

CYBERCRATIC CENTRALISM

Fabio Lupato García (University Complutense Madrid)

Valeria Tarditi (University of Calabria)

Definition

Cybercratic centralism is a transposition of the concept of democratic centralism in a technologically advanced society. It refers to the working principle and method of a collective organisation in which decisions and steering functions are centralised through digital tools and platforms, ensuring firm internal discipline. The control and management of digital platforms and affordances by small groups allows them to design the channels of participation, to decide the timing and implementation of the procedures, orienting the members' debate in the digital space up to the point to induce decisions that in most cases are consistent with the leadership's will.

Context

The concept of cybercratic centralism was developed in the last years in a context of a process of digitalisation of society and politics. It has been introduced in relation to parties that have adopted digital tools and platforms as constituent and structural elements of their own organisations, as for example the Five Star Movement in Italy (De Rosa 2013; 2022; Calise 2015; 2016; Mosca 2015). Specifically, the literature has adopted this concept to indicate the betrayal of the promises of participatory democracy through the use of the web (Calise & Musella 2020): the opportunities for individual expression and participation offered by digital platforms are often accompanied by strict control mechanisms on the part of platform managers and the centralisation of the agenda-setting by the disintermediated leadership.

Related concepts

Digital Crowdfunding; Digital Crowdsourcing; Digital Intra-Party Democracy; Digital Leadership; Digital Party; Online primaries; Personalization; Platform Politics; Political Organization

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