



**#EcrealCSI23**



**The seventh bi-annual meeting of the  
Interpersonal Communication and Social  
Interaction section of ECREA:**

**"Looking forward!"**

**October 24–26, 2023**

**Tallinn University,**

**Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, Tallinn, Estonia**

**Organizers: Interpersonal Communication and Social Interaction section of ECREA and Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School and Tallinn University Conference Centre**

**Sponsored in part by**



## Dear ECREA ICSI 2023 conference participant,

Welcome to Tallinn!

It is time to look ahead. As this decade has started with many crises and challenges in Europe, in their tragic way they remind us of the vital importance of our discipline. Interpersonal relationships are basic units of humanity, in social interaction we create and negotiate shared meanings. The capacity to solve relational problems, enhance mutual understanding and increase well-being is the value interpersonal communication and social interaction research creates. Our section for Interpersonal Communication and Social Interaction wants to be the platform where we all can wonder and visualize the future through critical yet supportive conversations.

The ICSI Conference 2023 provides an opportunity to share our ideas, theories and research about interpersonal communication and social interaction across our different specializations. Connecting our insights from different approaches will inform our own current research, provide creative ideas for future research, and contribute theory development. The city of Tallinn, the European Green Capital in 2023 provides us a perfect environment for discussing interpersonal and social aspects of ecological, economical, and societal responsibility and sustainability. We would like to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to Tallinn University and Baltic Film, Media and Arts School for hosting us and giving us this wonderful opportunity to get together.

We are “Looking forward!” to seeing again all the ICSI friends and meeting wonderful new colleagues. It is time to cherish and celebrate the research of interpersonal communication and social interaction!

On behalf of ICSI management team,  
Sincerely,



Leena Mikkola  
Chair of the ICSI Section / ECREA

Image: Eino Ansio

## Dear ECREA ICSI 2023 conference participant,

**Welcome to Tallinn University! Welcome to Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School! Tere tulemast! 'Welcome!'**

I felt deeply honoured when Professor Leena Mikkola approached me with the proposal to oversee the planning of ICSI2023, the 7th bi-annual meeting of the Interpersonal Communication and Social Interaction section of ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association), at Tallinn University. My excitement about organising the conference at Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School was even greater when I found out that after four years it is held in person again! Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School is a competence centre for communication and audio-visual knowledge and expertise. We are fully dedicated to fostering the commencement and execution of advanced, interdisciplinary research and development initiatives. We are delighted to engage in collaboration with the Interpersonal Communication and Social Interaction section of ECREA and to contribute to offering a platform for exploring and envisioning the future, along with the solutions we can offer as communication scholars.

On behalf of the organizing committee, I am excited to see you in Tallinn!

Please take the time to visit Tallinn University buildings (which are nice and modern) to add to your conference learning experience. Last but certainly not least, make sure to relish the experience of Tallinn, a medieval city and the Green Capital of 2023. It provides a captivating backdrop for our discussions on the interpersonal and social aspects of ecological, societal responsibility, and sustainability issues.

Thank you again for your participation! Enjoy the ICSI2023! Aitäh 'Thank you'!



Anastassia Zabrodskaja  
Conference Chair

Professor of Intercultural Communication and Head of the Master's Program in Communication Management at Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, Executive Director of European Masters in Intercultural Communication

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## Program

### **Tuesday, 24 October 2023:** *Early-career workshop for doctoral candidates*

Venue: Room M-648 (Senate Hall, Mare building, VI floor, use the lift)

10.00–10.30 Opening words and introductions:

Prof. Leena Mikkola, chair for the Interpersonal Communication and Social Interaction section of ECREA

Jonna Leppäkumpu, Yecrea Representative

Katrin Saks, Vice-Rector for Development at Tallinn University

Dr. Anastassia Zabrodsckaja, Professor of Intercultural Communication at Tallinn University

10.30–12.00 Presentations and discussions in small groups

12.00–13.00 *Lunch* (Cafe Oaas, Terra building, I floor)

13.00–13.45 Presentations and discussions in small groups

13.45–14.15 Summary

14.00–15.00 Panel discussions on different post-defence career options

15.00–15.30 *Coffee and light refreshments* (Cafe Oaas, Terra building, I floor)

### **Wednesday, 25 October 2023:** *The first conference day: Looking forward!*

Venue: Room M-213 (Riho Päts Auditorium, Mare building, II floor, use the lift or stairs)

9.00–10.00 Registration

10.00–10.30 Conference opening ceremony:

Prof. Leena Mikkola, chair for the Interpersonal Communication and Social Interaction section of ECREA

Katrin Saks, Vice-Rector for Development at Tallinn University

Dr. Anastassia Zabrodsckaja, Professor of Intercultural Communication at Tallinn University

10.30–11.30 Chair: Prof. Leena Mikkola. **Keynote:** *Looking forward!: Interpersonal communication theorizing across metatheoretical perspectives and methodological approaches* - Dr. Kristina Scharp, Associate Professor at the School of Communication and Information, Rutgers University, New Jersey, United States.

11.30–12.30 *Lunch* (Atrium, Mare building, 3rd floor)

12.30–14.00 Session 1 (room M-213) and Session 2 (room M-648)

14.00–14.30 *Coffee and light refreshments* (Atrium, Mare building, 3rd floor)

14.30–16.00 Session 3 (room M-213) and Session 4 (room M-648)

18.00–20.00 *Conference dinner* (Restaurant Peppersack, Vana-Turg 6)

### **Thursday, 26 October 2023:** *The second conference day: Looking forward!*

Venue for the all-day event: Room M-213 (Riho Päts Auditorium, Mare building, II floor, use the lift or stairs)

9.00–10.00 Chair: Dr Karyn Stapleton. **Keynote:** *Argumentation, strategic communication and sustainable trust* - Dr. Rudi Palmieri, Senior Lecturer in Strategic Communication at the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom.

10.00–10.15 *Short break*

10.15–11.45 Session 5 (room M-213)

11.45–12.45 *Lunch* (Atrium, Mare building, 3rd floor)

12.45–14.15 Session 6 (room M-213)

14.15–15.15 *Coffee and light refreshments & closing session*. General Discussion: A look to the future after the recent and still ongoing difficult and challenging times in Europe. (Atrium, Mare building, 3rd floor)

## Good to know

Tallinn University Campus: <https://www.tlu.ee/en/campus> or <http://virtualtour.tlu.ee/>

### How to get to rooms M-648 and M-213

If you approach Tallinn University from Narva Road (Narva maantee in Estonian).  
Come to Narva Road, 25 Terra building and find this view:



Then walk along the Narva road (Narva maantee) and follow this arrow:





You will see this building in the courtyard. Pass this building. Turn here round the marked corner.



Congratulations! You have arrived at the Mare building (NB! Address is Uus-Sadama 5). Please come through that door!



Once you are inside, take the lift to the 6th floor (press number 6). You will find our room, which is designated as M-648.

For conference participants arriving on 25 and 26 October: When entering the building, please take the lift (press number 2) or stairs to the 2nd floor. Our room is M-213.



## CONFERENCE DINNER

The conference dinner is **included** in the conference participation fee. The conference dinner will take place on Wednesday, October 25th, at the Restaurant Peppersack (Vana-Turg 6, Tallinn), starting at 6 PM. According to the restaurant's website, Restaurant Peppersack is “located in a building with an interesting history, in the heart of Tallinn’s Old Town, in the immediate vicinity of the Town Hall Square.”

Click here: <https://peppersack.ee/en/>

## WIFI CONNECTIONS

**Wireless networks at Tallinn University (click [here](#) for more information)**

**Public wireless networks** (WiFi networks) are available in the following university buildings and rooms:

Mare (Uus-Sadama 5, Tallinn): full coverage. SSID: TLU

Terra (Narva rd 25, Tallinn): full coverage. SSID: TLU

### **Eduroam**

Tallinn University is part of an academic network called Eduroam, which provides our teachers and students free internet access at several universities, institutions and libraries across the world. At every organisation that has joined the project, Eduroam is accessed by logging in with the home university e-mail address (username@tlu.ee) and password.

## 10TH ECREA CONFERENCE IN LJUBLJANA: 24 - 27 SEPTEMBER 2024

ECREA is pleased to announce that the 10th European Communication Conference will take place from 24 to 27 September 2024. It will be hosted by Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Keynote Speakers



### Kristina M. Scharp

*Associate Professor, School of Communication and Information, Rutgers University, USA Director of the Family Communication and Relationships Lab*

Wednesday October 25, 10.30-11.30

Venue: Room M-213 (Riho Päts Auditorium, Mare building, II floor, use the lift or stairs)

### **Looking forward!: Interpersonal communication theorizing across metatheoretical perspectives and methodological approaches**

From global health crises to everyday conflict, interpersonal communication scholars play a vital role in predicting relational outcomes, understanding major difficulties, and critiquing systems of oppression that exacerbate an already complicated life. Despite this potential, relationship researchers have traditionally focused on identifying antecedents and predicting outcomes, favoring goals of generalizability, falsifiability, and parsimony in their theoretical work. Although this work is highly valuable, interpersonal scholars are growing increasingly interested in applying theory with the goals of understanding particular speech communities and engaging issues of power and inequity. Thus, in looking forward, this keynote begins with the introduction of the Theory of Communication (Dis)Enfranchisement (TCD; Hintz & Scharp, 2023), which is a postmodern critical theory that focuses on the ideologies that marginalize people, the consequences of those ideologies, and the (dis)enfranchising talk that has the power to both reify and resist them. This theory represents a path to asking different types of questions focused on populations often overlooked by both researchers in the past but also in public policy, the media, and hearts and minds. In addition to increased attention to marginalized populations, researchers are making robust methodological advancements across the field of Communication generally but originating from interpersonal communication scholars specifically. For example, Floyd brought physiological methods to the study of bio-evolutionary theory; Baxter developed contrapuntal analysis as a corresponding method to her postmodern critical theory, and Solomon and her colleagues are revolutionizing how researchers analyze conversational data with their dynamic dyadic systems approach. Toward advancing and supporting interpretive theorizing, the second part of this keynote presents Thematic Co-Occurrence (TCA; Scharp, 2021) as a tool that helps researchers identify and interpret the relationships between their themes and across research questions. Generative for the development of grounded theory, TCA also allows researchers to illustrate the ambivalence that pervades participant accounts, yet is often difficult to articulate in research reports. Taken together, the Theory of Communication (Dis)Enfranchisement and Thematic CoOccurrence Analysis represent just two of the ways interpersonal communication scholars are increasing both meta-theoretical inclusivity and developing methodological innovations. Looking forward, advances in different types of theorizing and analysis foreshadow the promise of interpersonal communication scholars to be leaders in translating their research to address the timely and serious problems people must manage at multiple levels.

