

Government, Scandals and Political Support in Italy

VINCENZO MEMOLI
Università degli Studi di Milano



I am particularly grateful to Nicolò Conti (Unitelma -Sapienza, University of Rome), James Newell (University of Salford) and two anonymous reviewers for their constructive revisions. Nevertheless, errors and omissions are entirely my own.

Abstract

What are the political implications of government scandals? This article examines the impact of political scandals on the popularity of the Italian government. The literature on scandals shows that there is a strong relationship between scandals and the popularity of individual politicians and government leaders. Yet, the question of how scandals influence support for governments remains open. Exploring the case of Italy through the use of different data series, the article shows how sex and economic scandals have affected government popularity in 2005-2010

Introduction

When citizens say they support the political system, what do they effectively support? The key to answering this question may be found in Easton's work (1965; 1975). He describes the basic elements of democratic support: citizens' evaluation of institutions (performance) and their components (parties and political actors), and the citizens' identification with the State. Easton allows classification of political and institutional systems by emphasizing differences and similarities between three specific political objects (political community, regime and authority) and different levels of political support. He also distinguishes between two types of citizen orientations: diffuse support and specific support. Diffuse support is a deep-seated set of attitudes towards politics and the operation of the political system, and is relatively resistant to change. Specific support refers to satisfaction with institutional outcomes. It is directed towards political or state elites' actions. Specific support may be analogous to the "responsiveness" delineated by Pharr and Putnam (2000) as "democratic dissatisfactions". Diffuse and specific types of support are not disconnected, especially when analysed from

a longitudinal perspective (Adamany and Grossman 1983). Furthermore, diffuse support may also absorb the effects of unpopular decisions (Gibson 1989; Tyler 1990). In this respect, diffuse support can be high even when specific support is low.

Studies on political support have shown that the scenario of the last twenty years is not very optimistic. Many scholars, using different measures of specific and diffuse support, have found that in most of the consolidated democracies citizens are very dissatisfied with their political institutions and political class (McAllister 2000; Norris 1999). This situation reveals a state of clear democratic malaise (Dalton 2004).

This article analyses government support in Italy, as a measure of regime support. Italy represents an interesting case for two reasons. First, in the last three legislatures, political leaders have been involved in different scandals: misconduct, financial corruption, and abuse of public office (Newell 2010). Moreover, the number of political scandals has slowly increased in recent years, especially in 2010, when Berlusconi's lifestyle heavily coloured the image of Italy internationally (Economist 2010). Second, the political support of Italian citizens is declining. In the last five years trust in political institu-

tions, especially in the Parliament and the Government, has decreased (Memoli 2011). Besides, government popularity is declining (Corrispondenti 2010).

Political scandals represent one of the factors that may influence citizens' public values and their approval of the Government, and hence also damage the public figures involved (Newell 2010). Yet, even if scandals produce negative public reactions (Peters and Welch 1978) and are unfavourable for a democracy (Maier 2011), it is also true that the effect of these consequences can be limited. The Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi won the elections of 2001 and 2008 despite being under investigation in several corruption cases and inquiries (Vanucci 2009: 235).

Thus, if a scandal is defined as something that 'refers to action or events involving certain kinds of transgression which become known to others and are sufficiently serious to elicit a public response' (Thompson, 2000: 13), what happens to government popularity when a scandal occurs? Different views within the literature have explored the effect of scandals on government popularity. Scandals can lower regard for individual politicians and government leaders (Martorano and Ulbig 2008; Bowler and Karp 2004; Clarke et al. 1998), erode public trust in government (Damico, Conway and Bowman Damico, 2000), and reduce public's support for institutions (Morris and Clawson 2007). Occasionally scandals also have electoral consequences (Cowley 2002; McAllister 2000; Hetherington 1999).

Nevertheless, not all scholars agree on the idea that political scandals will damage the political system (Easton, 1965; Citrin, 1974) underlining as scandals are not always dysfunctional (Sabato et al. 2000; Kepplinger and Ehmig 2004; Kepplinger 2005). This is confirmed by the Watergate scandal since public support for the political system increased (Dunham and Mauss 1976; Sniderman et al. 1976). Others (Dimock and Jacobson 1995; Alford et al. 1994: 790), claim that "scandals lead to a decrease in a member's electoral margin. However, they do not routinely result in an incumbent's defeat". In his analysis of the impact of media coverage of political scandals on political disaffection in Germany, Maier (2002) shows a positive effect of media coverage on satisfaction with democracy.

People respond negatively to financial scandals affecting evaluations of a politician (Doherty et al. 2011). Furthermore, considering Inglehart (1997), it is possible to claim that the public in traditional countries should react to private misconduct more negatively than people in secular-rational countries. Thus, sex scandals should

cause more public uproar in traditional countries, such as the USA, than in those that are classified as very "secular-rational" (such as Italy). In this work, taking as the starting point the idea that Italy, despite being a secular-rational country, is strongly conditioned by Catholicism, sex scandals are expected to produce the same negative public reaction as financial scandals.

