

## ICT23-002 - Beyond computational propaganda and bot activism: Investigating social media suppression in authoritarian regimes

### Zusammenfassung

There are rising concerns about social media suppression (SMS) in non-democratic societies. Social media are somehow people's only hope for raising their voices in authoritarian regimes, and suppressing them could have detrimental effects on citizens' democratic efforts. The existing literature in this area mainly revolves around 'computational propaganda (CP).' This concept, however, is limited as it minimizes the problem of CP to its computational aspects. The extant research also concentrates on computational methods. However, the efficiency and validity of these methods in investigating SMS is under question. Furthermore, this line of research mainly focuses on false information as the primary tactic and social bots as the main actors of suppression. I argue SMS is the interplay between social media spaces, sociopolitical contexts, and hybrid media systems. Thus, we need to go beyond CP and bot activism to understand the depth and breadth of SMS as a computational and discursive process. BeyondCBA combines rhetoric analysis with computational methods to dig deeper into the multifaceted and complex dynamics of SMS. BeyondCBA focuses on #MahsaAmini movement on Twitter and Telegram in Iran to understand how computational techniques were combined with discursive practices by inauthentic agents, not only social bots, to suppress this movement. BeyondCBA provides fresh theoretical insights and empirical evidence of SMS in an understudied but relevant context: Iran.

Wissenschaftliche Disziplinen:

Political communication (70%) | Digital humanities (30%)

Keywords:

Social media suppression; Twitter; Computational propaganda; Disinformation; Critical discourse analysis; Rhetoric theory; Automated text analysis

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Status: Vertrag in Vorbereitung

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