

ECREA Political Communication Section Interim Conference

Communicating crisis: Political communication in the age of uncertainty

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest
March 26th - 27th, 2021

Friday, March 26th

PLENARY

10:00 – 10:30

OPENING REMARKS

Remus Pricopie, Rector, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania
Alina Bârgăoanu, Dean, Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania
Andreas Schuck, Chair of ECREA Political Communication Section, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Nicoleta Corbu, local host, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

10:30 – 11:30

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Understanding crises and the role of political communication
Darren Lilleker, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

ROOM A

12.00 – 13.30

AUTOMATIZATION IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Chair: Mădălina Boțan, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Public health authorities in a global context: A multi-lingual network approach to corona discourse on Twitter

Jessica Yarin Robinson, University of Oslo, Norway
Øyvind Ihlen, University of Oslo, Norway

Constructing Crises 1785-2015: Usage of the Term “Crisis” in the ‘Times’

Stefan Geiß, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

Can Self-transcendent Emotions Make a Difference? An Automated Content Analysis of German News Media during the “Refugee Crisis” 2015/2016

Katharina Ludwig, University of Mannheim, Germany

Emotions, Narrativity and Multimodality: A Multimodal Analysis of the Emotional Dimension of Political Discourse

Nicolae-Sorin Drăgan, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

14.30 – 16.00

POLITICAL RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

Chair: Jakob Ohme, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Reframing Leadership: Jacinda Ardern’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mihnea S. Stoica, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania
Andreea Voina, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Government crisis communication in Austria during COVID-19

Katie Bates, Medical University Innsbruck, Austria

Lore Hayek, University of Innsbruck, Austria

(De-)politicising knowledge: a key factor in managing crises

Robin Tschötschel, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

When the Rally-Around-the-Flag Effect Disappears, or: When the COVID-19 Pandemic Becomes 'Normalized'

Bengt Johansson, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

David Nicolas Hopmann, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Adam Shehata, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

16.15 – 17.45

QUESTIONING (DIS)INFORMATION

Chair: Nicoleta Corbu, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Generation Fake News - What growing up in a misinformation ecology means for media effects on political participation across Europe

Anna Brosius, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Jakob Ohme, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Claes H. de Vreese, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Support of disinformation in times of uncertainty: An experimental study of misinformation about the coronavirus in Western democracies

Anna Staender, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Edda Humprecht, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Sophie Morosoli, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Frank Esser, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Peter Van Aelst, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Spreading the (misinformation) disease. Discourse in the web portals and political decision-making during COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 presidential campaign in Poland

Jakub Jakubowski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Filip Biały, Kazimierz Wielki University, Poland / University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Citizen-generated fact-checking platforms: Outgrowing failing mediatic infrastructures

Tomás Dodds, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Isabel Tagle, Universidad Diego Portales, Chile

ROOM B

12.00 - 13.30

ELECTIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Chair: Agnieszka Stępińska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

The same tool for different tasks? Facebook campaign strategies during the 2019 European Parliament election campaign

Jörg Haßler, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany

Anna-Katharina Wurst, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany

Katharina Schlosser, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany

Melanie Magin, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

Márton Bene, CSS, ELKH & Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

Uta Rußmann, FH Wien der WKW University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication, Austria

Vicente Fenoll, University of Valencia, Spain

Between analogue and digital: A critical exploration of strategic social media use in Greek election campaigns

Anastasia Veneti, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

Dan Jackson, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

Darren Lilleker, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

Facebook as a political marketing tool in illiberal context. Mapping political advertising activity on Facebook during the 2019 Hungarian European Parliament and local election campaigns

Márton Bene, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

Márton Petrekanics, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Mátyás Bene, University of Pécs, Hungary

The 'against' campaign in the social media age: A Markov Chain Approach to understand the 2018 Presidential Election in Brazil

Mathias-Felipe de-Lima-Santos, University of Navarra, Spain

Wilson Ceron, Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil

14.30 – 16.00

ELECTIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Chair: Peter Van Aelst, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Right-wing mobilization on the ground? National multipliers and transnational mediators of right-wing orientations during the 2019 EP elections on Twitter

Barbara Pfetsch, Freie Universität Berlin & Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Germany

Vivien Benert, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Annett Heft, Freie Universität Berlin & Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Germany

