruption had increased over the previous three years, whereas 76 percent of respondents thought that corruption had increased in 2013, showing a growing sensitivity to political malfeasance.

Thus, the data show that the media and voters generally were more attuned to corruption in the second legislative session in each of our two sets. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the political impact of both sets of investigations was dramatic and almost immediate. Between 1992 and 1994, the DC, PSI, and their governing partners were discredited by corruption investigations and attacks by the media. Newspapers and television networks turned corruption into a highly salient public issue, portraying the investigations as a moral struggle between heroic public prosecutors and decadent, self-serving political elites (Giglioli, 1996). Opposition parties and citizen groups mobilized to fight corruption and those implicated. The combined effect of judicial investigations, media revelations, and public protests resulted in a massive loss of electoral support for the governing parties over the course of the legislature. Following weak results in a 1993 round of municipal elections, the DC and PSI regrouped into new parties (Sani, 1995). Even that did not protect them, and in the 1994 national elections, they were all but eradicated.

A similar but less severe pattern also occurred during the second period we study. Between 2008 and 2013, an economic recession in conjunction with the corruption scandals fueled popular discontent with the governing parties. In late 2011, Prime Minister 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, was ushered in with the external support from center-left, center, and center-right parties and remained in power until 2013. In the meantime, unemployment reached historically high levels and the government cut public spending. During this period, media focus on corruption again seems to have influenced public opinion. Public opinion polls and the outcomes of local-level elections find increasing resentment against the political class and increasing support for the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S), an anti-corruption, anti-establishment party which at the time held no seats in parliament (Paparo and Cataldi, 2013). In the 2013 elections, voters punished the

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governing parties, although not as severely as they had in 1994 (De Sio, Cataldi and de Lucia, 2013; Garzia, 2013). The vote was fragmented among the center-left coalition, the center-right coalition, and the Movimento 5 Stelle.

The two stories we have recounted exhibit important similarities. In the 1994 and 2013 elections, voters punished legislators implicated in corruption. But in Italy, party leaders have the capacity to protect the party brand by deselecting legislators before voters even vote. Candidate selection in Italy is highly centralized, and remained so over the period we study despite changes in the electoral system. The 1994 election was the first held under a mixed-member electoral system that had been introduced a year earlier, replacing a strict open-list proportional system. Three-fourths of the seats were allocated by plurality rule in single-member districts, and the remaining seats were assigned through closed-list PR. 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). Candidate selection remained as closed and centralized as had been the case under the pure PR system that the mixed-member system had replaced (Lundell, 2004; Wertman, 1988). The 2005 introduction of closed-list PR rules further empowered party leadership in candidate selection, marginalizing local party organizations and members (Merlo et al., 2010; Pasquino, 2007). Candidate selection was especially centralized in the center-right parties, whose top officials directly elaborated the party lists. Thus, despite changes to Italy's electoral system that occurred over the period we study, candidate selection remained a prerogative of party elites throughout the two decades. As a result, in the two periods, despite the different electoral rules in place, candidate selection remained fully in the hands of party leaders and select party bodies, giving elites a mechanism to protect the party brand in the face of increased public attention to malfeasance.

And indeed, a survey of the Italian press confirms that parties considered allegedly corrupt legislators as liabilities in 1994 but not in 1992. We 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.[6] For 1992, we were unable to find any article discussing corruption

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[6]We searched for the following strings: "corruzione (corruption) AND candidati (candidates)" and "indagati (inves-

allegations alongside candidate nominations. Either parties ignored such allegations when discussing candidate nominations, or newspapers failed to report on the issue. In 1994, by contrast, the leadership of the main parties publicly discussed candidates' criminal records and announced that, as a general rule, legislators investigated for corruption would not be renominated. For example, the leaders of the *Partito Popolare Italiano* — Italy's renamed Christian Democracy — reportedly disagreed on whether to remove from the ballot all the investigated legislators or to make an exception for popular party figureheads.[7] The secretary of the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* declared that his party would not make any exceptions and urged his coalition partners to do the same.[8]

Our analysis of press sources reveals that a similar shift took place between 2008 and 2013. In 2008, the two main parties, the *Partito Democratico* (PD) and *Popolo della Libertà* (PdL), discussed whether to renominate legislators accused of corruption and opted for a relatively flexible policy. The former pledged not to renominate legislators who had been convicted of corruption or other crimes. The leadership of the PdL reportedly recommended that regional-level organizations not renominate legislators involved in criminal proceedings, except for "those proceedings that, as we all know, are political in nature" — which left ample room for discretion. In 2013, the two parties took a more radical approach to the issue. The PdL's leader, Silvio Berlusconi, announced that his party would not renominate any legislators currently under investigation for corruption, despite the claim that he was convinced of their innocence.