To estimate the effect that financial and sex scandals have on government popularity a longitudinal dataset—2005 to 2010—based on survey data is used. Applying a Prais-Winston regression model, this article argues that government popularity tends to decrease if the behaviour of the political class diverges from public morality.

Political support

The conceptualization of political support is developed by adopting Easton's (1965) theoretical perspective. Easton (1975: 436) defines support as "the way in which a person evaluative orients himself to some objects through either his attitudes or his behavior". He defines support for a political system as a multidimensional concept that has two different modes—specific and diffuse—which are directed to three objects of a political system: the community, the regime, and the authorities. Accordingly, political support is to be understood as the extent to which individuals evaluate political objects positively. Political objects can be represented as the combination of attitudes about political leaders, institutions, and the system as a whole (Easton 1975: 436). Most of these distinctions are based on the idea that "democratic political systems need to keep the support of their citizens to remain viable . . . short-term failures in the capacity to satisfy public demands do not necessarily erode the diffuse support to the regime or to the political community" (Dalton, 1999: 59).

In the last twenty years political support in consolidated democracies has not been stable and political disaffection has characterized the prevailing political attitudes among citizens (Pharr and Putnam 2000). In many established western democracies, citizens have become more critical towards their political leaders, governmental institutions, and democratic systems (Dalton 2004). The decline mainly involves support towards the authorities and regimes (Norris 1999; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Dalton 2004). If citizens are more likely to approve their governments when they perform well in policy terms (Mishler and Rose 2001; Evans and Whitefield 1995) or when politicians are held

accountable (Weatherford 1992), it is also true that the relationship between institutional performance and political support has been inverse or weak (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Cusack 1999; Bellucci, Memoli and Sanders 2011).

The Italian context does not provide very optimistic prospects. Italians are characterized by very low levels of satisfaction towards democracy, as well as by political skepticism (Almond and Verba 1963). Lack of political interest and low levels of information have negatively conditioned the relationship between citizens and state. Yet, they have also contributed to limit political efficacy and increased political alienation of citizens. In other words, Italians display a political culture characterized by low levels of civicness. This result was successively confirmed by Banfield's study (1976) realized in Basilicata¹. He showed that communitarian ethos---the relationship between families and between those and the others---was damaged by citizens' orientation to maximizing the material advantages of their own families. Thus, citizens were characterized by weak social networks and low propensity to engage in cooperative forms of behaviour.

Even if Almond and Verba were criticized for their conclusions, which contrast with other interpretations proposed by Italian scholars (Sani 1980; 1989), the situation has not changed several decades later. Putnam (1993), in his analysis of civic traditions of the Italian regions, shows that different levels of civicness are related to political institutions' performances, with a direct impact on common well-being and local community governability (Cartocci 2000). That could produce a vicious circle whereby low political performances further increase citizens' institutional disaffection. This represents a trend that, since 1990, appears confirmed by citizens' anti-party (Bardi 1996; Sani and Segatti 2001) and anti-political (Mastropaolo 2000) behaviour. In this respect, citizens are alienated from politics and characterized by low levels of political efficacy (Bardi and Pasquino 1995). However, this picture appears excessively pessimistic. As Cartocci (2007) shows that unevenly distributed civicness characterizes only some parts of the country. At the end of the last century, even if the distance between citizens and the political class was clear, the level of institutional trust increased. In fact, Italy appears very close to other European nations in terms of social capital (Sciolla 2004), however, the institutional malaise

seems to persist (Graph 1). If, following Tangentopoli² (1992-2000), citizens expressed more trust towards the key political institutions, since 2001 the trend would be reversed. With systematic fluctuation (in the 2001 Berlusconi II government; in the 2005 Berlusconi III government; in the 2006 Prodi II government and in the 2008 with Berlusconi IV Government) political institutions have lost appeal among citizens. Exceptions have been the judicial system and the civil service, which have registered positive trends. In contrast, Parliament and Government have lost the trust of more than 10% of citizens. An explanation of this trend may lie in the negative performances of these two institutions during this time-period. Even if the data cover a limited period, it is possible to claim that since 1990, Italians have viewed their political institutions in pessimistic terms.

When political outcomes are not in line with citizens' expectations, the citizens will punish the institutions and the political class, following a punishment-reward logic. Thus, the weakening of public support would make it harder for the government to address the country's problems properly. The levels of government popularity³ in 2005-2010 show that government choices have affected citizens' evaluations of its performance. In fact, at the end of the 2008 electoral term, citizens have confirmed their dissatisfaction towards the incumbent government and they did not hesitate to sanction it (Graph 1).

