

Political Scandals as a Democratic Challenge: From Important Revelations to Provocations, Trivialities, and Neglect

Introduction

SIGURD ALLERN¹

University of Oslo, Norway

CHRISTIAN VON SIKORSKI

University of Vienna, Austria

This Introduction provides the conceptual and theoretical context for a Special Section on political scandals in the *International Journal of Communication*. Mediated political scandals are a worldwide phenomenon and are not limited to liberal democracies only. A main aim of this Special Section, drawing on articles and studies about scandals in the U.S., China, and Europe, is to discuss the mediation of scandals in countries with different political institutions and media systems. We point to the contradictory status of journalism as an important “watchdog” institution for democracy, holding leaders to account, and a “scandal machine” that often ignores serious political misdeeds and inflates the importance of trivial norm violations. Another aim of this Special Section, discussed in the Introduction, is to shed some light on the effects of political scandals on both the individual and institutional levels.

Keywords: mediated scandals, scandal journalism, democracy, effects of scandals

Mediated scandals are a worldwide phenomenon and can occur in all areas of society—in politics as well as in business and finance, culture and the arts, academia, religious institutions, and sports. Over the past few decades, there has been a steep increase in worldwide news coverage of political scandals (Allern, Kantola, Pollack, & Blach-Ørsten, 2012; Kumlin & Esaiasson, 2012; von Sikorski, 2017), often

Sigurd Allern: sigurd.allern@media.uio.no

Christian von Sikorski: christian.sikorski@univie.ac.at

Date submitted: 2018-07-02

¹ The authors would like to thank the Department of Media Studies, Stockholm University, for funding support that has made this Special Section possible to organize. Many thanks also to our anonymous reviewers, whose critical comments and suggestions have increased the scholarly quality of the articles—and to Arlene Luck, managing editor of the *International Journal of Communication*, for her friendly guidance and effective overseeing during the editorial process.

Copyright © 2018 (Sigurd Allern and Christian von Sikorski). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

depicted in a personalized manner: "Individuals, rather than ideologies or parties, are usually in the eye of scandals" (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004, p. 1036). Current research suggests that scandals have become a regular feature of election campaigns (e.g., Kumlin & Esaiasson, 2012), influencing election outcomes such as the 2016 U.S. presidential election involving Hillary Clinton's e-mail scandal. Other examples include the more recent national election in Austria, with its scandal about negative campaigning, and the scandal concerning misuse of public funds surrounding François Fillon, a candidate in the 2017 French presidential election. In 2017 and 2018, the #MeToo movement against sexual assault and harassment showed that scandals can develop quickly across societal sectors and national borders, from film studios and media organizations to political institutions and civil organizations, and in different parts of the world. Actions and behavior that had been passively accepted years ago—or at least looked upon as private matters—were suddenly exposed and condemned.

The #MeToo scandals remind us of two general lessons confirmed by international scandal research. First, actions and types of behavior that are deemed as "scandalous" depend on historical context; second, norms and the interpretation of norm violations may change over time. Modern political scandals also require public reports that may elicit criticism and other reactions. In most countries, the news media play a central role: real or conjectured norm transgressions must be reported on (Esser & Hartung, 2004) and framed as scandals through news headlines, images, and journalistic angles, and thereby threaten to undermine the reputation and standing of politicians and others in positions of power and influence (Entman, 2012).

The aim of this Special Section, drawing on articles and studies about scandals in the U.S., China, and Europe, is to discuss the mediation of political scandals in countries with different political institutions and media systems. We adhere to a definition of political scandals as real or conjectured norm violations of political actors or institutions that are repeatedly reported on and framed by the news media and other actors as scandalous. A central topic is also the contradictory status of journalism as an important watchdog institution for democracy, holding leaders to account, and a "scandal machine" that often ignores serious political misdeeds and inflates the importance of trivial norm violations. Attempts of scandalization may also be launched by rival power groups and competitors.