**Bio:**

Kristina M. Scharp (Ph.D, University of Iowa) is an Associate Professor in the School of Communication and Information at Rutgers University and a Director of the Family Communication and Relationships Lab. Her work meets at the intersection of interpersonal, family, and health communication and focuses on the process of marginalization and the ways people cope with the major disruptions to their lives. Specifically, Scharp's research programmatically advances communication theory and method with the aim of (a) exposing institutionalized structures of oppression, (b) understanding the populations those structures marginalize, and (c) illuminating communication processes marginalized populations enact to cope with the inequities they experience. To date, she has over 90 publications in outlets such as the *Journal of Communication*, *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Monographs*, and *Communication Research* as well as three co-authored textbooks. In the last few years, she was awarded the International Communication Association's Early Career Award, NCA Family Communication Division's Distinguished Article Award, and the Leslie A. Baxter Early Career Award in Family Communication. Her work on family estrangement, in particular, has garnered attention from numerous media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Conversation*, and *NPR*.



## Rudi Palmieri

*Senior Lecturer, Strategic Communication,  
University of Liverpool, UK*

Thursday October 26, 9.00-10.00

Venue: Room M-213 (Riho Päts  
Auditorium, Mare building, II floor, use the  
lift or stairs)

### **Argumentation, strategic communication and sustainable trust**

Communication and trust influence and determine each other. On the one hand, trust in one's interlocutor (either speaker/writer or hearer/reader) is a vital premise for communicative interactions that are at the same time effective, cooperative and respectful. On the other hand, communication plays a key role in generating and, more in particular, re-generating trust when negative or unexpected episodes undermine it. Corporate/institutional wrongdoings and crisis situations represent typical situations where the trustee-stakeholders (e.g., investors, customers, citizens, employees) question their opinion regarding the trustworthiness of the trustor-organisations, looking for reasons that are able to argumentatively confirm, revise or reject a positive image of trust. Despite (crisis) communication scholars have extensively theorised and studied trust-building and trust-repair strategies, relatively little attention has been given to the argumentative dimension of trust-oriented strategies. In this talk, I will first explain the central role of argumentation – the exchange of reasons for or against a claim – in the communicative process of negotiating trust. By re-evoking some wellknown cases of trust violation in the business, political and sport domains, argumentation-driven persuasion and manipulative persuasion will be compared in their long-term implications. This will lead us to introduce the concept of sustainable trust (i.e., trust beliefs made resilient by their sound argumentative support) as a central element of strategic communication. In the second part of the talk, I will revisit well-established repertoires of crisis response strategies from an argumentative perspective, suggesting to conceive of these strategies as instances of argumentative designs aimed at effectively communicating reasons that justify trust-related claims. Leveraging on argumentation theory, I will discuss the analysis and evaluation of trust-repair reasons, in a way that keeps together verbal means and substantive measures, the latter understood as actions that signal premises for inferences to trust. In the final part of the talk, I will sketch a research agenda on trust-oriented argumentation in connection with key trust issues in today's markets and society.

## Bio

Rudi Palmieri (PhD in Communication Sciences, USI Lugano) is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Strategic Communication at the University of Liverpool (UK). He is the founding director of MSc Strategic Communication and co-director for the Language, Data and Society research centre. His main area of expertise is the analysis of argumentation in strategic communication contexts, such as financial communication, crisis communication and entrepreneurial discourse. His work in this field aims at better understanding how the complexity of communicative situations (e.g., multiple audiences, conflicting goals, intercultural dynamics, and technological constraints) is reflected in the way in which organisational leaders and stakeholders design, convey and exchange reasons to influence opinions and decisions. An important part of his research is dedicated to developing an understanding of trust-oriented (crisis) communication as an inherently argumentative process. His research takes an interdisciplinary approach – combining theories and analytic methods from argumentation theory, rhetoric, pragmatic linguistics, semiotics, strategic management and corporate communications research – to identify and examine patterns of argumentative strategies in a variety of genres and activities, such as takeover documents, earnings calls, proxy fights, investor pitching, crowdfunding campaigns, and crisis responses. On all these topics, he has published extensively on different world-leading journals and has taught several courses at UG, PG and Doctoral levels in the UK, Switzerland and various other European countries.

## Parallel Sessions

**Wednesday, October 25, 12.30-14.00**

### **Session 1: Relationship building and maintenance in digital environment (room M-213)**

**Chair: Pekka Isotalus, Tampere University, Finland**

#### **Love is a click away! The use of dating apps by heterosexual and non-heterosexual emerging adults**

Anișoara Pavelea, Adelina Dinu and Iulia-Lorina Culic, Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania

One of the most important developmental tasks of emerging adulthood is the exploration of and search for dyadic intimate relationships. With the recent development of online websites and dating apps, dating has gone mobile (Sumter & Vandenbosch, 2019). One of the most frequent critiques related to online dating apps refers to encouraging the “hookup” culture, but recent studies have underlined a more nuanced perspective on users’ motivation to engage in online dating, distinguishing between: relational (love and casual sex), intrapersonal (ease of communication and self-worth validation), and entertainment motives (thrill of excitement and trendiness). With the literature indicating that reasons for use can depend on gender (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017, Sumter et al., 2017) and sexual orientation (Ranzini & Lutz, 2017), the current research explores the differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual emerging adults in terms of motivation to use online dating apps and how their underlying motivation influences online strategic self-presentation. With most studies on this topic covering the North American, Australian, or Asian realm, there is still a lack of data from European countries. Combining focusgroup data with an online survey (n=172), our study covers a sample of Romanian emerging adults, balanced in term of gender, area of residence and sexual orientation. Our data shows that, comparing to heterosexuals, non-heterosexual individuals use dating apps more for casual sex and ease of use than self-worth validation, and that strategic self-presentation motives differ significantly for the two. In the final section of our paper, we put the findings into context, discuss the limitations of our approach and provide avenues for future research into the topic.

#### **A one-way road? Insights of German Schools on Digitalization’s Impacts on the SchoolParent Communication**

Priscila Berger, Ilmenau University of Technology, Germany

In Germany, governmental initiatives have been implemented in the last five years to boost school digitalization, such as the School Digital Pact at the national level and the Digital Pilot Schools in Thuringia State. The present contribution draws on data collected from the twenty Thuringian Digital Pilot Schools since 2020 through the qualitative content analysis of their digitalization plans and qualitative interviews with school principals, teachers, and



parents, to identify to what extent schools' digitalization efforts have changed the communication processes between schools and parents. From the perspective of schools, the main change that occurred is the management of the communication with parents, i.e., what channels are used for what purposes and situations to maximize benefits and minimize inconvenience. Principals and teachers highlight the benefits of using digital instant message services to convey short information on short notice to parents and reach whole parent groups at once. However, some teachers and principals worry about being contacted and disturbed by parents in their free time. Thus, a few schools have decided to stick to communication with parents exclusively via email. Besides, some teachers consider that parents sometimes do not communicate appropriately via digital messenger services— their language is too informal, direct, and even rude. Also, parents tend to react too quickly to information (e.g., inquiring teachers about the reason for their children's bad grades). To counteract these undesired effects, a school has instructed parents to contact teachers and principals exclusively via email, i.e., only the school can use the messenger tool to contact parents but not vice versa. Moreover, schools consider some organizational tools to serve the purpose of communication, for instance, when they grant parents access to digital portals to consult students' grades and attendance records. Thus, schools expect parents to follow actively and independently their children's behaviors and performances. According to the parents, the main perceived change concerns the volume and frequency of information they get from the schools, considering that the communication between parents and schools used to happen in specific events (e.g., parent-teacher conferences) or emergency cases (e.g., notes or phone calls on students' bad behavior). In general, they find it positive that they can track a lot of information about their children's school life and get to know what is happening in the school. However, some parents consider some information irrelevant and excessive, which can be annoying and overwhelming. In summary, the adoption of digital tools maximizes one-way communication from schools to parents— at the same time that schools reach groups of parents quickly and inform parents more intensively, thoroughly, and frequently, they make efforts to control parents' involvement, limiting parents use of digital tools to reach out to schools. The presentation will discuss the pertinence of approaching digitalization not only as a format but also as the subject of communication between schools and parents to pursue communication solutions that suit both parties and promote digital competence.

