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Andrija Henjak

Adresa Uredništva / Editorial Office

Medijske studije / Media Studies

Lepušićeva 6, 10 000 Zagreb, Hrvatska / Croatia

e-mail: ms@fpzg.hr

www.mediastudies.fpzg.hr

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INTRODUCTION: SCANDALS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

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Special Issue Editors

Hendrik Michael :: Department of Communication Studies, University of Bamberg ::
hendrik.michael@uni-bamberg.de

André Haller :: FH Kufstein-Tyrol :: andre.haller@lektor.fh-kufstein.ac.at

To say that there are no scandals seems to be a paradoxical statement for the introduction to a special issue about scandals in a global context, especially with research providing evidence of a significant rise of scandals over the past decades (e.g., von Sikorski, 2018). A quick search through a global database like Google News currently indicates a financial scandal involving a cryptocurrency platform in Turkey, a drug scandal in college football in Japan, a fraud scandal in Geert Wilders' 2023 campaign in the Netherlands, a lobbying scandal in the wake of the United Nations Climate Conference 2023, and a corruption scandal in Portugal's ruling Socialist party. A few more examples of political scandals from the past five years also come to mind: the scandals leading to the downfall of former British prime minister Boris Johnson, the sheer disregard for political hallmarks, namely lack of peaceful transfer of power by populists, such as Donald Trump or Jair Bolsonaro, or a new bundle of offshore-leaks, including tax-evasion schemes of not only the rich and powerful but also numerous key political figures, show that political mischief is one of the main issues in media coverage on a global scale.

So, what is the point of opening with a paradoxical statement? It is to start with a reflection on the nature of scandals because our impact-driven research of such phenomena often treats grievances or abuses of power as if they *were* scandals. However, scandals do not occur as manifest events like a violent protest, a fraud election, or a criminal trial. Such events happen and they may have a negative impact which we observe as wrong-doings, legal transgressions, or violations of a social group's moral codes. Some of these events stir public outrage and condemnation, others do not. In some cases, severe transgressions take place openly and over a long period of time and are even well documented, yet they do not *become* scandals. But why does mischief become a scandal in one country and not in another? Why does something cause public outrage at one point, but just a few years later no one seems to be bothered?

Generally, despite the digital transformations of the modes of public communication, scandals occur only when journalism and the media report on a transgression as a scandal (Kepplinger, 2020, p. 29). In this sense scandals are realized via mechanisms of symbolic interaction, or what Brenton (2019, p. 28) calls a "social pathology", in the form of mediated rituals that may be essential to the functioning of (democratic) societies (Hondrich, 2002; Neckel, 2005; cf. Kepplinger, 2020). As scandals are a communicative construct produced through mediated actions, it seems impossible to establish a framework that offers a causal explanation between the original transgressions and the development of a scandal. A scandal only emerges through social action – it is not there 'by itself' – so we should differentiate and inquire how something becomes a scandal instead of claiming that something *is* a scandal.

An obvious additional point is to be made because in recent years, the phenomenon of scandal has become more elusive and the dynamics between political actors, the media, and the public are more uncertain. In this regard, the "deep mediatization" of our lives (Hepp, 2018) has most certainly consequences for the dynamics of scandalization. From a scientific perspective it is important to determine how this already affects social actors and public communication, how societies are dealing with scandals and cultural

affairs in digital media ecosystems, and to what end this results in collective acts of signifying and evaluating cultural norms and values with discursive means (Tumber & Waisbord, 2019, pp. 13-14).

A starting point may be to look for communicative invariants that constitute scandals. Often, these invariants, or schemata, are traced back to ancient Greece (Burkhardt, 2006; Brenton, 2019) and Judeo-Christian religious contexts (Thompson, 2000). Carey (1988, p. 42) points out that “[r]ituals of shame, degradation and excommunication are official and sanctioned ceremonies in all societies from the simple to the complex.” From the perspective of the cultural anthropologist, scandals are integral as a cultural practice and always have permeated living culture and its manifold forms of social behavior. In addition, scandals can be traced everywhere in recorded culture and its collections of material artifacts. The reason may be that scandals constitute an effective form of storytelling. Such stories have central conflicts, introduce heroes and villains, victims, and white knights, they follow a carefully scripted dramaturgy with rising and falling actions, and are thus relatable as well as emotionally engaging for the audience (Bird, 1997; Burkhardt, 2006; Wagner-Egelhaaf, 2018). Following this conceptualization, we could examine internal rhetorical features and storytelling techniques of scandal, e.g., the voice and perspective of the storyteller, plotting and the use of stylistic devices like metaphor and allegory, the make-up of the story-world, e.g., through references to previous scandal cases, profiling of the protagonists as round or flat characters, the medium of storytelling and, lastly, the relationship between the storyteller, protagonists, and the audience. This could be helpful to understand why some violations or transgressions are reported as scandals, i.e., because they make a good story, and others do not because they lack specific components, e.g., an obvious villain, a distinguishable victim, or an identifiable hero. In some cases, scandal cases are too complex to be told as stories by lacking a central conflict or a clear dramaturgy. This hinders the possibility of becoming part of durable media coverage – sine qua non for initiating dynamics of scandalization.¹

From the perspective of the social scientist, however, this may not suffice because such an approach lacks the means to assess and categorize the external conditions of culture that produce dynamic patterns of scandalization in different forms of media. One reason for this deficit is that research on political scandals has not been systematic. It often focuses on case studies within different cultural contexts (e.g., Tumber, 2004; Allern & Pollack, 2019; Esser & Hartung, 2004), or provides more general definitional work on the nature of scandals and theoretical assumptions on the structure and dramaturgy of scandal communication (Thompson, 2000; Burkhardt, 2015). Although international research on political scandals has provided a basis for more comparative research on scandals in recent years (see Haller, Michael & Kraus, 2018; Tumber & Waisbord, 2019; Haller & Michael, 2020; Haller, Michael & Seeber, 2021), concrete theoretical frameworks for comparative analyses of scandals are underdeveloped.

¹ If we look at the reports on the Panama Papers in 2016, we see that the widespread and sensational media coverage in the beginning was followed by rather less journalistic interest. Our thesis is that the Panama Papers, as a global scandal structure, contained too many details and legal specifications which created a sort of complexity that hindered scandalization. Other cases that come to mind are the misconduct of global corporations like Bayer or Nestlé that are regularly subject to lawsuits in many countries yet not necessarily scandalized in the media, e.g., because these cases lack a clear, climactic dramaturgy.

We can make use of heuristic frameworks which allow us to acknowledge related factors that increase a likelihood of transgressions becoming a scandal (or, more precisely, being scandalized in the media) in a specific context. Therefore, a first step is to develop a hierarchy-of-influences model (e.g., Donges, 2011; Reese & Shoemaker, 2014; Esser, 2016) to analyze global scandals through a functional-structuralist perspective, inspired by Durkheimian sociology (Brenton, 2019) and system theory (Luhmann, 1996). Such a framework can be applied to compare political scandals in different countries and illustrate how scandals mirror or even catalyze the changing of political norms and civic conduct in societies. The concept for such a framework can be based on the three different structural dimensions, examining a macro-, meso- and micro- level (Donges, 2011).

On the macro level, social subsystems that may have an influence on scandalization processes in politics are identified. The most relevant are the legal system, the media system, the political system, the religious system, and the cultural system. Each of these subsystems has a strong impact on the possibility for political scandals to occur. Obviously, the focal points remain the political system and the media system, drawing on Nyhan's (2015) conclusion that scandals are essentially a co-production of both systems. Looking at political scandals, the design of the political system as the foundation of politics is crucial for scandalization processes. In liberal democratic societies, politicians can be held responsible for irregular actions like tax evasion or bribery. In contrast to this, there are non-democratic regimes in authoritarian or totalitarian societies. In these systems, scandalization does not serve as a corrective mechanism because political elites are not restricted by legal frameworks. Scandalization in non-democratic regimes has the function to exclude enemies of the ruling elites and is therefore better described as preparations of show trials. Here, the legal system has a strong impact on scandal communication. Unlike the rule of law in liberal democracies, journalists in authoritarian regimes are not capable of investigating and reporting on political misconduct in a free and open manner.

However, other subsystems determine what kind of misconduct is scandalized, as transgressions of religious norms are more likely to lead to scandalization in societies with "puritan traditions" than in more secularized nations (2002, pp. 12-13). This includes violations of religious beliefs, for example extra-marital affairs as a transgression of Christian family values, that can lead to fractures in the plotlines of political careers in countries like the United States (Entman, 2012, pp. 74-93). Regarding the subsystem of culture, an ideological variable on the macro level of the social system, particularly in Western liberal democracies, is individuality. This has fostered a cult of authenticity in politics. Populist political agents use such personal narratives for their benefit because they often claim to be more authentic than career politicians and build a reputation for saying it 'as it is', which appeals to sizable parts of the electorate and has a potential to create strong identification with a political candidate (Enli, 2018, pp. 124-126). This image brand can also function as a firewall to mitigate the effects of political scandals since they seem to have less effect on the political reputation of populists (Sikorski & Kubin, 2021, pp. 50-51).

Furthermore, our changing media ecosystems have, as Chadwick (2017, pp. 207-210) has elaborated, disrupted political norms and the logic of political communication. A number of political scandals in the recent past would not have developed without the overall transformations of media and journalism in the digital age. On the one hand, technological infrastructure and digital tools give reporters new means for investigating political scandals that deal with substantial misconduct, such as corruption and other phenomena of power abuse. On the other hand, we can observe how social media offer new means for venting emotional attacks, sparking outrage, or voicing public discontent. Politicians are regularly subject to such firestorms. The rise of social media, particularly social network sites, led to a higher number of audience-induced scandals and to a faster distribution of accusations (Burkhardt, 2018).

While legacy media, i.e., TV, radio, and newspapers, are still the leading channels of political communication (Newman et al., 2020), participatory digital publics can create a 'spill-over' effect so that the consequences of misconduct, such as sexual harassment, may incite a more substantiated discourse in the political system and in journalistic mass media (Coombs & Holladay, 2021). Web 2.0 services, like blogs or Social Network Sites (SNS), empower users to share confidential information on wrongdoing or to express their distrust and outrage over actions which they perceive as scandalous. In this regard, scandals of less severity, like the concept of "talk scandals" (Ekström & Johansson, 2008), are becoming more prominent in public discourse about politics as well. In some instances, such provocative acts are strategic forms of "self-scandalization" (Haller, 2013) to increase attention for controversial political messages which gain prominence in discourse through media coverage and engagement in social media (Kleiman, 2019). Populist politicians, notably right-wing populists, appear to be especially skilled in using scandalous behavior and deliberate provocations to instrumentalize media coverage and trigger public attention (Maurer et al., 2022).

Taking a step back from most recent transformations, reflections on our understanding of 'new media' may also broaden the scope of scientific analysis. As Bösch (2011) suggests, the advent of new types of media has always created "opportunity structures" for scandals, e.g., the diffusion of print technologies since the 15th century and the rise of the popular press in the 19th century. In general, transformations of the media environment provide groups with new means for effective mediation of social events, which involve the breaching of certain moral or legal codes and help to determine how to elicit a public response.

While the macro-phenomena impact scandalization, organizational resources, routines, and roles should be accounted for as well, because such factors influence not only journalistic practices of reporting on misconduct but also how corporations and institutions react to being scandalized. Media organizations are dominated by hierarchies and political positions that allow varying degrees of editorial freedom to expose legal transgressions or social wrongs. Media organizations are biased towards specific candidates in political races, tend to draw a spotlight to their preferred candidates' political

biographies, or unfavorably scrutinize the opponents. Specific media organizations may deliberately campaign to destroy the reputation of politicians and scandalize their life stories, particularly in highly polarized public climates. Nowadays, the political reporting of Fox News illustrates the strategy used by partisan media which is close to what Kepplinger coined as “instrumental actualization” (2011). This is a journalistic practice in which events or topics from past news stories are recycled again and again by media outlets to launch attacks on and incite conflict among specific political actors. The prolonged and mostly unsubstantiated outrage surrounding Hillary Clinton’s use of private email accounts provides a recent example (Searle & Banda, 2019). An additional point to argue in this respect is that media systems with a dominant private sector (like the US or Italy) tend to favor scandalous news (Karidi, Meyen & Mahl, 2018).

Since such constellations co-determine the (re)actions of prominent figures, journalists, and audiences, the journalistic cultures of media organizations (or corporations) as well as party or corporate cultures are crucial factors in the dynamic of scandalization (Bergt, 2018; Nyhuis & Shikano, 2018; Coombs & Holladay, 2020). The effects of journalistic culture were noticeable during the revelation of the Panama Papers in 2016 when investigative journalism, as a professional mode deeply rooted in the participating media houses, became a driving force in scandal coverage (Haller, Michael & Kraus, 2018, p. 7). In the case of the Panama Papers, quality media covered a variety of financial and tax violations, which created a significant loss of reputation for companies in business and banking in countries like Iceland (Panamapapers.org).

On the micro-level the analysis can assess individual, psycho-social processes that may help us understand how certain actors handle scandals better than others but – more importantly – how recipients react to scandal coverage that may or may not yield an emotional effect. In this regard, the micro level refers to the three groups of actors in the coverage of political scandals, namely scandalized persons/organizations, scandalizers and scandal recipients (Burkhardt, 2018). Analyses can differentiate between fixed and more variable factors on the individual level. Concerning scandalizers, professional ethos, exogenous constraints and personality are variable and may also depend on the country of employment and culture of journalists. Looking at scandalized persons, human needs, such as security or social integration, are relatively fixed. Personality, personal involvement in a scandal or political beliefs are more variable. Scandal recipients do have relatively stable conditions/needs such as the wish to be entertained, to control the environment or to be informed about political grievances, but also exhibit varying factors, e.g., different processes of motivated reasoning (Sikorski, 2020) or abilities to articulate emotions and manage anger in reaction to scandals (Verbalyte, 2020). Depending on the culture in which a political scandal occurs, variable individual factors like personality, media usage patterns, cognitive abilities or personal involvement have relevance for the analysis.

In this introduction, the goal was to briefly elaborate some ideas that relate to different levels of scandal analysis to understand political scandals in a global context. Hence, the interconnectedness of social subsystems, resources and routines of organization,

and abilities as well as individual characteristics of agents involved in processes of scandalization were discussed and treated as variables in estimating and assessing the emergence of scandals in a particular cultural setting.

The papers published in this special issue are examples of different perspectives and methods to analyze and make sense of political scandals in a global context. Thus, the contributions cover a wide range of scandal cases, different cultures and national characteristics, with different focuses on the presented framework for comparative research of scandal communication.

Steffen Burkhardt elaborates the characteristics of global scandal processes in connection to historical developments of technologies and media systems. He identifies three steps of media change for global scandals: 1) written forms of moral code which were necessary for international reports and discourses on political scandals; 2) the evolution of a world-wide media system which led to an integration of political scandals in a global public, and 3) the development of digital forms of communication which resulted in a constant discourse on political scandals all around the globe. Burkhardt highlights specific features of digital communication which influence the process of political scandalization, such as the influence of algorithms on the proliferation of political news and 'alternative' media as partisan players in political communication. He argues that analyses on global political scandals offer the opportunity to discover the quality of public spheres in a global context.

Jan Dvorak focuses on the participation of social media audiences and therefore shows the result of a content analysis of tweets in two German political scandals. Out of a corpus of more than 55.000 messages on Twitter, he investigated 500 of the most influential tweets which were posted during the scandal cases of two younger German politicians, Philipp Amthor and Sarah-Lee Heinrich. Dvořák points out that there is a research gap regarding patterns of participation of social media audiences in scandalization processes. In his paper, he proposes a taxonomy of offensive and defensive types of audience participation during scandals. His results show that mainly dominant forms of participation were used in the two analyzed cases and that a high level of confrontation and conflict was observable in both cases. The taxonomy provides a framework for further comparative research, also in international contexts.

Maximilian Eder offers a case study of the so-called 'Ibiza-Affair' in the light of the new dynamic of scandalization that has made scandals a hyper-public phenomenon. Eder analyzes the process of scandalization and (political) journalistic discourse on Twitter in Germany and Austria. His research is based on a critical discourse analysis of 885 tweets from 149 influential political journalists. The findings suggest that scandalization on Twitter follows a hype cycle with a trigger event which functions as the starting point of the scandalization process and sharply declines over a relatively short period of time. In this process, a complex issue is reduced to an archetypical theme. The study adds to our understanding of the role of Twitter as an integral part of journalistic work when it

comes to delivering breaking news and reporting on political events of public relevance by focusing on the phenomenon of shifting the scandalization process to social media, which could be related to a deep mediatization.

Karine Prémont and Alexandre Millette expand on the research of political scandals by analyzing the media coverage of women involved in these scandals. However, rather than analyzing the coverage of women involved in sex scandals with American presidential candidates or elected officials, the authors study the media coverage of accidental celebrities, that is, women who find themselves caught up in a presidential scandal even though they are not responsible for or directly involved in it. The case studies range from 1972 (Watergate) to the Ukraine 'quid pro quo'-scandal (2020). The data are sampled from coverage of U.S. public affairs and cultural magazines. The authors' findings indicate that women who are indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered in a negative and stereotypical way and that this type of coverage does not diminish over time.

Domagoj Bebić, Daniela Dolinar and Antea Boko investigate the amplifying role of memes in political scandals in the context of the 2022 local election in Split, Croatia. The authors focus on memes as a hybrid genre of online communication because memes represent a kind of commentary on the news that uses irony and cynicism and aims to increase the reaction of the target audience. Their paper argues that political scandals in the media are shorter-lived, and when they are in the form of memes, they are shared more on social media, thus becoming a kind of common knowledge. To analyze their assumptions, a qualitative case study was conducted on three Croatian news portals – *Večernji.hr*, *Index.hr*, and *Slobodnadalmacija.hr* – as well as the memes about the scandal published on the *Megatroll Split* Facebook page in June 2022.

In this respect, the studies published in this special issue showcase that scandals are not trivial. Scandals are like a magnifying lens that offers us insights into the dynamics of public communication and societal change. As such, the 'social pathology' we call scandal uncovers disruptions in social institutions and can be treated as a seismograph for larger cultural trends in society, e.g., with respect to degrees of polarization or the increase of populist sentiments. Furthermore, the analysis of scandals touches transformations in journalism. Scandals tell us something about the nature of 'news' and highlight the flow and diffusion of information. Additionally, scandals make visible changes in politics and strategic communication. Through scandals we learn something about political agents and their routines and means of (re-)establishing accountability. Thus, scandals offer us focal points to observe larger narratives and evolving media practices used by producers and consumers alike. Scandals are thus "rich moments for applying and refining the analytical toolkit of concepts, arguments, and theories" in media and political science (Tumber & Waisbord, 2019, p. 1).

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SCANDALS IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE: AN OUTRAGEOUS HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Steffen Burkhardt

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ABSTRACT *The specific characteristics of political scandals in a global context follow the historical evolution of international communication technologies and media systems. This article examines the development of political scandals through selected cases in a global context. The global scandal evolution took place in three phases: (1) the written duplication of morals created the conditions for international reports on political scandals; (2) the establishment of an international media system transformed political scandals into an integral part of global public spheres; (3) the digitization of scandals on the Internet put moral pressure on global politics – resulting in permanent and omnipresent international scandal discourses. The digitization of political scandals comes, on the one hand, along with the loss of journalistic gatekeepers, post-truth manipulation of public spheres, influence from abroad and the risk of social unrest. On the other hand, it provides the chance to better understand the chances and limits of globalization.*

KEY WORDS

MEDIA HISTORY, SCANDAL HISTORY, HISTORICAL SCANDALS, DIGITIZATION, GLOBALIZATION

Author's note _____

Steffen Burkhardt :: HAW Hamburg, Department of Information and Media Communication ::
steffen.burkhardt@haw-hamburg.de

INTRODUCTION

Scandals are particularly suitable for surveying the cross-border interrelations of political discourses. As communication processes in which the social code is negotiated by rival collectives, they form moral maps in the global context. Depending on their significance and outcome they help to better understand the norms and values of an era. The global context can be thought of from two perspectives. Firstly, as communication processes, scandals can transport local, regional, or national offenses in international public spheres. Secondly, scandals can relate to alleged moral offenses in supranational contexts (e.g., when they concern supranational organizations such as the European Union). Both perspectives will be analyzed in this article using selected historical milestones of the political scandal in a global context. Above all, these milestones are exemplary for a change in times. Of course, the list of scandals is selective and does not include all major political scandals. The aim of the selection is rather to achieve transparency about the communication conditions that enabled political scandals to emerge in a global context and shaped their characteristics.

Scandals are not defined as offenses, but as specific communication processes about supposed offenses (Adut, 2008; Bulkow & Petersen, 2011; Burkhardt, 2006; Haller & Michael, 2018; Kepplinger, 2009; Thompson, 1997, 2000). For the communication analysis it is initially irrelevant whether scandal allegations are true or not, since it is not the alleged abuses that are examined, but the communication content and processes (Burkhardt, 2006). Whether an alleged offense turns into a political scandal does not depend on its political relevance but on the meaning that is attached to it in the public negotiation process.

Therefore, the organizational conditions of the public spheres are constitutive of political scandals in global contexts. They were shaped by several communication (r)evolutions through the centuries (Behringer, 2006; Habermas, 1990; Innis, 2007; McLuhan, 1992). This paper elaborates how the transformation of the public sphere in the historical process of globalization has changed political scandals from the oral communication practices of small communities to the global village in an electronically networked world.

Not every scandal directly affects the political system per se but is political. Even scandals about supposedly apolitical misconduct such as sports betting fraud (cf. Hill, 2013) or food contamination (cf. Linzmaier, 2007) or personal issues such as an abortion (cf. Ziegler, 2020) or wearing a burka (Cohen-Almagor, 2022) have been, and continue to be, controversies. They raise questions of *political regulation*, not only at different times, but also in different societies. The same applies to entertainment scandals such as controversies concerning a pop star's nipple exposition on live TV or sexual abuse by rock bands, in which demands for *political intervention* are made. At its core, every scandal has the potential to affect the political system, and this is also used strategically by scandalizers: they politicize by establishing references to politics between the scandalized events, conditions, or actions. This helps to legitimize the distribution of the

alleged offenses. While all scandals are essentially political scandals, this review focuses on scandals involving alleged misconduct of the political system in general, and of the legislative, executive, and judiciary in particular.

In a global context, the living environments in different countries are strongly networked. Therefore, a Quran burning in Sweden triggers a political scandal in Islamic countries almost in real time. The international, mass media communication between individuals is a development linked to the rise of social networks and microblogs. But how have these media changed the political scandal in the global context since its inception?

FROM LOCAL TALK TO DISTRIBUTED PRINT SCANDALS

Without media participation, political scandals serve to negotiate social norms within local publics, such as village inhabitants. The power imbalance between the scandalized and the scandalizers is based on their position in the village. A leader has more influence on the scandal discourse than a simple villager; a well-connected person has more influence than a poorly connected one. This also applies to the reception of the scandal outside the village in which it happened: a villager who is linked to the neighboring village and the first person there to describe the scandal has a decisive influence on the perception of the events. More people will listen to a person who tells an exciting story about a political scandal than to a boring narrator.

The Ancient Greek comedy-writer Aristophanes (Athens around 446 BCE to 386 BCE) knew already about the importance of the narrative as a core element of scandalization. He describes a dynamic and rhetorically brilliant prosecutor in court who, with his words, 'sets' the accused into a trap (Lindblom, 1921, p. 6) and compares the words of the prosecutor with a *scandalēthronē* (as cited in Käsler, 1991).

With the invention of writing, the simple principle of storytelling in networks changed. Narrators no longer have to travel to other places to scandalize themselves. They can write down the scandal, then they need messengers who can carry their messages to other places and recipients who can read and understand them. In addition to this local dimension, the scandal can last beyond the scandalizers' own age, if the written statement of scandalization lasts longer than their life. The influence of scandals increases with their geographic and temporal reach. In contrast to the retelling of a scandal, in which the content changes constantly due to different narrators, the narrative of the scandal always remains the same when it is written down, even if it is repeated in different places and in different decades, hence the power shift in scandals in favor of the people who have access to the media. This applies not only to storytellers, but also to scandalized people and scandalizers. In 1517, for example, the German professor of Bible interpretation Martin Luther, whose 95 theses against the sale of indulgences in the Roman Catholic Church were initially unanswered by the archbishop, decided to give them as prints to several confidants. Only the spread of the prints triggered the great scandal that led to the schism in the church (Clemen, 1904). The great interest in a revision of faith politics led to

a flood of pamphlets in which Luther and other reformers spread their ideas (Lies, 2021). Pamphlets reached hitherto unknown circulation levels and numbers. In 1524, there were already 2,400 pamphlets in approximately 2.4 million copies published (Köhler, 1986).

The written dissemination of scandal texts led to the development of another characteristic that shapes political scandals in a global context (Neutsch, 1995): it became easier for scandalizers to distribute their accusations anonymously. This resulted in a wave of political scandals with anonymous scandalizers.

The culture of political scandals reached its first peak in pre-revolutionary France. The life at the royal court *chroniques scandaleuses* was scandalized and paved the way for the 1789 French revolution. One of the most notable scandals in these years was the *affair of the diamond necklace* from 1785 and 1786. Napoleon I was certainly not entirely wrong when he, years later, somewhat exaggeratedly claimed that this “affair Queen Marie-Antoinette had cost her life in 1793” (Maza, 1993, p. 163). The fraud scandal represented one of the most important political events of the late Ancien Régime in France, which received continuous coverage in Europe. Its international attention resulted from the high nobility of the protagonists. In particular, international gazettes such as the *Gazette de Leyde* and the *Gazette des Deux-Ponts* spread the scandal outside France: to Holland, Germany and Switzerland, thus making it a central media event abroad (Angelike et al., 1997). The German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1792) wrote about the scandal in his comedy *Der Groß-Cophta* – an example of the early adaptation of a political scandal in entertainment culture abroad.

THE MASS MEDIA SYSTEM: THE BIRTHPLACE OF INTERNATIONAL SCANDALS

With the evolution of the mass media, namely the press in the second half of the 19th century and the increasing literacy of the population, political scandals could be circulated internationally for the first time in a larger number of copies, especially since the 1870s when rotary printing press was in commercial use in many Western countries. The press enabled the evolution of a commercial media system that required best-selling stories such as political affairs.

In addition, scandalous items of information about alleged abuses of power from all over the world were increasingly being reported in new international communication networks. This was made possible by the founding of the *Universal Postal Union*, established by the Treaty of Bern of 1874. It guaranteed international cooperation between postal companies and authorities – the framework for cross-border postal traffic (cf. Neutsch, 1995). At the same time, the telecommunications system developed with telex machines for telegrams and telephones for calls. The new communication technologies facilitated the success of a worldwide network of political correspondents for news agencies such as the French *Havas* (founded in 1835), British *Reuters* (founded in 1851) and German *Wolff* (founded in 1849) that signed an agreement known as the *Ring Combination*.

In the internationally networked communication landscape, political scandals such as the *Kruger telegram affair*, the *Dreyfus affair*, the *Harden-Eulenburg affair*, and the *Daily Telegraph affair* became topics all over Europe and overseas – with hardly any regulation and ethical guidelines for political journalists. The political scandal surrounding the French artillery captain Alfred Dreyfus started with his wrongful conviction by a military court in 1894 for alleged treason in favor of the German Empire. It led to years of public disputes and further court proceedings (Basch, 1994; Baumont, 1959; Burns, 1984). The military leadership wanted to prevent the rehabilitation of the Jew Dreyfus and the conviction of the actual traitor. Anti-Semitic, clerical and monarchist newspapers and politicians incited certain sections of the population. Even many families and longtime friends were deeply divided and stopped speaking to each other because of their differing opinions on the matter. In Paris, Dreyfus's public supporters were threatened, convicted, or dismissed from the army. Even Jews in French Algeria were under attack. The French newspaper *Le Figaro* ended its collaboration with the writer Émile Zola after right-wing nationalists called for a subscription boycott because of his contributions. Finally, in 1898, he was able to publish his famous article *J'accuse...!* in the newly founded literary journal *L'Aurore* that became prominent all over Europe. In it, he denounced the masterminds of the plot against Dreyfus on the front page of an open, full-page letter to the President of the Republic. Within hours, more than 200,000 copies of the newspaper had been sold and Zola had to flee France to avoid imprisonment (Brennan, 1998; Datta & Silverman, 1998; Fuchs, 1994). The Dreyfus affair and the associated growing anti-Semitism are considered to be the decisive reasons why the Austro-Hungarian writer Theodor Herzl, the then Paris correspondent of the Viennese daily newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*, developed Zionism (Duclert, 1948).

