



**University of
Zurich^{UZH}**

IKMZ – Institute of Communication and Media Research

The IKMZ Speaker Series presents:

**The Social Life of Persuasive Messages: Using
Neuroscience to Understand and Predict How Messages
Spread Through Populations.**

**Christin Scholz,
University of Amsterdam**

Monday, May 6, 2024

16:15-17:15

Room: AND-4-06

Persuasive messages reach and influence their receivers in social contexts governed by social norms, the presence of other people, daily conversations, and many other social influences. How do these social processes influence and interact with the effects of persuasive message? Relying on a variety of methodologies including functional neuroimaging, ecological momentary assessments, field experiments, and surveys, the data presented in this talk explore the psychological mechanisms that help us process and act upon persuasive messages within the context of our social lives. I will focus on mechanisms that help us decide whether and how to share messages with others, potentially increasing their reach and affecting their overall impact, and on mechanisms that introduce systematic biases in our sharing behavior that may be linked to polarizing tendencies. Finally, I will explore how we can use mechanistic insights about the social life of persuasive messages to build interventions that aim to encourage prosocial and healthy behaviors.

Christin Scholz's work examines the role of social interactions between individuals in the diffusion of information and the development of large-scale message effects in the context of health-related outcomes. Her multi-methodological approaches include neuroscientific methods like fMRI and social science techniques such as field experimentation, and survey methods to capture both detailed psychological mechanisms and real-world behavior. Her work has been supported by multiple international grants including an NWO Veni from the Dutch Science Foundation and a Marie Curie Individual Fellowship from the European Commission.

