

Abstract

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**Digitalization and party life. A
study of party members and party
structures in Poland.**

For many years, in almost every European country, an interest in membership in political parties has gradually declined. Party members are challenged by citizens and voters, who have an increasing trust in non-party actors, such as social movements, activists groups and individual leaders, what often announces the rise of populist tendencies. This is accompanied by the popular criticism of political parties as political bodies that have lost ties with grassroots. Nevertheless, relevant parties try to create new links with electorate through various networks interlinked by social media in order to be able to effectively spread political messages.

Author, along with the research team, conducts research project titled 'Political parties and their social environment – an analysis of organization and communication strategies of Polish political parties'. The work includes qualitative and quantitative empirical research among members of political parties, MPs and party administrators. The paper will discuss selected results of our research, in particular the relationship between digitalization at three levels: 1) individual party member, 2) organization of intra-party communication, 3) mediatized party - voter communication.

Research questions to be addressed: 1) How do political parties and its members perceive traditional vs online communication issues? 2) Are there differences between parties in the use of social media? 3) What are the key factors (variables) that cause the differences between parties? 4) Can digitalization help in reestablishing trust in political parties?