Markovits and Silverstein (1988) argued for a narrow definition of political scandal, restricting it to acts that, in the quest for political power, violate due process and procedure (pp. 6–7). Their reasoning was based on liberal theory: the political game must be open and accessible, based on a firm institutionalization of the process of decision making. According to this view, political scandals by definition occur at the intersection of power and process. Economic scandals and other personal norm violations by politicians may therefore only be considered rising to the level of political scandal if they are primarily linked to an abuse of power at the expense of process and procedure. Another of their postulates, related to this view, was that "political scandals can only take place in liberal democracies" (Markovits & Silverstein, 1988, p. 6).

In his seminal study of political scandals, John B. Thompson (2000) criticized this model for being unnecessarily restrictive, as it excludes a range of scandalous phenomena in which politicians are involved and "which may have far-reaching consequences in the political field" (p. 93). Scandals related to a violation of process and procedure, or "power scandals," is not the only form of political scandal. Exposure of financial

irregularities in the public sector and politicians' personal attempts at tax evasion are economic scandals with severe political consequences. Provocative utterances, lies, and hypocrisy are other well-known causes of scandalization. Politicians' violations of personal behavior norms can lead to political scandals because they trigger discussions of trust (Isolatus & Almonkari, 2014).

It is equally problematic to unilaterally link political scandals with one type of political system: liberal democracies. It is true that important features of liberal democracy, such as the organized and institutionalized competition for power and the relative autonomy of the news media, "render it prone to scandal" (Thompson, 2000, p. 94) compared with one-party states and authoritarian regimes where such revelations are more easily suppressed. However, as Francis L. F. Lee underlines in an article in this Special Section, the dichotomy of "liberal democracy" versus "dictatorship" is a political simplification that tends to overlook that, "most contemporary societies are neither full-fledged democracies nor extreme dictatorships" (Lee, 2018, this Special Section). The People's Republic of China, a one-party state, has experienced several political scandals over the past few decades—for example, the slave labor scandal (2007), the milk scandal (2008), and a long range of corruption scandals since 2008. Scandals are also a regular phenomenon in countries like Turkey and Russia, with such authoritarian practices as suppression of journalists and stifling press freedom. In practice, political scandals take place in societies with limited or varying levels of freedom of speech, media diversity, and public debate; however, they are less frequent and manifest in other forms compared with mediated scandals in liberal democracies. Political and structural societal differences around the world influence how scandals are launched, constructed, and framed.

In professional journalism, rooted in the Anglo-American tradition, investigating powerful institutions and public figures is a central goal, related to the Montesquieu-inspired notion of the press as an unofficial fourth branch of government, scrutinizing legislative, executive, and judicial powers on behalf of the people. Journalists maintain the norms of public life and the values of political conduct (Ettema & Glasser, 1988). According to this view, scandal journalism is healthy for democracy. News organizations increase their legitimacy by exposing norm violations and circumstances that can become political scandals (Allern & Pollack, 2012). The revelations of international corruption and money laundering known as the Panama Papers and the Paradise Papers, organized by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, is a recent example.

An optimistic view about the media's role is also highlighted in the Durkheim-inspired functional theory about scandals; because journalists expose norm transgressions, they help to restore and renew the moral order of society. "In the immediate post-Watergate period, a heightened sensitivity to the general meaning of office and democratic responsibility did indeed lead to heightened conflict and to series of challenges to authoritative control," writes Jeffrey C. Alexander (1988, p. 213). Scandals may help distinguish between the guilty and the innocent, expose shameful conduct, and ensure that those who violate norms are punished (Girard, 2007, p. 318). Also, certain forms of norm violations may be prevented in the first place—for example, when political actors fear that malfeasance may be discovered by investigative journalists searching for potential misconduct with the aim of turning it into a public scandal. Mediated scandals are therefore opportunities to validate social norms (Jacobsson & Löfmark, 2008, p. 212). In general, the functional sociological theory underlines the positive effects of scandal journalism. Scandals

enable an interrogation of the collective moral code, and public opinion is used to punish the deviant behavior of politicians, contributing to the maintenance of a healthy democracy (Brenton, 2012).

