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# Social Media and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe

Edited By Paweł Surowiec, Václav Štětka

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## Description

Social media are increasingly revolutionising the ways in which political communication works, and their importance for engaging citizens in politics and public affairs is well understood by political actors. This book surveys current developments in social media and politics in a range of Central and Eastern European countries, including Ukraine and Russia. It explores the process of adoption of social media by politicians, journalists and

civic activists, examines the impact of the different social and cultural backgrounds of the countries studied, and discusses specific political situations, such as the 2012 protests in Moscow and the 2014 EuroMaidan events in Ukraine, where social media played an important role. The book concludes by addressing how the relationship between social media and politics is likely to develop and how it might affect the still relatively new democracies in the region.

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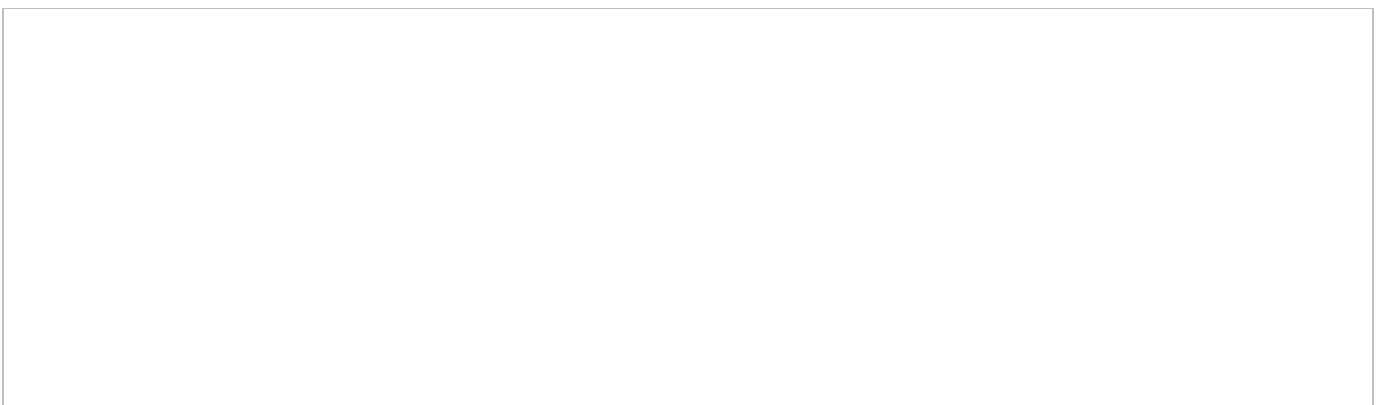
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## SOCIAL

Norbert Merkovity

**Towards Self-Mediatization of Politics**

Representatives' Use of Facebook and Twitter in Croatia and Hungary

**Introduction**

The concept of mediatization associates with changes and development of communication in media, mostly in television. It fosters social change, where the media play key role. According to Winfried Schulz this key role could be defined through extension, substitution, amalgamation and accommodation. Extension means that the media technologies extended the limits of human communication, which is limited in space, time and expressiveness, but the media bridging these distances. Substitution could be understanding according media's social role in contemporary societies, while amalgamation merge and mingle non-media activities. In the world of politics, accommodation means that political actors will adapt to the rule of media system in order to increase their publicity (Schulz 2004, 88–90). Although the concept of mediatization is linked with television era (Altheide 1991), but it has its affects/effects in the era of social media. For instance, political actors cannot ignore that citizens have social life on social networking sites, too, therefore politicians will move to these platforms to get closer to their electorate. This chapter examines Croatian and Hungarian members of parliaments (MPs) use of social media in order to understand the nature of their mediatization.

The comparison of CEE countries, Croatia and Hungary, is adequate not because they are neighboring states. The general and in some cases the political history of the two countries are similar. The two were one country from 1102 to 1918 (first personal union, then Croatia belonged to Hungary under the crown of Habsburg Monarchy), both witnessed socialism in the 20th century, both changed their regime at the end of '80s or beginning of '90s. Multi-party system works in Croatia and Hungary, too. The electoral systems are mixed in both countries. Croatia has dominant multi-seat constituencies, while the proportional part is strong in Hungary. Parties' presence instead of individual candidates with strong (party) leaders is clearly visible in electoral system/campaign of both countries. We saw many coalition

governments in the past in both countries. The political culture is not differing too much in these states.

A total of 6262 Facebook and Twitter notes were analyzed during the comparative research. The posts were written by representatives of Croatian and Hungarian parliaments and the notes were categorized according to their interactive and non-interactive functions. Finally, the categories were compared by means. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that social networking sites allow politicians to domesticate the process of mediatization and to transform it to self-mediatization. We will compare the representatives' use of Facebook and Twitter social networking sites in Croatia and Hungary, and use the findings from this research to document the presence of self-mediatization. The research will give opportunity to make other observations, as well. The most important one is the similarity or the difference between the analyzed countries' MPs.

