T13P01 / Transformation of the policy and regulatory agendas of emerging technologies

Topic : T13 / SCIENCE, INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Chair : Juan David Gutiérrez (Universidad del Rosario)

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Fourth Industrial Revolution, digital age, algorithmic society, quantum age, surveillance capitalism, informational capitalism, infocracy. These terms, among others, have been used to describe sociotechnical changes driven by digital technologies at a global scale. Emerging technologies, such as computational algorithms, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, etc., are embedded in devices that are ubiquitous in people's lives and in the way that governments, corporations and civil society organizations operate.

The development and implementation of emerging technologies may offer diverse benefits for individuals and organizations, but they can also negatively impact vulnerable individuals and communities and generate risks of harm for societies as a whole (Wirtz & Müller 2019). As the hundreds of incidents registered in the Artificial Intelligence Incident Database illustrate, these harms have started to materialize in different countries.

Kuziemski & Misuraca (2020) argue that governments face a "double bind" situation: they should protect citizens from the potential harms of emerging technologies, but they also use these technologies to govern. Hence, policymakers and regulators are in charge of formulating policy and legal responses to the challenges generated by the new technologies and their market Micklitz et al., 2021), but they also have the incentive of enabling government usage of such technologies. As Ajay Agrawal, Joshua Gans, and Avi Goldfarb have aptly recognized, "[u]nder either the optimistic or the pessimistic view, policy will shape how AI [and other emerging technologies] impact (...) society" (2019, p. 140). It will influence not only the impacts of emerging technologies, but also their reach and diffusion. The reverse may also be argued: digital technologies affect "virtually every aspect of politics and policy-making" (Gilardi, 2022, p. 1) in different settings, from liberal democracies to autocracies.

This panel aims at exploring how and why the policy and regulatory agendas of digital technologies change. The main objective of the panel is to discuss empirical and theoretical works that address the transformation of policy and regulatory agendas of emerging technologies in diverse political and economic contexts. The panel welcomes contributions that: identify the factors that contribute to shape agenda-setting processes associated with digital technologies; trace the incidence of diverse actors in the policy and regulatory processes; examine the different narratives that frame how problems associated with these technologies are understood and defined; study policy and regulatory changes through the lenses of diverse policy process theories (e.g. punctuated equilibrium, multiple streams approach, coalition framework); discuss whether policy and regulatory agendas are influenced by geopolitical dynamics; and, map different policy and regulatory trends and approaches regarding these technologies in different political systems.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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