However, while this benevolent interpretation of scandal journalism sometimes fits well, the functionalist perspective tends to overlook several more problematic aspects related to the role of the media in scandalization processes (Verbalyte, 2018). First, only a selection of norm violations is made public and condemned; to make mediated scandals out of every misdemeanor is impossible (Ehmig, 2016). The strength of scandalization is not directly related to the significance of the violated norms (Kepplinger, 2009). Even limited norm violations and minor scandals can sometimes lead to media frenzies. An analysis of scandal reporting shows that serious norm violations may not be reported, while more trivial matters are blown up to become large scandals (Allern et al., 2012; Entman, 2012). The media organizations' own interests and relationships to those in power also influence the scope of scandal reporting.

Political actors also use scandalization as a political weapon (Jenssen & Fladmoe, 2012). Those in power can use strategic communication to shape what is framed and mediated as a scandal. Staged scandals can be used to influence the public agenda and smear competitors. Politicians may also intentionally trigger "scandals" through provocative slogans and remarks to influence the political media agenda, as in the case of some right-wing populist parties (Wodak, 2015). The complexity of such scandalization processes underlines the need of critical, interdisciplinary research that examines the various roles and effects of political scandals.

Scandals can influence political processes in many ways and on different levels. Scandals can affect citizens' political behavior (von Sikorski, Knoll, & Matthes, 2017) and may end in resignations or other formal reactions; sometimes they only result in public debate or criticism. In other cases, scandals can significantly influence citizens' satisfaction with democracy (Kumlin & Esaiasson, 2012) and their trust in the political process (Bowler & Karp, 2004).

First, and not surprisingly, data show that scandals may negatively affect citizens' attitudes toward politicians involved in scandals (Carlson, Ganiel, & Hyde, 2000; von Sikorski & Knoll, 2018). However, there are also apparent boundary conditions for negative scandal consequences. That is, under certain conditions, even long-standing public accusations of misconduct may have little consequence for the accused (Kumlin & Esaiasson, 2012; von Sikorski, 2018). A clear example is the case of former U.S. President Bill Clinton, whose approval ratings "were at some of the highest levels they reached during his tenure in office" (Shah, Watts, Domke, & Fan, 2002, p. 339) during the period in which he was repeatedly under intensive questioning for his role in the so-called Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, probably one of the best known political scandals in the world.

Second, scandals may affect certain forms of political participation like voter turnout and may influence election outcomes. This is fairly intuitive. Nevertheless, competing views have been debated in this context. On one hand, it has been argued that voter turnout may decrease in light of a scandal because citizens withdraw from the political process (Chong, De La O, Karlan, & Wantchekon, 2015). Others have debated that scandals may affect voter turnout in quite the opposite way, by mobilizing the vote for the opponents of politicians involved in scandals. That is, voters are mobilized and motivated to vote for

alternative political candidates to hold actors involved in scandal accountable (Praino, Stockemer, & Moscardelli, 2013).

Third, political scandals can affect citizens' political trust and satisfaction with democracy more generally. Again, two competing hypotheses may be formulated. Political scandals, aside from negatively affecting the reputation of individual actors, may also generate spillover effects, fostering "skepticism about the political elite as a whole" influencing "the image of all political parties" (Maier, 2011, p. 285). In contrast, holding politicians accountable for serious wrongdoing can help to create a more positive view toward the political system. Put differently, scandals demonstrate that societal institutions, as well as democracy as whole, functions well by penalizing political misdeeds and thereby fostering satisfaction with democracy among individuals (Kumlin & Esaiasson, 2012; Maier, 2011).