The mass media system became the birthplace of international scandals. Thanks to the lucrative market for news, a jittery attention economy of the rival Old and New Worlds emerged, where political slurs from abroad spread quickly and scandals boosted newspaper sales in the Western nation-states (Esser & Umbricht, 2016). How naturally foreign media reported on international developments at the turn of the century can be observed in a German-British state affair in the context of colonial politics: the scandal surrounding the *Kruger telegram*. In 1896, the last German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, sent a telegram congratulating Paulus Kruger, the President of the South African Republic on what is now the Transvaal, on his victory over the *Jameson Raid*. In this sortie about 600 British irregulars from Cape Colony attacked the Transvaal in British interests, to trigger an anti-government uprising by the primarily British expatriate miners. In the telegram, the German Emperor implied an independence that the Transvaal State did not legally possess due to its restrictions on foreign affairs, which represented an attack on British rights. The text was made available to the media almost simultaneously, including the *Reuters* and *Wolff's Telegraphic Bureau* (cf. Seligmann, 1998). The case shows how naturally news agencies were already involved in international political scandals. While the mostly conservative German press agreed with the Kaiser, British newspapers criticized him with spiteful attacks. The *First Royal Dragoons*, of which he was honorary colonel, at times hung his portrait facing the wall in the casino while Queen Victoria, Kaiser Wilhelm II's grandmother, shared her "sorrow & astonishment" about his telegram (cf. Röhl, 2017).

The *Harden-Eulenburg affair* surrounding Wilhelm II was also closely intertwined with the international mass media landscape. It became and was one of the most spectacular political scandals of the German Empire that caused sensation worldwide. This controversy comprises a series of court-martials and court cases from 1907 to 1909 alleging homosexual behavior and the defamation lawsuits brought against these allegations – involving well-known political advisors and friends of the Kaiser, such as Philipp, Prince of Eulenburg. Maximilian Harden, editor of the weekly newspaper *Die Zukunft*, deliberately orchestrated the affair in order to put foreign policy pressure on the Kaiser (Hecht, 1997). The journalist exploited the alleged scandal to portray the Kaiser's closest friends as a homoerotic round table that had been trying to divert Wilhelm II for two decades from Bismarck's 'male' course and instead wanted to persuade him to pursue a lasting peace policy towards Great Britain and France (Domeier, 2010, pp. 301-345). Harden expected that this might risk a renunciation of German colonies or the annexed Imperial Territory of Alsace-Lorraine. Meanwhile, *The Daily Telegraph* published a conversation with the Emperor on October 28, 1908, which caused a great outrage in Germany because of undiplomatic and false statements (Röhl, 2014). The British newspaper presented what appeared to be an interview with Wilhelm II. It was in fact the reworked notes by British Army officer Edward Montagu-Stuart-Wortley of conversations he had with the Kaiser in 1907. The interview had previously been submitted to Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow for authorization, but he passed it on to the Foreign Ministry's press office for their review, which apparently was not done. In the Reichstag and in public, all political parties were mad at the Kaiser. Even the conservatives, whose opinion had already become critical because of the *Harden-Eulenburg affair*, condemned the Kaiser. The Chancellor distanced himself from the Emperor to distract attention from his own failure to review the interview and was dismissed. Foreign reporting thus had a retroactive effect on domestic events. The foreign interview became a trap for national politics. Both the *Harden-Eulenburg affair* and the simultaneous *Daily Telegraph affair* led to government crises, which were widely reported around the world. The cases such as the *Dreyfus affair* in France illustrate how the emergence of an internationally networked media system created a new type of political scandal, which the media not only reported on, but which arose in the first place under pressure from international media (cf. Thompson, 2000).

THE ELECTRIFICATION OF THE POLITICAL SCANDAL

While the 19th century's rotary presses were the midwives of international scandals, the 20th century's electronic media became their global playground. Newspapers and magazines provided the public with scandals from all over the world and became supplemented by audio-visual storytelling in a powerful news media system.

With the introduction of the first *regulated radio programs* around 1920 and the founding of *news cinemas* a few years later, in which newsreels were shown, scandals found their way into people's everyday lives electronically. The military recognized early the possibility of using film for psychological warfare and promoted the film industry in

many countries. This led to state regulation or control of broadcasting and film production. Political scandals were often directed against foreign and domestic government opponents in the wake of the world wars in the first half of the 20th century. The speed at which scandals spread increased with the availability of electronic transmission. This led to a further strengthening of journalists' sovereignty as gatekeepers and narrators of political scandals in a global context.

With the establishment of television stations with full programs and domestic TV sets in the second half of the 20th century, they could be broadcast live with moving images in the living room at home and the *news cinemas* became less important. The increasing variety of programs caused the decline of influence of regulatory authorities. In the new electronic media environment censorship became virtually impossible. Scandalous events once broadcast became difficult to get rid of afterwards. This has been particularly true since the introduction of video cassette recorders such as Sony's *CV-2000 model*, which paved the way for the home market as a video tape recorder from 1965.

Each of the major political scandals of this decade, such as *Profumo* (1962-1963), *Watergate* (1972-1974), *Koreagate* (1972-1974) and *Iran-Contra* (1985-1986) caused a stir internationally. They were revealed by newspaper journalists, but found rapid, international dissemination through broadcasters.

How intensively reporters researched global political scandals on behalf of media companies in the 20th century and how strongly the revelations in the media business influenced political relations became obvious in the scandal surrounding the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior*. The ship was on its way to protest against a planned French nuclear test in Moruroa and became a target of an intelligence operation by the *Direction générale de la Sécurité extérieure (DGSE)*. The French foreign intelligence agency wanted to prevent protests by Greenpeace and sunk the ship on July 10, 1985 at the port of Auckland, New Zealand. The Portuguese-Dutch photographer Fernando Pereira died on board in the state-terrorist assassination that was planned and financed with the approval of President François Mitterrand (Wilson, 2010). After the bombing, New Zealand police identified two French agents, Captain Dominique Prieur and Commander Alain Mafart, as accomplices. France, an ally of New Zealand, initially denied any involvement and jointly condemned the *act of terrorism*. When it became clear that the bombing was the act of the government of a friendly state, New Zealand no longer described the attack as an act of terrorism, but as a *criminal attack* violating international law on sovereign territory. The aspect of violation of international law was raised in all communications to the United Nations to prevent the French government from any arguments that might imply justifying its actions. The arrested agents pled guilty to manslaughter and were sentenced to ten years in prison on November 22, 1985. However, France set up its own commission of inquiry, which found the French government innocent and claimed that the arrested agents were merely spying on Greenpeace. When *The Times* and *Le Monde* refuted this account and revealed that President Mitterrand had authorized the bombing, Secretary of Defense Charles Hernu resigned and the head of the DGSE was sacked. Finally, due to the journalistic

revelations, Prime Minister Laurent Fabius admitted in a press conference that the bomb attack was a French secret service action. However, the top government remained in office and protected the DGSE and put New Zealand under economic pressure until they had freed the agents Mafart and Prieur in 1987. Back in France, they were awarded military decorations and promoted (Robie, 2007). The *Rainbow Warrior Scandal* illustrated how different the consequences of political scandals are in a global context. What is seen as scandalous in one country may not cause outrage in another, depending on different cultural perspectives and opposed national interests.

The expansion of international correspondent networks and electronic transmission via satellite in the second half of the 20th century led to an intensification of foreign reporting, in which political scandals from other countries were reported daily. Despite the constant stream of news, only a few of them remained permanently present in cultural memory.

A groundbreaking change for political scandals in a global context happened in 1998. For the first time, power shifted from newspaper publishers and broadcasting companies to the Internet with the *Clinton-Lewinsky affair* of US President Bill Clinton. For the first time in the mass media history of political scandals, the classic gatekeepers in the major news companies lost their sovereignty over scandals. The US magazine *Newsweek* had been researching the affair for almost a year, but there were still doubts about the credibility of the sources, so the editors decided to withhold the story about Clinton's sexual relationship with intern Monica Lewinsky from November 1995 to March 1997. That all changed on January 17, 1998, when the *Drudge Report* website broke the news that *Newsweek* had information about an inappropriate relationship between "a White House intern" and the President, but withheld publication (S. E. Bennett, 2002). After Drudge's report was published, *Newsweek* released the story and the scandal ensued. Because of the sex affair and an alleged false statement, Clinton had to testify before the team of special counsel Kenneth Starr in August 1998. Although the hearing was held behind closed doors, a video recording was released to the public on September 21, 1998, broadcast on television worldwide and circulated on the Internet. The scandal culminated in the impeachment of Bill Clinton. The *Drudge Report*, founded by Matt Drudge in 1995, was no longer able to surpass its global Lewinsky scoop, but paved the way for a new scandal sector that no longer followed the ethical standards of professional journalism and changed politics with fabricated outrage. It has been copied many times, amongst others by Andrew Breitbart, who was Drudge's first assistant. From 2007 onwards, Breitbart has been running his website *Breitbart News* and helped Donald Trump into the White House in 2016 using scandalization techniques (Peeters et al., 2023). The Lewinsky affair thus anticipated a development that would shape political scandals in the electronically networked international public spheres of the 21st century: anyone with Internet access can plant a political scandal in the global village – and it will be difficult for those who are the subject of a scandal to erase the allegations from collective memory.

OUTRAGE IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

The digitization of scandals on the Internet put moral pressure on political communication in the 21st century in many ways. Above all, the changes can be characterized by two developments: firstly, the digital space became a source of political scandal topics in which all content can be accessed almost indefinitely in terms of time and location, and secondly, scandalizers became able to trigger viral outrage worldwide. Consequently, a rise in political scandals was observed (cf. Allern et al., 2012; Burkhardt, 2018; Downey & Stanyer, 2013; Haller & Michael, 2018, 2020; Imhof, 2002; Kepplinger, 2018; Kumlin & Esaasson, 2012; Strömbäck, 2008).

Especially ideological conflicts became a major topic of outrage in the global village. The inhuman images of the global torture scandal in *Abu Ghraib prison* during the occupation of Iraq by the United States quickly spread worldwide via the Internet after their publication via the US television channel CBS in April 2004 (Binder, 2013). In the photos, American torturers posed triumphantly alongside the mostly proven innocent prisoners they had abused, raped, and often tortured to death. While foreign politicians and the media sharply criticized the American government for human rights violations, the discourse in the United States was divided (Burkhardt, 2006). Several newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*, requested Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to resign. There were also numerous public advocates of the torture (WL Bennett et al., 2006, 2008; Porpora et al., 2010). The still popular radio host Michael Savage said, "Instead of putting joysticks, I would have liked to have seen dynamite put in their orifices", and that "we need more of the humiliation tactics, not less." (cf. Rowling et al., 2011). These different assessments already revealed a divided public, which increased in the following decade. In Internet forums, extreme positions were expressed, especially in terms of the attention economy and algorithms. These distortions of discourse contained enormous conflict potential for international understanding and international politics.

The humiliation of the Islamic prisoners of war was followed by a scandal in the global discourse that caused further escalation: the controversy over the *Muhammad Cartoons* in the Danish daily newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005 and 2006 with more than 200 deaths globally (Eide & Kunelius, 2008). The publication of the cartoons followed a report by a Danish children's book author who claimed that three illustrators refused to work for his new book on the life of the Prophet Muhammad out of fear of reprisals. *Jyllands-Posten* wanted to explore how much Danish illustrators felt threatened. It commissioned 12 caricatures and published them on September 30, 2005 (Eide & Kunelius, 2008). In October, the Egyptian newspaper *Al Fagr* reprinted some of the cartoons, including one of the Prophet with a bomb in his turban, without much protest (Magala, 2008). The political scandal arose only in the global context after the publication of a dossier prepared by the Danish Imam Ahmad Abu Laban and the Islamic activist Ahmed Akkari for a trip to Egypt and Lebanon.

The *Akkari-Laban dossier*, which was presented to representatives of the Arab League and Muslim clerics and academics, also contained three Islamophobic images that were

said to be *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons but were in fact neither commissioned nor published by the newspaper. From January 2006, the international distribution of the dossier led to reactions such as the boycott of Danish and Norwegian goods in many Arab countries, the closing of Libya's embassy in Copenhagen and the ambassador to Saudi Arabia's departure. In addition, the interior ministers of 17 Arab countries passed a resolution, according to which the Danish government must "severely punish" the authors of the cartoons. In response, the EU threatened to appeal to the WTO if Arab governments supported the boycott of Danish and Norwegian goods. On the Internet, the cartoons were sent by e-mail and scandalized in Islamic blogs and forums as well as the video portal YouTube (founded in 2005), and called for *jihad* (Al-Rawi, 2015). In addition, the Arabic television channel Al Jazeera broadcast a speech by Mouhammed Fouad al-Barazi, well-known in the Muslim world as Denmark-based leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, who tearfully claimed that in Denmark text messages were calling on people to burn the Quran. In fact, there was a corresponding announcement by the right-wing splinter party Danish Front, which pretended to want to carry out such a Quran burning at one of their demonstrations. Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei claimed on Iranian television that the cartoonists were paid by Jews and part of a campaign by "filthy Zionists" who have "full control" not only of the newspapers and media, but also of the US government. There were almost everywhere in Islamic countries violent attacks on diplomatic institutions and citizens of Denmark and other European countries, as well as on Christian churches. An international discussion arose about freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of art and freedom of expression. Most European media reprinted the cartoons to clarify their point of view. This also included the editorial staff of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, which suffered Islamist-motivated terrorist attacks and killings in 2011, 2015 and 2020 after the publication of cartoons of Muhammad.

Since the *Jyllands-Posten controversy*, both far-right and Islamist extremists have used the Muhammad cartoons to draw a radical line between Muslims and non-Muslims (de Groot Heupner, 2022). The scandal not only revealed the enormous potential for controversies in global public spheres when the guiding code of morality is ideologically attacked. It also showed that scandals of the 21st century are no longer negotiated exclusively within societies that have a similar understanding of conflict management. Political scandals in a global context do not fundamentally differ in terms of conflict negotiation from scandals in local villages: violent conflicts are also common practice there in the heat of the battle. However, outrage in the global village has shifted away from the journalistic-dominated communication of the 20th century. Social networks have increasingly established themselves as important discourse platforms for political scandalization in global contexts. A comparison of local scandals and mediated scandals in social media therefore reveals significant differences in terms of the degree of publication, the modes of transgression, the temporal-spatial framing of the history of the scandal, the difference and identity management updated by it and the presence of those staged by the scandalization images (Burkhardt 2018).

These differences between outrage in the global village and local scandals can be observed in all major political scandals of the first two decades of the 21st century. In

2011, for the first time, a politician had to resign over the new Internet phenomenon of sexting. Anthony Weiner, Member of the United States House of Representatives from New York City, rose to global fame with photos of his genitals in underwear, taken with his smartphone and posted on the microblogging platform Twitter that was established in 2006. Weiner's communication failure was scandalized on social networks and journalists worldwide reported on it (Erzikova & Simpson, 2018). The discourse thus combined both non-professionally produced statements of everyday communication in different publics as well as professionally produced statements of journalism in the media system.

With the US presidential election of Donald J. Trump in 2016, the permanent scandalization of political opponents and self-scandalization became the hallmark of self-portrayal as a political underdog and lawyer of the underclass (McIntosh & Mendoza-Denton, 2020). Trump's presidency was accompanied by constant outrage, propagandistic lies, and unparalleled moral transgressions – including political influence by Russia (Darr et al., 2019). With the virulence of his scandals, Trump achieved maximized media exposure from his very first campaign, accompanied by aggressive Twitter posts in which he revealed his worldview to his supporters directly and without journalistic framing (Searles & Banda, 2019). At the same time, he put pressure on political journalists worldwide to follow him on Twitter and report on his agenda setting. The discourse power changed in favor of the president as scandalizer in digital public spheres – and journalism continued to lose influence in political scandals.

However, the possibility of global scandalization on the Internet was not reserved for presidents only. The blasting force of scandalization in social media suddenly became visible in the wake of the *Weinstein Scandal*. In this scandal, the anger at chauvinism, which was presented by Trump as socially acceptable again, exploded first in the United States. In October 2017, *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* accused the powerful US film producer Harvey Weinstein of decades of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape against dozens of women in the film industry. After the film mogul denied all allegations, actress Alyssa Milano called on women via Twitter on October 15, 2017 to use the phrase *Me too* to draw attention to the extent of sexual harassment and assault. More than ten thousand people replied directly to Milano's original tweet, including politicians from different countries. Under the hashtag *#MeToo*, the allegations became a persistent topic for several weeks and months in at least 85 countries (Lee & Murdie, 2021). Alternative language variants of the hashtag have been used across the globe in non-English speaking countries, including France, Italy, Iran, Israel, Japan, Spain, Vietnam, and the People's Republic of China. The wave of worldwide *#MeToo* allegations against numerous celebrities and politicians received special attention due to the global framing. The communication event was thus the first political scandal that was simultaneously adapted and updated by a global public in national languages in such a way that national sub-scandals of a global scandal emerged.

The *Weinstein Scandal* became a global scandal wave with far-reaching consequences for politicians in many countries, who were sometimes little known internationally. In the UK, Defense Secretary Michael Fallon resigned after Fallon's cabinet colleague Andrea

Leadsom complained to Prime Minister Teresa May that he had made lewd remarks (Julios, 2022). Welsh Minister Carl Sargeant committed suicide days after being suspended for alleged sexual abuse (ibid.). The European Parliament convened a session in the wake of the *MeToo* movement after allegations emerged against several members of Parliament and at the European Union offices in Brussels (Berthet & Kantola, 2021). In the United States, eight women made public allegations against former President George H. W. Bush of sexually harassing them at meetings. Several politicians reported on their experiences of sexual abuse. Congressman John Conyers had to resign in the wake of #MeToo after it became public that he had sexually harassed several female workers and used taxpayer money to settle harassment claims. Senate member Al Franken resigned from office after several women reported sexual harassment, including groping. On February 10, 2022, the US Congress passed legislation designed to ensure that anyone who is sexually harassed in the workplace has a legal remedy. In the same year, the statute of limitations on sex offenses was lifted. This allowed American journalist E. Jean Carroll to file a civil suit against Donald J. Trump alleging that he had raped her at the Bergdorf Goodman department store in New York in the 1990s. In 2023, the former president was sentenced to \$5 million in damages in this sexual abuse and defamation trial.

The outrage in the global village showed how social media can activate political scandals on a global scale. While in the face-to-face publics scandalizers and the scandalized had (depending on their social positions) relatively balanced power, political scandals in the global context developed a high degree of virulence that came along with an imbalance of power: the scattering effect means a loss of power of the scandalized and strengthening of the scandalizers' impact if there is no Internet censorship.

Autocratic states however censor the digital communication in political scandals. The result is not only that the scandal-related information on social media platforms differs between them and democracies, but even in digital one-to-one communication. A research team led by Crete-Nishihata (et al. 2017) used the case of *Liu Xiaobo Scandal* to explore these differences. China's only Nobel Peace Prize winner and most famous political prisoner was arrested in December 2008 for taking part in *Charta 08*, a manifesto calling for political reform and an end to one-party rule. *Charta 08* became a national Chinese scandal, whereas Xiaobo's arrest caused outrage mainly in many democratic countries (Alvaro, 2013). Scandals on political writers and activists in a global context show often this pattern: some countries rate their writings as scandalous, while other countries see the scandal in the scandalization, censorship and persecution of writers, journalists and whistleblowers who expose abuses, such as Judith Miller in 2004 in the *Plame affair* (Pearlstine, 2007), Chelsea Manning since 2010 and Julian Assange since 2012 in *WikiLeaks* (Brevini, 2013) or Edward Snowden in the *NSA global surveillance and espionage affair* since 2013 (Touchton et al., 2020). In the eyes of some they are criminals, in the eyes of others they are fighters for justice. Thus, this is not an exclusively Chinese problem. Liu Xiaobo died of complications from liver cancer on July 13, 2017, eight years after his incarceration. The scope of censorship of keywords and images on WeChat related to him was greatly expanded after his death. The analysis of WeChat's keyword-based censorship showed that after his death, messages containing his name in English

and in both Simplified and Traditional Chinese were blocked (Crete-Nishihata et al., 2017). For the first time, image filtering in one-to-one chats could also be demonstrated in addition to image filtering in group chats and WeChat moments. Sina Weibo also banned searching for Liu Xiaobo's name in English and both simplified and traditional Chinese. Since his death, his first name Xiaobo alone has been enough to trigger automated censorship. In other words, written individual communication about supposedly scandalous content was automatically erased. In China, the political scandal could only be discussed in uncensored publics, while internationally it could be discussed, reported, and researched without censorship.

In the digital public spheres, which became popular with the promise of more transparency, two opposing developments can therefore be observed: on the one hand, there are more topics for political scandals, with which scandalizers and their moral collectives have gained influence and a (largely) global thematic public for moral transgressions. On the other hand, political scandals are sometimes deliberately suppressed by being censored or drowned out by other topics. Thus, political scandals, even in the global village, once again follow the inherent rules of national public spheres.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the global context, the genesis of the political scandal is closely linked to the possibilities of communication and the associated media publicity. Orally negotiated scandals in local communities became mediated scandals that take place under the conditions of the respective media system. While journalists acted as scandal gatekeepers in the 20th century and dominated storytelling, in the 21st century social media increasingly gained influence on political scandals worldwide.

Non-transparent algorithms spread polarizing scandals in the social media sphere faster and exacerbated their political escalation. The merging of truth and fiction had replaced journalistic research as the basis for social self-observation and self-description in parts of the population that obtained information exclusively from *alternative news* or social media posts. This development offers a foretaste of post-truth scandals, in which deep fakes and AI applications are used to stimulate political events and movements in global contexts. Networked societies encounter different practices of the sayable and the unsayable and form moral collectives in such different cultures as high-tech autocracies with censored media systems, democracies with diverse world views and nomadic tribal societies that receive the same communication content via mobile data transmission. Hence, scandals are not only particularly suitable for depicting the cross-border entanglements of political discourses. More than ever, their analysis will be indispensable for drawing early conclusions about the normative design and regulation of political public spheres in a global context.

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SKANDALI U GLOBALNOM SELU: NEČUVENA POVIJEST MEĐUNARODNE POLITIKE

Steffen Burkhardt

SAŽETAK *Specifične karakteristike političkih skandala u globalnom kontekstu prate povijesnu evoluciju međunarodnih komunikacijskih tehnologija i medijskih sustava. Ovaj članak ispituje razvoj političkih skandala kroz odabrane skandalozne događaje u globalnom kontekstu. Globalna evolucija skandala odvijala se u tri faze: 1) pisano umnožavanje morala stvorilo je uvjete za međunarodna izvješća o političkim skandalima; 2) uspostava međunarodnoga medijskog sustava transformirala je političke skandale u sastavni dio globalnih javnih sfera; 3) digitalizacija skandala na internetu izvršila je moralni pritisak na globalnu politiku – što je rezultiralo stalnim i sveprisutnim međunarodnim diskursima skandala. Digitalizacija političkih skandala dolazi, s jedne strane, uz gubitak novinarskih „vratarata“, manipulacije u javnoj sferi koje su posljedice vremena postistine, utjecaj iz inozemstva i rizik od društvenih nemira. S druge strane, pruža priliku za bolje razumijevanje mogućnosti i ograničenja globalizacije.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

POVIJEST MEDIJA, POVIJEST SKANDALA, POVIJESNI SKANDALI, DIGITALIZACIJA, GLOBALIZACIJA

Bilješka o autoru _____

Steffen Burkhardt :: HAW Hamburg, Odsjek za informacije i medijsku komunikaciju ::
steffen.burkhardt@haw-hamburg.de

OUTRAGE, SOLIDARITY, COUNTERATTACK: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TWEETS ON TWO POLITICAL SCANDALS IN GERMANY

Jan Dvorak

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ABSTRACT *The prevalence of politicians' scandals on social media has become an integral part of contemporary political life, presenting a challenge to existing scandal research. The formerly passive audience is given new opportunities for participation that have not yet been comprehensively described either theoretically or empirically. This study contributes to filling this gap by developing a taxonomy to describe offensive and defensive forms of audience participation during scandals. I analyze a sample of 500 influential tweets, taken from a corpus of more than 55.000 tweets related to two scandalizations of German politicians. The proposed taxonomy is shown to be suitable for describing both offensive and defensive forms of audience participation in scandalizations on social media.*

KEY WORDS

SCANDAL, AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION, TWITTER, CONTENT ANALYSIS

Author's note _____

Jan Dvorak :: University of Hohenheim, Computational Science Hub (CSH),
Department of Food Informatics :: jan.dvorak@uni-hohenheim.de

INTRODUCTION

Most scandals arise from norm violations, but not all norm violations lead to scandalization (Kepplinger, 2018a, p. 31). For scandalization to succeed, the misconduct must first be communicated to an audience and labelled as a relevant problem. In scandal research, this role is usually ascribed to journalists (Burkhardt, 2006, p. 139; Pörksen & Detel, 2012, p. 20). Scandals can therefore be seen as mediated events in which hidden, morally reprehensible activities are revealed (Thompson, 2000, p. 52). For this reason, scandalization processes have always been oriented towards the possibilities of conveying information via the media (Burkhardt, 2006, pp. 82-111). The most recent milestone in this development is the establishment of the Internet. Detached from the logic of traditional mass media, the scandal reaches a new stage of evolution and escalation (Pörksen & Detel, 2012, p. 23). The traditional division of responsibilities during a scandal, according to which journalists encourage scandalization (Kepplinger, 2018b, p. 35) and the audience voices public outrage (Neckel, 1989, p. 594), is radically challenged by the opportunities for participation in online media. Above all, the role of the audience changes under these conditions. They become a *journalistic superpower* (Pörksen & Detel, 2012, p. 23), which significantly influences the scandal. In previous research, scandals have often been interpreted as a means of control by ordinary citizens over the political elite (Hondrich, 2002, pp. 31-31; Neckel, 1986, p. 600). It remains to be seen what social function the scandal will fulfil under the changed communication conditions of the networked society. One thing is certain: the rather passive role assigned to the audience in the *scandal triad* (Käsler, 1991, p.13; Neckel, 1986, p. 585) is changing.

This study examines how internet users make use of the new opportunities to participate in scandalizations. Drawing on scandal research literature and taking into account the conditions of communication on the Internet, I develop a taxonomy of offensive and defensive forms of audience participation during scandalizations. I then use quantitative content analysis to examine whether these forms of participation can be observed in two scandals involving the German politicians Philipp Amthor (Christian Democratic Union) and Sarah-Lee Heinrich (Alliance 90/The Greens).

THE SCANDAL ON THE INTERNET

The affinity between media and scandals can be seen in their parallel development. The extent to which changes in media systems create new opportunities for scandalization and thus influence the occurrence of scandals has been described in detail as far as the past centuries are concerned (Bösch, 2011, pp. 36-38; Burkhardt, 2006, pp. 82-111; Thompson, 2000, pp. 31-60). However, with the global triumph of the Internet and the establishment of social media in the 21st century, a transformation of scandals is taking place that has not yet been fully explored by scandal research. Previous research assumed that it was journalists and traditional mass media that gave scandals the necessary reach for collective outrage (Kepplinger, 2018a, p. 35). Scandal research has long regarded the traditional mass media as the most important producers of scandal due to their sovereignty

of interpretation (Burkhardt, 2006, p. 4). This assumption is being challenged in the 21st century. Participatory forms of journalism have blurred the distinction between producers and audience in the digital age (Hermida, 2011, pp. 30-31). The Internet offers all users the opportunity to publish and redistribute scandalous material themselves (Pörksen & Detel, 2012, p. 23; Stegbauer, 2018, p. 42). The new opportunities for participation, for example through social networks or user comments on news websites, shape the scandal landscape of the Internet (von Sikorski, 2018, p. 3124). Zulli (2020) terms this construction of scandals across multiple platforms “socio-mediated scandals” (p. 4) that are characterized by increased collaboration, personalization, partisanship and liveness (pp. 5-14).

This development generates new content whose distribution channels are no longer subject to the traditional logic of the mass media. It is no longer the journalists, in their role as gatekeepers with established selection patterns, who decide what becomes a scandal and what does not. The assessment of what is scandalous and thus socially relevant is now made by individuals (Stegbauer, 2018, p. 43; Zulli, 2020, p. 5). If violations of norms no longer have to be universally recognized, any circumstance that has the potential to outrage at least a small part of society can theoretically become a scandal. The Internet fuels this process in two ways. First, by publishing private content, its users become more accessible and easier to criticize (Stegbauer, 2018, p. 43). Due to the permanence of communication on the Internet, this can happen years after a piece of content has been created.¹ Secondly, the establishment of social networks has fundamentally changed the social communication system. The platforms offer their users new forms of visibility and participation as well as various possibilities of articulation and organization (Jarren, 2021, p. 43). This creates new opportunities for the dissemination of scandalous content and forms of collective outrage (Burkhardt, 2020, p. 11; Pörksen & Detel, 2012, p. 23).

THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

The audience’s agency has expanded dramatically in the Internet age. Although scandal research has investigated some scandalization on the Internet in recent years (e.g., Herbers & Lichtenstein, 2021; Pörksen & Detel, 2012; Stegbauer, 2018), there are still no methodological approaches to systematically capture audience contributions. Therefore, in the following sections, I will explore which forms of participation are conceivable for social network audiences during internet scandals.

Outrage for All

The elaboration of possible offensive forms of participation is based on the descriptions of audiences in traditional scandal research. In addition, the few research findings on the behavior of audiences during scandalizations on the Internet are taken into account. Since private individuals can now play an active role in the scandalization process that was previously reserved for journalists in the traditional mass media (Stegbauer, 2018, p. 43), research approaches on the motives and behaviors of accusers are also considered.

¹ It is very difficult to delete public content from the Internet. For example, the Internet Archive has archived over 855 billion pieces of content that can be easily searched (Internet Archive, n.d.).

In the following two sections, these aspects collected from the literature are divided into two categories.

The Moral Focus

This category of participation describes the sincere indignation about the norm violation of the scandalized person. What is decisive is the perceived injustice resulting from the violation of morality (Burkhardt, 2006, p. 142). At the center of the uproar is transgression and what it means for central values of society. In this context, scandals often function as an escalating moment for deeper conflicts between competing values (Hondrich, 2002, p. 63). The negotiation process that follows the outrage leads to an affirmation or differentiation of society's normative guidelines (Burkhardt, 2020, p. 4; Hondrich, 2002, pp. 28-31; Kepplinger, 2005, p. 148). In traditional scandal research, this process is often interpreted as an act of governance (Hondrich, 2002, pp. 31-33; Neckel, 1998, p. 600). Scandalization thus represents the moral counter-power of social groups that otherwise have only a few opportunities to participate (Stegbauer, 2018, p. 46). Orientation towards moral concepts can also be identified as the motivation for scandalization (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1044; Tiffen, 1999, p. 137). Thus, reporting on moral grievances is part of the professional self-image of investigative journalists (Thompson, 2000, p. 82).

The Instrumental Focus

Scandalization can also be seen as a means of power. The interests of the attackers in this context go beyond mere scandal. The scandal is to be seen as a method of maintaining, extending or limiting power (Pflügler & Baugut, 2015, p. 317). Here, the scandal moves away from the normative claim of the controlling authority and the self-serving motives of the accusers come to the fore. This is most evident when considering the immediate personal benefits that can accrue to those involved in the scandalization process. For example, media companies can expect financial gains from the sale of their products and journalists can expect a gain in prestige for their investigative research (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1044; Thompson, 2000, p. 79). Scandalizing others can also provide benefits in a political context. Damaging political opponents can be done for various reasons: for example, to intimidate the scandalized person (Stegbauer, 2018, p. 106), to eliminate competitors (Jenssen & Fladmoe, 2012, p. 67), or to damage the reputation of established politicians (Burkhardt, 2020, p. 5). Another motivation would be the *reactionary scandalization* of political activists in order to delegitimize their protest (Allen, 2016).

Networked Solidarity

So far, there is no systematization of the forms of participation that the audience can use to support the person at the center of a scandal. In scandal research, however, there are various systematizations of defenses for scandalized persons. These are so-called *Image Repair Strategies* (Benoit, 2015, pp. 22-31), *Practical Explanations* (Scott & Lyman, 1976, pp. 73-105), or simply *Defenses* (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1045; Kepplinger, 2018a, p. 160; Tiffen, 1999, pp. 124-135). What all approaches have in common is the overarching goal of influencing the outcome of the situation in a way that is beneficial to the scandalized

person. The following sections explore which of these defenses are conceivable for social network audiences in the case of online scandalizations.

Denial

Denial of the allegations represents a simple form of defense that has been extensively described in scandal research (Benoit, 2015; Kepplinger, 2018a; Ware & Linkugel, 1973). This defense has the potential to completely absolve the scandalized person of the accusations, provided it is accepted by the audience. On the other hand, this defense carries a high risk, as it often leads to additional investigations. If the attackers conclude that the defense is based on lies, the scandal is further fuelled (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1045).

Justifications

Scandalized individuals have various techniques at their disposal to justify their actions (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1045; Kepplinger, 2018a, p. 160). The various approaches in scandal research can be summarized in three categories:

>The *denial of responsibility* is based on various aspects for which the scandalized person is not responsible. These include, for example, accidents, lack of information, and provocation (Benoit, 2015, p. 23; Scott & Lyman, 1976, pp. 76-81).

>The *reassessment* can refer either to the norm violation or to the entire scandal. Thus, it can be argued that the criticized act is based on good intentions (Benoit, 2015, pp. 23-24), does not violate any law (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1045), or causes only minor damage (Benoit 2015, p. 24; Scott & Lyman, 1976, pp. 83-84). Moreover, a reinterpretation of the whole scandal is possible by shifting the conflict to a more abstract level (Benoit, 2015, pp. 24-25; Tiffen, 1999, p. 134; Ware & Linkugel, 1973, p. 278).

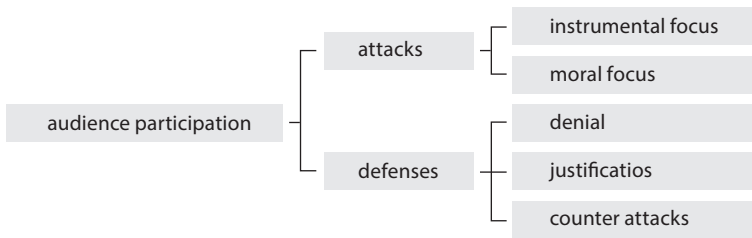
>The *focus on positive aspects* aims to strengthen the relationship between the scandalized person and the audience by focusing on positive attributes or actions (Ware & Linkugel, 1973, p. 277). Although this does not change the evaluation of the norm violation, it may help to reduce the audience's negative feelings towards the scandalized person (Benoit, 2015, p. 24).

Counterattacks

These defenses shift public attention from the scandalized person to the accuser, sometimes with different aims. First, the motives and methods of the attacker(s) can be exposed in order to discredit them and remove the weight of their accusations (Benoit, 2015, p. 25; Tiffen, 1999, pp. 125, 129). For example, if the scandalized person can convey to the audience the message that their critics are acting from selfish motives or are going too far with their criticism (for example, by threatening violence), the outrage can quickly shift to the critics. Another form of counterattack refers explicitly to norm violations by the attacker(s), which may have occurred some time ago (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1045). The scandalized person uses public attention to point out the misbehavior of the other party. This is particularly effective if their actions can be portrayed as more serious, as this makes their own norm violation seem less relevant (Scott & Lyman, 1976, p. 84).

RESEARCH INTEREST: AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION IN SCANDALIZATIONS

Internet audiences have new ways of participating in scandalizations that have not yet been fully described in scandal research. This study attempts to fill this research gap by identifying the ways in which the internet community participates in scandalizations. The various forms of audience participation in political scandals on the Internet have been systematized in the previous sections (Figure 1).



▲ *Figure 1*
Forms of audience participation in political scandals on the Internet
Note. Source: Author.

This study examines the extent to which these theoretically based communication patterns can be empirically determined in two scandalizations of German politicians on Twitter (now called X). The German political system lends itself to the study of scandal, as the number of scandals has increased steadily in recent decades (Kepplinger, 1996; von Sikorski, 2017). In recent years, several high-profile politicians have resigned in the wake of scandals, including former German presidents Horst Köhler and Christian Wulff. Twitter is a good medium for monitoring audience participation in scandalizations. In Germany, just under 10% of the population use Twitter regularly (Koch, 2023). This study tries to understand, how Twitter is used to participate in political scandals by the German public. This leads to the first overarching research question:

RQ1: How does the Twitter audience participate in the scandalizations of Phillip Amthor and Sarah-Lee Heinrich?

In order to gain a detailed understanding of the different forms of participation, the following more specific research questions will be addressed:

RQ 2a: What forms of instrumentalization and moralization are used by the Twitter audience during the scandalizations?

RQ 2b: What forms of denial, justification and counterattack are used by the Twitter audience during the scandalizations?

METHOD

Case Selection

A quantitative content analysis is used to capture offensive and defensive forms of participation. Two cases are examined, as this may reveal similarities and differences between the participations. Similarities point to potentially universal patterns, while differences help to understand the specifics of the respective scandalization. On the basis of these considerations, two comparable cases were selected.

In both cases, young politicians are at the center of public outrage, and the scandalizations take place on the social network Twitter through the publication of content that testifies to the norm violations of the scandalized persons. Both cases are located in the German political system.

Philipp Amthor and the Photo With a Neo-Nazi

Philipp Amthor is a 30-year-old politician (Christian Democratic Union) and has been a member of the German parliament since October 2017 (Amthor, n.d.). On 19 July 2021, at 11:02 am, the Twitter account *Antifaschistische Linke Bochum* posted a picture of Philipp Amthor and two other men at a horse show in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Antifaschistische Linke Bochum, 2021). One of the two men was wearing a T-shirt that reads *Solidarity with Ursula Haverbeck*.²

Sarah-Lee Heinrich and the Disgusting White Majority Society

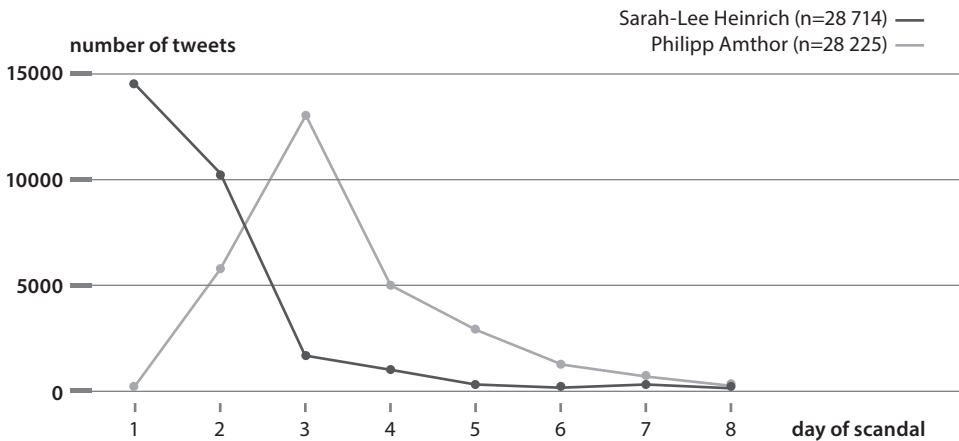
Sarah-Lee Heinrich is a 22-year-old politician from the Green Party (Pausch, 2021). On 09 October 2021, she was elected federal spokesperson of the party's youth organization at its federal congress (Reuter, 2021). At 16:02 on the same day, the Twitter account *GreenWatch* published a video of Sarah-Lee Heinrich in which she answered the question to what extent the success of climate activism was related to the skin color of the protesting activists (GreenWatch, 2021a)³. In this context, Heinrich spoke of a "disgusting white majority society" in Germany that would find it easier to identify with Greta Thunberg, for example. A movement of People of Color, on the other hand, would not have been able to achieve the same success as *Fridays for Future* due to societal racism. A few hours later on the same day, *GreenWatch* followed up by publishing a collection of juvenile, sometimes vulgar tweets posted by Sarah-Lee Heinrich when she was a 13-14 year old teenager (GreenWatch, 2021b). Over the next 24 hours, various accounts spread more screenshots of the politician's old tweets containing homophobic, ableist and violence-glorifying statements.

² Ursula Haverbeck is a far-right activist and convicted Holocaust denier.

³ The clip is part of an edition of KARAKAYA TALK entitled "Fridays for Future: too white?". The format is produced by Funk and is part of German public broadcasting. The full video can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXtzy2Rljc8&t=267s>

Data Collection

All analyses in this article refer to the audience communication on the social network Twitter. Both scandals originated on Twitter, and in both cases, there was active audience participation. The open-source software R (R Core Team, 2021) and the package *academictweetR* (Barrie & Ho, 2021) are used to collect data via the Twitter API. The start of the study period is set to the day when the scandalous material was published on Twitter. The end of the study period is set to seven days later, as the number of tweets decreased significantly after that time. For the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, a dataset of 28,714 tweets was collected. The dataset for the case of Philipp Amthor case contains 28,225 tweets. Figure 2 shows an overview of the scandals.



▲ Figure 2
 Number of tweets on the days of the scandal for both cases
 Note. Day 1 Sarah-Lee Heinrich = 09.10.2021, 0-24 hrs. Day 1 Philipp Amthor = 19.07.2021, 0-24 hrs.
 Tweets with the hashtags #sarahleeheinrich and #philippamthor and #amthor are considered.

Quantitative Content Analysis

In order to identify different offensive and defensive forms of audience participation, the data are processed using quantitative content analysis based on Rössler (2010)⁴. Due to the large amount of material available, the first key decision is to weigh the effort and the expected gain in knowledge of the coding. I decided on a sample of 250 tweets per case to satisfy both aspects. For the sampling, all retweets were first removed from the datasets, as this could introduce bias into the analysis. The popularity of the tweets was then determined and ranked based on the number of likes. In this way, the 250 most popular posts for each scandal were selected.

⁴ The codebook (in German) created for this purpose contains detailed considerations for all steps of the coding process and can be accessed via the online appendix.

Category Formation

Based on theoretical assumptions and taking into account initial empirical observations of the two scandals, I developed a system of categories. This system was validated in a pre-test ($n = 60$). The reliability of the category system was determined after the content analysis had been conducted. For this purpose, the intracoder reliability was calculated by repeating the measurement with the same material ($n = 60$). For both scandals, at least eight out of ten codings from the two measurement time points agreed in each category. The average for all categories was nine out of ten codes.

General Categories. Each tweet was given an identification number to facilitate later analyses during data preparation and evaluation. In addition, the time of publication and various popularity statistics (likes, retweets, quotes) were automatically coded for each tweet.

I assume that all offensive forms of participation show a negative attitude, while all defensive forms a positive attitude towards the scandalized person. Therefore, in the context of a global assessment, the *tendency of the tweet towards the scandalized person* was evaluated. This assessment determined the further course of coding. For example, for tweets with a negative attitude towards the scandalized person, only the offensive forms of participation were coded. If a tweet could not be assigned a clear attitude, it was coded as neutral, and both offensive and defensive forms of participation were coded.

Offensive Forms of Participation. To operationalize the *moral focus*, it was first recorded whether the tweet addressed the norm violation of the scandalized person. The formation of this category follows the consideration that the motivations described for the moral focus, for example, pointing out grievances (Thompson, 2000, p. 82), controlling power (Hondrich, 2002, pp. 31-33), and updating the normative codes of society (Burkhardt, 2020, p. 4), require the thematization of the norm violation of the scandalized person.

In order to capture participations with an *instrumental focus*, I first created two open categories based on my theoretical considerations. The first category referred to aspects that are intended to strengthen one's own group, such as increasing prestige, financial gains, or positive self-presentation. The second category included content that harmed the scandalized person or his or her camp, such as references to further norm violations by the scandalized person or damage to the reputation of his or her party. After the pre-test I divided these categories into four categories based on the most frequently observed patterns:

- >The *reference to other norm violations* records whether other misconduct on the part of the scandalized person is addressed.
- >The *criticism of competence* records whether the violation of the norm is used to classify the competence of the scandalized person as low.
- >The category *extension to other people* covers the extent to which the tweet expands the scandalization to other people. This can take different forms, such as extension to other politicians or extension to the entire party of the scandalized person. Open coding is used here to additionally record the target of the extension.

>*Positive self-portrayal* describes the extent to which users use the norm violation to present themselves or their camp in a good light. This can be done, for example, by thematizing one's own moral integrity.

One form of participation that should be observed in both moral and instrumental focus participation is *extension to other topics*. Based on the theoretical considerations of the *moral focus*, this category is intended to capture whether the tweet establishes a connection to a deeper conflict. With regard to the *instrumental focus*, I will examine the extent to which the publicity generated by the scandal is strategically used to negotiate issues that have nothing to do with the actual norm violation, but which additionally damage the scandalized person or his or her camp. Open coding is used here to capture the issue to which the tweet relates.

Defensive Forms of Participation. Defensive forms of participation were first examined with five categories. The *denial* category captures whether the tweet denies the norm violation of the scandalized person. The theoretically described mechanisms of *justification* are captured by three categories that closely follow the theoretical explanations:

>*Denial of responsibility* captures whether the tweet cites circumstances that exonerate the scandalized person. Since denial can occur in a variety of ways, open coding is used here.

>The *reassessment* category captures whether the tweet reassesses the norm violation of the scandalized person or the entire scandalization. Again, open coding is used to capture the type of reassessment.

>The category *positive focus* is used to examine the extent to which a tweet addresses a positive aspect of the scandalized person. Open coding is used to capture different forms of this technique.

The category *counterattack* refers to confrontational forms of defense. After the pre-test, this category was divided into three categories, as some counterattacks were multifaceted and different forms of confrontation were often mixed. The first category examines whether the *attacker's motives* to participate in the scandal are thematized and negatively evaluated. The second category covers the extent to which the *attacker's methods* are criticized, for example by interpreting them as an unjustified or transgressive reaction. The third category examines if a tweet shifts the attention to *norm violations of the attackers*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to determine the forms of audience participation in scandalizations on the internet, a sample of 250 tweets was systematically analyzed for two scandals. To answer RQ1, these tweets are divided into offensive, defensive, and neutral forms of participation based on the *attitude* category (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentages of the forms of participation used in both cases

	Philipp Amthor (n = 232)	Sarah-Lee Heinrich (n = 236)
Offensive forms of participation	84	67
Defensive forms of participation	8	28
Neutral forms of participation	7	6

Note. The basis of this table is the coding of the *attitude* category. Some tweets had to be removed from the analysis because they were part of a thread and could not be interpreted without their respective contexts.

In both scandalizations, users most often choose offensive forms of participation. In the case of scandalizations on the internet, too, the audience thus seems to fulfil its role as defined in the scandal triad and provides the public reaction of outrage (Neckel, 1989, p. 594).

However, there are clear differences between the two cases in terms of the relationship between offensive and defensive forms of participation. In the case of the scandalization of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, approximately every fourth tweet contains a defensive form of participation – in the case of Philipp Amthor, it is not even every tenth tweet. There are two possible explanations for this difference. In the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, there is no consensus in the audience regarding the evaluation of the norm violation. Stegbauer (2018) has called this process as *cultural conflict* (p. 105). Resistance to the attacks arises, particularly when the scandals are politically motivated (p. 101). In the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, the scandalizing material was published on the day of her election as national spokesperson for the Green Youth (GreenWatch, 2021a, 2021b), although some of the norm violations criticized took place many years ago. This *instrumental updating* (Kepplinger, 2018a, pp. 85-88), i.e. the planned creation of a scandal at a certain point in time, can be interpreted as an indication of a political motivation on the part of the accusers, which in turn could explain the greater willingness of the public to defend Sarah-Lee Heinrich. Another explanation has to do with the popularity of the scandalized persons on Twitter. Philipp Amthor does not have his own Twitter account, whereas Sarah-Lee Heinrich can rely on a network of more than 37,000 followers (sarah-lee, n.d.). There are also clear differences between the accounts of the politicians' parties: the account of Alliance 90/The Greens has 639,000 followers, which is more than that of the Christian Democratic Union with 373,000 (BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN, n.d.; CDU Deutschlands, 2022).⁵

Neutral forms of participation are only sporadically used by the audience. In the traditional scandal, the role of neutral reporting is assigned to the so-called *chroniclers* (Kepplinger, 2018a, p. 105), who do not make any accusations of their own, but merely document the events. The audience seems to take on this chronicler's role only to a limited extent. There are only a few contributions that do not take a clear position on the scandalized person.

⁵ The figures stated here refer to the status on 19/03/2022.

Offensive Forms of Participation

To describe the offensive forms of participations (RQ2a), the attacks are divided into participation with a moral focus and participation with an instrumental focus. Participation with a moral focus is only present if the tweet *addresses the norm violation of the scandalized person* and does not include any form of *instrumentalization*.

Table 2. Percentages of offensive forms of participation used with a moral and instrumental focus for both cases.

	Philipp Amthor	Sarah-Lee Heinrich
Offensive forms of participation	(n = 196)	(n = 158)
Moral focus	30	43
Instrumental focus	70	57
Forms of instrumentalization	(n=136)	(n=90)
<i>Positive self-expression</i>	14	11
<i>Reference to other norm violations</i>	32	1
<i>Criticism of competence</i>	17	2
<i>Extension: thematic</i>	36	44
<i>Extension: people</i>	31	76

Note. Only tweets that show a *negative attitude* towards the scandalized person are shown here.

Moral Focus

Sincere indignation at the violation of norms by the scandalized person was used less frequently by the audience in both cases than instrumentalization. There are also similarities in the content of the tweets. In both cases, about one in five posts makes a connection to a more abstract conflict, which comes to light on the basis of the criticized norm violation. In the case of Philipp Amthor, the focus is on his insufficient demarcation from right-wing positions and the normalization of right-wing extremism. In the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, an alleged double standard is criticized, which becomes apparent in the context of scandalization (Figure 3).

Schräg genug, dass #PhilippAmthor ein zum himmelschreiendes rechtsextremes Shirt nicht erkennt (von der Frisur ganz zu schweigen). Aber dass er im Nachhinein keine klaren Worte der Abgrenzung von Neonazis findet und sie als „Bürger“ normalisiert ist das eigentliche Desaster.

Das, was #sarahleeheinrich jetzt entgegenschlägt, ist genau die hasserfüllte Cancel Culture, an der sie sich Jahrelang beteiligt hat – und auch in Zukunft wahrscheinlich noch beteiligen wird. Da sie die Unschuldige spielt, wird sie wohl nicht aus der Erfahrung lernen.

▲ Figure 3
Tweets with moral focus and thematic extension

Annotation. Translations: (1) Weird enough that #PhilippAmthor doesn't recognize an appallingly right-wing extremist shirt (not to mention the hairstyle). But the fact that he doesn't find any clear words of demarcation from neo-Nazis afterwards and normalizes them as "citizens" is the real disaster. (2) What #sarahleeheinrich is now facing is the very hateful Cancel Culture she has participated in for years – and will likely continue to participate in the future. Playing the innocent, she is unlikely to learn from the experience. Source: Twitter.

Instrumental Focus

Tweets with instrumentalizations no longer focus on the violation of norms by a person, but on other content in the public sphere created by the scandal. Some forms of instrumentalization can be identified for both cases. Others, however, differ significantly in their use between the two cases.

One common feature is the *positive self-expression* in offensive tweets. In both cases, the users affirm that they themselves would not have committed the norm violation. In the case of Philipp Amthor's scandalization, other politicians stated that they themselves had recognized the two men as neo-Nazis or had never been asked for photos by people with this attitude. In the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, the attackers often emphasize their own moral integrity in their teenage years and stress that they would not have committed the norm violation at that age.

The two cases studied are also similar in terms of the *extension of the debate*. In both cases additional topics are frequently introduced into the discussion. In the case of Philipp Amthor, the indignation about the misconduct is justified by (partly fictitious) scandals of other politicians. It is often emphasized that people from other political camps are likely to be much more outraged in similar cases. The instrumentalizations in the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich often refer to current political debates, for example as an argument against lowering the voting age (Figure 4). In addition to these specific issues, more abstract conflicts are also addressed. For example, some attacks refer to a harmful left-wing identity politics, which is reflected in the politician's statements about the white majority society.

Die Versuche der #Grünen und der Guten™, die abscheulichen Tweets von #sarahleeheinrich mit ihrem jugendlichen Alter zu entschuldigen, sind das beste Argument GEGEN ein #Wahlrecht ab 16!

Man stelle sich vor, Habeck oder #Baerbock würden sich aus Versehen mit einem Typen fotografieren lassen, der ein Stalin-Porträt mit blutroter Faust auf seinem T Shirt trägt. Zehn Tage Springer-Headline-Hetze mindestens. #Amthor

▲ *Figure 4*

Tweets with thematic extension

Annotation. Translations: (1) The attempts of the #Greens and the good people™ to excuse the vile tweets of #sarahleeheinrich with her youthful age are the best argument AGAINST a #voting right from 16! (2) Imagine if Habeck or #Baerbock accidentally had their picture taken with a guy wearing a portrait of Stalin with a blood-red fist on his T-shirt. Ten days of Springer headline agitation at least. #Amthor. Source: Twitter.

In both cases, attempts are made to *extend the scandals to other persons*, although this kind of instrumentalization is used twice as often in the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich. The aims of the extension are also different. In the case of Philipp Amthor, the tweets equally contain extensions with reference to other persons and to the entire political camp. On the one hand, violations of norms by other politicians are criticized, on the other hand, links are made to the CDU as a whole, for example by describing the entire party as corrupt or open to right-wing ideology. In the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, there are only a few references to politicians. Much more often, the scandal is extended to the entire political camp. These attacks not only refer to the Greens, but often construct an abstract *left-green camp*, to which various negative and derogative attributes such as low intelligence, racism, dishonesty or ideological delusion are attributed.

In the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich⁶, the *reference to other norm violations* is very rare, whereas in the case of Philipp Amthor it is used in about every third instrumentalization. Most tweets refer to his lobbying activities for the company *Augustus Intelligence* and his derogatory remarks about Muslims.⁷ Looking at the specifics of the Sarah-Lee Heinrich case, a similar pattern emerges for both scandals: the attackers use all incriminating material they can gather when scandalizing. This communication pattern has been described in classical scandal research as *serial scandalization*, in which several norm violations are presented as a major grievance because of their bundled nature (Kepplinger, 2018a, p. 87).

The *criticism of competence* is used almost exclusively in the scandalization of Philipp Amthor. Because of his role as a domestic politician, it can be assumed that he has in-depth knowledge of anti-constitutional organizations and symbols. Many of the attackers consider this competence to be lacking, since Philipp Amthor agreed to pose for a photo with the two men, even though their right-wing leanings were obvious from the clothing typical of the scene, especially the T-shirt with the imprint of a prominent Holocaust denier.

Defensive Forms of Participation

In this section, the forms of participation aimed at defending the scandalized person are presented (*RQ2b*). Table 3 shows how often the three different approaches (*denials, justifications, counterattacks*) could be identified through quantitative content analysis.

There are clear differences between the two scandals in terms of the number of tweets using defensive forms of participation. However, there are some similarities in terms of the content of the defenses. In both cases, counterattacks are the most popular defensive form of participation, followed by justifications. Denial of the norm violation is not used in either scandalization. The following sections describe the defenses in more detail.

⁶ This finding is due to methodological difficulties. In the analysis, all of her scandalized tweets were considered as a single norm violation since for most attacks it could not be determined to which specific content they refer.

⁷ More about this norm violations, cf. (Reyher, 2021) and (Laggai, 2018).

Table 3. Percentages of defensive forms of participation used in both cases

	Philipp Amthor (n = 19)	Sarah-Lee Heinrich (n = 65)
Defensive forms of participation		
Denials	-	-
Justifications	63	63
<i>Type of justification</i>	<i>(n=12)</i>	<i>(n=41)</i>
<i>Denial of responsibility</i>	67	56
<i>Reassessment</i>	17	41
<i>Focus on positive aspects</i>	55	12
Counterattacks	74	71
<i>Type of counterattack</i>	<i>(n=14)</i>	<i>(n=46)</i>
<i>Criticism of the attacker's methods</i>	14	45
<i>Criticism of the attacker's motives</i>	35	28
<i>Focus on other norm violations</i>	64	39

Note. Only tweets that show a *positive attitude* towards the scandalized person are shown here.

Denials

The defensive participation form of denying the norm violation was not used by the audience in either scandalization. This is probably due to the low chances of success of this form of defense. Denial has already been described as a weak form of defense in traditional scandal research (Kepplinger, 2005, pp. 115-116). In the case of internet scandals, the potential of this defense is likely to be even lower. This can be justified by the fact that both Sarah-Lee Heinrich and Philipp Amthor experience what Pörksen and Detel (2012) call a *loss of control*, in which the evidence of the norm violation circulates virally and becomes impossible to erase (pp. 232-233).

