

Historical Roots of Information Flows in Hybrid Media Systems

Silke Fürst 

Department of Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Correspondence: Silke Fürst (s.fuerst@ikmz.uzh.ch)

Submitted: 22 March 2025 **Accepted:** 26 August 2025 **Published:** 16 October 2025

Issue: This article is part of the issue “Journalism in the Hybrid Media System” edited by Silke Fürst (University of Zurich), Florian Muhle (Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen), and Colin Porlezza (Università della Svizzera italiana), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.i494>

Abstract

Research on hybrid media systems has predominantly focused on recent digital developments, often overlooking historical precedents and long-term patterns that continue to shape today’s media landscape. This study addresses that gap by examining information flows—the cross-media dissemination of information and amplification of attention—from a historical perspective. Combining a literature review in journalism and media history with a longitudinal analysis of newspaper content, the study investigates four phenomena that illustrate information flows over time: media events, scandals, intermedia agenda-setting, and metaphors of public response. These phenomena are closely linked to recurring phrases and terms in public discourse and function as self-reinforcing communication patterns that connect different media channels and logics. The analysis draws on press coverage from three leading German-language newspapers: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany), *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Switzerland), and *Die Presse* (Austria). The findings reveal that terms such as “media frenzy,” “media attention,” and “scandal” have been used since the mid-20th century to describe cross-media dynamics, well before the advent of digital and social media. The frequency of such terms has increased over time, particularly with the expansion and diversification of mass media, and again with the rise of digitalization. By situating information flows in a historical context, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of continuity and change within hybrid media systems. While focused on German-speaking countries, the results suggest broader relevance and encourage future research that further integrates historical perspectives into the study of information flows in hybrid media systems.

Keywords

hybrid media system; intermedia agenda-setting; journalism; media events; media history; metaphors; news coverage; news factors; newspapers; scandals

1. Introduction

The concept of hybrid media systems, introduced by Chadwick (2017), has become a seminal framework in communication and media research. It describes the dynamic interplay between older and newer media, where different technologies, genres, norms, behaviors, and organizational forms coexist and influence each other. Much of the research on hybrid media systems has focused on digitalization and contemporary media developments (see, e.g., Fürst et al., 2025; Simon et al., 2025), reflecting Chadwick's emphasis on communication dynamics since the late 2000s. However, scholars have recently questioned this focus on "presentism" (Hallin et al., 2023, p. 229), arguing that it risks overlooking historical precedents and long-term patterns that continue to shape today's media landscape.

While Chadwick himself acknowledges that "all media systems are...hybrid media systems" (2017, p. 29), suggesting that hybridity and dynamics across media are not new phenomena, his analysis devotes limited attention to historical developments. In one book chapter, he briefly examines the emergence and coexistence of media technologies and types over the centuries, such as religious books, pamphlets, and phonographs (Chadwick, 2017, pp. 28–48). The chapter highlights the persistence of older media, the adaptation of established media practices to new technologies, and the role of power struggles in shaping emerging media. Accordingly, Chadwick's historical reflections focus primarily on media technologies and their use rather than on media content, journalism, and how (political) communication evolved across different media.

This contrasts with a central concern of Chadwick's book and subsequent research on hybrid media systems, which is to understand the characteristics of political and public communication by exploring "key events and processes that reveal the hybrid media system *in flow*" and analyzing "how political information cycles are built on news-making assemblages that combine older and newer media logics" (Chadwick, 2017, p. 70, emphasis in original). In other words, Chadwick regards these "information flows," understood as the dissemination of information and amplification of attention across different channels and media, as essential for empirical analysis. However, research so far has neglected to provide historical reflections and longitudinal data to understand information flows in hybrid media systems and their development before and during the rise of digital media.

This article aims to contribute to the understanding of information flows in hybrid media systems by putting them into historical perspective. By reviewing different strands of literature on journalism and media history and providing the first synthesis of them, the article illustrates various facets of information flows, particularly throughout the 20th century. Media events, scandals, intermedia agenda-setting, and the news factor of public response are all shown to be connected to dynamic, self-reinforcing communication processes across various channels and outlets. The article focuses on these four phenomena as indicators of the historical roots of information flows in hybrid media systems. Building on the discussion of existing literature, a data analysis of newspaper databases is conducted to provide an initial overview of the changing prevalence of these phenomena over the past several decades. Hence, the following research questions are addressed: How do media events, scandals, intermedia agenda-setting, and public response relate to hybrid media systems in both past and present contexts (Section 2), and how frequently have they been referenced in press coverage over time (Section 4)?

2. Theoretical Approaches Informing the Historical Analysis of Information Flows

Some scholars trace the concept of information flows back to Shannon and Weaver's (1964) mathematical theory of information (Simon et al., 2025, p. 1184). However, the metaphorical term "information flow" is not mentioned once in Shannon and Weaver's (1964) work. Since the 1980s, the terms "information flows" (e.g., Veltri, 2012; Yadava, 1990) or "news flows" (e.g., Guo & Vargo, 2017; Wilke, 1987) have been increasingly used to examine the international exchange and dissemination of information, analyzing how news from one country spreads to others. Accordingly, information flows have also been explored as part of intermedia agenda-setting, with investigation of how news media pick up stories from other (international) news media (Veltri, 2012) or "how the salience of issues is transferred from one country to another" (Guo & Vargo, 2017, p. 517). In addition, research on intermedia agenda-setting analyzes information flows from local to national media, often focusing on the salience of issues (e.g., economy, education, immigration) on the media agenda rather than on the circulation of specific content and stories (e.g., Guo & Zhang, 2023).

In the past decade, the term "information flows" has become more common and is increasingly used to describe public circulation of specific content and stories across media channels. Chadwick (2017) explores hybrid media systems by analyzing how information and attention circulate and are amplified across different media channels, highlighting the interactions and dynamics among various actors and between traditional and digital media. He begins his book (Chadwick, 2017, pp. 1–3) with an illustrative example of such information flows: An interview aired on Sky News, a British 24-hour television news channel, was recorded by a viewer via smartphone and shared online as a short clip on YouTube. The clip was then widely discussed and circulated on several social media platforms and blogs, eventually influencing subsequent news media coverage. The case illustrates how information flows across various media, demonstrating what Chadwick (2017, p. 238) calls the "circulatory and amplifying logics of the hybrid media system."

The notion of information flows is central to Chadwick's (2017) analysis and is closely linked to central issues, including "concentrations and diffusions of power" (p. 4), "power struggles" (p. 18), "competition, conflict, and interdependency among media and their publics" (p. 42), the fragmentation of attention and audiences (p. 49), and also their "integration" (p. 290). Chadwick (2017, p. 285) argues that "power in the hybrid media system is exercised by those who are successfully able to create, tap, or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals." Due to the fragmentation of the media landscape, audiences are increasingly dispersed across various media channels and platforms (Schulz, 1997; Webster, 2014). However, this disintegration is accompanied by information flows that amplify the dissemination of content across these channels. These flows increase the likelihood that audiences across different media will be exposed to particular events and stories, thus contributing to shared media experiences and "a form of unifying publicness" (Chadwick, 2017, p. 102). Such processes of "simultaneous integration and fragmentation" are considered a characteristic feature of hybrid media systems (Chadwick, 2017, p. 18), but they remain underexplored from long-term and historical perspectives.

Chadwick (2017) draws on various phenomena to describe information flows in hybrid media systems. These descriptions and analyses focus on information flows in the past two decades, which have been shaped by the rise of digitalization. They include intermedia agenda-setting processes between blogs and newspapers (p. 63), scandals such as "Bullygate" (p. 70), media events like "televised candidate debates" in the US (p. 166), and the news factor public response, illustrated by journalists "hunting for high-impact tweets that they could embed

in their news articles—with the numbers of retweets, likes, and replies all prominently displayed” (p. 256). However, the book (Chadwick, 2017) does not provide in-depth engagement with these four concepts in light of their academic foundations, nor are they systematically discussed in terms of their connection to information flows in hybrid media systems. More importantly, the chapter on historical developments in hybrid media systems (Chadwick, 2017, pp. 28–48) does not consider intermedia agenda-setting processes, scandals, media events, or journalistic constructions of public response.

This section addresses this gap and argues that existing theoretical approaches and research provide valuable insights for historically analyzing information flows in hybrid media systems. By synthesizing literature, it shows that studies on intermedia agenda-setting, scandals, media events, and public response reveal complex information flows not only in the 20th century but dating as far back as the 18th century. Furthermore, the review highlights that certain phrases and terms commonly used in everyday language and public discourse indicate these information flows and can therefore serve as useful markers in empirical research.

The four phenomena discussed in the following—intermedia agenda-setting, scandals, media events, and public response—are embedded in widely recognized frameworks and concepts in communication and media studies. While conceptually distinct, they exhibit partial overlap. Intermedia agenda-setting is the broadest approach, referring to newsroom practices and patterns of media coverage across different beats, shaped by mutual monitoring and influence among media outlets and channels. Scandals and media events spread through intermedia agenda-setting but refer to specific topics and occurrences that draw widespread attention across multiple media channels. Scandals revolve around violations of social norms, whereas media events are distinguished by an extraordinary public response that is explicitly emphasized in the communication surrounding them. This explicit communication about public attention and popularity is a defining feature of the news factor public response, which—unlike media events—applies to news selection and presentation in general and thus spans various topics and occurrences.