Fourth, news reporting on political scandals may influence the public's perceptions of the news media itself. This aspect has—so far—only rarely been reflected on (Bennett, Rhine, & Flickinger, 2001). However, it may be especially important given that news outlets increasingly report about minor and even trivial norm transgressions of political actors. Experimental results point exactly in this direction. When news media report about a relatively minor corruption scandal involving small sums of money (compared with an identical case reporting about a high sum), news recipients tended to evaluate the news outlet and its credibility more negatively (von Sikorski, 2018).

Therefore, another aim of this Special Section is to shed light on the effects of political scandals by compiling empirical evidence from different research fields (i.e., political psychology, communication science, political science) and conducting a meta-analysis of findings from individual studies.

Articles in this Special Section

In their article, "Blunders, Scandals, and Strategic Communication in U.S. Foreign Policy: Benghazi vs. 9/11," Robert Entman and Sarah Stonbely address a topic that has drawn little attention from scholars: the role of media scandals in U.S. foreign policy discourse. To illuminate politicians' strategic communication, the authors analyze media content, not leaders' behaviors. The article suggests that journalists' treatment of foreign policy failures as scandalous bears little relationship to the nature or effects of the malfeasance. Scandalized news coverage is instead more fruitfully viewed through the lens of skilled strategic framing. Contrasting the news about two terrorist attacks on Americans—the large-scale 9/11 attack in 2001 and the limited attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, in 2012—reveals how politicians can successfully promote or deflect potential foreign policy scandals without much regard for evidence. The Benghazi case suggests that unsubstantiated or minor failings can spawn major scandals. Conversely, 9/11 shows how and why well-documented and massive miscues may not ignite a scandal. Much depends on the strategic communication choices of party elites. The authors conclude with a clear normative point: Inconsistencies and asymmetries in the politics of scandal weaken leaders' incentives to learn from mistakes and act with prudence and reasonable transparency in the management of national security and foreign policy.

In his article, "Political Scandals Under Responsive Authoritarianism: The Case of the Bo Xilai Trial in China," Francis L. F. Lee examines the corruption scandal and trial of Chinese political leader Bo Xilai in

2012 and 2013, and analyzes the discourses associated with the scandal in the years that followed. In political communication literature, scandals are mostly seen as a phenomenon in liberal democracies, but as the author points out, most contemporary societies are neither full-fledged democracies nor extreme dictatorships. In the case of contemporary China, the concept “responsive authoritarianism” is used to characterize a system that has developed a limited degree of responsiveness to public opinion. The article focuses on how mainstream media portrayed the trial of Bo Xilai, discussed the problem of official corruption, and articulated the notion of the rule of law in the context of responsive authoritarianism. The case illustrated how political scandals in contemporary China can be occasions for those in power to present an image of willingness to address public concerns and social problems. The analysis also suggests that political scandals can provide opportunities for the articulation and propagation of the power-holders’ preferred concepts of social and political reform. However, the author highlights that the Bo Xilai case suggests that in an authoritarian system, political leaders are expected to maintain certain norms, and the violation of these moral or political norms can lead to public disapproval.

In his article, “Assassination Campaigns: Corruption Scandals and News Media Instrumentalization,” Paolo Mancini offers a different view of mediated corruption scandals than the one prevalent in Western liberal democracies. Revelations of corruption are, according to the liberal model of journalism, important for democracy, and can at the same time be characterized as a competitive resource, strengthening and legitimizing the role of professional news media. However, in many countries (and partially also in the West), corruption scandals respond mainly to a logic of instrumentalization: They come to light and occupy the front pages of newspapers and privileged slots on television news because they are occasions and tools to attack political and business competitors. In this analysis, based on findings from a series of studies on media corruption in Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania, and Italy, the author explores how instrumentalization drives the coverage of corruption cases in new and transitional democracies compared with the established democracies in France and the UK. In transitional democracies, media corruption scandals serve as instruments for those seeking power in business and politics. The logic of instrumentalization is especially strong in countries characterized by political instability, weak social and political organizations, and where clientelism is commonplace.

