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Time and Location

Thursdays, 08:15 - 09:45 Uhr, D201

Description**

The digital age is fundamentally transforming our society. This course examines the effects of modern information- and communication technologies (ICTs), with a particular focus on politics in non-democratic and conflict countries. We start with an overview of how these technologies work and how they differ from classical ICTs. Next, we discuss different ways in which these technologies affect political and economic outcomes. In doing so, we give particular attention to empirical tests that can (or cannot) let us gauge these hypothesized effects. The course requires a solid background in research design and quantitative methods.

Grading

The course will be held as a seminar, and it is necessary that students come prepared to class. Participation in class discussions and participation in the mini-conference together account for 20% of the final grade. You are expected to participate in every session. Still, you have two jokers, which means that I will tolerate up to two unexcused absences. Every absence beyond that requires a doctors certificate (if due to sickness) or some other written documentation. Failure to comply with this rule will result in you failing the course. In addition, there are two kinds of written evaluation:

- A research design paper, due on April 15, 2020 (submit via ILIAS, no late submissions). The purpose of this paper is to describe a research question related to the topic of this course, and develop a (quantitative or qualitative) design to answer this question without actually carrying out the research. In particular, your research design paper must
 1. introduce the research question and its relevance,
 2. relate the question to the existing literature,
 3. spell out the theoretical framework that explains the phenomenon you are studying,
 4. describe the empirical cases and the data, and
 5. introduce the (qualitative or quantitative) approach you employ to answer your question.

If you are unsure about possible topics for your paper and/or about the approach you should take, I would be happy to provide feedback at early stages of your project. The final version of your paper should be about 15 pages (main text, excluding title page and references), 12pt font, line spacing 1.5, with one inch margins. It accounts for 50% of the course grade. We will use the last sessions of the course to organize a mini-workshop, where students briefly present the ideas for their research projects.

- Two response paper. In the first session, I will pre-assign weeks to students in order to obtain an equal distribution of response papers across all sessions. You can select one of the assigned readings, mandatory or additional, for the respective session, with the exception of papers marked with an asterisk (*) that cannot be selected. Your response paper should have three paragraphs. In the first paragraph, summarize the research question and argument presented. Do so briefly and

**This seminar is inspired by previous courses on the topic taught by Prof. Nils B. Weidmann (University of Konstanz), Sebastian Hellmeier (University of Gotheburg) and Prof. Anita Gohdes (Hertie School of Governance).

without technical details. The second paragraph describes how and where this question fits into the literature: maybe you can draw links to other work you know? Finally, in the third paragraph, critically discuss one aspect of the paper/chapter. This last point must be the focus of your paper (about half of its length), and can address a theoretical, methodological or empirical issue. Your response paper should be about one page, single-spaced, one inch margins, and is due at 12 noon on Wednesdays before class (submit via ILIAS). We will incorporate the issues raised in the response papers into the class discussion, so it is required that you submit your paper on time. Late submissions will not be accepted. Each response paper accounts for 15% of the course grade.

- Grading: All grading will be done according to the 1.0–5.0 scale. Each grade element (participation, response paper, final paper) must receive a 4.0 or above for you to pass. The final score (the weighted average of written submissions and participation, as defined above) will be rounded to the nearest grade to determine your final grade for the course.

Online Resources

Readings are available from the [ILIAS](#) module for this course. Registration requires a password: 123456seven. Please fill out the preregistration survey if you want to participate in the course. This system is also to be used for submissions of response- and term papers.

Legal

Please familiarize yourself with the Departments policies for academic integrity. See <https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/en/advice-and-service/academic-working/plagiarism/>. Please complete the form available on this website and submit it along with your final paper. We do not require this form for the response papers, but the Departments academic integrity policy applies nevertheless.

Course Readings

The readings for this course consist of books and academic papers on the topics to be discussed in class. Readings are available on the ILIAS system (see above). If you need a more in-depth introduction to the topic (optional), the following references may be helpful:

Political science resources:

- Howard, P. N. (2010). *The digital origins of dictatorship and democracy: Information technology and political Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Roberts, M. E. (2018). *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside Chinas Great Firewall*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Weidmann, N. B., & Rød, E. G. (2019). *The Internet and political protest in autocracies*. Oxford: Oxford Studies in Digital Politics

Technical resources:

- Deibert, R. J., Palfrey, J. G., Rohozinski, R., & Zittrain, J. (2008). *Access denied: The practice and policy of global internet filtering*. MIT University Press.
- [Severance \(2015\): Introduction to Networking: How the Internet Works \(online resource\)](#)
- [Harte \(2006\): Introduction to Mobile Telephone Systems \(online resource\)](#)

Schedule

Book chapters and papers are listed in the order in which I recommend you to read them.

