



IAMCR
BEIJING 2022



IAMCR

Global Media Policy Working Group

Abstracts of papers accepted for presentation in the Online Conference Papers of the
International Association for Media and Communication Research¹

IAMCR

beijing2022.iamcr.org
July 2022

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Version: 14/04/22

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The Future of Global Internet Governance : Neo-Globalization, Post-Globalization or National Populisms?

Authors

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Abstract

The internet became popular worldwide in the 1990s and 2000s, at the time in which globalisation was seen as the dominant economic, political, legal and cultural development. Internet governance developed a series of models that were premised upon the declining role and influence of the nation-state, including multistakeholderism and polycentric governance. It became apparent in the 2010s and 2020s that nation-states continued to be the major players in global governance regimes, and that many states did not accept that they were effectively rule-takers with regards to the internet and global digital platforms. The return of nation-state governance has coincided with a slowing of economic globalisation – sometimes referred to as ‘post-globalisation’ or ‘slowbalisation’ – and the rise of populist nationalisms in various countries. This is pointing towards a crisis in global internet governance, subject to a mismatch between nation-state sovereignty and the pursuit of supra-national laws and institutions.

Submission ID

330

An analysis of big tech EU competition policy: The case of Alphabet, Amazon, Apple and Meta

Authors

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Abstract

This article analyses EU competition policy applying to four multinational technology conglomerates or information intermediaries, Alphabet, Amazon, Apple and Meta. These platforms attract data-providing consumers at limited costs and sell their tracked attention to advertisers; they hold unprecedented structural market power due to the benefits of 'network effects'; their dominance and reach allows them to make unparalleled investments in new technologies of artificial intelligence, cloud computing and machine learning (Iosifidis and Andrews, 2020). This article develops an argument within a critical political economy of communication framework that focuses on market dominance concerns of high concentration levels, network effects and digital advertising. In doing so, the work examines the pressure for a new regulatory framework for the information intermediaries in Europe, noting that the range of issues thrown up by the operations of these platforms now engage a wider focus than media policy per se, including data and privacy policy, national security, hate speech and other issues. The areas of policy contestation are varied as Helberger et al. (2015) have suggested. First is the question of monopoly and antitrust. The second area relates to the need to broaden the scope of media and internet legislation to take account of the specific nature of the 'information intermediaries' (Moore, 2016; Iosifidis and Nicoli, 2020). The EU has been active in the area of platform regulation through the Digital Services Act adopted in December 2020, but here we use a case study approach to analyse the effectiveness of the Act and the wider phenomenon of big tech competition policy in the EU. Data collection includes three expert interviews, official EU announcements, policy reports and industry documents regarding the four conglomerates. A thematic analysis is applied to the data. The article asks whether antitrust enforcement, merger controls and state aid, the three pillars of EU competition policy, are enough to yield the measures required to preserve a healthy digital economy sector. All four conglomerates have taken actions prompting all three pillars, yet none have been sufficiently regulated to prevent their growing dominance and continued process of platformization.

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Keywords

Antitrust enforcement; communications policy. digital economy, big technology, network effects, political economy of communication.

Submission ID

585

Building a Framework for News Media Governance: A Case-study from India

Authors

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Abstract

On 10th July, 2020 a complaint was heard by the News Broadcasting and Standards Authority (NBSA, now NBDSA), the self-regulatory body constituted for television news in India by the News Broadcasters Association (NBA, now NBDA).

The complaint was against Sakshi Media for its biased coverage. Sakshi Media comprises of the Telugu language Sakshi news channel and newspaper whose chairman is YS Bharathi Reddy. She is the wife of YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the current Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and head of the political party YSRCP. The complainant alluded to this political ownership of a media group and the resultant threat to democracy due to bias in its coverage of political parties. Telugu is the most widely spoken language in Andhra Pradesh.

The body noted that the complaint does not fall within its jurisdiction and closed it. While the principles of self-regulation of the NBDSA begin with Impartiality and objectivity, they fall short in theory and practice when it comes to institutional capture. Multiple studies & reports of media capture highlight the important role of media ownership. The 'Media Ownership Monitor' report puts India at 'Medium to High Risk' to media pluralism due to '(Political) Control over media outlets & distribution networks.' The report also points out similar trends of news media ownership by vested political interests in other Indian States & linguistic markets.

Defined as “a captive media system...”, the notion of media capture is built on theories of regulatory capture, a term used by George Stigler to explain the close alignment of regulators with the entities they are supposed to regulate. In media the capture happens via mechanisms like soft pressure, self-censorship, etc.

