



## **Global Media Policy Working Group**

**Abstracts of papers presented at the 2022 Online Conference of the  
International Association for Media and Communication Research**

**IAMCR**

**beijing2022.iamcr.org  
July 2022**

Version: 17/08/22

## Table of Contents

An analysis of big tech EU competition policy: The case of Alphabet, Amazon, Apple and Meta.....	3
Building a Framework for News Media Governance: A Case-study from India.....	4
Critically Analyzing Information Warfare Policy in Context to Fifth Generation War in Pakistan.....	5
Fighting disinformation in Brazil: fact-checking, demonetization, regulation and media education .....	6

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

## **Authors**

Prof. Petros Iosifidis - City University London

Dr. Nicholas Nicoli - University of Nicosia

## **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.

## **References**

EC (2020) The Digital Services Act Package at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-services-act-package>

Helberger, N. et al (2015) Regulating the new information intermediaries as gatekeepers of information diversity. *Info* 17(6): 50-71.

Iosifidis, P. and Andrews, L. (2020) Regulating the internet intermediaries in a post-truth world: Beyond media policy? *International Communication Gazette*, 82(3): 211-230.

Iosifidis, P. and Nicoli, N. (2020) The battle to end fake news: A qualitative content analysis of Facebook announcements on how it combats disinformation. *International Communication Gazette*, 82(3): 60-81.

Moore, M. (2016) *Tech giants and civic power* centre for the study of media. Communication & Power, King's College, London.

### **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**

Mr. Ashkumar Gopalani - Independent Researcher

### **Abstract**

On 10<sup>th</sup> 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 NBDSA. 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**

Dr. Taha Shabbir - Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University

Mr. Dastar Chandio - Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University

Mr. Umair Ansari - University of Karachi

## **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**

Prof. Ivan Paganotti - Universidade Metodista de São Paulo

### **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 collective 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](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