## From Mediatization to Self-Mediatization of Politics

The term of mediatization in political communication studies is rather a confusing than a well-defined concept. Some scholars sees it as a catch-all concept (Deacon & Stanyer 2014), and others "as still unfolding historical project" (Livingstone 2009, 7). The close concept to mediatization is mediation, which describes only the transmitting nature of communication process and mass media, but much more is happening in political communication when the actors are using communication technologies and mass media. Although, some sees mediation more useful than mediatization (Couldry 2008, Livingstone 2009), and use it more widely than a simple transmission. Jesper Strömbäck understands mediatization as a process where the independence of media and politics could be analyzed (Strömbäck, 2008). According to this, Strömbäck states that mediation of politics is the first phase of mediatization of politics (see Strömbäck, 2008; Strömbäck & Esser 2014).

Gianpietro Mazzoleni distinguishes mediatization from mediation. He states that "mediatization of politics is a complex process that is closely linked to the presence of media logic in society and in the political sphere. It is distinguished from the idea of 'mediation', a natural, preordained mission of mass media to convey meaning from communicators to their target audiences" (Mazzoleni 2015, 378). In agreement with this view, we must make difference between transmission and a process which is close to media logic. One of the first

analysts of mediatization and media logic, David L. Altheide argues that mediation indicates the impact of media logic of a medium "involved in the communication process that is part of an ecology of communication that joins information technology and communication (media) formats with the time and place of activities. Mediatization may be regarded as the process by which this takes place, including the institutionalization and blending of media forms" (Altheide 2013, 226). Altheide's concept of mediatization is more than "unfolding historical project", and it is not linked with, but it includes the media logic. Mediatization is an organizing principle that contains media logic and media format, and it happens through activities in information technology and communication formats. Adopting this concept, we could give more specifics to mediatization, which make us possible to understand the concept in the environment of social networking sites. It is a non-linear, multi-directional and multidimensional process, where the effects of mediatization include strategic adaptations and the concept is non-normative, the consequences do not depend on normative perspectives (Strömbäck & Esser 2014, 251–252).

The environment of social media enables free publicity and interactivity for its users. However, interactivity could mean critics or subjective opinions, too. These communicative situations could have unpleasant results for politicians, therefore the politicians, "to control the uncertainty of the outcome of free publicity, have in a process of 'mediatization' professionalized the art of news management and introduced the framing and packaging of spin" (Brants et al. 2010, 29; see also Negrine at al. 2007). Politicians already controlled their communication before the social media with the help of mediatization, but the social media works slightly differently as the traditional media and this brings us to self-mediatization of politics. The use of mediatization could be understand as communicative representation of politicians (Mansbridge 2009) or spin doctoring (Esser 2008), but either way it ends in self-representation and in "self-initiated stage-management" (Esser 2013, 162). From this perspective the concept of mediatization in politics is a functional principle of media, and particularly of social media. The users of social media are responsible of their own communication what could be described as intentional activity. Since "web 2.0 tools have made it possible for a massive, unprecedented surge in self-publication and personal broadcasting" (Wheeler 2012, 23) people adapted their communication accordingly (Bazarova & Choi 2014, 653). This works similarly in the world of politics. The intentional activity could be seen as self-broadcasting that could be conceptualized as self-mediatization of politics. Thus, unlike Haßler, Maurer and Oschatz, this chapter claims that the effects of

online communication on mediatization are not marginal (Haßler, Maurer & Oschatz 2014), although the effects will not change the style of political actors communication, they will not be interactive. We will examine self-mediatization through empirical research of Croatian and Hungarian MPs' use of social networking sites.

**The internet and the social networking sites in politics of Croatia and Hungary**

According to Internet World Stats the internet penetration in Croatia is 75%, while the Facebook penetration is 35.7%. The internet penetration in Hungary is the same, 75%, the Facebook penetration is little bit higher, 43%.[1] No reliable data was found on Twitter use in analyzed countries. These facts should indicate that previous studies showed similarities in the use of internet and social networking sites by political parties and politicians (Balogh 2011; Bebić & Vučković 2011; Brautović , John & Milanović-Litre 2013; Merkovity 2010; Mustić, Balabanić & Mustapić 2012). Indeed, Domagoj Bebić and Norbert Merkovity are repeating the same findings regarding the two states. The main findings are the following: relatively low interaction function, inadequate involvements of small parties, and no grassroots initiatives (Bebić 2011; Merkovity 2014).

