



Reignite Multilateralism
via Technology

D3.2 Overview multistakeholder beliefs and values related to paradigms

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Background of the REMIT project

The REMIT project aims to “**Reignite Multilateralism via Technology**”. A reigniting that not only reacts to China’s rise as a systemic technology rival or Russia’s resurgence as a technology abuser or the dominance of large U.S.-based digital platforms, but that sets a clear vision for the future — one in which Europe plays a leading role.

Coordinated by Maastricht University, the REMIT project brings together leading European researchers from nine partners from Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and the United Kingdom. The goal is to develop recommendations, clear understanding of the status quo and innovative methodologies that support effective policies to revitalize global democratic structures.

REMIT aims to re-mobilize a transnational collective spirit that addresses global problems through technology, because

1. Technology has strong effect on economic competitiveness
2. Technology is important to national security including threats to democratic principles
3. Technology is crucial to the solutions for global challenges

By focusing on technology and the policy areas that emerge from the REMIT researchers’ expertise, the project provides the needed analysis and the theory building to support the EU. The four technology areas are also instrumental in finding solutions to all important challenges, including climate, digital transitions, the rise of inequalities, ageing and disabilities, migrations, health pandemics, and information disorder. Ultimately, REMIT intends to design policy recommendations that will give a remit to reignite multilateralism via technology.

The detailed objectives of the REMIT project are:

» **Objective 1:** To define the EU’s role in leading the renewal and defence of multilateralism starting with the global governance of technologies in four crucial policy areas (digital, health bio, security and defence, and financial technologies). The lack of comprehensive, multilateral tech regulations represents material national security threats to the EU and its allies by allowing others (especially China) to set the rules for the digital future.

» **Objective 2:** To provide evidence-based advice to reinforce European institutions in the field of technology that work and propose innovative, multilateral-governance constructs for those that do not.

» **Objective 3:** To develop policy recommendations and scenario testing workshops offered to relevant EU administrators, important regional groups, and national officials.

» **Objective 4:** To share knowledge among stakeholders and to communicate policy recommendations. REMIT will recommend policy action for the European Union that further re-conceptualizes multilateralism in the four technology areas.

The REMIT project is carried out from March 2023 until February 2027 and has a total budget of almost €3 million, of which €2.6 million is funded by the EU’s Horizon Europe research and innovation program and €370k is provided by the UK government through the UK Research and Innovation fund (UKRI). The project is being carried out by internationally recognized researchers from Maastricht University, Universitatea Babes Bolyai, Universitaet Bremen, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Luiss Libera Universita Internazionale Degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Finnish Institute for International Affairs and the University of Tartu. In addition, the European Cyber Conflict Research Initiative (ECCRI) joins the consortium as an associate partner, receiving funding from UKRI.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1. Building on previous REMIT research insights	3
2. Identifying discourse coalitions: Beliefs and values in digital governance	4
2.1. Creating the Digital Bills of Rights Dataset 1.0	5
2.2. Description of the Dataset	7
3. Actor-Principle Network: Four Discourse Coalitions.....	10
4. Implications for Technology Governance Paradigms.....	15
4.1. Limitations	18
4.2. Data Availability.....	19
5. References	20

List of Abbreviations and Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
5G/6G	Fifth/Sixth Generation Mobile Networks
AFC	Advocacy Coalition Framework
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AI Act	Artificial Intelligence Act
DBR	Digital Bill of Rights
DSA	Digital Services Act
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GESIS	Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IoT	Internet of Things
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society



Executive Summary

This report (D3.2) focuses on understanding multistakeholder beliefs and values in the global technology governance landscape, particularly in relation to existing governance paradigms. Building upon previous research discussed in deliverable D3.1, which mapped the normative construction of technology governance and its regulatory frameworks, this study analyzes the values and beliefs held by diverse stakeholders in the global technology governance field. The goal of the study is to deepen empirical insights into the normative foundations that guide stakeholder strategies and policy preferences. Through a coding and a quantitative content analysis of 321 normative policy documents, specifically – Digital Bills of Rights (DBRs) – the study investigates beliefs and values articulated by 583 unique actors across 30+ years (1992–2023). This analysis provides a critical view on the current discourse on paradigms or “digital empires” in the field of technology governance. It also builds the foundation for better understanding of the empirical normative landscape in this expansive transnational field.

The studied DBRs, which include a range of governance principles and rights claims, have been analyzed to identify *discourse coalitions* that transcend national and organizational (and temporal) boundaries. The documents include, at times indirectly, a variety of governance objects within the digital technology governance field, including Internet governance, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, cloud computing, and 5G/6G networks. The quantitative network analysis using a clustering algorithm for a network analysis enabled the visualization of actor-principle networks, illustrating the proximity of actors based on shared normative commitments. This approach revealed how discourse coalitions emerged, often without direct coordination, through shared values expressed in DBRs. A key finding of the analysis is the identification of four major discourse coalitions within the global technology governance field: the *Security and Legitimate Purpose* discourse coalition, the *Inclusionary Rights* discourse coalition, the *Human Rights and Internet Self-Governance* discourse coalition, and the *Content Governance* discourse coalition.

