

Franziska Barbara Keller

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Personal information:	Date of birth: 14.03.1979 Swiss national Married 2 children (Dates of birth: 10.08.2017, 21.12.2022)
Research interests:	authoritarian regimes, network analysis, elite politics, country, experts, social media, social movements, influence campaigns
Employment history:	9/2025 – : Assistant Professor , Institute of Communication and Media Studies, University of Bern, Switzerland 01/2022 – 9/2025: Advanced PostDoc , Institute of Communication and Media Studies, University of Bern, Switzerland 5/2020 – : non-resident fellow at the Digital Democracy Lab, University of Zurich, Switzerland 9/2019 – 12/2021: Faculty associate , Institute for Emerging Market Studies at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong 7/2016 – 12/2021: Assistant Professor (tenure track), Division of Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong [did not apply for tenure because of deteriorating political situation in Hong Kong] 6/2017 – 5/2018: SNSF Postdoc.Mobility fellow at the University of California, San Diego, United States 9/2015 – 5/2016: Postdoctoral Fellow , Harriman Institute, Columbia University, New York, United States 4/2015 – 7/2015: Visiting Researcher (with scholarship) at the International Center for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID) at the Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia
Education	PhD in Political Science , Department of Politics, New York University, USA . Degree received: September 28, 2015. Dissertation title: <i>Networks of Power. Using Social Network Analysis to Understand Who Will Rule and Who is Really in Charge in an Authoritarian Regime. Theory, Method, and Application on Chinese Communist Elites (1982-2012)</i> Committee: Jenn Larson (Chair), Adam Przeworski, Joshua Tucker “Lizentiat” in Political Sciences (major) and Islamic Studies (minor), University of Bern, Switzerland . MA equivalent degree received: January 2010. Thesis title: <i>An Evaluation of the Community-Based Tourism Policy in Kyrgyzstan</i>
Research projects	2025 - : Through A Glass, Darkly: How country experts and their network influence our understanding of politics in authoritarian regimes 2021- : Extracting information on the relations of political actors from unstructured text

2016-2022: Political Astroturfing on Twitter

2015-2018: Social Network Analysis in authoritarian regimes. Comparing Networks of Power in China and the Soviet Union. *Postdoc.Mobility project*

2013-2016: Exploring the informal network between government and citizens in Kazakhstan

2012-2015: Networks of Power Using Social Network Analysis to Understand Who Will Rule and Who is Really in Charge among Chinese Communist Elites (1982-2012). *Dissertation project*

2010-2012: (Why) Do Revolutions Spread?

Prizes and Awards **2020:** [UROP Faculty Research Award](#) (HDK 20,000 for supervising Mr Armin and Mrs Lillian Kitchell Undergraduate Research Awardee Hojun Lee)

2019: [Top Paper Award](#) for *The Electoral Dimension of Disinformation: Political Astroturfing on Twitter*, International Communication Association - Computational Methods

2014: **John Sprague Award** for best paper presented by a graduate student for *Networks of Power: A Social Network Analysis of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, 1982-2006*, APSA Political Networks Section 2013-2014

2013: **Best Poster Award** for *How to Spot a Successful Revolution in Advance*, Political Networks Conference 2013

Fellowship and grants (as principal investigator) **2024:** **SNSF Starting Grant**, Swiss National Science Foundation, 1.8 mio CHF

2024: **SAGW Travel Grant**, Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, CHF 1000

2024: **DigiK-Perspektivprojekt**, University of Bern, Digitalization Commission, CHF 19,934 for "Automated identification of political elites' personal networks in unstructured text" (March 2024-February 2025)

2023: **SAGW Travel Grant**, Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, CHF 1000 [returned due to illness]

2023: [120%-Care-Grant](#), University of Bern: 19.2 Personalpunkte or CHF 24,900 for "Developing an algorithm to extract relationships between political actors in unstructured text" (May 2023-April 2024)

2022: [COMET](#) – **Coaching, Mentoring and Training for female PostDocs**, University of Bern, CHF 3000 (June 2022-February 2023)

2021: **Funds** to hire research assistant under the Hong Kong Government's **Anti-epidemic Fund 2.0 Job Creation Scheme**. Received HKD 340,779 for the project "Who is connected to whom? Developing a tool for the automatic extraction of political and economic elites' personal networks from unstructured text." (2021-2022)

2020: **Equipment Competition Grant**, HKUST. Received HKD 165,028 to buy high-performance computing hardware. Grant number: REC20HSR01

2020: **Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (Special Round) Grant** of the [Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office](#), Hong Kong Government. Received HKD 441,600 for the project "The Spread of Rumors on and across Social Media Platforms during Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition-Law-Protests." Grant number: SR2020.A7.004 (March 2020-January 2021)

2019: [Germany/Hong Kong Joint Research Scheme Grant](#) of the University Grants Committee's Research Grants Council, Hong Kong. Received HKD 60,000 for the project "Comparing Hidden Propaganda Campaigns Worldwide: The Manipulation of Political Twitter Discussions in South Korea, United States, Iran, Venezuela, Germany, Russia, and Bangladesh". Grant number: G-HKUST601/19 (January 2020 – December 2021)

2019: [UROP Collaboration Grant](#) through HKUST's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program's Collaboration Funding Scheme. Received HKD 97,151 for the project "Comparing hidden propaganda campaigns on Twitter worldwide: influencing political discussions in South Korea, United States, Iran, Venezuela, Germany, and Russia." Grant number: UROPCFS1903 (September 2019 – August 2021).