During the last five years, government popularity has declined from 38.5% to 30.0% (graph 2). As in the case of the previous institutional indicators, also this one is characterized by high variability since it is influenced by government choices and by internal and external events. The trend of government popularity clearly shows the negative public judgment during the initial months of 2005, probably due to the crisis that affected Casa delle Libertà⁴ following the regional elections. This induced Berlusconi to replace some of the ministers. The effects of the new governmental appointments are evident only in the subsequent quarter (Sep-

2 Tangentopoli is a term which was coined to describe pervasive corruption in the Italian political system. It began on February 17, 1992, when a member of the Italian Socialist party, Mario Chiesi, was arrested for accepting a bribe from a Milan cleaning firm.

3 The question is: *How do you evaluate government work?* The categories are three: positively, negatively and don't know. The data were collected by ISPO and the percentage values were computed considering also the don't know answers.

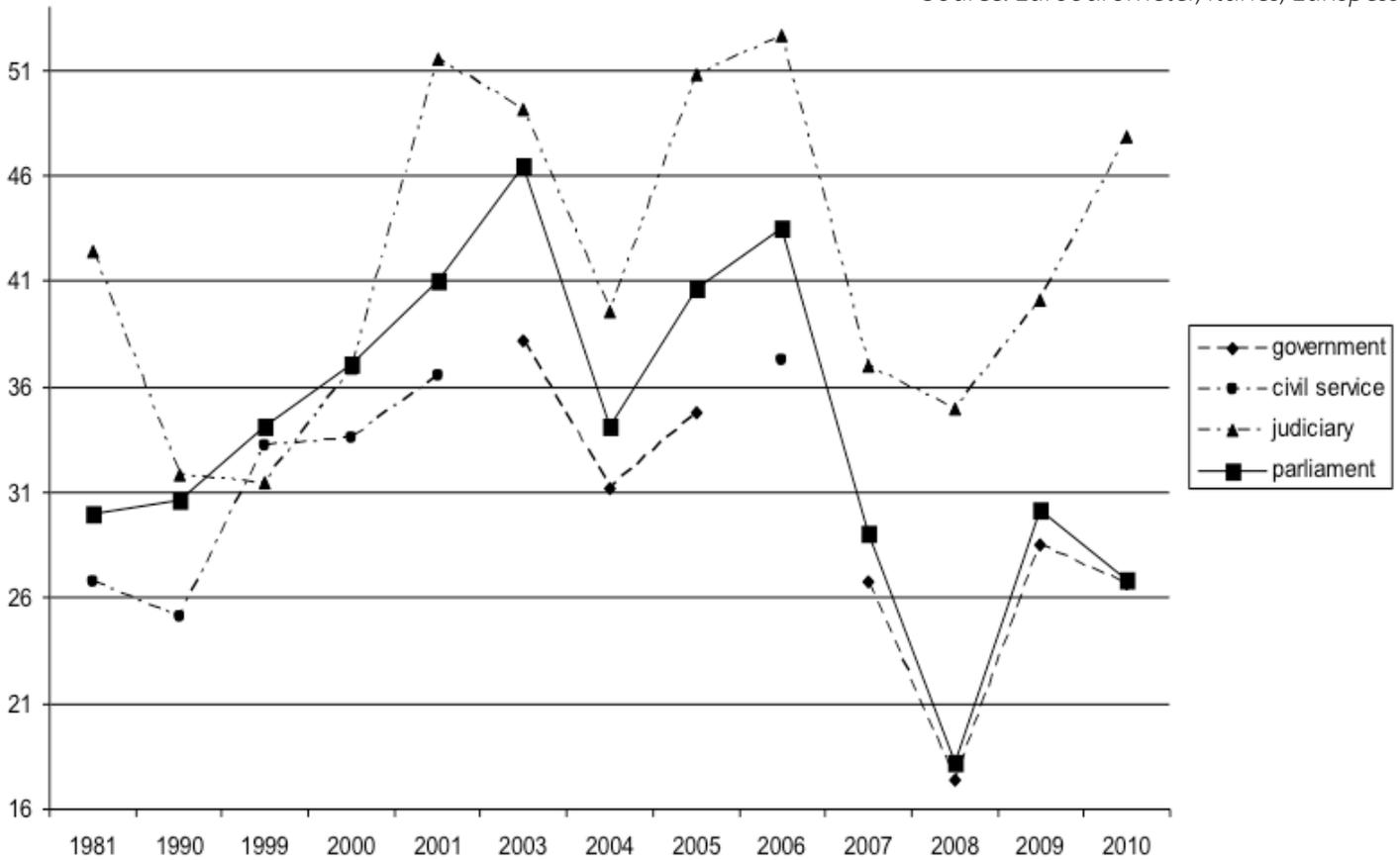
4 The Casa della Libertà was a major Italian centre-right political and electoral alliance led by Silvio Berlusconi. It was composed of several parties.

1 The city name adopted by Banfield is imaginary. The city which Banfield refers is Chiaromonte, a little Basilicata county, situated in Potenza province.