### **Framing a Parasocial Intergroup Encounter**

Lassi Rikkonen, Ira Virtanen, Venla Kuuluvainen and Pekka Isotalus, Tampere University, Finland

Intergroup contact theory is considered an important contribution of social sciences to reducing prejudice and improving intergroup attitudes. Based on Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, the theory posits that positive contact with outgroup members can reduce prejudice towards the outgroup in general. Anxiety reduction and empathy are considered the primary mediators in this process. This quantitative study investigates the role of relational framing within intergroup contact process. According to relational frames theory, there are two primary frames, dominance-submission and affiliation-disaffiliation, that guide the interpretation of messages when people make relational inferences (Dillard et al., 1996). These frames are mental structures that can be used in organizing knowledge about social relationships. They are "the lenses through which social reality is viewed" (Dillard et

al., 1996, p. 706). This study looks at how relational framing is associated with willingness to engage in intergroup contact, anxiety reduction, and feelings of empathy. In this study, intergroup contact occurred at parasocial level. Participants (N = 51) took part in a pretest/posttest experiment where they made the acquaintance of a Finnish-Somali woman on a web-based learning platform. The platform combines traditional video material and immersive virtual material. Participants' willingness to engage in intergroup contact and experienced intergroup anxiety were measured both before and after the parasocial intergroup encounter. Regarding relational framing, intensities of five relational judgements (dominance, submissiveness, affiliation, disaffiliation, and involvement) during the encounter were measured. Regression analysis and structural equation modeling were utilized to test the hypotheses and to answer the research questions. Results show that while the preceding willingness to engage in intergroup contact does not affect the selection of relational frames, framing affects the intergroup contact process in many ways. Importantly, frame intensities seem to influence the affective mediators of the process. Dominance-submission dimension is mainly connected with experienced intergroup anxiety whereas affiliation-disaffiliation dimension is more closely connected with feelings of empathy. Involvement was the only relational frame dimension to have a direct effect on willingness to engage in intergroup contact. Thus, new digital formats such as immersive virtual environments may offer an additional contribution to positive intergroup contact effects. However, the observed effects were quite small. This suggests that larger, and probably longer-lasting effects, may require more time spent in contact and perhaps also contact occurring in face-to-face settings. While this study was conducted at a laboratory setting, the applicability of the findings extends beyond research environments. This is due to the inherently central position of relational framing in human interaction. Regardless of the communication context, focusing on those aspects of interaction that bring about different emphases on relational frame intensities may reveal something about why emotions such as anxiety and empathy weaken or intensify, and why intergroup contact is perceived either positively or negatively.

### **Give me a break: Communication channels of mothers and daughters from three generations**

Noa Ana Hatzir and Elad Segev, Tel Aviv University, Israel

This study aims to provide insights into how mothers and daughters manage relationships through various communication channels (face-to-face, phone calls, and WhatsApp). Each channel has its own distinctive characteristics. It has been argued that the choice of communication channel is part of the message itself (Madianou & Miller, 2012, 2013), and can reveal expectations from the relationships, family norms, emotional intentions, and actual communication practices (Madianou, 2021). Mother-daughter relationships and communication are unique within the family (Miller-Day, 2004) and remain significant throughout life (Alford & Miller-Day, 2019; Miller-Day, 2004). They involve complex and challenging issues arising from the interplay between connection and autonomy, particularly during developmental milestones, like emerging adulthood (Bojczyk et al., 2011; Fingerman, 2017; Harrigan & Miller-Ott, 2013), midlife (Dare & Green, 2011), and aging (Lefkowitz & Fingerman, 2003). Additionally, there may be misunderstandings between generations as a result of different perceptions and practices of communication channel use (Chai et al., 2020; Harrigan & Miller-Ott, 2013; Miller-Ott & Kelly, 2019). The study examines

Israeli mothers and daughters living in an environment characterized by high levels of family unity, also known as "familism" (Fogiel-Bijaoui & Rutlinger-Reiner, 2013). Communication channels are viewed primarily as a means of enhancing family connections by three generations of Israeli women. Moreover, a counter-perception exists regarding communication as disruptive (Hatzir & Segev, 2023). This study of three generations of Israeli mother-daughter communication offers a unique perspective on that interplay. We conducted six focus groups to explore the misunderstandings and conflicts that arise while using communication channels. Choosing this methodology was motivated by its ability to promote interaction between the women, providing a comprehensive understanding of communication processes (Marková et al., 2007). Three groups focused on the communication of young adult daughters (aged 25-35) and mothers (aged 50-70), and three groups focused on the communication of mid-life adult daughters (aged 40-65) and aging mothers (aged 65-85). Mothers and their daughters did not participate in the same group to encourage open discussion. Recruitment was done using snowball sampling and postings on various Facebook pages. Each focus group consisted of six to eight participants, resulting in 43 participants. Two key themes emerged from the study, highlighting the potential for misunderstandings when utilizing communication channels: availability and media richness. A lack of availability may cause conflicts when choosing telephone calls and face-to-face communication. As such, daughters often expressed that unexpected visits or phone calls from their mothers were not always welcomed. They hoped that their mothers would use WhatsApp to coordinate their availability first. A WhatsApp conversation is significantly less rich in tone, context, and nonverbal communication than a face-to-face conversation or a telephone call. Conflicts and misinterpretations may arise due to limited information contained in text messages. A resolution to these conflicts can be achieved when using complementary communication channels along these two axes. Understanding each other's needs and the strengths and limitations of each communication channel can help mothers and daughters communicate more effectively and be less prone to misunderstandings.

**Wednesday, October 25, 12.30-14.00**

**Session 2: Interpersonal and relational issues in work  
(room M-648)**

**Chair: Malgorzata Lahti, University of Jyväskylä, Finland**

**Navigating Connectivity Expectations and Work-life Boundaries Through  
Sensemaking in Global Teams**

Jonna Leppäkumpu and Anu Sivunen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The use of communication technologies in everyday life has increasingly blurred the boundaries between work and personal life. Technologies such as email, instant messaging, phone calls, and text messages enable constant connectivity, regardless of time and location, leading to greater flexibility and permeability of the work-life. However, connectivity is not solely reliant on technology; it also depends on the responsible use by individuals, teams, and organizations. Therefore, the perception and the ways connectivity expectations are communicated within organizations play a crucial role in effectively managing work-life boundaries. Connectivity expectations can be particularly challenging for global employees

due to the demands of their work and the social environments in which global teams operate. These expectations can result in stress and strain, especially when they involve non-urgent or minor tasks that interfere with personal life responsibilities. Moreover, employees' responses and coping mechanisms in relation to connectivity expectations are influenced by the behavior of their supervisors. Supervisors serve as guiding figures, shaping the values and norms of the organization, and employees interpret their supervisors' stance on connectivity practices. In our study, we examine the ways in which connectivity expectations are understood and navigated through the theoretical framework of sensemaking. This approach allows us to explore connectivity as a shared process of negotiation, moving beyond the notion that connectivity in global work is solely negative and beyond the control of team members. By employing this framework, we examine how global team members and leaders make sense of these expectations and how they are reflected team members' work-life boundary management. The study is based on in-depth interviews with 55 employees working in nine different teams across Europe, the US, and Asia-Pacific. Our findings show that team members collaboratively made sense of connectivity expectations within the team, while team leaders engaged in sensegiving, attempting to influence the sensemaking processes of team members. Both team members and team leaders drew cues for sensemaking from professional, organizational, and global work frameworks. The sensemaking of connectivity expectations was reflected in team members' work-life boundary management, as cocreated rules around connectivity enabled team members to disconnect from work and team leaders' sensegiving allowed adjustments in work-life boundaries, resulting in a supportive culture for work-life boundary management.

### **Feedback – a multifaceted communication phenomenon**

Inkeri Roos-Manninen, Aalto University, Finland

Feedback is a central phenomenon in working life and an an important part of leader-member communication. Feedback can be defined as a dynamic communication process that conveys information about the receiver's work performance or behavior (Baker et al. 2013). Giving, seeking, and receiving feedback is considered important for both individual and organizational wellbeing and success. In organizations, feedback interactions between leaders and team members can be a valuable source for promoting learning and development, job performance and wellbeing at work. Consequently, team leaders are encouraged to give ongoing feedback to employees. The advantages of feedback, however, cannot be taken for granted. Feedback interactions can also fail and have negative consequences on job performance and work motivation, and they can also damage working relationships. Especially providing critical feedback is often regarded as a challenging communication task. Despite the extensive research literature on feedback, there is surprisingly little research on leader-member feedback conducted in the field of communication. There is lack of qualitative research investigating feedback between leaders and members from the point of view of interpersonal communication and social interaction. Previous research on feedback has been conducted largely by using quantitative survey methods and has focused predominantly on the antecedents and outcomes of feedback, and not so much on the feedback itself as a concept and a communication phenomenon. Furthermore, previous research on feedback has paid little attention to the many changes which have occurred in working life such as the increase in knowledge work, distributed teams, e-leadership, and the growing role of technology-mediated communication in

leader-member interactions. The objective of this presentation is to describe and understand feedback as a multifaceted communication phenomenon in leader-member interaction. The paper seeks to describe leaders' and members' experiences and interpretations of feedback in the context of distributed knowledge work and e-leadership. The paper aims to build an understanding of feedback as a concept by describing its different meanings and manifestations in leader-member interaction. The paper discusses the tentative results of a qualitative doctoral investigation. The empirical data was collected interviewing (N=26) leaders and members working in global business companies. The participants work in demanding expert and leadership positions and represent six different nationalities. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and analyzed qualitatively. The tentative results suggest feedback is an ambiguous concept and a multifaceted communication phenomenon that has several different meanings and manifestations in leader-member interaction. Hence, feedback may be best understood as an umbrella concept. Several different feedback types were identified in the study. The feedback types vary according to the different contents, functions, and forms of feedback in different situations. Moreover, contextual factors such as the nature of distributed knowledge work and the working relationships between leaders and members are interrelated with the interpretations and meanings given to feedback. The paper discusses the ambiguity inherent in the feedback concept and analyses feedback as a complex communication phenomenon. Theoretical and practical implications of the results, and avenues for future research are discussed in the full paper.