2019: Research Grant of HKUST's Institute for Emerging Markets. Received HKD 100,000 for the project "[Evaluating the evaluators of political risks in emerging markets: A social network analysis of experts on China](#)" (August 2019-December 2021)

2019: School-based Initiative Grant, HKUST School of Humanities and Social Science. Received HKD 20,000 for the project "Comparing hidden propaganda campaigns during democratic elections: Presidential elections in South Korean 2012 and the United States 2016" (February 2019 – August 2020)

2019: APSA Travel Grant, American Political Science Association, USD 400.

2016: Start-up Grant, HKUST School of Humanities and Social Science. HKD 100,000.

2015: Post-Doctoral Fellowship, [Harriman Center](#), Columbia University, USD 50,000

2015: Early PostDoc.Mobility stipend, Swiss National Science Foundation, for the project [Social Network Analysis in authoritarian regimes: Who will rule, who will get purged, and who is actually in charge? Comparing Networks of Power in China and the Soviet Union](#). Grant number P2SKP1_161666 (June 2017 – May 2018)

2015: Doctoral Dissertation fellowship, [Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange](#), USD 18,000 for completing the dissertation "Networks of Power: A Social Network Analysis of the Central Committee of the P.R. of China." Grant number DD058-A-14 (July 2015 – June 2016)

2015: [World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship grant](#), Smith Richardson Foundation, USD 7,500 for the project "Networks of Power: Revealing Informal Networks among Authoritarian Elites to Predict Regime Instability and Turnover" (March 2015 – March 2016)

2015: APSA Travel Grant, American Political Science Association, USD 165.

2015: Student Senator's Council Conference Funding, New York University, USD 850

2015: Travel Grant, NYU Department of Politics, USD 350

2014: [Global Research Initiative Fellowship](#), New York University, Washington, DC, USD 4500 (Fall Academic Year 2014).

2014: New Generation China Scholars Grant, the University of Chicago Center in Beijing, USD 3000 for the project "Shaking Hands in Public" (December 2014 – June 2015)

2014: National Science Foundation Political Networks Fellowship, Political Networks Conference, USD 1000

2014: Conference Travel Award, NYU Center for Social and Political Behavior, USD 1000

2014: Travel Grant, NYU Department of Politics, USD 350

2014: Summer Research Assistantship, NYU Department of Politics, USD 4000

2013: [Global Research Initiative Fellowship](#), New York University, NYU Shanghai, USD 4500 (Spring Academic Year 2014).

2013: Research grant, NYU Center on U.S.-China Relations, USD 10,000 for the project "Guanxi", factions, and "princelings": investigating informal networks among the Chinese political elite (September 2013 – September 2014)

2013: Summer research grant, NYU Department of Politics, USD 4000 for the project "Exploring the informal network between government and citizens in Kazakhstan" (June

2013 – May 2014)

2013: Research grant, [NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia](#), USD 2500 for the project “Exploring the informal network between government and citizens in Kazakhstan” (June 2013 – May 2014)

2013: Dean’s Travel Grant, NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science, USD 500.

2013: National Science Foundation Political Networks Fellowship, Political Networks Conference, USD 1000

2013: Conference Travel Award, NYU Center for Social and Political Behavior, USD 2000

2013: Travel Grant, NYU Department of Politics, USD 350

2013: Summer Research Assistantship, NYU Department of Politics, USD 4000

2012: Teaching Assistantships, NYU Department of Politics, USD 10,000

2012: Data gathering grant, NYU Department of Politics, USD 2000 for the project “Coding Revolutionary Events” (June 2012 – May 2013)

2012: SAGW Travel Grant, Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, CHF 400

2012: Travel Grant, NYU Department of Politics, USD 250

2012: Summer Research Assistantship, NYU Department of Politics, USD 4000

2011: Teaching Assistantships, NYU Department of Politics, USD 10,000

2011: Dean’s Travel Grant, NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science, USD 500

2011: Summer Research Assistantship, NYU Department of Politics, USD 4000

2010: MacCracken PhD Fellowship 2010-2015, NYU Graduate School of Arts and Science, USD 120,000

2002: Full Scholarship to study at Renmin University 2002-2003, Chinese Scholarship Council

2001: Partial Scholarship to study at Wuhan University 2001-2002, Chinese Scholarship Council

Institutional responsibilities

2021-2022: Member of faculty search committee, Division of Social Science, HKUST

2020-2021: Member of faculty search committee, Division of Social Science, HKUST

2019-2020: Member of the postgraduate student admission committee, Division of Social Science, HKUST

2018-2019: Member of the postgraduate student admission committee, Division of Social Science, HKUST

2018-2019: Member of the subcommittee for Digital Society, HKUST Guangzhou Campus

2017, 2019: Interviews of prospective students for the Global China Studies and the Quantitative Social Analysis major

Supervision of students / junior researchers

Jasmin Bauer (2025, BA student, icmb, University of Bern): currently supervising BA-thesis

Enea Atroce (2025, BA student, icmb, University of Bern): I supervised his BA-thesis “Framing Analyse des Blutskaudals. Berichterstattung in Grossbritannien.”