2.1. Intermedia Agenda-Setting

Intermedia agenda-setting is a persistent feature of hybrid media systems in the 20th and 21st centuries, pointing to the dynamic and reciprocal influences among various media channels in shaping public discourse. Several decades ago, wire services and broadcast media “tended to break stories first, with newspapers following” (Atwater et al., 1987, p. 57), picking up these stories and adding further details or new angles. However, newspapers have also played—and continue to play—a prominent role in shaping the broader media agenda, with leading daily and weekly newspapers as well as magazines creating cascading effects across the media ecosystem (Breed, 1955; Du, 2017; Mathis & Humprecht, 2018; Su & Borah, 2019; Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2008; Weischenberg et al., 2006). With the rise of digital media, intermedia agenda-setting influence is also exerted by news websites, blogs, and social media platforms. The “24-hour news cycle” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 72) of online newspapers has accelerated intermedia agenda-setting (Webster, 2014, p. 58), as online news outlets influence television news but also media organizations with less frequent publication cycles (Boczkowski, 2009; Du, 2017; Harder et al., 2017). Moreover, online newspapers monitor and influence each other (Du, 2017). Additionally, content on social media platforms is both shaped by and contributes to the agendas of legacy news media (Du, 2017; Harder et al., 2017), including newspapers (Su & Borah, 2019; Su & Xiao, 2024). A systematic literature review of studies on

intermedia agenda-setting from 1997 to 2019—decades that are also a focus of this study—provides strong evidence for such reciprocal effects both among different legacy media (including print and broadcasting) and between legacy media and social media platforms (Su & Xiao, 2021).

Long before digitalization, media organizations routinely monitored one another. This mutual observation serves to gauge emerging topics and their newsworthiness, to avoid missing out on important topics, and to gain reference points for editorial decisions (Boczkowski, 2009; Breed, 1955; Guo & Vargo, 2020; Sigal, 1973; Weischenberg et al., 2006). Intermedia agenda-setting also plays a crucial role in the context of scandals (see Section 2.2): The mutual monitoring and competition among news media “tends to ensure that once a story with a clear scandal potential breaks somewhere in the media, other media organizations will rush to pick it up, report it and develop it further” (Thompson, 2000, p. 84; see also Fürst, 2018). Due to increasing economic pressures and budget cuts in newsrooms worldwide, media organizations have increasingly relied on mutual monitoring as a cost-saving strategy, using news aggregation to minimize the resources required for original reporting (Coddington, 2019; Harder et al., 2017).

An underexplored aspect of intermedia agenda-setting is *how* media outlets refer to one another in their reporting, with only a few studies examining this phenomenon. One common practice is the explicit attribution of information to other news organizations (Mathis & Humprecht, 2018) through phrases like “as reported by *Spiegel* [German news magazine]” (Rössler, 2000, p. 177) or “as *Le Monde* [French newspaper] said” (Veltri, 2012, p. 357). Longitudinal analyses of German news coverage, including newspapers and news agencies, indicate that such references to reports from specific media outlets have increased between the 1940s and the 2000s (Reinemann & Huismann, 2007). Beyond individual references, some news reports incorporate multiple sources, listing several media outlets as contributors to a particular story (Mertens, 2006). In other cases, journalists use generalizations like “the media are reporting that...” or metaphorical terms such as a media “frenzy” to signal a wider media consensus rather than attributing information to a specific outlet (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021, p. 802; Mertens, 2006, p. 26; see also Reinemann & Huismann, 2007). However, intermedia agenda-setting extends beyond visible citations and general references. News aggregation and journalistic coorientation involve selecting topics and compiling and synthesizing reports from multiple sources without necessarily crediting the original contributors (Coddington, 2019; Reinemann & Huismann, 2007). This process facilitates the spread of narratives across platforms in ways that remain largely opaque to audiences. Overall, findings from research on intermedia agenda-setting reveal “interactions that determine the construction of media content” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 25) and the role of competition and interdependency in hybrid media systems. However, the frequency with which news media rely on generalized phrases such as “according to media reports...” remains an open question.

2.2. Scandals

Scandals have long been an important part of public communication because of their ability to attract widespread attention across multiple media channels. Defined as “intense public communication about a real or imagined defect that is by consensus condemned” (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1041), scandals revolve around violations of social norms and rely heavily on media visibility for their emergence (Lull & Hinerman, 1997; McNair, 2019; Thompson, 2000). In other words, “the media system as a whole has to react to make the pattern evolve from the stage of suggesting scandal to a fully developed one” (Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1047). While the rise of blogs and social media has introduced an accelerated dynamic with more actors

into the scandalization process (Chadwick, 2017, p. 169; Pörksen & Detel, 2014; Tumber & Waisbord, 2019), scandal studies and historical analysis reveal that the processes underlying scandals have long involved complex interactions among multiple actors and communication channels (Bösch, 2009; Esser & Hartung, 2004; Thompson, 2000). Political scandals exemplify this complexity, with politicians or other actors, such as whistleblowers, using news media to leak information or amplify accusations, while journalists investigate and report on these claims or on counter-allegations, creating a cycle of mutual reinforcement and reflecting power struggles and a growing competition for attention (Bösch, 2009; Liebes & Blum-Kulka, 2004). This struggle for power and attention and the interplay of political debates, journalistic investigations, and public reactions (Tumber & Waisbord, 2019) are considered typical features of hybrid media systems (Chadwick, 2017).

Research has shown that the frequency and scope of scandals have increased since the late 19th century (Bösch, 2009), with a notable acceleration from the 1970s onward (Esser & Hartung, 2004; Oehmer, 2011; Tumber, 2004; Udris & Lucht, 2011). This increase has been driven by transformations in societal structures and the media landscape, including the expansion, diversification, and specialization of mass media in general, as well as the rise of investigative journalism and the tabloid press in particular. These developments have contributed to the mediatization of society, where actors and organizations adapt to media logics to gain advantages as the competition for attention grows (Bösch, 2009; Meng, 2019; Schulz, 1997; Thompson, 2000; Tumber & Waisbord, 2019; Udris & Lucht, 2011).

Scandals have typically revolved around issues related to sex, power, and money, aligning with news factors such as conflict, negativity, surprise, and elite involvement (Haller, 2013, p. 328; McNair, 2019; Oehmer, 2011; Tumber & Waisbord, 2019; Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019). Parliamentary debates, accusations by politicians, investigations, and legal proceedings frequently act as catalysts for scandal narratives, which are then amplified through media coverage and public discourse across multiple communication channels (Bösch, 2009). Historically, these channels included texts and caricatures in newspapers, political, satirical, and illustrated magazines, pamphlets, flyers, party publications, annuals, and books (Bösch, 2009). In recent decades, broadcasts, reports in political or news magazines and newspapers, blogs, emails, and posts or videos on social media and online platforms often initiated scandals, which were spread through intermedia agenda-setting (see Section 2.1), mobilizing politicians and other actors whose involvement further intensifies scandal coverage in news media (e.g., Esser & Hartung, 2004; Fürst, 2018; Liebes & Blum-Kulka, 2004; Meng, 2019; Pörksen & Detel, 2014; Tumber & Waisbord, 2019).

Typically, the term “scandal” is *explicitly* used in the coverage of scandals (Oehmer, 2011; Thompson, 2000), often also in the headline or lead of a report (Bösch, 2009; Tumber, 2004), which underscores the indispensable role of news media in establishing scandal narratives (Bösch, 2009; Esser & Hartung, 2004, p. 1047; Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019, p. 422). Scandals emerge not as isolated events but as outcomes of sustained media attention across multiple channels and interaction among key actors. This interplay creates feedback loops where political figures, journalists, and other actors mutually reinforce and amplify scandal narratives. Politicians often play dual roles in both instigating and responding to scandals through various communication channels and media outlets (Bösch, 2009).

Scandals, therefore, exemplify the hybrid nature of media systems, where information flows dynamically across channels and publics (Chadwick, 2017). They thrive on the interplay of older and newer media. While

digital media and platforms add to this dynamic, the basic mechanisms of information flows in scandals show continuity across centuries.

2.3. Media Events

The concept of media events refers to events that attract extraordinary public attention. In their seminal work, Dayan and Katz (1992) defined them as preplanned, ceremonial occurrences that are broadcast live and capable of uniting national or global audiences through simultaneous viewership. They are said to “integrate societies in a collective heartbeat” (Dayan & Katz, 1992, p. 9, emphasis in original). Examples include the moon landing, royal weddings, and the Eurovision Song Contest. They are not only televised but also receive extensive pre- and post-event press coverage, reinforcing their perceived significance (Fürst, 2020). For instance, in the lead-up to the 1968 Olympics, news reports projected a record-breaking audience of 500 million viewers long before the event took place (Bartz, 2003), illustrating the role of public response as a news factor (see Section 2.4). Similarly, US coverage across magazines, newspapers, and broadcasting contributes to the narrative that “the entire world pauses to pay homage to the Super Bowl” (Martin & Reeves, 2001, p. 228), routinely announcing global audiences of nearly one billion without providing evidence (Dyreson, 2017; Martin & Reeves, 2001). Such estimations then serve as benchmarks to amplify cross-media attention for other media events, such as televised presidential debates. For example, the news agency Reuters and numerous US media outlets predicted that the 2016 debates “could score Super Bowl-sized audience[s]” (Fürst, 2021, p. 346). In recent decades, the purported reach of media events has expanded, with some broadcasters and event organizers claiming billions of viewers (Clancy, 2019; Fürst, 2020; Mytton, 2012) and the press predicting a “landmark of global shared experience” or even “one of the biggest worldwide TV audiences in history” (Fürst, 2020, p. 1531). However, there is also ongoing debate about whether media events have become less frequent, or whether they have partially lost their integrative power due to a general trend of audience fragmentation (Katz & Liebes, 2007; Sonnevend, 2018; Sumiala et al., 2018).

In recent decades, the definition of media events has evolved to also include unplanned occurrences such as crises, wars, terror attacks, and natural disasters (Hepp & Couldry, 2010; Katz & Liebes, 2007; Kyriakidou, 2008; Morgner, 2016; Wilke, 2010). This broader conceptualization acknowledges historical examples, such as the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, which received extensive newspaper coverage in multiple countries (Wilke, 2010), as well as contemporary events, where live broadcasting and cross-media coverage shape the public perceptions of disruptive moments (Katz & Liebes, 2007). As a result, more recent research on media events has examined both ceremonial and disruptive events across various media channels, including television, newspapers, and social media (Clancy, 2019; Nashmi, 2018; Sumiala et al., 2018; Vaccari et al., 2015). What unites these studies is their focus on events that generate massive media coverage across different channels and reach a vast audience—making them exceptional rather than everyday occurrences.