These coalitions highlight diverse normative commitments around a large variety of principles and rights - ranging from privacy and security concerns to advocacy for inclusive access and freedom of expression. The study reveals that while REMIT, following other scholars, originally conceptualized three primary technology governance paradigms – a European (rights-based regulation), an American (market-driven liberalism), and a Chinese (state-controlled governance) – the analysis suggests a more nuanced landscape. In particular, it identifies a potential fourth paradigm: a *Developmentalist* paradigm, largely driven by Global South actors, emphasizing digital inclusion and equitable access.



1. Introduction

In this second deliverable of Work Package 3 of the project “Reignite Multilateralism via Technology” (REMIT), we present empirical research results with a focus on the “normative construction of technology governance”. Whereas the preceding deliverable entailed a framework for what the *normative construction* in our eyes refers to and also provided a mapping of the existing regulatory *landscape of technology governance*, the current deliverable builds on these earlier findings and definitions. By analyzing *multistakeholder beliefs and values* related to technology governance *paradigms*, we provide an analysis of the normative claims and demands by a large variety of actors in the global technology governance field and we also relate these to three tech governance paradigms: a European, an American and a Chinese.

The goal of the current deliverable with reference to the entire REMIT project is to expand the state of the art of knowledge related to our empirical understanding of the normative foundations of technology governance in order to better actor strategies and policy preferences that are arguably based on them. This analysis represents the basis for an analysis of policy subsystems in global technology governance in D3.3. In order to achieve the goal of the deliverable, we present the results of a quantitative content analysis of 321 normative policy documents that outline demands and values with regard to the governance of technologies. These documents fall within the technology domains and wider policy subsystems of Internet governance *and* AI governance. It should be noted that the former includes a variety of related technologies such as the Internet of Things, blockchain technology and 5G/6G, usually dealt with by the same global policy fora - most importantly the United Nations’ Internet Governance Forum (IGF), epistemic and policy communities, and specialized multilateral agencies such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). We analyze the beliefs and values expressed by 583 unique actors, who can be identified to support the documents analyzed, which resulted in coding 883 unique expressions of beliefs. By their nature, these actors are a good representation of the multistakeholder community engaged in the policy field. Amongst others, the data features nation states, regional and international organizations, civil society, businesses, academics, and technical experts in the analysis.

The examination of individual values and beliefs from documents issued between 1992 and 2023 allows us to discover *discourse coalitions* between these hundreds of actors. Unlike advocacy coalitions, which - according to the common understanding of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) - can be identified “on the basis of shared beliefs and coordination strategies” (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018: 141), the presence of such coordination cannot be assumed for discourse coalitions.¹ A discourse coalition, in principle, could be formed without the knowledge of the actors themselves, i.e., by sheer co-occurrence. Within the multistakeholder environment, different types of stakeholders may also (strategically) choose whether or not to (be seen to) coordinate with certain stakeholder groups. Given the 30+ years of data analyzed, the analysis of discourse coalitions enables us to gain a better foundation for studying the normative beliefs of advocacy coalitions in global technology governance. The analysis we present is based on a quantitative network analysis and the application of a clustering algorithm (‘Force Atlas’) in order to develop clusters of a non-specific number, based on the actors’ expressed beliefs and the relations to other actors and their beliefs. With a network analysis, we descriptively and visually analyze the relative relationship between different actors and different principles by using a visualization that “simulates a physical system” (Jacomy et al, 2014). As we demonstrate below, we identified *four* discourse coalitions in the resulting “actor-principle” network, which reveals the relative relationship (and proximity) between actors *and* normative principles. At first glance, these findings contradict the assumption of the existence of *three paradigms in global technology governance*, which REMIT has taken as a starting point. We discuss the implications of these findings below, including the relationship

¹ Due to the lack of coordination, one might also argue for discourse groupings based on mere closer distance in the network but we opt use the phrase discourse coalitions as is not unusual in the field (Santaniello & Palladino, 2022).



between paradigms and discourse coalitions. We conclude that at least two of the paradigms can still be mapped onto four discourse coalitions, but that specifically a not-included fourth paradigm may be missing.

Quantitative network analysis allows us to expand our empirical understanding of norms as expressed by actors in an increasingly multistakeholder-powered multilateral governance system for technology governance. The study of policy and advocacy documents provides a long-term perspective into discourses and investigations into two key policy subsystems in the larger field of technology governance.

1.1. Building on previous REMIT research insights

In our analysis, we take as a starting point our definition of the *normative construction of technology governance* as laid out in deliverable D3.1. There, we defined norms as a social construct, created intersubjectively between and within different social and political actors (Björkdahl, 2002). The norms we refer to in the context of technology governance fall in the spectrum from collective and formalized norms to informal understandings of how an issue ‘should be handled’. Normative beliefs held by individual actors are key to understanding which governance arrangements for technology governance, both substantially and procedurally, can be achieved in the global governance arena.