Guangnan Zhu (2025, PhD student, Queensland University of Technology): External reviewer for PhD thesis “A Deep Learning-based Computational Framework for

Detecting and Analysing Multimodal Online Coordinated Behaviour.”

Raya Keller (2024, BA student, icmb, University of Bern): I supervised her BA-thesis “Die Macht der Emotionen. Wie Social-Media-Kommunikation die US-Wahlen 2024 prägt.»

Lucy Kopp (2024, BA student, icmb, University of Bern): I supervised her BA-thesis “Euroskeptizismus in der Schweizer Parteikommunikation.”

Han Feng (2023, PhD student, University of Edinburgh): outside review board member to provide feedback on PhD proposal.

Christophe Hutmacher (2022, BA student, ICMB, University of Bern): I supervised his BA-thesis “Wahlvorhersage mit Twitter-API-Daten: ein retrospektiver Versuch im Kontext der Bundestagswahl 2021.”

Hangying Wei (MPhil student, Division of Social Science, 2020-2022): I was a reader of her MPhil thesis “How Do Domestic Events in the U.S. Affect Young and Educated Chinese Netizens’ Attitudes toward Democracy? Evidence from Zhihu.” She was part of our research project on the spread of rumors during the protests in Hong Kong. [She is now a PhD student at Columbia University.](#)

Ruilin Lai (MPhil student, 2018-2021, Division of Social Science, HKUST): I supervised his research as undergraduate and MPhil student and wrote letters of recommendation for his successful applications to HKUST’s MPhil program, the 2019 ICPSR Summer School, and an application to work as research assistant at NYU Abu Dhabi in 2021 to gain additional research experience. He supervised some of my Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) students (see below), and presented joint research at the MPSA Annual Conference 2019. [He entered the PhD program in Political Science at the Washington University of St. Louis in 2022.](#)

Ting Yin (Tammy) Ng (MPhil student, 2018-2021, Division of Social Science, HKUST): I supervised her Honour’s thesis “The Effectiveness of the Great Firewall in a New Perspective: Chinese Studying Abroad” and encouraged her to apply to and wrote a letter of recommendation for HKUST’s MPhil program, which she completed successfully in 2021. During that time, she participated in our research projects on China experts and the spread of rumors during the protests in Hong Kong.

Hojun Lee (UG student, Division of Social Science, 2018-2020): I supervised his Honour’s thesis and he participated in several of my UROP projects, for one of which he received the Mr Armin and Mrs Lillian Kitchell Undergraduate Research Award in 2019. [He entered the PhD program in the Washington University of St. Louis’ Division of Computational and Data Science in 2020.](#)

Yanbang Wang (UG student, Computer Science and Engineering 2019): I was a reader of his final year project “Analyzing Career Trajectories of Qing Dynasty Civil Servants with Data Mining and Machine Learning.”

Qingyan Wang (MPhil student, 2016-2018, Division of Social Science, HKUST): I was a reader of her MPhil thesis “The Controversial Role of Online Charitable Crowdfunding in China” and wrote letters of recommendation for a scholarship to successfully present her research at the PolNet conference 2017 and for her PhD admission. [She entered the PhD program of the School of Public & International Affairs of the University of Georgia in 2018.](#)

In addition, between 2016 and 2021 I offered 6 different [Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program](#) projects, providing a total of 35 undergraduate students an opportunity to participate in Academic research projects.

Teaching activities

Introduction to Political Science:

The World of Politics (online, offline, mixed-mode), lecture for ca. **120 undergraduate students**, HKUST (2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021)

Social Network Analysis and other method courses:

Qualitative Methods in Social Science (offline), lecture for ca 80 **undergraduate** students, University of Bern (2025)

Introduction to Social Network Analysis (online, offline, mixed-mode), lecture and lab for **10-20 undergraduate** and ca. 5 **graduate students**, HKUST (2017, 2019, 2020, 2021)

Introduction to Social Network Analysis (offline), ca. **20 PhD and PostDocs**, Zurich Summer School for Women in Political Methodology, 2019

Introductory course to Social Network Analysis and related statistical programs (offline), **20-30 undergraduate, graduate and PhD students**, Higher School of Economics, Moscow and HKUST, 2015

Social Movements and Information Campaigns:

Practical training in research I and II (offline): Government propaganda? The communication of governmental and parastatal actors on social media, **33 undergraduate students**, University of Bern, Fall 2023

Practical training in research I and II (offline): Fake and genuine grassroots movements on social media, **25 undergraduate students**, University of Bern, Spring and Fall 2022

Political Astroturfing worldwide: how to manipulate public opinion on Twitter (offline), **1-5 undergraduate students**, HKUST, Summer 2019 – Fall 2022 (UROP - Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program)

The spread of rumors on and across social media platforms during Hong Kong's anti-extradition-law-protests (offline), **3-5 undergraduate students**, HKUST, Spring 2020 – Summer 2020 (UROP)

