

Digital Media, Civil Society, and Anti-Corruption from the Grassroots

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Abstract

Institutional actors increasingly employ digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence to counter corruption. Civil society actors, including social movements organizations and grassroots activist groups, are also embracing digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence at a swift pace across the world. Although this seems to be a phenomenon that occurs on a global scale, we still know little about it. However, understanding how activists embed digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence in their grassroots struggles against corruption is relevant for at least two reasons. First, these are not just tools in the hands of civil society and social movement actors. Instead, they bring with them materials and imagined affordances that might have an impact on how corruption is understood and redefined from the grassroots; also, they mobilize a series of technical competences that goes beyond the mere sphere of politics, hence demanding a reframing of what it means to be an anti-corruption activist and what it takes to be an anti-corruption organization. Second, and related to the previous point, digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence as they are employed to counter corruption call into question the very notion of how people can come together to fight corruptive behaviors beyond governmental institutions, hence experimenting with innovative forms of social accountability, deeply tied to technologies. The panel, thus, invites scholars who tackle one or more of the following questions either through case studies or through theoretical reflections:

- How do activists across the world create, imagine, and employ digital media to counter different types of corruption in different parts of the globe?
- How do they collaborate with experts in the creation of digital media platforms, big data management, and artificial intelligence development to counter corruption?
- Who are the other actors, beyond activists and their organizations, that employ digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence to counter corruption beyond the top-down efforts of governmental institutions?
- In which ways are they able to combine with other forms of communication that do not rest on digital media?
- Are digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence always the most appropriate tools to counter corruption from the grassroots?
- Which are the challenges and opportunities that the use of digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence to counter corruption from the grassroots imply for civil society actors?
- Which are the intended and unintended outcomes of anti-corruption activists' use of digital media, algorithmic automation, and artificial intelligence, both in the political realm at large and, more specifically, for the anti-corruption sector?

The panel invites scholars who are working on these and related topics in different fields of studies and through different methodological lenses. The panel also welcomes papers that compare case studies across the world and use mixed-methods research designs.

To submit a Paper proposal, you need to create a MyECPR account (if you don't already have one) and send the following information to [Alice Mattoni](#) by **10**

February:

- your name, academic affiliation and email address
- a title for your paper
- an abstract of up to 500 words
- 3-8 keywords