

## Editorial

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Dear SComS readers,

We are pleased to announce several innovations at SComS. In July, SComS was added to the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). This gives our young open access journal more visibility and connects us even better with the growing community dedicated to developing open access journals and making scientific knowledge accessible. In addition, there are technical innovations on the Submission Platform. Authors can now directly enter their ORCID ID as part of the submission process and link their papers to their unique researcher ID. In case you are not familiar with ORCID, you can find more information on <https://orcid.org>.

We would also like to draw your attention to the two open Calls for Papers to Thematic Sections that will be published in future issues of SComS. The guest editors Silke Fürst, Daniel Vogler, Isabel Sörensen, and Mike S. Schäfer will be responsible for the Thematic Section on *“Changes in communication in, from, and about higher education institutions”*. The deadline for full paper submissions is December 12, 2021. The guest editors invite submissions that focus on the communication of higher education institutions (HEIs) from different perspectives, methodologically, theoretically, or conceptually. Exemplary topics concern professionalization tendencies of communication, changes in resources, practices, and strategies as well as the representation of HEIs in different forms of discourse and their perception. A detailed description of the foci and topics can be found on the SComS

website under the menu item “Call for Papers” (<https://www.hope.uzh.ch/scoms/cfp>). There, interested users will also find the Call for Papers for a second Thematic Section entitled *“Historizing international organizations and their communication – Institutions, practices, changes”*. The deadline is January 30, 2022. Guest editors are Erik Koenen, Arne L. Gellrich, Christian Schwarzenegger, Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz, and Astrid Blome. The Thematic Section invites submissions that examine the history of international organizations and their communication based on concrete international organizations that serve as examples and case studies. Moreover, manuscripts should address one of the following three problem areas: 1) Communication and communication management of international organizations, 2) international organizations, media, and journalism, or 3) international organizations in the public sphere.

Let us now turn our attention from future issues to this issue of SComS. It contains four articles in the General Section, a Thematic Section entitled “Critical perspectives on migration in discourse and communication,” and two book reviews in the Reviews and Reports Section. In addition, the Community Section contains the summary of Sina Blassnig’s dissertation, which was awarded the 2021 Dissertation Prize of the Swiss Association of Communication and Media Research (SACM). On a sad occasion, the issue also contains an obituary of the communication and media scientist Michael Schanne.

The first paper of the General Section is entitled “Four pillars of Luhmann’s ana-



lytical apparatus: Applications for communication research.” In this article, YJ Sohn devotes herself to a detailed discussion of Luhmann’s theory of social systems. The author uses a controversy around Luhmann’s theory as a starting point: While some researchers see methodological implications as the core of the theory, others describe the theory as inapplicable and detached from empirical research. The author wants to refute the latter criticism in particular. To this end, she defines the core concepts in Luhmann’s theory and shows how these can be examined and even lend themselves to an operationalization for different methods (form analysis, observation analysis, differentiation analysis and semantic analysis). She then incorporates these concepts and methods into an integrative model with the aim to make Luhmann’s theory increasingly and more easily applicable for empirical communication research.

In the second article, Lídia Raquel Herculano Maia, Olga Demushina, and Stephen D. McDowell examine the “Vertical and horizontal communication on the Facebook pages of 2014 Brazilian presidential candidates.” In their empirical study, the authors analyze the official Facebook Pages of the presidential candidates at the time of the campaign. In addition to the candidates’ messages, the comments by supporters as well as by supporters of opposing candidates were examined in depth using a qualitative content analysis. Particular attention was paid to vertical and horizontal interactions, i. e., interactions between users and the candidates, as well as among the users of different camps themselves. The authors identified various patterns of interactions and showed in particular that vertical interactions remain rather a rarity and are only used in particular cases. The authors explain this, among other things, with technical aspects and the interface design – i. e., the discursive architecture of the platform. If candidates respond to critical comments, for example, these comments simultaneously receive increased prominence, which the candidates naturally try to avoid and thus not react to the comments. This is just one

of many results with which the researchers point to the interconnectedness of political strategies and platform affordances. The authors believe that it is above all the vertical interactions, i. e., between elites and voters, that represent a highly relevant area for future research. After all, these interactions are essential for democratic processes under digitized conditions.

In “Use of science in British newspapers’ narratives of climate change,” Maria Laura Ruiu and Massimo Ragnedda address a key issue of our time, climate change, and its framing in the British press from 1988 to 2016. The authors found that the framing differed according to the political orientation of the papers, with center-left papers’ increasing certainty about the science of climate change and the center-right newspapers’ increasing confusion. Center-left newspapers presented a scientific consensus about the long-term risks / consequences and visible signs of climate change highlighting their increasing severity. The center-left papers reported that scientists agree that there is still time to make changes and adapt, noting the climate scientists’ involvement as political and economic advisors. The newspapers also addressed skepticism, framing it as driven by economic and political interests and emphasizing conflicting scientific views. Center-right newspapers supported those interests as they vacillated between questioning and accepting the science of climate change. In the first, they focused on the scientific disagreement, concluding even that climate change is a myth. They also emphasized scientific dishonesty of “eco-doomsters” as well as uncertainty. But the reporting was complex as it also presented scientific consensus, and shifted over time from reporting about the impact on nature and the poor, to impossibility of acting, to contingent acceptance of scientific findings.