Political astroturfing in South Korea: examining how the secret service manipulated twitter during the 2012 presidential election (offline), **1 undergraduate student**, HKUST, Spring 2019 – Spring 2020 (UROP project)

Political Elites:

Practical training in research I and II (offline): Political elites in the media, **28 undergraduate students**, University of Bern, 2024

Changing Alliances in Trump's White House: Networks and Elite Politics, **1-5 undergraduate students**, HKUST, Fall 2018 – Summer 2021 (UROP project)

State visits and international get-togethers: studying the meetings of state leaders worldwide, **2-3 undergraduate students**, HKUST, Summer 2020 – Fall 2020 (UROP project)

Who profits from the current anti-corruption campaign in China? Examining who replaces the fallen tigers and flies, **2 undergraduate students**, HKUST, Spring 2017, (UROP project)

Memberships in panels and boards

Discussant at the 2019 APSA Annual Meeting panel "[The Ones that Never Knock: Opportunities for Career Advancement and Corruption](#)"

Discussant at the 2019 EPSA Annual Conference panel "Communicating (for and against) populism"

Chair and Discussant at the 2019 MPSA Annual Meeting panel "[The Influence of State Media](#)"

Discussant for the 2019 MPSA Annual Meeting panel "[Political Networks East & West: Asia and the Americas](#)"

Chair of the 2018 APSA Annual Meeting panel "[Ties Matter: Selection, Distribution, and Information Networks in Latin America](#)"

Chair of the 2018 EPSA Annual Conference panel "Autocracies and Hybrid Regimes"

Discussant at the 2017 EPSA Annual Conference panel "Authoritarian Politics"

Discussant at the 2016 MPSA Annual Conference panel [“Varieties of Liberalism”](#)

Section Chair of the Political Networks section at the General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research in Montréal, 2015

Reviewer for the John Sprague Award (2014-2015) presented by the Political Networks section of the American Political Science Association

Reviews for scientific journals

American Journal of Political Science (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020); American Political Science Review (2018, 2019); Big Data and Society (2020, 2020); British Journal of Political Science (2018, 2021, 2024, 2024); China: An International Journal (2016); China Quarterly (2017); Cities (2018, 2019); Communication and the Public (2020); Comparative Political Studies (2017, 2017); Comparative Politics (2018, 2018); Contemporary Politics (2020, 2021); Democracy and Security (2020); Democratization (2023); EPA: Economy and Space (2025); Government and Opposition (2018, 2021, 2022); Harvard Data Science Review (2024); The Information Society (2024); Information, Communication and Society (2019); International Journal of Communication (2023, 2023); International Journal of Press/Politics (2020, 2021, 2021, 2022, 2024, 2024); International Journal of Political Opinion (2024); International Journal of Public Opinion Research (2024); Journal of Chinese Political Science (2020, 2020, 2021, 2024, 2024); Journal of Comparative Politics (2021); Journal of Communication (2017); Journal of Conflict Resolution (2021); Journal of Contemporary Asia (2020, 2020); Journal of Contemporary China (2021); Journal of Current Chinese Affairs (2021, 2022); Journal of Politics (2019, 2024, 2025); Journalism Practice (2020, 2020); Party Politics (2018, 2018, 2018); Political Communication (2020, 2023); Political Research Quarterly (2015); Political Science and Research Methods (2024, 2025); Political Studies (2017); Post-Soviet Affairs (2021); Problems of Post-Communism (2020); Social Networks (2016, 2017, 2023, 2025); Territory, Politics, Governance (2020, 2020); VOLUNTAS (2022); World Politics (2020, 2025)

Organization of conferences and panels

Organized the working group [“Bots, Trolls, and Fake News: Political Astroturfing Across the World”](#) at the 2017 APSA Annual Meeting.

Organized the panel “AstroTurf Wars: Online Campaigns to Influence Public Opinion in Comparison” at the 2017 APSA Annual Meeting

Organized two panels at the 2017 MPSA Annual Conference entitled “Conflict and Government from a Network Perspective” and “More than Just Guanxi: Chinese Politics and Social Network Analysis” and acted as discussant on the latter

Organized the panel “Elite Networks and Authoritarian Stability” at the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting.

Organized the panel “Social Network Approaches to Violence and Coercion” at the 2015 APSA Annual Meeting.

Organized the panel “Network Analysis in Non-Democratic Settings” at the 2015 MPSA Annual Conference.

Organized the panel “Network Analysis and Authoritarian Regimes” at the 2014 MPSA Annual Meeting.