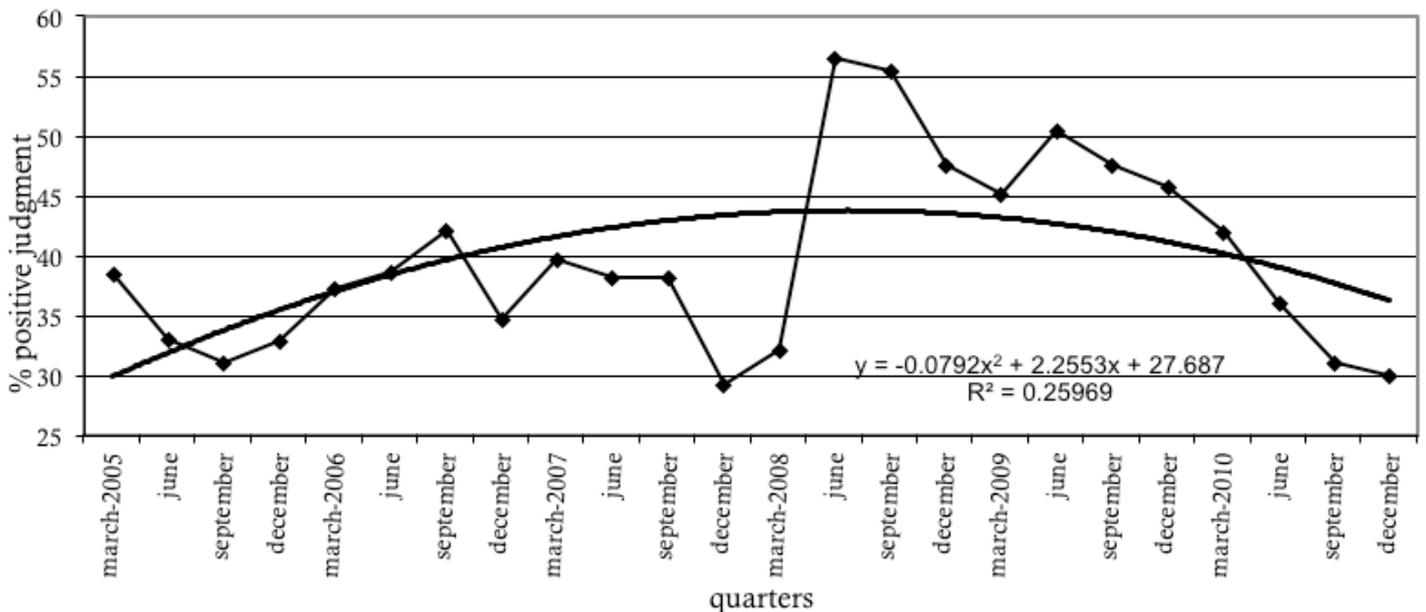
tember 2005). However, even if government support increased, in the 2006 elections Berlusconi experienced an electoral. Until September 2006 the new Prodi government benefited from relatively high levels of citizen

support (4 out of 10 evaluated the work of the government positively). However it was a short-term success. Judicial problems affected some of the government's members and a number of unpopular decisions under-

Graph 1. Confidence in political institutions
Source: Eurobarometer, Itanes, Eurispess.



Graph 2. Government popularity
Source: Ispo (2005-2010)



mined government popularity. At the end of 2007 the support for the government declined to 29.0%. The general citizen's discontent is evident looking at the results of the 2008 election: the citizens, again punishing the incumbent, delegate the right-wing coalition to guide the country, with a positive judgment higher than 55.0%. Even in this case, the idyllic moment was very short for the Prodi II Government. A series of political scandals, in which both government members and Prime Minister Berlusconi were involved, influenced public opinion and the government popularity, which in December 2010 declined to 30.0%. In this period, economic and sex scandals have affected some members of the government.

There are several factors to consider when defining an event as a scandal: the relevance of the alleged offence with respect to conceived societal norms (King, 1986; Schudson, 2004); the presence of calls for resignation made by politicians in parliamentary discussions (Dewan and Dowding 2005), and media attention given to the scandal, measured either as the number of days during which it gained coverage in the media or as the number of articles focusing on it in the press (Bytzek 2007). The most successful approach would include a combination of all these factors (Esser 1999). Moving from this point and considering the scandals between 2005 and 2010, in which government members have been involved, seven specific events have been selected. Some of them have involved bank managers and politicians (Bancopoli 2005), others government members—Minister Scajola⁵, the head of the civil protection agency Guido Bertolaso⁶ ----or the Prime Minister—Lodo Milano⁷ and Mills⁸. Apart from economic scandals, also sex scandals have coloured Italian politics: Ruby⁹,

5 In april 2010, Italian Industry Minister Claudio Scajola, one of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's closest allies, has resigned amid allegations of an improper real-estate deal – he may have used money from a kickback to purchase a luxury apartment.

6 The ministry's head, Guido Bertolaso, was credited with the "miracle" of getting the garbage off the streets of Naples, responding to last summer's earthquake in the Abruzzo, and managing various other public works projects. At the moment he is an ugly tangle of cronyism, waste, and corruption, as well as prostitution.

