"Seeing Through the Lens of Event Stigma: Media Evaluations of Football Referees in the Aftermath of Calciopoli"
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ABSTRACT

We study how event stigma can shape the evaluation of the conduct of actors at the field-level. Specifically, we argue that in the aftermath of a traumatic event, event stigma breeds skepticism in a generalized fashion, so that all actors within the field should face more contestation. Moreover, we expect high-status actors to face a larger increase in the contestation levels compared to low-status ones because event stigma is associated with a generalized loss of trust, which is especially damaging to high-status actors. Finally, we argue that event stigma will translate into a stronger preference for monitoring and control; as a result, perceived failures to act (omissions) will face particular contestation, and especially so in the case of high-status actors. A study of media coverage of Italian football referees’ decisions before and after the 2006 Calciopoli scandal provides support for our arguments.