RHEINISCHE FRIEDRICH-WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT BONN

CENTER FOR ADVANCED SECURITY, STRATEGIC AND INTEGRATION STUDIES

TRANSDISPLINARY RESEARCH AREA Individuals, Institutions and Societies (TRA 4)

Call for Papers

"Digital Fragmentations and Digital Sovereignty"

Digital Fragmentations and Digital Sovereignty

In the past years, a growing prominence of the idea of "digital sovereignty" as well as multiple data localization regulations have called the vision of a global, open Internet into question. Data localization requirements could splinter the current global internet into many regional systems and shape innovation dynamics in a wider variety of data-utilizing sectors. Accordingly, the idea of the fragmentation or Balkanization of the Internet began to play a bigger role in debates on global Internet governance. This debate covers the Internet as an infrastructure as such and increasingly blurs the boundaries between geopolitics, national jurisdictions, and a power struggle for the future of global governance. The resulting discursive and policy fragmentations are likely going to be with us for a long time and many of the underlying tensions could intensify.

Against this background, this project advances theorizations and conceptual understandings of digital sovereignty and fragmentations in cyberspace. To take up the challenge of understanding the problem of digital fragmentation and its interplay with the notion of "digital sovereignty", we aim to theorize the degree to which the Internet is becoming or fragmented and the understand the diver's modes of fragmentation to which parts of the Internet are subjected, and which actors and processes are driving forces for fragmentation.

Call for Papers

TRA 4 and CASSIS invite contributions for an edited volume about "Digital Fragmentations and Digital Sovereignty" as contribution to the international online-conference on "Digital Fragmentations and Digital Sovereignty" (**17-18 September 2021**) with the goal to advance interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research cooperation on the topic of digital sovereignty, data regulation, cyber security and internet governance.

We welcome submissions from disciplines such as political science, sociology, international relations, security studies, philosophy, public administration, law, information science, etc. Suggested topics for analyses include, *inter alia*:

- Theoretical, empirical, or comparative analysis of digital sovereignty
- The conceptualization and taxonomies of Internet fragmentation
- Tensions between national Cybersecurity/digital sovereignty and free and open Internet
- Theoretical, empirical, or comparative analysis of data protection regulations
- Global Internet Governance and the power struggle between great powers
- International tech competition and digital fragmentation

Submission Guidelines

Draft papers will be considered for inclusion in the publication only if they have not been previously published. The length of the abstract submissions should be between 1 500 and 2 000

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words. The length of the final submissions should be between 8 000 and 10 000 words. To facilitate the reviewing process, papers should not include author names or other information that would help identify the authors. All submission shall be in English language. Authors shall use footnotes rather than endnotes and submission should be in Microsoft Word Text format (.docx).

Abstract submissions are due on **28 April 2021**. They should include the following elements:

(1) Title

(2) Extended abstract (1 500-2 000 words)

(3) Author's name, affiliation and short bibliographical note (in the body of the email)

Authors will be notified of the status of their contributions within approximately 3 weeks of the abstract submission deadline. Authors will also be invited to the conference on **17-18 September 2021**. All submitted papers will be subject to peer review and will be judged based on the novelty of the contribution, the theoretical soundness, and the quality of presentation.

Authors of the selected submissions will be invited to submit the **first drafts** of their paper proposals (8 000-10 000 words) by **18 July 2021**. Authors will be given the opportunity to improve their contributions based on peer comments. **Final drafts** are due on **12 September 2021**.

All submissions shall be sent to Dr. Ying Huang (yhuang@uni-bonn.de).

Connecting research activities

The Center for Advanced Security, Strategic and Integration Studies (CASSIS) is an interdisciplinary research center of the University of Bonn that focuses on the interdisciplinary examination of traditional foreign and security issues and non-traditional security challenges such as cyber and energy security, terrorism and human security. Its research group "Infrastructures of China's Modernity and Their Global Constitutive Effects", funded by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, investigates the worldwide structural effects of China's rapid modernization. The subproject "Infrastructures of Data" concentrates on the influence of Chinese data infrastructures. China's vision of cyber sovereignty and the Global Governance of cyberspace are considered as challenge to a global, open internet and could accelerate the process of digital fragmentation and complicate interactions among states and non-state actors in the global internet governance.

The six Transdisciplinary Research Areas (TRAs) identified as innovative structures at the University of Bonn change the focus from individual disciplines towards scientific networks and transdisciplinary research. TRA4 "Individuals, Institutions and Societies" investigates how institutions (markets, law, culture) mediate complex relationships between the individual and societies and develops a new view of micro-phenomena (development of personality, agency, individualization) as well as macro-phenomena (world society, globalization). Having a common research focus on the digitalization and cyber space, TRA 4 and CASSIS initiate this project to strengthen corporation and expand academic networks with colleagues from around the world in the research fields of "Cybersecurity" and "Global Cyberspace Governance" with the ultimate goal to develop a new research Cluster of Excellence of the University of Bonn.

