

Political Marketing in Times of Crisis: Resolving the Online Conflict Between Democratic Duties and Branding Motivations for European Parliamentarians

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Abstract

As political communication transforms by the prolonged use of social media platforms, maintaining an active social media profile turns into a component of representation. Using Twitter as a case study, this paper questions if the increasing online interactions with European Parliamentarians (MEPs), designate a deliberative function or if the platform works as a brand-building mechanism used for promotional purposes. In a series of semi-structured interviews, MEPs from crisis-inflicted countries (Ireland, Greece, Cyprus), indicated their willingness to embrace the co-production of policy proposals with citizen contributions (deliberation). However, their motivation to use existing social media as deliberative mechanisms is minimal, unless an institutional platform regulated and managed by the European Parliament (EP), would set up a new landscape for online political discussion.

Keywords: *Online Branding, European Parliament, Policy Deliberation*