Justifications

The most popular form of justification in both cases studied is the *denial of responsibility*. In the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, the defenders largely refer to the age at which the politician wrote the criticized tweets. It is often argued that scandalization is inappropriate because young people should not be held responsible to this extent. Others emphasize the politician's development in recent years and point out that she herself now condemns the content of the tweets. In Phillip Amthor's defense, external factors are used to deny responsibility. In particular, the circumstances in which the photo was taken are described. For example, it is argued that the politician cannot be held responsible for the misconduct because he did not have enough information. This finding is in line with existing research, which describes the reference to a lack of information as a popular defense strategy during scandals (Benoit, 2015; Scott & Lyman, 1976).

The clearest difference between the forms of justification can be seen in the case of *reassessment*. This form of defense is used more often in the case of Sarah Lee Heinrich.

Most often, the scandal is reinterpreted as a form of discrimination: The scandal is not accepted as an appropriate response to the norm violation but is interpreted as an attack on Sarah-Lee Heinrich because of her identity as a (female) Person of Color (Figure 6).

In Wirklichkeit regen sich Leute nicht über einen Tweet einer damals 14 Jährigen auf, der 6 Jahre alt ist. Sie regen sich einfach auf, dass eine junge Schwarze Frau Politik macht und suchen sich einen Vorwand, um zu hetzen. Solidarität mit @xsarahlee! #sarahleeheinrich

Du wirst 500 Jahre beschimpft, bespuckt, beleidigt, gefoltert, versklavt. Dann sagst Du Deine Meinung und der Shitstorm geht los. Die Sklavenhalter sind völlig empört und reagieren zornig. Die BILD vertritt sie alle. Dummes Deutschland #sarahleeheinrich #noAfD

▲ Figure 5

Reassessment of the scandalization in the case of Sarah-Lee Heinrich.

Annotation. Translations: (1) In reality, people don't get upset over a tweet from a then 14-year-old that is 6 years old. They are just upset that a young Black woman is doing politics and are looking for an excuse to agitate. Solidarity with @xsarahlee! #sarahleeheinrich (2) You will be insulted, spat upon, insulted, tortured, enslaved for 500 years. Then you speak your mind and the shitstorm starts. The slave owners are completely outraged and react angrily. The BILD represents them all. Stupid Germany! #sarahleeheinrich #noAfD Source: Twitter.

Tiffen (1999) describes this technique of transforming the conflict to a more abstract level as refusing to fight on the accuser's ground (p. 134). Reassessing the scandal as discrimination opens up many new possibilities for participation that do not have to do with norm violation. In the case of Philipp Amthor, similar communication patterns can be observed in few cases. Here, the scandal is interpreted as a form of *cancel culture*, which can also lead to new debates that do not have to deal primarily with norm violation.

The *focus on positive aspects* is more often used in the Philipp Amthor case. However, the positive content of both cases can be compared. In both defenses, the political commitment of the scandalized person is emphasized, and personal qualities are praised. This communication pattern has already been described in traditional scandal research and can be interpreted as an attempt to reduce the negative feelings of the audience towards the criticized person (Benoit, 2015, p. 24).

Counterattacks

In both cases, the audience most often uses counterattacks to defend the scandalized person. All three forms of counterattacks derived from the literature can be observed. In both scandalizations, criticism of the *motives* and *methods* of the attackers is voiced and *violations of norms by others* are addressed. In the defense of Sarah-Lee Heinrich, most of the counterattacks are criticizing the methods of the attackers. Especially the vehemence of the attacks is thematized, for example that the attacks contain racism or death threats. In the case of Philipp Amthor, this form of counterattack is only used sporadically. Here, the focus is more on addressing norm violations of other people. However, there are similarities between the two cases when it comes to criticizing the motives of the attackers.

These are criticized with similar frequency in both cases. For example, the enemy camp is accused of not participating in the scandalization out of sincere indignation. Instead, the attacks are attributed to base or strategic motives (Figure 7).

Dass die Tweets von #sarahleeheinrich verbreitet werden, zeigt, wie tief der braune Hass in der Gesellschaft verankert ist. Die Angst vor einer eloquenten und klugen Woman of Color ist enorm. Wir dürfen diesen Angriff auf die Demokratie niemals zulassen. Volle Solidarität!

#Amthor ist ne Konserve und hat nichts mit antisemitischen Neonazis gemein. Wer das nicht erkennt will einfach nur Konserven aus dem demokratischen Diskurs verdrängen. Jedes Mittel recht.

▲ Figure 6

Counterattacks, in which the motives of the attackers are criticized.

Annotation. Translations: (1) The fact that the tweets of #sarahleeheinrich are spreading shows how deeply anchored brown hatred is in society. The fear of an eloquent and smart Woman of Color is enormous. We must never allow this attack on democracy. Full solidarity! (2) #Amthor is a conservative and has nothing in common with anti-Semitic neo-Nazis. Those who do not recognize this simply want to oust conservatives from democratic discourse. Any means will do. Source: Twitter.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a contribution to the understanding of scandal on the Internet. In particular, it highlights the relevance of the audience for digital scandalization processes. In both observed cases, the audience predominantly uses offensive forms of participation. The majority of the attackers instrumentalizes the incident by using norm violation as an argument for political demands or to inflict various forms of damage on the scandalized person or his or her political camp. Justifications and counterattacks are the dominant forms of defensive participation. Defenders use justifications in an attempt to gain interpretive power over the events and thus to completely reassess the scandal. Counterattacks, on the other hand, criticize the behavior of the accusers, such as their methods, their motives, or their own violations of norms. The overarching patterns that link both scandals and offensive and defensive forms of participation are confrontation and the tendency to extend the scandal to other issues and persons. Many of the communication strategies identified have already been described in scandal research for the role of the accuser or the scandalized person. This study extends that research by considering the changing role of the audience, proposing a taxonomy of possible forms of participation, and validating this taxonomy through quantitative content analysis of two scandals.

The quantitative content analysis only looked at communication on Twitter, as this is where both scandals originated and where lively public participation could be observed. Nevertheless, the question arises as to whether completely different forms of scandalization might occur elsewhere on the Internet. Moreover, not all communication

could be captured on Twitter either. Here, hashtags, retweets, replies, quotes and threads form a complex sphere of communication that could only be considered to a limited extent. The restriction to the 250 most popular tweets also leads to certain limitations. The trade-off between a comprehensive analysis of the scandalization phenomenon as a whole and an in-depth understanding of the individual content required adjustments in both aspects. Thus, only the content that significantly shapes the public perception of the scandalization is captured and blind spots arise with regard to content that is less visible. The extent to which, for example, there are other relationships between attack and defense, or other forms of participation, could not be determined in this way. Future studies should take these problems into account and use automated procedures to process larger datasets.

In addition to larger data sets, the individual contents could also be examined more closely. Through many open codings and adjustments to the category system after the pre-test, this study already contains a certain openness to the material studied. Nevertheless, it was by no means possible to decode all aspects of communication and many phenomena were only examined at an abstract level. For example, it was not possible to consider the contexts of the tweets, such as whether they were published in response to another tweet. References to content outside of Twitter were also not included in the analysis. These and other aspects could be addressed in future studies using a qualitative approach. In this context, it is also conceivable to conduct surveys to gain insight into users' motivation for engaging in scandalization.

Despite these limitations, the proposed taxonomy has proven to be suitable for systematically categorizing audience participation during scandalization processes within the German political system. The taxonomy should now be applied and further developed in future research, especially to understand its generalizability beyond the German setting.

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BIJES, SOLIDARNOST, KONTRAUDAR: ANALIZA SADRŽAJA TWEETOVA O DVA POLITIČKA SKANDALA U NJEMAČKOJ

Jan Dvorak

SAŽETAK *Politički skandali na društvenim mrežama postali su sastavan dio suvremenoga političkog života, što predstavlja izazov dosadašnjem istraživanju skandala. Nekada pasivna publika dobiva nove mogućnosti za sudjelovanje koje još uvijek nisu cjelovito opisane, ni teorijski ni empirijski. Ovo istraživanje pridonosi premošćivanju tog jaza razvijanjem kategorija za opis uvredljivih i obrambenih oblika sudjelovanja publike tijekom skandalizacija. Analiziram uzorak od 500 utjecajnih tweetova, izvučenih iz korpusa od preko 55 000 tweetova, koji su povezani s dva skandala vezana uz njemačke političare. Predložene kategorije pokazale su se prikladnima za opisivanje kako uvredljivih tako i obrambenih oblika sudjelovanja publike u skandalizacijama na društvenim mrežama.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

SKANDAL, SUDJELOVANJE PUBLIKE, TWITTER, ANALIZA SADRŽAJA

Bilješka o autoru

Jan Dvorak :: Sveučilište u Hohenheimu, Zavod za računarsku znanost,
Odsjek za informatiku hrane :: jan.dvorak@uni-hohenheim.de

FROM QUESTIONABLE INCIDENT TO POLITICAL SCANDAL: THE IBIZA AFFAIR'S SCANDALIZATION ON TWITTER

Maximilian Eder

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ABSTRACT *Political scandals have become an everyday phenomenon, among other things, due to the crucial role of social media platforms as they shape how scandals unfold, are reported upon by journalists, and are perceived by the audience. This article examines the process of scandalization and journalistic discourse on Twitter in Germany and Austria against the background of the so-called Ibiza affair. Through a critical discourse analysis of 885 tweets from 149 influential political journalists, this study seeks to add to the understanding of scandalization on Twitter. Building upon the functional phase model by Burkhardt (2015, 2018), the study finds that those previously identified phases of a (political) scandal in print media coverage are shortened on Twitter, indicating a different scandalization dynamic on social media.*

KEYWORDS

SCANDALS, JOURNALISM PRACTICE, SOCIAL MEDIA, TWITTER

Author's note _____

Maximilian Eder :: Department of Media and Communication, LMU Munich ::
maximilian.eder@ifkw.lmu.de

INTRODUCTION

Political scandals have become an everyday phenomenon, among other things, due to the crucial role of social media platforms, which provide diverse information and multifaceted perspectives on political and public issues for a digital audience. Especially Twitter, as “one of the most popular social networking platforms, and one used extensively by media and political junkies” (Freelon, 2019, p. 2), legitimized mainly by the early adoption among journalists, is relevant for contemporary reporting (political) scandals.

However, the way scandals unfold, are reported upon, and are perceived by the audience has fundamentally changed. Social media platforms have created new opportunities for the polarization of scandalous objects or issues due to increased online visibility and different actors’ involvement in the discourse (Burkhardt, 2018, p. 19). The audience can now directly participate in the scandalization process, while journalists especially use Twitter to report on events almost instantaneously as they happen. As stated by Masullo Chen (2019): “The social media age [...] made it easier, and quicker, for the media and the public to share news of scandal” (p. 169).

Social media platforms also shape journalistic norms and practices according to their specific technological affordances (Lasorsa et al., 2012; S. C. Lewis & Molyneux, 2018; Parmelee, 2013) and, therefore, the dynamics of scandalization within the networked public sphere. Arguably, social media can be helpful “to create and expand audiences, increase geographical reach, respond more quickly than ever before to news events and issues” (Bowd, 2016, p. 129). However, the speed-driven demand for sharing breaking news stories on social media inevitably leads to tensions over the accuracy and verification of information (Reinardy, 2010).

Against this background and the (still) existing importance of journalists in scandalization processes, as they indirectly frame elite perception and influence the forming of public opinion (Entman, 2012, pp. 27–28), this study aims to analyze the process of scandalization and (political) journalistic discourse on Twitter in Germany and Austria. Therefore, a critical discourse analysis of 885 tweets from 149 influential political journalists regarding the so-called Ibiza affair as a high-profile exemplary scandal from 2019 was conducted. The present study finds that the functional phases of a (political) scandal are condensed compared to legacy media coverage, indicating a great temporal scandalization dynamic on social media. This article complements research about journalistic scandalization practices on social media, which provide an environment for journalists to identify, share, and amplify (political) scandals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

During the past decade, social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have transformed the creation and dissemination of information, which gains importance, especially under exceptional circumstances like scandals. In this context, research about

Twitter for journalistic reporting and political scandals is valuable, as “the mediatized scandal not only touches the moral sensibilities of the outraged public, but also provides information about the journalistic system within which the scandal is identified as such” (Krakovsky, 2021, p. 185).

Research about scandals is characterized by its heterogeneity of conceptualizations (e.g., Just & Crigler, 2019, p. 34; McNair, 2019, p. 78). To specify the terminology of a political scandal for this study, the author adopts the notion by Burkhardt (2018; see also Thompson, 2000, p. 13), who differentiates between scandals as something referring to actions or events involving publicly recognized transgressions and mediatized scandals which “are communication processes induced by mass media that trigger public outrage by means of a postulated violation of the general moral model of the social reference system” (p. 22).

SCANDALIZATION PRACTICES ON TWITTER

Social media have become an integral part of journalistic work. Journalists have widely adopted Twitter, especially due to, among other things, the possibility of continuous news updates (Armstrong & Gao, 2010; Lasorsa et al., 2012; Molyneux & Mourão, 2019; Vis, 2013). This adoption process results in a situation in which “breaking news has become a kind of breathless routine, a form of predictable punctuation marking out a news day” (J. Lewis & Cushion, 2009, p. 316).

Against this background, a new dynamic of scandalization emerged, which “made scandals *hyper-public*, meaning the audience could learn about them through news reports and watch or listen to every salacious detail unfold right before their eyes” (Masullo Chen, 2019, p. 168). Although social media can increase the visibility of a potential scandalous issue and get a broader range of actors involved in the media discourse (Burkhardt, 2018, p. 19; Trottier, 2018), it is essential to acknowledge that journalism still plays a crucial role in shaping the social significance of scandals. The impact of social media is somewhat limited without the reach of traditional mass media and journalistic reporting (Burkhardt, 2018, p. 20; Kepplinger, 2018, pp. 58–60).

Journalistic activity on social media regarding scandals centers around three main dynamics:

First, new media technologies enable and encourage journalists to speed up their reporting and content dissemination while providing them “a glimpse at the continuously unfolding phenomenon of opinion online, which they can draw from for their reporting” (McGregor, 2019, p. 1074) and support the constant demand of news content. Therefore, Twitter is essential to the news industry’s speed-driven practices (Heravi & Harrower, 2016, p. 1202; Lee, 2015, p. 227). The social media platform is also a place where journalists look at what is happening and get newsworthy issues to use in their reporting (Kapidzic et al.,

2022; von Nordheim et al., 2018). At the same time, they seek to distribute their content and breaking news via Twitter to generate reach and visibility among the audience, especially elites like politicians and other journalists (Cornia et al., 2018).

Second, mediatized scandals are the outcome of mass media communication processes in the public sphere and other sub-publics (Burkhardt, 2018, p. 22). There, different interconnected agendas, social structures, and actors interact at a specific time and location (Allern & von Sikorski, 2018, p. 3016). While journalists still play an essential role in raising public awareness of issues, this dynamic has become bidirectional due to Twitter's practical and technological affordances (Neuman et al., 2014). Social media also serve as information sources and allow users and actors involved in a scandal to communicate by expressing their opinions, influencing how scandals are perceived and evaluated by the public (Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019). In this regard, scandalized individuals can mobilize their followers by placing information and messages (Kepplinger et al., 2012, pp. 175–176).

Third, Twitter is a place to create media hype (Pang, 2013; Roese, 2018), which corresponds to news flashpoints. Waisbord and Russell (2020, p. 377) describe them as "[...] moments of content alignment when headlines and stories in mainstream and alternative media, trends, and hashtags in social media, popular bloggers, and discussion forums address the same topics". Both phenomena are initiated by an event or issue (a minor incident or extraordinary occurrence) that receives significant attention from journalists and the audience. Additionally, social media have expanded society's ability to observe and created a limitless number of potential scandalizing actors who might trigger such events (Coombs & Holladay, 2021; Eisenegger, 2016, p. 42).

FRAMING OF MEDIA SCANDALS

Journalists contribute to media scandalization by selecting certain aspects and further interpreting existing news and issues. In this regard, journalists and other communicators apply frames through textual structures in media coverage and, by doing so, give meaning to events: "A *scandal frame* must be applied, repeatedly and prominently. [...] In this view, scandal demands a narrative identifying an individual villain as causing the socially significant problem" (Entman, 2012, p. 28). The media's selection of news impacts the moral assessment of events and potential subsequent actions.

As stated by Entman (2012), the sequence of framing in political scandals can be interpreted as a cascade of frames that amplify each other and are established and communicated through communicative networks, textual information in (online) news and interpersonal communication, and public opinions. Against this background, Miller and Riechert (2001) argue that addressing an issue requires developing a distinctive frame in public discourse and implementing relevant measures. Key or trigger events are framed as significant with extensive media coverage (Boesman et al., 2017; Brosius & Eps, 1995;

Mourão et al., 2021), where “one frame comes to dominate debate, and decision makers set public policy to conform to it” (Miller & Riechert, 2001, p. 113).

The applied frames are not static but are somewhat influenced by various factors, such as the degree of correspondence between the new event and existing frames, journalists' involvement, and the specific frame's temporal duration (Scheufele & Brosius, 1999). However, frames exhibit relative stability, fostered by journalistic co-orientation, the interconnectedness of individual journalistic elements, and their repeated activation and application (Potthoff, 2012, p. 139). On the one hand, the audience evaluation can be fundamentally influenced by media frames: “We can assume that media frames in scandals tend to induce audience frames that become more extreme as individuals strive for a consistent impression of the scandal case” (Kepplinger et al., 2012, p. 675). On the other hand, audience members in high-choice online news environments could not only get personalization news according to their attitudes but also deliberately choose information, and therefore “it becomes less likely that allegations [...] develop into full-blown scandals” (von Sikorski & Kubin, 2021, p. 53).

THE FUNCTIONAL PHASES OF MEDIA SCANDALS

The media operates with cycles or serialized reporting where particular narratives and dramaturgy emerge from existing journalistic routines, which affect the audience's perception of the scandal (von Sikorski & Knoll, 2018). Although these patterns extend over several weeks, months, or even years (Thompson, 2000, p. 72), it can be stated that scandals are characterized by significant temporal dynamics and a high journalistic narrative density (Burkhardt, 2018, pp. 20–24).

Different phase models have been developed for conceptualizing the media scandal process. Several of these models differentiate between four media scandal phases (e.g., Kepplinger, 2018, pp. 37–40; Wilczek, 2016). For example, Thompson (2000, pp. 72–77) identified a pre-scandal phase, where journalists become aware of an issue, either on their own or through their sources, and informally disseminate information about the issue to their journalistic peers. In the second phase, the facts about the issue are revealed and publicly assessed by journalistic reporting. In the third phase, the reporting has led to a public statement of the involved persons or groups in the scandal, or they have been heard in the public sphere, which ends the scandal as such. Finally, in the fourth phase, the scandalization is re-evaluated and reflected.

The functional phase model, the so-called scandal clock (Burkhardt, 2018, pp. 28–31; see also Burkhardt, 2015, pp. 178–205), which will be considered research-leading for this study, describes the process of public debate about a scandal in five chronological phases: the latency phase with key events, the upswing phase, the establishment phase with scandal climax, the downturn phase and the rehabilitation phase. Each one has different functions for political discourse. These phases can be described as part of media

hypes which are “triggered by a key event and feeding on the self-reinforcing processes of news production, expands one specific frame, which becomes dominant in the public arena” (Vasterman, 2005, p. 516).

During the latency phase, the protagonists and key events are introduced. Even if the surrounding accusations are sometimes well known, the scandal suddenly emerges unexpectedly from the audience’s perspective (Burkhardt, 2018, p. 29). A scandalization has yet to occur, and only a few articles have been published. Moreover, not every mediatized scandal necessarily has a latency phase.

In the upswing phase of a media scandal, journalists contextualize key actors and events, increasing the public interest (Burkhardt, 2015, pp. 322–324). Initially, differing views are present in the reporting, but these converge over time, typically within two to three weeks (Burkhardt, 2015, p. 191). The duration of the upswing phase varies, and the number of publications fluctuates strongly.

During the establishment phase of a media scandal, social rules of conduct are used to evaluate the transgression of norms by those involved. At the same time, journalistic research work introduces new information, leading to more publications and reinforcing the audience’s interest (Langer & Gruber, 2021).

The downturn phase begins after the public finds an actor or group guilty or the accused admits the misconduct (Allern & Pollack, 2012, p. 13). During this phase, journalistic coverage decreases significantly, and the decision-making leading to the scandal is reviewed. This phase serves as a review of the discourse processes that took place before, and the reaction of the scandalized person is publicly considered (Burkhardt, 2015, p. 199).

During the rehabilitation phase of a media scandal, if the reaction of the scandalized person is no longer considered scandalous, the scandal is marginalized, and the state of emergency returns to normal. Coverage continues to decrease until the scandal is eventually displaced by other news. However, rehabilitation is not guaranteed, and the scandalized person may remain socially discredited (Burkhardt, 2018, p. 31).

THE IBIZA AFFAIR

Academic research has largely neglected the so-called Ibiza affair, although “arguably the biggest scandal since the Waldheim affair of 1986” (Karner, 2021, p. 253), as a binational relevant event, which was picked up upon by journalists in Germany and Austria. Moreover, widely discussed in social media discourse, the scandal can be described as an exemplary high-profile case of political transgressions with norm violations of individual politicians in their function as political leaders, followed by a significant political crisis.

The scandal centers around a meeting on July 24, 2017, at a finca on the island of Ibiza – hence its name – of the Austrian vice-chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache, his political protégé Johann Gudenus, and a woman who they believed was the niece of a Russian oligarch. The idea for staging the meeting came from a lawyer representing a former bodyguard of Strache, who owned incriminating evidence against the politician. Strache proposed, among other things, a (partial) takeover of the *Kronen Zeitung*, the leading print outlet in Austria, with the aim to influence journalistic coverage in favor of his political party. In addition, under the circumstances that he would become a part of the government, Strache held out the prospect of state contracts.

Unbeknown to both politicians, the meeting was taped by a private eye on the lawyer's behalf (Peters, 2023), and the video was later given to the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. The newspaper, together with the news magazine *Der Spiegel* and the Austrian weekly *Falter*, reported about it on May 17, 2019. The following day, the politicians involved in the allegations resigned. In January 2020, the Ibiza Committee of Inquiry was set up to investigate the scandal comprehensively. The following months after his immunity had been revoked to investigate if he was also involved in political corruption related to the Ibiza affair, the Austrian chancellor Kurz resigned for personal reasons. Since then, a cascade of scandals followed, showing that the past journalistic representation of the events in Ibiza was accurate and that even more politicians engaged in practices related to the scandal (for an overview, see Eder, 2023). For example, the so-called *Inseratenaffäre* in 2021 revealed that politicians supporting then-foreign minister Kurz in 2016 had tried to skew public opinion by publishing manipulated polling data in return for advertising space by government institutions in the tabloid newspaper *Österreich/OE24* (Balluff et al., 2023). This incident mirrors Strache's plan to gain political influence through favorable journalistic coverage in the *Kronen Zeitung*, further indicating that the Ibiza affair provided a glimpse into the widespread political corruption in Austria.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook play an essential role in scandalization as part of a digital public space where public opinion emerges (Habermas, 2022, pp. 165–166). Given that the audience gets their news on social media platforms like Twitter (Newman et al., 2021, p. 24), these (and other intermediaries) can shape the audience's perception of a scandal by providing information necessary for evaluation (e.g., von Sikorski, 2020). At the same time, journalists normalized new technology in day-to-day journalistic routines (Lasorsa et al., 2012), resulting in a fast-paced "1440-minute news cycle" (Bruno, 2011, pp. 64–69).

Against this background and the extent to which journalists' normalization of Twitter influences them (e.g., professional norms, routines, and output), it is asked whether the temporal dynamics of scandals differ on Twitter compared to findings from previous research regarding print media.

METHOD

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on understanding structures of meaning and discourses as they unfold. The related analytical frameworks include the analysis of communication in texts and other media and broader social-cultural practice (for an overview, see Fairclough, 1995; Kelsey, 2017). Bouvier and Machin (2018) define discourse analysis as an approach to analyze “how some have the power over the discourses – and therefore the ideas, values, and priorities – that define our societies” (p. 178).

Against the background of how social and political issues are represented and debated on social media platforms both by organizations and individuals alike, KhosraviNik and Unger (2016) state that critical discourse analysis could be used to analyze discursive practices on social media: “The core theoretical principles of CDS [critical discourse studies], such as problem orientation and a focus on linguistic/discursive features, abduction etc., are still relevant to new spaces for discursive practices” (p. 230).

While social media provide new possibilities for various actors to participate in social media discourse alongside legacy media, “both macro/political/industrial and local communicative notions of power are still at play” (KhosraviNik, 2017, p. 583). Therefore, the content produced by journalists and media organizations still provides a particular frame of reference in discourses which manifests in a kind of consent (Bouvier & Manchin, 2018, p. 178).

As van Dijk (2015, p. 468) argues, critical discourse analysis does not follow a unitary theoretical framework or methodology. Recent developments in discourse analysis practices have shown that a mixed-method approach can support the analytical process (Duchastel & Laberge, 2019). The quantitative analysis of structures allows for extracting communicative patterns by reducing complexity. To explore discursive representations, qualitative measures complement the quantitative analyses by offering a nuanced and in-depth understanding of meaning. Therefore, to answer the research question, a qualitative thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the discursive practice of journalists on Twitter alongside a quantitative content analysis to demonstrate the dynamics of the scandalization process on Twitter. The social media platform is especially relevant as a sphere where “users present their identities, try to convince and persuade, troll, display their emotions, foment revolutions, and attempt to set the agenda” (Bennett, 2022, p. 887).

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE

Following the research goal to analyze how journalists on social media posted during the Ibiza affair, tweets from influential political journalists with active Twitter accounts were collected. The influence of the journalists was measured according to Razis et al. (2022), who incorporated the most recent activities of a Twitter account and a followers-

to-following ratio in their metric. The sampling process is based on prior methodological considerations, focusing on “case selection strategically in alignment with the inquiry’s purpose, primary questions, and data being collected” (Patton, 2022, p. 1173). Therefore, 18 national quality newspapers¹ and weeklies, news magazines, and their online offshoots in Germany and Austria were selected (see Table 2). They were selected as they represent the journalistic elite in both countries (for classification, see Greck, 2017, pp. 235–258), which makes them particularly relevant for defining (online) discourses. The study uses a homogeneous sample of political journalists from such news outlets as they remain relevant for elite perception by society and the forming of public opinion (Entman, 2012, pp. 27–28).

The accounts were identified via the database *ZimpeI* according to their journalistic beat and respective reporting topics. The sample consists of 149 journalists (62.42 % dailies, e. g., Standard, Kleine Zeitung, or Kurier, and FAZ, SZ, or taz; 8.05 % weeklies, e. g., Falter and Zeit; 29.53 % news magazines, e. g., Focus, Spiegel, Stern, Profil, Trend, and News).

This study uses data collected from Twitter through the R-package *rtweet* (Kearney, 2019). Overall, the analyzed corpus comprises 885 manually sampled tweets from *#IbizaGate*, *#IbizaAffäre*, or *#StracheVideo*, as well as those that mentioned the Austrian political scandal without using such hashtags. They were analyzed from roughly two weeks following the first article about the scandal until the inauguration of the expert government (May 17 to June 3, 2019).

FINDINGS

In general, journalists tweeted about the scandal for roughly two weeks. Across both countries and media outlets, most tweets were posted during the second day after the scandal was reported, with a share of around 29% of all tweets (GER: 63.81%, n=497; AT: 36.19%, n=388). Within the first three days, over 60% of all tweets (N=885) were posted (see Table 1).

Regarding the average number of tweets by journalists about the Ibiza affair, on the first day, 85 tweets per day were posted, followed by the second day with the most tweets on average (129 per day), and a steep decline during the third day with 56 tweets on average. These patterns are similar in Germany and Austria.

¹ Quality newspapers adhere to journalistic quality features such as relevance, ethics, impartiality, comprehensibility, and accuracy (see Urban & Schweiger, 2014). They report on various topics and primarily strive for information journalism that provides reliable information for the audience.

