

Panel Proposal: Social media and their influence on the quality of democracy

Joint Panel RC 34 and RC 22

Chair: Marianne Kneuer

Co-Chair: Oscar Luengo

Discussant: Javier G. Marín

The potential of the new information and communication technologies for mobilizing democratic protest movements (see Spain, Portugal and Occupy in 2011, Turkey or Brazil in 2013) and even overthrowing non-democratic regimes (Arab Spring) has become evident. There has been arisen a sort of hopeful expectation that new and social media are able to revitalize deficient aspects in representative democracies, f.e. by facilitating the communication between politicians and citizens, in order to ameliorate the quality of democracy providing more say and influence on the decision making. This is the point of departure for this panel which focuses the effects social media have on the democratic processes. The papers are expected to assess if and why and in which realms social media have a rather positive or negative (or maybe not so ever) effect on the democratic quality. Can social media increase transparency? Do they foster citizens' participation? What effect do these new forms of reciprocal and interactive communication have on the responsiveness of politicians? The perspective though should not be limited to the executive and legislative level but also include the other relevant political actors like parties, interest organizations and civil society. Paper proposals may have a theoretical-conceptual interest or be empirical. Comparative studies are also welcomed.