

## **Advanced SNA Seminar, January 17, 2019, University of Bern**

We are happy to invite you to the next “**Advanced SNA**” seminar, which will take place on **Thursday, 17 January 2019, 12:00 – 14:00**, at University of Bern, Uni S, Schanzeneckstrasse 1, 3012 Bern, (room A 017). If you like, bring your lunch!

### **Program:**

12:00-13:00

#### **Political Astroturfing in Electoral Campaigns: a comparison between the South Korean and the US presidential election**

*Franziska Keller, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Co-authors: David Schoch, Sebastian Stier, and Junghwan Yang)*

Political astroturfing, a centrally coordinated disinformation campaign in which participants pretend to be ordinary citizens acting independently, has the potential to influence electoral outcomes and other forms of political behaviour. Unlike other types of disinformation such as demonstrably false statements, it is hard to evaluate the scope and effectiveness of political astroturfing without a “ground truth” – information that unambiguously identifies participants. In this paper, we compare two astroturfing campaigns for which we have such information, and which aimed at influencing the 2012 South Korean and the 2016 US presidential elections, respectively. We show that features that best distinguish these accounts from regular users are not individual account characteristics, but traces left by coordination among agents of astroturfing. We use these empirical regularities to detect additional suspect accounts that have a high probability of being part of the campaigns. We find similarities and differences between the online patterns that the two campaigns left behind and link them to the internal organization of the campaign as described in court documents and journalistic investigations. We also compare their respective strategies and their overall effectiveness in influencing public opinion, and find a limited online impact in the South Korean case.

13:00-14:00

#### **Sanitation in Vietnam: collaborative or hierarchical governance?**

*Manuel Fischer, EAWAG*

Whereas collaborative governance mechanisms are increasingly common in many governance systems, there is little knowledge on how such tendencies have spread to non-Western countries. This article analyses to what degree the sanitation sector in socialist Vietnam is influenced by elements of collaborative and hierarchical governance, respectively. The empirical study on sanitation in two provinces in Vietnam reveals a complex mix of collaborative and hierarchical governance. In the centrally run city of Hanoi, which serves as a national leader of innovation and where local actors have high capacities, information exchange tends to follow horizontal network structures. In the normal province of Ben Tre, hierarchical network structures are present more strongly.

**Aim of the Seminar Series:**

Fostering the exchange among SNA scholars in the region and discussing SNA methods and recent developments with a focus on applications in social sciences. The idea is that each of us has the opportunity to present her/his current work in an informal setting and to get feedback from the other participants. We aim at presenting early-stage research as well as papers ready to submit. In cases where a paper already exists, the manuscript should be circulated in advance in order to enable people to read it.

We are looking forward to meeting you all.

Best

Karin, Manuel, & Marlene

## Presentation 1:

Political Astroturfing in Electoral Campaigns: a comparison between the South Korean and the US presidential election

*Franziska Keller, David Schoch, Sebastian Stier, and Junghwan Yang*

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## Presentation 2:

Sanitation in Vietnam: collaborative or hierarchical governance?

Manuel Fischer

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