Political and media agendas in the Spanish regional elections during Covid-19 pandemic. A study of the Galician campaign

Rubén Rivas-de-Roca, Universidad de Sevilla, Spain

The Elections in Crisis: Media Coverage of the Postponed 2020 Presidential Elections in Poland

Agnieszka Stępińska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Hate Journalism and Its Remedies in an Authoritarian Media Environment: Defamation, Intimidation and Hate Speech in Istanbul 2019 Mayor Elections

Murat Akser, Ulster University, United Kingdom

Banu Baybars-Hawks, Kadir Has University, Turkey

16.15 – 17.45

POLITICAL SATIRE 2.0

Chair: Uta Rußmann - FHWien der WKW University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication, Austria

Visual discourses and public sphere during Covid-19 pandemic

Dragoş Farmazon, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Memes: a new type of political participation

Ramona Buraga, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Anișoara Pavelea, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Romania's first female Prime Minister's meme-ification: Trivialization and banalization of politics through satirical memes

Elena Negrea-Busuioac, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Oana Ștefăniță, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Diana Maria Buf, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Who's watching satire? A typology of the young political satire audience
Mark Boukes, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Saturday, March 27th

ROOM A

11.00 – 12.30

THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN TIMES OF THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

Chair: Elena Negrea-Busuioc, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

#Mitigatecorona: news repertoires and civic participation during the COVID-19 pandemic

Cato Waeterloos, Ghent University, Belgium
Michel Walrave, University of Antwerp, Belgium
Koen Ponnet, Ghent University, Belgium

Selective Exposure Beyond Left and Right: Exploring How Support for Independence and National Identity Drive Catalans' News Media Choices during the Catalan Conflict (2010-2017)

Lidia Valera-Ordaz, University of Valencia, Spain

The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis on Trust in the News Media: Evidence From Three Panel Waves with a Pre-Crisis Baseline

Magnus Hoem Iversen, University of Bergen, Norway
Erik Knudsen, University of Bergen, Norway
Åsta Dyrnes Nordø, Norwegian Research Center, Norway

The Europeanisation of National Public Spheres or the (Re-)Nationalisation of Public Spheres? The Litmus Test of Covid-19

Jan Erik Kermer, Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali "Guido Carli", Italy

12.45 – 14.15

IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Chair: Václav Štětka, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Romanian intra-EU labor migrants in the news media during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic

Delia Cristina Balaban, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania
Hanna Orsolya Vincze, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

The negotiation of diasporic identities in the Romanian political discourse and the construction of political responsibility towards Romanians abroad

Florența Toader, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

"The diaspora's vote": citizen empowerment and transnational ties in mobilization campaigns for 2019 European Parliament elections

Mălina Ciocea, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania
Alexandru I. Cărlan, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania
Bianca-Florentina Cheregi, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

From the "asylum crisis" to the "self-provoked crisis". Evolution of the syntagm associated with the word "crisis" in the Belgian migratory context

Cécile Balty, Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
Valérie Mistiaen, Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

15.15 – 16.45

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION DURING THE FIRST WAVE OF COVID-19 (SPECIAL PANEL)

Chair: Oana Ștefăniță, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Attributions of Blame and Stigma during the COVID-19 Pandemic – An International Comparative Analysis

Ioana A. Coman, Texas Tech University, United States of America

Infodemic: Comparison of National and Supranational Responses to the False Information Related to Covid-19

Miloš Gregor, Masaryk University, Czech Republic

"Rally Around the Flag": The Effect of The Covid-19 Emergency on the Mechanisms of Political Consent and Protest

Edoardo Novelli, Università Roma Tre, Italy

Social Cohesion in the Era of COVID-19: Exploring Public Narratives and Behaviour in Support and Opposition to Government Virus Containment Measures

Darren Lilleker, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

ROOM B

11.00 – 12.30

POPULISM, PANDEMIC, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Chair: Raluca Buturoiu, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Populism in context. A cross-country investigation of the Facebook usage of populist appeals during the 2019 EP elections

Melanie Magin - Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

Márton Bene – CSS, ELKH & Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

Jörg Haßler - Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany

Darren Lilleker - Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

Simon Kruschinski - Johannes Gutenberg-University, Austria

Paweł Baranowski - University of Wrocław, Poland

Uta Rußmann - FH Wien der WKW University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication, Austria

