

Call for Papers
TU FELIX AUSTRIA?
POLITICAL SCANDALS AND AFFAIRS IN AUSTRIA
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Political scandals and affairs seem to have established themselves as a constant in Austria's political landscape in recent decades. The country's special socio-political structure, in which close relationships are cultivated between politics, business and culture, and the political proportional representation that has existed for many decades in government-related areas such as the civil service or ORF, provide a favorable environment for the emergence of political scandals and affairs. In addition, the scandalization of people and events is used as a means of staging, particularly by high-reach tabloid media in Austria.

In the course of the digital transformation of public communication, social media are also used to generate attention and thus reach – even if the moral transgressions are actually marginal. At the same time, uncovering hidden transgressions and making them the subject of public discourse remain key achievements of Austrian journalism in its function as the fourth estate (Hanizsch & Lauerer, 2019).

The discourse surrounding the “scandalous republic of Austria” (Sickinger, 2007, p. 698) is not new and various phases with different political scandals can now be identified: The political scandals of the 1980s, such as the Waldheim affair, the Noricum affair and the AKH scandal, set early precedents. A later wave from 2010 onwards brought further prominent cases to light, including the Silberstein affair, the Ibiza affair and the ÖVP advertisement affair. Each of these episodes reveal specific political, social and economic dynamics within Austria.

Political scandals and affairs are understood as moral misconduct by actors in their function as political decision-makers who are clearly responsible for an issue that is not generally known, with public outrage as a consequence. In particular, reference is made here to the term “Causa”, which is commonly used in Austria to describe incidents with sustained public and political resonance.

In view of the aforementioned developments, a well-founded examination of the phenomenon of scandal, its actors and their relationships with each other, as well as an analysis of its reception and effects on society is necessary. The question also arises as to whether the tendency towards permanent scandalization and outrage is now a symptom of a general development of social deficits or whether scandals (must) play a prominent role in public discourse, precisely because they make grievances tangible and thus possibly (can) initiate or accelerate necessary institutional reform processes.

This issue of *medien & zeit* aims to reflect on and analyze the phenomenon of political scandal in the recent past of the Second Republic in order to systematically expand this fragmentary field of research. It brings together different academic perspectives, particularly from the historical and social sciences.

The topic of this issue will be differentiated on the basis of the following areas and questions:

Processes and characteristics of scandals

- What are the typical processes and characteristics that define political scandals in Austria?
- How do political scandals develop and change the media and political discourse?

Triggers and catalysts

- What factors and contexts act as triggers for political scandals in Austria?
- How do changes in political culture, social norms and economic structures influence the emergence of scandals?

Actors and networks of relationships

- Who are the main players in political scandals in Austria, and how are they interconnected?
- What role does the concept of “Verhaberung” play as an interweaving of political, economic and cultural elites?

Reception and social impact

- How are political scandals perceived and interpreted in Austrian society?
- What broader social, cultural and political consequences do these events have?
- To what extent do scandals influence public trust in political institutions and actors?

Submissions are welcome in English or German. Submitted abstracts (no more than 500 words and a meaningful title) outlining a prospective contribution will be reviewed by the editors of the issue. On this basis, authors will be invited to submit full papers (max. 7,000 words including title, abstract, keywords, tables, figures and bibliography). All complete contributions will be subjected to a double-blind peer review. In a possible revision phase after the peer review, authors can extend the length of the article to a maximum of 8,000 words, taking into account the suggestions of the reviewers and editors. *medien & zeit* is completely free (open access) and does not charge its authors any fees for editing.

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Deadline for Full Papers: 31. August 2025

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Submissions per email: cfp@medienundzeit.at