This broader understanding of media events is also evident in public discourse. The term “media event” is commonly used in news reporting to describe occurrences that attract extensive media coverage and engage a broad audience (Mertens, 2006). Similarly, the term “television event” has been used in media coverage of ceremonial media events (Fürst, 2020)—for example, journalists referred to Diana Spencer’s funeral in 1997 as “the biggest TV event” (Fürst, 2020, p. 1531) and to the 2008 Beijing Olympics as “the most watched television event in U.S. television history” (Cooper & Tang, 2012, p. 507).

The concept of media events highlights key characteristics of the hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2017) while having historical roots that date back centuries. Long before digitalization, media events emerged by traveling across different media channels and formats and receiving attention across media—ranging from coverage in newspapers, magazines, and radio to live television broadcasts of ceremonial events (Morgner, 2016; Sonnevend, 2018). The evolving understanding of media events, along with the use of the term in both academic and public discourse, underscores their continuing relevance in an increasingly complex media landscape.

2.4. Public Response as a News Factor

The news value approach is among the most widely recognized frameworks in communication studies (Eilders, 2006; Preston, 2016). Recently, scholars have introduced an additional news factor called public response, which reflects the prominence given to topics, events, and actors that are said to “have received broad or unexpected public attention” (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021, p. 799). This factor includes coverage of issues that have attracted media publicity, considerable crowds, large media audiences, or high engagement on social media.

Unlike the intermedia agenda-setting approach, which focuses on media attention and the (often hidden) reliance on reports by competing media, the news factor of public response also considers audience attention. Moreover, it captures how journalists *explicitly* refer to the public attention an actor, event, or topic has received—for example, by noting social media likes and shares or trending hashtags (Beckers & Harder, 2016; McGregor, 2019; von Nordheim et al., 2018), reporting the number of journalists and cameras covering an event (Mertens, 2006), or estimating the audience size (Fürst, 2020). In doing so, journalistic practices not only reflect but also actively shape the dynamics of information flows within hybrid media systems by reinforcing cycles of attention (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021).

Historically, numerical indicators of public response—such as television ratings—shaped how journalists select and present events as well as other media content and formats, including entertainment programs (Bor, 2013; Gillespie, 2016; Webster, 2014) and media events (see Section 2.3). Digitization and datafication have substantially increased both the frequency and the scope of such practices (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021). Beyond audience metrics and ratings, metaphors are used in news coverage to highlight public response, evoking perceptions of what society or different publics are watching or discussing (Fürst, 2023). Metaphors describe one thing in terms of another and “serve particular political, technical or economic interests” (Wyatt, 2021, p. 408). Examples include expressions that have entered everyday language, such as “shitstorm,” “candystorm,” Twitter “storm,” a “wave of indignation,” or content “going viral” (Beckers & Harder, 2016, p. 913; Einwiller et al., 2017; Haarkötter, 2016; Kornemann, 2018, p. 382; Mertens, 2006, p. 26; Payne, 2013, p. 540). As one journalist put it: “There are all these guys writing about this ‘social media storm’ and so you repeat it. It’s a spiral and nobody wants to get left behind” (Rega, 2025, p. 17). Constructions of public response thus stimulate self-reinforcing processes of attention and intermedia agenda-setting processes.

Metaphors and generalizing terms that signal public response are neither new nor limited to digital contexts. For example, extensive media coverage is often described by saying that certain actors or events attract a lot of “media attention,” spark a media “frenzy,” or make “headlines,” while audience engagement is highlighted with expressions such as “ratings machine,” “ratings boon,” or “ratings bonanza” (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021, pp. 806, 808; Mertens, 2006, p. 26). However, digital and social media have given rise to numerous new

metaphors and terms that embody public response and are used in news coverage, including “influencer,” “YouTube star,” “social media star,” or “social media sensation” (Deller & Murphy, 2020, pp. 121, 124; Enke & Borchers, 2019; Lee, 2016, p. 112). In Germany and Switzerland, the terms “shitstorm” and “influencer” have become so prevalent in everyday language that they were named “Wort/Anglizismus des Jahres” (Word/Anglicism of the Year) in the 2010s.

Journalism frames online communicators based on their ability to generate a public response, but it rarely defines or discloses the thresholds of popularity or influence required for the above-mentioned labels (Fürst, 2023). Journalists therefore act as curators and amplifiers of attention, shaping perceptions of which individuals and messages hold cultural and social significance. Being labeled an “influencer” or a “YouTube star” in the news reinforces expectations about certain actors’ ability to attract widespread engagement, further cementing their prominence and power within hybrid media systems. However, little is known about the extent to which this occurs in news coverage.

As demonstrated in the above literature review on intermedia agenda-setting, scandals, media events, and the news factor public response, everyday terms like “shitstorm” and “media frenzy” can signal underlying patterns of information flows. These terms provide the analytical lens for the following section, which outlines the methodological design for examining their occurrence and role in press coverage over time.

3. Method

The following analysis presents data on the evolving frequency of terms that signify information flows in hybrid media systems. As was shown in Section 2, these terms/phrases—such as “television event,” “scandal,” “influencer,” “media frenzy,” or “according to media reports”—are commonly used in everyday language and public discourse. Their presence in news coverage provides insights into how information flows across media channels, formats, and technologies (e.g., newspapers reporting on a social media “shitstorm” or “influencer,” thereby combining older and newer media logics). Newspaper databases are particularly suitable for tracking the use of these terms over time, as these archives can span several decades (Geiß et al., 2025; Oehmer, 2011). Furthermore, analysis of newspaper coverage is well-suited for this study, as newspapers influenced the agendas of other media outlets throughout the 20th century and continue to do so today (see Section 2.1).

The analysis focuses on three leading newspapers in German-speaking countries (DACH countries): *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) from Germany, *Die Presse* from Austria, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) from Switzerland. FAZ, founded in November 1949, offers a comprehensive, fully digitized newspaper archive (Birkner et al., 2018) that is accessible to members of the University of Zurich (<https://www.faz-biblionet.de/faz-portal>). It is a nationally distributed center-right newspaper and one of the most widely read and influential quality newspapers in Germany, including among journalists (Weischenberg et al., 2006). Austria’s *Die Presse* and Switzerland’s NZZ are comparable to FAZ in terms of editorial orientation, credibility, audience reach, and influence among journalists in their respective countries (Mathis & Humprecht, 2018; Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2023, pp. 60–61, 103). A comprehensive content analysis (Mathis & Humprecht, 2018) found that NZZ is the most widely cited newspaper in Switzerland. Both NZZ and *Die Presse* have archived coverage available in the Factiva database dating back to January 1994. Therefore, in the case of these two newspapers, all articles published in the last three decades can be included, while FAZ’s coverage spans more than seven decades, allowing longer-term developments to be

identified. The varying progress in newspaper retro-digitization (Birkner et al., 2018) thus results in an uneven period of analysis. However, the aim of this study is to make use of the available potential of existing databases to conduct longitudinal analyses.

For each phenomenon discussed in the literature review, a dedicated search string was created (see Table 1 for all the search strings used). The search string for public response was focused on social media communication to capture terms that have emerged in recent decades. Because expressions like “media frenzy” and “media attention” appeared not only in relation to public response, but across all phenomena (see Section 2), an additional search string was developed that is not tailored to a specific phenomenon but is related to all. Before final inclusion, all search strings were thoroughly tested. Terms that are indicative of information flows and that, according to the literature, are commonly used in everyday language and public discourse were considered. A few terms derived from the literature (Section 2) were eventually excluded because they generated a high number of false positives, as in the case of “wave of indignation.” Other terms from the literature were excluded from the analysis because they yielded fewer than 10 hits. This is why, for instance, the terms “YouTube star,” “Twitter storm,” and “shitstorm” were included, while the terms “Facebook star,” “Instagram storm,” “TikTok star,” “Snapchat star,” “social media storm,” and “candystorm” were left out. A few terms required further specification to avoid a high number of false positives—for example, the search term “headlines” was ineffective, whereas more precise phrases like “made headlines” or “created headlines” produced relevant results. Other search terms were overly specific (e.g., “as reported by Spiegel”), prompting the use of broader phrases instead (e.g., “according to media reports”). The list of search

Table 1. Validating the appropriateness of the search strings.

Number of checked articles	Outlet	Year(s) of coverage	False positives	Examples
Intermedia agenda-setting (n = 9,457)				
Search terms: “according to media reports” OR “media reported” (in German: “laut Medienberichten” OR “Medien berichteten”)				
30	FAZ	1971–1992	0%	“Local media reported”; “The national media reported”; “The Czech media reported”; “International media also reported”; “According to media reports, the police”; “The media reported several times over the past few days that”; “Some media reported”; “Numerous media reported”; “Most of the media reported extensively on this”; “The NYT and other media reported”
30	FAZ	2024	0%	
30	Die Presse	1994–1998	0%	
30	Die Presse	2024	0%	
30	NZZ	1994–1995	0%	
30	NZZ	2024	0%	
Scandal (n = 67,866)				
Search terms: scandal OR scandals (in German: Skandal OR Skandals OR Skandale OR Skandalen)				
30	FAZ	1950	20%	“The Tories in the throes of a new scandal”; “which sparked the marriage crisis and subsequent political scandal”; “A Tamedia [Swiss media company] investigation had uncovered the scandal”; “Cum-Ex scandal”; “Volkswagen diesel scandal”; “Wirecard scandal”; “opioid scandal”; “Ibiza scandal”; “Watergate scandal”; “denazification scandal”
30	FAZ	2024	10%	
30	Die Presse	1994	6.7%	
30	Die Presse	2024	26.7%	
30	NZZ	1994	13.3%	
30	NZZ	2024	10%	

Table 1. (Cont.) Validating the appropriateness of the search strings.