This paper focuses on one such media regulator – the NBDISA. It studies 106 decisions passed by the body from 2009 to 2020 which are available in public domain on its website. The study conducts an analysis on the complaints the body has received, concerns raised, broadcasters’ response, final orders passed & the duration between the complaint and final decision. Through this analysis, the paper attempts to give shape to what a modern news media governance institution could look like by answering the following questions:

1. The effectiveness of the current regulatory framework, its redressal mechanisms and whether it needs to adapt itself from self-regulation to co-regulation for a digital environment.
2. If it needs to move to co-regulation, what would be the composition of the co-regulatory entities?
3. How would the areas of focus be constituted for such an institution to include political advertising, hate speech, media literacy to addressing platform capture, data privacy, AI algorithms and fostering local journalism?

Since this body started functioning in 2009, no such study has been conducted before. As the regulatory body widens its mandate to include the digital ecosystem as well, it is impertinent that a critical study be undertaken so as to build a news media governance institution which not only addresses media capture but enables an information ecosystem centered on peoples’ voices, empathy and critical thinking.

Submission ID

1127

Critically Analyzing Information Warfare Policy in Context to Fifth Generation War in Pakistan

Authors

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Abstract

The typical facets of warfare are changing: conventional methods are depleting, while newer strategies and technologies, such as intelligence warfare, media propaganda, and hybrid warfare, are filling the void, blurring the distinctions between combatant and noncombatant, as well as between war and peacetime. This article discusses Lind's fourth-

generation warfare and Daniel H. Abbott's fifth-generation warfare. It examines the different theories for fourth-generation warfare advanced by various academics (4GW). To begin, it defines 5GW as asymmetric warfare carried out by nonstate actors and nonstate cultural groups, in which nonstate actors and mercenaries wage asymmetric warfare and shadow wars in the strategic interests of hostile nations. The research then explores various interpretations of 5GW, which is often understood as fighting with light infantry on a moral basis. By contrast, other scholars assert that 5GW is fought via the deployment of knowledge and technical resources throughout cyberspace. Following that, this article addresses how to fight 5GW and the manner in which it is being fought at the moment. Additionally, the Article analyzes Abbott's fifth-generation warfare, a war of expectations, and considers ways to fight 5GW and the manner in which it is now being fought. Additionally, this article examines how contemporary warfare use technological progress as a weapon in Pakistan.

Keywords: 'Open Data', Policy Makers, Strategic Planning, Development, Pakistan Army, Peace and Conflict

Submission ID

1277

Fighting disinformation in Brazil: fact-checking, demonetization, regulation and media education

Authors

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Abstract

This research presents a cartography of strategies to combat online disinformation, classifying each proposal according to a multidimensional model. Analysis categories consider implementation process, actors involved, advantages, conditions, costs and risks of collateral damage. Five proposals to combat fake news are evaluated: government regulation; codes of conduct and algorithms; fact-checking; educational awareness campaigns; boycott and demonetization against advertisers and digital platforms.

The research methodology is based on a Habermasian model to analyze the decision-making processes that affect the functioning of the public sphere while, in the same time, it is collectively discussed in this same space – since the public sphere is both object and arena of the dispute over alternative and complementary interventions. Each proposal is compared from different analytical categories, starting from the agents involved (legislators, regulatory authorities, search engines, social networks, user-generated content repositories, journalists, educators, activists, online users and advertisers) and their fields of action (politics, law, programming, ethics, journalism, education, advertising). It is also evaluated each implementation mechanism (degree of openness to participation

of interested actors, decision transparency, possibility of appeal or reversal), whether the proposal can be implemented in short, medium or long term and its costs (both its volume and whether the investment would be public or private). Finally, this classification compares the advantages (in addition to reducing the proliferation of so-called “fake news”, some initiatives can also combat discrimination, digital attacks, and even promote media literacy) and collateral risks (censorship, increased control over private data, digital oligopolies consolidation).

This classification is applied to a sample of new proposals recently discussed in Brazil, a country that finds itself at a political and technological crossroads on the eve of the 2022 elections, trying to reverse problematic experiences with disinformation dissemination during the pandemic since 2020 and in the previous electoral process in 2018.

The first of these initiatives is the robot *Fatima* – <https://fatima.aosfatos.org> – developed by the fact-checking agency *Aos Fatos* to interact in *Messenger*, *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*, answering questions and helping users to do their own checks, as well as identifying users who post links that have already been refuted by the checkers, and pointing out their mistakes. The second is the free online course “Vaza, Falsiane!” – <https://vazafalsiane.com> – which promotes media education in formats adapted to go viral on social networks. The third are bills that point out punishments for the creation and dissemination of false information, as is the case of PL 2630/2020, the Brazilian Law of Freedom, Responsibility and Transparency on the Internet – also known as the “Fake News Law”. Fourth, the profile *Sleeping Giants Brazil* – https://twitter.com/slpng_giants_pt – engages users willing to expose and pressure advertisers to remove advertisements from sites accused of spreading fake news and hate speech. Finally, this research evaluates Facebook’s alterations since 2018, including new conduct policies, removal of accounts and pages, control of content dissemination, strategies to change behavior and decrease the visibility of posts.