The case of Nicola Cosentino illustrates our point. An influential member of Berlusconi's party, Cosentino, while serving as undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy, was implicated in two corruption investigations between 2008 and 2010. In 2012, prosecutors accused him of colluding with the Camorra, the criminal organization based in his home region of Campania, but

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tigated) AND candidati (candidates)." The timeframe is the 30-day period preceding the deadline for the submission of candidate lists, party names, and symbols.

[7]"Segni Martinazzoli, scontro sugli inquisiti," *Corriere della Sera*, February 9, 1994; "Il gran carnevale di Segni e Martinazzoli," *La Repubblica*, February 12, 1994.

[8]"Le liste di Occhetto a prove di inquisito," *La Repubblica*, January 29, 1994.

the parliament denied the judiciary the authorization to arrest him.[9] In 2013, when discussing the composition of the party lists, 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. As a result, the PdL leadership took him off the ballot.[10]

In short, we have identified two pairs of back-to-back Italian legislatures that differ in the prominence of corruption as a national political issue. We have also outlined a mechanism embedded in Italian electoral processes through which political elites may protect the party brand. The mechanism consists of deselecting legislators whose reputations most threaten the party. Below we use an empirical strategy that leverages variation in association with corruption for individual legislators, and examines whether — as some press reports indicate — party leaders behave as we expect.

4   Data and Empirical Strategy

We assume that party leaders seek to protect the party brand. Because of this, we expect that Italian political parties will approach candidate selection differently in Legislatures XI and XVI than in Legislatures X and XV. Political elites in the latter of the two sets of legislatures — cognizant of growing anti-corruption sentiment among the public and concerned about protecting the party valence brand — should be more likely to deselect those legislators most implicated in corruption, all else equal. To study this, we construct a dataset of incumbents from the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Republic in each of the four legislatures.[11] We code each legislator as corrupt (or

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[9]"Cosentino referente dei Casalesi. Chiesto di nuovo l'arresto del parlamentare del Pdl," *Corriere della Sera*, July 12, 2011.

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

[11]The two chambers enjoy equivalent powers and are elected concurrently using similar rules, making this an appropriate analytical strategy.

not) based on whether the individual was accused of corruption by the judiciary or not.[12] We then code the extent to which each corrupt legislator was implicated publicly through an examination of Italian media sources (detailed below), and use statistical analysis to investigate whether more media mentions of allegations against specific individuals during the second legislature in each pair — Legislatures XI (1992–1994) and XVI (2008-2013) — are associated with lower chances of renomination relative to the first legislature in each pair, Legislatures X (1987–1992) and XV (2006–2008).

We model statistically the differential influence of press mentions about corruption on renomination in the second legislature of each pair relative to the first legislature. Doing so assumes that, in the absence of corruption becoming a more salient national political issue in the second legislative period within each pair, the rate at which political parties renominate similar types of legislators would have been constant across the two legislative sessions. That is, decisions about renomination should follow the same criteria across the two periods. We see no theoretical reason to doubt the validity of this assumption. We are making comparisons between two back-to-back legislative sessions, making it likely that decisions about renomination reflect variance in the salience of corruption and not other factors that could plausibly change over time, such as the state of the economy.[13]

An assumption underlying this strategy is that candidates always seek to be renominated and if they are not, it is because their political party deliberately declines to do so. This assumption aligns with the common theory of politicians as seeking to maximize their chances of reelection. Nonetheless, it may not be empirically accurate. Students of U.S. politics, for instance, stress that congressional representatives may engage in "strategic retirement" if they judge their chances of reelection to be too low (Jacobson and Kernell, 1981). However, the concept of strategic retirement does not travel well to the political system that we study. In both periods we analyze, Italy

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[12]In the Appendix, we detail how we coded for corruption.