7 It refers to a trial opposing Silvio Berlusconi to Carlo De Benedetti for the Mondadori publisher proprietary rights.

8 David Mills, the British lawyer who was the witness, had already been convicted of accepting a 600,000 euro bribe paid by Berlusconi to influence a judiciary sentence.

9 The girl at the centre of the affair—a 17-year-old Moroccan runaway—calls herself Ruby Rubacuori, or "Ruby Heartstealer". The precise nature of their involvement is unclear. "Ruby"—whose real name appears to be Karima El Mahroug—said in an interview that

Noemi¹⁰ and D'Addario¹¹. Thus, if government popularity declined between 2005 and 2010, to what extent the above mentioned scandals have conditioned this negative trend?

The Hypothesis

Markovits and Silverstein (1988: 9) define a political scandal as "a betrayal of the public trust in terms of the accountability and process of the liberal democratic state". Accordingly, scandals were encapsulating "the dynamics of accountability in democracies" (Tumber and Waisboard 2004:1035) and have become an important dimension of electoral politics. Scandals seem also to damage an important political resource, namely individual political reputation (Thompson 2000).

Even if the scandals' impact could be mediated by individual political attitudes and home-team effect (Mishler and Rose 2001), their effect on political institutions is evident (Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1998; della Porta 2000; Seligson 2002; Anderson and Tverdova 2003). Of course, not all political scandals produce the same effects in the same way. For example, the 1994 financial abuse scandals in the USA had quite different repercussions. Even if Clinton was alleged of taking illegal loans from the Whiterwater development project in Arkansas, he remained in power and was subsequently re-elected. A different trend occurs when sex scandals are considered. In the case of New Jersey Governor James E. McGreevey, his confession of being involved in an extra-marital relation contributed to the end of his political career. Even if political scandals seem to involve individual politicians affecting their career, they may have consequences for the government (Miller 1999), parties and politicians (Doherty et al. 2011) as well. Hence, the discussion leads to the expectation that the following influence on government popularity should be found:

she visited Mr Berlusconi's home outside Milan only once, and that after giving him an account of her misfortunes, he gave her money and some jewellery. But, according to leaked details from an inquiry in Milan, she had earlier told police and prosecutors that she had been there three times, and that one of the parties ended in an erotic game called "Bunga, Bunga".

10 Letizia Noemi, a model/dancer, is the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's mistress and the reason behind his divorce. The PM's wife Veronica Lario has asked for divorce after finding out he was having a relationship with a minor.

11 Patrizia D'Addario is a former model and girl escort. She was paid to attend Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi's private parties. She has pictures showing her with Berlusconi in his bedroom.

Hypothesis: Both sex and economic scandals should matter for government popularity.

Using a regression model, in the next section I empirically test of this hypothesis.

Data, measurement and analysis

The goal of this article is to assemble a government popularity function¹² that meets the following criteria: the measures of the dependent and independent variables have to be comparable; each time-series has to be long enough; time-series have to cover the same time period. These results were achieved by use four observations for each year between 2005 and 2010. The total N (24) offers an acceptable dataset to calculate the proposed government popularity function¹³.

The general model used through the application a Prais-Winsten regression¹⁴, is presented by the following equation:

$$Pgov = \alpha + \beta_1(Bertolaso) + \beta_2(Scajola) + \beta_3(Mills) + \beta_4(LodoMilano) + \beta_5(Bancopoli) + \beta_6(Ruby) + \beta_7(Noemi) + \beta_8(Daddario) + \beta_9(government - coalition) + e$$

Where

Pgov is the level of government popularity (Pgov)¹⁵;

Bertolaso, Scajola, Mills, Lodo Milano and Bancopoli are dummy variables with value 1 if economic scandals occur; Ruby, Noemi and D'Addario are dummy variables with value 1 if sex scandals occur;

tgov is a dummy variable with value 1 if a right-wing government is in power;

e is the error term.

I have also controlled for a variable expressing the percentage of those who in the next election intend to vote for a party, which is in the governmental coalition.

12 The question is: 'How would you evaluate the work of the government until now? Very positive, positive enough, negative enough, completely negative.' Approval is the percentage of those answering 'positive'. Source: ISPO.

13 The variable is represented by individual data surveyed by ISPO between 2005 and 2010. For each quarter we have computed the mean of percentage values of who evaluate the work of the government very positive or positive enough.

14 Serial correlation is a frequent problem in the analysis of time series data. A first regression model showed autocorrelation problems. To correct the regression for the serial correlation we have chosen to apply a Prais-Winsten estimation model. Even if one assumes no autocorrelation, bias can result when the sample is small (N=24), the conclusion must be accepted cautiously.

15 The concept was measured by the question: "How would you evaluate the work of the government until now? (positive, negative, not answer). The government popularity is the percentage of those answering 'positive'. The source is ISPO.