### **How newcomers' experience and conceptualize workplace relationships? A phenomenographical perspective**

Sari Rajamäki, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Workplace relationships are unique interpersonal relationships that exist and develop within organizations. They include an expectation of productivity and task performance and can enhance decision making, information sharing, mentoring, and social support. Therefore, workplace relationships are in a key role when it comes to values, workload and how we conduct our work. These expectations of workplace relationships may vary depending on who experiences or conceptualizes them. Even though earlier studies have shown the importance of relationships in the work, they do not present a clear understanding of how workplace relationships are experienced and conceptualized by newcomers. The present study contributes to the workplace relationship research by producing a classification of different conceptualizations of how early career newcomers understand workplace relationships. The aim of this study is to analyze how newcomers experience and conceptualize their workplace relationships. Moreover, the study asks whether there are temporal differences in these conceptualizations. The participants were 23 employees in their first workplace after graduation, working in both small and large companies, public sector organizations, and other associations. Starting at the point of entry into their new workplace, each participant was interviewed between five and 10 times every two or three weeks during their first three to 10 months. The data collection was inductive and guided by the participants' descriptions to capture the changes in their description of workplace relationships. In this ongoing study, phenomenographical data analysis is applied. In presentation, preliminary findings of newcomers' conceptualizations are presented. The

connections between relationship development and overall work life experiences are discussed.

### **The Communicative B2B (business to business) -Encounter between Small Finnish and German Enterprises: Facilitators of Success**

Jarl Macalka, University of Vaasa, Finland

There is an increasing number of internationalizing small enterprises (SEs) in this millennium in the EU, and the communicative encounter of Finnish and German SEs has consequently become an interesting research field (Eurostat 2023). These companies now face the challenges of international corporate communication. This setting also requires new skills in interpersonal communication in the form of cultural competence (Aririguzoh 2022, Ting-Toomey 2009, Gudykunst et al. 1988). As a result, certain professional and especially personal qualifications are mandatory to facilitate internationalization and conflict resolution in social interactions (DeVito 2019, Knapp et al. 2005). Cultural competence has also a crucial role in the ability of these SEs to cooperate internationally (Purhonen 2012). There are plenty of earlier studies on cultural competence in B2B settings (see e.g. Moran et al. 2009). However, few studies have focused on the early encounters from the perspectives of two nationalities in SEs. The aim of this presentation is to examine how cultural competence is experienced by representatives of Finnish and German SEs in the first personal contacts of this communicative B2B-encounter. The related research questions are: How is this communicative B2B -encounter experienced by representatives of Finnish and German SEs? In the opinion of these representatives, what facilitates or detracts from the success of this B2B -encounter? The data of the study consists of focused interviews from 10 Finnish and 10 German SEs. The criteria by which the participating SEs were chosen were average headcount, revenue, and international advancement. The interviewees were actually involved in this encounter's interpersonal communication. The data was collected by focused interviews centering on first contacts to find affiliates, negotiations, and agreements and the maintenance of on-going business relationships. In this context, the main notion of this study is cultural competence (Moran et al. 2009). It describes the ability to act in this social interaction according to the situational expectations and requirements of international dialogue. It implicates the ability to identify, if possible, whether communication issues are related to culture or not. The data analysis was conducted by thematic analysis, which allowed research questions to be answered by revealing unique and important material (see e.g. Braun & Clarke 2006). The analytic notion of "theme" allows the researcher to disclose latent and implicated meanings that made more in-depth interpretations possible (Braun & Clarke 2006). Regarding to these latent meanings, or even those only appearing once a statistic-based content analysis is insufficient. The communicative B2B -encounter is considered under the perspective of social constructivism (Berger & Luckmann 1967) and the study leans on the organizational communication theory of Deetz (2001). Social constructivism allows an individual to use social interaction to build an image of the truth related to the observed and surrounding world. Therefore there does not exist only one single version of truth. According to Deetz (2001), possible research themes in organizational communication are hierarchy, structure, form, culture, and power. In this study cultural competence is a cultural factor of organizational communication. The preliminary results show that the culture of interpersonal communication is seen as dynamic and that it depends on personal and situational conditions based on individual



multiculturalism shaping interpersonal communication. Facilitators must create trust, open-mindedness, personal relationships in business and knowledge and acceptance of multiculturalism. The results further suggest that cultural competence in social interaction takes three different shapes: this competence is mostly outsourced, it is seldom the result of training, and it is rarely already existing in these SEs. Outsourcing and training are very dependent on corporate resources. Already existing competence was always connected to individual backgrounds, such as the spouse, partner, family, education, or former activities connected to other cultures. These persons also emphasized the status of cultural competence. All in all, this interview study focusing on two European countries indicated that cultural factors of this communicative B2B -encounter are by far not the only ones. It can therefore be concluded that personal and situational conditions have a greater impact than cultural settings.

**Wednesday, October 25, 14.30-16.00**

**Session 3: Interpersonal relationships as a source of well-being  
(room M-213)**

**Chair: Leah Bryant, DePaul University, US**

**Assessing the Conservation on of Resources Theory: Examining Stress, Conflict, and Burnout in Relationship across an International Sample during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Hannah Jones, Jorlanditha Austin and Jennifer Theiss, Rutgers University, US

Defying projected expectations, the COVID-19 pandemic persisted well past the spring of 2020 when it first began. In many countries, lockdown and related restrictions lasted well into 2021. As a result of shelter in place orders, individuals were forced to drastically alter their day-to-day working and living conditions. These changes likely resulted in high work-family interaction (WFI) for individuals as they worked to create new schedules to survive sustained disruptions. Adverse psychological effects of stay-at-home orders due to COVID-19 have been well documented (e.g., Tull et al., 2020), but less is known about the communicative impact of these orders and how couples managed to live, work, and maintain their relationship from the confines of their home. A result of year plus long lockdowns likely resulted in increased WFI strain and potentially burnout. Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1988; 1998) can provide a useful framework for understanding burnout experiences within relationships during the pandemic by exploring the role of partner interference and facilitation that result from resource loss or gain. The theory proposes that individuals strive to accrue resources while working against losing resources. If individuals are not able to procure and maintain resources in the context of WFI, they may experience burnout. When individuals experience burnout, they can experience various health, employment, and interpersonal impacts. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many of these mechanisms are already compromised, understanding how burnout occurs and how we can combat it becomes even more critical. Given this knowledge, we proposed four hypotheses exploring resource loss and gain on stress, work-family interference and facilitation, and the interplay of these variables both contributing to and buffering burnout. To assess our hypotheses, we collected data from 397 individuals in a

committed romantic relationship one year after the start of pandemic-induced lockdowns. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 75 ( $M = 31.67$ ) and were from 27 countries across six continents. The majority of participants were white (78.1%), from the United Kingdom (23.4%), seriously dating (46.2%), and in their current relationship for an average of 8.50 years. Participants completed a survey that measured resource inventory, stress, work and family facilitation and interference (i.e., conflict), and burnout. As a first step, all variables were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis to ensure they met criteria for internal consistency and parallelism. We then ran bivariate correlations, and all variables were significant in the expected direction. Results of a structural equation analysis revealed positive relationships between resource loss and stress experienced by participants. In addition, stress was significantly associated with the experience of work-family conflict and burnout. These findings showcase the theoretical utility of the conservation of resources theory within relationships and highlight the role of communication within the theory. Further, our results illustrate how burnout can extend beyond organizational contexts and occur within romantic relationships. Finally, our results highlight direct relationships between the loss of resources, stress, and burnout, thereby pointing to ways in which crisis conditions of the pandemic can undermine relationship functioning and comprise relationship stability.

### **Tackling loneliness with digital connectedness in older age: The double-edged sword and the ethical way forward**

Marek Háša, Charles University, Czechia

When an older person affected by loneliness embarks on the journey of adopting a new digital communication technology to keep up with a family group chat or find a new friend online, what are the changes that may occur in her everyday reality? And how does she herself perceive and reflect on such developments, especially in regard to her own (senior) identity and emotional wellbeing? The lack of human interaction and perceived social presence poses a serious public health challenge to our rapidly aging population. Both formal and informal interventions utilizing digital communication means such as text and voice messages, video calls, or interactive social games offer vast potential for addressing this threat. However, while a plethora of objectivistic findings have been published on the design and effectiveness of specific digital media-based solutions to the problem of widespread loneliness in older adults, our understanding of the highly complex impact such digital interactions may have on this fragile population's everyday realities and identities remains rather shallow. In an attempt to bridge this gap, I took a non-media centric, human-first, empathy-driven perspective when inspecting the process of introducing digitally mediated interpersonal communication into older adults' lives. In my dissertation study, I paired 15 younger volunteers with 15 older adults who were all impacted by loneliness to varying degrees. These dyads were encouraged to gradually build a digitally mediated friendship with their counterpart over the course of one month. I collected rich multimodal data through observations during home visits, two rounds of in-depth phenomenological interviews, phone check-ups, tablet usage records, and participants' activity logs. As part of my hermeneutic circle with and in the data, I progressed from a preliminary thematic analysis of interview transcripts to a multi-perspectival, narrative-based approach with the

objective to produce in-depth, highly contextualized insights into the emotionality of adopting new communication technologies as means of increasing or maintaining one's level of social integration and social agency. By depicting the stories of older individuals and their accomplishments and struggles with digitally mediated friendships and family relationships, the proposed paper presentation will unravel the highly sensitive dynamics between one's (senior) identity, mental wellness, and the perceived control and agency within the age of deep mediatization (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Readers will be invited to form their own interpretations of the meaning-making processes behind an older man accepting the control of digital media as a prerequisite for a socially saturated life or an older woman's self-perception severely suffering from common, minor technological difficulties with a smartphone. The ultimate goal of the presentation (and doctoral dissertation) is to apply the aforementioned in-depth insights based on the older adults' lived experiences in depicting an ethical way forward - specific suggestions for future research and practical projects aiming to address loneliness with digitally-mediated interventions in an empathic, harm-free, empowering manner.