Organized thematic Political Networks panels for the Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress 2014

Co-founder of the Comparative Political Networks group and mailing list

Active memberships in scientific societies

Swiss Political Science Association, American Political Science Association, International Network for Social Network Analysis

Personal skills

Language skills: German (native speaker), English (fluent), French (advanced), Chinese (advanced), Russian (intermediate), Arabic (beginner), Italian (beginner), Spanish (beginner)

Computer skills: R, STATA, NetLogo, gephi, visone, LaTeX

Research Output

Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals

Keller, Franziska Barbara; Johan Dornschneider-Elkink; and Tung, Hans Hanpu (2025): China Watchers, [forthcoming in **PS: Political Science**]

Adam, Silke; Rohrbach, Tobias; **Keller, Franziska Barbara**; Makhortykh, Mykola; De León, Ernesto; Valli, Chiara; Baghumyan, Ani; Sydorova, Maryna (2025): How do media contribute to the dissemination of conspiracy beliefs? A field study combining panel and web tracking at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Journal of Communication**, jqaf033 [SJR: 2.532, Google Scholar: 1]

Schoch, David; **Keller, Franziska Barbara**; Stier, Sebastian and Yang, JungHwan (2022): [Coordination patterns reveal online political astroturfing across the world](#), **Scientific Reports** 12, 4572. [SJR: 0.973, Google Scholar: 64]

Keller, Franziska Barbara; Schoch, David; Stier, Sebastian and Yang, JungHwan (2020): [Political Astroturfing on Twitter: How to Coordinate a Disinformation Campaign](#), **Political Communication** 37:2, 256-280. [SJR: 3.405, Google Scholar: 517]

Doyon, Jérôme, and **Keller, Franziska Barbara** (2020): [Knowing the Wrong Cadre: Social Networking in the Chinese Central Party School](#), **Political Studies** 68:4, 1036-1053. [SJR: 1.406, Google Scholar: 24]

Keller, Franziska Barbara (2020): [Appropriating Democracy: A Comparison between Argumentative Strategies for Confucian and Islamic Democracy](#), **Journal of Intercultural Studies** 41:2, 180-196. [SJR: 0.285, Google Scholar: 5]

Keller, Franziska Barbara (2016): [Moving Beyond Factions: Using Social Network Analysis to Uncover Patronage Networks Among Chinese Elites](#), in **Journal of East Asian Studies** 16:1, 17-41. [SJR: 0.209, Google Scholar: 135]

Peer-reviewed books/monographs

Yang, Song; **Keller, Franziska Barbara** and Zheng Lu (2017): [Social Network Analysis: Methods and Examples](#), SAGE Publications [Google Scholar: 337]

Peer-reviewed conference proceedings

Haq, Ehsan-UI; Braud, Tristan; Yau, Yui-Pan; Lee, Lik-Hang; **Keller, Franziska Barbara** and Hui, Pan (2022): [Screenshots, Symbols, and Personal Thoughts: The role of Instagram for Social Activism](#), in **Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2022**, 3728-3739. [Google Scholar: 23]

Keller, Franziska Barbara; Schoch, David; Stier, Sebastian and Yang, JungHwan (2017): [How to Manipulate Social Media: Analyzing Political Astroturfing Using Ground Truth Data from South Korea](#), **Proceedings of the 11th International Association of the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence Conference on Web and Social Media – ICWSM 2017** [Google Scholar: 97]

Contributions to books

Keller, Franziska Barbara (2018): [Analyses of Elite Networks](#), in Heinrich Best, Maurizio Cotta, Jean-Pascal Daloz, John Higley, Ursula Hoffmann Lange, Jan Pakulski, Elena Semenova (editors): *The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites*, Palgrave Macmillan UK [Google Scholar: 34]

Invited Talks

Keller, Franziska Barbara (11.04.2025): China Watchers, Swiss China-Networking Day, Europainstitut, University of Basel, Switzerland.

Keller, Franziska Barbara (31.03.2025): Contributions to “The Vectors of Pro-Russian Discourses in the West / The Receptivity of Democratic Societies to Russian Narratives and Fake News”, panel at the conference “Prevalence and degree of penetration of Russian disinformation related to the Russia-Ukraine war in the information space in the West”, Université de Montréal, Canada (online)

Keller, Franziska Barbara (30.10.2024): China Watchers, [GIGA China Series](#), German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Hamburg, Germany (online)

Keller, Franziska Barbara (17.04.2024): How do we learn about authoritarian politics? Thinking about the role of experts, their networks and government propaganda. Key note speech for FRIAS Conference [“Understanding the Rise of Autocrats in the 21st Century: Digital Propaganda, Populism, and \(Hybrid\) Warfare”](#), Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany

Keller, Franziska Barbara (11.07.2023): Should we be worried about Echo Chambers among China Watchers? University of Bremen, Germany

Keller, Franziska Barbara (23.09.2019): Positions of Power. Uncovering hierarchies using career paths and network measures, [Network Perspectives on the Study of Chinese History](#), ICSCC Fudan University, Shanghai, China

Keller, Franziska Barbara (19.10.2018): Political Astroturfing during Elections. The case of South Korea 2012, Sociology Seminar, Hong Kong Baptist University

Keller, Franziska Barbara (30.04.2018): The Politics of Paying A Visit: A Network Analysis of Provincial Leadership Visits, USC Marshall China Research Day, University of Southern California, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (12.01.2018): Shaking Hands in Public Co-appearances of political elites in China and the Soviet Union, [China Research Workshop](#), Fudan-UC Center on Contemporary China, UC San Diego, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (14.11.2017): Applications of Social Network Analysis in Chinese Politics, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (14.11.2017): Chinese Politics and Social Network Analysis and “Creating Aristocracy - Networking in the Central Party School”, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (23.04.2016): Networks of Power. Using Social Network Analysis to Analyze Chinese Informal Politics, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, China