[13]One potential problem with this strategy is that the composition of the treatment and control groups also changes over time because the composition of the legislatures change. To deal with this, Tables A1–A4 in the Appendix show that the composition of each second legislature was similar to the first.

used multimember electoral districts, meaning that each constituency elected multiple deputies and senators. This environment makes it extremely difficult for an individual legislator to evaluate his reelection probability. It depends on vote shifts among parties, but also on his position on the party list and, under open list, on the strength of his individual popularity. Only the latter is under the control of the incumbent; the strength of the party reflects many factors, and the candidate's position on the party list is given by party leaders. Because of this, we rule out the option of strategic retirement on the part of legislators and assume, more naturally, that they all seek reelection.[14]

We estimate two linear probability models (LPM), one for each legislative set:[15]

$$Renomination\ in\ 1994_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot Press\ Mentions_i + \beta_2 \cdot Legislature\ XI_i$$
$$+ \beta_3 \cdot Base\ Mentions_i + \beta_4 \cdot Governing\ Party_i + \beta_5 \cdot Seniority_i$$
$$+ \beta_6 \cdot Elite_i + \beta_7 \cdot South_i + \beta_8 \cdot Age_i + \beta_9 \cdot Job_i$$
$$+ \beta_{10} \cdot College_i + \beta_{11} \cdot Female_i$$
$$+ \beta_{12} \cdot Press\ Mentions_i \cdot Legislature\ XI_i + \epsilon_i$$

$$Renomination\ in\ 2013_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot Press\ Mentions_i + \beta_2 \cdot Legislature\ XVI_i$$
$$+ \beta_3 \cdot Base\ Mentions_i + \beta_4 \cdot Governing\ Party_i + \beta_5 \cdot Seniority_i$$
$$+ \beta_6 \cdot Elite_i + \beta_7 \cdot South_i + \beta_8 \cdot Age_i + \beta_9 \cdot Job_i$$
$$+ \beta_{10} \cdot College_i + \beta_{11} \cdot Female_i$$
$$+ \beta_{12} \cdot Press\ Mentions_i \cdot Legislature\ XVI_i + \epsilon_i$$

where i denotes the individual legislator. *Renominated* indicates whether the legislator was nominated by his or her party (or a successor party). We code a deputy or senator as renominated

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[14]In the analysis below, we handle the issue of normal retirement because of advancing age with a control variable for age in our estimations.

[15]We opt to present LPMs here for ease of interpretation. Logistic or probit regression may be a more appropriate approach, given the potential for the LPM to make unbounded predictions. Figures A1 and A2 in the Appendix present predicted probabilities generated from a probit regression for each set of legislatures. The results are substantively and statistically similar.

regardless of whether she was nominated for the same or the other chamber of parliament. *Press Mentions* counts the number of newspaper articles published in *La Stampa* during the legislature that mention corruption allegations against the legislator.[16] *La Stampa* is a daily newspaper published in northern Italy with a circulation of about 250,000 (as of 2012). *La Stampa* is one of the only reputable national newspapers with an online archive that covers both periods under study — 1987 to 1994 and 2006 to 2013 — that also allows easy access to more than just front page stories.[17] Other electronic archives, such as those associated with *ANSA*, *Corriere della Sera*, and *La Repubblica*, do not cover the first period we study. We take the count of all articles containing the name of the legislator as well as a string at least one of the following keywords: *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), and *corruttor** (i.e. person who corrupts). Given its skewed distribution, we log-transform this variable.

Our key explanatory variable is the interaction between the logged count of press mentions about corruption for the individual and a dummy variable for the second legislative period in each set. The interaction term gives us an estimate of whether there is an intercept shift between the two periods. It captures whether political parties were significantly more punitive towards those more implicated in corruption in the second period relative to the first. We also control for a number of theoretically-relevant variables that may be associated with both press mentions about corruption and renomination.[18] These are:

Base Mentions: Some legislators may be mentioned as corrupt more frequently than others simply because they have a higher public profile and appear in the newspaper more often. Following Larcinese and Sircar (N.d.), we measure how many times each incriminated deputy and

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[16]We do not differentiate between positively and negatively slanted coverage. The context suggests that most coverage will be negative, given that the politician's name is associated with corruption.

[17]Available at `http://www.lastampa.it/archivio-storico/index.jpp`.

[18]In the Appendix, we also further explain how each variable — including our dependent variable — is coded and we note the source of each.

senator appeared in the press to capture base public visibility. As base mentions, we code the number of articles in *La Stampa* published during each legislative session that mentions the legislator. Given the skewed distribution, we log-transform this variable.

Governing Party: We expect party leaders in the governing parties to be more sensitive to the need to protect their party brands since those parties were more implicated in both sets of scandals. We thus expect that this measure will be negatively associated with the likelihood of renomination.

Seniority: Historically, seniority has been associated negatively with renomination in Italy (Chang, Golden and Hill, 2010). In 1994 and 2013, party leaders had incentives to exclude the most senior incumbents, since they were perceived by the public as a particularly entrenched and self-serving elite. Incumbents with longer tenure in office should thus have lower chances of being renominated.

Elite: Compared to backbenchers, elite legislators should have more incentives and political resources to seek reelection. We code elite representatives based on whether they hold any office within their parties at the national level (e.g. member of the party's national executive). We expect party elites to be more likely to be renominated.