### **Navigating the Digital Frontier: The Implications of ChatGPT on Health Information Seeking and Interpersonal Communication**

Kaitlin E. Phillips and Kayla B. Rhidenour, Baylor University, US

According to OpenAI ChatGPT (GPT-4) is, “a large multimodal model [LLMs] (accepting text inputs and emitting text outputs today, with image inputs coming in the future) that can solve difficult problems with greater accuracy than any of our previous models”(Open AI). As our society grapples with online (mis)information, there is a growing concern that individuals will encounter incorrect or harmful health related knowledge (Sallam, 2023), as they utilize the Internet and other online sources to solve their health needs (Smailhodzic et al., 2016). Our paper animates the conference theme of “looking ahead” by theoretically juxtaposing the new breakthrough technology of ChatGPT with existing literature of online health information seeking. In particular, we aim to examine the connections between these bodies of literature through a specific look into the potential consequences of individuals utilizing ChatGPT to seek information on a diagnosis, new symptomatology, health risks, or diagnosis management and encountering (mis)information from the LLM. Interpersonal communication has broad reaching implications for health behaviors from (mis)information seeking (Ackerson & Viswanath, 2009) to the overall quality of our lives (Stewart, 2012). Consequently, when considering the parameters of interpersonal communication in the context of health, it includes communication “with friends and family members, between consumers and health care providers, among members of social networks, and within public health systems” (Ackerson & Viswanath, 2009, p. 11). As evidenced above, we know that a) individuals increasingly seek health related information online, b) that online (mis)information is on the rise across topic areas, and c) that we utilize our social networks when managing health concerns. In reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, personal relationships were either strengthened through congruent views on health information—such as vaccines or mask wearing compliance—or severed due to their incongruent views. Consequently, the ability to access LLMs on a global scale offers both theoretical and practical avenues for research—in particular as we consider a generation tasked with health

literacy, emotional support, and financial assistance of both their parents and children. The Sandwich generation as they are called, consists of those “who have a living parent age 65 or older and are either raising a child under age 18 or supporting a grown child” (Parker & Patten, 2013, para 7), and is prevalent across both North American (Parker & Patten, 2013) and Europe (Albertini et al., 2022). Members of this generation are faced with the impossible task of managing their own, their children’s, and their parent’s health related issues. Constantly inundated with health concerns, the Internet has become a common source of health related (mis)information for these individuals. However, as people attempt to navigate a variety of health issues—the LLMs like ChatGPT have the potential to both minimize their burden by providing quick answers to complicated and nuanced illnesses without fully comprehending that the LLM’s information is potentially unreliable (mis)information or worse, altogether incorrect. Thus, we present an agenda for communication scholars as we navigate the global implications of ChatGPT technology on our health information seeking behaviors and intersecting interpersonal communication.

### **Using language to overcome major personal trauma. For a theory of ‘words that do good’**

Yanick Farmer, University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada

**Background:** All human life is marked by finitude, that is to say by the limits inherent in the fact of inhabiting a body whose duration and capacities are finite. This condition gives certain events the possibility of producing pleasure, joy and happiness. But it also exposes the human being to the risks of traumas, such as illnesses, injuries and other physical or psychological shocks that can seriously invalidate him or her. Trauma can be broadly defined as sudden and unexpected "shocks" with physical and/or emotional consequences. In the most tragic cases, these traumas can radically change a person's life trajectory. The death of a loved one, a serious accident, a severe chronic or degenerative disease, all of these traumas represent an extremely difficult ordeal for the people who experience them. In order to help a person overcome trauma, it would probably be useful to better understand how to find the "right words", i.e. the words or sentences that "produce" well-being in the traumatized person. To do this, it is important to understand the link between language and psychological needs. **Purpose:** Thus, the general objective of this research was to contribute to the study of effective communication in psychosocial intervention and the helping relationship by examining the linguistic and psychological characteristics of utterances (words and sentences) used by family caregivers or professionals with trauma victims. More specifically, this study sought to understand how speech acts positively, by creating well-being, a sense of balance, appeasement or self-determination, on a person experiencing "major personal trauma" and helps him or her feel better. This goal addresses a need of many in the field of comprehensive health and intervention for the creation of "conversational tools" for their work. **Analysis:** We chose to answer this question through a qualitative empirical investigation in which we interviewed 49 individuals (patients, caregivers, professionals). To get at the heart of the “performativity” of language and its ability to alter mental states, we identified phrases and words that “do good” for traumatized individuals. The theoretical framework used to analyze the interview verbatims drew on Deci and Ryan's theory of self-determination, Barrett's theory of constructed emotion and Assaraf's theory of performativity. **Conclusion and implications:** Examining these words and phrases allowed us to identify broad themes that we then linked to basic

psychological needs and elementary linguistic morphologies. These helped us to grasp the basic structure on which it is possible to build conversational tools for psychosocial intervention.

**Wednesday, October 25, 14.30-16.00**

**Session 4: Inclusion and influence: Perspectives on young people's education, participation, and possibilities  
(room M-648)**

**Chair: Priscila Berger, Ilmenau University of Technology, Germany**

**Communicative aspects of scientific thinking in the university education of communication**

Tessa Horila (1), Mitra Raappana (2), Marianna Langenoja (1) and Katja Lehtisaari (1)

(1) Tampere University, Finland

(2) University of Jyväskylä, Finland

University studies represent overarching changes in students' thinking. The utmost goal of university education is to provide proficient scientific thinking skills to graduates. These skills combine critical thinking with epistemic understanding, research skills, evidence-based reasoning, and contextual understanding of knowledge (Murtonen & Salmento, 2019). They are especially pivotal in the education of communication studies and journalism (CSJ), as graduates of these fields will be employed as knowledge professionals with an expectancy to understand complex social and societal phenomena. However, scientific thinking and its development has not yet been studied much in the context of communication education. In the presentation we discuss findings from two unpublished manuscripts conducted as part of a recent research project entitled TAJU ("The development of scientific thinking within the university education of journalism and communication"). The first of these studies (Horila, Raappana & Mikkola) focuses on CSJ students' academic self-efficacy (ASE); the goal was to understand students' self-perceived ASE and the factors they perceive as meaningful for its development during their studies. The aim of the second study (Horila, Langenoja & Lehtisaari) was to understand the role and effect of critical events in the development of scientific thinking within the university education of CSJ. Both studies employed interview data (N=34) from Finnish university students of journalism and communication studies, and data for both studies were analyzed qualitatively. In our presentation, we will zoom in on findings from these studies that focus specifically on two communicative aspects of scientific thinking: communicative ASE and communicative critical events that develop thinking. The results of the first study show that the ASE of CSJ students is strongly anchored in communication. As a novel finding, a communicative ASE—efficacy beliefs related to one's academic communication competence—stands out as important for developing scientific thinking. CSJ students construct their overall ASE in various communication tasks, such as group work, seminar discussions, presentations, etc., while simultaneously these tasks continuously shape their communicative academic efficacy beliefs. Communicative ASE is also relational. Our results specifically highlight the importance of peer support and confirmation as well as the supervisory relationship in constructing ASE. However, the

supervisory relationship can be a central cause of anxiety and weak efficacy beliefs. Regarding the second study, a critical event analysis showed that the development of scientific thinking, for communication studies students specifically, occurs largely in interaction and shared meaning-making. While individual processes, such as conducting one's BA or MA thesis, were identified as important, a large part of critical events were communicative, including group work and other forms of collaboration, being exposed to and learning from multifaceted views, and mirroring one's thinking with that of others. Taken together, the findings of these studies help us understand the formation of scientific thinking in communicative processes, as well as communication competence as part of the skillset of scientific thinking for CSJ students. They thus broaden our theoretical understanding of scientific thinking by shedding light on the relational aspects of the phenomenon. In addition, we will discuss the pedagogical implications to develop communication education at the level of teaching practices and curriculum design

### **Accessibility in Digital Communication Higher Education Curricula: Moving towards an Inclusive Society**

Anastassia Zabrodskaia, Tallinn University, Estonia

As per the World Bank's data, roughly one billion individuals, which accounts for approximately 15% of the global populace, confront various types of disabilities. Given the growing prevalence of disability worldwide and the shift towards digital information sharing and consumption, there is an amplified demand for making content more accessible when it comes to publishing. As the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, the urgency of this requirement heightened, compelling public authorities to disseminate crisis information through digital means. It is crucial that communication is both inclusive and extends to all members of society, encompassing marginalized communities like people with disabilities, older adults, and immigrants, with the objective of ensuring that no one is excluded or left behind. The phrase 'digitally accessible communication' pertains to the development of information that accommodates individuals across diverse populations, encompassing a broad spectrum of user needs, attributes, and capabilities. For instance, this means providing information in sign language for the deaf community and offering audio information for individuals with visual impairments. In most higher education communication curricula, accessibility is often overlooked, and there is a need for greater emphasis on understanding the diverse and unique requirements of potential target audiences.