Xénia Farkas - CSS, ELKH & Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Dan Jackson - Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

Vicente Fenoll - University of Valencia, Spain

Pandemic populism? How COVID-19 triggered populist user comments on mass media Facebook sites in Germany and Austria

Daniel Thiele, University of Vienna, Austria

Populist Communication in Facebook: The Case of Kosovar. Politicians during the 2017 General Election

Dren Gërguri, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

"The elites will ruin us": How populism and crisis in political communication impact political mobilization

Benjamin Schürmann, WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin

Populist representation: ideology and performance

Lone Sorensen, University of Leeds, United Kingdom

12.45 – 14.15

PUBLIC DIALOGUE AND RETHORICS OF AUTHORITIES

Chair: Melanie Magin - Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

Remaining level-headed during a crisis: is it possible to establish an informative public dialogue on social media in times of corona? Local government communications in the context of #CoronaHH

Hanna Klimpe, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Bastian Kießling, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Marcel Schweitzer, Senatskanzlei Hamburg, Germany

The Construction of legitimation in Romanian public authorities' discourses during the COVID-19 pandemic

Camelia Cuşnir, University of Bucharest, Romania

Anamaria Nicola, University of Bucharest, Romania

Female Mayors in Romania: Four Discursive Pathways to Power

Andreea Voina, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Anişoara Pavelea, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Journalists and Politicians on Social Media – Political Information Flow during Lockdown Announcement

Kinga Adamczewska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

15.15 – 16.45

SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

Chair: Andreas Schuck, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Divisive feeling rules: An investigation of emotions in news stories, political speeches and campaign tweets

Imke Henkel, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom

Populist Anger vs. Anger about Populists: Discourse Network Analysis of European Election Campaign 2019 in Germany

Monika Verbalyte, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Outrage or apathy? Explaining uncertainties in political scandalization through a multidimensional framework for comparative research

André Haller, University of Applied Sciences Kufstein Tyrol, Austria

Hendrik Michael, University of Bamberg, Germany

ROOM C

10.00 – 11.00

ECREA POLITICAL COMMUNICATION SECTION BUSINESS MEETING

Chair: Andreas Schuck, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Vice-Chair: Václav Štětka, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Vice-Chair: Melanie Magin, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

11.00 – 12.30

INFORMATION CREDIBILITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Chair: Arjen van Dalen, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

If you are home alone, trust the right folks! The effects of exposure to news, engagement in discussion, and trust on the knowledge about the Covid-19 among locked-down Italians.

Augusto Valeriani, University of Bologna, Italy

Sergio Splendore, University of Milan, Italy

Danilo Serani, University of Bologna, Italy

Trust in sources of information during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis: Evidence from Romania

Denisa-Adriana Oprea, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Raluca Buturoiu, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Nicoleta Corbu, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Mădălina Boțan, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Judging the credibility of information about corona: Individual differences and possible implications

Priscila Berger, Technische Universität Ilmenau, Germany

How the Advocacy Strategies for Social Inclusion changed during the COVID-19 pandemic? What's the Role of the Media?

Raluca Dinu-Paicu, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

12.45 – 14.15

POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Chair: Sergio Splendore, University of Milan, Italy

Impolite or antidemocratic users? The characteristics of the political discussion on Facebook

Rossella Rega, University of Siena, Italy

Rita Marchetti, University of Perugia, Italy

Anna Stanziano, University of Perugia, Italy

Visual elements of the 2019 European Parliamentary campaign on party Facebook pages: a twelve-country comparative analysis

Xénia Farkas, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary & Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Anastasia Veneti, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

Daniel Jackson, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

Márton Bene, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

Uta Russmann, FHWien der WKW University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication, Austria

Paweł Baranowski, University of Wrocław, Poland

Influence of algorithm settings on debate on discussion forum

Arjen van Dalen, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Fridays for Future and COVID-19: activist repertoires of action in times of crisis

Delia Dumitrica, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Giuliana Sorce, University of Tübingen, Germany

15.15 – 16.45

A WORLD DIVIDED

Chair: Delia Cristina Balaban, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Alternative news media audiences and polarization in the Czech Republic