South: Patronage networks and other similar personalistic ties between voters and politicians are more common in the south of Italy. Southern politicians thus have deeper reservoirs of personal support and may be more immune to reputational decline. Thus, we expect that incriminated politicians will be more likely to be renominated if they represent a southern constituency.

Age: Older legislators should be more likely to retire. Therefore, the representative's age as of the election year should be negatively associated with the likelihood of renomination.

Job: Incumbents who had relatively good jobs before entering parliament should have a greater incentive to retire since they have better outside options. We create a dummy variable indi-

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cating whether the legislator had a high-status non-political job in the private (e.g. manager, business owner) or public sector (e.g. university professor, judge) prior to entering office.[19]

College: Highly educated incumbents, having more professional options outside of politics than their less educated colleagues, should have a greater incentive to retire from office. At the same time, party leaders may put more effort into retaining higher-quality politicians. We control for college education as a way to assess these two possibilities.[20]

Female: We have no a priori theory of the effect of gender on the likelihood of renomination. On the one hand, women are traditionally at a disadvantage in Italian politics.[21] On the other hand, the parties that have already selected particular women to be in parliament should not discriminate against their female legislators in renomination decisions. We control for gender only in Legislature XI, when women are well represented among corrupt incumbents, as a way to assess the possible importance of this variable.

5 Analytical Results

In Table 1, we present statistical results. We present results separately for each set of legislatures, both with and without the control variables listed above.

Let us begin with the base estimates with no control variables, reported in columns 1 and 3. The key interaction effect for Legislatures X–XI shows a strong negative relationship between the interaction term — the (logged) number of press mentions referencing corruption and a dummy variable for Legislature XI — and incumbent renomination, suggesting that political parties were

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[19]Unlike their U.S. counterparts, 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, pp. 43–44). For instance, lawyers, who comprise 15 percent and 12 percent of Legislature XI and Legislature XVI respectively, normally continue working for their law firms even after election to office.

[20]The college premium in Italy is lower than in most developed countries (OECD, 2005). As a result, college-educated incumbents do not have as strong an incentive as elsewhere to leave politics, for example to work in the private sector.

[21]The proportion of female deputies and senators increased from nine to 21 percent from Legislature XI to Legislature XVI. Nonetheless, in 2012, Italy had the lowest rate of female parliamentary representation in the Eurozone.

Table 1: Relationship Between Press Mentions and Renomination by Legislature

	Legislatures X-XI	Legislatures X-XI	Legislatures XV-XVI	Legislatures XV-XVI
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Press mentions	0.013	0.015	0.046	0.045
	(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.067)	(0.066)
Legislature XI	−0.282***	−0.261***		
	(0.024)	(0.025)		
Legislature XVI			−0.174***	−0.039
			(0.022)	(0.027)
Base mentions		0.030***		0.019***
		(0.007)		(0.007)
Governing party		−0.075***		−0.108***
		(0.024)		(0.026)
Seniority		−0.028***		−0.033***
		(0.007)		(0.008)
Elite		0.019		0.082***
		(0.027)		(0.024)
South		0.047*		−0.026
		(0.024)		(0.023)
Age		−0.007***		−0.012***
		(0.001)		(0.001)
Job		0.043*		0.039*
		(0.025)		(0.023)
College		0.084***		−0.011
		(0.025)		(0.025)
Female		−0.062		0.045
		(0.038)		(0.029)
Press mentions x Legislature XI	−0.199***	−0.202***		
	(0.058)	(0.056)		
Press mentions x Legislature XVI			−0.195**	−0.166**
			(0.079)	(0.079)
Constant	0.801***	1.062***	0.755***	1.427***
	(0.018)	(0.073)	(0.015)	(0.073)
Observations	1,555	1,538	1,834	1,675
R^2	0.164	0.226	0.045	0.158

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

more responsive to public associations with corruption in the second legislature compared to the first. That is, political elites, arguably responding to the growing anti-corruption climate in the second legislature, deselected those legislators who were publicly most implicated in a way they had not in the earlier legislature. More precisely, we find that for each one percent increase in the logged count of press mentions, legislators were about two percentage points less likely to be renominated in the second period relative to the first. Press mentions referencing malfeasance had no statistically detectable association with the probability of renomination during the first legislature (as given by the base press mentions term). We find a similar result when we examine the results in column 3 for Legislatures XV–XVI. The interaction term between the logged number of press mentions referencing corruption and the dummy variable for the second session (Legislature XVI) is negative and statistically different from zero: political parties were more likely to deselect legislators implicated in corruption when corruption was more salient to the public, as was the case in Legislative XVI relative to Legislature XV. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that parties in Italy were concerned about their valence brand and chose to act before voters went to the polls.

