



## Simpozij Digitalno državljanstvo / Symposium Digital citizenship\*

FDV, torek, 24. maj ob 13. uri v predavalnici 19 /  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Tuesday, May 24 at 1 p.m., lecture room 19

Simpozij organiziramo v okviru triletnega projekta **Digitalno državljanstvo**, v okviru katerega se ukvarjamo z vprašanjem politične participacije, ki se spreminja pod vplivom naraščajoče družbene kompleksnosti, vzpona informacijskih in komunikacijskih tehnologij ter konvergence medijev. Digitalno državljanstvo obravnavamo kot delovanje državljanov v enakopravnih odnosih v skupnosti (*polity*), s poudarkom na preučevanju priložnosti in ovir online okolja in z upoštevanjem vrste okoliščin, ki določajo participacijo v (evropski) javni sferi. Raziskava preučuje komuniciranje etabliranih političnih akterjev in tematizira politiko in komunikacijo družbenih gibanj, ki se različno formirajo v nasprotjih do institucionalizirane politike. Projekt poteka v koordinaciji Mirovnega inštituta v sodelovanju s Fakulteto za družbene vede (UL) in Fakulteto za humanistične študije (UP).

Več: <http://www.digitalnodrzavljanstvo.si/>

\*Simpozij bo potekal v angleškem jeziku. / The symposium will be in English.

The symposium is organized as part of a three year project **Digital citizenship** that addresses political participation which has been changing under the influence of a growing social complexity, the rise of information and communication technologies and media convergence. The research views digital citizenship as referring to citizen action in equal relations within the polity, underscoring the study of opportunities and constraints of the online environment, and considering a series of circumstances determining participation in the (European) public sphere. Attention is devoted to study communication of established political actors as well as to discuss the potential and communication of social movements differently acting as counterparts to institutional politics. The project is coordinated by the Peace Institute, Institute for Contemporary Social and Political studies in cooperation with the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana and the Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska.

More: <http://www.digitalnodrzavljanstvo.si/>

## **Program**

13.00-13.15

Introduction and Presentation of the Research Project

Mojca Pajnik (Peace Institute and Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana)

### **Session I: Social Movements in Times of Crisis**

13.15-15.00

Andrew Calabrese (College of Media, Communication and Information, University of Colorado Boulder)

Food Movements and the Cultural Politics of Trade Institutions

Simona Zavratnik (Faculty of Social Sciences, UL), Iztok Šori (Peace Institute)

From “Let’s throw them out” to Silenced Streets and the Post-uprising Period: A Discussion on the Violence and Criminalisation of the Uprisings in Slovenia

Marko Ribač (Peace Institute)

Civil Society During the Economic and Political Crisis: Identifying Actors, Recognizing Differences

Lana Zdravković (Peace Institute)

Tensions in Relations Guiding Actors of the Uprising Movement in Slovenia in 2012-13

Ilda Londo (Albanian Media Institute)

Effects of Protests and their Communication on Public Accountability

Coffee break: 15.00-15.15

### **Session II: Institutional Politics and Instrumentalization of Citizenship**

15.15-16.-30

Tanja Oblak Črnič (Faculty of Social Sciences, UL)

Training Citizenship in Participatory Digital Culture? Contested Links between Political Institutions and Young Citizens in Slovenia

Peter Sekloča (Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska)

Political Effectiveness of Digital Citizens: Communication in the Structured Hierarchies of Power

Jernej Amon Prodnik (Faculty of Social Sciences, UL)

The Instrumentalisation of Politics and Politicians-as-Commodities: Political Communication of Slovenian Parties

Veronika Bajt (Peace Institute)

Digital Nationalism: The Case of Slovenian Political Actors

## List of Abstracts

Andrew Calabrese (University of Colorado)