This chapter reflects mainly on mediatization, therefore we will further expand on interaction. The fear of interaction or generally, the decentralized structures will reflect even in such a closed channel as the email. According to previous findings, the majority of the MPs will not prefer the user-to-user communication, they will use it as a tool for user-to-system communication what ends in a conclusion that the politicians will have email addresses to demonstrate their openness to new communication technologies, but they will avoid to keep daily contact with their electorate (Merkovity 2014, 315). The dominance of informational functions instead of interactive ones could be also seen on the most controlled internet channel of the political parties, the party websites (Merkovity 2014; Mustić, Balabanić & Mustapić 2012). The environment of social networking sites brings no change to this attitude of politics. Moreover, mainly one channel, namely the Facebook is used by the politicians and the political parties, while other platforms like Twitter have secondary role (Balogh 2011; Brautović, John & Milanović-Litre 2013). Seeing these findings, Bebić points out that

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[1]   Internet and Facebook data are available on Internet World Stats (http://www.internetworldstats.com/europa2.htm). The internet penetration data for Croatia is shows the numbers of December, 2013, for Hungary 31st December, 2014, and the both Facebook penetration data are from 31st December 2012.

"[…]the dilemma remains whether the parties want to really involve voters through the web in politics and talk with them or want only 'to spread their message'" (Bebić 2011, 31). However, the situation could be different if we look to the micro-level. City councils could be more interactive and they could have daily (online) contact with the local people, but this depends on the commitments of the local politicians (see: Bebić & Vučković 2011 or Merkovity 2010).

To conclude, although the internet plays important role in parties' and party members' communication, it is mainly used as a tool for one-way communication channel in both countries, even it enables versatile communication. Regarding the mediatization, this should mean that politicians still see the internet and the social networking sites similarly to the traditional media and the broadcast function is more important than the interactivity function. Despite these findings, some positive examples could be found for interactivity of online politics: local governments could foster the engagement of citizens in communication of politics. "A transparent and open local government uses different means to provide citizens with information [on the internet], to help citizens understand and participate in decision-making, and to control the implementation of decisions and policies, while effectively communicating with the public on a regular basis in order to be able to respond to citizen demands" (Musa, Bebić & Đurman 2015, 440).

Past research confirmed that, beside the common patterns (Habsburg Monarchy, post-socialist past, similarities in electoral system, internet adoption to political development, use of Facebook and Twitter in political communication), the Croatian and the Hungarian politicians' use of social networking sites are similar there is no sharp difference between the political actors.

**The research method and the categorization of analyzed records**

As we already mentioned, Facebook is popular in both countries, but this could not be said about Twitter. However, we were not interested in popularity of these sites among public and politicians. We wanted to outline tendencies from representatives' use of social networking sites. To do this, we analyzed official Facebook or Twitter accounts that were written under the name of politicians. We search for the answers to the following questions from the research: Are the members of Croatian and Hungarian parliaments acting as quasi journalists

on social networking sites? Do they foster the interaction between politics and public? What are the similarities and differences between Hungarian and Croatian representatives' use of social networking sites?

We were searching evidence for media logic, as well as for network logic through these questions on the one side. According to empirical research we wanted to prove that traditional 'one-to-many' communication with no real chance for interaction with the MPs will be dominant. Politicians would share mainly status updates with the public. The informational notes would dominate their communication, although, social networking sites' nature supports versatile communication. The politicians would use a lot of 'press-conference like' posts in their communication in order to direct the attention of the public, but they will not use this opportunity to start interactions or discussions with their followers. On the other side, we wanted to demonstrate that despite differences the tendencies are similar in Croatian and Hungarian politicians' Facebook and Twitter use. Thus, we did not expect rapid transformation of political communication by social networking sites. Similar political history, electoral system, party system, and political culture would have stronger effects on politicians than the effects of social networking sites.

*Sample and data*

Since we did not want to explore Facebook and Twitter penetration among politicians, we decided to work with reduced sample. On the one hand, this reduction let us to avoid errors that could occur when we found a profile with representative's name, but in reality that is a profile of a citizen who has the same name, and publishes a lot on political topics. The project did not want to undertake this job of selection. On the second hand, the number of possible records pushed us into the reduction of sample. We decided to analyze 10% of two countries' members of parliament and since we wanted to see the tendencies, but not the actual political discourse, we used an unbiased surveying technique. The total population was the number of representatives in the parliaments of Croatia (151) and Hungary (386), and with simple random sampling we chose individual representatives randomly. Each MP had equal chance of being chosen during the sampling project. The only condition was that the representatives had to have active Facebook or Twitter profile during the studied timeframe. This means that 15 (9.93%) Croatian and 39 (10.1%) Hungarian MPs were in the sample, or at least should be, because this plan worked for Facebook only, but not for Twitter. We found 5 (3.31%) active

MPs on Twitter in Croatia and 14 (3.63%) in Hungary. These numbers also mean that in case of Twitter we analyzed the total penetration of representatives.