In both legislative periods, the magnitude of the initial effects holds when we add the control variables, as is evident from the results reported in columns 2 and 4. In addition, covariates perform as expected. In column 2, we report estimates for Legislatures X–XI with controls. Results show that association with a governing party, age, and seniority each reduces the likelihood of being renominated. More visible legislators (as measured by the overall count of media mentions), Southern legislators, those with previous professional experience, and those with a college degree are all more likely to be renominated, all else equal. Results in column 4 for Legislatures XV–XVI also show that affiliation with a governing party, age, and seniority reduce the likelihood of being renominated. In this period, as in the earlier one, we also find statistical evidence that more visible politicians and party elites were more likely to be renominated.

These results show that party leaders appear to have been sensitive to the frequency with

which the names of their legislators appeared in the press in connection with corruption. In the second of each pair of legislatures, more frequent corruption-related publicity of a legislator is associated with a reduced probability of renomination. In the first of each pair of legislatures, this is not the case. In other words, the data show a period break in how party leaders responded to implications of wrongdoing on the part of their own legislators. We interpret this difference as efforts by party elites to protect the party brand in periods of growing general salience of and public dissatisfaction with corruption.

6   Discussion

According to Transparency International, Italy continues to exhibit corruption levels well above those of the average for western Europe.[22] Scholars of the country likewise lament that the Clean Hands investigations failed to curb corruption (della Porta and Vannucci, 2012), and may have even augmented it (Vannucci, 2009). As evidence, analysts contend that "the political class has only partially 'renewed' itself, with a large number of politicians being 'recycled' from the parties of the 'First Republic'" (della Porta and Vannucci, 2007, p. 830), and that "all the indicators available on the diffusion of corruption instead signal high and constant levels" (p. 831). This view has been widely diffused by the Italian press, and is arguably the conventional wisdom (Di Nicola, 2003).

Other investigations present evidence that contradicts the dominant view. Statistical analyses of criminal activities on the part of civil servants show a substantial drop in the decades after the Clean Hands investigations as well as declines in the prices paid for construction of public infrastructure (Acconcia and Cantabene, 2008; Del Monte and Cantabene, 2007). This quantitative work suggests that the systems that previously linked political parties, civil servants, and construction companies in elaborate schemes involving kickbacks for campaign financing may have been permanently disrupted with the judicial investigations that took place in the early 1990s. And indeed,

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[22]For 2017 data, see `https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/europe_and_central_asia_more_civil_engagement`. Accessed August 8, 2018.

the scandals that underlie the second set of legislatures we study in this article involve geographically localized phenomena and forms of corruption distinct from party campaign financing, a fact admitted even by those who contend that corruption remains a major on-going problem in Italy (della Porta, Sberna and Vannucci, 2015).

Arbitrating between these views is difficult given the kinds of data that is typically available. The reason is that if quantitative indicators of corruption show falling rates, there is no way to know if this is because corruption is actually in decline or if it has instead become more secretive and difficult to uncover. For instance, if fewer civil servants are charged with crimes related to corruption, we do not know if this is because fewer of them commit such crimes or if investigators are doing a less good job in uncovering these crimes, perhaps because those who commit them are taking greater care to hide them. Due to these inferential problems, it is not surprising that many analysts contend that the Clean Hands investigations were not successful in reducing corruption in Italy in the decades that followed: they would have strong grounds for this claim if observed levels of corruption increased, but they could be correct in making this claim even if levels decreased.

Our analysis contributes to this debate. Our data show that in the period since the Clean Hands investigations, national legislators who are implicated in corrupt activities are *not* successful at remaining in public life as elected officials *when the press is vigilant in making corruption a publicly salient issue*. Our research design is well suited for making descriptive inferences of this sort because it is constructed to examine parallel trends in different legislative periods when, arguably, only a single determining factor has changed: namely, the overall extent of public interest in corruption. Our design is similar to a differences-in-differences design, with the shift in public opinion as measured by the legislature dummy variable serving as the treatment. Although it still suffers from limitations — namely, there may be changes in addition to that of the intensity of public opinion that occur between the legislative periods — it offers an improvement over the simple examination of trends over time. We thus contend that our findings are more persuasive than arguments based on weaker research designs or on raw counts of phenomena. In addition,

our analysis systematically studies the ability of incriminated politicians to re-enter public office, whereas other studies draw exclusively on anecdotal evidence.