### **Food Movements and the Cultural Politics of Trade Institutions**

This paper examines how traditional, local agricultural practices and foodways are central to the idea that "culture is ordinary," as it is described by Raymond Williams. Much of the research about media and social movements emphasizes human rights and social justice, and from this orientation the cultural politics of the global movement for "food sovereignty" can best be understood. The food sovereignty movement is represented by struggles against the power of global agribusiness corporations that supply seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and farm equipment used in industrial agriculture. These struggles also focus on the multilateral and bilateral policy agreements that institutionalize and normalize highly capitalized industrial agriculture, and which are understood worldwide by many millions of small-scale farmers as causes of both economic dependency and the disruption of the everyday practices of deeply rooted cultural life. The paper illustrates how an anthropological perspective on the ordinariness of culture is vital to our understanding of the cultural politics and policies of global trade.

Simona Zavratnik (Faculty of Social Sciences, UL), Iztok Šori (Peace Institute)

### **From "Let's throw them out" to Silenced Streets and the Post-uprising Period: A Discussion on the Violence and Criminalisation of the Uprisings in Slovenia**

Around the world, many recent protest movements started as local uprisings against bad governing in the field of spatial and green politics before they evolved into broader political movements. Another global similarity are methods of deligitimization and repression against protesting movements and people, which were used by the authorities: from disciplining by fines and imprisonment, to physical violence by the police. We could see both also during the uprising period in Slovenia (2012-2013): in Maribor, where it all started, the main trigger was the radar system set up by the mayor, clearly intended to pull as much money from people's pockets as possible. The police reacted with unprecedented violence against protesters, which however only flamed up protests in other cities around the country. The interviews with members of different movements, which were active at that time show most of them interpret the uprisings as a revolt against neoliberal economic policies, where the "success" of the movement is doubtful. The government and the mayor of Maribor were forced to resign, but in respect to policies not much has changed. Not surprisingly, today the uprising movements themselves regard the outcomes of protest as very limited, and some speak of being instrumentalized or abused by certain mainstream political actors.

Marko Ribač (Peace Institute)

### **Civil Society During the Economic and Political Crisis: Identifying Actors, Recognizing Differences**

Presentation argues that during the uprisings in Slovenia in years 2012 and 2013 it is rather generalizing to speak of unified or homogenous civil society that participated in protests. Thus, presentation will decouple and identify various protesting groups from

undifferentiated mass of protesters in the streets. It will classify groups, actively participating in the uprisings, while observing largest conflicts, antagonisms and relations that formed between, among and around them. Classification is grounded in sociology of social movements, however presenter mostly relies on Clauss Offe's theory on new social movements and antisystemic movements elaborated by authors of world-system theory to grasp the characteristics of participants and conflicts surrounding them. Based on these arguments speaker will try to present the case that when minimalist demands of uprisings, which neutralized internal conflicts between groups, became reality, coherency generated by the protest form dissipated.

Lana Zdravković (Peace Institute)

### **Tensions in Relations Guiding Actors of the Uprising Movement in Slovenia in 2012-13**

This paper rethinks the most important tensions that were established among the actors of the uprising movement in Slovenia 2012-13, such as old/new, exclusive (identitarian)/inclusive, national/beyond-national. But the paper especially thematises the delimitation of those who are within the paradigm of “the possible”, where politics is understood as a rule, and those emancipatory ones, in the field of “the impossible” that is inventing spaces of politics, based on radical equality principle, beyond the struggle for power. Analysis is based on interviews with individuals from the 19 initiatives/groups/collectives active during the uprisings, but also on the action of some other groups, such as the Anti-capitalist block (AKB).

Ilda Londo (Albanian Media Institute)

### **Effects of Protests and their Communication on Public Accountability**

Effects of protests and their communication on public accountability in Albania  
The paper explores the communication practices during protests in Albania, by analyzing the perceived role of mass media and alternative communication platforms, considering how these practices relate to public accountability. The research examines three case studies, employing media content analysis and in-depth interviews. The research indicates that the media tended to report the events and the different voices in the protests and beyond, but failed to launch on their own a discussion of greater government accountability and to follow up on this issue. At the same time, the notion of accountability among officials vis-à-vis protesters and citizens is very weak. Communication practices in this regard indicate that officials usually totally ignore requests for accountability, or avoid engaging in direct dialogue with the protest representatives. Even in the rare cases where there are attempts at communication, the discussion assumes a populist angle, avoiding the pressing issue of the protest. Overall, the prospects for improvement of accountability of state officials seem rather gloomy, while protests seem not to have affected this state of affairs.

