



# ALEKSANDRA URMAN

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## EMPLOYMENT

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- Postdoctoral researcher** *Since September 2020*  
Social Computing Group (Department of Informatics)  
University of Zurich
- Postdoctoral researcher** *July 2020 - June 2021*  
Institute of Communication and Media Studies  
University of Bern
- Research assistant** *June 2018 - June 2020*  
Institute of Communication and Media Studies  
University of Bern

## EDUCATION

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- PhD (summa cum laude)** *June 2018- May 2020*  
Institute of Communication and Media Studies  
University of Bern  
Dissertation Title: "Polarisation on Social Media in Different National Contexts"  
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Silke Adam; Second Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Peter Van Aelst
- MA in Political Science** *2016-2017*  
Central European University, Budapest
- BA in Asian Studies** *2012-2016*  
Higher School of Economics, Moscow

## PUBLICATIONS

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### PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

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- Urman, A., Makhortykh, M., Ulloa, R. (2021). **The Matter of Chance: Auditing Web Search Results Related to the 2020 U. S. Presidential Primary Elections Across Six Search Engines.** Social Science Computer Review. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393211006863>
- Christner C., Urman, A., Adam S., Maier M. (2021). **Automated Tracking Approaches for Studying Online Media Use: A Critical Review and Recommendations.** Communication Methods and Measures. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393211006863>
- Urman, A., Makhortykh, M. (2021). **There can be only one truth: Ideological segregation and online news communities in Ukraine.** Global Media and Communication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17427665211009930>
- Urman, A., Katz S. (2020). **What they do in the shadows: examining the far-right networks on Telegram.** Information, Communication & Society. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1803946>
- Makhortykh, M., Urman, A., Ulloa, R. (2020). **How search engines disseminate information about the coronavirus and why they can do better.** Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review. <https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-017>
- Urman, A. (2019). **Context matters: political polarization on Twitter from a comparative perspective.** Media, Culture and Society. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719876541>
- Urman, A. (2019). **News Consumption of Russian Vkontakte Users: Polarization and News Avoidance.** International Journal Of Communication, 13, 25. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/11161>

## PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

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Makhortykh, M., *Urman, A.*, Ulloa, R. (2021). **Detecting race and gender bias in visual representation of AI on web search engines.** In L. Boratto, S. Faralli, M. Marras, G. Stilo (Eds.), *Advances in Bias and Fairness in Information Retrieval* (pp. 36–50). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78818-6\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78818-6_5)

*Urman, A.*, Makhortykh, M., Ulloa, R. (2021). **Auditing source diversity bias in video search results using virtual agents.** Third Workshop on Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, Ethics and Society on the Web (FATES). Companion proceedings of the 2021 WWW Conference. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3442442.3452306>

## AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FUNDING

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**Research Grant, An Overview of the Swiss Political Telegram User Communities and their Role in the Distribution of Toxic Speech, 46160CHF** *June 2021-May 2022*

Co-PI Together with Stefan Katz  
Federal Office of Communications, Switzerland

**Research Grant, Algorithmic curation of (political) information and related biases, 2800CHF** 2020

Co-PI Together with Dr. Mykola Makhortykh  
Förderverein Kommunikations-und Medienwissenschaft der Universität Bern

**EuroCSS Datathon Challenge Winner** *September 2019*

Together with Stefan Katz, Neal Tsur  
The event took place at ETH Zurich

**Full grant for participation in SICSS Bamberg** *August 2019*

Alfred P. Sloan & Russell Sage Foundations

**Top Student Paper Award, ICA** *May 2019*

Political Communication Division of International Communication Association, ICA Annual Conference

**CEU Master's Scholarship** *2016-2017*

Covering tuition fees, housing and a monthly stipend of 50,000 HUF

**Jaguar-Landrover Scholarship for Extracurricular Activities** *Spring 2015*

Higher School of Economics & Jaguar-Landrover, Moscow

**HSE Merit-based Scholarship, 100% of Tuition Fees** *2012-2016*

Higher School of Economics, Moscow

## TEACHING

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**Blame it on the internet? How the world wide web changed the world in three decades.** Instructor, course designer; Spring Semester 2021, Undergraduate course, University of Bern.

**Political Communication and the Internet.** Instructor, course designer; Fall Semester 2019, Undergraduate course, University of Bern. Average teaching evaluation score: 4.75 out of 5.

**Machine Learning for Social Science Research.** Instructor, course designer; Fall Semester 2019, Undergraduate course, University of Bern. Average teaching evaluation score: 4.69 out of 5.

**Introduction to R for Communication Research.** Co-Instructor (with Dr. Ueli Reber, Dr. Tom Haeussler, Dr. Marlene Kammerer); Fall Semester 2019; 2020, Block course, University of Bern.

**Social Media Analysis Using R.** Instructor, course designer; Fall Semester 2018, Undergraduate course, University of Bern. Average teaching evaluation score: 4.2 out of 5.