<TABLE X.1 HERE>

The timeframe for the study was from November 2012 until January 2013 for Facebook and from November 2013 until January 2014 for Twitter. We considered every representative active if they had at least 2 posts or tweets over the analyzed period. The last elections were in 2011 in Croatia and in 2010 in Hungary before the study. This means that election campaigns had no effects on our research, we managed to analyze the MPs during 'everyday politics', when the tone of political communication or rhetoric is not tuned up. Parliamentary sessions at the end of year, usual commemorations, possible New Year's resolutions, holiday greetings, and opening parliamentary sessions of the New Year were the typical happenings over the analyzed periods.

The records for analysis were collected in Microsoft Excel program, where we did the categorization and some parts of analysis, too. The categorized records were prepared for SPSS statistical software and the final analysis was made in that software.[2] We used quantitative content analysis to analyze the posts. We considered as post every textual or visual content made by the politicians, but not by their followers. Notes, photos, links to other websites (e.g. YouTube) were categorized, and we treated them as the communication of representatives, but we did not analyzed likes, retweets and comments from Facebook,[3] because we wanted to analyze the more traditional way of communication and not the networking site driven interactions like retweets or likes. However, in some cases we had to open the ground for social networking sites' specialties. Since the comments on Twitter are in the center of communication along with other communication forms, we decided to analyze those notes, as well.

During the above mentioned three months we analyzed a total of 6262 notes. 54 representatives' 3356 posts on Facebook and a total of 19 representatives' 2906 tweets on

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[2] The data was collected manually by the author with the help of students at University of Szeged. The author thanks Bence Karvalics for his work in SPSS software.

[3] Although, we collected the Facebook comments, but the analysis of those was not the aim of this study. The 58 comments from Croatian MPs and 347 from Hungarian MPs were analyzed in much broader context. See for this: Ábrahám et al. 2015.

Twitter. We set up 6 categories for Facebook and 7 for Twitter. The first 4 were identical on both social networking sites. These were the textual categories, which mean that there could be a photo or a link in the post, but it must have written text in the note. These were the following categories: (1) *private sphere*, where the politicians wrote about their family, friends, personal happenings in their lives, but the season greetings ended in this category, too. (2) *Informational* category were used by MPs when they wrote about their work or direct the attention of their followers (e.g.: when they attended on openings, official ceremonies or celebrations, or they gave interview to a media and they draw the attention to that, or when they propose an article, book, video, etc.). (3) *Issue related statement* category contains the representatives' personal opinion on something, or sometimes on somebody. (4) *Personal attack* category is more explicit then the previous one. In contrast to issue related statement, it usually attacks other persons by using their names; rarely, but it happens that the notes in this category is used against an institution.

After the first four the rest of the categories are different regarding two networking sites. Non-textual categories are the following on Facebook. The fifth category is (5 – only Facebook) *link*, when politician shares a hyperlink without any commentary. This could be a link to an article or to a video, for instance. And the last on Facebook is (6 – only Facebook) *photo*, shared photos of photo albums with no textual reference to them. The fifth category on Twitter is a combination of Facebook's fifth and sixth categories. (5 – only Twitter) *link/photo/video* category – similarly to Facebook – is a non-textual category. And finally, since the Twitter works slightly different than the Facebook, we set up two interaction categories for Twitter. The tweets in these two had to contain the "@username" formula, because this code in Twitter shows that the user is interacting with other user(s). (6 – only Twitter) *Positive interaction*, when the representatives enter into a conversation with their followers. These notes could also mean neutral and/or constructive communication style. In contrast to the previous, (7 – only Twitter) *negative interaction*'s nature is deconstructive.

Finally, these classifications allow us to set up two dichotomies in order to analyze the tendencies in representative's communication. These dichotomies will be used for Facebook only, since the size of the sample allows us to have enough diversity of data on this social networking site, but not on Twitter. The first possible way is to make difference between textual categories and the categories without any textual reference. The first would be private sphere, informational, issue related statement, and personal attack categories, while the

second would be link, and photo categories. The group of textual categories assumes effort from the politicians, because it expects more from clicking or uploading. They should write down their own thoughts to share with their followers. The second dichotomy is the group of proactive –neutral classification. Proactive categories are issue related statement, personal attack. Neutral categories are private sphere, informational, link, and photo. Proactives are supporting interaction with the followers. They often generate debates, discussions or controversies. Neutral categories do not necessarily initiate interaction with their followers.

**Results**

The above mentioned 6262 notes divide among Croatian and Hungarian samples as follows. From the total of 3356 Facebook notes 331 were posted by Croatian and 3025 by Hungarian MPs, and from total of 2906 tweets 873 were written by Croatian and 2033 by Hungarian representatives. A total of 1204 notes were posted by Croatian and 5058 by Hungarian MPs. Since the Hungarian MPs were over represented in the sample, we see more notes from Hungarian politicians, but this result comes from the different size of the assemblies.
We can state that the Facebook were more used by the politicians in the samples, however, the total of 450 less notes posted on Twitter were made by fewer MPs in the sample. This shows the potential of Twitter in political communication in the two countries where this microblogging service is not used by lot of politician. Since the records are more diverse on Facebook, we introduce the results of Facebook more detailed.