Submission ID

2420

Media policy and politics from a young people perspective. The case of Switzerland.

Authors

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Abstract

“Promote or protect?” The title of von Feilitzen and Carlsson’s 2003 publication on young people and the media offers a clear differentiation between two kinds of media policies: Those protecting young people from harmful media content and those promoting their

participation in civic matters. Protectional media policies receive much more political, public and research attention, making “risk and safety” the dominant paradigm (Livingstone & Third 2017, pp. 665). Promotional media policies, however, are better suited to tackle young people’s “news deprivation” (Schwaiger, 2020, pp. 1) and “democratic disconnect” (Collin, 2015, pp. 155).

A theoretical explanation for the dominance of the risk and safety paradigm is what Raymer et al. (2017) call reverse ageism. Overprotecting young people instead of enabling their participation is one criticism of this perspective (see, e.g., Bell, 2018; Conner et al., 2016). Another criticism is that the missing representation of young people in political decision-making is instrumental to public policies that privilege the interests of older people (Bratt et al., 2018; 2020). This is why this paper asks about the role young people play in (promotional) media policies and politics, using Switzerland as a case study.

Switzerland is a suitable case for three reasons. First, due to its multilingualism, citizens pay a comparably high annual household levy of 335 CHF/EUR that is used to fund public and private media organizations. Second, due to its direct democratic tradition, Switzerland offers three pathways for political advocacy: Quarterly public referenda, regular public consultations, and parliamentary submissions. Third, young Swiss people report high levels of age-based discrimination (Bratt et al., 2018; 2020), and they have been historically problematized in public discourse (Bühler, 2019).

The paper uses qualitative content analysis (e.g., Puppis, 2019) to gather and analyze documents covering policy and politics from 2000 to 2020, including laws, reports or submitted statements. Text passages were selected based on two criteria: First, they contain the terms young or youth in Switzerland’s official languages German, French and Italian. Second, they address public service media obligations, public funding or licensing of youth media stations, or support for journalism training. Through close reading instances of reverse ageism and of youth advocacy were identified.

The paper starts by introducing the concept of reverse ageism, its manifestation in politics and the media and its suggested counter-measures. It also discusses and updates Montgomery’s (2000) policy research agenda on youth and digital media. In the empirical part, it highlights, e.g. licensing decisions to the advantage and disadvantage of young people. And it shows how political parties, particularly young libertarians, and other advocacy groups shape the political discourse. The paper closes with a discussion on the value of the reverse ageism concept in the field of promotional media policy.

Submission ID

2480

Glocalization: identity resistance, hybridity or market strategy in the age of neo-globalization

Authors

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Abstract

The starting point of globalization is not precise. Some historians consider the 15th century navigations promoted by European countries as an important milestone of the beginning of the globalization process. Others understand globalization as a phenomenon of industrial society, which gave rise not only to new means of transportation that resigned distances, but also to means of communication that enabled the circulation of the element that, according to geographer Milton Santos (2003), together with capital, sanctified globalization as the dominant logic of the 20th century: information.

The present proposal intends to follow the critical reading on globalization made by Milton Santos (2003), that globalization has not deterritorialized much more than capital and information, while, on the other hand, social woes, armed conflicts, hunger, poverty, have remained territorialized. At the same time, following Stuart Hall's theory (2002) about the construction of fragmented identity in post-modernity, we seek to observe how the diversity and multiplicity of access, production, and sharing of information may promote and facilitate the formation of identity groups that arise around local causes, but that gain global projection.

Other authors, such as Nestor Garcia Canclini (2003), promote a reading of globalization from its possibilities of hybridity, that is, moving away from the idea of domination and approaching the idea of possible negotiations that arise from the shock, from the contact, promoted, mainly, from the consumption of symbolic goods and cultural products internationalized by the global market and media. It is in line with this point of view that we associate the concept of "glocalization", which, according to Roland Robertson (1995), represents the attempt to reveal the non-linear process of the global logic, where the "local" is seen as an active actor in the globalization process, and not just a victim of the globalizing forces.

Thus, we seek to understand aspects of contemporary culture from an updated reading of the concept of "glocalization" against the ideas of "domination", "hybridism", and "fragmentation". This problematization will be tested by checking two distinct phenomena: the tendency of big brands to seek to incorporate symbols of local identity - a tendency that will be verified from at least one advertising campaign. And the social causes, which appear localized, but become global through the engagement of social networks. The hypothesis is that the complexity of the neo-globalization era also complexifies the idea of "glocalization," revealing distinct and perhaps even antagonistic dynamics at the same time.

Submission ID
2554