## OTHER EDUCATION

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**Network Science Project**  
ETH Zurich, Switzerland

*Spring 2020*

<b>Network Modeling</b> ETH Zurich, Switzerland	<i>Fall 2019</i>
<b>Summer Institute in Computational Social Science</b> University of Bamberg, Germany	<i>August 2019</i>
<b>Introduction to Agent-Based Modeling Workshop</b> IC2S2 Conference, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands	<i>July 2019</i>
<b>Text Mining with R</b> University of Hohenheim, Germany	<i>June 2019</i>
<b>Linguistic Temporal Trajectory Analysis Workshop</b> EuroCSS Symposium, GESIS, Cologne, Germany	<i>December 2018</i>
<b>Winter School on Data Analysis with R</b> Moscow, Russia	<i>January 2018</i>
<b>Global Business Journalism Program</b> Tsinghua University, China	<i>Fall 2017</i>
<b>Exchange Program</b> Kookmin University, South Korea	<i>Fall 2015</i>

## SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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<b>Where did you come from, where did you go? Pathways to news in Germany and Switzerland</b> de Leon E., Makhortykh M., Urman A. ICA 2021, Virtual	<i>May 2021</i>
<b>Online publicity and outcomes of individual politically motivated criminal cases in an authoritarian regime: evidence from Russia</b> Urman A. & Katz S. ICA 2021, Virtual	<i>May 2021</i>
<b>Hey, Google, is it what the Holocaust really looked like? Auditing biases in visual representation of the Holocaust on web search engines</b> Makhortykh M., Urman A., Ulloa R. ICA 2021, Virtual	<i>May 2021</i>
<b>THE GREAT RANDOMIZER: USING VIRTUAL AGENTS FOR AUDITING THE EFFECTS OF YOUTUBE RECOMMENDATION ALGORITHM ON IDEOLOGICALLY-CHARGED NEWS CONTENT DISTRIBUTION</b> Makhortykh M., Urman A., Ulloa R. AoIR 2020, Virtual	<i>October 2020</i>
<b>To track or not to track: Examining perceptions of online tracking in the context of information behaviour research</b> Makhortykh M., Urman A., Gil-Lopez T., Ulloa R. ICA 2020, Virtual	<i>May 2020</i>
<b>Trolls, Bots and Everyone else: Online Disinformation Campaigns and 2019 Presidential Elections in Ukraine</b> Urman A. & Makhortykh M. EuroCSS, ETH Zurich	<i>September 2019</i>
<b>Online Tracking Tools for Research Purposes: A Critical Review of Existing Approaches</b> Urman A., Christner C., Adam S., Maier M. IC2S2, University of Amsterdam	<i>July 2019</i>
<b>It's All About Context: Political Polarization on Twitter and Electoral Systems</b> Urman A. 69th Annual ICA Conference, Washington, DC	<i>May 2019</i>

**East is East and West is West: Ideological Segregation and Online News Communities in Ukraine** *May 2019*

Urman A. & Makhortykh M.

69th Annual ICA Conference, Washington, DC

**Political Polarization on Twitter Put Into Context**

*December 2018*

Poster

Urman A.

EuroCSS, GESIS, Cologne

## SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE

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**BA Thesis:** "Empirical Analysis of the Recommendation Algorithm of TikTok" [working title] - by Maximilian Boecker; Department of Informatics, University of Zurich (2021, in progress)

**BA Thesis:** "Measuring Differences in Rating Behaviours on Hotel Booking Websites by Demographics" [working title] - by Ivan Allinckx; Department of Informatics, University of Zurich (2021, in progress)

**BA Thesis:** "Persuasion in Online Debates - A Study of the r/changemyview Subreddit" - by Seraina Kull; Department of Social Sciences, University of Bern (2020)

## SKILLS

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**Research methods:** Network analysis and modeling, quantitative text analysis, machine learning, web scraping, (basic) data visualization

**Programming:** R, basic Python

**Languages:** Russian (native); English (fluent); German (Goethe-Zertifikat B1), Spanish (DELE B1), French and Korean (pre-intermediate).

## INVITED TALKS

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**Russian Protests of 2021 on TikTok and Telegram.** February 2021, Invited Speaker at the Virtual Event "Navalny and the Kremlin: Politics and Protest in Russia" co-hosted by the Harriman Institute at Columbia University and the New York University Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia, the US

**(Un)reliable and (un)interpretable narrators? How search engines represent COVID-19 via text and image search results.** December 2020, Guest Lecture together with Dr. Mykola Makhortykh, University of Passau, Germany

**Computational Methods for Social Science Research.** November 2020, Guest Lecture, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

**Auditing Algorithmic Content Curation Using Virtual Agents.** November 2020, Guest Lecture together with Dr. Mykola Makhortykh and Dr. Roberto Ulloa, University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

## REVIEWER EXPERIENCE AND OTHER SERVICE

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I have peer-reviewed for the following journals: Information, Communication and Society; Social Media and Society; New Media and Society; Journal of Information Technology and Politics; HKS Misinformation Review; Journal of Communication; International Journal of Communication.

I was a Mittelbau Board (a body representing early- and mid-career researchers) member at the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Bern in 2020-2021.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

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My research on far-right communities on Telegram has been covered by [Wired UK](#), [The Economist](#), [Le Temps](#) and [NZZ](#). My article about political polarization on Twitter was referenced by [FiveThirtyEight](#), and a preprint on Telegram-based activity in Hong Kong during the Anti-ELAB protests of 2019 was mentioned in [The Washington Post](#).