<FIGURE X.1 HERE>

The Croatian representatives' sample used Facebook during the analyzed time period mainly to share information about their work or to direct the attention of their followers. The two non-textual categories are 17%, therefore the dominance of textual categories could be seen, and the group of neutral communication (74%) is more visible than the proactive group (issue related statement and personal attack categories). The results are indicating that Croatian politicians are using Facebook mainly to communicate their interests, but they do not use this platform as a tool for versatile communication. The first figure shows us the self-broadcasting nature of Croatian MPs. The situation is almost the same in Hungarian sample.

<FIGURE X.2 HERE>

Similarly to their Croatian colleagues, the Hungarian representatives in the sample used Facebook during the analyzed time period mainly to share information about their work or to direct the attention of their followers. But here the two non-textual categories are much higher 41%, 24% more than in Croatia. However, the dominance of textual categories is still visible, and the group of neutral communication is 86%. Major difference could be seen between the two countries in the use of link and photo categories. The self-broadcasting nature and the ignorance of interactivity are common. Other similarities could be seen in same percent of personal attack category and in similar percent of photo category. Although, the issue related statement category is more than 10 percent in both states, the MPs rarely use their opinion to attack others.

The first two figures showed more similarities than differences between the countries. If we look for the results more detailed in statistical software, then we can discover some differences. In order to do this we will analyze the means of Facebook categories.

<TABLE X.2 HERE>

The first category is the private sphere. We found no real difference in the use of private sphere posts. The Croatian sample's mean is 3.467 while the Hungarian politicians' is 3.33, the number of posts are practically the same. The second category is the informational, where we found more difference. The mean of Hungarian MPs' is around 6.5 times higher than the Croatian MPs'. This could be seen as a huge difference and shows that although the informational category is the most used category by the Croatian representatives' sample it is not so visible if we compare this with Hungarian sample. Next category is the issue related statement. Similarly to the first category, we found no difference between the use of this category in the two countries. However, there is difference in the tendencies. The Hungarian sample has an average of four times more issue related statement posts. The reason behind the difference is because the maximums are much higher in Hungarian MPs' sample that means few politicians post the most of this kind of notes. The fourth category is the personal attack, which was the most neglected category in both of the countries. According to our findings, the Hungarian sample is using the category more, but this could be seen from the actual numbers, too. 6 personal attack posts were written by Croatian and 55 posts by the Hungarian sample.

The first non-textual category is the link category. The Hungarian representatives in the sample are using more this category, what would mean that the Hungarians prefer this form of non-textual category more. The last category is the photo. The Hungarian sample posts 6 times more photos, but this is not significant, since the maximums are higher among the Hungarian politicians.

In general, the Hungarian politicians are more active on Facebook (the means are higher in Hungary), but the difference is not always remarkable (except for informational, personal attack, and link categories). It could be stated, that according to the means, the issue related statement category is more popular in Croatian sample, but the informational post category is not far behind, while the informational category is the most used by the Hungarian sample.

The analysis of Twitter would not change these results from above, on the one hand. Therefore, we decided to look the means of Facebook and Twitter results together which could give us overview of the research. On the other hand, we came to the conclusion to combine the results of two networking site mainly because the samples of the two countries did not fulfill our goal of 10% of MPs on Twitter. We analyzed the first four categories together since these are the same categories on both sites. The non-textual and the interaction categories are analyzed alone. Next table shows the results.

<TABLE X.3 HERE>

As we can see, the results are similar as on Facebook. The Hungarian means are higher, except for private sphere category and the interaction categories on Twitter. The results show that the Hungarian MPs' sample did not use interaction function of the Twitter, they did not talk with their followers. If we look the means then the informational category is the most popular not just in Hungarian but in Croatian sample, too. However, we should not make far-reaching conclusions on tendencies from the Twitter part of the research, since we found only 5 Croatian and 14 Hungarian MPs' who were actively using tweets in their communication and this was the 100% of MPs Twitter penetration.

**Discussion and conclusion**

The above presented results of the research enable us to outline tendencies. We found two evidence to question *are the members of Croatian and Hungarian parliaments acting as quasi journalist on social networking sites?* First, the MPs are content generators. They are sharing information about their work, happenings, thoughts and everyday life. From these shares the dominance of informational post category is the most visible. Informational posts mean the will to share information with the public, but the interactivity role of social media is secondary in this kind of communication (neutral communication). However, the shared information also means subjective selection process by the representatives. They will share anything what they could use as a tool for control the attention of their followers. Basically, we can answer Bebić's dilemma: the politicians did not want to have interaction with the public, they want "to spread their message" (Bebić 2011, 31). But, this recognition also supports Esser's opinion on mediatization of politics, what we called self-mediatization. Politicians in our samples used the analyzed social networking channels as "self-initiated stage-management" (Esser 2013, 162). Second, the broadcasting nature of representatives' communication means a shift from traditional media logic to the logic of social networking sites. The finding backing Altheide's opinion, MPs communication supports the mediatization which includes institutionalization and blending of different media forms on the analyzed sites (Altheide 2013). Media logic will not disappear, but new logic will rise. These observations allow us to give positive answer the members of the analyzed countries' parliaments are acting as quasi journalists on social networking sites.