Keller, Franziska Barbara (11.03.2016): Networks of Power: How Social Network Analysis can tell us who will rule and who is really in charge in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Digital Media, Networks, & Political Communication, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (17.03.2016): Networks of Power. Using Social Network Analysis to better understand who will rule China, and who is actually in charge, Division of Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, China

Keller, Franziska Barbara (9.02.2016): Networks of Power: who will rule, who will be purged, and who is really in charge in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), INCITE – Interdisciplinary Center for Innovative Theory and Empirics, Columbia University, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (25.09.2015): Moving Beyond Factions: Using Social Network Analysis to Uncover Patronage Networks Among Chinese Elites, HKUST-HSE Workshop on Comparative Studies of Regional Governance in China and Russia, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Keller, Franziska Barbara (23.06.2015): Introduction to Social Network Analysis. With focus on elites and bureaucracies, International Center for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID) at the Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

Keller, Franziska Barbara (26.05.2015): Shaking Hands in Public. What elite co-appearances tell us about the politics behind the scenes, International Center for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID) at the Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

Keller, Franziska Barbara (07.02.2015): Networks of Power. Social Network Analysis and Chinese Elites: Conceptualizing and Measuring Informal Institutions, Quantitative Studies of the Chinese Elite, UC San Diego, USA.

Keller, Franziska Barbara (16.01.2015): Networks of Power. Using Social Network

Analysis to predict who will rule China, (who will get purged,) and who is actually in charge, Fachbereich Politik- und Verwaltungswissenschaft, University of Konstanz, Germany.

Keller, Franziska Barbara (17.05.2014): Networks of Power Informal Networks in the Chinese Central Committee 1982-2006, School of International Relations & Public Affairs, Fudan University, China

Keller, Franziska Barbara (20.11.2014): Looking Beyond Patrons. Using Social Network Analysis to identify current and future leaders among the Chinese elite, U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Washington DC, USA

Talks at conferences and workshops

Keller, Franziska Barbara (16.10.2025): Using LLMs to extract political networks from newspapers – preliminary results and lessons learned, colloquium "Most recent topics in political communication", ICMB, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (13.09.2025): China Watchers vs. China Government on Twitter/X, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Vancouver, Canada

Keller, Franziska Barbara (11.09.2025): Are There "Good" Conspiracy Beliefs? Groups of Conspiracies and Who Believes Them, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Vancouver, Canada

Keller, Franziska Barbara (02.09.2025): Franziska Keller: Networks and Contingency in Hybrid Regimes: Understanding Party Defections and Coalitions during Georgia's Colored Revolution, [WhoGov workshop](#), University of Oslo, Norway

Keller, Franziska Barbara (28.06.2025): China Watchers vs. China Government on Twitter, [Sunbelt \(INSNA\) conference](#), Paris, France

Keller, Franziska Barbara (25.06.2025): Networks and Contingency in Hybrid Regimes Understanding Party Coalitions and Defection during Georgia's Colored Revolution, [Sunbelt \(INSNA\) conference](#), Paris, France

Keller, Franziska Barbara (15.05.2025): China's Attempts for Information Control among China Scholars and Possible Implications for Knowledge Production and Academic Independence, colloquium "Most recent topics in political communication", ICMB, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (17.03.2025): (How) does government repression against China Experts directly and indirectly affect the output of the field of China Studies? Winter School in Digital Political Communication and the Digital Public Sphere, Roskilde University, Denmark

Keller, Franziska Barbara (10.01.2025): What Conspiracies Does Switzerland Believe in? colloquium "Most recent topics in political communication", Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of Geneva, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (28.11.2024): What Conspiracies Does Switzerland Believe in? Colloquium "Most recent topics in political communication", ICMB, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (07.09.2024): A Network Approach to the Generation of Knowledge about Authoritarian Regimes [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Philadelphia, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (4.6.2024): The Diffusion of Expert Opinion and the Risk of Echo Chambers, European Political Science Association Annual Conference, Cologne, Germany

Keller, Franziska Barbara (9.2.2024): China Watchers (and Echo Chambers), Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (8.12.2023): Knowing when and how to fail: Leaving a tenure-track job or not?, [Behind the Veil of Success: Learning from \(Academic\) Failures and Mistakes](#), University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (18.10.2023): Astroturfing: how to detect fake grassroots movements on Twitter and other social media platforms, [Information Pollution on the Web: Sources, Algorithms and Recipients](#), University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (11.10.2023): Through a Glass, Darkly: How to Study Closed Regimes, PhD/PostDoc workshop, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (02.09.2023): Should we be worried about echo chambers among China Watchers? [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Los Angeles, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (01.09.2023): Wolf Warriors and Their Pups: The PR of China's Presence on Twitter? [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Los Angeles, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (05.05.2023): Do China Experts influence each other? Evidence from their online writings, ICMB workshop, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (03.11.2022): Watching the China Watchers – who are the individuals that shape our understanding of Chinese politics, colloquium "Most recent topics in political communication", ICMB, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (27.10.2022): Wolf Warriors and their pups: China's presence on Twitter, [Digital Democracy Workshop](#), DigDemLab, University of Zürich, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (05.05.2022): Wolf warriors and their followers - the Chinese government's presence on Twitter, colloquium "Most recent topics in political communication", ICMB, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (08.09.2021): Astroturfing in Hong Kong and elsewhere: patterns of coordination in hidden Twitter campaigns, 8th European Communication Conference (online), European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA)

