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Editorial

Dear Readers,

This edition of SComS brings a rich *Thematic Section* on health communication to light. We were lucky enough to gain three renowned experts on health communication as our guest editors – Peter Schulz from the University of Lugano as well as Adrian Bangerter and Marianne Schmid Mast from the University of Neuchâtel. They present an intriguing selection of research on adaptivity in health communication, tackling various aspects of how healthcare messages can be better adapted and aligned with the needs of audiences.

As is often the case for studies in communication sciences, a specific topic like adaptivity links to a variety of issues related to culture, trust, behaviour change, and media, to mention just a few. As a consequence, this edition of SComS is once again a testimony of the truly interdisciplinary nature of communication science and the interested reader will learn concurrently from disciplines such as social psychology, social marketing, linguistics, and organization science. The thematic section will be introduced in greater detail by the guest editors themselves. We are left with the task of thanking all three of them for their valued work.

Given the richness of the *Thematic Section*, the *General Section* – for once – is limited to three papers. Yet, quantity should not be equated with quality! Two papers address the media consumption of the elderly in Switzerland, a growing population worthy of more scientific attention. Lea Unternährer and Philomen Schönhagen conducted an explorative study on the media consumption of elderly people, yielding insights not only on the use of specific media (e.g., radio, newspaper, TV, Internet), but also on factors that may explain specific tendencies in media use within the elderly population. For example, they find that the level of education, activity, social embeddedness, and gender all impact media use. In addition, disruptions such as the death of a partner can change media consumption behaviour.

The second article by Lydia Bauer, Urs Dahinden and Michael Aschwanden deals with the media use of elderly populations specifically

in the field of mobile communication. They draw on a larger study (the “KommTech-Studie 2010”) on the use of Information and Communication Technologies in Switzerland and find – similarly to Unternährer & Schönhagen – that age, gender, education, and income can explain differences in media use. The study qualifies further that it is particularly income and age that determine the use of mobile communication.

We finally present a paper written by Eva Mayerhöffer and Barbara Pfetsch, set in the field of political communication. It investigates the relationship of a country’s political culture – in particular its orientation on a consensual versus a majority democracy – and the communication culture between its politicians and journalists. The authors ask if the concordance system of Switzerland leads to a more harmonious and less conflictive relationship between politicians and journalists than in other European countries. Their Europe-wide survey suggests, however, another conclusion. In fact, while Swiss journalists and politicians conceive their relationship as harmonious, it is not perceived as more harmonious than equivalent relationships in other European countries. The study presents interesting data on how we can understand this unanticipated finding and considers what may explain the degree of conflict in the relationship between journalists and politicians.

In the *Laboratory Section*, Stephan Russ-Mohl presents a provocative piece on how we can practically (re-)imagine the relationship between communication science and the media industry. Building on the experience acquired with the *European Journalism Observatory* (EJO) since 2004, Russ-Mohl discusses how journalism can benefit in terms of quality and innovation from practices such as benchmarking, international networking, or translation services (from science to practice, from one linguistic community to another) and how journalism education can contribute to the provision of such services.

Before passing the torch to our authors, we would like to point to the *Community Section* and Otfried Jarren’s acknowledgement of the work of our scientific community’s father, Ulrich Saxer. He turned eighty earlier this year and we would like to congratulate and thank him for his groundbreaking work and inspiration.

Jeanne Mengis on behalf of the Editorial Board