

Citizen participation and civic engagement in the digital era: where do we go now?

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Engaging citizens at different stages of the public policy process extensively preoccupied recent scientific research. Governments have slowly witnessed a profound transformation of their roles and tasks, from the initiator and implementer of public policies toward becoming a facilitator of public service delivery, in the quest for increased transparency, legitimacy, and public trust. This means that communities and states are constantly searching for means and solutions to strengthen civic engagement for better developing and implementing policy reforms. The good and bad practices developed in the process are important, not only for understanding causes of success and failure of citizen participation policy efforts, but also for developing a better understanding of the mechanism(s) which facilitate such efforts in a sustainable way. Particular attention needs to be addressed to the sustainability of the process, given the extensive transformations of the relationships between communities and states in the wake of the COVID19 crisis.

Citizen participation in CEE countries has been increasingly investigated in the recent years (see also the recent special edition of *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* in 2016, Volume 49:3 edited by T. Agarin and I.P Karolewski). Lember et alli (2019) provide promising suggestions for expanding the research to the impact of digital technologies on co-production. The current paper is set to investigate patterns in the abrupt transition to digital forms of interaction between citizen and governments in the onset of the COVID19 crisis in (selected) CEE countries.

The paper combines quantitative and qualitative data from internationally available databases to develop an analysis of the measures taken by (selected) CEE countries to facilitate citizen information and participation.

We expect to find a limited variation in the types of measures used in the onset of the COVID19 crisis, primarily (unidirectional) promotion and information campaigns on behalf of government. Additionally, we expect to find an increased use of the participation via social media and to find citizen increasingly involved in policy via digital means.

The filan version of the paper will be uploaded after the conference.