Another crucial issue of our times, migration, is addressed in “No government mouthpieces: Changes in the framing of the ‘migration crisis’ in German news and infotainment media,” where Dennis Lichtenstein examines the framing of refugees in 2015 and 2016 by German public

broadcasting news as well as talk and satirical shows. The study centers on whether the assaults on women in Cologne on 2015 New Year's Eve changed media frames and how they deviated from frames in official governmental communication. The author found that while the government showed ambivalence about its policies after the incident, the media did not parallel the government line and were already critical of the policy in 2015. Talk shows and, especially, satirical shows showed more support for the "open door" policy and criticized xenophobic tendencies in the German society in early 2016. The infotainment media paralleled the government only in representing the "migration crisis" as a German issue first, and European second, before the 2015 NYE, whereas afterwards, the government externalized the blame for the arrival of refugees, while the media did not follow. The media also underemphasized the global dimension of refuge seeking, limiting information about the causes and complexity and restricting ideas about how to solve the problems.

Representation of migration in discourse is also the topic of the Thematic Section "Critical perspectives on migration in discourse and communication", edited by Dimitris Serafis, Jolanta Drzewiecka, and Sara Greco. The phrase "the so-called 'migration crisis'" calls attention to the self-centered European politics of naming the 2015 refuge seeking by people fleeing desperate conditions, while the developing countries host the majority of displaced people. While the numbers were significant, so was the precarity and mortality (over 4000 are estimated to have died only in the Mediterranean Sea, the numbers went up to over 5000 in 2016) along the refugee routes. Yet, as the editors note in their introduction, global developments continue to forcibly displace people. Thus, critical scholarship continues to investigate discourse about refugees after 2015, examining, for example, how the Covid-19 health situation impacted representations of refugees, or the evolution of anti-refugee right wing discourses. The Thematic Section presents a sample of this research,

with five papers showcasing different methods and contexts.

The introductory contribution of the Community Section is the summary of the dissertation by Sina Blassnig entitled "Populist online communication: Interactions among politicians, journalists, and citizens." The dissertation was awarded the 2021 Dissertation Prize of the SACM. It is a great pleasure for us to be able to make it available to our SComS readers. Every year, the SACM Dissertation Award honors the best PhD thesis in communication and media research completed at a Swiss University, or by researchers of Swiss origin. Based on her empirical studies that use manifold methodological approaches, Sina Blassnig develops a heuristic model of populist communication. This model is an important contribution for studying populist communication in an area in which "the roles of politicians, the media, and citizens have become more interconnected and reciprocal in an online communication environment" (p. 383). Examining populist communication is a highly topical research need considering the increasing polarization of society dividing populist and anti-populist opinions and communication strategies. We congratulate Sina Blassnig on this extraordinary achievement and invite our readers to read the summary of her excellent cumulative thesis.

The Community Section is concluded by the obituary for Michael Schanne who sadly passed away in August 2021. Heinz Bonfadelli, Werner A. Meier, and Vinzenz Wyss commemorate him and pay tribute to his scientific legacy in the research field of science, risk, and health communication and highlight his critical spirit.

In the Reviews and Reports Section, we present two book reviews: First, Roger Blum discusses the monograph "Kommunikations- und Mediengeschichte. Von Versammlungen bis zu den digitalen Medien", by Philomena Schönhagen and Mike Meißner. Blum particularly highlights and lauds the emphasis on the Swiss context. Continuing a dear tradition to SComS, the book review is presented in three languages: German, French, and Italian. The sec-

ond book review by Ursula Ganz-Blättler discusses the anthology “Streitlust und Streitkunst. Diskurs als Essenz der Demokratie” edited by Stephan Russ-Mohl. Ganz-Blättler particularly highlights the value and importance of the programmatic heterogeneity within the publication and the important contributions it provides but also critically points to discrepancies with respect to the overall aim of the book.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank all reviewers who reviewed manuscripts in 2020 and supported the authors by providing detailed feedback and constructive suggestions. Without you, dear reviewers, SComS could not prosper successfully. We thank Argiris Archakis, Dorothee Arlt, Stavros Assimakopoulos, Ángel Barbas Coslado, Márton Bene, Samuel Bennett, Sina Blassnig, Salomi Boukala, Gloria Dagnino, Massimiliano Demata, Alexan-

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We hope you will enjoy reading this issue!

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