A few decades ago, liberal democracies like Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland were regarded as relatively scandal-free areas. This is no longer the case. In “The New Normal: Scandals as a Standard Feature of Political Life in Nordic Countries,” authors Ester Pollack, Sigurd Allern, Ana Kantola, and Mark Blach-Ørsten examine the incidence of mediated political scandals and analyze the types and consequences of scandalization. The article is based on 101 political scandals in the four countries from 2010–16, and a study of political scandals in the wake of the #MeToo movement in 2017–18. Compared with the 1980s and 1990s, there has after the millennium been an exponential rise in the number of scandals. Offenses related to economic affairs, including corruption, and personal behavior scandals, such as accusations of sexual harassment, constitute the most prominent scandal types. In today’s competitive media climate, a wide range of actions can be treated as scandalous media events, including minor legal offenses and personal moral transgressions by politicians. The distinction between the important and the trivial is blurred. The authors point to several factors that explain this development; these include changes in societal norms and laws, and an increasingly competitive media climate, leading to a lower threshold for scandalization.

Christian von Sikorski's article, "The Aftermath of Political Scandals: A Meta-Analysis," represents the first attempt to examine the effects of political scandals via meta-analysis. Seventy-four studies, including more than 54,000 participants, were identified and examined. A quantitative analysis revealed that the majority of research originates in North America and Europe, and studies have mostly been published in political psychology, political science, and psychology journals. Communication journals play only a minor role. Aspects that are relevant to the field of communication, like content-related factors and specific types of scandals and actors, are frequently neglected. A qualitative analysis shows that two central outcome variables, evaluation of politicians and electoral consequences, are frequently studied. Overall, studies reveal negative evaluative effects for politicians. However, five central moderators (candidate characteristics and behaviors, prior attitudes, context, and scandal type) significantly influence the effects of scandals. The results about electoral consequences of scandals are less clear and the effects on voter turnout are inconsistent. Research has largely neglected to precisely conceptualize the major independent variable in studies about the effects of scandals: news coverage and its intensity. This may be an important factor in explaining the inconsistent findings, including findings on the electoral consequences of scandals. In the last part of the article, central research gaps are identified, and avenues for future research are discussed.

In their article, "Powerful and Powerless: Psychological Reactions of Norwegian Politicians Exposed in Media Scandals," Kim Edgar Karlsen and Fanny Duckert examine how politicians who have been involved in mediated scandals have experienced, reacted to, and coped with the media exposure. The study is qualitative and explorative, and is based on interviews with 14 Norwegian politicians. The interviewees expressed deep feelings of injustice and powerlessness related to the proportion of the coverage, the journalistic practices, and the use of anonymous statements. Most significant triggers for negative reactions were the extent of the exposure, attacks on personal and moral attributes, harmful effects on significant others, and perceived betrayal by political colleagues. They also found it difficult to correct dubious assertions. The politicians experienced stress during direct encounters with media as well as stress related to reactions of family members, friends, and colleagues. Long-term effects were loss of trust in others and avoidance of public exposure. Media coping strategies included approaching personal media contacts, counterattacks, and attempts to keep a low public profile. Emotion-focused coping strategies involved conducting business as usual and following self-control instructions. The study concludes with an important ethical point: the need for the media to be cautious and accurate when covering scandals, particularly when politicians' abilities or personal lives are criticized, or their personal integrity is at stake.