As of September 23, 2020, the EU Website Accessibility Directive mandates that public sector websites and applications adhere to accessibility standards. Despite this directive being incorporated into national legislation throughout the EU, the majority of digital content remains inaccessible to many users. Hence, it is evident that individuals preparing for careers in the field of communication require specialized training to create and disseminate content in an accessible manner. This, coupled with the increasing recognition that accessible digital content benefits everyone, is expected to generate a rising demand for communication experts with proficiency in accessibility. However, there is currently an insufficient supply of skilled professionals to meet this demand.

The general goal of this presentation is to introduce the "[Accessibility in Digital Communication Higher Education Curricula](#)" project in the context of interpersonal communication and social interaction. The ERASMUS+ funded project educates university staff in communication on accessible content publishing. It promotes partnerships between



academia, training organisations and the private sector to embed accessibility skills in communication education and prepare students for the changing demands of an inclusive society. The presentation has a specific aim: to analyse the current situation and address the gaps regarding the communication needs of university teaching and learning staff in accessibility training and the challenges faced by underrepresented groups in accessing digital communication content. The study involved 182 students, 57 employees and 399 end-users (people with disabilities, older adults and migrants). From the surveys, it is clear that there is a need to clarify what digital accessibility is in a general sense and why it is important in the learning environment and in interpersonal communication. The areas that were identified after analysing the three surveys are included in the design of the Accessibility training toolkit. It aims to create a more inclusive society that values the accessibility in digital communication higher education curricula.

### **Designing Online Surveys to Enhance Youth Participation: A Study on Motivational Tools and Technical Accessibility**

Benjamin Bigl, University of Münster, Germany

Sustainability has become a paramount concern in our digital age, encompassing the dimensions of environment, society, and economy (WCED 1987). However, identifying the diverse needs and opinions of various stakeholders remains a challenge (Farnsworth 2012). This scholarly study explores the design of online surveys to encourage greater participation among younger individuals (Keusch 2015), addressing the issue of willingness to engage and the technical accessibility (EUP2016) of survey platforms. Traditional methods of representative surveys are increasingly facing participation issues, particularly among the youth (Beullens, Loosveldt, Vandenplas & Stoop 2018; Brick & Williams 2013; De Leeuw et al. 2002). Motivated by the need to reach younger people effectively, this study aims to answer the research question: How should online surveys be designed to encourage increased participation among the youth? To investigate this, an experimental study was conducted in schools in North Rhine-Westphalia, involving 376 students using tablets and headphones. The questionnaire was designed with technical accessibility in mind (W3C 2018) to decrease survey burden (Crawford, Cooper & Lamias 2001), and additional motivational tools identified through literature research (Pedersen, Bojesen, Rayce & Pontoppidan 2020) were integrated. Preliminary findings indicate the effectiveness and utilization of the tested tools. Approximately 75% of participants used the provided tools, with the read-aloud function being the most widely utilized and positively rated for reducing response burden. The inclusion of a "dark mode," mirroring the prevalent smartphone behavior of young people, was permanently used by 48% of participants. However, the embedded video games and movie clips were deemed unnecessary and lacking context by the participants. The results reveal a positive attitude towards innovative survey designs that challenge conventional survey methodology. As societal change gains political legitimacy, it is crucial for the scientific community to consider how online surveys, as essential instruments of political demoscropy, can be redesigned to involve more individuals and amplify their voices. This study provides valuable insights into enhancing youth participation in online surveys. By addressing the motivational and technical aspects of survey design, researchers and policymakers can better engage younger demographics and ensure their perspectives are adequately represented in decision-making processes.

**Communication that matters. Protests and civic demonstrations as a response to political decisions of the authorities on the example of Poland**

Dominika Popielec, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Given Paul Watzlawick's very well-known axiom "we cannot not communicate," every behavior and action is communication. This is particularly evident in a democratic society, which expresses its opinion in this way, which should be equated with social interaction, in other words communication. This takes the form of various protests and demonstrations supported by slogans, slogans and symbols, which are reported by the media and by citizens themselves through the opportunities offered by social media. The reaction, i.e. the public response, is most often caused by political decisions that contradict the values and expectations of a group of citizens. The purpose of the paper is to present selected protests by social groups such as those opposing the tightening of abortion laws in Poland as a result of the Constitutional Court judgment, entrepreneurs opposing government policies, and farmers criticizing the state's agricultural policy. In this connection, the modes of communication of these groups were analyzed in terms of demands, slogans and symbolism appearing in traditional and social media, as well as their public reception.

**Thursday, October 26, 10.15-11.45**

**Session 5: Building and maintaining relationships in turbulent times  
(Room M-213)**

**Chair: Anișoara Pavelea, Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania**

**Postnatal Depression and Relational Uncertainty after the Birth of a Child Predict  
New Parents' Sexual Communication and Relational Turbulence**

Jennifer Theiss, Jorlanditha Austin, Salvador Guzman, and Hannah Jones, Rutgers University, US

The transition to parenthood is an exciting turning point for romantic partners, but many new parents struggle with personal and relational hardships during this time. Approximately 10% to 30% of new mothers and fathers have persistent depressive symptoms postpartum (Gavin et al., 2012), with 30% to 75% of new parents reporting mild postpartum blues characterized by emotional sensitivity, fatigue, and mood swings (e.g., Stewart & Vigod, 2016). Postnatal depression is linked to a perceived lack of social support and low self-efficacy regarding parenting (Leahy-Warran et al., 2012), as well as decreases in intimacy, sexual satisfaction, and relational quality (Letourneau et al., 2012). These factors can heighten uncertainty about relational involvement and undermine dyadic functioning in myriad ways. In particular, negotiating sexual intimacy is one aspect of romantic relationships that is often compromised when partners become parents. The first year after child birth is marked by a decline in sexual frequency, mismatched sexual desire between partners, and reduced time and energy for sexual activity (Schlagintweit et al., 2015), with 36% of new mothers reporting dissatisfaction with their sexual relationship (Ahlborg et al., 2005). We draw on the logic of relational turbulence theory (Solomon et al., 2016) to examine how symptoms of postnatal depression are associated with relational uncertainty during this transition and how these factors correspond with emotional, cognitive, and communicative aspects of sexual intimacy. Specifically, we consider how relational uncertainty undermines sexual desire and sexual self-esteem, which are predicted to mediate associations between relational uncertainty and the assertiveness and coordination of sexual communication. Finally, sexual episodes marked by decreased sexual desire, esteem, communicative assertiveness, and coordination are predicted to share negative associations with sexual satisfaction and positive associations with relational turbulence. To test our hypotheses, we surveyed 484 individuals (204 male, 280 female) from the United Kingdom (N = 271) and United States (N = 213) who were in a romantic relationship and had a child within the past five years. The average age of participants was 34.4 years. The majority of participants were white (87.8%) and married (72.1%). Respondents completed an online survey with scales measuring symptoms of postnatal depression, relational uncertainty, sexual desire and self-esteem, assertiveness and coordination of sexual communication, and sexual satisfaction and relational turbulence. We analyzed the data using structural equation modeling. Results indicated that depressive symptoms were positively associated with relational uncertainty. Relational uncertainty was negatively associated with sexual self-esteem, but contrary to hypotheses it was positively associated with sexual desire. Sexual self-esteem and desire were both positively associated with the

assertiveness and coordination of sexual communication, which in turn were positively associated with sexual satisfaction. In addition, sexual coordination was negatively associated with relational turbulence. The results point to depressive symptoms and relational uncertainty as two factors in the aftermath of having a child that can undermine sexual communication and relational functioning for romantic partners. We discuss these findings in terms of their practical applications for helping new parents engage in more functional and satisfying sexual communication to improve relational well-being.