Number of checked articles	Outlet	Year(s) of coverage	False positives	Examples
Media event (n = 1,597)				
Search terms: media event* OR "TV event*" OR "television event*" OR "audience of billions" OR "billions of viewers" (in German: Medienereignis* OR "TV-Ereignis*" OR Fernsehereignis* OR Milliardenpublikum* OR "Milliarden Zuschauer*")				
30	FAZ	1965–1980	0%	"The coronation of Charles III...this Saturday will be a gigantic TV event for billions of people around the globe"; "the Euro Summit as a media event with 2500 journalists from all over the world"; "In total, around 37 billion viewers will experience the World Cup"; "an unparalleled media event"; "a total of 1.5 billion viewers on television and the Internet"
30	FAZ	2022–2024	3.3%	
30	Die Presse	1994–1999	10%	
30	Die Presse	2016–2024	0%	
30	NZZ	1994–1996	6.7%	
30	NZZ	2021–2024	6.7%	
Public response to social media communication (n = 4,515)				
Search terms: influencer* OR "social media star*" OR "YouTube star*" OR "TikTok star*" OR "Instagram star*" OR "going viral" OR "went viral" OR shitstorm* OR "Twitter storm" (in German: Influencer OR Influencers OR Influencern OR "Social-Media-Star*" OR "YouTube-Star*" OR "TikTok-Star*" OR "Instagram-Star*" OR "ging viral" OR "viral gegangen" OR "geht viral" OR "viral gehen" OR Shitstorm* OR "Twitter-Sturm")				
30	FAZ	2010–2012	0%	"This earned her criticism and a shitstorm that included misogynistic remarks"; "She triggered a shitstorm that lasted for weeks"; "Right-wing influencer Laura Loomer accused the two men of selling out American culture"; "A video by Iranian singer...Parastu Ahmadi has gone viral in Iran"; "one of the most popular influencers in Tunisia"; "had unexpectedly become a YouTube star"
30	FAZ	2024	0%	
30	Die Presse	2010–2012	0%	
30	Die Presse	2024	6.7%	
30	NZZ	2010–2013	6.7%	
30	NZZ	2024	0%	
Overarching search string (n = 6,494)				
Search terms: "media frenzy" OR "media attention" OR "made headlines" OR "created headlines" (in German: Medienrummel* OR Medienaufmerksamkeit OR "mediale* Aufmerksamkeit" OR "Schlagzeilen gemacht" OR "Schlagzeilen gesorgt")				
30	FAZ	1960–1970	3.3%	"One of these columns made headlines across Germany"; "has made a lot of headlines"; "This act of terrorism shook up Switzerland and made international headlines"; "The media frenzy began with an NZZ article, followed by reports in the SZ and recently even in the British <i>Guardian</i> "; "the current media frenzy"; "the media attention is enormous"
30	FAZ	2024	0%	
30	Die Presse	1994–1995	0%	
30	Die Presse	2024	0%	
30	NZZ	1994	0%	
30	NZZ	2024	0%	

terms used for the analysis (see Table 1) is not intended to be exhaustive. However, it is well-suited for conducting a longitudinal cross-country analysis and for offering initial insights into the historical roots of information flows in hybrid media systems.

All hits in the Factiva database were searched and checked for possible duplicates. Duplicates were excluded from the data, which improved data quality. To assess the accuracy of the search strings, each was tested by manually reviewing the first and last 30 results in each newspaper (totaling 180 articles per search string).

Based on this process, the number of false positives was calculated for each search string (see Table 1). The terms “according to media reports” or “media reported” yielded no false positives—that is, no articles unrelated to intermedia agenda-setting. Similarly, the search strings for media events, and especially for public response and the overarching terms, were quite accurate. In contrast, the search string for scandal-related coverage resulted in a higher rate of false positives, ranging from about 7% to 27%. Previous research has noted that the term “scandal” is sometimes used broadly in public discourse, for example to refer to (perceived or alleged) norm violations that do not attract much public attention (Bösch, 2009; Thompson, 2000). This was also the case for some of the articles identified in the manual validation. In addition, some articles also reported on fictional scandals, i.e., scandals that occur in plays or books, while others referred to possible actions that were not taken but could have led to a scandal. This shows that the term is sometimes included in articles unrelated to actual scandals. In most cases, however, the coverage actually pertained to (perceived or alleged) norm violations that attracted broad attention across media channels and types, such as the Wirecard scandal, the Cum-Ex scandal, and the Volkswagen diesel scandal.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Emergence and Development of References to Intermedia Agenda-Setting

Figure 1 illustrates a pronounced and growing number of articles referencing other media, thereby contributing to dynamics of intermedia agenda-setting. In 2024 alone, 270 articles in NZZ and 235 in FAZ contained such references, while *Die Presse* had considerably fewer, with 139 articles. The earliest instance of phrases like “according to media reports” and “media reported that” appeared in FAZ in 1971. However, such references remained rare in the 1980s and only began to increase in the late 1990s. This is in line with evidence from previous studies investigating media references to reports from other media outlets (Reinemann & Huismann,

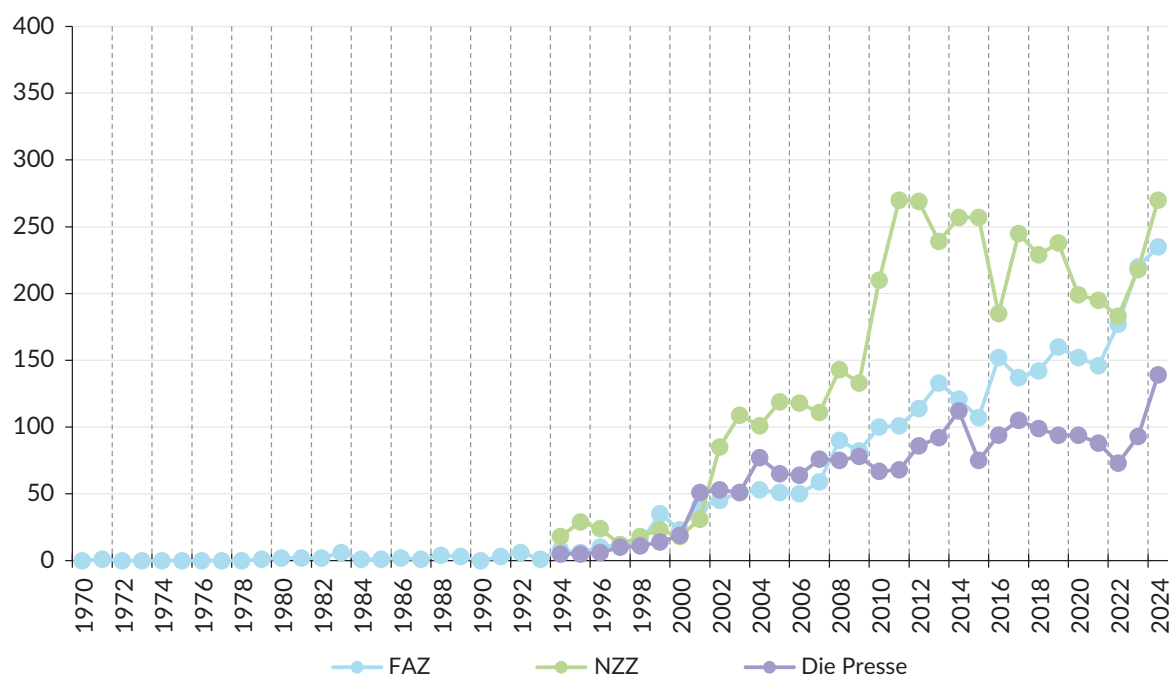


Figure 1. Change over time in the number of articles referencing other news media (e.g., “according to media reports”).

2007). A more pronounced rise occurred in all three DACH countries in the 2000s, followed by a decline around 2015 and between 2020 and 2022. The latter decline may be attributed to the pandemic, during which news media primarily focused on Covid-19-related coverage and relied heavily on official statements from political authorities, public health institutions, and corporate actors (Eisenegger et al., 2020; Ort & Rohrbach, 2024). This shift in journalistic priorities likely contributed to a temporary reduction in general references to other news media. Since 2023, however, the number of such articles has increased again, reaching its highest level to date.

The data therefore indicate that this phenomenon is not new. With the proliferation of media channels and acceleration of news cycles, including the diversification of broadcasting programs in the 1980s and 1990s (Maurer & Reinemann, 2006; Schulz, 1997), the number of articles referencing other media increased. This trend continued as the media environment became more fragmented and fast-paced with the emergence of news websites since the mid-1990s (Bødker & Brügger, 2018; Neuberger et al., 1998). Phrases such as “according to media reports” have become a common way to cite coverage from media outlets across various channels, both old and new, amplifying attention to specific topics. Despite variations in absolute numbers between countries, the overall trend follows a similar trajectory.

4.2. *Emergence and Development of References to Scandals*

Figure 2 shows that scandals were being reported in the 1950s, aligning with previous research documenting numerous scandals throughout the 20th century (Bösch, 2009; Esser & Hartung, 2004) and a first peak in the 1970s (Oehmer, 2011; Tumber, 2004). The volume of coverage devoted to scandals is substantial, though likely slightly overstated due to false positives in the search results (see Table 1). In 2000 alone, FAZ published 1,081 such articles, while NZZ and *Die Presse* published 472 and 426, respectively. While the volume of scandal coverage fluctuated over the years, the overall trend shows an increase until the 2010s, peaking between 2015 and 2018. Corporate and political scandals were then prevalent, including the “Volkswagen diesel scandal” and personal scandals related to Donald Trump, such as the “Access Hollywood” scandal (Meraz, 2019). In addition, a “mix of global networks of corruption, information gathering, and reporting have contributed to a series of international and national scandals” (Tumber & Waisbord, 2019, p. 16), including the Panama and Paradise Papers as well as Clinton’s Wikileaks email scandal (Meraz, 2019; Tumber & Waisbord, 2019).