In his commentary, "Hidden Traps: An Essay on Scandals," Hans Mathias Kepplinger provides an informed reflection on scandals and scandal research. The article summarizes a number of characteristics that scandals share, and points to hidden traps that scandals may contain. During scandals, observers relying on media coverage tend to attribute their perception of triggering events not to their depiction by the media but to the events depicted. This leads to insufficient distinctions between grievances and scandals. One consequence is erroneous conclusions from the number of scandals to the number of grievances—and vice versa. A second consequence is false notions about the likelihood that the framing of grievances as scandals really trigger scandals. A third consequence is—because the media seldom report negative side effects of scandals—biased balances of the costs and benefits of scandals. Distinctions of four levels of actions are necessary: the levels of depicted events, of media depictions of events, of perceptions of events

by the public, and of the impact of these factors on related behavior of decision makers. In a critical assessment of the functional scandal theory, the author opposes the idea that political scandals generally have positive political and social functions. He further concludes that the less democratic a country is, the more worthwhile it is to report on violations as scandals, because there is no other possibility for reform, so the ends may justify the means. The more democratic a state is, the more questionable it becomes to report on such events as scandals because there are political and administrative alternatives for seeking solutions.

In summary, the articles in this Special Section offer new and innovative perspectives on political scandals, drawing on international research. This Special Section is intended as an inspiration for scholars around the world to advance the collective understanding of political scandals and their effects in countries with various political systems and media traditions.

References

- Alexander, J. C. (1988). Culture and political crisis: "Watergate" and Durkheimian sociology. In J. C. Alexander (Ed.), *Durkheimian sociology: Cultural studies* (pp. 187–224). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Allern, S., & Pollack, E. (2012). Mediated scandals. In S. Allern & E. Pollack (Eds.), *Scandalous! The mediated construction of political scandals in four Nordic countries* (pp. 9–28). Gothenburg, Sweden: Nordicom.
- Allern, S., Kantola, A., Pollack, E., & Blach-Ørsten, M. (2012). Increased scandalization: Nordic political scandals 1980–2010. In S. Allern & E. Pollack (Eds.), *Scandalous! The mediated construction of political scandals in four Nordic countries* (pp. 29–50). Gothenburg, Sweden: Nordicom.
- Bennett, S. E., Rhine, S. L., & Flickinger, R. S. (2001). Assessing Americans' opinions about the news media's fairness in 1996 and 1998. *Political Communication*, 18(2), 163–182. doi:10.1080/105846001750322961
- Bowler, S., & Karp, J. A. (2004). Politicians, scandals, and trust in government. *Political Behavior*, 26(3), 271–287. doi:10.1023/B:POBE.0000043456.87303.3a
- Brenton, S. (2012). Scandals as a positive feature of liberal democratic politics: A Durkheimian perspective. *Comparative Sociology*, 11(6), 815–844. doi:10.1163/15691330-12341247
- Carlson, J., Ganiel, G., & Hyde, M. S. (2000). Scandal and political candidate image. *Southeastern Political Review*, 28(4), 747–757. doi:10.1111/j.1747-1346.2000.tb00798.x
- Chong, A., De La O, A. L., Karlan, D., & Wantchekon, L. (2015). Does corruption information inspire the fight or quash the hope? A field experiment in Mexico on voter turnout, choice, and party identification. *Journal of Politics*, 77(1), 55–71. doi:10.1086/678766