### **Why we socially interact? The need, the ability, and the desire**

Aurelio Fernández (1,2), Charo Sádaba (1), Javier García-Manglano (1) and Mariek Vanden Abeel (2)

(1) University of Navarra, Institute for Culture and Society, Spain

(2) Ghent University, Belgium

Each interpersonal relationship is formed and maintained through continuous social interactions in everyday life, which are the key unit of interpersonal communication. Their occurrence is the result of a complex balance between satisfying the fundamental need to belong and managing human social energy. In simple words, we interact based on three factors: the need, the ability, and the desire to interact. The need. Social interactions have a core relationship constituting function, making it present in everyday life while “talking” with others in normal conversations. We interact in response to our need for frequent, affectively pleasant interactions with a few other people. The ability. We continuously engage in social interactions, being willing to expend the social energy needed to develop our relationships and feel belonging; trying to use as little as possible and to engage in those interactions that give us the greatest return on our expenditure. The desire. There is a homeostatic principle between interaction and non-interaction moments: as long as the momentary need to belong arises, the desire to be alone decreases, impacting on interactions occurring. In our preregistered study (<https://osf.io/z374v>), we explored the previous three dimensions that explains why we interact using multilevel time series models. In order to explain why we interact considering the in-the-moment role of the need (closeness and loneliness), the ability (energy level), and the desire (to be alone), our preregistered hypotheses were mainly within-individual, analyzing mainly the average within-individual associations. One hundred and thirty-one young adults make up the sample (18-25 years old, Mage = 20.69, SDage = 2.09, women = 62.6%). For 14 days, participants answered 7397 momentary questionnaires, registering 4616 social interactions (62.4%) and 2781 solitude moments. The project codebook is available at OSF (<https://osf.io/kawhn>). To test the effect of the time interval between questionnaires we used a second, larger dataset with similar characteristics (257 participants, 21158 momentary questionnaires answered, and 12937 social interactions registered). This analysis allows us to explore the difference of measuring social interactions in different intervals. We analyzed concurrent and lagged within-individual associations between social interaction occurrence and closeness, loneliness, social energy and desire to be alone through four bivariate multilevel vector autoregressive models using Dynamic Structural Equation Modeling in Mplus (version 8.9). To test the hypothesis, variables were decomposed in their within- and between-individual components. In the preregistration we included all the specifications of the models and the actions to be taken in different

scenarios; we applied some preregistered actions to converge the models. Considering the in-the-moment need to belong, the average within-individuals associations showed a different direction than expected: closeness is positively associated with interaction occurrence (95% CI: [0,250; 0,357]) whereas loneliness is negatively associated (95% CI: [-0,242; -0,127]). Conversely, energy (95% CI: [0,062; 0,150]) and desire to be alone (95% CI: [-0,336; -0,232]) are, as expected, positively and negatively associated with social interaction occurrence. The size of the effects decreased significantly when we run the same analyses on the same kind of data but with bigger intervals between questionnaires.

### **Looking Forward” from Past Interactions: A Descriptive Analysis of Toxic Relationships in Post-Divorce Families**

Leah Bryant, (1) and DeAnne Priddis (2)

(1) DePaul University, US

(2) Middle Tennessee State University, US

This exploratory interpretive study explores the notion of 'toxic relationships' within the context of post-divorce families. More specifically, this study investigates how toxic relationships are defined by emerging adult children (18–25-year-olds) who have a toxic relationship with at least one of their divorced parents. 'Toxic' is the colloquial term given to relationships that are characterized by ongoing difficult interaction; and this difficulty may be due to factors such as personality trait(s) (e.g., Branje, van Lieshout, & van Aken, 2005), psychopathy (Summers & Summers, 2006), and/or substance abuse (Haverfield, Theiss, & Leustek, 2016). This study focuses on toxic as a trait, which is the enduring characteristics of an individual defined by their past behavior. This extends previous research related to difficult family conversations, which refers to an interaction or series of exchanges (e.g., Keating, et al., 2013), as well as difficult relationships (Lahad & van Hooff, 2022). Interviews have been conducted with 16 emerging adult children of divorced parents to elucidate the communication interactions that define a toxic relationship. The results indicate that participants experience dissonance from the perceived disjuncture between their current relationship with the toxic parent and the idealized image of a healthy parental relationship. Additionally, this envisioned mismatch precipitates the emerging adults' reevaluation of the value and health of the relationship. The findings of this study identify the communicative characteristics that constitute relational toxicity and shed light on the enduring impact of messages and behaviors that create perceptions of toxicity in the parental relationship that may contribute to parental alienation or estrangement (Scharp & Dorrance Hall, 2017).

### **Interpersonal Factors that Shape and Reflect Relational Turbulence and Relationship Maintenance during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Hannah Jones and Jennifer Theiss, Rutgers University, US

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in the spring of 2020, most individuals across the globe were faced with unprecedented lockdown orders and social distancing mandates that altered how people functioned at the individual and relational level. The pandemic and resulting societal changes impacted relationships in ways that made individuals more reactive to interpersonal events and circumstances. Relational turbulence theory is a communication theory that describes how transitions in close relationships call forth

changes to roles and routines that can intensify questions about relational involvement, disrupt interdependence patterns, and ultimately create turmoil, or turbulence, in relationships (Solomon et al., 2016). The experience of relational turbulence during transitions can make it difficult for romantic partners to enact prosocial relationship maintenance behaviors, which can further erode relationship functioning over time. Given the magnitude of the transition created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the potential for heightened relational uncertainty and disruptions to dyadic routines, we applied relational turbulence theory to propose six hypotheses and six research questions exploring longitudinal and dyadic effects of the pandemic on relationship functioning, stress, negative emotions, relational turbulence, and communicative relationship maintenance strategies. To assess our hypotheses, 151 romantic cohabitating dyads across the United States completed a series of four weekly surveys within the first three months following initial lockdowns due to COVID-19. The average age of participants was 30.58. The majority were white (71.03%), married (61.5%), and in their current relationship for an average of 6.34 years. Each partner completed an online survey that measured relational uncertainty, partner's interference and facilitation in goals and routines, perceived stress and negative emotion (i.e., fear, sadness, and anger), and four communicative relationship maintenance strategies (i.e., openness, conflict management, sharing responsibility, and assurances). Data were analyzed with multi-level modeling to examine relationships between the variables of interest for both actors and partners, as well as over time. Our results were generally consistent with our hypotheses, such that relationship characteristics were positively associated with negative emotions, stress, and relational turbulence for actors and partners, negative emotions and stress were positively associated with relational turbulence for actors and partners, and relational turbulence was negatively associated with maintenance behaviors for actors. Finally, actors' maintenance behaviors in one week were positively associated with improved relationship qualities in the following week, and partners' relationship maintenance in one week were positively associated with actors' interference and facilitation in the following week. The findings are discussed in terms of theoretical implications for relational turbulence theory and practical implications for helping romantic partners navigate challenging transitions and life events in ways that improve relational well-being.



**Thursday, October 26, 12.45-14.45**

**Session 6: Becoming me: Perspectives on identity and empowerment through communication**

**(Room M-213)**

**Chair: Anastassia Zabrodskaja, Tallinn University, Estonia**

**Social interaction quality as an interpersonal three-dimensional construct: “I”, “You”, and “We”**

Aurelio Fernández, (1,2), Charo Sádaba (1), Javier García-Manglano (1) and Mariek Vanden Abeel (2)

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At the same time that we are witnessing an exponential development of technologies that facilitate online connectivity, it is not clear that there is a commensurate improvement in interpersonal connection. Indeed, there is a global concern about loneliness and the actions to be taken to help people feel close to others and satisfy their fundamental need to belong. Everyday social interactions have become the key concept for empirically studying interpersonal communication and how the in-the-moment need to belong is satisfied. Exploring this phenomenon in daily life allows researchers to associate the quality of specific social interactions with in-the-moment outcomes such as closeness (Hall et al., 2022; Reissmann et al., 2021), loneliness (Elmer & Lodder, 2022; Luo et al., 2022), or well-being (Kroencke et al., 2022; Subrahmanyam et al., 2020). There are many articles that have studied the relationship between the frequency, quality, and lately the content of social interactions and closeness, loneliness, and well-being using different time scales. We review some examples of how the quality of social interactions has been conceived so far in the literature, from some of the earliest articles that studied it (Berry & Hansen, 1996; Nezlek, 1993; Tidwell et al., 1996; Wheeler et al., 1983) to more recent ones (Achterhof et al., 2021; Bayer et al., 2021; Hall et al., 2023; Moschko et al., 2022), including a recent systematic review (Liu et al., 2019). It is possible to identify some problems with these constructs that interpret quality primarily as (un)pleasant, (un)comfortable, and (un)supportive, for instance, they easily overlap with the outcomes studied. Taking some distance from the current approach to social interaction quality and redefining it from the interpersonal theory, in this article we propose a three-dimensional conceptualization of social interaction quality based on Buber's (1958) dialogical theory. Our construct is based on the mutual valuation of the interaction partners, simulating a dyadic approach that measures quality from the dimensions of “I”, “You”, and “We”. In addition to the theoretical rationale for an interpersonal construct, we empirically tested it by looking at the internal validation and its association with perceived closeness and loneliness through three-level random-intercept models, where moments are nested in days and days in individuals. Furthermore, we tested whether it is consistently associated with specific content of social interactions. Finally, we analyzed how quality varies according to different channels and familiarity of interaction partners. For those validations we pre-registered the study with a sample of 131 young adults (18-25 years old, Mage = 20.69, SDage = 2.09, women = 62.6%) that answered 7397

momentary questionnaires, registering 4616 social interactions (62.4%) and 2781 solitude moments. The project codebook is available at OSF (<https://osf.io/kawhn>). In the preregistration we stated that we have a second larger dataset with similar characteristics in case we need more power (257 participants, 21158 momentary questionnaires, and 12937 social interactions).

### **Memories of swearing: An exploratory study**

Karyn Stapleton, (1) Richard Stephens, (2), Kristy Beers Fägersten, (3) and Catherine Loveday (4)

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- (2) Keele University, UK
- (3) Södertörn University, Sweden
- (4) University of Westminster, UK

**Context and research issues:** Swearing is the use of taboo linguistic terms, which are likely to be objectionable or offensive in social and interactional contexts (Beers Fägersten, 2012; O'Driscoll, 2020; Beers Fägersten and Stapleton, 2022). Research in Communication, Linguistics and Psychology has shown consistently that swearing produces powerful cognitive, emotional, physiological and interactional outcomes, which are not observed with other forms of linguistic communication (Stephens et al., 2009; Stapleton, 2010; Vingerhoets et al., 2013; Stephens & Roberston, 2020; Stapleton et al., 2022). However, as discussed in Stapleton et al (2022), the source of these effects is poorly understood. It must be assumed that through the lifespan, individuals acquire personal understandings and experiences of swearing, which generate powerful responses and outcomes. Classical aversive conditioning (ACC or childhood punishment for swearing) is often thought to play a significant role in this process (Jay et al. 2006). However, there is little direct evidence for the ACC hypothesis. In addition, other types of experiences, at different ages, are likely to play a role in the formation of individual relationships to swearing.