Table 1. Number of tweets by date, Germany and Austria

	Germany		Austria		total		M (SD)
	n	percent	n	percent	n	percent	
17. Mai 2019	89	52.35	81	47.65	170	19.21	85 (5.66)
18. Mai 2019	164	63.81	93	36.19	257	29.04	128.5 (50.20)
19. Mai 2019	67	60.36	44	39.64	111	12.54	55.5 (16.26)
20. Mai 2019	49	69.01	22	30.99	71	8.02	35.5 (19.09)
21. Mai 2019	30	47.62	33	52.38	63	7.12	31.5 (2.12)
22. Mai 2019	25	50.00	25	50.00	50	5.65	25 (0.00)
23. Mai 2019	8	22.86	27	77.14	35	3.95	17.5 (13.44)
24. Mai 2019	15	57.69	11	42.31	26	2.94	13 (2.83)
25. Mai 2019	14	48.28	15	51.72	29	3.28	14.5 (0.71)
26. Mai 2019	9	56.25	7	43.75	16	1.81	8 (1.41)
27. Mai 2019	9	50.00	9	50.00	18	2.03	9 (0.00)
28. Mai 2019	3	75.00	1	25.00	4	0.45	2 (1.41)
29. Mai 2019	3	42.86	4	57.14	7	0.79	3.5 (0.71)
30. Mai 2019	3	75.00	1	25.00	4	0.45	2 (1.41)
31. Mai 2019	5	55.56	4	44.44	9	1.02	4.5 (0.71)
01. Juni 2019	2	28.57	5	71.43	7	0.79	3.5 (2.12)
02. Juni 2019	1	16.67	5	83.33	6	0.68	3 (2.83)
03. Juni 2019	1	50.00	1	50.00	2	0.23	1 (0.00)
total	497		388		885	100	

Regarding the different media outlets, there are three per country of which journalists tweeted the most. In Germany, journalists from the news magazine *Der Spiegel* posted 22.33% of all tweets ($n_{\text{GER}}=497$), closely followed by their colleagues from the tabloid *Bild* with 21.53% and the daily newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (21.33%). In Austria, journalists from the daily newspaper *Der Standard* tweeted the most, with 28.35% of all tweets ($n_{\text{AT}}=388$). In second place is the *Falter* with 27.84%, which is remarkable given that there are only two journalists in the sample, followed by journalists from the *Kleine Zeitung* (11.86%).

Table 2. Number of tweets by outlet, Germany and Austria

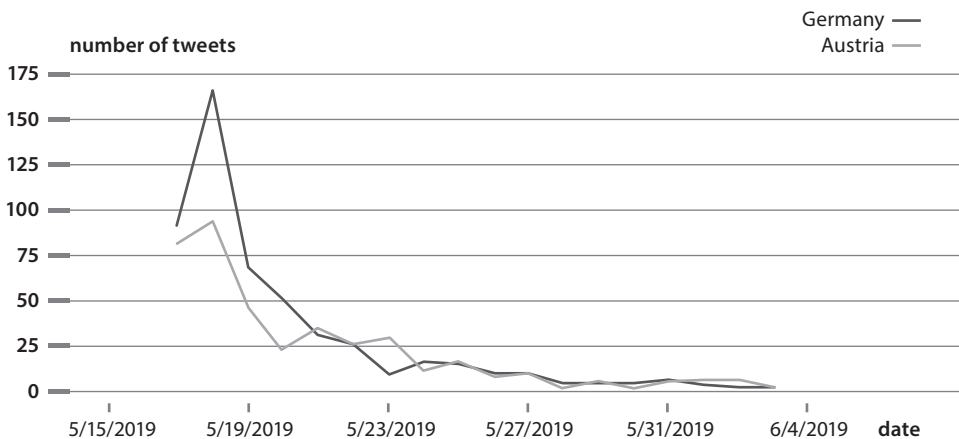
Country	Outlet	Journalists (n)	Total posts (n)	Posts per country (percent)
Germany	<i>Der Spiegel</i>	10	111	22.33
	<i>Bild</i>	10	107	21.53
	<i>Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)</i>	10	106	21.33
	<i>Die Tageszeitung (taz)</i>	10	71	14.29
	<i>Die Zeit</i>	10	49	9.86



	<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)</i>	10	28	5.63
	<i>Die Welt</i>	10	15	3.02
	<i>Focus</i>	7	8	1.61
	<i>Stern</i>	10	2	0.40
total		87	497	100
Austria	<i>Der Standard</i>	10	110	28.35
	<i>Falter</i>	2	108	27.84
	<i>Kleine Zeitung</i>	10	46	11.86
	<i>Kurier</i>	10	35	9.02
	<i>Die Presse</i>	5	32	8.25
	<i>Kronen Zeitung</i>	8	25	6.44
	<i>Profil</i>	10	18	4.64
	<i>Trend</i>	3	13	3.35
	<i>News</i>	4	1	0.26
total		62	388	100

Despite the different numbers of journalists in the sample, the number of tweets by those three outlets covers about two-thirds of all tweets during the scandalization process (GER: 65.19%; AT: 68.05%)

The diagram of tweets regarding the scandal reveals the following dynamic of journalistic communication: After a sharp rise, the Twitter activity of the sampled journalists both in Germany and Austria peaked on May 18, followed by an overall drop in journalists' Twitter activity. Nevertheless, Twitter activity also indicates a short-lived peak in Austria on May 23.



▲ Figure 1.
Twitter activity by date, Germany and Austria

Based on the functional phase model by Burkhardt (2015, 2018), the following phases can be identified in the context of the Ibiza affair on Twitter:

The latency phase starts immediately after the first article is published. For example, Maximilian Popp from *Spiegel* tweeted three minutes after the publication: "Urgent: FPÖ leader Strache held out prospect of state contracts in return for election campaign aid: [#StracheVideo](https://t.co/sfj56HxKH1)" (@Maximilian_Popp, 2019)². The scandal emerges suddenly and unexpectedly, even from other journalists' perspectives. For example, Fabian Schmid, a journalist at the Austrian *Standard*, initially responded with "Wow!" (@fabian_schmid, 2019) and his colleague Rainer Schüller with nothing more than: "☺" (@RainerSchueller, 2019), indicating him being somewhat speechless about the scandal.

A scandalization process also occurred, although only a few articles had been published. Some examples were:

What a #Sittenbild! @HCStracheFP & @JGudenus The secret Strache videos – <http://FALTER.at> @falter_at #sicherheitsrisikofpö #stracheVideos (@barbaratoth)

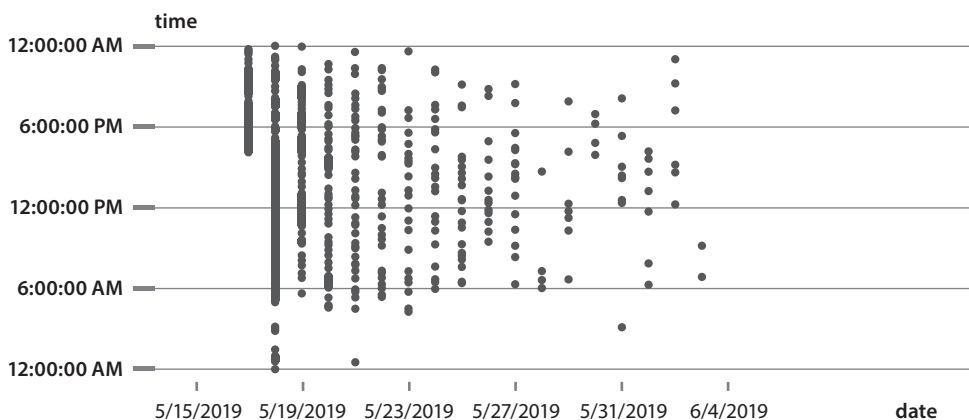
I mean, there are dozens of sentences in this video that would be valid reasons for resignation on their own. I am really gobsmacked. (@fabian_schmidt, 2019)

Strictly speaking, as the first article was published in the afternoon of May 17, the latency phase only lasted until the following day. However, the simultaneous publication in different media outlets indicates an extended latency phase, where not only the issue is scandalized, but also further contextualized.

The upswing phase started on May 18, with the journalist posting more tweets regarding the issue. Differentiated views are absent in the journalists' tweets compared to other scandals. Instead, Strache was ominously framed as the key actor in the scandal. The initial events of the scandal were no longer directly reported upon but rather the fallout of the scandalization. After the initial reporting about the scandal, two events happened in rapid succession, which contributed to Twitter communication by political journalists: Strache stepping down as vice chancellor of Austria, and Austria's chancellor Sebastian Kurz declared the end of the political coalition between his party, the conservative ÖVP, and Strache's right-wing FPÖ. These circumstances led to a steady stream of journalists' tweets where they reported and commented about the events in nearly real-time.

For instance, Gerald Winter-Pölsler, a journalist from the Austrian *Kleine Zeitung*, tweeted during the live broadcasted resignation speech by Strache: "A 'political assassination'?!?! Seriously? #Stracherücktritt" (@KLZWinter, 2019). Other journalists also reported live from the Austrian government district, where a political demonstration occurred.

² All cited tweets are translated from German to English.



▲ Figure 2.
Twitter activity by time, overall

During the following establishment phase, journalists researched new information and contextualized the events of the day before, which led to less Twitter communication in the sample. Especially the political future of Austria and other politicians of the FPÖ, like Herbert Kickl or Norbert Hofer, were discussed:

From my point of view, Kickl can hardly be held. The Ibiza video is proof for the West that FPO is heavily Russia-susceptible. Western services will put cooperation on hold as long as FPO controls the security department (@MichaelJungwirth, 2019)

Does the "Straxit" harm the right-wing populists? @BILD (@RalfSchuler, 2019)

Norbert Hofer has been Heinz-Christian Strache's deputy since 2005. Does anyone really believe that he was unaware of Strache's power fantasies and probably corrupt reveries? And if not, what does that say about his knowledge of human nature? (@fabian_schmid, 2019)

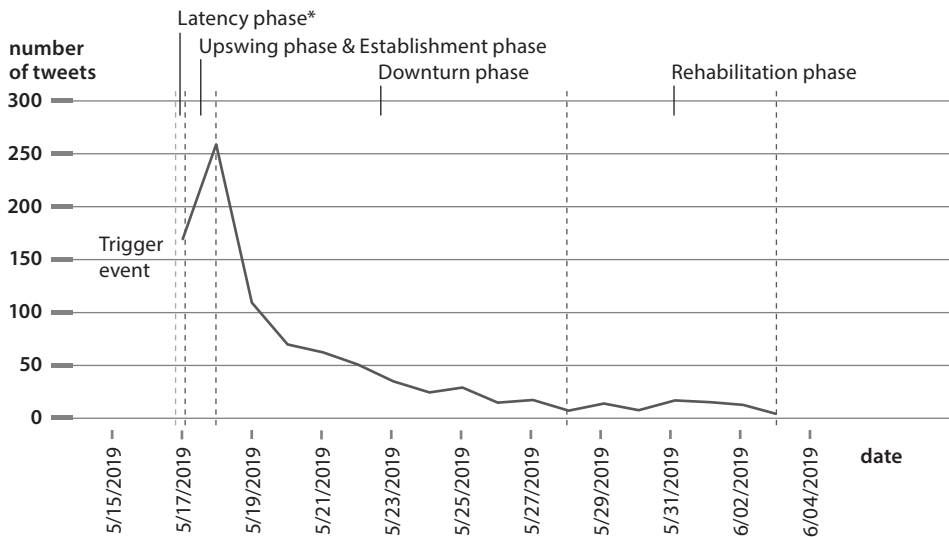
After Strache resigned from his political positions, the downturn phase began, with a significant decrease in tweets related to the scandal. Twitter communication decreased during the next few days when the state of emergency and need for reporting returned to an average level until other topics displaced the scandal (rehabilitation phase). Another small peak in Twitter activity stems from an investigative story by *Die Presse* about the lawyer who financed the videotaping.

DISCUSSION

This study explores the applicability of the functional phase model of scandals by Burkhardt (2015) on social media and, more specifically, Twitter. Therefore, the Twitter communication of political journalists in Germany and Austria regarding the Ibiza affair as a high-profile scandal case was analyzed.

The results indicate that the dynamic of social media increases the speed and diffusion of scandals (Burkhardt, 2018), and major news outlets' coverage on social media also benefits from such new patterns as they share hyperlinks to their websites and content (Barkemeyer et al., 2020). While the ideal-typical progression pattern of mediated scandals extends over several weeks, months, or years but always more than one day (Thompson, 2000, p. 72), the operational phases of the scandal on social media are shortened and performed in relatively rapid succession. For example, the latency phase during the Ibiza affair only lasted a few hours. Overall, far greater temporal dynamics seem to characterize scandalization on social media, more than in legacy news outlets or even digital reporting. Furthermore, the time delay between the event and the first journalistic coverage is shortened, which echoes the findings by Zulli (2020), who identifies a "liveness" of social media news reporting during political scandals.

Following the functional phase model by Burkhardt (2018), the scandal cycle regarding the Ibiza affair revealed the following development:



▲ Figure 3.

Number of tweets by date, overall

* A several-hour-long latency phase; a further extension in other online and print media

Consistent with previous research, the functional phases on Twitter largely follow the dynamics of hype cycles with a trigger event (i.e., the first article about the scandal) which functions as the starting point of the scandalization process and a following media hype with the potential for being covered by journalists as it a) meets specific news values like elite status, moral transgression, and hypocrisy (McNair, 2019, p. 80) and b) allows to be reduced from a complex issue into an “archetypal image (or theme)” (Giasson et al., 2018, p. 169). Furthermore, the time frame of the Ibiza affair also supports the findings of Wien (2018) regarding the duration of such media hypes. Borrowing here from Vasterman (2005, p. 508), the sharp decline in news stories could result from *not* making news and reporting on news events following news values instead. As the theoretical concepts of media hype and media scandal are related, they function in a symbiotic relationship where “a news-reporting story is easily converted into a news-making story and vice versa” (Elmelund-Præstekær & Wien, 2008, p. 249). Furthermore, three different narrative themes were presented by the journalists: First, the initial allegations focusing on Strache; second, the political turmoil and end of the political coalition between the ÖVP and FPÖ; and third, the relatively short-lived discussion about the legitimacy of the video production (see also Burkhardt, 2020, p. 7).

Journalists from specific news media tweeted more than others. The possible reasons are manifold: First, media organizations encourage or even expect their journalists to be active on social media, which can influence tweeting behavior (Lasorsa et al., 2012). Second, personal preferences and comfort with social media vary among journalists. Some may naturally gravitate toward frequent tweeting, while others prefer a more reserved approach (see e.g., Tandoc & Vos, 2016). The sample’s composition further indicates that journalists in leading positions, such as deputy editor-in-chief, editor-in-chief, and managing editor, specifically engage on Twitter. Third, journalists from *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Falter*, who were actively involved in reporting about the Ibiza affair, tweeted more frequently as they might see it as part of promoting their work.

To conclude, the findings add to research on the role of Twitter as an integral part of journalistic work for breaking news and political events of public relevance by focusing on a shifting scandalization process to social media, which could be related to a deep mediatization where “all elements of our social world are intricately related to digital media and their underlying infrastructures” (Hepp, 2020, p. 5).

This study also has limitations. While Twitter provides reliable data for research purposes regarding journalistic practice, when selecting specific data related to the research subject, it is necessary to avoid losing sight of the actual research goal. Against the background of the methodologically justified considerations to focus on influential political journalists in Germany and Austria and the selection of media outlets, an overall generalizability beyond the Twitter communication of political journalists should be critically reflected upon. Even though the Ibiza affair can be described as a prime example of scandalization dynamics, the journalistic communication analyzed in this study is closely related to specific scandalized political actors within a particular time on a particular social media platform with its own affordances and by specific journalists.

Furthermore, the data collection has the usual limitations regarding access via the Twitter API, such as data loss.

Future research could explore the mutual observations, references, and interactions between social media, their users, and news outlets during the scandalization process, as social media have changed the communicative figurations of political journalism, which Hepp (2013) defines as “patterns of processes of communicative interweaving that exist across various media” with a “thematic framing’ that orients communicative action” (p. 623). Even legacy media are now closely following social media trends, integrating them into their reporting on (political) scandals, enabling hybrid formats, and organizing forms of netizens’ participation where these audience members voice their opinions about scandals.

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OD INCIDENTA DO POLITIČKOG SKANDALA: AFERA IBIZA NA TWITTERU

Maximilian Eder

SAŽETAK *Politički skandali postali su svakodnevna pojava, između ostalog, zbog ključne uloge društvenih medija koji definiraju način na koji se skandali odvijaju, kako o njima izvještavaju novinari te kako ih publika percipira. Ovaj članak istražuje proces skandalizacije i novinarskog diskursa na Twitteru u Njemačkoj i Austriji u kontekstu tzv. afere Ibiza. Kroz kritičku analizu diskursa 885 tweetova koje je objavilo 149 utjecajnih političkih novinara, ovo istraživanje nastoji doprinijeti razumijevanju skandalizacije na Twitteru. Nadograđujući Burkhardtov (2015, 2018) funkcionalni model faza, istraživanje pokazuje da su prethodno identificirane faze (političkog) skandala u izvještavanju tiskanih medija skraćene na Twitteru, što ukazuje na različitu dinamiku skandalizacije u društvenim medijima.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

SKANDALI, NOVINARSKE PRAKSE, DRUŠTVENI MEDIJI, TWITTER

Bilješka o autoru _____

Maximilian Eder :: Odsjek za medije i komunikaciju, LMU Minhen ::
maximilian.eder@ifkw.lmu.de

'ACCIDENTAL CELEBRITIES': MAGAZINE COVERAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS¹

Karine Prémont :: Alexandre Millette

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ABSTRACT *Using quantitative analysis, we analyzed the coverage of women indirectly involved in four major U.S. presidential scandals (Watergate, Iran-Contra, Clinton-Lewinsky affair, Ukraine quid pro quo) through 258 articles published in six magazines (The Atlantic, The New York Times Magazine, Time, The New Yorker, Newsweek, Rolling Stone) to assess how they are described by journalists. Three assumptions guided our analysis. First, women are covered in a negative way even if they are not responsible for the scandal. Second, they are covered by the magazines in a stereotypical way to describe their behavior, their character, or their role in the scandal. Finally, the coverage of women involved in more recent scandals is less stereotypical and less negative. While the literature shows that women receive more negative coverage than men when they are responsible for political scandals, our results show that this is also the case for these "accidental celebrities".*

KEYWORDS

PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS, UNITED STATES, MAGAZINES, GENDER STEREOTYPES, MEDIA COVERAGE

Authors' note _____

Karine Prémont :: Université de Sherbrooke :: karine.premont@usherbrooke.ca

Alexandre Millette :: École nationale d'administration publique, Université du Québec :: alexandre.millette@enap.ca

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INTRODUCTION

The profusion of scandals that have made headlines in the mainstream American media since the 2016 presidential campaign undoubtedly represents a turning point in American political life. While scandals have always been part of the media landscape, we are now witnessing the “scandalization” of politics (Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019), which puts revelations of all kinds at the center of political coverage. Sex scandals, in particular, seem to be multiplying: accusations against former President Donald Trump are added to numerous sexual affairs involving members of Congress, such as those concerning Katie Hill (D-CA), and Madison Cawthorne (R-FL), to name only the most recent. If we compile the financial or political scandals of all kinds that have erupted in the media since 2016, we quickly note that coverage of federal politics in the United States devotes a large share to scandals and transgressions involving politicians.

As scandals proliferate, it seems necessary to look at the news media coverage of scandals involving presidents. Although many studies have examined the coverage of scandals (Cervi, 2019; Delli Carpini & Williams, 2000; Downey & Stanyer, 2013; Entman, 2012; Marcos-Marne et al., 2022; Thompson, 2000; Weaver et al., 1975; Williams & Delli Carpini, 2000; Yioutas & Segvic, 2003), our analysis focuses on the media coverage of women involved in these scandals. Rather than analyzing the coverage of women involved in sex scandals with American candidates or elected officials (Dahl, 2016; Everbach, 2017; Kroon & Ekström, 2006; Mandell, 2017; Sipes, 2011; Stoker, 1993), or how women in elected office are perceived by voters or the media when they are responsible for scandals (Barnes et al., 2020; Courtemanche & Connor Green, 2020; Kahn, 1994; Niven, 2004; Stilwell & Utych, 2022; Ross, 2017; Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2016), we study the media coverage of “accidental celebrities”², that is, women who find themselves caught up in a presidential scandal even though they are not responsible for or directly involved in it.

Our analysis looks at the coverage of U.S. public affairs and cultural magazines. On the one hand, several scholars have already studied newspapers and television coverage of scandals (Burke & Mazzarella, 2008; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006; Just & Crigler, 2019; Pugliosi & Snyder, 2011; Sabato et al., 2001; Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a; Tumber & Waisbord, 2004b). On the other hand, although the representation of women in magazines has been analyzed (Harp et al., 2011; Hatton & Trautner, 2011; Yun et al., 2007), their coverage of political scandals – or of the women who were involved in these scandals – has not received as much attention from researchers. Finally, we think it is important to understand how magazines represent women involved in presidential scandals because of their generally more informed or interested audiences, but also because they often feature more in-depth articles (Delli Carpini & Williams, 2001): these particularities could lead to a different coverage of women. The aim of our research is to demonstrate how women who are indirectly involved in presidential scandals are represented in American magazines, and to understand how – and if – this coverage evolves from one scandal to the next.

² The expression comes from a *Newsweek* article, which describes Fawn Hall as “the archetype of the Accidental Celebrity: an anonymous figure in a crowd of famous faces who happens to stick out a foot just as history is rushing by” (Adler et al, 1987, p. 36). We use this expression to refer to women who have found themselves indirectly involved in presidential scandals, whether or not they were already public figures.

THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOMEN INVOLVED IN POLITICAL SCANDALS

Scandals, considered inherent to democratic life (Markovits & Silverstein, 1988), imply “verified allegations of illegal, unethical, or immoral wrongdoing” (Rottinghaus, 2015, p. 18), that is “a transgression of certain values, norms, or moral codes (Thompson, 2000, p. 13) or an action “contrary to conventional morality or a set of shared values” (Garment, 1992, p. 14). The scandal becomes political when it “involves a departure or lapse from the normative standards that guide behavior in public office” (Williams, 1998, p. 7).

We chose to study only the scandals in which presidents are, or are suspected to be, directly involved, because these scandals are more widely disseminated by the national media (Woodward, 1999). The “presidential scandal” concept is also more specific than the notion of “executive scandal”, defined by Brandon Rottinghaus as a scandal which may involve not only the president or a governor, but also a member of their family or any person they have appointed to public office (Rottinghaus, 2015). We therefore selected our case studies based on the following parameters: a scandal must be considered serious, namely that it led to the appointment of a special prosecutor or an independent counsel to investigate (Williams, 1998). The scandal must also be the subject of a high-magnitude coverage (prominently daily coverage for more than a week) by the mainstream media (Entman, 2012).

Political scandals are more often than not perceived as entertainment rather than news (Apostolidis & Williams, 2004), especially as the protagonists become unwitting celebrities whose private lives are displayed in the public arena (Garment, 1992). This coverage of scandals as entertainment events also has the effect of minimizing the malfeasance of individuals or institutional failings (Just & Crigler, 2019). Finally, the extensive coverage given to political scandals obscures the media’s role and responsibility in how these events are presented. As transmitters of values and social norms, the media are also the “primary definers and shapers” (Byerly & Ross, 2006, p. 40) of discourses and issues, which is particularly important to understand the representation of women (Falk, 2008; Harp et al., 2016; Ross, 2009). Thus, media coverage of political scandals not only concerns transgressions, but also makes judgments about the personality and status of the people involved (Lull & Hinerman, 1997). In this sense, scandals represent “society’s broader gender dynamics [...], conveying messages that range from subtle to obvious about power and morality” (Mandell, 2017, p. 2).

News media coverage of women involved in scandals is part of the general literature on media coverage of women and female politicians: it is generally negative and usually stereotyped (Byerly & Ross, 2006). When not ignored (Yun et al., 2007), women are most often defined by the media through their personal and family lives, such as their status as wives or mothers (Burke & Mazzarella, 2008; Rakow & Kranich, 1991), or trivialized or sexualized (Beasley & Gibbons, 1993; Johnson & Christ, 1988). The same applies to women politicians, whether candidates or elected: the media are more interested in their appearance or family life than their competence or political platform (Harp, 2019; Harp et

al., 2016). Although there are variations in the coverage of female politicians depending on the position sought or the candidate's experience (Kahn, 1994), they occupy less media space than male candidates and are portrayed more stereotypically (Byerly & Ross, 2006). They are also covered more negatively than men when they enter politics.

The literature has focused mainly on women involved in sex scandals, whether as mistresses of politicians or as deceived wives. The formers are most often demonized by the media (Rosewarne, 2009; Thompson, 2020) and described as exploiters, manipulators or gold-diggers (Mandell, 2017), judged solely through the prism of their appearance and sexuality. According to Hinda Mandell, who has published one of the most in-depth studies on this subject, wives are criticized when they support their husbands but are also criticized when they do not, forcing them into a "double bind of presence/absence" that reduces them to their role as wives (Mandell, 2017, p. 78). Thus, they find themselves, in one way or another, blamed for their husbands' sexual behavior (Harp, 2019).

In the case of female politicians responsible for or directly involved in scandals, the literature is more mixed as to the factors that can explain their news media treatment or the perceptions and judgments of public opinion (Cucchi & Cavazza, 2021; Huddy & Capalos, 2002). Some studies maintain that the gender of the politicians involved does not affect the way they are judged (Brenton, 2011; Smith et al., 2005), or that it is difficult to determine whether the judgement comes from ideological or partisan bias, or from sexism (Barnes et al., 2020; Solomon et al., 2019). Other research asserts that female politicians are judged less harshly than men, particularly in the case of sex scandals (Carlson et al., 2000; Stewart et al., 2013). Finally, other analyses show how norm transgression theories can explain why female politicians suffer more negative consequences following a scandal for which they are responsible, whether financial or sexual in nature (Barnes & Beaulieu, 2019; Courtemanche & Connor Green, 2020; Kahn, 1992; Koch, 1999; Lull & Hinerman, 1997; Ross, 2017; Swamy et al., 2001).

In the light of this rich literature, we do not seek to explain the media treatment of women indirectly involved in political scandals, but rather whether it is similar to that offered to women responsible for or directly involved in scandals. Therefore, our research question is: *Are women who are indirectly involved in presidential scandals covered by magazines in the same way as female politicians involved in scandals or women caught up in sex scandals involving presidents or presidential candidates?* We postulate hypothesis H1: *Women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered in a negative way by magazines even if they are not responsible for the transgression*, as well as hypothesis H2: *Women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered by magazines in a stereotypical way*. Their physical appearance, their sexual or personal life, as well as the qualities usually perceived as "feminine" would be used to describe their behavior, their character, or their role in the scandal.

Recent literature also shows that media coverage of female politicians is improving. Indeed, because gender norms are cultural representations, they evolve as concepts of masculinity and femininity change (Harp et al., 2016). Coverage of female politicians is thus

proving to be more equitable, at least in terms of quantity (Banwart et al., 2003), notably due to the increased presence of women in politics (Courtemanche & Connor Green, 2020) but also in journalism and, more broadly, within media management (Mandell, 2017).

This evolution does not mean the disappearance of gender stereotypes, which persist despite social transformations (Devere & Davies, 2006). In this sense, we believe that this social evolution will also affect women indirectly involved in presidential scandals. We therefore pose the following hypothesis *H3: Magazines' coverage of women indirectly involved in presidential scandals improves from one scandal to the next* because of changing attitudes and journalistic practices, which means that their coverage will be less negative and less stereotypical in more recent scandals.

METHOD

We selected four presidential scandals: Watergate³ (Nixon Administration), the Iran-Contra affair (Reagan Administration), the Monica Lewinsky affair (Clinton Administration), and Ukraine *quid pro quo* (Trump Administration). Each of these is considered a serious scandal since they all brought to light illegal or unethical decisions or actions taken by the president during his term in office and led to the creation of congressional commissions of inquiry and the appointment of a special prosecutor. Three of these scandals – Watergate, Lewinsky and Ukraine – even led to impeachment proceedings against the president. These are also scandals that had high-magnitude coverage for months.

The scandals covered in this paper take place over a broad period, ranging from 1972 to 2020. Therefore, we gathered articles from magazines that were publishing political content in that same time frame⁴: *The Atlantic* (founded in 1857), *The New York Times Magazine* (1896), *Time Magazine* (1923), *The New Yorker* (1925), *Newsweek* (1933), and *The Rolling Stone* (1967). The choice of these magazines is also due to the accessibility of their archives, whether online or via databases such as ProQuest, EbscoHost, and Gale.

For Watergate, we compiled articles published between June 17, 1972 (the burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Hotel) and August 8, 1974 (President Nixon's resignation). For the Iran-Contra case, we compiled articles published between November 3, 1986 (the revelation of the scandal by the Lebanese magazine *Ash-Shiraa*) and November 18, 1987 (the publication of the Congressional Committees' final report). For the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, we compiled articles published between January 19, 1998 (the revelation of the relationship by the *Drudge Report*) and February 12, 1999 (the Senate vote in the impeachment proceedings). Finally, for Ukraine *quid pro quo*, we compiled articles published between August 28, 2019 (the revelation about the July 25, 2019, phone call between President Trump and Ukraine President

³ We started with Watergate because it is the archetypal political scandal of the contemporary era, against which all other scandals are measured.