- Ehmig, S. C. (2016). Wie der Alltag zum Skandal wird. Implikationen der Anprangerung von Missständen mit regionaler und überregionaler Reichweite. [How everyday life becomes scandal: Implications of denunciation of grievances with regional and supraregional reach] In M. Ludwig, T. Schierl, & C. von Sikorski (Eds.), *Mediated scandals. Gründe, Genese und Folgeeffekte von medialer Skandalberichterstattung* [Mediated scandals: Causes, formation and consequences of scandal news coverage] (pp. 126–145). Cologne, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag.
- Entman, R. M. (2012). *Scandal and silence: Media responses to presidential misconduct*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Esser, F., & Hartung, U. (2004). *Nazis, pollution, and no sex: Political scandals as a reflection of political culture in Germany*. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(8), 1040–1071.
doi:10.1177/0002764203262277
- Ettema, J. S., & Glasser, T. L. (1998). *Custodians of conscience: Investigative journalism and public virtue*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Girard, R. (2007). *Syndabocken—en antologi* [The Scapegoat—An anthology]. Stockholm, Sweden: Themis Förlag.
- Isolatus, P., & Almonkari, M. (2014). Political scandals test trust in politicians: The case of the Finnish minister who resigned because of his text messages. *Nordicom Review*, 35(2), 3–6.
doi:10.2478/nor-2014-0011
- Jacobsson, K., & Löfmark, E. (2008). A sociology of scandal and moral transgression: The Swedish “Nannygate” scandal. *Acta Sociologica*, 51(3), 203–216. doi:10.1177/0001699308094166
- Jenssen, A. T., & Fladmoe, H. (2012). Ten commandments for the scandalization of political opponents. In S. Allern & E. Pollack (Eds.), *Scandalous! The mediated construction of political scandals in four Nordic countries* (pp. 51–71). Gothenburg, Sweden: Nordicom.
- Kepplinger, H. M. (2009). *Publizistische Konflikte und Skandale* [Journalistic conflicts and scandals]. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Kumlin, S., & Esaiasson, P. (2012). *Scandal fatigue? Scandal elections and satisfaction with democracy in Western Europe, 1977–2007*. *British Journal of Political Science*, 42(2), 263–282.
doi:10.1017/S000712341100024X
- Lee, F. L. F. (2018). Political scandals under responsive authoritarianism: The case of the Bo Xilai Trial in China. *International Journal of Communication*, this Special Section.
- Maier, J. (2011). The impact of political scandals on political support: An experimental test of two theories. *International Political Science Review*, 32(2), 283–302.
doi:10.1177/0192512110378056

- Markovits, A. S., & Silverstein, M. (1988). Introduction. In A. S. Markovits & M. Silverstein (Eds.), *The politics of scandal: Power and progress in liberal democracies* (pp. 1–12). New York, NY: Holmes & Meier.
- Praino, R., Stockemer, D., & Moscardelli, V. G. (2013). The lingering effect of scandals in congressional elections: Incumbents, challengers, and voters. *Social Science Quarterly*, *94*(4), 1045–1061. doi:10.1111/ssqu.12046
- Shah, D. V., Watts, M. D., Domke, D., & Fan, D. P. (2002). News framing and cueing of issue regimes. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *66*(3), 339–370. doi:10.1086/341396
- Thompson, J. B. (2000). *Political scandal: Power and visibility in the media age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Tumber, H., & Waisbord, S. (2004). Introduction: Political scandals and media across democracies, Volume I. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, *47*(8), 1031–1039. doi:10.1177/0002764203262275
- Verbalyte, M. (2018). Deconstruction of the emotional logic of political scandal. In A. Haller, M. Henrik, & M. Kraus (Eds.), *Scandology: An interdisciplinary field* (pp. 62–87). Cologne, Germany: Herbert von Halem Verlag.
- von Sikorski, C. (2017). Politische Skandalberichterstattung. Ein Forschungsüberblick und Systematisierungsversuch [Political scandals in the news: A review and systematization of international research]. *Publizistik*, *62*(3), 299–323. doi:10.1007/s11616-017-0355-3
- von Sikorski, C. (2018, March). The consequences of political scandals. Paper presentation at the International Conference in Scandology, Bamberg, Germany.
- von Sikorski, C., & Knoll, J. (2018). All at once or bit by bit? How the serialization of news affects people's attitudes toward politicians involved in scandals. *International Journal of Communication*, *12*, 1389–1407.
- von Sikorski, C., Knoll, J., & Matthes, J. (2017). A new look at celebrity endorsements in politics: Investigating the impact of scandalous celebrity endorsers and politicians' best responses. *Media Psychology*, *21*(3), 403–436. doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2017.1378109
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.