Table 1 reports the results of the models. They largely fit my expectations. When scandals occur, the government has a higher probability of being negatively judged. The effect of economic scandals related to government members on the dependent variable is higher than that related to sex scandals involving the Prime Minister Berlusconi. This is particularly evident when comparing the Bertolaso scandal (b=-29.380) with Mills scandal (b=-16.007) or the Scajola scandal with Lodo Milano. This evidence shows that although citizens express a rather negative judgment toward the government when economic scandals occur, this is less evident when the scandals involve Berlusconi. A possible explanation is that the citizens are used to (and in a sense they accept) the scandals of Berlusconi, given the fact that they started in 1994 but, so far, they have not produced any conviction sentence against him. On the contrary, sex scandals related to Berlusconi, reveal a negative impact on the government approval, with the only exception of the scandal related to Letizia Noemi. Both Ruby

(b=-28.332) and D'Addario (b=-17.838) scandals show a negative impact on the government popularity, with

the former marked by higher intensity than the latter. This could be explained by the fact that the Prime Minister abused his power to pressure for a release of a young girl detained under accusation of theft.

I have controlled the results using a dummy variable on citizens' intention of vote. As reported in the second model of Table 1, my results are stable and in some cases their intensity even increases, showing that scandals have a similar impact on citizens of all political orientations. Finally, I have found that in Italy both economic and sex scandals have a negative impact on government popularity—Bertolaso, Mills and Ruby scandals show similar coefficients—, but the economic scandals of Berlusconi are less influential than those related to other government staff. So, even if Italy has been defined as a secular-rational nation, the citizens are sensitive not only to economic scandals, but also to sex ones.

Conclusion

The present study examined the effects of scandals on the popularity of governments based on data from five consecutive years. Citizens are broadly mistrustful of politics, skeptical about institutions, disenchanted with the effectiveness of the democratic process (Dalton 2004). My data appears to confirm this tendency showing that, in the last years, confidence in political institutions in Italy

has declined. This is particularly evident in the case of the government. Although many factors could determine this trend, I showed that scandals are certainly relevant. My results seem to confirm Bowler and Karp's argument (2004) on the attitude of voters to punish scandalous behaviour more heavily than they reward good behaviour.

I demonstrated that the relationship between both economic and sex scandals and government popularity is of similar intensity. Two main conclusions can therefore be derived from my analysis. First, even governments that are able to present policies in line with citizens' expectations may lose political support if they are affected by scandals. In this respect, a widespread democratic malaise among citizens could also be the result of recurrent scandals. Second, it has been argued in the literature that alternation in power can restrain corruption and rent-seeking (Sartori 1976) and strengthen the rule of law (Horowitz et al 2009). In other words, although in Italy alternation in power has touched the highest peak in the past twenty years, the impact of political corruption and public immorality is still very high. While my results clearly meet the expectation of a dysfunctional theory—the political scandals have a negative impact on government popularity—and demonstrate, unlike other longitudinal studies (see Maurer 2003), that the relationship between scandals and political support is strong. A more robust investigation of any cumulative effect of scandals on political support would ideally examine data covering a longer time span.

Table 1. The scandals effects on the government popularity
Note: a) the variables are lagged (t-1); *p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01.
Source: Ispo (2005-2010).

		Coef.	Std. Err.		Coef.	Std. Err.
<i>Economic-Corruption scandals</i>						
Bertolaso(a)		-29.380***	7.792		-29.605***	7.846
Scajola		27.782***	7.723		29.606***	8.290
Lodo Milano		-14.298*	7.793		-16.329*	8.297
Mills (a)		-16.007**	6.005		-18.502**	6.877
Bancopoli (a)		-11.621	7.100		-10.745	7.772
<i>Sexual scandal</i>						
Ruby		28.332***	7.795		28.104***	7.868
Noemi		-7.348	7.412		-9.710	8.329
D'Addario		-17.838**	7.667		-19.580**	8.032
<i>Government</i>						
Left-right		12.755**	4.240		12.170**	4.405
<i>Control</i>						
Citizens' future vote behaviour					0.393	0.581
Constant		-0.263	3.221		-17.455	25.384
Adj R-squared	0.483			0.495		
Anova F (sig.)	3.28 (0.026)			3.16 (0.032)		
Durbin Watson statistic	1.953			1.946		

Although problems of data availability currently restrain such approach, collection of cross-national panel data would provide useful material for future research. The question of how different kinds of scandals may mutually interact is another question that deserves further investigation.