⁴ We retained only articles published within issues (in paper or digital format) and not those published solely on the web: on the one hand, these can be modified several times, which complicates the analysis; on the other hand, two of the four scandals selected occurred before the arrival of the Internet, which would have caused a distortion in the analysis.

Volodymyr Zelensky) and February 5, 2020 (the Senate vote in the impeachment proceedings). As illustrated in Table 1, we initially collected 1 304 articles covering these four scandals across the selected magazines.

Table 1. Number of articles about presidential scandals

Source	Watergate	Iran-Contra	Clinton-Lewinsky	Ukraine	TOTAL
<i>Atlantic</i>	9	2	0	7	18
<i>New York Times Magazine</i>	14	4	4	15	37
<i>Time</i>	230	107	155	90	582
<i>New Yorker</i>	46	31	46	59	182
<i>Newsweek</i>	153	99	138	41	431
<i>Rolling Stone</i>	18	10	14	12	54
TOTAL	470	253	357	224	1 304

As the scope of this article is to study how magazines cover women involved indirectly in U.S. presidential scandals, we identified seven “accidental celebrities”. Starting with Watergate, we selected Rose Mary Woods, which was President Richard Nixon’s personal secretary and claimed to have accidentally erased 18½ minutes of one of the recordings requested by the Ervin Commission; and Martha Mitchell, wife of Attorney General John Mitchell, who made several statements about Nixon’s involvement in the Watergate scandal. For the Iran-Contra scandal, we singled out Fawn Hall, Oliver North’s secretary, who participated in the destruction of important documents concerning the details of the operation to sell arms to Iran and redistribute the money to Nicaragua’s Contra. Regarding the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, we selected Linda Tripp, Monica Lewinsky’s colleague and friend, who recorded Lewinsky without her knowledge and gave the tapes to Kenneth Starr, the prosecutor investigating the Clintons; and Hillary Rodham Clinton, President Bill Clinton’s wife. We ruled out Monica Lewinsky, as she was one of the parties directly involved in the scandal, but also, and more importantly, because her media coverage has been widely studied (Berlant & Duggan 2001; Dahl 2016; Everbach 2017; Joslyn 2003; Kenski 2003; Lawrence & Bennett 2001; Williams & Delli Carpini 2000, 2004; Yioutas & Segvic 2003). Finally, as for Ukraine *quid pro quo*, we opted for Marie Yovanovitch, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, who was the subject of a smear campaign waged by President Trump and his top advisors, and recalled because she refused to encourage Trump’s attempts to convince Zelensky to launch an investigation on Joe Biden or his son Hunter; and Fiona Hill, Director of Europe and Russia of the National Security Council, who testified, like Yovanovitch, before Congress during the impeachment proceedings against Trump in this case.

To pinpoint the articles mentioning these women, we used the R language as it offers multiple packages for statistical computing. First, we created a query to search through our 1 304 articles and were left with 258 articles, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of articles mentioning women indirectly involved in presidential scandals (percentage of the total number of articles)

Source	Watergate	Iran-Contra	Clinton-Lewinsky	Ukraine	TOTAL
<i>Atlantic</i>	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.56%)
<i>New York Times Magazine</i>	3 (21.43)	1 (25)	1 (25)	1 (6.67)	6 (16.22)
<i>Time</i>	21 (9.13)	8 (7.48)	76 (49.03)	0 (0)	105 (18.04)
<i>New Yorker</i>	2 (4.34)	2 (6.45)	23 (50)	5 (8.47)	32 (17.58)
<i>Newsweek</i>	25 (16.33)	14 (14.14)	64 (46.38)	0 (0)	103 (23.9)
<i>Rolling Stone</i>	3 (16.67)	3 (30)	5 (35.71)	0 (0)	11 (20.37)
TOTAL	55 (11.7)	28 (11.06)	169 (47.34)	6 (2.68)	258 (19.79)

This article focuses on quantitative textual analysis techniques known as Natural Language Processing (NLP) using the *quanteda* package (Benoit et al., 2018). While many sentiment dictionaries are available, we settled on using the *Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary* (LSD) (Young & Soroka, 2012). Using these results, we created a positivity ratio for each sentence using the following formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ positive words} - \# \text{ negative words})}{\# \text{ words}} * 100$$

Furthermore, we built a dictionary containing stereotypical words that we used to search through the sentences referring to the women selected. We thus built an inductive list of 93 words/stereotypes based on reading the magazine articles and on the literature, then grouped these stereotypes into four themes: appearance, personality and behavior, personal life, sexuality⁵. We could then pin down stereotypical sentences and measure a stereotypical ratio for each women using this formula:

$$\frac{\# \text{ stereotypical sentences}}{\# \text{ sentences}} * 100$$

ARE WOMEN INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS COVERED IN A NEGATIVE WAY BY MAGAZINES?

Hypothesis H1 postulates that women are covered in a negative way even if they are not responsible for the transgressions at the origin of the scandal in which they are involved. When we examine the sentences mentioning these women (Table 3), we see that they have a rather negative polarity, except for Hillary Rodham Clinton, and even a very negative one in the case of Fawn Hall. Since this is an automated analysis based on LSD, we cannot conclude without further investigations that the negativity is aimed at

⁵ The lists of words and stereotypes used, as well as of the articles cited and analyzed, are available on request.

them directly, but the emotions associated with these women seem to be more negative than positive. Therefore, we proceeded with a manual randomized screening of negative polarity-based sentences for each woman involved with a baseline of 20 percent of their overall sentences. Following our manual verifications, we can confirm that most of these negative polarity-based sentences are, in fact, directed towards the women involved in the various scandals except for Marie Yovanovitch and Fiona Hill. In these cases, the very small number of sentences makes it impossible to obtain significant data.

Table 3. Sentiment analysis

Scandal	Women involved	Number of sentences	Positivity ratio
Watergate	Rose Mary Woods	268	-1.89
	Martha Mitchell	118	-3.18
Iran-Contra	Fawn Hall	83	-4.02
Clinton-Lewinsky affair	Linda Tripp	1 105	-1.39
	Hillary Rodham Clinton	702	0.28
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>	Marie Yovanovitch	5	-4.15
	Fiona Hill	8	-3.22

Fawn Hall is the subject of the highest ratio of negative sentences (Table 4). She also receives the most sentences containing at least one sentiment – almost twice as many sentences about Hall contain sentiments, compared to those about other women. This suggests that stories about her are more emotionally charged than those about other women.

Table 4. Sentiments per sentences

Scandal / Women involved	No sentiment	Negative sentiments	Neutral sentiments	Positive sentiments
Watergate				
Rose Mary Woods	62 (23.13%)	99 (36.94%)	36 (13.43%)	71 (26.49%)
Martha Mitchell	30 (25.42)	48 (40.68)	15 (12.71)	25 (21.19)
Iran-Contra				
Fawn Hall	10 (12.05)	43 (51.81)	12 (14.46)	18 (21.69)
Clinton-Lewinsky affair				
Linda Tripp	284 (25.70)	377 (34.12)	140 (12.67)	304 (27.51)
Hillary Rodham Clinton	161 (22.94)	213 (30.34)	90 (12.82)	238 (33.9)
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>				
Marie Yovanovitch	1 (20)	3 (60)	1 (20)	0 (0)
Fiona Hill	0 (0)	5 (62.5)	2 (25)	1 (12.5)

It is interesting to note that a minority of sentences are neutral, and this applies to all the women studied except Fiona Hill (but again, the small number of sentences does not allow for precise analysis). This means that women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are most often covered by magazines in either a positive or negative light. Only Clinton is mentioned more often in sentences with positive connotations: all the others are mostly associated with negative feelings. For example, while Rose Mary Woods is presented as almost “a member of the Nixon family” (Time, July 30, 1973) and as “his indispensable office aide” (Time, December 10, 1973), that loyalty is repeatedly portrayed as negative, as of a devoted person ready for anything to protect her boss (The Atlantic, April 1, 1974) and who is both “feisty” (Time, November 19, 1973) and “combative” (Time, December 10, 1973) before the members of the Ervin Commission.

Martha Mitchell was already a household name before Watergate due to her outspokenness and regular participation in Republican events. From the outset of Watergate, Martha Mitchell’s propensity to address reporters off the cuff to accuse the president of using her husband as a scapegoat in the scandal quickly propelled her into the headlines. In the articles studied, she is often described in pejorative terms, suggesting she may have mental health or drinking problems, and that she embarrasses her husband by phoning reporters to flaunt her moods (Newsweek, September 10, 1973). Thus, while it is acknowledged that Mitchell possesses “a certain wacky charm” (Time, May 21, 1973), journalists also point out that she “has never come up with much solid evidence to back up her intuitions” (Newsweek, September 10, 1973) and that despite the ridicule, “she could not be silenced” (New Yorker, May 5, 1973)⁶.

From the moment Fawn Hall appeared in the media, she was perceived as a “bad girl” (Orth, 1987), portrayed in the same way as women involved in sex scandals with politicians, even though the Iran-Contra scandal was not a sex scandal and her relationship with her boss, Oliver North, was not an intimate one. Most of the sentences about her are strongly stereotyped – as we will show later – but they are also largely negative, mostly describing her (and North’s) attempt to destroy key documents as “neglectful and unlucky” (New Yorker, June 22, 1987). While it is acknowledged that she does not play “Dumb Dora on the witness stand to protect her boss” as other secretaries have, like Woods (Rolling Stone, April 23, 1987), reports often repeat the demeaning jokes made about her on late-night shows (Time, March 9, 1987).

As for Linda Tripp, the coverage she received in the magazines mirrored that of the TV channels and Americans’ perception of her: only 12% of Americans had a favorable opinion of Tripp when the scandal first broke (Holland, 1998), and only 30% of television reports about her were positive (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006). In the articles we analyzed, Tripp is depicted as “nosy, shrewd, principled, conniving, cynical and moralistic” (Newsweek, February 2, 1998), with “a penchant for office intrigue” (New Yorker, March 23, 1998).

⁶ Martha Mitchell’s image and reputation are currently being rehabilitated, at least on TV and radio: the series *Gaslit* (Matt Ross, 2022), taken from the first season of the podcast *Slow Burn* (Slate, 2017), as well as the documentary *The Martha Mitchell Effect* (Anne Alvergue, 2022) paint a fairer, more modern portrait of the Attorney General’s wife, who was sedated and kept prisoner in her own home to prevent her to talk to journalists at the height of the Watergate scandal.

In contrast, Hillary Rodham Clinton enjoys both public support – almost 70% of Americans have a favorable opinion of the First Lady (CNN, 1999) – and largely positive television coverage: up to 96% of television coverage was positive at the height of the scandal (Farnworth & Lichter, 2006). In magazine articles, while some journalists wondered what Hillary Clinton knew about the president's "philandering and lies" (Time, August 31, 1998), her faith, courage and stoicism were often highlighted in reports (Newsweek, February 9, 1998; Time, August 31, 1998).

Considering the low number of sentences available to describe Yovanovitch and Hill, no significant analysis can be pursued. Although, a manual screening allowed us to observe that the negativity of the sentences is not directed towards them, but rather towards President Donald Trump's actions being "highly improper" (New Yorker, November 18, 2019).

Therefore, the results obtained for women involved in Watergate, Iran-Contra, and Clinton-Lewinsky scandals allow us to partially validate our hypothesis that women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered negatively by the selected magazines. While it seems that is not the case for Ukraine *quid pro quo*, our sample size is too small to allow any substantial confirmation.

ARE WOMEN INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS COVERED IN A STEREOTYPICAL WAY BY MAGAZINES?

The women we selected receive rather stereotypical coverage from the magazines (Table 5), as do female politicians involved in scandals and women who have had relationships with politicians. Stories about Hall contain the most stereotyped sentences (31.33%), while stories about Woods contain the fewest (6.72%) – if we exclude stories about Yovanovitch and Hill. The beauty and youthfulness of Hall seemed to open the door to the use of stereotypes linked more to her appearance and love life.

Similarly, Hall also receives the most stereotyped coverage in terms of the ratio of stereotypes per stereotyped sentence, at 1.58: even though the number of stereotyped sentences is small (26), each contains more stereotypes than in the other stereotyped sentences concerning other women.

Table 5. Sentences with at least one stereotypical keyword

Scandal / Women involved	Number of sentences	Stereotypical sentences	Stereotypes per stereotypical sentence
Watergate			
Rose Mary Woods	268	18 (6.72%)	1.06
Martha Mitchell	118	18 (15.25)	1



Scandal / Women involved	Number of sentences	Stereotypical sentences	Stereotypes per stereotypical sentence
Iran-Contra			
Fawn Hall	83	26 (31.33)	1.58
Clinton-Lewinsky affair			
Linda Tripp	1 105	167 (15.11)	1.11
Hillary Rodham Clinton	702	98 (13.96)	1.10
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>			
Marie Yovanovitch	5	0	0
Fiona Hill	8	0	0

Most of the stereotypes used in the articles studied relate to women’s personal lives or behaviors (Woods, Mitchell, Tripp, Clinton), or their appearance (Hall) (Table 6).

Table 6. Number of stereotypical mentions by category

Scandal / Women involved	Appearance	Personality and behaviors	Personal life	Sexuality	Total stereotypical mentions
Watergate					
Rose Mary Woods	5 (26.32%)	7 (36.84%)	6 (31.58%)	1 (5.26%)	19
Martha Mitchell	4 (22.22)	2 (11.11)	12 (66.67)	0	18
Iran-Contra					
Fawn Hall	19 (46.34)	9 (21.95)	6 (14.63)	7 (17.07)	41
Clinton-Lewinsky affair					
Linda Tripp	48 (25.95)	48 (25.95)	61 (32.97)	28 (15.14)	185
Hillary Rodham Clinton	25 (23.15)	19 (17.59)	54 (50)	10 (9.26)	108
Ukraine <i>quid pro quo</i>					
Marie Yovanovitch	0	0	0	0	0
Fiona Hill	0	0	0	0	0

Several journalists mention Rose Mary Woods’ “scant personal life” (Time, November 19, 1973), who chose to devote herself to President Nixon, going so far as to lie or accuse herself to protect him (The Atlantic, April 1974). Her personal qualities, considered “feminine”, are highlighted in reports, including that she is “one of the most decent persons on the White House staff” and that “she had heart and warmth, and she would go out of her way to help you out on a problem” (Time, December 10, 1973).

In Martha Mitchell’s case, the articles focus on her personality and behaviors, describing her as unpredictable or “unshushable” (Newsweek, July 16, 1973). This “unrepressed

Southern belle" (Time, May 21, 1973) is described as "the Cassandra of the Watergate case – an insomniac talker whose wee-hour prophecies have not always been proved but have always been hard to ignore" (Newsweek, September 10, 1973). She is also described as increasingly "frantic" and "unpredictable" as the Watergate story unfolded (Newsweek, September 24, 1973). Several reports mention Martha's mental state more directly, stating that John Mitchell "feels like his wife needs medical help, but cannot bring himself to take the necessary legal steps to try to have her committed" (Newsweek, September 24, 1973).

Linda Tripp's past is scrutinized, from her acrimonious divorce to an arrest for theft when she was younger (New Yorker and Newsweek, March 23, 1998). She is described as "the modern Mata Hari" (Time, November 30, 1998), "sometimes playing off different officemates against each other and delighting in watercooler gossip, especially about the foibles of her bosses" (Newsweek, February 2, 1998). Numerous articles describe her physical appearance and clothing, noting that "her hair had been styled by a Georgetown salon" (Time, March 23, 1998).

As for Hillary Rodham Clinton, she was also stereotyped in terms of her personal life and behavior. On the one hand, reports noted that she "was not subservient but equal" to her husband (Time, August 31, 1998), but "constantly shouted at her husband and ruthlessly bossed him around" (Rolling Stone, March 19, 1998). On the other hand, journalists dwell on her reaction to her husband's infidelities. Since last summer, she has done nothing directly to pick her husband up, dust him off with public praise and send him back into the fray" (Newsweek, December 21, 1998). Some also analyze the support – or lack of it – that Hillary Clinton received from feminists, who "wouldn't stand for too much standing by her man" (Newsweek, December 21, 1998). Stereotypes linked to physical appearance are also present in magazine coverage of Hillary Clinton, with some not hesitating to resort to dubious analogies: "This is my big question: If you are married to Hillary Clinton, why the hell would you want to mess around with Monica Lewinsky anyway... why go out for a cheeseburger when you can have a filet mignon at home" (Rolling Stone, November 12, 1998).

However, it is Fawn Hall who is judged most on her appearance and sexuality. From "Foxy Fawn" (Newsweek, June 15, 1987) to "show-stopping blond secretary" (Newsweek, May 4, 1987), from "Intranscend beauty" (Time, March 9, 1987) to "North's glamorous secretary" (Newsweek, March 9, 1987), Hall is covered more as a mistress than a secretary. The articles also mentioned her personal life, noting that she dated the son of a Contra Leader" (Time, March 9, 1987). Several journalists also hinted at a relationship between Hall and Oliver North: "The combination of their closeness and her beauty led to inevitable rumors of an affair, but North – who is married with four children – dismissed the speculation" (Newsweek, March 9, 1987). This "strikingly pretty blond with blue-green eyes" (Time, March 9, 1987), who has done a bit of modeling, is also the subject of gossip within the National Security Council, where she works, where the "top-secret electronic message system contained a surprising number of references to Fawn Hall and her physical beauty" (Newsweek, March 9, 1987). Moreover, some observers insinuated that the members of the Tower Commission "needed her blond hair, pretty face and nice figure to keep their

audience interested" (Newsweek, July 20, 1987). Finally, some journalists pointed that Hall "may look like a Republican bunny, but she is not stupid" (Rolling Stone, April 23, 1987): she did not hesitate to reveal that she and her boss had destroyed documents. She did shred documents, some journalists say, because she was "so obedient that she followed North's orders last November to retype four NSC memos, possibly to conceal President Reagan's role" (Time, March 9, 1987). But in addition to being "a loyal secretary who helped her boss [...] she was also tall, blond and beautiful" (Newsweek, June 15, 1987).

In the light of these data, we can validate our H2 hypothesis, which states that women indirectly involved in presidential scandals are covered in the same stereotypical way as female politicians involved in scandals or as women entangled in a sex scandal with a politician, with accent put on their personal lives, behaviors, and physical appearance. Just as sexism can be hostile or benevolent, so too can stereotypes: many articles presented these female stereotypes as qualities.

IS THE COVERAGE OF WOMEN INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PRESIDENTIAL SCANDALS IMPROVE OVER TIME?

Our hypothesis H3, which states that coverage of women indirectly involved in presidential scandals should be less negative and less stereotyped from one scandal to the next due to changing attitudes and journalistic practices, is invalidated by our results. When we look at the percentage of stereotyped sentences presented in Table 5, we should observe a lower rate in more recent scandals. However, this percentage remains the same for Watergate and the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal (between 13 and 15%), while it doubles for the Iran-Contra affair (31%). Furthermore, the articles selected for Ukraine *quid pro quo* did not generate enough sentences to draw any conclusions about Yovanovitch and Hill's coverage, which prevents us from seeing if and how stereotypes have evolved since the 1990s, and therefore from saying whether magazine coverage is improving over time. Nonetheless, we need to consider the time elapsed between the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal (1998) and Ukraine *quid pro quo* (2019), which amounts to a little over two decades. Events such as the #MeToo movement created more social awareness towards all forms of abuse perpetrated against women. It is not far-fetched to assume that these events created an increase in collective awareness towards the representation of women in society, or at least, in the news media. While our dataset is not suited to observe this intuition, it is an avenue worth pursuing to determine if there is indeed an improvement in women's representation in the media.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We can therefore say that, like women politicians responsible for scandals and women caught up in sex scandals with politicians, women who are indirectly involved in a political scandal also receive negative and stereotyped coverage by magazines. We can draw several conclusions from our results, although they only allow to analyze a small number

of scandals. Firstly, we can say that the results obtained by T. Everbach (2017) on the negative and stereotypical coverage of Monica Lewinsky also apply to women indirectly involved in presidential scandals, whether of a sexual nature or not. Moreover, women do not seem to be covered more negatively or stereotypically when they are indirectly involved in a sex scandal than when they are in a political scandal, as the case of Fawn Hall clearly demonstrates.

Secondly, our study also shows that the use of stereotypes is a constant that does not seem to diminish over time, which supports the assertion that:

journalists actively re-use previous knowledge, experience and assumptions based on prior scandals when the discursive frame of a politician is constructed in a new scandal. This seems to be even more true when the politician in question is a woman, possibly because women are used more actively in the construction of an emotional scandal narrative (Kroon & Ekström, 2006, p. 22).

Women who are not politicians but who find themselves caught up in political scandals do indeed seem to be stuck in a stereotyped frame, despite social transformations, confirming the "durability of basic stereotypes" over time (Haines et al., 2016, p. 353).

Finally, our results help to understand the limitations of our corpus, particularly regarding the number of scandals and the difference between the roles and implications of the women we selected – Tripp is a more active player than Woods; Hall has engaged in illegal actions, contrary to Mitchell; Clinton is a First Lady and Tripp is a total stranger to the public – but also regarding more recent presidential scandals. Analyzing executive scandals, adding scandals that occurred during presidential election campaigns or even the scandals that happened before the election but were revealed once the candidate is in office would yield a greater number of scandals and, by the same token, a greater number of women whose media coverage could be studied.

In addition, it might be interesting to integrate web articles for more recent cases, such as Ukraine *quid pro quo*, to broaden our corpus and make a more detailed and accurate analysis of Marie Yovanovitch and Fiona Hill's coverage, especially as the number of such articles available only on the web is growing at the expense of the paper or digital format.

Finally, a systematic comparison between the magazines' coverage of women involved in presidential scandals and that of the men responsible for or involved in them would undoubtedly provide a better understanding of how stereotypes are used, in addition to measuring the presence of male stereotypes in news coverage. Such an endeavor would allow to determine if stereotypes are generalized equally across men and women or if there is an asymmetry in their usage.

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„SLUČAJNO SLAVNE“: KAKO ČASOPISI IZVJEŠTAVAJU O ŽENAMA UMIJEŠANIMA U AMERIČKE PREDSDJEDNIČKE SKANDALE

Karine Prémont :: Alexandre Millette

SAŽETAK Koristeći se kvantitativnom analizom, analizirali smo izvještavanje o ženama koje su bile neizravno umiješane u četiri velika predsjednička skandala u SAD-u (Watergate, Iran – Contra, afera Clinton – Lewinsky, Ukrajina quid pro quo) u 258 članaka objavljenih u šest časopisa (The Atlantic, The New York Times Magazine, Time, The New Yorker, Newsweek, Rolling Stone) kako bismo ocijenili kako ih opisuju novinari. Tri su pretpostavke vodile našu analizu. Prvo, žene su pokrivene na negativan način, čak i ako nisu odgovorne za skandal. Drugo, časopisi o njima pišu na stereotipan način kada opisuju njihovo ponašanje, njihov karakter ili njihovu ulogu u skandalu. Konačno, izvještavanje o ženama uključenima u novije skandale manje je stereotipno i manje negativno. Dok literatura pokazuje da su žene negativnije prikazane od muškaraca kada su odgovorne za političke skandale, naši rezultati pokazuju da je tako i s ovim „slučajno slavnim ženama“.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

PREDSDJEDNIČKI SKANDALI, SJEDINJENE AMERIČKE DRŽAVE, ČASOPISI, RODNI STEREOTIPI, MEDIJSKA POKRIVENOST

Bilješka o autoricama _____

Karine Prémont :: Sveučilište u Sherbrookeu :: karine.premont@usherbrooke.ca

Alexandre Millette :: Škola za javnu administraciju, Sveučilište u Québecu :: alexandre.millette@enap.ca

MEMING UP THE SCANDALS: INTERNET MEMES AS AMPLIFIERS OF SCANDALS

Domagoj Bebić :: Daniela Dolinar :: Antea Boko

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ABSTRACT *This research investigates the amplifying role of memes in political scandals. This study, therefore, begins with the hypothesis that political scandals originating from mainstream media extend to social networks through memes. Consequently, the duration and impact of a specific scandal are extended as it circulates within these online platforms. The case study examines three Croatian news portals – Večernji.hr, Index.hr, and Slobodnadalmacija.hr – and analyzes memes published on the Megatroll Split Facebook page in June 2022. Findings indicate that despite a smaller number of memes generated within a two-day timeframe, the Megatroll Split Facebook page received more user engagement than Večernji.hr, which published sixteen articles over eight days. This research confirms the significant role of memes in political scandals and underscores the need for further exploration in this area.*

KEY WORDS

SCANDALIZATION, POLITICAL MEMES, POLITICAL SCANDALS, SOCIAL MEDIA,
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Authors' note

Domagoj Bebić :: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science ::
domagoj@edemokracija.hr

Daniela Dolinar :: University North :: daniela.dolinar@edemokracija.hr

Antea Boko :: University North :: antea.boko@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Scandals and scandalization, especially in politics, have evolved in the digital age with the influence of social media (Bennett, 2012; Essien, 2017; Haller, 2019; Herkman, 2018; Lee, 2018; Lotan et al., 2011; Shifman, 2014; Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019; Zulli, 2020a; Zulli, 2020b). While journalists previously held a prominent position in shaping political scandals and the processes of scandalization, the digitalization of society has now empowered users of social media platforms to actively participate and become integral actors in this arena. Furthermore, digital platforms in the present era provide easier avenues for expressing opinions and attitudes toward scandalous cases, with the added advantage of a wider reach (Haller, 2019). Consequently, political scandals are increasingly unfolding in a multiplatform environment, encompassing both social networks and news portals (Zulli, 2020a).

Considering the increasing significance of social networks as a crucial channel for political communication, memes have emerged as a distinct and influential means of expression. Politically oriented memes serve as a form of viral political communication, posing a substantial threat to competing candidates (Bebić & Volarević, 2018; Seiffert-Brockmann, 2021). Recognizing the importance of memes in political communication and their role as a visual medium, Dean (2019) emphasizes their significance as a subject worthy of study. This paper, therefore, starts from the hypothesis that memes are one of the ways in which political scandals are transmitted from the mainstream media to social networks. In this way, the life of a particular scandal is extended, information reaches a larger number of people, and keeps users' interest in it longer. If we take a critical look at scandals, we can notice that in the media, a scandal is relevant only for a while, until another scandal comes that fills the media space. Nevertheless, through memes, a political scandal remains interesting to the audience for a longer time and thus becomes common knowledge. This research focuses on the role of memes in political scandals, aiming to establish that memes amplify political scandals created within the media and enable the dissemination of political messages. The research question of this paper is:

IQ: In what way did memes increase the political scandal during the local election in Split?

To achieve this goal, a case study methodology will be used, focusing on the early local election in Split, Croatia in 2022. The election was marked by scandalization, which subsequently transferred into social networks and memes. Following the emergence of scandals on Croatian news portals, the Facebook page *Megatroll Split*, known for its opposition to the Croatian Democratic Union¹ (HDZ), created memes that garnered significant attention from users through comments, likes, and shares over several days. One particular focus of interest was the alleged sex scandal involving members of the political party Centar (*Center*). Centar is a Croatian parliamentary party whose ideas and activities are based on contemporary European liberalism (Hrvatska u Centru, 2023). It was originally created in 2015 in Split under the name Pametno² (Pametno, 2023), and then

¹ In Croatian: *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*.

² In English: *Smart*.

changed its name in 2020. On the other hand, the HDZ represents Croatia's main center-right parliamentary party (Raos, 2019) and it is also the governing party at the national level. The party was founded in 1989 and formally registered in 1990 (Žižić, 2020). Since the separation from Yugoslavia, it has been one of the largest and most important parties in Croatia (Bebić & Volarević, 2018).

The *Megatroll Split* page defended the individuals involved by using memes, effectively diminishing the significance of the scandal. Additionally, the page's activities can be seen as a form of crisis communication, which ultimately lead to success. Despite the scandalous nature of the intimate communication controversy, the political party Centar emerged victorious in the Split elections. The study consists of a theoretical framework that explores political scandals and scandalization in the digital environment, as well as the role of memes as a medium for viral political communication.