The answer to previous question allows us to response the following: *do they foster the interaction between politics and public?* While the informational post category and the non-textual categories do not encourage further dialogue with the followers, the issue related statement and personal attack post categories (proactive categories) would be a great opportunity to start a conversation with the public. However, these categories also mean that the politician have to make her or his opinion clear. The politicians could find themselves changing their opinion too often and this could end in 'flip-flopping'. They would be alone, finding nobody to blame for misrepresentation of their opinion on a networking site, because they are the self-broadcaster. Therefore, the 'press-conference like' notes dominate their communication. This resonates with Merkovity's finding on politicians use of email, representatives will use these tools to demonstrate their openness, but they do not actually use them to interact with their voters (Merkovity 2014, 315), although versatile communication is a basic nature of the social media. This attitude of the politicians show strong connection with

Brants and colleagues findings: the politicians will try "to control the uncertainty of the outcome of free publicity" (Brants et al. 2010, 29). The picture is more nuanced if we add that – regarding the means – Croatian sample used the issue related statement category a bit more than the informational, but this stands only for the Facebook. If we add the results from the Twitter, the informational category will dominate. Still, we think the tendency is that the MPs in Croatia are starting to recognize the possibilities of Facebook. Though, the Hungarian sample's zero number in Twitter's interaction category indicates, that the Hungarian politicians still have lot to learn about the possibilities of social networking sites. Reviewing the results, our answer to this question is that Facebook and Twitter are *still* new tools to doing the same old things. The word 'still' means that it is true for the present, but the results show tendencies of change in Croatia.

We can give straight answer to the question *are there any similarities between the Hungarian and Croatian representatives' use of social networking sites?* We observed some differences, but more similarities could be found. Most of these were already discussed in the chapter. Here we will just point out the most important features. The differences are the following, Croatian politicians used a bit more the issue related statement category then the informational on Facebook. Further differences could be seen among the Hungarian representatives who use more the informational, personal attack, and link categories, while the private sphere category is more used by the Croatian MPs. Moreover, the number of means is almost identical. This brings us to the similarities. We found no remarkable difference in private sphere, issue related statement, and photo categories. In some cases Hungarians are more active than Croatians in these categories, but it happens mainly because of active individuals in the sample and not because the tendencies in the records. The self-broadcasting nature and the ignorance of interactivity are common. Finally, the weak presence of Twitter in political communication could be seen in both countries. The similarities support the previous findings on Croatian and Hungarian politicians use of internet: on macro-level, the level of state politics, representatives principally do not involve citizens (Bebić 2011), do not use social networking sites as a tool for two-way communication (Merkovity 2014), the informational function is still here to stay (Merkovity 2014; Mustić, Balabanić & Mustapić 2012), and nothing is threatening the dominance of Facebook (Balogh 2011; Brautović , John & Milanović-Litre 2013). Despite the differences, our answer to the question is clear we found similarities in characteristics of MPs communication in Croatia and Hungarian.

Two conclusions could be made from this research. The first one is that *the Croatian and Hungarian representatives will self-broadcast their communication, although they will use Facebook and Twitter as new tool for doing the same old thing*. The politicians used 'press-conference like' notes in their communication and this happened to direct the attention of their followers. Interactions with the public are not dominant. The activity what representatives did was self-broadcasting and this does not require interaction, bottom-up involvement, decentralized structures in communication and finally, it does not contain the need to accept the nature of social networking sites. These are the characteristics of self-mediatization of politics, and it could be defined as the self-broadcasting nature of politicians' communication on social networking sites.

The second conclusion states that *the use of Facebook and Twitter by Croatian and Hungarian representatives has not too many differences*. There were detected similarities before this research, too. The comparative research of MPs Facebook and Twitter use just confirmed previous studies' findings. The conclusion proves that social networking sites do not make any revolutionary changes in political communication. The reasons behind this are twofold. First, the political history, culture, etc. are still strong in one country's political communication development. Second, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter homogenize the possibilities in communication. Of course, the nature of communication could be different on these sites, but if there would be any difference, we would see that from the tendencies, however, the results of the samples did not prove any new or groundbreaking shift in online communication of representatives.