REFERENCES

- Adamany, D. and Grossman, J. (1983). "Support for the Supreme Court as a National Policymaker", *Law & Policy Quarterly*, 5, pp. 405–437.
- Alford, J., Teeters, H., Ward, D.S. and Wilson, R.K. (1994). "Overdraft: The Political Cost of Congressional Malfeasance", *The Journal of Politics*, 56, pp. 788-801.
- Almond, G.A. and Verba, S. (1963). *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nation*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Anderson, C.J. and Guillory, A. (1997). "Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy", *American Political Science Review*, 91, pp. 66–81.
- Anderson, C.J. and Tverdova, Y.V. (2003). "Corruption, political allegiances, and attitudes toward government in contemporary democracies", *American Journal of Political Science*, 47, pp. 91-109.
- Banfield, E. (1976). *Le basi morali di una società arretrata*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- Bardi, L. (1996). "Anti-party sentiment and party system change in Italy", *European Journal of Political Science*, 29, pp. 345-363.
- Bardi, L. and Pasquino, G. (1995). "Politizzati ed alienati", in A. Parisi and H. Schadee (eds), *Sulla soglia del cambiamento*, Bologna: il Mulino.
- Bellucci, P., Memoli, V. and Sanders, D. (2011). "The determinants of democratic support in Europe" in P.C. Magalhaes, D. Sanders, G. Toka (eds), *Citizens and the European Polity: Mass Attitudes Towards the European and National Polities (Citizenship, Identity and European Integration)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford (in press).
- Bowler, S.B. and Karp, J.A. (2004). "Politicians, Scandals, and Trust in Government", *Political Behavior*, 26 (3), pp. 271-287.
- Bytzek, E. (2007). *Ereignisse und ihre Wirkung auf die Popularität von Regierungen : Von der Schleyer-Entführung zur Elbeflut*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Cartocci R. (2000). "Chi ha paura dei valori? Capitale sociale e dintorni", *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, 3, pp. 423-474.
- Cartocci, R. (2007). *Mappe del tesoro. Atlante del capitale sociale in Italia*. Bologna: il Mulino.
- Citrin, J. (1974). "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government", *American Political Science Review*, 68, pp. 973–88.
- Clarke, H. D., Norpoth, H. and Whiteley P. (1998) "It's About Time: Modelling Political and Social Dynamics – A guide to new approaches", in E. Scarbrough, E. Tannenbaum (eds), *Research Strategies in the Social Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cowley, P. (2002). *Revolts & Rebellions – Parliamentary Voting Under Blair*. London: Politico.
- Cusack, T.R. (1999). "The shaping of popular satisfaction with government and regime performance in Germany", *British Journal of Political Science*, 29, pp. 641-72.
- Dalton, R.J. (1999). "Political support in advanced industrial democracies", in P. Norris (ed), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dalton, R.J. (2004). *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Damico, A. J., Conway, M.M., Bowman Damico, S. (2000). "Patterns of Political Trust and Mistrust: Three Moments in the Lives of Democratic Citizens", *Polity*, pp. 377-400.
- Della Porta, D. (2000). "Social capital, beliefs in government, and political corruption", in S. J. Pharr, R. Putnam (eds), *Disaffected Democracies: Whats Troubling the Trilateral Countries*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Dewan, T. and Dowding, K. (2005) "The Corrective Effect of Ministerial Resignations on Government Popularity", *American Journal of Political Science*, 49 (1), pp. 46-56.
- Dimock, M.A. and Jacobson, G.C. (1995). "Checks and Choices: The House Bank Scandal's Impact on Voters in 1992", *The Journal of Politics*, 57, pp. 1143-1159.
- Doherty, D., Dowling, C.M. and Miller, M.G. 2011. "Are Financial or Moral Scandals Worse? It Depends", *PS: Political Science & Politics*, forthcoming.
- Dunham, R.G. and Mauss A. L. (1976). "Waves from Watergate: evidence concerning the impact of the Watergate scandal upon political legitimacy and social control", *Pacific Sociological Review*, 19, pp. 469–490.
- Easton, D. (1965). *A System Analysis of Political Life*. New York: Harper.
- Easton, D. (1975). "A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support", *British Journal of Political Science*, 5, pp. 435-57.
- Economist. (2010). "Silvio Berlusconi's latest scandal. Bungled bungled! Available online at: http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2010/11/silvio_berlusconis_latest_scandal/print.

