

Call for Papers

Scandalogy IV

Political Scandals in the Age of Populism, Partisanship, and Polarization

A multitude of political scandals is coming to public attention in recent years across the world, involving all kinds of nepotism, sexual harassment, coercion, and abuses of power. To name just a few examples: the Cuomo-scandal, dubious deals concerning the purchase of protective masks during COVID-19 in Germany, or the Pandora Papers, a new bundle of offshore-leaks, involving tax-evasion schemes of not only the rich and powerful but also numerous key political figures, show that political misconduct is one of the main issues in media coverage on a global scale.

A cause for the number of political scandals in the last decades can be attributed to overall transformations of media and journalism in the digital age. On the one hand, technological infrastructure and digital tools give reporters new means to investigate 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 offers new means to vent emotional attacks, spark outrage, or voice public discontent. However, aside from transformations of media and journalism, there are larger socio-political trends that produce a hotbed for scandalization. These changes in political culture and society are generally outlined with reference to three umbrella terms: Populism, partisanship, and polarization (Baybars Hawks & Uzunoaylu, 2019; Ruzza, Berti & Cossarini, 2021).

Therefore, the 4th International Conference in Scandalogy (for information about previous conferences, [see here](#)) will focus on “Political Scandals in the Age of Populism, Partisanship, and Polarization”. This overarching theme serves a two-fold goal: On the one hand, we want to intensify research on political scandals (cf. Thompson, 2000; Entman, 2012) and substantiate our understanding of such forms of scandals and their impact on today’s (increasingly fragile) democratic societies. On the other hand, we hope to connect the study of scandals with a larger scientific community in the broad fields of political and social sciences.

The organizers call for proposals in all subfields of communication studies, political communication research as well as related disciplines in the field of the humanities and invite conceptual, empirical, and methodological proposals reflecting on political scandals and the role which media and/or communication plays therein. The conference encourages submissions of both empirically and theoretically focused work from advanced scholars as well as graduate students or doctoral candidates.

Proposals may focus on – but are not limited to – such topics as:

- the role of political scandals in modern post-industrial societies as an instrument for societal change (e. g. Hondrich, 2002; Hessel, 2010)

- audience-induced scandals and emotional outrage in participatory digital publics (e. g. Burkhardt, 2018)
- political scandalization and reputation management in hybrid media systems (e. g. Chadwick, 2017; Samoilenko et al., 2020)
- public provocations and the instrumentalization of scandals in populist politics (e. g. Berti & Loner, 2021)
- scandalization and its effects on political attitudes in hyper-partisan alternative media ecosystems (e. g. Holt et al., 2019; von Sikorski, Heiss & Matthes 2020)
- scandalization, polarization, and tabloidization as results of changing logics of media production and cycles of attention management (e. g. Boukes, Otto & Glogger, 2017)

In this context, topics that are more general can still be relevant to the theme of this conference, for instance:

- cross-national or cross-cultural studies on levels of populist sentiment and polarized media
- political campaigning in a climate of political and/or journalistic partisanship
- polarization, partisanship, or populism as phenomena from a historical perspective
- media effects studies in the context of polarization/partisanship and the use of new media
- challenges to professional norms of objectivity in journalism and their ethical dilemmas

Hosts

The conference is hosted by Otto Friedrich University Bamberg (Dr. Hendrik Michael) and the University of Applied Sciences Kufstein Tyrol (Prof. (FH) Dr. André Haller).

Organization: Papers & panels

The conference will feature both presentations of individual research papers, and thematic panels. Paper submissions will be grouped in sessions of 3-4 papers by the conference program chair. A limited number of slots will be available for coherent panels where one topic is addressed in 3-4 presentations, followed by responses. Preference will be given to panels with presenters from diverse backgrounds and affiliations.

Submission Guidelines

For individual research papers: Please send an MS Word (.doc, .docx) file including (a) the title of your paper and an abstract of no more than 400 words, and (b), on a separate page, the names and affiliations of the authors.

For panel submissions: Please send an MS Word (doc., docx) file including (a) a rationale of no more than 300 word; (b) summaries for all the presentations in the panel (no more than 150 words for each summary); and (c) the names and affiliations of the chair, presenters, and respondents.

All submissions will be evaluated on relevance and originality, clarity of research purpose, grounding of theoretical and methodological approach, focus, and organization.

Only one proposal per first author can be accepted. A publication of selected articles is planned. Please send all submissions to scandalogy.kowi@uni-bamberg.de

Deadline for submissions: May 15, 2022

Date of notification: June 24, 2022

Please note

Due to the on-going pandemic, we plan the conference with caution. As of now, we are optimistic to hold the 4th International Conference in Scandalogy as an in-person event at the University of Bamberg, Germany. However, there will be an option to present your research online, for those who are unable to travel. Therefore, there will be a possibility for virtual formats. We will be in contact as the situation evolves and update information about our hygiene concept and travel options on our website <<https://www.uni-bamberg.de/kowi/forschung/tagungen/4th-international-conference-in-scandalogy-2022/>>.

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