In recent years, however, the term “scandal” has appeared less frequently in news coverage. Despite differences in the absolute numbers between countries, the general trend remains similar for all three. Two factors help explain the recent decline in scandal coverage. First, right-wing extremists and populists, such as the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany and Donald Trump in the US, gained extensive media attention in the 2010s through numerous scandals and taboo-breaking statements (Grönegräs & De Cleen, 2023; Vorberg & Zeitler, 2019). As taboo-breaking, provocation, and incivility have become more common, scholars suggest that their normalization has raised the threshold for an event to be considered a scandal (McNair, 2019; Väliverronen & Juntunen, 2019). As Vorberg and Zeitler (2019, p. 431) argue, “since Trump’s logic of provocation—constant deviations and transgressions—has become the new ‘normal’ in daily political discourse,” scandal coverage may have declined. Second, widespread budget cuts in many newsrooms have markedly reduced the number of articles published in print newspapers. As a result, the overall volume of reporting has declined in recent years (Krei, 2014; Vogler et al., 2020, p. 1470). This suggests that the decrease in scandal coverage is at least partly due to a general reduction in the number of published articles.

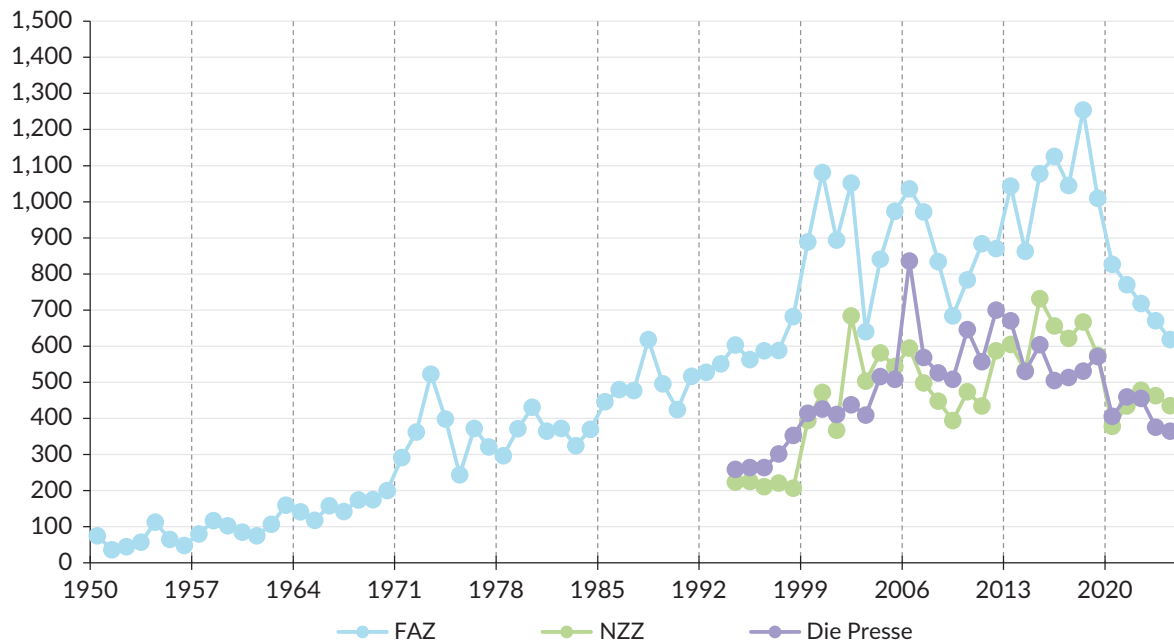


Figure 2. Change over time in the number of articles referencing scandals (e.g., “scandal”).

4.3. Emergence and Development of References to Media Events

Compared to scandal coverage and general references to other media, reporting on media events is much less frequent (see Figure 3), reflecting their exceptional and extraordinary nature (see Section 2.3). Nonetheless, a few reports on media events appeared each year in all three DACH countries. The earliest FAZ article in the dataset explicitly covering a media event dates back to 1965, with coverage increasing notably in the 1980s and continuing to rise through the 2000s. In 2005, FAZ published 39 such articles, NZZ 25, and *Die Presse* 15.

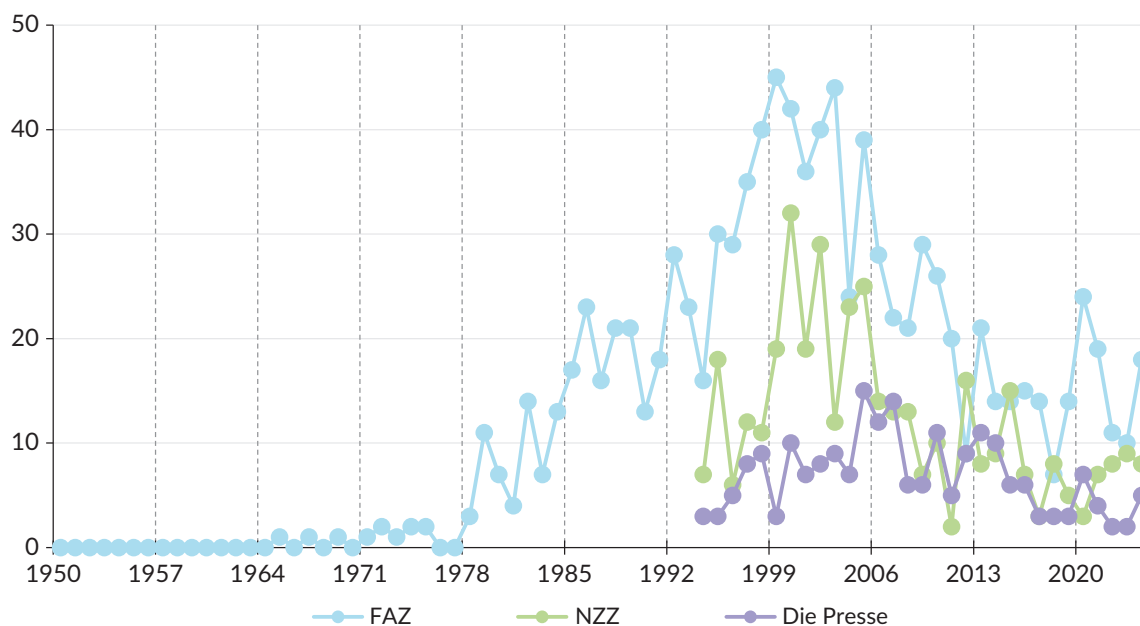


Figure 3. Change over time in the number of articles referencing media events (e.g., “television event”).

However, coverage has declined in all three countries since then. In recent years, only a few articles explicitly reference media events.

While some scholars argue that changes in media and society have contributed to the declining importance and frequency of media events (Katz & Liebes, 2007), others suggest that ceremonial or disruptive media events remain relevant (Sonnevend, 2018; Sumiala et al., 2018). The data presented here indicate that coverage of media events has declined since the mid-2000s—at least for those labeled media or television events or those said to attract billions of viewers. Disruptive events such as terror attacks and wars have remained frequent in recent years, but may often not be called media events in news coverage.

4.4. Emergence and Development of References to Public Response in the Context of Social Media

Press coverage of influencers, shitstorms, and viral content began to emerge gradually in 2010 in the three DACH countries and increased in 2012. The terms “shitstorm” and “influencer” were recognized in Germany as Anglicisms of the Year in 2011 and 2017, respectively, and in Switzerland as Words of the Year in 2012 and 2017. However, it wasn’t until 2017 that media attention around these phenomena began to rise sharply (see Figure 4). Such reports on the public response to social media communication increased notably in subsequent years. In 2024, coverage reached its highest level, with FAZ publishing 386 articles, NZZ 257, and Die Presse 233. This pattern of coverage is consistent across countries.

The steady increase over the years suggests this trend may continue, as prior research has concluded (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021). This reflects the growing tendency of the press to report on topics and actors that first gain traction on social media. However, there is no shared understanding of the criteria for labeling someone or something an influencer, a shitstorm, or a viral post, meaning that “there is no predetermined threshold to what

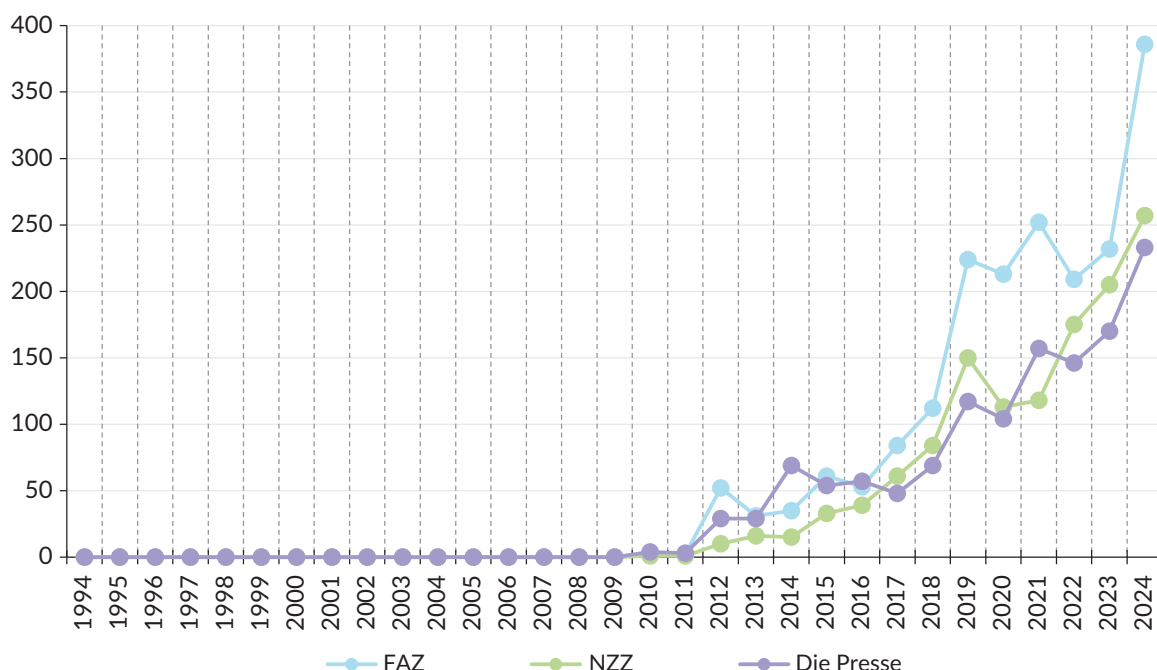


Figure 4. Change over time in the number of articles referencing public response to social media communication (e.g., “going viral”).

a ‘fuss’ or ‘storm’ constitutes” (Beckers & Harder, 2016, p. 917). Previous studies have found that the response or popularity threshold (e.g., number of shares or followers) for using such labels varies greatly, and journalists rarely disclose how they arrived at their assessments (Beckers & Harder, 2016; Fürst, 2023; Haarkötter, 2016). The trend shown in Figure 4 thus underscores the influential role journalists play in shaping attention dynamics within hybrid media systems across the three analyzed countries. By introducing and framing actors or content on social media as influencers, shitstorms, or viral phenomena, they contribute to—or even help construct—their popularity or perceived social significance.