- Esser, F. (1999)- "Tabloidization' of News, A Comparative Analysis of Anglo-American and German Press Journalism", *European Journal of Communication*, 14 (3), pp. 291-324.
- Evans, G. and Whitefield, S. (1995). "The politics and economics of democratic commitment: Support for democracy in transition societies", *British Journal of Political Science*, 25 (4), pp. 485-514.
- Gibson, J. (1989). "Understandings of Justice: Institutional Legitimacy , Procedural Justice, and Political Tolerance", *Law & Society Review*, 23, pp. 469-96.
- Hetherington, M.J. (1999). "The effect of political trust on the presidential vote, 1968-1996", *American Political Science Review*, 93, pp. 311-326.
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Corrispondenti (2010). *Politica: Mannheimer "Popolarità Governo in calo"*. Available online at: <http://www.corrispondenti.net/?id=25778>.
- Kepplinger, H.M. (2005). *Die Mechanismen der Skandalierung. Die Macht der Medien und die Möglichkeiten der Betroffenen*, München: Olzog.
- Kepplinger, H.M. and Ehmig, S.C. (2004). "Ist die funktionalistische Skandaltheorie haltbar? Ein Beitrag zur Interdependenz von Politik und Medien im Umgang mit Missständen in der Gesellschaft", in K. Imhof, R. Blum. H. Bonfadelli, O. Jarren (eds), *Mediengesellschaft: Strukturen, Merkmale, Entwicklungsdynamiken*, Wiesbaden:Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Maier J (2002). "Politische Skandale – Quelle der Politikverdrossenheit? Zum Einfluss von Fernsehberichten über politische Skandale auf Bevölkerungseinstellungen zu Parteien, Politikern und Demokratie in Deutschland", in H. Schatz, P. Rössler, J.U. Nieland (eds), *Politische Akteure in der Mediendemokratie: Politiker in den Fesseln der Medien?*, Wiesbaden:Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Maier, J. (2011). "The impact of political scandals on the political support: An experimental test of two theories", *International Political Science Review*, 32 (4), pp.283-302.
- Markovits, A, Silverstein M. (1988). *The Politics of Scandal. Power and Process in Liberal Democracies*. London: Holmes & Meier.
- Martorano, N., Uilbig S.G. (2008). "THE COINGATE EFFECT: The Impact of Scandal on Attitudes Toward State and Federal Political Actors", paper presented at Annual Meeting of the State Politics and Policy Conference, Philadelphia, PA: May 30-31.
- Maurer, M. (2003). *Politikverdrossenheit durch Medienberichte: Eine Paneluntersuchung*, Konstanz: UVK.
- McAllister I. (2000). "Keeping them honest: public and elite perception of ethical conduct among Australian legislators", *Political Studies*, 48, pp. 22-37.
- Memoli, V. (2011). "La responsiveness in Italia: uno studio longitudinale", paper presented at the XXV Annual Meeting of the SISP (Palermo, September 8-10).
- Miller, A.H. (1999). "Sex, Politics, and Public Opinion: What Political Scientists Really Learned From the Clinton-Lewinsky Scandal", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 32 (4), pp. 721-9.
- Mishler W., Rose, R. (2001). "What are the origins of political trust? Testing institutional and cultural theories in post-communist societies", *Comparative Political Studies*, 34 (1), pp. 30-62.
- Morris, J., Clawson, R. (2007). "The Media and Congressional Approval", paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- Newell, J. (2010). "Sex, lies and public money: Recent scandals in Britain and Italy", paper presented at 60th Annual Conference of the UK Political Studies Association (Edinburg, 2 March-1 April).
- Norris P. (1999) *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Peters, J.G., Welch, S. (1978). "Political Corruption in America: A Search for Definitions and a Theory, or if Political Corruption is in the Mainstream of American Politics Why is it not in the Mainstream of American Politics Research?", *American Political Science Review*, 72, pp. 974-984.
- Pharr J.S., Putnam R.D. (2000). *Disaffected Democracies*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Putnam, R. (1993). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rose, R., Mishler, W.T., Haerpfer, C.W. (1998). *Democracy and its Alternatives. Understanding Post-Communist Societies*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Sabato, L.J, Stencel, M., Lichter S.R. (2000). *Peep Show: Media and Politics in the Age of Scandal*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sani, G. (1980). "The Political Culture of Italy: Continuity and Change", in G. Almond, S. Verba (eds), *The Civic Culture Revisited*, New York: Sage Publications.
- Sani, G. (1989). "La cultura politica", in L. Morlino (ed), *Scienza Politica*, Torino: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli.

- Sani, G., Segatti, P. (2001). "Antiparty Politics and the Restructuring of the Italian Party System, in P.N. Diamandouros, R. Gunther (eds), *Parties, Politics, and Democracy in the New Southern Europe*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Schudson, M. (2004). "Notes on Scandal and the Watergate Legacy", *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (9), pp. 1231-1238.
- Sciolla, L. (2004). *La sfida dei valori. Rispetto delle regole e rispetto dei diritti in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Seligson, M.A. (2002). "The impact of corruption on regime legitimacy: A comparative study of four Latin American countries", *Journal of Politics*, 64, pp. 408-33.
- Sniderman, P.M., Neuman, W.R., Citrin, J., McClosky, H., Shanks, J.M. (1975). "Stability of support for the political system: the initial impact of Watergate", *American Politics Quarterly*, 3, pp. 437-457.
- Thompson, J.B. (2000). *Political Scandal. Power and Visibility in the Media Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tumber, H., Waisbord, S. (2004). "Introduction. Political Scandals and Media Across Democracies. Volume I", *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47, pp. 1031-9.
- Tyler, T.R. (1990). *Why People Follow the Law: Procedural Justice, Legitimacy, and Compliance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Vannucci, A. (2009). "The Controversial Legacy of 'Mani Pulite': A Critical Analysis of Italian Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies", *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 1, pp 233-264.
- Weatherford, M.S. (1992). "Measuring Political Legitimacy", *American Political Science Review*, 54, pp.682-706.