Part I. Introduction

Oct 26 (Week 1): Introduction, Course Overview

Farrell, H. (2012). The consequences of the internet for politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15, 35–52*

Oct 31 (Week 2): Modern ICTs & Political Conflict

Tucker, J. A., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M. E., & Barberá, P. (2017). From liberation to turmoil: Social media and democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 28(4), 46–59*

Weidmann, N. B. (2015). Communication, technology, and political conflict: Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(3), 263–268*

Zeitsoff, T. (2017). How social media is changing conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(9), 1970–1991*

Nov 7 (Week 3): Inequality & Internet Diffusion

Milner, H. V. (2006). The digital divide: The role of political institutions in technology diffusion. *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(2), 176–199

Weidmann, N. B., Benitez-Baleato, S., Hunziker, P., Glatz, E., & Dimitropoulos, X. (2016). Digital discrimination: Political bias in internet service provision across ethnic groups. *Science*, 353(6304), 1151–1155

Hargittai, E., & Hsieh, Y. P. (2013). Digital inequality. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*, (pp. 129–151). Oxford: Oxford University Press*

Additional readings (optional):

Stier, S. (2017). Internet diffusion and regime type: Temporal patterns in technology adoption. *Telecommunications Policy*, 41(1), 25–34

Nov 14 (Week 4): Democratization

Diamond, L. (2010). Liberation technology. *Journal of Democracy*, 21(3), 69–83*

Groshek, J. (2009). The democratic effects of the internet, 1994-2003: A cross-national inquiry of 152 countries. *International Communication Gazette*, 71(3), 115–136

Rød, E. G., & Weidmann, N. B. (2015). Empowering activists or autocrats? The Internet in authoritarian regimes. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(3), 338–351

Part II. Political Outcomes for Individuals and Groups

Nov 21 (Week 5): Protest

Ruijgrok, K. (2017). From the web to the streets: internet and protests under authoritarian regimes. *Democratization*, 24(3), 498–520

Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 363–379

Additional readings (optional):

Steinert-Threlkeld, Z. C. (2017). Spontaneous collective action: Peripheral mobilization during the Arab Spring. *American Political Science Review*, 111(2), 379–403

Enikolopov, R., Makarin, A., & Petrova, M. (2019). Social media and protest participation: Evidence from Russia. Working Paper. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2696236> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2696236>

Nov 28 (Week 6): Insurgency

Pierskalla, J. H., & Hollenbach, F. M. (2013). Technology and collective action: The effect of cell phone coverage on political violence in Africa. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), 207–224

Christensen, D., Garfias, F., et al. (2018). Can you hear me now? How communication technology affects protest and repression. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 13(1), 89–117

Additional readings (optional):

Gohdes, A. R. (2018). Studying the internet and violent conflict. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 35(1), 89–106*

Shapiro, J. N., & Weidmann, N. B. (2015). Is the phone mightier than the sword? Cellphones and insurgent violence in Iraq. *International Organization*, 69(2), 247–274

Weidmann, N. B. (2016). A closer look at reporting bias in conflict event data. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1), 206–218*

Dec 6 (Week 7): Radicalization and Terrorism

Please note that this session will take place on Friday (10:00 – 11:30) in G306

Weirman, S., & Alexander, A. (2018). Hyperlinked sympathizers: Urls and the Islamic state. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Online First*, 1–19

Mitts, T. (2019). From isolation to radicalization: anti-Muslim hostility and support for ISIS in the West. *American Political Science Review*, 113(1), 173–194

Additional readings (optional):

Barceló, J., & Labzina, E. (2018). Do Islamic State's deadly attacks disengage, deter, or mobilize supporters? *British Journal of Political Science, Online First*, 1–21

Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., Alexander, A., & Kaderbhai, N. (2017). The impact of digital communications technology on radicalization and recruitment. *International Affairs*, 93(5), 1233–1249*

Part III. Political Outcomes for Governments

Dec 12 (Week 8): Online Censorship

Howard, P. N., Agarwal, S. D., & Hussain, M. M. (2011). When do states disconnect their digital networks? Regime responses to the political uses of social media. *The Communication Review*, 14(3), 216–232

King, G., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2013). How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), 326–343

Lutscher, P. M., Weidmann, N. B., Roberts, M. E., Jonker, M., King, A., & Dainotti, A. (2019). At home and abroad: The use of denial-of-service attacks during elections in nondemocratic regimes. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, Online First*, 1–29

Additional readings (optional):