Finally, the above presented results are demonstrating the tendencies what we know from the literature on 'Wester countries' (i.e.: Aharony 2012; Blumler 2014). The limitations of the research do not allow us, to generalize the results presented in this chapter. We analyzed just 10% of the two countries' representatives. We did not analyze MPs' total penetration on Facebook, but we did analyze the total penetration of MPs on Twitter, although the number of active politicians is too low to make any universal statement on their communication. We can make statements only to the politicians who were included in our samples, as well as we can speak only about the analyzed time period. A research on same countries but with other politicians in other time period could end with slightly different results. However, we strongly believe that the tendencies would be the same. The ever changing social networking space

could have its long-term effect on politicians' communication, but this would be a topic of a different research with a more sophisticated methodology.

**Literature**

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**Towards Self-Mediatization of Politics**

Representatives' Use of Facebook and Twitter in Croatia and Hungary
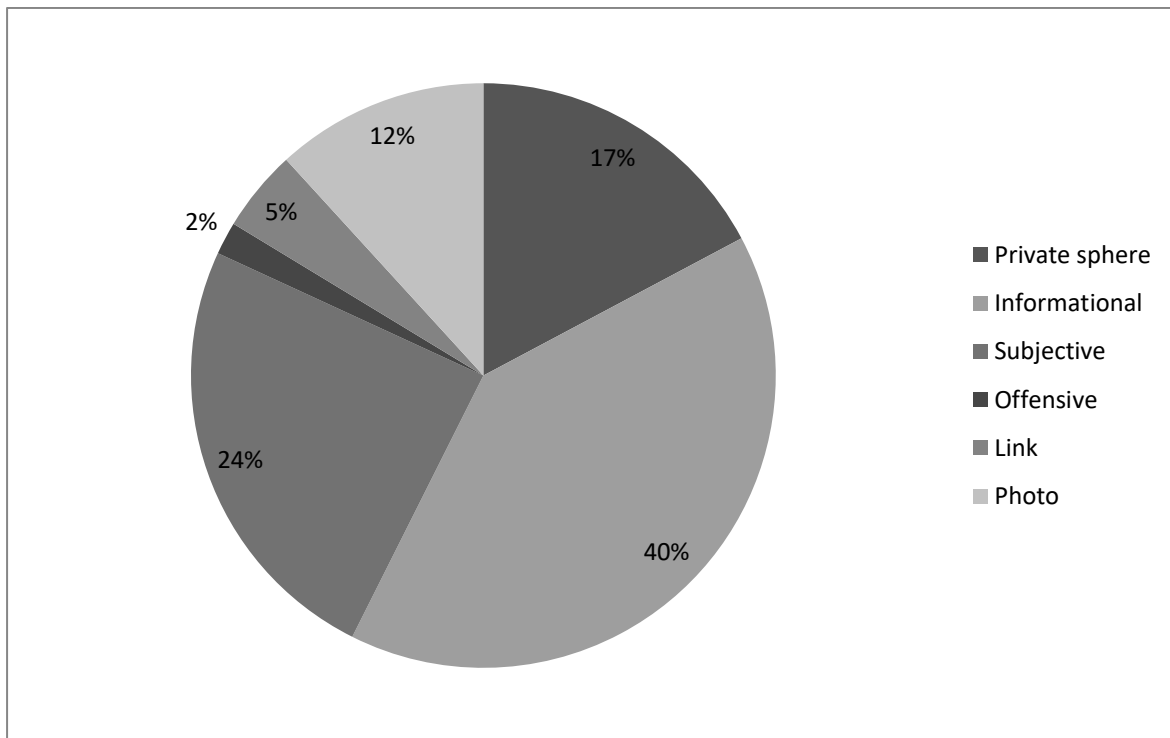
FIGURES

Figure 1.