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Societies (TRA 4)

Conference Program (Draft)

International Online-Conference on

Digital Fragmentations and Digital Sovereignty

17-18 September 2021

Theme

In the past years, there has been a steady global trend towards "digital sovereignty" and "data localization". Tensions are rising between the vision of a global, open Internet and state tendencies to invoke sovereignty in cyberspace. Data localization requirements could splinter the current global internet into many regional systems and deter innovation in a wider variety of data-utilizing sectors (Huddleston and Varas, 2020). Accordingly, the idea of the fragmentation or Balkanization of the Internet began to play a bigger role in debates on global Internet governance (Kim, 2019). This debate, however, does not solely cover the Internet as an infrastructure but also in regard to geopolitics, national jurisdictions, and a power struggle future of global governance (Mueller, 2017). The resulting fragmentations are likely going to be with us for a long time and many of the underlying tensions could intensify (see Rosenau, 2006).

Goal

This conference advances theorizations and conceptual understandings of digital sovereignty and fragmentations in cyberspace. To take up the challenge of understanding the problem of digital fragmentation and its relation with the notion of "digital sovereignty", it is essential to theorize the degree to which the Internet is either unified or fragmented, which parts of the Internet are fragmenting, and which actors and processes are causing the fragmentation. The new digital spheres are perhaps only superficially reminiscent of earlier versions of geopolitics. Although these spheres are not digital containers, major economic-legal regions (such as China, the EU, North America, India) create their own regulatory spaces with different rules and norms for digital technologies and datafication businesses (i.e. cloud services) of which the Chinese 'great firewall', the 'clean network' program of the U.S. and the EU's data protection law represent instances. Protectionism, polarization, the growing power of platforms and a dearth of shared imaginaries threaten not only the promise of a joined Internet of Things but also undermine the potential for progressive digital politics agendas.

Outcomes

Deliberations are part of a continuous series of exchanges creating a network which aims at theoretically informed and empirically driven research. The second result of the conference is to develop a draft manuscript for an edited volume under the title "Digital Fragmentations and Digital Sovereignty". Draft papers will be circulated before the conference and should be submitted to yhuang@uni-bonn.de by **July 18th 2021**.

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TRANSDISPLINARY RESEARCH AREA Individuals, Institutions and Societies (TRA 4)

Schedule of the conference

17 September 2021

12:00-14:00 AM, 14:15-16:15 AM (Berlin Time)

06:00-08:00 AM, 08:15-10:15 AM (Georgia Time)

18:00-20:00 PM, 20:15-22:15 PM (Peking Time)

18 September 2021

12:00-14:00 AM, 14:15-16:15 AM (Berlin Time)

06:00-08:00 AM, 08:15-10:15 AM (Georgia Time)

18:00-20:00 PM, 20:15-22:15 PM (Peking Time)

Language: English

Platform: ZOOM

Meeting ID: XX

Passcode: XX

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17 September 2021

Greetings: TRA and CASSIS

Keynote Dialog:
Against digital Sovereignty? Cyber-Fragmentation and the contested future of cyberspace

Panel 1: Digital Sovereignty and Varieties of the Internet Regulation

Guiding Questions:

- Why do nation-states want to control their own data and technological infrastructures?
- Does the vison of a global, open Internet and state's digital sovereignty contradict each other?
- How do states seek a balance between cyber security and digital economic development?
- Who should own the sovereignty over the cyberspace? States or multiple stakeholders?

Moderator:
Speakers:
Open Discussion

Panel 2: Data Infrastructure, Data Localization, Cyber Security

Guiding Questions:

- Is Data Localization the first step to internet fragmentation?
- Can Data Localization laws protect national critical data infrastructures?
- How is cyber security impacted by various dimensions of digital fragmentations?
- Does the least amount of Data Localization mean the most successful in benefiting from networked digital economy?

Moderator:
Speakers:
Open Discussion

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Panel 3: Territorializing and Securitizing Digital Applications

Guiding Questions:

- Which actors and processes are actually causing the fragmentation to occur?
- How to conceptualize und theorize the process of "Digital Fragmentation"?
- What is the connection between digital sovereignty and internet fragmentation?
- Can new digital applications prevent/foster fragmentation dynamics?

Moderator:
Speakers:
Open Discussion

Panel 4: Fragmentation of the Global Internet Governance

Guiding Questions:

- To what extent does Internet fragmentation relate to fragmentations of cyber governance?
- What role can cyberspace play as a global commons in balancing between state sovereignty and the fragmentation of cyberspace?
- Will the multilateralism in cyberspace governance replace multistakeholderism?
- Can each country participate in international cyberspace governance on equal terms?

Moderator:
Speakers:
Open Discussion

Closing Remarks: Synthesis and Outlook