Keller, Franziska Barbara (28.05.2021): Wolf Warriors and their pups: China's presence on Twitter, Empirical Political Science Working Group in Hong Kong (EPSinHK), City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR

Keller, Franziska Barbara (28.04.2020): Big Data Analysis? Two Examples, Research Methods in Public Policy, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong SAR

Keller, Franziska Barbara (30.08.2019): Uncovering Bureaucratic Hierarchies Using Career Paths, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Washington DC, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (29.08.2019): The Trump White House Network and How We Get to Know it, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Washington DC, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (20.06.2019): Political Astroturfing in Electoral Campaigns: a comparison between the South Korean and the US presidential election, European Political Science Association Annual Conference, Belfast, UK

Keller, Franziska Barbara (16.06.2019): Extracting Political Elite Networks from Unstructured Text: the Case of the Steele Dossier, Quantitative Text Analysis Workshop Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (04.04.2019): Political Astroturfing in Electoral Campaigns: A comparison between the South Korean and the US presidential election, Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (22.03.2019): Positions of Power. Uncovering hierarchies using career paths and network measures, [Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference](#), Denver, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (17.01.2019): Political Astroturfing in Electoral Campaigns: a comparison between the South Korean and the US presidential election, Advanced

SNA Seminar, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (31.08.2018): How Do Autocrats Signal Loyalty?: Inter-Provincial Visits of Chinese Elites, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Boston USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (30.08.2018): Purges, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Boston, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (21.06.2018): Political Networks and Competition: Sharing the spoils or building partisanship? Political party development and defections in hybrid regimes, European Political Science Association Annual Conference, Vienna, Austria

Keller, Franziska Barbara (07.04.2018): Uncovering Authoritarian Hierarchies Using Career Paths and Network Measures, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (05.01.2018) Shaking hands in public: Co-appearances of political elites in opaque regimes, [Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), New Orleans, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (31.01.2018): Political Astroturfing during Elections. The case of South Korea 2012, HNG retreat UC San Diego, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (31.08.2017): The secret service's twitter campaign to influence South Korean public opinion, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), San Francisco, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (23.06.2017): Public appearances of political elites in opaque regimes – the cases of China and the Soviet Union, European Political Science Association Annual Conference, Milan, Italy.

Keller, Franziska Barbara (09.04.2017): Manipulating Online Public Opinion during a Presidential Election: Political Astroturfing in South Korea, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (06.04.2017): Public Appearances of Political Elites in Opaque Regimes: The Cases of China and the Soviet Union, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (11.01.2017): Manipulating Online Public Opinion during a Presidential Election - Political Astroturfing in South Korea, Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (02.09.2016): The Ties that Kill: Informal Networks and Purges, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Philadelphia, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (01.09.2016): Uncovering Hierarchies Using Career Paths and Network Measures, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), Philadelphia, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (23.06.2016): Who is really running the show? Uncovering hierarchies using career paths and network measures, European Political Science Association Annual Conference, Brussels, Belgium

Keller, Franziska Barbara (15.06.2016): Who is really running the show? Uncovering hierarchies using career paths and network measures, 2nd European Conference on Social Networks (EUSN), SciencesPo, France

Keller, Franziska Barbara (27.04.2016): Coalition formation along informal ties: a network model, ECPR Joint Session Workshop ["The Informalization of Global Governance"](#), Pisa, Italy

Keller, Franziska Barbara (16.04.2016): How many hands must a Kazakh shake until she reaches the President? A replication of Milgram's "small world" experiment in Kazakhstan, World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, Columbia University, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara and Truex, Rory (08.04.2016): Anti-Corruption and Growth,

[Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (07.04.2016): "Appropriating" Democracy: A Comparison between Argumentative Strategies for Confucian and Islamic Democracy, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (02.04.2016): "Degrees of separation: How many hands must a Kazakh citizen shake until she reaches the president?" North East Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference, NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (22.01.2016): "Appropriating" Democracy. A Comparison between Argumentative Strategies for Confucian and Islamic Democracy, Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of Basel, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (22.01.2016): Farewell Comrades! Struggle and Elite Removal during Leadership Succession in Authoritarian Regimes, Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of Basel, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (05.09.2015): Moving beyond Factions Using Social Network Analysis to uncover patronage networks among Chinese elites (changed title), [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), San Francisco, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (05.09.2015): The corruption Network of Zhou Yongkang, [American Political Science Association Annual Meeting](#), San Francisco, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (27.08.2015): Social Network Analysis and the Study of Chinese Elites: A New Approach for Conceptualizing and Measuring Informal Institutions, [General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research](#), University of Montreal, Canada

Keller, Franziska Barbara (29.06.2015): Networks of Power: Using Social Network Analysis to understand who will rule and who is really in charge in the Chinese Communist Party, 4th International Center for the Study of Institutions and Development Conference, Higher School of Economics, Russia.