POLITICAL SCANDALIZATION IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The concept of scandal has its roots in Ancient Greece and has evolved alongside the rise of the press. The media has played a pivotal role in shaping scandal as a mediated event, as we know it today (Thompson, 2005). Although Nyhan (2015, p. 436) explains that many scholars define the term as "the disclosure of an ethical or moral transgression", Ekström & Johansson (2008, p. 18) claim that "a scandal is not merely something that is revealed but also something that is shown, reported, staged and kept alive day after day." The phenomenon of scandal as a mediated event marks the recognition and disclosure of certain controversial activity and coverage of the subject in the mainstream media (Nyhan, 2015; Thompson, 2005). Thus, the role of the media in the continuous monitoring and presentation of scandalous events is emphasized, contributing to its significance and influence.

Haller, Michael and Kraus (2018) point out that scandals are happening in all social fields. However, the media, including scientists, pay special attention to political scandals. In point of fact, political scandals are present in countries around the world, and their persistence dates to the beginning of democracy (Essien, 2017). Lee (2017, p. 1) defines political scandal as "publicly revealed transgressions of moral, political, or legal norms by politicians or political institutions." In particular, the political scandal involves "a kind of political corruption that is exposed and becomes a scandal, in which politicians or government officials are accused of engaging in various illegal, corrupt, or unethical practices" (Essien, 2017, p. 162). They are also characterized by a certain form of explosiveness, the capture of various public spheres and forms of visibility (Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019). Also, in such situations, there is a deterioration in the reputation of politicians (Von Sikorski, 2018). Based on the literature review, it is evident that there are different characteristics of political scandals. The authors especially emphasize their prominence in democratic societies, exposure in the media, but also their influence on political reputation.

Before the technological breakthrough, it was journalists who informed citizens about the political scandal, while today digitalization allows social media users to share political controversies and, for the cases themselves, to reach a larger audience (Haller, 2019). Digital platforms have enabled users to actively participate in debates and coordinate different individualized collectives that have emerged around broader political programs, such as the Arab Spring and various uprisings in the US and Europe (Bennett, 2012; Lotan et al., 2011; Shifman, 2014). A survey conducted on a sample of Nordic countries showed that populist political scandals were often represented and visible on social media (Herkman, 2018).

Politicians in the digital environment are less able to separate their public and private lives (Essien, 2017), and party affiliation on social media is getting stronger (Zulli, 2020a). Digital platforms have enabled the emergence of a virtual realm where contentious topics that can evoke strong emotional reactions from the audience effortlessly become prominent, and later develop into scandals that receive significant media coverage (Haller, 2019). Political scandals in the digital space are gaining more attention, and by extension, their narratives in the online environment are amplified. Social media communication, therefore, tends to amplify the transfer of scandals from mainstream media (Lee, 2018).

Zulli (2020a) calls political scandals in the new digital space, according to the analogy of the Thompson scandals of 2000, 'socio-mediated scandals'. It is about the fact that socio-mediated scandals are "facilitated by mediated communication and co-constructed by mainstream media, political elite discourse, and vernacular discourse across a range of media platforms" (Zulli, 2020a, p. 4). Thus, political scandals in the new digital environment are mediated by several platforms such as social media and news portals. This kind of political scandals are viewed as central communicative events that are extremely individualized (Zulli, 2020a; Zulli, 2020b). As political scandals gain significant attention and importance in the online environment, it has become crucial to critically assess the implications of socially mediated scandals. The ability of the virtual environment to effortlessly elevate contentious topics to powerful emotional reactions has made political scandals central communication events with far-reaching consequences. Understanding these scandals in the new digital space is important for navigating the complexities of modern political discourse and media communication.

The term 'scandalization' was certainly formed by derivation from the noun 'scandal'. More specifically, scandalization is the tendency of journalists to convince the public that there is a certain scandal aimed at provoking outrage among the audience (Geiß, 2017; Graßl et al., 2021). According to Graßl et al. (2021, p. 2567), scandalization "does not entail the reporting of a scandal per se, but an attempt to report events in such a way that a scandal is created." Although scandalization can be justified in situations where serious wrongdoing occurs, in this case the main goal for journalists is certainly not to inform the public, but to convince them that there is a scandalous action (Graßl et al., 2021). The media, therefore, in this way can increase their profit and present their power in the placement of information (Demirhan, 2018).

A survey conducted by Graßl et al. (2021) showed that topics related to mild transgressions presented through scandalization caused a lower perception of severity in the audience compared to neutrally presented news. In addition, there has been a significant increase in the frequency of the use of scandalization in political news. Journalists exaggerate the importance of minor mistakes related to political actors and convince the public of the existence of a political scandal (Graßl et al., 2021). Such a pattern was confirmed by research in Germany – the media reported on numerous provocations by the right-wing populist party AfD and used scandalization strongly. Furthermore, the amplified media visibility associated with such scandals has the potential to significantly enhance public familiarity with the implicated political party, as demonstrated by the study conducted by Maurer et al. (2022). Ultimately, the rise of technological advancements has contributed to the escalating prevalence of scandalization, as it encompasses not only the traditional mass media audience but also holds a central position within the realm of digital media users (Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019). Based on these examples, it can be concluded that the prevalence of scandals in the media can potentially lead to the distortion of public perception and the strategic use of sensationalism for media visibility and political influence.

MEMES AS A WEAPON OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

The digital landscape has facilitated the rapid transmission of information and increased user engagement. The emergence and widespread adoption of social networking platforms have provided new avenues for political discussions to proliferate. Consequently, political scandals have transcended traditional boundaries and transferred into social media effortlessly reaching end users. A form that is particularly popular with viral political communication are memes (Bebić & Volarević, 2018). The term 'meme' was first introduced by Dawkins in 1976 (Dawkins, 2006). Since then, there have been different definitions and interpretations of memes, which will be described below. Thus, Shifman (2013, p. 41) defines internet memes as "(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which (b) were created with awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users".

Vorberg and Zeitler (2019, pp. 422-423) believe that "memes or tweets that are used to comment on a scandal on Twitter, for instance, may be reintegrated in classic TV news as they can serve as templates for unexpected narrative twists." Although most internet memes rest on a fun feature, some memes "can be turned social media weapons, posing a serious threat to the reputation of an individual, an organization, or an entire social group" (Seiffert-Brockmann, 2021, p. 402). So, memes are formulated as capital: "memes as subcultural knowledge, as unstable equilibriums, and as discursive weapons" (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017, p. 484). Thus, memes have a multiple role in contemporary media. Indeed, they are not always just humorous images, but can serve as influential tools that bridge the gap between online and traditional media, while also

carrying the potential to influence reputation and act as cultural and discursive agents in the digital landscape.

Internet memes represent a kind of contemporary, cultural, and digital phenomenon, and they are connected by language, society, and digital communication (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017; Ross & Rivers, 2017). These are digital texts that can be visual, verbal, or audible and are subject to repetition (Gal, 2018). Thanks to their form and way of transmitting internet memes, they enable a new way of political expression, persuasion, communication, and participation (Ross & Rivers, 2017) and are now used by numerous political actors (Beskow et al., 2020). Moreover, memes, as a form of digital visual communication, play a key role in creating a political community (Dean, 2019).

Internet politically oriented memes are used for the purpose of persuasion or political advocacy, mass action, and modes of expression and public debate (Shifman, 2013). According to previous research, internet memes used for political purposes have proven to be a useful form of political participation (e.g., Ross & Rivers, 2017). Paz et al. (2021, p. 12) in turn point out that internet memes “reflect the current political situation and the society they refer to.” In the case of a survey conducted in Spain, internet memes were found to have a lot of similarities in criticism, polarization, and icons as far as representatives of right and left political options were concerned (Paz et al., 2021).

Chagas et al. (2019) classified political memes as persuasive memes, grassroots action memes and public discussion memes. Furthermore, their research conducted in Brazil showed that the most used are public discussion memes. Bebić and Volarević (2018) conclude that the media reported more affirmatively about Ivo Sanader³, a politician and former Croatian Prime Minister thanks to internet memes and the satirical Facebook page titled “Ćaća se vraća”. Social media certainly provide fertile ground for political meme wars. Regardless of ideological differences, political trolls use various memes with the aim of dominating online discourses (Al-Rawi, 2021). Using British politics as an example, Dean (2019) concludes that the importance of memefication should by no means be underestimated. Moreover, it is a complex area that scientists need to study (Dean, 2019).

Memes have a visible advantage over ordinary or journalistic texts because they are much shorter and combine references using recognizable visual communication. During the 2016 US Presidential Election, continuous internet memes influenced public perception of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump (Seiffert-Brockmann, 2019). Seiffert-Brockmann (2019, p. 419) compares their influence with mosquitoes that attack an elephant saying that “one tiny mosquito poses no threat to the giant elephant, but many of them will seriously harm it “. Previous research shows the importance of the role of memes in creating the perception of politicians. Memes represent a kind of commentary on news, additional content that, using irony and cynicism, aims to increase the reaction of target audiences, which is reflected in the number of likes, comments, and shares on social media.

³ Ivo Sanader plays an important role in Croatian politics and is one of the most popular Croatian politicians. He was elected prime minister twice, the first time in 2003, and then in 2007. In 2010, Sanader was arrested for corruption and abuse of power. When it was announced in 2015 that the Croatian Supreme Court rejected the lawsuit against him, this satirical Facebook page was launched (Bebić & Volarević, 2018). Currently, Sanader is in prison on the basis of three final verdicts to which he was sentenced for three different cases (Dešković, 2023).

POLITICAL SCANDALIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY LOCAL ELECTIONS IN SPLIT

The local election held in 2021 in Split, the second largest city of Croatia and the largest city of Dalmatia, resulted in the victory of the party Centar against the then governing HDZ. The party Centar's mayoral candidate Ivica Puljak beat Vice Mihanović, the HDZ candidate, in the second round of the election. During the campaign, both political options were involved in scandals. For example, in the media appeared a recording featuring Puljak singing Ustasha songs⁴, and Mihanović's doctoral dissertation was under public eye for plagiarism. In addition to the fact that the media regularly reported on the current situation on the Split political scene, on the social network Facebook, continuous activity was recorded by the satiric page *Megatroll Split*.

In March 2022, Puljak, along with his deputy Bojan Ivošević, made the decision to step down from office, leading to an early local election in Split. Their resignation was marred by a series of scandals, including allegations of mistreatment of a cleaning lady, questionable employment practices in city companies, and Ivošević's aggressive remarks. Particularly concerning was Ivošević's threatening phone call to the editor of the city section of the *Slobodna Dalmacija* newspaper, where he expressed dissatisfaction with a published article by telling her "that he would drink her blood" (Maretić Žonja & Filipović, 2022). Following the resignation, Puljak once again ran for mayor in the early local election, again with Ivošević, yet their primary opponent was Zoran Đogaš, an independent candidate affiliated with the HDZ party.

The early local election was also marked by scandals reported by domestic media. Furthermore, the *Megatroll Split* Facebook page regularly communicated memes against the HDZ's candidates and the party in general. Although Puljak won again in July 2022, only a few days before the first round of the election, his party found itself in the focus of the alleged sex scandal. Studies suggest that political sex scandals in some democracies are largely absent and are rarely reported by the media, while in other democracies their media presence has been recorded (Cervi, 2019; Downey & Stanyer, 2013).

On June 12, 2022, the news portal *Večernji.hr* released a series of correspondences between two candidates affiliated with the party Centar who were participating in the early local election. Specifically, the correspondence involved the former Deputy Mayor Ivošević and former City Councilor Luka Baričić, and two girls from Serbia, one of whom claimed to be a minor (Filipović, 2022a). The published correspondence included text and audio messages of a sexual nature. The media highlighted the correspondence with the seventeen-year-old girl as an act of misconduct, while *Večernji.hr* pointed out that the conversation "unequivocally shows that the member of the Centar party's Presidency, Luka Baričić, arranged sexual relations with the girl by offering her help in finding a job in Split in return" (Filipović, 2022a). However, the news portal *Index.hr* (2022) later published a correspondence where Baričić denied such claims and emphasized that the party Centar

⁴ Ustasha songs are songs associated with the Ustasha regime, which was an ultranationalist and fascist political movement in Croatia during World War II (Tomasevich, 2002).

does not engage in hiring practices based on personal relationships. The party Centar dismissed the scandal as non-existent, arguing that there was no physical contact and suggesting that the entire situation was orchestrated by their political rivals.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of research and obtaining answers to the research question, the method of qualitative content analysis was employed. Goran Milas (2005), in the book *Research Methods in Psychology and Other Social Sciences* (2005), emphasizes the importance of content analysis as a non-intrusive method for studying human behavior. According to Milas (2005), content analysis is a research technique that quantitatively describes the content of a specific aspect of communication in an objective and systematic manner. This method is characterized by objectivity, systematicity, generality, and a quantitative nature.

The generality of the analysis refers to the theoretical significance of the results, which should go beyond mere content description. Milas (2005) notes that the application of this method is diverse, but its use has three main objectives: describing the characteristics of communication, drawing conclusions about events preceding communication, and drawing conclusions about the effects of communication. Content analysis enables precise descriptions of communication trends and allows for comparisons of reporting on the same cases in different media or parts of the world.

As mentioned, the research used the method of qualitative content analysis on the specific case and included content on two different platforms – social media and news portals. As stated by Creswell et al. (2007), a case study is a qualitative approach in which a researcher studies a specific case or multiple cases, using detailed and in-depth data collection from multiple sources of information, and reports on a case and the related topic. The case study approach is known in social sciences, including political science. The qualitative scientific research method is used for a deeper understanding of phenomena, processes, and experiences. This method focuses on describing, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data to obtain a deeper meaning of the area studied. By analyzing and describing these contents, patterns, topics, trends, or details that may be relevant to research can be revealed (Creswell et al., 2007).

The analysis included media articles published on three Croatian news portals - *Večernji.hr*, *Index.hr*, and *Slobodnadalmacija.hr*. For the purposes of this research, *Večernji.hr* was chosen because it was the first to publish an article on the topic of sex scandals. Furthermore, *Index.hr* was chosen because it is the most widely read news portal in Croatia according to the *Reuters Institute News Report 2023* (Newman et al., 2023). Both news portals cover topics from the national area. Finally, *Slobodnadalmacija.hr* was used in this paper because of its geographical component – it is a news portal located in Split, which primarily focuses on topics of local importance from the area of Dalmatia and Split

but also covers important topics of national importance. Additionally, it is the most widely read regional news portal (Newman et al., 2023).

Articles were searched using integrated search tools within the given news portal, searching for keywords: 'sex scandal Ivošević', 'sex scandal Split Center', 'sex scandal Puljak', 'sex scandal Baričić'. The search on *Večernji.hr* identified sixteen media articles directly related to the disputed scandal, *Index.hr* reported on the scandal in a total of ten media articles, while *Slobodnadalmacija.hr* published a total of seven media articles about the scandal.

When it comes to analyzing content published on social media, the analyzed content was taken from the Facebook page – *Megatroll Split*. This page, that was launched on January 20, 2017, uses humor, irony, cynicism, and sarcasm primarily to comment on political situations in Croatia. The page's description states: "Croatia is a country full of political clowns, and we will represent them one by one from each political option. Regardless of whether it is left or right or which way the wind blows" (Megatroll Split, n.d.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Večernji.hr published information about the involvement of two close associates of the candidate for mayor of Split of the party Centar, and the first news about the scandal on this news portal came out on June 12, 2022. On the same day, three more media articles on the same topic followed. The next day, the news portal published six more media articles on the same topic, and the reactions in the form of readers' comments on the portal itself caused an article: "Puljak: 'This is a mafia showdown.' Baričić: 'I am withdrawing from politics.' Ivošević: 'I know who set us up'" that conveyed information from the press conference that the party leadership had convened to present their position on the scandal (Večernji.hr, 2023). The next day, June 14, *Večernji.hr* announced: "Ivošević is lying! We have a picture and messages he sent to Milica even after she revealed her age, asking her to come" (Filipović, 2022b). On the same day, another article was published. *Večernji.hr* tried to keep the topic relevant in the media space, so the last article on the subject was published on June 20. In the first days of the scandal, *Večernji.hr* reported on statements by the actors involved, comments by opponents, but also comments by representatives of organizations that were directly or indirectly involved in the scandal. Most of the media articles published by *Večernji.hr*, except for the article that presents the content in question to readers, ignore the two main actors of the scandal – Baričić and Ivošević, but focus on the guilt of Puljak as a representative of the party Centar and a candidate for mayor in the local election in Split, for example: "Analysts: The fact that Puljak puts blame on the media is a sign of panic and a political own goal" (Matijević & Boban Valečić, 2022).

To keep the topic relevant in the media environment, in the following days, *Večernji.hr* compared this scandal with other similar scandals whose actors were members of other political options in Croatia in previous years. After the article of June 20, *Večernji.hr*

hr stopped publishing media articles on this topic. When these articles are analyzed, it is evident that *Večernji.hr* sought to reinforce readers' interest in the topic itself by means of sensationalist headlines and through the effects on the photographs accompanying the articles. It is important to note that in one of his statements, Puljak blamed *Večernji.hr* for being part of a group that was deliberately trying to sabotage his own and his party's success in the local election and accused them of being the tool of the "thieves" and "mobsters" behind the scandal. Furthermore, he added that "the real culprits should be sought in that media outlet and the criminal underworld of the city of Split", thus claiming that the scandal was instructed by the party's political opponents (Matijević, 2022).

The analysis also includes articles published on the *Index.hr* news portal, which is recognized in the Croatian media space as a medium that strives for a sensationalist style of writing and choosing topics of a sensationalist character, with provocative and clickbait headlines (Jaić, 2022). Articles covering the sex scandal involving the closest associates of the mayoral candidate – Puljak, span from June 12, when the news was initially reported by *Večernji.hr* to June 20. On this latter date, a media article not only presents the latest results of a pre-election poll and the candidates' ratings for the local election in Split but also reflects on the sex scandal and its potential impact on the survey results and Puljak's rating.

In this case, it is noticeable that *Index.hr*, when selecting elements for the article such as headlines and photos, adopted a more restrained approach compared to *Večernji.hr*. More precisely, the equipment used for articles related to the analyzed sex scandal was less sensationalistic on *Index.hr*, whereas *Večernji.hr* tended to use more clickbait-style headlines.

The last news portal that is included in the analysis is *Slobodnadalmacija.hr* that published only seven media articles about the sex scandal involving Baričević and Ivošević, on June 13 and 14, in which they presented exclusively the statements by the actors of the scandal itself and the candidate for mayor – Puljak.

The second part of the research includes an analysis of memes published on the *Megatroll Split* Facebook page on the topic of sex scandals in the political campaign for mayor in the local election in Split. In the period from, June 14 to 18 on the Facebook page *Megatroll Split*, a total of seven memes related to the sex scandal in the political campaign were published.

The first meme, that was published on June 14, banalizes the scandal in a way that on the left it says: "He seduces some girls from Serbia on Tinder", and the right side refers to a member of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), who is accused of being behind the whole affair, and states: "He cheats on his wife, gets a child with a mistress and wins the election".

Another meme again accuses the Croatian Democratic Union of the scandal by portraying a crying boy who is disappointed when he realizes that behind the fake profile

of the Serbian girl is a fifty-year-old mustachioed member of the Croatian Democratic Union.

The third meme contains a text written in Serbian, and Vice Mihanović, the candidate of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in the 2021 local election for mayor of Split, is disguised as a woman. "You seem uninterested, I can't win the election like that" – the text again accuses HDZ of creating a fake profile and rigging sex scandals on members of another political option. The fourth published meme again accuses Vice Mihanović, the HDZ candidate in the 2021 local election, of being behind the fake profile of the girls with whom Ivošević and Beričević had conversations using Tinder.

The fifth published meme shows a profile of a female person on Tinder, and below that it says: "But what if this is Vice?" again hinting that the Croatian Democratic Union is behind the sex scandal. The sixth published meme shows a fake profile of the girl on Tinder, again depicting the character of Vice Mihanović. The last, seventh meme presents tips for dating on the Internet, noting that if a girl knows how to speak English, then she cannot be Vice Mihanović.

Through the analysis of the presented content, it was determined that although the analyzed articles on news portals and memes on social media address the same topic, they have entirely different narratives. The media present this case as inappropriate behavior by members of a political option, calling into question the moral principles of these individuals. Meanwhile, memes portray the same case as a setup by the opposing political option, emphasizing their immorality.

The analysis found that the Facebook page *Megatroll Split*, through the creation and posting of memes, prolonged the lifespan of this topic in the public sphere. The scandal itself transitioned from traditional media to an entirely different environment – social media. The published memes not only intensified the scandal itself, thus extending its duration, but also presented an alternative perspective on the scandal, giving it an entirely new meaning. Although the scandal had a longer presence in the public space through the posting of memes on social media, thus reaching a larger audience, simultaneously, by introducing a completely opposite narrative compared to that on news portals, the memes defended the individuals involved in the scandal, redirecting public attention to the political opponents of the party Centar.

Considering the results of the *Reuters Digital News Report* (Newman et al., 2023), which, over the years, has been consistently showing a growing trend of information consumption through social media rather than through traditional news outlets, we can conclude that the social media presence of *Megatroll Split* in Split enabled a much quicker and more effective dissemination of the message of the party Centar, unlike the media articles from the analyzed news portals. Although the article shows a specific example of the use of memes at the local level, this is certainly a typical example of the role of memes in scandals. Actually, memes are increasingly used as weapons in the context of political communication.

Communication through social media, as demonstrated by Lee (2018), often tends to amplify the impact of scandals, and this case study has confirmed it. Specifically, it was found that memes did indeed amplify the scandal, shifting it from news portals to social networks and giving it an entirely new narrative. This research once again confirmed that memes are an essential tool in political communication (Al-Rawi, 2021; Bebić & Volarević, 2018; Beskow et al., 2020; Dean, 2019; Paz et al., 2021; Ross & Rivers, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to prove that memes are an amplifier of political scandals created in the media and that thanks to social media they have a greater reach. More precisely, political scandals in the media are shorter-lived, and when they are in the form of memes, they are shared more on social media, thus becoming a kind of common knowledge. The case study focused on three Croatian news portals – *Večernji.hr*, *Index.hr*, and *Slobodnadalmacija.hr* – as well as the memes about the scandal published on the *Megatroll Split* Facebook page during the period from June 12 to 20, 2022. More precisely, content about sex scandal was published on news portals in the period from June 12 to 20, and on the *Megatroll Split* Facebook page from June 14 to 18.

The published memes served to reinforce the scandal itself, transferring it to social media and simultaneously presenting a new narrative. Specifically, they introduced a secondary perspective on the scandal as orchestrated by political opponents, imbuing it with fresh significance. The social networks of *Megatroll Split* facilitated a much faster and more effective dissemination of the messaging aligned with the Centar party option than the media articles featured on the selected news portals.

This research once again confirms the role of social media in amplifying political scandals. Specifically, this study has demonstrated a significant role of memes in political scandals, and it is assumed that future research will further validate this finding. As emphasized by Dean (2019), the role of political memes is highly significant, and it is upon scientists to fully explore the breadth of this phenomenon.

In future research, it would be important to deal with the audience's attitudes about memes, how the audience reacts to memes related to political scandals, the habits of informing through memes and sharing such content. Also, it would be important to develop a metric or a methodology that could give concrete results and answers to the question – how social media, more specifically memes, reinforce or emphasize certain phenomena that spill over from the mainstream media.

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MEMEIFIKACIJA SKANDALA: INTERNETSKI MEMEOVI KAO POJAČIVAČI SKANDALA

Domagoj Bebić :: Daniela Dolinar :: Antea Boko

SAŽETAK Ovim istraživanjem želi se dokazati da memeovi pojačavaju političke skandale nastale u medijima. Točnije, ovo istraživanje polazi od hipoteze da politički skandali koji potječu iz medija prelaze na društvene mreže putem memeova. Zahvaljujući društvenim mrežama i memeovima, političkim skandalima produžuje se vijek trajanja. Za potrebe ovog rada provedena je studija slučaja koja ispituje tri hrvatska portala – Večernji.hr, Index.hr i Slobodnadalmacija.hr – te analizira memeove objavljene na Facebook stranici Megatroll Split u lipnju 2022. Rezultati ukazuju da je unatoč manjem broju memeova generiranih u dvodnevnom razdoblju stranica Megatroll Split na Facebooku dobila više angažmana korisnika nego Večernji.hr, koji je objavio šesnaest članaka u osam dana. Ovo istraživanje potvrđuje značajnu ulogu memeova u političkim skandalima i ističe potrebu za daljnjim istraživanjem u tom području.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

SKANDALIZACIJA, POLITIČKI MEMEOVI, POLITIČKI SKANDALI, DRUŠTVENI MEDIJI, POLITIČKA KOMUNIKACIJA

Bilješka o autorima

Domagoj Bebić :: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Fakultet političkih znanosti ::

domagoj@edemokracija.hr

Daniela Dolinar :: Sveučilište Sjever :: daniela.dolinar@edemokracija.hr

Antea Boko :: Sveučilište Sjever :: antea.boko@gmail.com

PRIKAZI KNJIGA

BOOK REVIEWS

Whitney Lehmann

SOCIAL MEDIA THEORY AND COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICE

New York: Routledge, 2023

ISBN 9781032185873, 220 pages

The university textbook *Social Media Theory and Communications Practice* is the latest monograph by Whitney Lehmann, an associate professor at the Department of Communication, Media, and the Arts at Nova Southeastern University, U.S. In 13 concise and conversational chapters, organized into three thematic sections and complemented with sidebars by scholars and industry professionals, end-of-chapter summaries and exercises, the book breaks down basics, fuses theory and practice, and provides a comprehensive introduction to social media for future communications professionals.

The first section, "What is Social Media?", opens with Lehmann's notion of the *absence* of universally accepted definition of social media, since scholars, industry professionals, and users all have different backgrounds and experiences that affect their perceptions of this term. As a result, the definitions of social media vary from basic and broad – e.g., "the practice of using media socially" (p. 3), to more complex and narrower – e.g., "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (p. 3)". She also indicates social media's purpose across different areas of communication, such as journalism, public relations, advertising, and marketing. The author then problematizes the *evolution of social media*, specifically whether the so-called "old media" (books, newspapers, radio, and television) can constitute social media, or whether this term is constrained to online platforms. She concludes that a person's accepted definition also determines their perception of where the timeline of social media begins – for those who believe that social media include certain forms of old media, the timeline begins before the invention of the Internet, whilst for those who argue that social media are Internet-based applications, the starting point is the advent of Web 2.0. Just as how there is no single agreed-upon definition of social media, there is also no agreed-upon methodology to categorize social media sites – the task even more challenging as platforms constantly compete with one another when it comes to new features and functions. Nevertheless, Lehmann argues that they can be roughly categorized into: social networking (e.g., *Facebook* and *LinkedIn*), content-sharing (e.g., *Instagram* and *YouTube*), live streaming (e.g., *Meerkat* and *Twitch*), bookmarking (e.g., *Pinterest* and *Digg*), and social review sites (e.g., *TripAdvisor* and *Yelp*), blogs (e.g., *WordPress* and *Wix*), microblogs (e.g., *Twitter* and *Tumblr*), forums (e.g., *Reddit* and *Quora*), messaging applications (e.g., *WhatsApp* and *Facebook Messenger*), and shopping platforms (e.g., *eBay* and *Amazon*). In the last chapter of the first section, the author emphasizes the importance of *demographic data* (e.g., gender, age, education level, profession, financial status, and ethnicity) in defining target groups on social media. She also points out that the use of social media is determined by people's *psychographic characteristics* (e.g., lifestyle, interests, personality, values, attitudes, and social status), as well as that this use can vary depending on the geographic location. In the second section, "Social Media and Theory", Lehmann broadens the debate from the previous section with an overview of how scholars, educators, and practitioners apply communication theories to the ever-evolving field of social media. She points out that the

study of social media is *interdisciplinary*, with knowledge and theories coming from various disciplines, such as communication, sociology, anthropology, psychology, marketing, cultural studies, informatics and more, and distinguishes three main theoretical – the social science, interpretive, and critical, as well as two methodological – qualitative (e.g., ethnography, interviews, and focus groups) and quantitative (e.g., surveys, content analysis, and experiments) approaches that contribute to knowledge in the communication field. The author then discusses several “classical” theories and models of mass communication, and how they can provide contemporary perspectives on the relationship between social media and audiences. For example, the study of *agenda-setting* in a social media setting has shown that blog coverage can create a “pressure cooker effect” (p. 84) where mainstream media are forced to cover an issue that may have otherwise been ignored; the *cultivation theory* is still current since streaming services and social media facilitate content consumption and affect the time spent watching; considerable attention has also been devoted to *uses and gratifications theory*, i.e., how people use social media and content to fulfill their needs and desires. Next, Lehmann examines social media through a human communication lens, which generally encompasses two main classifications – relational and rhetorical communication. Contemporary *relational communication* focuses on the influence of networking on social connections, social support, and social capital, as well as on the impact of user-generated content on decision-making. On the other hand, one common application of *rhetorical study* within a social media landscape involves examining the influence of electronic word-of-mouth on the exchange of opinions about various goods and services. In addition to these two dominant approaches, other widely studied areas of human communication research include intercultural, intrapersonal, nonverbal, small group, and organizational communication. In the last chapter of the second section, the author talks about defining and harmonizing business goals with communication on social media. She especially emphasizes the importance of identifying the *target audiences* by taking into account their demographic and psychographic data, selecting and adjusting communication channels, as well as measuring success through *key performance indicators*, such as reach, engagement, conversion, and customer satisfaction).