Ironically, the role of the press in publicizing corruption and thereby arousing anticorruption public opinion contributes to what we believe is the erroneous interpretation that corruption remains as frequent as ever in Italian public life. It is when the press most often publicizes corruption that public opinion is aroused and national politicians under investigation thereby driven from public office — but this is precisely when it appears to a naive observer that there is *more* rather than *less* corruption in public life. The frequency of anecdoctal reports in the media serves simultaneously to prevent the recurrence of corruption and to suggest that the problem remains common. Frequent reporting on corruption may be misleading if it is interpreted to suggest that the underlying phenomenon is worse.

Our analysis offers grounds for reinterpreting the after-effects of the Clean Hands investigations. As we have said, many have concluded that these investigations were not successful in reducing political corruption in Italy. We disagree. We believe that our analysis shows a substantial reduction in political corruption in Italy — both during and in the years following the Clean Hands investigations — and in particular demonstrates the role of the press in combination with party leaders in keeping corrupt politicians from re-entering public office. Our data demonstrate that the most corrupt politicians are not typically able to continue running for and winning public office; their careers are forcibly interrupted when the press goes to work making corruption a salient public issue.

These findings may have implications for understanding the success of anticorruption campaigns more generally. Anticorruption campaigns apparently can be successful. But success requires on-going vigilance by three separate groups: the public, which must continue to condemn corruption; the press, which must continue to publicize it; and party gatekeepers, who must shift from facilitating to preventing their corrupt peers from reentering public office. Note as well that in the case we study, keeping legislators who are accused of corruption out of public office does

not seem to require successful judicial prosecution or conviction. Whether these results will be duplicated in more recent anti-corruption campaigns, such as that in Brazil, Mexico, and Guatemala, remains to be seen.

7 Conclusion

We have found a negative and statistically significant relationship between the number of newspaper mentions of corruption allegations for individual members of Italy's Chamber of Deputies and Senate and the likelihood of renomination — but only when corruption is a salient political issue to the public. This finding supports the hypothesis that, when corruption is publicized in the media, it decreases renomination chances. We argue that these findings suggest political parties were concerned that their national vote shares would suffer as voters in other constituencies across the country punished candidates associated with those parties that renominated the most publicly visible transgressor — even if the particular candidates so implicated might have achieved reelection. Our findings are thus consistent with the idea that party leaders seek to protect the party valence brand, and are most inclined to take action to root out corrupt legislators when their actions appear salient to the public.

We recognize that our findings may elicit alternate interpretations. One possible alternative is that political party leaders anticipate electoral defeat were they to renominate legislators under judicial scrutiny for criminal activity. In this view, voters would have not reelected the implicated legislators had they been on the ballot. Another, and perhaps less reasonable interpretation, is that party elites suddenly experienced moral revulsion at the behavior of their partisan compatriots. Our analysis does not allow us to distinguish among these possibilities, because we have no way to know which specific groups of voters would have withdrawn electoral support from parties had they renominated malfeasant legislators and no way to peer into the hearts of party elites. Future research should carefully consider the mechanisms that may be at work.

Our empirical strategy has some obvious limitations. We rely exclusively on newspaper sources to measure media coverage. Some justification for this comes from the fact that television coverage is known to be correlated with newspaper coverage in Italy (Asquer, 2015). Likewise, Ceron (2014) finds that mentions of corruption on Italian news websites and Twitter posts follow the publication of corruption-related references in hardcopy newspapers. This suggests that coverage by online sources should also be correlated with newspaper coverage and gives us confidence that newspaper mentions are a good general informational proxy.

Our findings point to the importance of the media in ensuring electoral accountability. Some studies find that the more information on malfeasance voters receive from the media, the more likely they are to vote them out of office (Costas-Peŕez, Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro, 2012; Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Larreguy, Marshall and Snyder, 2014). These studies assume a direct accountability mechanism between voters and representatives. But before voters vote, political party elites choose whether to renominate the incumbent and allow his name on the ballot. We have demonstrated that in Italy in two different periods, separated by decades and characterized by different electoral rules, party elites appear to have operated similarly to reduce the exposure of their parties to allegations of corruption. They did so by refusing to renominate incumbents whose names appeared more often in the press in conjunction with corruption allegations. By enabling voters to identify incumbents accused of corruption, the media contributes to removing them from office. But party elites — and not voters — are the channel through which removal occurs. Our study thus shows how politicians implicated in corruption are removed from office despite the fact that voters generally appear to reelect such incumbents — when they are on the ballot.