Keller, Franziska Barbara & Jérôme Doyon (17.04.2015): Creating Aristocracy: Social Networking in the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (17.04.2015): How to Recognize an Informal Elite Network From Quite a Long Way Away: An Appraisal of Different Approaches, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (11.12.2014): Appearing in public together. Can elite public co-appearance tell us something about behind-the-scene politics? New Generation China Scholars Program, Beijing, China

Keller, Franziska Barbara (04.09.2014): Networks of Power. Coalition Formation in Networks, [General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research](#), Glasgow, UK

Keller, Franziska Barbara (28.08.2014): [Networks of Power. Informal networks in the Chinese Central Committee 1982-2012](#), American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington DC, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (04.07.2014): Networks of Power. Coalition Formation in Networks, 1st European Conference on Social Networks, Barcelona, Spain

Keller, Franziska Barbara (05.04.2014): Getting the Message Across - Informal Communication Networks between the Government and Citizens in Kazakhstan, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (04.04.2014): Networks of Power – a Social Network Analysis of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, [Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference](#), Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (22.02.2014): Networks of Power. Informal Networks in the

Chinese Central Committee 1982-2006, [Sunbelt XXXIV](#), St. Pete Beach, US

Keller, Franziska Barbara (30.01.2014): Networks of Power. Informal Networks in the Chinese Central Committee 1982-2006, Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (13.04.2013): "Yes, Emperor" - Controlling the Bureaucracy in an Authoritarian Regime. On the Appointment of Qing Dynasty Provincial Governors, 1644-1912, Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (13.04.2013) Finding Support Elsewhere - Elections and Coup Deterrence, Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (01.02.2013): Finding Support Elsewhere. Elections and Coup Deterrence, Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara (2012 – Conference cancelled due to Hurricane): [\(Why\) Do Revolutions Spread?](#) American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (12.04.2012): (Why) Do Revolutions Spread? Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, USA

Keller, Franziska Barbara (03.02.2012): Do Revolutions Spread? If so, how and why? Swiss Political Science Association Annual Congress, University of Lucerne, Switzerland

Posters

Silke Adam, Tobias Rohrbach, Chiara Valli, Franziska Keller, Mykola Makhortykh, Ani Baghumyan (2025): Preparing the mainstream media for the next pandemic – when do media foster conspiracy beliefs? Presented at the MCID annual meeting, University of Bern, Switzerland

Silke Adam, Franziska Keller, Beatrice Eugster, Chiara Valli, Mykola Makhortykh, Ernesto de León, Ani Baghumyan (2022): Preparing for the next pandemic - when does mainstream media content foster belief in conspiracy theories? presented at the MCID Opening Event, University of Bern, Switzerland

Keller, Franziska Barbara, Schoch, David, Stier, Sebastian and Yang, JungHwan (2019): Political Astroturfing around the World, presented at the Politics and Computational Social Science (PACSS) Conference 2019, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA.

Keller, Franziska Barbara (2013): [How to Spot a Successful Revolution in Advance](#), presented at the [Political Networks Conference 2013](#), Indiana University, Bloomington, USA.

Keller, Franziska Barbara and Del Sordi, Adele (2013): Exploring informal networks between citizens and the government in Kazakhstan, presented at the Applications of Social Network Analysis Conference, 2013, University of Zürich, Switzerland.

Outreach activities

Astroturfing and Disinformation:

16.5.2025: I gave a talk on conspiracy theories in Switzerland at a workshop for journalists organized by the Institute of Communication and Media Studies, University of Bern, Switzerland.

3.5.2024: I gave a talk on "Desinformation auf dem Internet" at the SEV Mitgliederversammlung, Sektion AS Bern, Hotel Bern, Switzerland.

18.10.2023: I presented a general summary of Astroturfing research during the public workshop [Information Pollution on the Web: Sources, Algorithms and Recipients](#) at the University of Bern, which was covered in der Bund and the Berner Zeitung:

<https://www.derbund.ch/google-und-desinformation-im-internet-uni-bern-praesentiert-forschung-390822546588>

28.10.2019: I summarized our findings of the Political Communication article “Political Astroturfing on Twitter: How to Coordinate a Disinformation Campaign” in the Washington Post’s Monkey Cage Blog for a lay audience:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/28/its-not-easy-spot-disinformation-twitter-heres-what-we-learned-political-astroturfing-campaigns/>

04.03.2020: Our results were also featured in a contribution by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/coastal-gas-link-rail-blockades-facebook-1.5484039>

22.06.2020: And in BBC Radio 4’s The Digital Human podcast: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000k7jk> - in particular this bit: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08hhz0h>

Reports

Keller, Franziska Barbara; Hui, Pan and Braud, Tristan (2021): The Spread of Rumors on and across Social Media Platforms during Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition-Law-Protests. Report produced for the Hong Kong Policy and Innovation Coordination Office

Under review

Keller, Franziska Barbara and Adele Del Sordi: Measuring How Many Hands a Kazakh Citizen Must Shake to Reach the President

Keller, Franziska Barbara: When “Divide and Conquer” fails: a Simulation of Protest Cascades in Heterogeneous Societies. Extension of poster [“How to Spot a Successful Revolution in Advance”](#)

Working papers

Keller, Franziska Barbara: [Shaking hands in public. What elite co-appearances tell us about the politics behind the scenes](#). Working paper, Institute for Industrial and Market Studies, Higher School of Economics, Moscow.