The third section, “Social Media Practice and Strategy”, opens with the chapter in which Lehmann argues that social media serve an important function in public relations and that achieving business goals requires well-rounded media projects, programs, and campaigns. Referring to the public relations cycle, she defines four phases of the social media campaigns: *listening* (to gain an understanding of the organization itself, as well as the conversations that are taking place on social media, and which may be relevant to the brand), *strategic design* (which implies developing SMART goals, strategies, and tactics), *implementation and monitoring* (the most visible phase during which strategists execute the created program), and *evaluation* (the final phase when strategists gather summative data and use it to evaluate whether or not a campaign was successful, as well as to lay the foundation for future campaigns). The author then explores different approaches to creating and planning content on social media, emphasizing the importance of *content diversity* and its adaptation to the infrastructure of specific platforms. For example, content that focuses on the written word is best suited for platforms that are informative in nature, like *Facebook* and *LinkedIn*; quick updates and announcements are a good fit for

microblogs like *Twitter*; photo and video content should be geared toward content-sharing sites like *Instagram* and *YouTube*. She also points out the importance of categorizing content according to its purpose (e.g., informing, educating, entertaining, promoting, etc.), maintaining a balance between organic and paid content, using a content calendar, and collaborating with influencers. Another important aspect of communication on social media is *writing*. "Social media writing is so much more than a simple caption slapped with emojis and a long line of hashtags" (p. 156). Its primary purpose is to communicate information that will influence priority audiences and persuade them to do something that we want them to do, and should therefore be concise, honest, ethical, persuasive, and sensitive to all types of diversity, while taking into account proper style, structure, tone, and voice. Furthermore, organizations use social media to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with their publics, which includes *customer service* and *crisis management*. In this context, Lehmann discerns several strategies for providing excellent customer service, such as monitoring conversations about the brand, being proactive in anticipating customer requests, maintaining a high response rate and fast response time, getting creative with customer service solutions, etc. On the other hand, crisis management implies the ability to recognize and admit mistakes, having a crisis plan in place, as well as practicing the plan in a controlled setting. In the last chapter of the book, the author emphasizes that members of the organization who are tasked with creating and maintaining social media channels for the brand need to be knowledgeable of legal and ethical considerations that come into play when managing a social media presence. Every organization should therefore develop a *social media policy* – "a comprehensive document that describes in detail how the company and its employees use social media" (p. 185). In addition, an organization should also develop the set of rules for public engagement with an organization's social media, i.e., *social media guidelines*. These include guidelines for the community (the public), and guidelines for internal publics (employees). While most social media texts approach the subject through either a theoretical, empirical, academic, professional, or practical lens, the presented book offers a much-needed linkage of theory to the practical tactics employed by social media communicators. By the use of simple and comprehensible writing style, the author demystifies the complexity of (social) media theories, which makes the book accessible to a wide audience and therefore ideal for introductory digital media and public relations courses, as well as for mass communication university departments.

Filip Trbojević

Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb

Jake Lynch, Charis Rice (editors)

PERSPECTIVES RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM IN CONFLICTED SOCIETIES:

Trust and Public Service Across New and Old Divides

London: Routledge, 2023, 216 pp

ISBN: 9781003178217 (ebook)

Responsible Journalism in Conflicted Societies: Trust and Public Service Across New and Old Divides, edited by Jake Lynch and Charis Rice embraces a broad understanding of

conflicted societies. It focuses on the concept of responsibility in journalism in today's media environment marked by disinformation, misinformation, decline of trust, conflicts, and polarization. The book addresses the complexity of the media's public service role and raises questions about journalistic responsibility in serving the public interests in *conflicted societies*.

The book is structured into three sections and comprises 13 chapters, wherein authors explore the central theme of *responsibility* from various perspectives, through research undertaken in diverse parts of the world.

The first section of the book "Responsibility and Viability in Journalism – The Turn to Local News", contains three chapters focused on trust and responsibility in (hyper)local media. The first chapter by Julie Firmstone, John Steel, Martin Conboy, Charlotte Elliot-Harvey, Carl Fox, Jane Mulderrig, Joe Saunders, and Paul Wragg is titled "Trust and Ethics in Local Journalism: A Distinctive Orientation Towards Responsible Journalism and Ethical Practices". In a cross-national comparison of local and broader media practices, the authors explore how the perception of a journalist's role in local media and their specific and close connection with the local audience influences their sense of responsibility. The study shows the link between a high level of trust in local media and the perception of journalistic responsibility in maintaining high ethical practices.

In Chapter 2, "Community Journalism as Responsible Journalism", the author Karl Wahl-Jorgensen discusses the significance of community journalism in the concept of responsible journalism. The study shows how community journalists perceived their responsibility while playing a crucial and multifunctional role in delivering information and supporting the community during the COVID-19 pandemic (p.40).

In the concluding chapter of the first section, "Where's the Fake News in Hyperlocal Media? Trust Amongst Citizen Journalists and Participatory Audiences in Local Facebook Pages", Jerome Turner and David Harte explore high trust levels on hyperlocal media Facebook Pages. The authors explore the advantages while also addressing the potential for dissemination of misinformation due to that trust.

Section II, "Reform Agendas in the Study of News About Conflict and Peace", consists of five chapters that focus on peace journalism in conflict coverage and contribute to *de-Westernizing* journalism studies.

In Chapter 4, "Peace Journalism Revisited: Challenging the One-Size-Fits-All Approach", Cecilia Arregui Olivera argues for reshaping peace journalism and moving away from a *fixed dualist model* and uniformed approach to a more dynamic and contextual approach. Focusing on the peace journalism scholarship, she advocates *de-Westernizing* the media systems and broadening settings, like *re-Westernizing* studied conflicts by applying peace journalism theory not only to *non-Western* conflicts, but also to western *cultural and structural violence*. The author also argues moving beyond dominant methodology in peace journalism research.

Chapter 5, "Constructive Information Practices after training: Feasibility, Aspects, and Effects in Peace Journalism Media Production" by Jake Lynch and Giuliana Tirpelli shows the feasibility and adaptability of peace journalism in daily practices of journalists and communication professionals who underwent constructive media training. It also shows that applying peace journalism produces effects during the news production process, prior to publishing.

In Chapter 6, "The Matter of Journalists' Social Psychological Processes in a Divided and Conflicted Society", Huri Yontucu and Metin Ersoy focus on the divided island of Cyprus and investigate social psychological processes among two groups of (War Journalism-oriented) journalists in both sides of the division. They investigate processes such as inadequate contacts, which can be assumed as obstacles to practicing peace journalism. They conclude that as journalists increase collaboration and social interaction, there is an increase in positive feelings, perception of a single identity, and a greater willingness to forgive (p.103).

In Chapter 7, "Peace Journalism in a Non-Western Context: A Theoretical perspective", Shabir Hussain analyzes various theoretical approaches to peace journalism. The author suggests the *theory of critical pragmatism* to address the existing limitations in theories and practice of Peace Journalism in non-western contexts.

In Chapter 8, "Journalism in Times of Pandemic: Ethical and Responsible Reporting in Transitional Societies", Fabiola Ortiz Dos Santos discusses responsible journalism during the COVID19 pandemic, investigating the duty to public service of the UN radios in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Central African Republic. The research demonstrates significant adaptations in journalistic practices caused by the pandemic, all the while upholding ethical and professional standards.

"The People Formerly Known as Audiences – New Roles and Relationships with Publics" is the name of the last, third section that focuses on the questions of journalistic and audiences' responsibility.

In Chapter 9, "Trust in Media: Relevance, Responsibility, and Epistemic Needs in Divided Societies", Chris Rice and Maureen Taylor examine trust in the media in post-conflict, divided society in the context of Northern Ireland. They explore trust in relation to news consumption and personal epistemic needs.

In Chapter 10, "Responsible Journalism and Personalized News Communication: A Potential Route Toward More Relevant and Accountable News", Burton St. John III and Kirsten Johnson discuss the rise of personalization of the news, looking in to public, participatory, citizen, service, solutions and transparent journalisms. They insist on the potential of constructive personalized news in transparent journalism.

In Chapter 11, "Trust in News in the Context of Political Polarization: A Case Study of Turkey", Çiğdem Bozdağ and Suncem Koçer investigate how the polarized Turkish environment influences news-trust and how users establish trust in the news. They find that trust in news is established through diverse tactics that indicate reputation on different platforms. Also, they note the tendency within a polarized environment to trust sources aligned with similar mentalities and political positions.

In Chapter 12, "Objectivity as a Post-truth Excuse in Dystopian Realities" Robin Blom focuses on the opinion news format and discusses partisan debates in practicing the ideal of objectivity, which contributes to the post-truth era, without a genuine intention to pursue the truth.

"Edification and Awareness: Educating the Public to Become More Media Literate Citizens" by Judith P. Roberts is the last chapter. The author underscores the significance of media literacy in empowering the public to hold journalists accountable for their actions. She highlights the need to educate citizens about media sources, particularly as it has become challenging to distinguish who qualifies as a journalist in today's media landscape.

This book stands out for its broad definition of conflicted societies, therefore providing insights into dealing with some of the most complex issues of contemporary journalism in diverse contexts, drawing on research conducted in distinct areas. It serves as a valuable resource for practitioners, scholars and students of journalism, communications, and social sciences. It contributes to encouraging a reevaluation of the role and responsibilities of journalism and its audiences in divided societies.

Nina Krapić

Pontifical Gregorian University

Lana Ciboci Perša, Igor Kanižaj, Danijel Labaš

MEDIJSKA PISMENOST: PRIRUČNIK ZA UČITELJICE I UČITELJE RAZREDNE NASTAVE

Zagreb: Profil Klett, 1. izdanje, 2022., 83 str.

Priručnik je sadržajno podijeljen na četiri cjeline u različitim bojama koje označavaju razred (1. – 4.) kojemu su namijenjene te na šesnaest poglavlja. Svako poglavlje donosi jasan vremenski okvir provedbe određene nastavne cjeline, kao i detaljno navedene ishode učenja te razradu pojedinih ishoda.

U prvom poglavlju „Abeceda medija i medijske pismenosti” autori obrađuju klasifikaciju medija i tipove medijskog sadržaja. Dok uče slova abecede, učenici otkrivaju nazive medija, a svakim slovom podsjeća ih se na popularne animirane (crtane) filmove i likove uz koje su odrastali. Abecedna slikopriča o medijima potiče učenike na kritičko razmišljanje i smještanje pojmova u određeni povijesni kontekst. „Mediji i medijski sadržaji” drugo je poglavlje koje donosi prikaz kratke povijesti medija te mnoštvo zadataka za učenike dostupnih na platformi IZZI. Aktivnosti su osmišljene po modelu igranja uloga s ciljem prepoznavanja društvenih funkcija medija (informiranje, zabava, edukacija). Analizira se mjesto i uloga vrednota u medijima s ciljem osnaživanja kompetencija učenika kako bi lakše prepoznali neprihvatljiv sadržaj koji može imati dalekosežne posljedice na njih same, ali i na druge u njihovu okruženju. Treće poglavlje „Upoznajmo svijet radija” započinje analizom navika mladih slušatelja radija. Nadalje, objašnjava se uloga glasa u prezentiranju medijskog sadržaja na primjeru kulturne emisije „Bijela vrana” voditelja Mladena Kušeca uz kojega su odrastale brojne generacije. Kroz igranje uloga voditelja i gosta učenicima se nastoji približiti proces stvaranja radijskih emisija, a potiče se i njihovo upoznavanje s radijskim emisijama koje su stvorila djeca. „Animirani likovi” naziv je četvrtoga poglavlja u kojemu autori problematiziraju sve učestaliju pojavu animiranih likova namijenjenih odraslima, kao i upotrebu tih likova u promotivnim sadržajima. Učenicima se donose preporuke za pregled odabranih animiranih likova na *YouTubeu* kroz koje se može pratiti njihov povijesni razvoj, a kreativnost se nastoji potaknuti kroz osmišljavanje vlastitog animiranog filma. „Razlikovanje stvarnih i medijskih sadržaja” peto je poglavlje kojim počinje druga tematska cjelina ovoga priručnika. Polazeći od teorije kognitivnog razvoja djeteta Jeana Piageta, autori objašnjavaju kako razlikovati stvarnost i fikciju. Poglavlje analizira ulogu nasilja u medijima te pokušava usmjeriti učenike na prepoznavanje nasilja, kao i na posljedice ponavljanja nestvarnih scena. Također, istražuje se uloga oglasa u medijskim sadržajima te emocionalni aspekti u sklopu iskustva publike s manipulativnim marketinškim sadržajima.

Analizira se odnos fikcije i stvarnosti u videoigrama, vrlo popularnom medijskom sadržaju, na čiji je razvoj tehnologija u posljednje vrijeme znatno utjecala. Šesto poglavlje „Televizija“ donosi povijesni pregled razvoja toga medija, ali i pojašnjava njegove posebnosti, a učenike se upoznaje i s formatima televizijskog sadržaja. Što su dobne oznake i čemu služe, kako je izgledao televizijski studio nekada, a kako izgleda danas – to su samo neka od pitanja na koje šesto poglavlje nudi odgovore. Nadalje, analiziraju se specifičnosti odgođene konzumacije televizijskog sadržaja na primjeru platforme HRTi te se mlade potiče na analizu kvalitete sadržaja koje konzumiraju putem televizije, kao i vremena uloženoga u gledanje televizije. Sedmo poglavlje „Filmovi – vrste i obilježja“ definira film kao medij te donosi kratki pregled povijesnoga razvoja. Nadalje, učenicima se prezentiraju filmski rodovi te se pojašnjava odnos između imaginacije i realnosti, kao i uloga dobnih oznaka prikladnosti sadržaja za konzumente. „Nasilje u medijima“ naziv je osmoga poglavlja koje učitelje i učenike uvodno upoznaje sa sadržajem definicije nasilja, a autori ističu kako je ono zastupljeno u svim medijskim žanrovima i svim medijskim formatima. Predložene su brojne aktivnosti kojima je cilj ispitati percepciju nasilja kod mladih i utvrditi njihovu izloženost nasilju. Poglavlje nadalje obrađuje ulogu nasilja u crtanim filmovima, kao i nasilja u videoigrama, potičući učitelje i učenike na korištenje stranice PEGI kako bi provjerili primjerenost videoigara određenom uzrastu. Istodobno, poglavlje obrađuje i ulogu pametnih telefona u distribuciji nasilja, analizu emocija kod mladih i pokušava osvijestiti bolne učinke nasilja neovisno o tome gdje se ono dogodilo – u stvarnom ili virtualnom svijetu. Također se podsjeća na Dan ružičastih majica – nacionalni dan borbe protiv nasilja nad vršnjacima.

„Tiskani mediji“ naziv je devetog poglavlja koje ujedno otvara treću tematsku cjelinu. Priказuju se svi elementi naslovnice (glava novina, naslovi, fotografije, infografike, reklame, vremenska prognoza; usp. str. 44), te se objašnjava uloga urednika u odabiru medijskog sadržaja. Nadalje, učitelje i učenike upućuje se na digitalni repozitorij portala Stare hrvatske novine Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice kako bi se upoznali s uređivačkim politikama u prošlosti. U desetom poglavlju „Razlikovanje izvora informacija“ podsjeća se na promjenu u kanalima komuniciranja, što se odrazilo i na profesionalne novinarske standarde, ponajprije na točnost. Nadalje, učitelje i učenike informira se o razlikama između digitalnih i tiskanih medija, nastojeći ih potaknuti na kritičko promišljanje o konzumiranom medijskom sadržaju. Konačno, učiteljima i učenicima objašnjava se razlika između stvarnih i lažnih vijesti te ih se upoznaje s pojmom *clickbait* mamilica. Što je vijest, po kojem principu nastaje, kako stil pisanja utječe na recepciju vijesti kod publike – to su samo neka od pitanja na koja nastoji odgovoriti jedanaesto poglavlje „Vijesti u tiskanim medijima“. Također se predstavlja koncept „šest poštenih slugu“ (5 W + H) – temeljne formule pisanja vijesti te se objašnjava uloga obrnute piramide. Istodobno se učitelje i učenike upoznaje s ulogom vrednota u medijima, „novinarskom patkom“ i važnošću profesionalnih standarda. Naslovi u medijima mogu biti ne samo informativni nego i šokantni, a autori nastoje obučiti učitelje i učiteljice za njihovo uspješno prepoznavanje. Poglavlje završava smjerokazom u deset koraka koji pokazuje kako uspostaviti uredništvo i organizirati proizvodni proces. Dvanaesto poglavlje „Videoigre“ analizira procvat toga medija u vrijeme pandemije bolesti Covid-19. Donoseći povijesni prikaz razvoja videoigara, autori potiču na usklađivanje sadržaja koji se konzumira s dobi konzumenta, kao i na kontinuirano promišljanje o zaštiti privatnosti i identiteta u *online* okružju.

Četvrtu tematsku cjelinu otvara trinaesto poglavlje „Upoznajmo medije: internet“ koje kroz brojne interaktivne vježbe potiče na traženje sličnosti interneta s ostalim medijima, ali i razlika među njima. Upotreba virtualnih enciklopedija, kao i pitanje vjerodostojnosti sadržaja takvih izvora u središtu su trinaestoga poglavlja. S druge strane, učitelje i učenike podsjeća se kako komunikacija na internetu, osim sigurnosnih aspekata, zahtijeva poštivanje pravila uljudnoga ponašanja, kao i u stvarnome životu (usp. str. 66). Odstupanje od navedenoga često vodi elektroničkom nasilju koje treba znati prepoznati, ali i prijaviti roditeljima ili policiji, upozoravaju autori. Četrnaesto poglavlje „Oglasi“ upoznaje učitelje i učenike s temeljnim načelima oglašavanja: otklon od svjesnog zavaravanja, poštivanje dostojanstva osobe i društveno odgovorno poslovanje (usp. str. 70). Koji su elementi prikrivenog oglašavanja te kako ga prepoznati – to su ključna pitanja četrnaestog poglavlja. „Usporedba radija i televizije“ petnaesto je poglavlje u kojemu se objašnjava uloga javnog medijskog servisa i komercijalnih medija. Oslanjajući se na radionički tip izvođenja nastave, autori na primjeru stvaranja sadržaja za Dnevnik Nove TV upoznaju učitelje i učenike s ulogom televizijskog voditelja. Nadalje, potiče se praćenje emisija za djecu na radiju i televiziji, dostupnima na mrežnim stranicama HRT-a, kao i na slušanje *online* sadržaja. Posljednje, šesnaesto poglavlje „YouTube i influenceri“ objašnjava pojam *influencera*/utjecajnika u medijskom okružju, kao i područja njihova djelovanja. Autori upozoravaju na dominaciju manipulativnih fotografija u njihovim objavama, ističući nužan oprez oko odabira kriterija onih koje pratimo. Konačno, poglavlje analizira ulogu *influencera* u distribuciji i širenju elektroničkog nasilja, a učiteljima i učenicima predstavlja se i platforma UHO (Utočište hrabrih online) za sprječavanje elektroničkog nasilja.

Medijska pismenost: priručnik za učiteljice i učitelje razredne nastave prvo je takvo djelo kojemu je cilj pozvati odrasle (roditelje, odgajatelje i nastavnike), ali i djecu i mlade, na kritičko propitivanje medijskog sadržaja, kao i na kvalitetnije provođenje vremena s medijima. Bogato iskustvo troje istaknutih sveučilišnih nastavnika, doc. dr. sc. Lane Ciboci Perša, prof. dr. sc. Danijela Labaša i prof. dr. sc. Igora Kanižaja, temeljeno na višegodišnjim radionicama za djecu, roditelje, učiteljice i učitelje, konačno je dobilo svoje tiskano izdanje koje će biti važan korak na putu k uvođenju medijske pismenosti u kurikule osnovnoškolskog obrazovanja. Naime, njihov je znanstveni rad posvećen upravo medijskoj pismenosti i obrazovanju za medije. Metodički odlično strukturiran i prilagođen uzrastu publike kojoj se obraća, priručnik je vrijedan putokaz učiteljicama i učiteljima razredne nastave za provedbu pojedinoga nastavnog sata, implementaciju medijskog odgoja i stvaranje odgovornih medijskih konzumenata. Poglavlja kreirana u obliku radionica te mnoštvo dodatnog interaktivnog sadržaja za čitatelje dostupnog na digitalnoj platformi IZZI čine ovaj priručnik posebnim i prilagođenim digitalnom dobu u kojemu živimo. Osim učitelja i učiteljica razredne nastave, priručnik će nesumnjivo koristiti studentima nastavnčkih smjerova, ali i roditeljima kao prvim medijskim odgajateljima, s obzirom na to da je njihova uključenost u medijski odgoj djece iznimno važna i aktivno se potiče brojnim vježbama u ovome jedinstvenom priručniku.

Tanja Grmuša

Poslovno veleučilište Zagreb

Upute suradnicima

Interdisciplinarni časopis *Medijske studije* otvara prostor za međunarodnu znanstvenu i stručnu raspravu o medijima, komunikacijama, novinarstvu i srodnim disciplinama. Na suradnju su pozvani autori čiji radovi (prilozi) ispunjavaju kriterij relevantnosti i znanstvene izvrsnosti. Radovi ne smiju biti djelomično ili u cijelosti već objavljeni, ne smiju biti u procesu objavljivanja u nekom drugom časopisu, zborniku, knjizi i sl., niti smiju biti prijevod takvih radova. Za sve navedeno autori preuzimaju odgovornost. Uvjet za objavu rada u časopisu jesu dvije anonimne, pozitivne recenzije međunarodnih stručnjaka.

Radovi se šalju isključivo u DOC formatu putem portala Open Journal System (<https://hrcak.srce.hr/ojs/index.php/medijske-studije>). Zbog anonimnosti autora u postupku recenziranja u zasebnom dokumentu treba poslati ime, odnosno imena autora/autorica, naziv matične institucije ili organizacije, kontakt (adresa/telefon/e-adresa) te kratku biografiju. Radovi moraju biti napisani na hrvatskom ili engleskom jeziku, fontom Times New Roman, veličina 12, prored 1,5. Sve stranice trebaju biti numerirane. Na prvoj stranici trebaju biti ispisani naslov rada te sažetak koji upućuje na zadaće i cilj rada, metode istraživanja te najvažnije rezultate (100 do 150 riječi s popisom ključnih 5 do 6 riječi), sve na hrvatskom i na engleskom jeziku. Na dnu stranice u bilješci mogu se navesti zahvale i detalji o projektu (naziv i broj), ukoliko je članak nastao kao dio nekog projekta. Očekivani opseg rada (uključujući bilješke i literaturu) jest između 5000 i 8000 riječi. Izvori se citiraju prema APA stilu citiranja, 7. izdanje (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>).

Primjeri citiranja unutar teksta

Citirani izvori navode se u tekstu (a ne u bilješkama) u skraćenom obliku i u zagradama, prvo prezime, zatim godina objave, a onda stranica (ako je riječ o izravnom citatu), npr. (Dahlgren, 2009, str. 67) ili ako je riječ o dvoje autora (Gillespie i Toynbee, 2006, str. 52). Kada se citira rad troje i više autora, navodi se samo prezime prvog te kratica *sur.*, npr. (Ridgeout i *sur.*, 2010). Kada se citira više autora unutar istih zagrada, navode se prezimena autora abecednim redom i odvajaju se točkom sa zareptom (;), npr. (Dahlgren, 2009; Gillespie i Toynbee, 2006).

Kada ima više radova istog autora iz iste godine, navodi se: (2006a), (2006b), (2006c) itd.

Ako je citat preuzet s mrežne stranice, za njega vrijede ista pravila citiranja kao i za ostale izvore; npr. kada je riječ o službenoj mrežnoj stranici, navodi se mrežna stranica i godina preuzimanja (FPZG, 2021), a ako je riječ o internetskoj knjizi/članku, onda se navodi prezime autora i godina objave (Ridgeout i *sur.*, 2010).

Citiranje u popisu literature

Na kraju teksta pod naslovom Literatura navodi se samo literatura koja je citirana u tekstu, abecednim redom. Potrebno je navesti DOI broj uz svaku bibliografsku jedinicu koja ga ima. U Literaturi se navode svi autori knjige, članka ili poglavlja, kao i svi urednici knjige ili zbornika.

Knjige:

Autor: Prezime, I. (godina). *Naslov knjige*. Izdavač. DOI (ako je dostupan)

Primjer:

Dahlgren, P. (2009). *Media and Political Engagement*. Cambridge University Press.

Čapeta, T. i Rodin, S. (2011). *Osnove prava Europske unije*. Narodne novine.

Članci u časopisima:

Autor: Prezime, I. (godina). Naslov. *Časopis, godište*(broj), stranice. DOI (ako je dostupan)

Primjer:

McQuail, D. (2003). Public Service Broadcasting: Both Free and Accountable. *The Public/Javnost*, 10(3), 13–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2003.11008832>

Poglavlje u knjizi ili članak u zborniku:

Autor: Prezime, I. i Prezime, I. (godina). Naslov poglavlja. U I. Prezime (ur.), *Naslov knjige/zbornika* (str.). Izdavač.

Primjer:

Corbett, N. (2009). Digital Performance, Live Technology: Video Games and the Remediation of Theatrical Spectatorship. U M. MacArthur, L. Wilkinson i K. Zaiontz (ur.), *Performing Adaptions: Essays and Conversations on the Theory and Practice of Adaptation* (str. 11–23). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Dokumenti s interneta:

Autor ili institucija ili naziv mrežne stranice (godina, datum). *Naslov*. Izdavač. Preuzeto DD.MM. GGGG. (datum kada je pristupljeno poveznici), s <https://URL>

Primjer:

Ridgeout, V., Foehr, U. i Roberts, D. (2010, srpanj). *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18- Years Olds. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation*. Preuzeto 28.10.2013., s <http://kff.org/other/poll-finding/report-generation-m2-media-in-the-lives/>

UNICEF, Ured za Hrvatsku (2011, ožujak). *Mišljenja i stavovi djece i mladih u Hrvatskoj*. Preuzeto 19.11.2013., s <http://www.unicef.hr/upload/>

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Electronic copy (.doc) of the manuscript should be uploaded to the OJS (<https://hrcak.srce.hr/ojs/index.php/medijske-studije>). For the purposes of the blind review, full names of the authors, authors' current affiliation, contacts and short biographical notes, should be submitted in a separate document. Manuscripts should be written in either Croatian or English, using Times New Roman font; size 12; 1.5 line spacing; all pages should be numbered. The title page shall consist of the article's full title and abstract that states the purpose, goals, methodologies, and the most important results (100-150 words, including 5-6 key words) in both Croatian and English. In a footnote, the author(s) may add further description of the research, acknowledge contributions from non-authors and/or list funding sources. If the research was conducted as a part of the project, the authors are kindly asked to add the project number and, if applicable, include a code or identifier of the project. The main text of the article (including notes, references, and illustrations) should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words long. References must be incorporated into the text and must follow the APA Style of Referencing, 7TH edition (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>).

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References should be cited in the text (not in notes) as follows: author's surname, year, page number), e.g., (Dahlgren, 2009, p. 67). APA in-text citation style uses the author's last name and the year of publication, for example: (Field, 2005). For direct quotations, include the page number as well, for example: (Field, 2005, p. 14). If there are two authors, the following model should be followed (Gillespie & Toynbee, 2006). If there are three or more authors, list only the first author's name followed by "et al.", e.g. (Ridgeout et al., 2010). If there are more references by the same author published in the same year, letters should be added to the citation: a, b, c..., e.g., (2006a), (2006b), (2006c).

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Example:

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Ridgeout, V., Foehr, U. & Roberts, D. (2010, July). Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18- Years Olds. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved October 28, 2013, from <http://kff.org/other/poll-finding/report-generation-m2-media-in-the-lives/>
UNICEF, Ured za Hrvatsku (2011, March). Mišljenja i stavovi djece i mladih u Hrvatskoj. Retrieved November 19, 2013, from <http://www.unicef.hr/upload/>

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