4.5. Emergence and Development of References to Information Flows in General

The terms “media frenzy,” “media attention,” and “making headlines” are used to indicate intermedia agenda-setting, highlight public response, describe media events, and they are also referenced in the context of scandals, which rely heavily on media visibility for their emergence (see Section 2). Accordingly, these terms were included in an overarching search string, which revealed that such coverage began in the 1960s (see Figure 5). Coverage increased fairly steadily over the first decades, peaking in the mid-2000s and mid-2010s. While the overall trend among the DACH countries is similar, the data show that NZZ published a high number of related articles—125 in 2015 alone—whereas coverage in *Die Presse* was considerably lower.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, coverage declined in all countries, with annual article counts ranging from 46 to 77 in NZZ, FAZ, and *Die Presse*. This decline was likely due to a reduction in public events and the media’s focus on pandemic-related topics (Eisenegger et al., 2020; Jaakkola & Skulte, 2023; Ort & Rohrbach, 2024). However, apart from the pandemic years, there has been a noticeable increase in the use of terms such as “media frenzy,” which signal information flows in hybrid media systems—reflecting the historical and continuing diversification of media channels and the rise of digital platforms (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021; Schulz, 1997; von Nordheim et al., 2018).

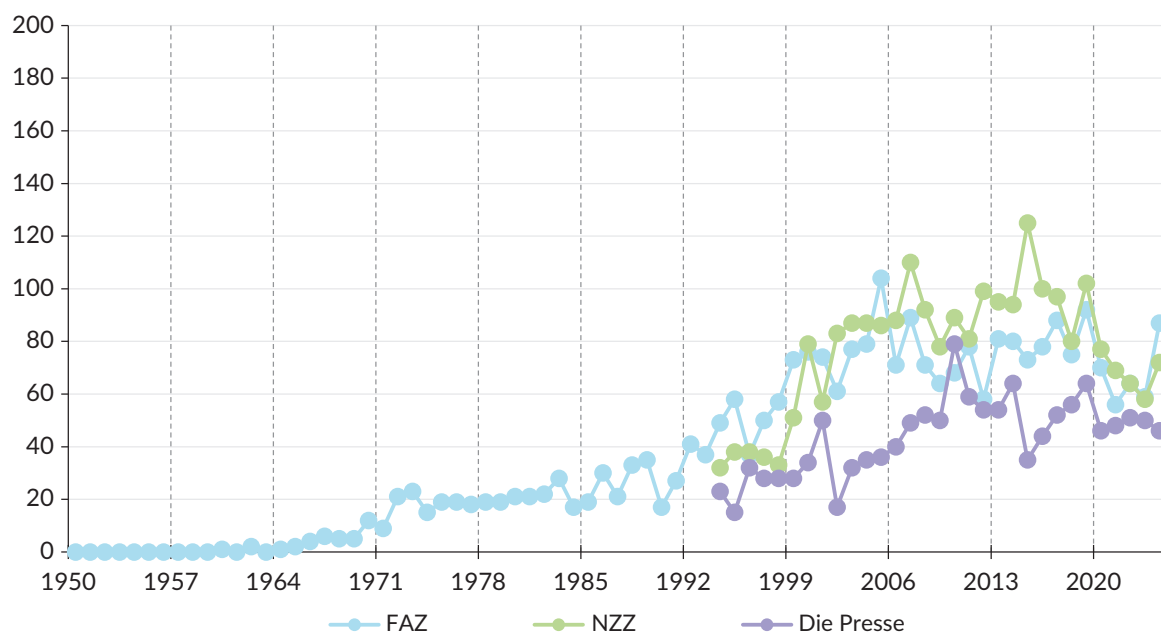


Figure 5. Change over time in the number of articles referencing “media frenzy,” “media attention,” and “making headlines” (overarching search string).

5. Conclusion

Recent studies have emphasized that “presentism” in research on hybrid media systems has resulted in “missed opportunities both to build on existing literature on journalism history and on change in media systems and journalism cultures” (Hallin et al., 2023, p. 229). This study set out to address this gap and contribute to a deeper, historically informed understanding of information flows in hybrid media systems. By synthesizing existing literature on journalism research and media history, it has demonstrated that intermedia agenda-setting, scandals, media events, and the news factor public response have long functioned as self-reinforcing communication processes across various channels and outlets—connecting both newer and older media logics.

The literature review has shown that certain phrases and terms commonly used in everyday language and public discourse—such as “scandals,” “TV events,” “shitstorms,” and “media frenzy” (Cooper & Tang, 2012; Einwiller et al., 2017; Fürst, 2020; Mertens, 2006; Oehmer, 2011; Thompson, 2000)—serve as signifiers of information flows across media and can be effectively used to identify relevant research material. These terms, grounded in prior studies and existing knowledge, were used to guide the longitudinal analysis of press coverage and to identify relevant articles.

Analysis of newspaper databases spanning three decades (NZZ, *Die Presse*) or more than seven decades (FAZ) has demonstrated that these terms are widely used in coverage. In each of the examined phenomena—media events, scandals, intermedia agenda-setting, and public response—key phrases explicitly signal underlying information flows, understood as the cross-channel dissemination of information and amplification of attention. The results indicate that such flows are not exclusive to the digital age or the advent of social media; rather, they have been evident for many decades, as reflected in the recurring use of terms like “media frenzy” and “media attention.” In most cases, the prevalence of these signifiers has grown alongside the expansion and specialization of the media sector (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021), including the emergence and diversification of private television and radio programs in the 1980s and 1990s as well as the rise of digital media since the 1990s (Maurer & Reinemann, 2006; Schulz, 1997; Webster, 2014).

Coverage of media events and scandals dates back more than 50 years and shows a clear increase up to the 2000s or 2010s, respectively. With the rise of digital and social media, however, references to media events have declined. In contrast, generalized references to media reports began to increase in the 1990s and continue to rise, reflecting the high degree of interconnection among news media and their contribution to cross-media information flows. Reporting on the public response to social media communication has also increased notably since the late 2010s and continues to grow, suggesting that the press is increasingly covering influencers, shitstorms, and viral content—actors and topics that first gain traction on social media platforms (see also Muhle & Bock, 2025). Taken together, the data reveal that while some phenomena have declined during a particular time (e.g., scandal coverage in the past three years), others have intensified (e.g., articles referencing other news media during the same period). The findings suggest that at any point in time, certain phenomena stimulate information flows within the hybrid media system and—alongside the existing media and audience fragmentation—also contribute to processes of integration, echoing Chadwick’s (2017, p. 18) notion of “simultaneous integration and fragmentation.” While some national differences are apparent in the data, the overall trends are consistently observed across the newspapers analyzed from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

Yet this (re)integration of publics is not without its downsides. Information flows in a hybrid media system, as analyzed in this study, can amplify events and narratives that scandalize nonpublic figures and private matters (Fürst, 2018; Pörksen & Detel, 2014) and advantage actors and organizations that inflate audience figures (Fürst, 2020; Martin & Reeves, 2001) or use social bots to artificially boost the public response (Fürst, 2021; Muhle & Bock, 2025)—thereby fostering self-reinforcing communication processes and potentially sidelining hard news and traditional news values (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021; Rega, 2025). Future studies should therefore investigate more closely the extent to which information flows are shaped by strategic and influential actors and should assess the degree to which these flows, alongside their integrative potential, may also generate dysfunctional effects.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the search terms were tested for coverage in German-speaking countries. While this limits the generalizability of the findings, the terms—derived from international communication research—are likely to be applicable, at least in similar forms, for other languages. Second, the analysis of newspaper databases is based on a selected set of search terms. These terms were tested and found suitable for conducting a longitudinal analysis across decades. However, they capture only a portion of the information flows that are the focus of this study. Many additional search terms could be considered to more comprehensively map such flows. Media coverage often uses slightly varying phrases to describe information flows, including expressions like “the hashtag #Laschetlacht was trending,” “shared thousands of times on Twitter,” “dominated German Twitter trends” (Muhle & Bock, 2025, pp. 11–12), or “king of Twitter, collecting 5 million followers” (Fürst & Oehmer, 2021, p. 806). Qualitative studies could identify the diverse range of such formulations, which could then inform the development of more complex search strings for future longitudinal quantitative research. Third, the analysis provides only a first overview and starting point for future studies analyzing information flows in hybrid systems in long-term and historical perspectives. It is beyond the scope of the quantitative analysis included in this study to shed light on specific events and stories. Further (quantitative and qualitative) research is needed to examine how references to the same events and topics (e.g., a particular scandal, media event, or shitstorm) evolve across different channels. Such studies could explore in greater depth how the media and audience attention attributed to specific events and actors develop over time and contribute to dynamic information flows, what types of evidence are provided (e.g., the number of journalists or camera teams on site), and which sources—such as politicians or event organizers—are cited to support such claims. The data presented in this study can inform the design of future research, particularly in selecting periods of analysis. For instance, researchers could delve deeper into moments where coverage peaked or began to increase or decline. It would also be interesting to examine how new terms and metaphors, such as “shitstorm,” “influencer,” or “viral video,” were introduced in public discourse and whether their meanings or thematic contexts have changed over the years. Finally, the data from two of the newspapers analyzed covers only the past three decades, while the FAZ archive enables the tracing of developments as far back as the 1950s. Continued retro-digitization of newspaper and magazine archives would further enhance opportunities for comparative analyses across decades and countries (Birkner et al., 2018). The historical roots of information flows clearly deserve further scholarly attention, as they can deepen our understanding of both continuities and changes within hybrid media systems.