Tanja Oblak Črnič (Faculty of Social Sciences, UL)

### **Training Citizenship in Participatory Digital Culture? Contested Links between Political Institutions and Young Citizens in Slovenia**

The article reflects the findings of two interrelated empirical studies conducted in 2014 which together demand a critical understanding of political actors and their role in the

online construction of digital citizens today. The study supports the thesis of depolitization of institutionalized political digital sphere and confronts the idea of a medization of political institutions. The results of a quantitative analysis of the 63 websites of Slovenian political institutions show that online political institutions are more media-structured: participatory, dialogical, creative and mobilized forms of participation are less present on their websites than is the expansion of news, photos, video and other self-centered promotional materials. As a consequence, instead of promoting an active and mobilized notion of digital citizen, characteristic for a "pluralist model of citizenship" (Artertone 1987), a "populist model of citizenship" comes into front, favouring passive followers and convinced voters without the potential for creating their own political input. Such tendency seems to be critically asserted in a group of young digital elite who notice well what political websites miss. In their eyes the political sphere is "like a newspaper", offering "one-way communication", aiming to promote "political faces", which neglects the potential for actualizing citizenship (Bennett 2008). The reasons for such a state of digital political sphere can be conceptually explained as an institutionalized preference of the controlled opinions instead of their autonomy and expression.

Peter Sekloča (Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska)

### **Political Effectiveness of Digital Citizens: Communication in the Structured Hierarchies of Power**

The article problematizes political effectiveness of communication of digital citizens. This opens the question of power as the factor to restore reality and relations in the political subsystem of society. Empirical research – with triangulation of the method of quantitative content analysis of web pages of political organizations, semi-structured interviews of young digital citizens and producers of web pages – sets the power and the effectiveness of the citizens' participation in relation to the institutions that form the structure of the political system. Results indicate that mostly structural characteristics of the political system with actors that have variable amounts of power condition certain forms and praxis' of communication. The approach demonstrates that the theory of structuration has greater explanation capacity of (political) communication than system theory.

Jernej Amon Prodnik (Faculty of Social Sciences, UL)

### **The Instrumentalisation of Politics and Politicians-as-Commodities: Political Communication of Slovenian Parties**

Paper focuses on the current processes in institutional politics, especially tendency towards the professionalisation of political communication. It relates it to the instrumentalisation of political life and its adoption of the commodity logic in public communication, which is leading to the internalisation and normalisation of marketing techniques, political branding, and selling of political programmes and candidates. The study proceeds from the perspective of critical theory and the political economy of communication, with the empirical part relating this theoretical framework to Slovenian institutional politics with the aim to analyse whether and in which ways instrumental reason and commodity logic have been adopted in the political communication of political parties. The study is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with key representatives of Slovenian parties or groups. Even though politics is not fully

professionalised, mainly due to financial constraints, the interviewees openly spoke about self-promotion in online communication, permanent campaigning, selling of the party, niche targeting and branding opportunities. They by and large internalised and naturalised the commodity logic and viewed it as commonsensical.

Veronika Bajt (Peace Institute)

### **Digital Nationalism: The Case of Slovenian Political Actors**

Drawing on an analysis of websites of political actors in Slovenia, the author notes that in the Slovenian context online national symbolism is associated with the civic idea of belonging to a political community of citizens, and less to ethnonationalism. This means that state institutions are modest in their use of national symbolism in the online environment given that it is only present on the websites of one-third of the analysed political actors. Introducing the term “digital nationalism”, the article uses theories of nationalism to explain the apparent divide between digitalised nationalist archaism and online civic actualisation.