

CALL FOR CHAPTERS

Contributions are solicited for an edited volume on *‘Social media and political communication in Central and Eastern Europe’*.

Within the national and transnational field of politics in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) political actors – political parties, interest groups, NGOs, think-tanks, social movements and campaigners - have been, with various degrees of enthusiasm, adapting social media (Twitter, Facebook, Google +, Youtube, or blogs etc.) as part of their media management and communication strategies. Within the CEE region, social media have become buzzwords facilitating and defining digital revolutions in political communication, which policy-makers have been advancing to facilitate relationships between governments, state institutions and citizens. Also individual politicians in CEE have been building political capital thanks to their engagement with social media in their everyday political communication practices. For examples, Radek Sikorski, the Polish Foreign Affairs Minister, conducts ‘Twitter diplomacy’ and engages in lively tweet-chats with David Cameron and other European political leaders on issues not exclusively reserved to foreign affairs.

Social media in Central and Eastern Europe have been pervading political elites, but what does it mean in terms of political participation among citizens in the part of the world defined by the heritage of the socialist/authoritarian past and maturing media systems? Do social media platforms encourage greater political participation? Do social media, if at all, reshape the quality of relationships between citizens and political elites and state institutions? Can social media facilitate change of power relationships within political economies among CEE states or do they perpetuate political status quo(s)? We raise those questions to examine the role of social networking sites (SNS) as social spaces in which diverse forms of political participation can take place. Identifying what forms of political participation occur, understanding the patterns of participation and the motivations for participating offers insights into how, if at all, SNS drive participation within the context of a nation’s democratic culture. We are looking to examine if political participation online translates into civic participation and agency enhancing or hindering qualities of democracy in the region of Europe in which democratization has been one of the biggest priorities since the end of the Cold War.

The aim of this edited volume is to present state of the art research on political communication and social media in the CEE region. The scholarship at the crossover of political communication, social media, and civic participation has been one of the most dynamic research areas in political and media studies, but so far, little attention has been paid to the analysis of the role of social media in transforming political communication in this part of the world. With the rise of digital platforms and advancement of the digital revolution among CEE states, political elites and political parties have been adopting social media to reach out to electorate, citizens, and stakeholders alike. The tense relationship between the media and democracy in CEE has emerged as a result of the political economy transformation which post-1989 has been further complicated by media convergence, Internet technologies, and the use of social media platforms in political processes. This book aims to fill this gap and analyse the complex relationship between forms of political communication, social media, and civic participation. By accounting for research avenues in the field of political communication, this book aims to consider transformational and cultural features

accompanying the use of social media in the fields of politics in CEE.

The aim of this book is to bring together innovative and current research on the role of social media in transforming the dynamics of political communication, that not only explores the types of tensions between 'old' and 'new' media, but accounts for economic and cultural forces driving those changes. A diversity of empirical national-case studies is welcome.

We particularly encourage comparative studies featuring political actors in the CEE region.

We also encourage contributions from various contexts in which social media platforms are used in political communication (e.g. political parties, activist groups, social movements, the EU institutions). Chapters might include, but are by no means limited to the following themes:

- social media users and their characteristics in the context of political communication;
- adoption of social media strategies and tactics in political communication;
- the role of social media platforms in national and European election campaigns;
- relationship between 'old' and 'new media' including the role of social media in reporting political news stories in CEE;
- the relationship between political participation on SNS, civic participation and community action, 'new' versus 'traditional' forms of political participation;
- social media as drivers of political participation in activist/issues campaigns in CEE (e.g. the LGBT movement; environmental and human right groups; pressure groups);
- social media, the state surveillance practices, transparency and democratic accountability in CEE;
- social media platforms as mediators of political and social change in CEE.

We are seeking contributions from researchers exploring the above themes in the following national settings or in comparative research studies: the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ukraine, and Russia.

Keen interest in the proposal has already been expressed by Routledge to include this volume into their on-going and successful 'BASEES\Russian and East European Studies.' The collection will be comprised of approximately 10-12 chapters of around 7,000 words. Publication has been scheduled for 2016.

The deadline for a 400 words abstract and short (3-4 line) biography of author/s is 31 October 2014. Abstracts should be sent to the editors of this volume, Dr Pawel Surowiec (Bournemouth University, United Kingdom, psurowiec@bournemouth.ac.uk) and Dr Vaclav Stetka (Charles University, the Czech Republic, stetka@fsv.cuni.cz). The editors welcome preliminary expressions of interest and encourage potential authors to contact them for further information.