Funding

Publication of this article in open access was made possible through the institutional membership agreement between the University of Zurich and Cogitatio Press.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests. In this article, editorial decisions were undertaken by Florian Muhle (Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen, Germany) and Colin Porlezza (Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland).

LLMs Disclosure

ChatGPT-4o and DeepL were used for brainstorming initial ideas for the structure, for grammar and style improvement, and partly for translations from German to English, which were thoroughly checked, modified, and refined by the author.

References

- Atwater, T., Fico, F., & Pizante, G. (1987). Reporting on the state legislature: A case study of inter-media agenda-setting. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 8(2), 53–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/073953298700800206>
- Bartz, C. (2003). Sport—Medium des Fernsehens. In I. Schneider, T. Hahn, & C. Bartz (Eds.), *Medienkultur der 60er Jahre. Diskursgeschichte der Medien nach 1945* (pp. 35–49). Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Beckers, K., & Harder, R. A. (2016). “Twitter just exploded”: Social media as alternative vox pop. *Digital Journalism*, 4(7), 910–920. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2016.1161493>
- Birkner, T., Koenen, E., & Schwarzenegger, C. (2018). A century of journalism history as challenge. Digital archives, sources, and methods. *Digital Journalism*, 6(9), 1121–1135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1514271>
- Boczkowski, P. J. (2009). Technology, monitoring, and imitation in contemporary news work. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 2(1), 39–59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2008.01028.x>
- Bødker, H., & Brügger, N. (2018). The shifting temporalities of online news: *The Guardian's* website from 1996 to 2015. *Journalism*, 19(1), 56–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916689153>
- Bor, S. E. (2013). Lucy's two babies: Framing the first televised depiction of pregnancy. *Media History*, 19(4), 464–478. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2013.844889>
- Bösch, F. (2009). *Öffentliche Geheimnisse. Skandale, Politik und Medien in Deutschland und Großbritannien 1880–1914*. Oldenbourg. <https://doi.org/10.1524/9783486707465>
- Breed, W. (1955). Newspaper ‘opinion leaders’ and processes of standardization. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 32(3), 277–328. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769905503200302>
- Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Clancy, L. (2019). ‘Queen’s Day—TV’s Day’: The British monarchy and the media industries. *Contemporary British History*, 33(3), 427–450. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2019.1597710>
- Coddington, M. (2019). *Aggregating the news: Secondhand storytelling and the changing work of digital journalism*. Columbia University Press.
- Cooper, R., & Tang, T. (2012). Fans, nonfans, and the Olympics: Predictors of audience’s multiplatform experience with the 2008 Beijing Games. *Mass Communication and Society*, 15(4), 506–524. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2012.677093>
- Dayan, D., & Katz, E. (1992). *Media events: The live broadcasting of history*. Harvard University Press.
- Deller, R. A., & Murphy, K. (2020). ‘Zoella hasn’t really written a book, she’s written a cheque’: Mainstream media representations of YouTube celebrities. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(1), 112–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549419861638>
- Du, Y. R. (2017). Intermedia agenda-setting effects. In P. Rössler, C. A. Hoffner, & L. van Zoonen (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of media effects*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0033>

- Dyreson, M. (2017). The Super Bowl as a television spectacle: Global designs, glocal niches, and parochial patterns. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 34(1/2), 139–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2017.1349115>
- Eilders, C. (2006). News factors and news decisions: Theoretical and methodological advances in Germany. *Communications*, 31(1), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1515/COMMUN.2006.002>
- Einwiller, S., Viererbl, B., & Himmelreich, S. (2017). Journalists' coverage of online firestorms in German-language news media. *Journalism Practice*, 11(9), 1178–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2016.1229578>
- Eisenegger, M., Oehmer, F., Udris, L., & Vogler, D. (2020). Die Qualität der Medienberichterstattung zur Corona-Pandemie. In Forschungszentrum Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft (Ed.), *Qualität der Medien. Schweiz–Suisse–Svizzera* (pp. 29–50). Schwabe. <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-192622>
- Enke, N., & Borchers, N. S. (2019). Social media influencers in strategic communication: A conceptual framework for strategic social media influencer communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 13(4), 261–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2019.1620234>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764203262277>
- Fürst, S. (2018). „Die Volksseele kocht!“ Eine inhaltsanalytische Untersuchung des Nachrichtenfaktors Öffentlichkeitsresonanz im ‚Fall Carlos.‘ *Medien Journal*, 42(4), 55–74. <https://doi.org/10.24989/medienjournal.v42i4.1762>
- Fürst, S. (2020). “The whole world watching”? How news media create the myth of an audience of billions and foster imagined communities. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 1524–1541. <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-186374>
- Fürst, S. (2021). Neue Öffentlichkeitsdynamiken: Zu selbstverstärkenden, plattformübergreifenden Effekten von ‚Popularität.‘ In M. Eisenegger, M. Prinzing, P. Ettinger, & R. Blum (Eds.), *Digitaler Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Historische Verortung, Modelle und Konsequenzen* (pp. 339–359). Springer.
- Fürst, S. (2023). Blockbuster, Quotenhits, Shitstorms und virale Botschaften: Sichtbarmachung von Medienpublika durch Metaphern. In F. Muhle, T. Sutter, & J. Wehner (Eds.), *Das sichtbare Publikum? Publikumsbeziehungen der Massenmedien im digitalen Wandel* (pp. 193–219). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-41172-5_8
- Fürst, S., Muhle, F., & Porlezza, C. (2025). Journalism in the hybrid media system: Editorial. *Media and Communication*, 13, Article 11227. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.11227>
- Fürst, S., & Oehmer, F. (2021). Attention for attention hotspots: Exploring the newsworthiness of public response in the metric society. *Journalism Studies*, 22(6), 799–819. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2021.1889396>
- Geiß, S., Viehmann, C., & Kelly, C. A. (2025). Inflation of crisis coverage? Tracking and explaining the changes in crisis labeling and crisis news wave salience 1785–2020. *Journal of Communication*, 75(1), 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqae033>
- Gillespie, T. (2016). #Trendingistrending: When algorithms become culture. In R. Seyfert & J. Roberge (Eds.), *Algorithmic cultures: Essays on meaning, performance and new technologies* (pp. 52–75). Routledge.
- Grönegräs, M., & De Cleen, B. (2023). Negotiating the boundaries of the politically sayable: Populist radical right talk scandals in the German media. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 20(6), 665–682. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2022.2149580>
- Guo, L., & Vargo, C. (2017). Global intermedia agenda setting: A big data analysis of international news flow. *Journal of Communication*, 67(4), 499–520. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12311>

- Guo, L., & Vargo, C. (2020). "Fake news" and emerging online media ecosystem: An integrated intermedia agenda-setting analysis of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. *Communication Research*, 47(2), 178–200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650218777177>
- Guo, L., & Zhang, Y. (2023). Information flows from local to national: Evidence from 21 major US cities. *Journalism*, 24(12), 2651–2667. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849231152364>
- Haarkötter, H. (2016). Empörungskaskaden und rhetorische Strategien in Shitstorms. Eine empirische Analyse des User-Verhaltens in ausgewählten Facebook-Shitstorms. In H. Haarkötter (Ed.), *Shitstorms und andere Nettigkeiten. Über die Grenzen der Kommunikation in Social Media* (pp. 17–50). Nomos.
- Haller, M. (2013). *Dissens als kommunikatives Instrument: Theorie der intendierten Selbstskandalisierung in der politischen Kommunikation*. University of Bamberg Press.
- Hallin, D. C., Mellado, C., & Mancini, P. (2023). The concept of hybridity in journalism studies. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 28(1), 219–237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211039704>
- Harder, R. A., Sevenans, J., & Van Aelst, P. (2017). Intermedia agenda setting in the social media age: How traditional players dominate the news agenda in election times. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 22(3), 275–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161217704969>
- Hepp, A., & Couldry, N. (2010). Introduction: Media events in globalized media cultures. In N. Couldry, A. Hepp, & F. Krotz (Eds.), *Media events in a global age* (pp. 1–20). Routledge.
- Jaakkola, M., & Skulte, I. (2023). Reporting like there was no pandemic. Cultural journalism during the Covid-19 pandemic in Finland, Sweden, and Latvia. *MedieKultur*, 38(73), 28–49. <https://doi.org/10.7146/mk.v38i73.128154>
- Katz, E., & Liebes, T. (2007). "No more peace!": How disaster, terror and war have upstaged media events. *International Journal of Communication*, 1, 157–166.
- Kornemann, L. (2018). Die Sexismus-Debatte in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit—Brüderle vs. #aufschrei. In M. Lünenborg & S. Sell (Eds.), *Politischer Journalismus im Fokus der Journalistik* (pp. 369–390). Springer.
- Krei, A. (2014, May 20). "FAZ" mit höherem Verlust und weniger Seiten. *DWDL.de*. https://www.dwdl.de/nachrichten/45944/faz_mit_hoeherem_verlust_und_weniger_seiten
- Kyriakidou, M. (2008). Rethinking media events in the context of a global public sphere: Exploring the audience of global disasters in Greece. *Communications*, 33(3), 273–291. <https://doi.org/10.1515/COMM.2008.018>
- Lee, J. (2016). Opportunity or risk? How news organizations frame social media in their guidelines for journalists. *The Communication Review*, 19(2), 106–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2016.1161328>
- Liebes, T., & Blum-Kulka, S. (2004). It takes two to blow the whistle: Do journalists control the outbreak of scandal? *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(9), 1153–1170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764203262341>
- Lull, J., & Hinerman, S. (1997). The search for scandal. In J. Lull & S. Hinerman (Eds.), *Media scandals: Morality and desire in the popular culture marketplace* (pp. 1–33). Columbia University Press.
- Martin, C. R., & Reeves, J. L. (2001). The whole world isn't watching (but we thought they were): The Super Bowl and United States solipsism. *Culture, Sport, Society*, 4(2), 213–236. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713999822>
- Mathis, T., & Humprecht, E. (2018). Werden Leitmedien häufiger zitiert? Eine empirische Untersuchung von Schweizer Printmedien. *M&K: Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft*, 66(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.5771/1615-634X-2018-1-41>
- Maurer, M., & Reinemann, C. (2006). *Medieninhalte. Eine Einführung*. VS.
- McGregor, S. C. (2019). Social media as public opinion: How journalists use social media to represent public opinion. *Journalism*, 20(8), 1070–1086.

