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Online Mobilisation and “Citizen Diplomacy”

The challenges and opportunities created by the internet for traditional civic engagement have been extensively discussed in the academic literature. Furthermore, the role of new media as tools of (top-down) public diplomacy is currently being highlighted. The purpose of this paper is to bring together these two, quite autonomous strands of thought; it, thus, applies recent findings regarding online civic mobilisation (i.e. what motivates internet users to engage with issues) onto the field of diplomacy, a field of theory and practice, which has traditionally be conceptualised in a very top-down fashion. New media have created a space for user-generated content and “citizen journalists”. The opportunities for, and potential benefits of, online, grassroots “citizen diplomacy”, as well as the many and varied challenges affecting that process, are considered.

Biographical Note:

Roman Gerodimos is a Lecturer in Communication and Journalism at the Media School, Bournemouth University, where he teaches media theory and global current affairs. He is currently completing his doctoral thesis on online youth civic engagement in the UK. Roman’s background is in international studies and he holds an MSc in European Politics and Policy (LSE). His research interests include political communication, civic culture, issue politics, online mobilisation and the public sphere. He has published in scholarly journals and has contributed to many media and academic outlets internationally. Roman is Founder and Convenor of the Greek Politics Specialist Group and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.