**Research Aims:** To understand how swearing acquires power for individuals (as well as larger social collectives), it is necessary to directly investigate personal experiences and associations. In this paper, we apply the methodology of autobiographical memory (Loveday et al. 2020) to systematically elicit and analyse memories of swearing. Thus, we produce an exploratory empirical investigation into the processes whereby swearing becomes psychologically and communicatively powerful.

**Methodology:** A repeated measures survey design was used to elicit recollections prompted by a swear word compared with recollections prompted by a neutral word. There were six exemplars of each word category: the six swear words were selected freely by the participants; the six neutral words were supplied in the survey. Participants (N=273) completed the survey online. Mean age was 29.5 years (SD 15.0). These were 196 females, 72 males and 5 individuals with non-binary gender. Participants were asked to supply specific recollections (qualitative, open text) for each of the exemplar words. They then completed a set of quantitative survey items designed to probe specific relevant details of the recalled events. The latter were based partly on autobiographical memory elicitation techniques outlined by Janssen and Murre (2008). Key response categories included: age at

the time of the event; who was present; when the word was learned; strength and valence of emotion; importance of the event; and ratings of the strength of the word in question. Analysis and contribution: The data were initially analysed as two discrete sets before being triangulated to gain a holistic view of the processes concerned. The open text recollections were coded qualitatively to identify recurrent patterns of content and meaning. This analysis focused on thematic features, swearing narrative structures and discursive construction of memories. The quantitative survey responses were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches. This analysis allowed us to establish, respectively: response frequencies on each of the key autobiographical and swearing memory criteria identified in the survey design; and comparison/correlation of the demographic groupings and the study variables, to establish statistically significant relationships and outcomes. Our study presents a first systematic analysis of autobiographical memory as a basis for understanding how swearing acquires psychological and communicative 'power' for individuals. It is also a first attempt to explore how this process may take place across the lifespan (rather than just in childhood), and with different types of swearing memory (rather than just aversive experiences).

### **Knowledge Construction in Cleaners' Break Interactions: A Project of Professionalising the Cleaning Occupation**

Malgorzata Lahti and Margarethe Olbertz-Siitonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Cleaning work has been discussed in research as low-skilled, invisible, "dirty," stigmatised and not concerned with practices of knowing. This apparent non-professional rank of the cleaning occupation finds further support in classical sociological literature on profession (e.g., Abbott, 1988) that highlights the command of an abstract body of knowledge, factualised and objectivised through formal education, testing and certification, as the exclusive demarcating line around professional occupations. Our paper proposes an alternative perspective on profession and knowledge as communicative processes where meanings and evaluations of occupations as well as claims to the ownership of some specific knowledge or expertise are constantly negotiated, challenged, claimed and resisted in interaction (e.g., Ashcraft et al., 2012). Rather than starting off with an objective set of criteria against which the professional status of an occupational group would be assessed, we take an inductive approach and examine how our research participants jointly produce knowledge claims that may contribute to establishing their occupation as professional. Our data consists of video recordings of 21 breakfast and lunch break meetings (each approx. 45 minutes long) of cleaners working in a large public organisation in Finland. While our research participants mostly work in isolation, the breaks offer them an important opportunity to interact with one another. The meetings that involved 2 to 5 cleaners were recorded with an unobtrusive 360 degrees camera in 2021. In the recordings, the participants engage in multiple processes of knowledge construction on the topic of organisational and occupational affairs. We analysed these episodes of knowledge construction taking a communicative constitution of organisation perspective and utilising ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. We identified three recurrent patterns of knowledge construction: 1. invoking shared organisational belonging and constructing cleaning work as offering an important contribution to the constitution of organisational events, 2. constructing epistemic boundaries marking the limits of one's occupational jurisdiction, and 3. displaying or implying joint access to a specific body of technical

knowledge on cleaning and cleaning protocol. Our findings point to the participants actively constructing themselves as worthy organisational members, and their work as expertise-based, autonomous, committed and organisationally important. Professionalism-in-knowledge construction appears to be a mundane everyday practice, which, in turn, enables us to see professionalising the cleaning occupation as an everyday project. The study expands our understanding of knowledge processes in organisational settings through reclaiming the notion of knowledge from the figure of the “highly-skilled professional” (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2013) and attending to different types of expertise relevant in organisational settings.

### **Constructing interprofessional collaboration through intercultural narratives: A study of meetings of an interprofessional healthcare team**

Karoliina Karppinen, Tampere University, Finland

Interprofessional care has been proved to have multiple benefits from securing patients’ safety and enhancing acceptance of care to strengthening healthcare systems. Hence, today’s healthcare organizations increasingly rely on interprofessional collaboration to tackle complex tasks. While communication has been recognized as fundamental to interprofessional collaboration, communication is often “black-boxed” and explorations of interprofessionality as constructed in interaction remain scant. This study aims to shed light on these processes by examining an interprofessional healthcare team’s meetings from the viewpoints of interpersonal and intercultural communication. Since interprofessionality is founded on the idea of bringing together people with diverse professional identities, we approach the “interprofessional” as “intercultural”. From this viewpoint, identities are social constructs whose fluid meanings are negotiated in interaction. As a theoretical lens, we use the framework of small culture formation on the go (Holliday, 2016) that examines how people jointly construct rules, meanings and relationships for positioning themselves in relation to one another. The theory works with the concepts of block and thread narratives that represent two modes of constructing culture. Blocks may be seen as emphasizing cultural boundaries between different professions, threads as creating common ground. The aim of the study is to understand how thread and block narratives in interprofessional healthcare teams’ meetings inform the construction of interprofessional collaboration. We address the following research questions: 1) How do interprofessional healthcare team members position themselves and others with block and thread narratives? 2) What do these narratives produce in terms of interprofessional collaboration? Our dataset comprises the audio-recordings of five weekly meetings of an interprofessional nursing team. The data were collected in an outpatient orthopedic clinic in a large Finnish hospital. The team members comprised nurses, physiotherapists, and ward secretaries. The analysis combines positioning analysis and thematic analysis. First, the data were examined inductively to identify positionings and how these positionings affected the deployed narratives. Block narratives were recognized by positionings that indicated fixed professional boundaries and identities, whereas thread narratives included positionings implying professional fluidity, negotiability, unity or sharing. Next, these narratives were clustered into seven broader themes: patient as an active team member, prioritization of patients, drawing the line between professions, reconstructions of treatment processes, construction of shared understanding, inside/outside practices and competing resources. The findings indicate that block narratives are deployed to organize collaboration by coordinating practices, managing

extensive processes and establishing different professions' responsibilities, duties and jurisdictions. Also, blocks are used to bring out juxtapositions between the team and the surrounding organization. Thread narratives are in key role in implementing patient-centeredness, constructing shared understanding of treatment processes, practices and joint goals and establishing team membership. Threads are also used to jointly develop work practices. These findings give important insights on how interprofessional teams can construct collaboration and implement patient-centered care in their day-to-day interactions. Theoretically this study contributes to fields of health communication and intercultural communication by innovatively applying the framework of small culture formation on the go in the context of healthcare. These findings can also be utilized in all future interprofessional teamwork studies.

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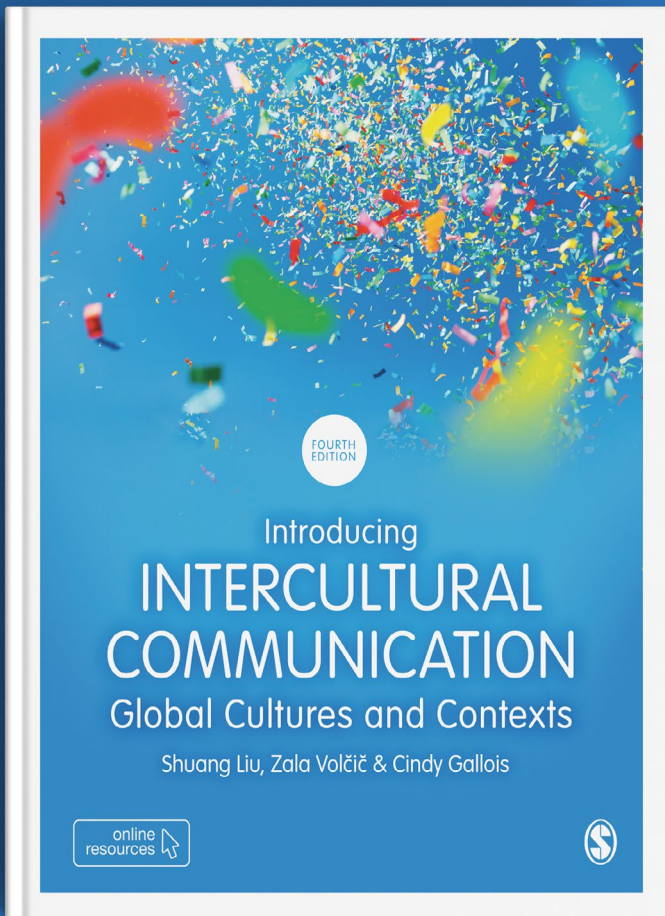
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