- McNair, B. (2019). Scandal and news values. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to media and scandal* (pp. 76–85). Routledge.
- Meng, B. (2019). Mediatization and political scandal. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to media and scandal* (pp. 67–75). Routledge.
- Meraz, S. (2019). Scandals and agenda setting. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to media and scandal* (pp. 55–66). Routledge.
- Mertens, M. (2006). „Der Rummel wuchs und kumulierte”—Über den Prozess des Medienereignisses. In J. Schwier & C. Leggewie (Eds.), *Wettbewerbsspiele. Die Inszenierung von Sport und Politik in den Medien* (pp. 20–41). Campus.
- Morgner, C. (2016). Global media events: Kennedy, Titanic, and Fukushima. In A. Fox (Ed.), *Global perspectives on media events in contemporary society* (pp. 1–16). IGI Global.
- Muhle, F., & Bock, I. (2025). Artificial amplification and intermedia dynamics in the hybrid media system: The case of #LaschetLacht. *Media and Communication*, 13, Article 10244. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.10244>
- Mytton, G. (2012). Global media research: Can we know global audiences? A view from a BBC perspective. In I. Volkmer (Ed.), *The handbook of global media research* (pp. 40–53). Wiley.
- Nashmi, E. A. (2018). From selfies to media events: How Instagram users interrupted their routines after the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings. *Digital Journalism*, 6(1), 98–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1306787>
- Neuberger, C., Tonnemacher, J., Biebl, M., & Duck, A. (1998). Online—The future of newspapers? Germany's dailies on the World Wide Web. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 4(1), Article JCMC414. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.1998.tb00087.x>
- Oehmer, F. (2011). Skandale im Spiegel der Zeit: Eine quantitative Inhaltsanalyse der Skandalberichterstattung im Nachrichtenmagazin *Der Spiegel*. In K. Bulkow & C. Petersen (Eds.), *Skandale. Strukturen und Strategien öffentlicher Aufmerksamkeitserzeugung* (pp. 157–175). VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-93264-4_8
- Ort, A., & Rohrbach, T. (2024). (Dis)harmony in times of crisis? An analysis of Covid-related strategic communication by Swiss public health institutions. *Public Health*, 228, 112–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2023.12.033>
- Payne, R. (2013). Virality 2.0: Networked promiscuity and the sharing subject. *Cultural Studies*, 27(4), 540–560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2012.707219>
- Pörksen, B., & Detel, H. (2014). *The unleashed scandal: The end of control in the digital age*. Imprint Academic.
- Preston, P. (2016). News values. In G. Mazzoleni (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of political communication* (Vol. 2, pp. 872–877). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc062>
- Rega, R. (2025). Media hybridization and the strategic value of political incivility: Insights from Italian journalists. *Media and Communication*, 13, Article 10236. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.10236>
- Reinemann, C., & Huismann, J. (2007). Beziehen sich Medien immer mehr auf Medien? Dimensionen, Belege, Erklärungen. *Publizistik*, 52(4), 465–484. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11616-007-0243-3>
- Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. (2023). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023*. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/Digital_News_Report_2023.pdf
- Rössler, P. (2000). Vielzahl = Vielfalt = Fragmentierung? Empirische Anhaltspunkte zur Differenzierung von Medienangeboten auf der Mikroebene. In O. Jarren, K. Imhof, & R. Blum (Eds.), *Zerfall der Öffentlichkeit?* (pp. 168–186). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-663-07953-8_12
- Schulz, W. (1997). Changes of mass media and the public sphere. *Javnost – The Public*, 4(2), 57–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.1997.11008646111>

- Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1964). *The mathematical theory of communication*. University of Illinois Press.
- Sigal, L. V. (1973). *Reporters and officials: The organization and politics of newsmaking*. D.C. Heath.
- Simon, M., Zannettou, S., Welbers, K., Kroon, A. C., & Trilling, D. (2025). Tracing information flows in the hybrid media system: The agenda-setting role of dark platforms surrounding the Ukraine invasion discourse. *International Journal of Communication*, 19, 1182–1206.
- Sonnevend, J. (2018). The lasting charm of *Media Events*. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(1), 122–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717726013>
- Su, Y., & Borah, P. (2019). Who is the agenda setter? Examining the intermedia agenda-setting effect between Twitter and newspapers. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 16(3), 236–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2019.1641451>
- Su, Y., & Xiao, X. (2021). Mapping the intermedia agenda setting (IAS) literature: Current trajectories and future directions. *The Agenda Setting Journal*, 5(1), 56–83. <https://www.jbe-platform.com/content/journals/10.1075/asj.20001.su>
- Su, Y., & Xiao, X. (2024). Intermedia attribute agenda setting between the U.S. mainstream newspapers and Twitter: A two-study analysis of the paradigm and driving forces of the agenda flow. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 101(2), 451–476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990231221150>
- Sumiala, J., Valaskivi, K., Tikka, M., & Huhtamäki, J. (2018). *Hybrid media events: The Charlie Hebdo attacks and the global circulation of terrorist violence*. Emerald.
- Thompson, E. P. (2000). *Political scandal: Power and visibility in the media age*. Polity.
- Tumber, H. (2004). Scandal and media in the United Kingdom: From Major to Blair. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(8), 1122–1137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764203262280>
- Tumber, H., & Waisbord, S. (2019). Media and scandal. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to media and scandal* (pp. 10–21). Routledge.
- Udris, L., & Lucht, J. (2011). Qualitätsmedien in Pressesystemen. Wandel der Medienstrukturen gleich Wandel der Medieninhalte? In R. Blum, H. Bonfadelli, K. Imhof, & O. Jarren (Eds.), *Krise der Leuchttürme öffentlicher Kommunikation* (pp. 151–176). VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-93084-8_10
- Vaccari, C., Chadwick, A., & O'Loughlin, B. (2015). Dual screening the political: Media events, social media, and citizen engagement. *Journal of Communication*, 65(6), 1041–1061. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12187>
- Välvirronen, E., & Juntunen, L. (2019). The shifting boundaries of elite and tabloid media in political sex scandals. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to media and scandal* (pp. 174–182). Routledge.
- Veltri, G. A. (2012). Information flows and centrality among elite European newspapers. *European Journal of Communication*, 27(4), 354–375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323112459321>
- Vliegthart, R., & Walgrave, S. (2008). The contingency of intermedia agenda setting: A longitudinal study in Belgium. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 85(4), 860–877. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900808500409>
- Vogler, D., Udris, L., & Eisenegger, M. (2020). Measuring media content concentration at a large scale using automated text comparisons. *Journalism Studies*, 21(11), 1459–1478. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1761865>
- von Nordheim, G., Boczek, K., & Koppers, L. (2018). Sourcing the sources: An analysis of the use of Twitter and Facebook as a journalistic source over 10 years in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. *Digital Journalism*, 6(7), 807–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1490658>
- Vorberg, L., & Zeitler, A. (2019). 'This is (not) entertainment!': Media constructions of political scandal discourses in the 2016 US presidential election. *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(4), 417–432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719833288>

- Webster, J. G. (2014). *The marketplace of attention: How audiences take shape in a digital age*. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9892.001.0001>
- Weischenberg, S., Malik, M., & Scholl, A. (2006). *Die Souffleure der Mediengesellschaft. Report über die Journalisten in Deutschland*. UVK.
- Wilke, J. (1987). Foreign news coverage and international news flow over three centuries. *International Communication Gazette*, 39(3), 147–180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001654928703900301>
- Wilke, J. (2010). Historical perspectives on media events: A comparison of the Lisbon earthquake in 1755 and the Tsunami catastrophe in 2004. In N. Couldry, A. Hepp, & F. Krotz (Eds.), *Media events in a global age* (pp. 45–60). Routledge.
- Wyatt, S. (2021). Metaphors in critical Internet and digital media studies. *New Media & Society*, 23(2), 406–416. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820929324>
- Yadava, J. S. (1990). News media: Frontiers in international relations. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 13(1), 473–477. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1990.11678769>

About the Author



Silke Fürst is senior research and teaching associate at the Department of Communication and Media Research (IKMZ), University of Zurich, Switzerland. Her research focuses on journalism, datafication, mediatization, discourses about media audiences, science communication and higher education studies, open science, media history, and media ethics. She serves on the editorial boards of *Media and Communication* and *Medien Journal*.