

Political Communication Section

Annual Report 2019

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1. Development of the section

The section currently has 365 members. The Facebook group of the section currently grew to 275, a 25% increase since the last main ECREA conference in Lugano. The section management team informed that the group is open also for non-members of the section to allow for wider reach and interaction, and that new members have to answer several questions about their interest in political communication first before being admitted to the group. At the business meeting attendees were encouraged to join our Facebook group and check their official ECREA membership status and join the section if they are not already a member currently. Our Facebook group can be found via the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1394409020594291/>

2. The 2019 ECREA Political Communication section interim conference in Poznań, Poland

At the Business Meeting at the 2017 section interim conference in Zurich, several members expressed support for the idea to hold the next interim conference in Central or Eastern Europe. The section management team, on behalf of all section members and conference attendees, thanked Agnieszka Stępińska and her team from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland, for organizing and hosting this 2019 section interim conference. In total, 102 paper abstracts (including two panel submissions with 5 papers each) have been submitted for the conference in Poznań, the second highest number of submissions for an interim conference after Zurich in 2017. 74 paper abstracts have been accepted for presentation. There have been 40 reviewers. All submissions have been reviewed by a minimum of two reviewers (2-3 reviewers per abstract). If scores differed substantially, a third review was conducted to decide if the abstract could be accepted or not. Acceptance rate was 72%. The final program consisted of 16 panels with 3-5 presentations each. At the Business Meeting, the Top Abstract Award of the PolCom section, based on the highest average reviewer scores, was presented to: Edda Humprecht (U of Zurich), Frank Esser (U of Zurich) & Peter Van Aelst (U of Antwerp) for their submission: *“Resilience to Online Disinformation: A Framework for Cross-National Comparative Research.”*

3. Mentoring programme

As introduced and discussed at the Business meeting at our Interim conference in Zurich in 2017, and reported on at the Business meeting at the last main ECREA conference in Lugano (2018) and our last annual report (2018), our section has launched and successfully started a Mentoring program for junior faculty. Currently, it consists of 12 Mentees (junior researchers) and 12 Mentors (senior researchers). The 12 Mentees (8 female, 4 male) stem from 7 different countries: Russia, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Turkey. The 12 Mentors (5 female, 7 male,) stem from 8 different countries. The program has successfully started last fall, Mentees and Mentors are in direct personal contact and there have been joint meetings for Mentees and Mentors in Lugano (ECC), Washington (ICA) and Poznań (ECREA PolCom interim conference). A second round of the

mentorship program is planned for 2020-2022. The section management team thanks all Mentees and Mentors making this initiative a success!

4. Member survey

As announced in the last annual report (2018) of our section, the first ECREA PolCom section membership survey has been conducted in the summer of 2019. The objective was to learn more about the research interests, expertise/skills, methodological profiles, and current research projects of our section members as well as strengthen the networking opportunities in our section. Thus, the information from this survey is also meant to serve as a basis for a database that can be assessed by section members to foster and facilitate communication, cooperation and networking among individual section members. A full report with the results will be published in the membership section of the ECREA website and preliminary findings were presented at the business meeting. In total, 60 section members participated in the survey so far (43% female, 57% male; 44% junior scholars, 48% senior scholars). The survey results provide valuable and concrete input from the members to the section management team about which topics and issues to turn to in the future. For example, there is only weak support to (re-)consider establishing an own journal (a point discussed at the Business meeting at the general ECREA conference in Prague in 2016), support and willingness to get engaged in a second round of the sections' mentorship program, and there is active interest (by 80% of the participants, N=48) in participating in network activities and joint project collaborations among section members. Other input concerned feedback on the conference review system (positively evaluated), the use of the Facebook group page, suggestions for future conference themes and activities, and an expression of interest in potentially hosting a future interim conference of the section by no less than 23 individual members. In a next step a networking database will be established for those who expressed an interest in such additional opportunity to work together with other section members and consented to be included in such database.

6. YECREA representative

Erik Knudsen (U Bergen) is the PolCom YECREA representative; at the 2019 Poznań Interim conference he organized a workshop on the topic of how to act as a reviewer, how to respond effectively to journal review reports as author, and how to manage this process successfully (*"Revise & Resubmit! What to do as reviewer and how to react to reviews?"*). He was joined by two senior scholars from the section (Melanie Magin [Trondheim] and Mark Boukes [Amsterdam]) to discuss and answer questions junior scholars had regarding this topic.

7. Next conferences

The next PolCom main conference will take place in 2020 in Braga, Portugal, entitled '*Communication and trust: building safe, sustainable and promising futures*'. A call for abstract submissions has been published and submissions close on January 15th 2020. At that conference the new section management team will be elected and a call will be distributed beforehand. The section is still looking for potential hosts for the next section interim conference in 2021, several section members have expressed general interest in hosting this next interim conference.