

OSTROM WORKSHOP COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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Information-Based Governance and Cross-Border Information Flows: The Structural Alliance Between Domestic Dissent and Foreign Subversion



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12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park

This paper explains cross-border information flows in terms of “informational governance”. We start with a puzzle: our content analysis of RT (Russia’s state-funded news network) failed to support the (strong) claim that RT disseminates “brazen lies” (The Guardian, 9/15/2018); most guests on the flagship show, Crosstalk, were reputable, if critical, speakers. The question is, how can cross-border truth-telling (or “not-lying”) support the interest of a foreign state? Our answer is that foreign states seek to subvert rivals’ “informational governance.” States employ a variety of information-based mechanisms to gain domestic compliance with policies, and some of these can involve disseminating “untruths”, be they outright lies (John Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie*) or simply narratives (Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.) Such informational governance can be subverted by rival states who expose lies, critique narratives, and offer destabilizing counter-narratives. We posit that RT’s effectiveness as propaganda does not derive from any lies that it might disseminate itself but from the untruths and the narratives that it exposes, thereby undermining informational governance. The same may hold for US cross-border news provided to Russian and other societies. For domestic dissent groups, such subversive truth-telling, even if by a foreign state, could contribute to their programs for domestic reform.

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[Hans Klein](#) is Associate Professor at Georgia Tech’s School of Public Policy. His research is on holistic modeling of Internet governance and on information warfare and informational governance. He is the former Chair of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility. Klein has a BS in computer science from Princeton University and PhD in political science from MIT and has served on the faculties of George Mason University and Princeton University.

Presentations are open to the public and are live streamed (see our website for URL and papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).