Our study suggests that future research on corruption, malfeasance, and governance should pay more attention to the role of political elites in stemming bad behavior, and should seek to understand why party leaders behave as they do, given how voters typically behave. Previous work has focused overwhelmingly on whether and how voters hold politicians accountable and has ignored how elites respond to scandal. Our results suggest that party leaders and elites may be

the best hope of cleaning up corruption.

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Appendix

Corrupt: Indicates whether the legislator was accused of corruption by the judiciary. In Legislatures X–XI, it refers to legislators investigated by the judiciary for corruption-related crimes during the legislature. In Legislatures XV–XVI, *Corrupt* identifies the legislators 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*). Corruption-related crimes are: bribery (*corruzione*), extortion by a public official (*concussione*), abuse of office (*abuso d'ufficio*), embezzlement (*peculato*), illegal party funding (*violazione delle leggi sul finanziamento pubblico ai partiti*), and fraud against the State or the regional government (*truffa ai danni dello Stato/ai danni della Regione*). For Legislatures X–XI, we use data on the requests to lift parliamentary immunity issued by Italian prosecutors (*richieste di autorizzazione a procedere*), drawn from Chang, Golden and Hill (2010), Ceron (2014), and records from Parliament (`http://legislature.camera.it`). For Legislature XV, criminal records are from Gomez and Travaglio (2008), integrated with data compiled by *La Repubblica*.[23] For Legislature XVI, we use data compiled by *La Repubblica* and *Il Fatto Quotidiano*.[24]

Renomination: Indicates whether the legislator 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. Chang, Golden and Hill (2010) codes whether legislators were nominated for the Chamber in the 1992 election. We use the Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (available at `http://elezionistorico.interno.it/`) to code whether legislators were nominated for the Senate. For Legislatures XI, XV, and XVI, we merged MP data with a dataset of candidates in the 1994, 2006, and 2008 elections. We use

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[23]"Tutti i guai con la giustizia degli aspiranti onorevoli," *La Repubblica*, March 16, 2008.

[24]"Gli 84 sotto accusa," *La Repubblica*, July 22, 2011; "I cento parlamentari condannati, imputati, indagati o prescritti," *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, September 30, 2012; and "La lista dei parlamentari indagati e condannati," *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, November 5, 2012.

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, we integrated existing datasets with data scraped from the Electoral Archive of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (available at `http://elezionistorico.interno.it/`).

Governing Party: Indicates whether the legislator was affiliated with a party in the governing coalition during the legislature. For Legislatures X, XI, and XV, variables were coded by Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables were coded by Center for the Study of Political Change (CIRCaP) (2013).

Seniority: Number of previous parliamentary terms served. We not distinguish between terms served in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate. For Legislatures X,XI, and XV, variables were coded by Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables were coded by Center for the Study of Political Change (CIRCaP) (2013).

Elite: Indicates whether the legislator held national-level offices within his/her party apparatus at the opening of the legislature. For Legislatures X, XI, and XV, variables were coded by Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables were coded by Center for the Study of Political Change (CIRCaP) (2013).

South: Indicates that the legislator was elected in one of the following regions: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Apulia (Puglia), Sardinia (Sardegna), Sicily (Sicilia). For Legislatures X, XI, and XV, variables were coded by Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables coded by Center for the Study of Political Change (CIRCaP) (2013).

Age: Legislator's age as of the election year. For Legislatures X, XI, and XV, variables were coded by Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables were coded by Center for the Study of Political Change (CIRCaP) (2013).

Job: Indicates whether the legislator 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 using data from Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011), following the criteria set out by Chang, Golden and Hill (2010).

College: Indicates whether the legislator had a university degree. For Legislatures X, XI, and XV, variables were coded by Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables were coded by Center for the Study of Political Change (CIRCaP) (2013).

Female: Indicates whether the legislator was a female or not. For Legislatures X, XI, and XV, variables were coded by Chang, Golden and Hill (2010) and Gagliarducci, Nannicini and Naticchioni (2011). For Legislature XVI, variables were coded by Center for the Study of Political Change (CIRCaP) (2013).