Alena Macková, Masaryk University, the Czech Republic

Jakub Macek, Masaryk University, the Czech Republic

Lenka Hrbková, Masaryk University, the Czech Republic

Polarization and silencing others during Coronavirus pandemic in Germany: An experimental study using algorithmic-curated online environments

Tim Neumann, Heinrich Heine University, Germany

Ole Kelm, Heinrich Heine University, Germany

Marco Dohle, Heinrich Heine University, Germany

Trust and bias in a polarized media environment: examining perceptions of media performance in Central and Eastern Europe

Václav Štětka, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Sabina Mihelj, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Fanni Tóth, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Katherine Kondor, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Public polarization on social networks during the campaign for Bucharest City Hall: no debate, hundreds of memes

Elena Radu Tuşa, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

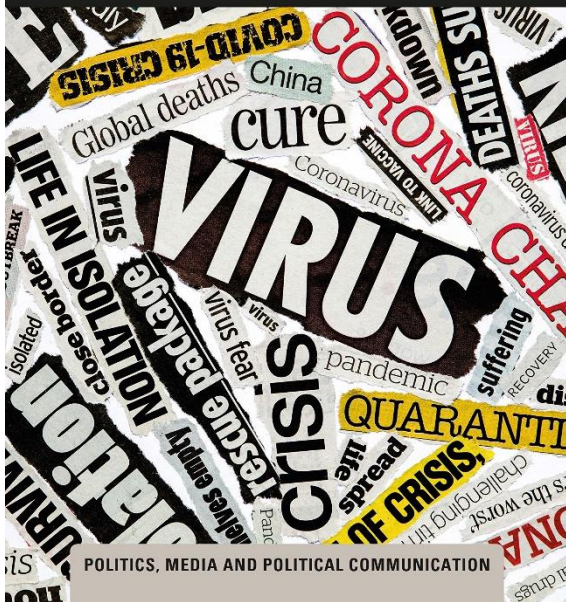
Dragoş Farmazon, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Edited by Darren Lilleker, Ioana A. Coman,
Miloš Gregor and Edoardo Novelli



Political Communication and COVID-19

Governance and Rhetoric in Times of Crisis



Political Communication and Covid-19: Governance and Rhetoric in Times of Crisis

Editors: Darren Lilleker, Ioana Coman, Miloš Gregor, and Edoardo Novelli

The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented and regardless of the stability of democratic institutions all governments faced the challenges of dealing with a severe but highly unpredictable threat to the lives of their citizens. Our study of 27 nations, as well as the WHO and EU, offer a timeline of the responses to the first wave of COVID-19 infections as it spread across the planet.

We study the government's communication, the flow of information across the media environment, actions within civic society, and map the measures implemented and communication to the numbers of cases and deaths. We reveal contrasting responses which reflect the politics of the nations, suggesting the handling of the pandemic was

embedded in existing patterns in the style of political leadership. Our analysis offers ten major over-arching findings:

- Many governments under-estimated the impact of the pandemic, claimed they were prepared, but none actually were. Hence, the rules for proper emergency communication in a pandemic weren't correctly adopted in any country.
- Democracies proved less efficient in reacting to Covid-19 than non-democratic and authoritarian regimes. Conflicts between different levels of authorities - national, regional, local - slowed down the ability to respond and to develop effective communication.
- International and supranational institutions showed themselves ill-equipped and overly bureaucratic to provide the advice and support national governments required.
- Most leaders kept control of primary decision-making and public communication without delegating these roles to experts.
- Mass media were crucial for disseminating and reinforcing government messages, where contrasting messages circulated in media public trust in government declined.
- Social Networks' role was overall positive, they were an essential tool for remote socialization, mitigating the effects of social distancing. While mis/disinformation circulated its impact was largely contained.
- In countries not marred by political polarisation and serious structural inequity citizens tended to come together, rally around the flag and the support for their leaders increased.
- U-turns, short-notice decision making, visible uncertainty and overblown claims were damaging to the credibility of governments.
- Populist leaders adopted a denier stance towards Covid-19, politicisation of the pandemic lead to greater belief in misinformation and rejection of containment measures.
- In all countries economic inequities were exposed, and the fragility of the living conditions of many impacted their likelihood of catching and dying from COVID-19; discrimination and marginalization were exacerbated during the pandemic.