

Editorial

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Dear SComS readers,

We are happy to present you the first issue of 2019. As has happened quite regularly since the migration of SComS to the HOPE platform, also this issue features, beyond the general section, a thematic section. This time, our thematic section is devoted to crises seen from a perspective of political communication. We are happy and proud that many authors and contributors are willing to publish thematic sections with SComS, which propose cutting-edge research and open fresh perspectives on communication studies. You might consult our open calls for thematic sections on the journal webpage, www.scoms.ch.

Moving to the discussion of the contents of issue 19/1, the general section contains three articles. First, the article by Carole Probst, Alexander Buhmann, Diana Ingenhoff and Benedetto Lepori is a particularly important contribution for the Swiss Media and Communication landscape. The authors illustrate how Swiss Media and Communication Studies have developed over the last decade in terms of growths of research units, publication outputs, career paths, resources as well as research and teaching activities. The meticulous analysis of many different yet important indicators not only allows young as well as established scholars to better understand the character and the various traditions of Media and Communication Studies in the Swiss context, it also provides a historical and current account of the state of the field; from the establishment of the first research and teaching units, to a phase of rapid growth and expansion to a consolidation phase that characterized the last years. Most importantly, the article also discusses publication strategies and publication tendencies in the field that has seen a trend towards English publica-

tions in “international” journals. One of the many challenges of the field is thus a certain pressure towards homogenization, as the authors argue, which “creates tensions with respect to traditional links to Swiss society and culture(s)”. The authors underscore that these challenges will need to be managed and monitored carefully.

The second paper in the general section (“*Nested presuppositions: a manipulative form of informed presupposition*”) deals with a fine-grained analysis of a linguistic phenomenon relevant to speech communication, namely *presupposition*. Roughly speaking, what is presupposed in discourse is not said but taken for granted or considered as such by the speaker. Working at the interface between semantics and pragmatics, author Mohyi Eldeen Maziad elaborates the concept of *nested presuppositions*, referring to how different layers of contents are conveyed from speaker to hearer. In the author’s perspective, such layers of contents in nested presuppositions are always ideological and manipulative; even though they are new to the hearer, they are treated as taken for granted by the speaker. Needless to say, there is a risk associated to nested presuppositions: namely, new content is made part of the communication process without anyone really questioning its truthfulness and validity. Mohyi Eldeen Maziad provides a cognitive account of why and how nested presuppositions may work, using examples from the Arab Spring in Tunisia to explain the role this phenomenon plays in political communication.

Also concerned with political communication, “*Communicating nationalism in a changing Europe*” by Marcos Martínez Solanilla concludes the general section. This paper looks at how the conflict relative to the Catalan referendum (1 October 2017) is covered in online versions of

newspapers (mostly, tabloids) in Portugal, Switzerland, UK, Italy, Scotland and Northeast Italy. These regions and countries were chosen because they represent areas with very diverse relations to cases of requests for independence by minorities on their territory. The author claims that online coverage of nationalism allows “for different social sectors in diverse states to find out about each other, empathize with one another and feel supported”. Using methods from Critical Discourse Analysis and framing theory, Martínez Solanilla argues that the Catalan referendum is covered in ways that are extremely different, not to say conflicting, depending on “the social, political and cultural characteristics of the considered region” as well as on the newspaper’s orientation.

As the guest editors of the thematic section “*Political communication in and about crises*”, Julia Metag and Caroline Dalmus, illustrate, crises are to be found everywhere nowadays. Just think of the “refugee crisis”, the “financial crisis”, the “climate crisis” and many more current or recent crises. Crises are so ubiquitous that

they paradoxically might even become everyday routine events. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to theoretically reflect on what a crisis actually is and to empirically investigate how crises are used, maybe even instrumentalised and constructed in politics, how media report on crises, and how audiences react to them or perceive them. In other words, crises need to be examined with respect to their political dimensions. The thematic section in this issue of SComS presents an important step in this direction. It consists of three papers that offer diverse perspectives on political dimension of crises. And additional commentary that addresses further research gaps and challenges in political crisis communication concludes this thematic section. Further information on the article and the overall aim of the thematic section can be found in the guest editorial by Julia Metag and Caroline Dalmus.

It is time to leave our readers to this issue of our journal, thanking you for your interest in SComS.

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