Hellmeier, S. (2016). The dictator's digital toolkit: Explaining variation in internet filtering in authoritarian regimes. *Politics & Policy*, 44(6), 1158–1191

Meserve, S. A., & Pemstein, D. (2018). Google politics: The political determinants of internet censorship in democracies. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 6(2), 245–263

Dainotti, A., Squarcella, C., Aben, E., Claffy, K. C., Chiesa, M., Russan, M., & Pescapé, A. (2014). Analysis of country-wide internet outages caused by censorship. *IEEE/ACM Transactions on Networking*, 22(6), 1964–1977*

Gueorguiev, D. D., & Malesky, E. J. (2019). Consultation and selective censorship in China. *The Journal of Politics, Online First*, 1–7*

Dec 19 (Week 9): Censorship Outcomes

Hobbs, W. R., & Roberts, M. E. (2018). How sudden censorship can increase access to information. *American Political Science Review*, 112(3), 621–636

Enikolopov, R., Petrova, M., & Zhuravskaya, E. (2011). Media and political persuasion: Evidence from Russia. *American Economic Review*, 101(7), 3253–85

Additional readings (optional):

Knight, B., & Tribin, A. (2019). Opposition media, state censorship, and political accountability: Evidence from Chavez's Venezuela. Tech. Rep. Working Paper 25916, National Bureau of Economic Research

Jan 9 (Week 10): Flooding & Responsiveness

Munger, K., Bonneau, R., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2018). Elites tweet to get feet off the streets: Measuring regime social media strategies during protest. *Political Science Research and Methods, Online First*, 1–20

Chen, J., Pan, J., & Xu, Y. (2016). Sources of authoritarian responsiveness: A field experiment in China. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(2), 383–400

Additional readings (optional):

King, G., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2017). How the Chinese government fabricates social media posts for strategic distraction, not engaged argument. *American Political Science Review*, 111(3), 484–501

Barberá, P., & Zeitzoff, T. (2017). The new public address system: Why do world leaders adopt social media? *International Studies Quarterly*, 62(1), 121–130

Jan 16 (Week 11): Domestic Conflict

Gohdes, A. R. (2015). Pulling the plug: Network disruptions and violence in civil conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(3), 352–367

Zeitzoff, T. (2018). Does social media influence conflict? Evidence from the 2012 Gaza conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(1), 29–63

Additional readings (optional):

Krcmaric, D. (2019). Information, secrecy, and civilian targeting. *International Studies Quarterly*, 63(2), 322–333

Gohdes, A. (forthcoming). Repression technology: Internet accessibility and state violence. *American Journal of Political Science*

Yanagizawa-Drott, D. (2014). Propaganda and conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan genocide. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(4), 1947–1994

Part V. International Outcomes

Jan 23 (Week 12): Cyber Conflict

Valeriano, B., & Maness, R. C. (2014). The dynamics of cyber conflict between rival antagonists, 2001–11. *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(3), 347–360

Kostyuk, N., & Zhukov, Y. M. (2019). Invisible digital front: Can cyber attacks shape battlefield events? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(2), 317–347

Maness, R. C., & Valeriano, B. (2016). The impact of cyber conflict on international interactions. *Armed Forces & Society*, 42(2), 301–323

Additional reading (optional):

Deibert, R. J., Rohozinski, R., & Crete-Nishihata, M. (2012). Cyclones in cyberspace: Information shaping and denial in the 2008 Russia–Georgia war. *Security Dialogue*, 43(1), 3–24*

Valeriano, B., & Maness, R. C. (2018). How we stopped worrying about cyber doom and started collecting data. *Politics and Governance*, 6(2), 49–60*

Gartzke, E. (2013). The myth of cyberwar: Bringing war in cyberspace back down to earth. *International Security*, 38(2), 41–73*

Jan 30 (Week 13): Disinformation Campaigns

Bradshaw, S., & Howard, P. N. (2018). The global organization of social media disinformation campaigns. *Journal of International Affairs*, 71(1.5), 23–32

Zannettou, S., Caulfield, T., De Cristofaro, E., Sirivianos, M., Stringhini, G., & Blackburn, J. (2019). Disinformation warfare: Understanding state-sponsored trolls on Twitter and their influence on the web. In *Companion Proceedings of The 2019 World Wide Web Conference, WWW '19*, (pp. 218–226)*

Guess, A., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Science Advances*, 5(1), 1–8

Part VI. Workshops

Mini-Workshop: Pitch your research projects in three slides (approx. 5 minutes). Details and schedule to be announced. Please submit your slides the day before the presentation via ILIAS.

Feb 6 (Week 14): Mini-Workshop I

Feb 13 (Week 15): Mini-Workshop II