Figure X.1 The distribution of Facebook categories in Croatia
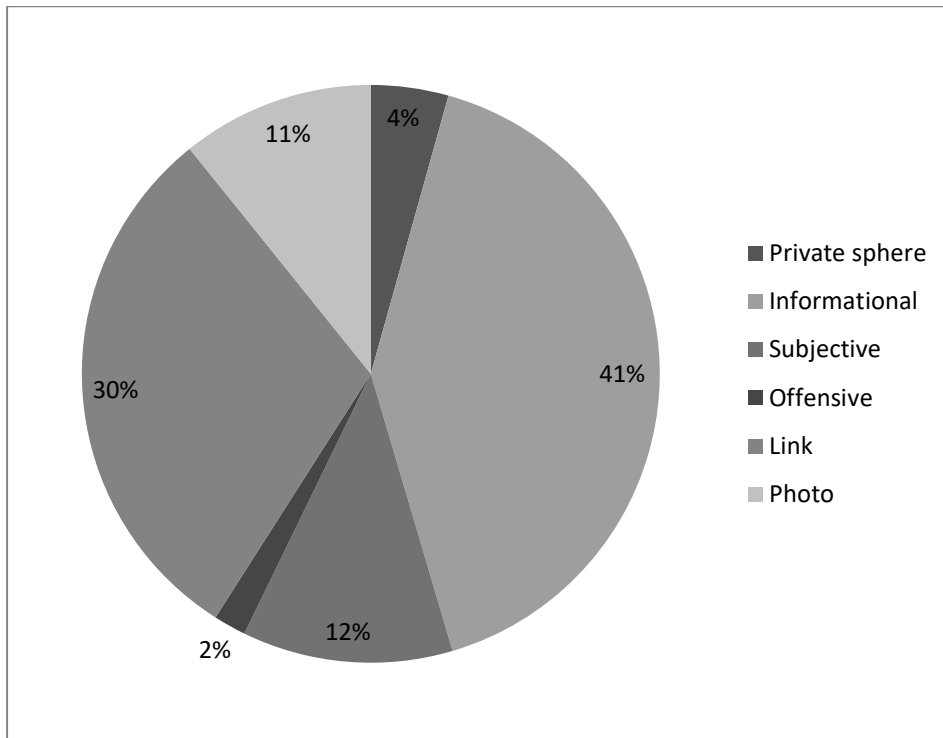
Figure 2.



Figure X.2 The distribution of Facebook categories in Hungary

TABLES

Table 1.

| Facebook | Number of MPs of party groups in the sample | Facebook | Party groups and number of MPs in the sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Croatia* | 7 Social Democratic Party of Croatia | *Hungary* | 16 Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance |
| | 3 Croatian Democratic Union | | 6 Hungarian Socialist Party |
| | 2 Croatian Labourists – Labour Party | | 6 Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary |
| | 1 Croatian People's Party – Liberal Democrats | | 4 Christian Democratic People's Party |
| | 1 Istrian Democratic Assembly | | 2 Democratic Coalition |
| | 1 Independent | | 2 Politics Can Be Different |
| | | | 2 Dialogue for Hungary |
| | | | 1 Independent |
| | **Average age of sample: 46** | | **Average age of sample: 44** |
| **Twitter** | | **Twitter** | |
| *Croatia* | 3 Social Democratic Party of Croatia | *Hungary* | 6 Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance |
| | 1 Croatian Democratic Union | | 3 Christian Democratic People's Party |
| | 1 Croatian Labourists – Labour Party | | 2 Hungarian Socialist Party |
| | | | 1 Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary |
| | | | 1 Politics Can Be Different |
| | | | 1 Dialogue for Hungary |
| | **Average age of sample: 44** | | **Average age of sample: 46** |

Table X.1 Party groups and average ages of the samples

Table 2.

| | Country | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Private sphere | Croatia | 15 | 3,4667 | 3,54293 | ,91478 |
| | Hungary | 39 | 3,3333 | 4,43273 | ,70981 |
| Informational | Croatia | 15 | 5,0000 | 8,56905 | 2,21252 |
| | Hungary | 39 | 32,1538 | 42,81511 | 6,85590 |
| Subjective | Croatia | 15 | 5,4667 | 6,97820 | 1,80176 |
| | Hungary | 39 | 9,1282 | 14,09214 | 2,25655 |
| Offensive | Croatia | 15 | ,4000 | ,82808 | ,21381 |
| | Hungary | 39 | 1,4103 | 2,76936 | ,44345 |
| Link | Croatia | 15 | ,9333 | 1,53375 | ,39601 |
| | Hungary | 39 | 23,4615 | 35,84385 | 5,73961 |
| Photo | Croatia | 15 | 2,6000 | 3,33381 | ,86079 |
| | Hungary | 39 | 8,3333 | 17,25709 | 2,76335 |

Table X.2 Means of Facebook categories

Table 3.

| Country | | Private sphere (Facebook and Twitter) | Information al (Facebook and Twitter) | Subjective (Facebook and Twitter) | Offensive (Facebook and Twitter) | Link/Video (Only Facebook) | Photo (Only Facebook) | Link/Photo/ Video (Only Twitter) | Interaction positive (Only Twitter) | Interaction negative (Only Twitter) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | Mean | 6,4762 | 10,8095 | 10,6667 | 1,0476 | ,6667 | 1,8571 | ,3333 | 19,0476 | 3,5714 |
| | Std. Deviation | 11,08431 | 18,50032 | 16,27677 | 1,82965 | 1,35401 | 3,03786 | 1,15470 | 57,62072 | 12,69083 |
| Hungary | Mean | 4,3208 | 43,1509 | 17,8679 | 6,1698 | 17,2642 | 6,1321 | ,9434 | ,0000 | ,0000 |
| | Std. Deviation | 6,58020 | 54,61276 | 37,03535 | 22,47283 | 32,37173 | 15,21138 | 5,15683 | ,00000 | ,00000 |

Table X.3 Means of categories (Facebook and Twitter)