Table A1: Summary Statistics for Legislature X

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.
Press mentions (logged)	0.046	0.331
Base mentions (logged)	3.003	1.857
Governing party	0.597	0.491
Seniority	1.626	1.865
Elite	0.223	0.416
South	0.360	0.480
Age	49.211	9.202
Job	0.458	0.499
College	0.614	0.487
Female	0.128	0.334

Table A2: Summary Statistics for Legislature XI

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.
Press mentions (logged)	0.282	0.779
Base mentions (logged)	2.466	1.715
Governing party	0.524	0.500
Seniority	1.429	1.850
Elite	0.231	0.421
South	0.367	0.482
Age	51.418	9.404
Job	0.334	0.472
College	0.678	0.468
Female	0.088	0.283

Table A3: Summary Statistics for Legislature XV

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.
Press mentions (logged)	0.028	0.229
Base mentions (logged)	2.204	1.699
Governing party	0.511	0.500
Seniority	1.289	1.546
Elite	0.465	0.499
South	0.363	0.481
Age	53.608	9.243
Job	0.591	0.492
College	0.732	0.443
Female	0.163	0.370

Table A4: Summary Statistics for Legislature XVI

Statistic	Mean	St. Dev.
Press mentions (logged)	0.060	0.365
Base mentions (logged)	2.563	1.774
Governing party	0.886	0.317
Seniority	2.355	1.557
Elite	0.193	0.395
South	0.364	0.481
Age	57.193	9.495
Job	0.572	0.495
College	0.708	0.455
Female	0.207	0.406

Figure A1: Predicted Probabilities of Renomination by Press Mentions and Legislature (Legislatures X-XI)
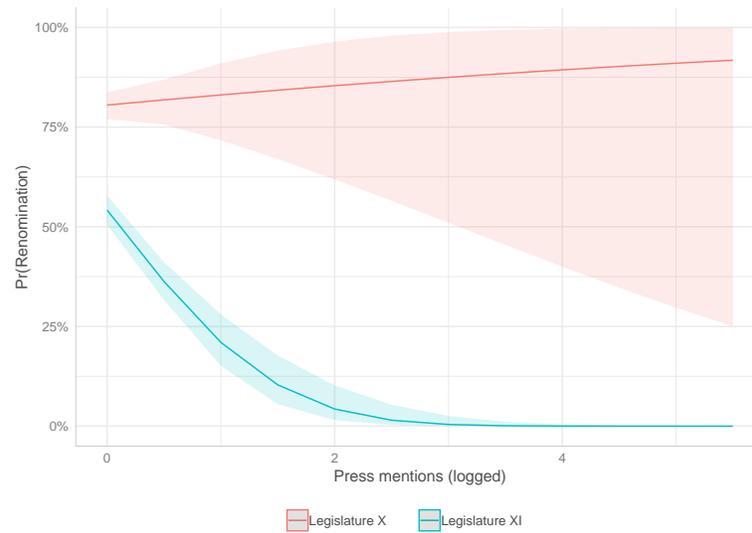
Note: Probabilities reflect estimates from a probit regression model. The model is the same as reported in Table 1 using OLS. Each covariate is held at its mean. The results show that the probability of renomination decreases as the (logged) number of press mentions referencing corruption increases in the second legislature (XI), but that press mentions do not decrease the probability of renomination during the first period (X). The interaction term in the model is also statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Figure A2: Predicted Probabilities of Renomination by Press Mentions and Legislature (Legislatures XV-XVI)
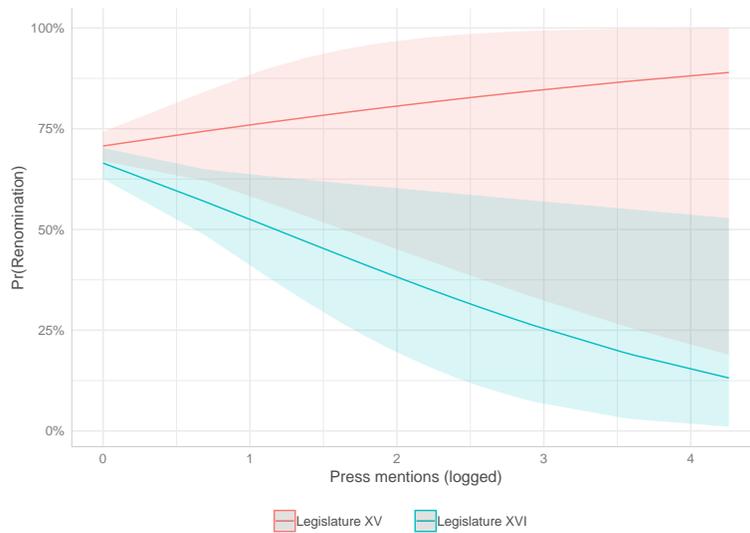
Note: Probabilities reflect estimates from a probit regression model. The model is the same as reported in Table 1 using OLS. Each covariate is held at its mean. The results show that the probability of renomination decreases as the (logged) number of press mentions referencing corruption increases in the second legislature (XVI), but that press mentions do not decrease the probability of renomination during the first period (XV). The interaction term in the model is also statistically significant at $p < .08$.