In D3.1., we also posited that technology governance is a broad meta-field that at times entails overlapping policy subsystems (e.g., the governance of Internet infrastructure, blockchain, AI, the Internet of Things, etc.) and also entails both civil and military aspects of specific technologies. It is this distinction that often but not always impacts how *multilateralism* is conceived in the context of technology governance: traditional definitions of multilateralism as “practice of co-coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements of by means of institutions” (Keohane, 1989: 731) do not suffice in today’s governance of civilian technologies. This is particularly obvious in those policy subsystems that established a great openness to a variety of stakeholders in the governance. A widely held norm in fields such as Internet and AI governance is that of multistakeholder approaches, which include a wide variety of stakeholders such as states, companies, technical experts, academics, civil society, and technology end users into the governance process. Global technology governance is *the* policy field that established multistakeholder approaches in the international political system but not the only one in which such arrangement has been firmly established (Gasser et al., 2015). While it is fair to question the extent to which multistakeholder digital governance lives up to its promises (Hofmann, 2016), it has nonetheless shown a remarkable staying power.

We also build on the mapping exercise entailed in D3.1 that explored a variety of jurisdictions to analyze the nature of technology regulation and trends in five core technology domains targeted by REMIT: artificial intelligence (AI), distributed ledger technologies (blockchain), Internet of Things (IoT) Internet, cloud computing, and 5G/6G technologies. As part of the regulatory landscape analysis performed, we examined various jurisdictions around the world through intensive desk research. In spite of the fact that the mapping shows that hard law remains the choice of regulators, soft law, standards, and the various forms of anticipatory regulation are frequently adopted. D3.1 thus also highlighted a shift toward more adaptive and collaborative tools such as *regulatory sandboxes*. It stresses the importance of multistakeholder collaboration, flexible approaches, and international cooperation to address rapid technological changes, advocating for a methodology to guide anticipatory regulation and cross-border frameworks. Highly relevant for the current deliverable, in D3.1’s regulatory landscape analysis, we differentiated between governance, legislation, and regulation of digital technology, whereas the current focus is set largely to be governance, rather than regulation or legislation.

The analysis conducted as part of the mapping of regulations with regard to these five technology domains also identified the stakeholder types engaged through the regulations. While the regulatory



landscape analysis focuses on specific technologies and the regulatory approaches taken across countries, it does not specify the beliefs and values of these stakeholders. It is here, where the current deliverable sets in to map these comprehensively for the digital and AI field to deepen our understanding of the normative dynamics at play.

2. Identifying discourse coalitions: Beliefs and values in digital governance

This study's goals are to better understand the normative discourse with regard to the governance of digital technologies on a global scale. The main driver for the choice of materials to be studied is the realization that so-called "digital bills of rights" (DBRs), which "adopt a constitutional 'tone' in order to articulate rights and principles for the digital society" (Celeste et al., 2024) are an underexplored yet useful way to better understand the values and beliefs of actors in the digital governance field. Scholarship on "digital constitutionalism" has studied DBRs for years with the view that these documents "articulate a set of political rights, governance norms, and limitations on the exercise of power" (Redeker et al., 2018, p. 302). The fact that these DBRs are written by a variety of stakeholders, including states, international organizations, companies, civil society groups, multistakeholder communities, and technical experts, allows us to take a more comprehensive view of the discursive space over a period of more than 30 years.

DBRs are by definition written to express normative demands, including demands for human and fundamental rights as well as calls to adhere to specific governance principles for the transnational governance of digital technologies (Redeker et al., 2018).² This allows researchers to analyze these demands directly from the documents, including any specifications and - possibly - the order of principles as to rank the normative demands (which, in this case, was beyond our objectives). The nature of DBRs, therefore, is advantageous over an analysis of other documents and statements by similar actors, which may be prepared for other more specific or tactical purposes (e.g., comments on policies, which are much less general than comprehensive accounts of normative demands entailed in DBRs). The goal of the quantitative content analysis of 321 DBRs and the subsequent automated clustering is to analyze the views of actors in the digital governance space and to examine discourse coalitions, similarities between actors and principles.

It should be noted here that it is difficult to learn about the true beliefs and values of any actors within a governance field. Not only is there the difference between stated and revealed values beliefs. In addition, DBRs are always, at least when not authored by a single author, the product of a negotiation. This does not mean that DBRs are not a useful way to approach understanding actors' values and beliefs. It is true that actors may have to compromise with others to agree on a joint text of a DBR if they do not choose to abandon the project. We believe, also based on own research, that the compromise is likely between actors with similar beliefs and values, or even between actors who only through this process develop positions and beliefs on a specific topic. In any case, we propose that these documents are generally not meaningless to actors, quite the contrary. We suggest that actors involved in writing a DBR shape their own values and beliefs in the process (Redeker, 2018). Hence, the digital bills of rights included in the current analysis provide us with a window into the end point of that meaning making process, in which beliefs and values, can be fortified and created.

² Originally, the term "Internet bills of rights" has been employed by scholars from various disciplines to describe non-legally binding declarations that aim to define rights and principles for the digital society. The prefix "Internet" serves as a metonym for the broader environment subject to digital governance. In this report, we use the term digital bills of rights to emphasize that their scope extends beyond the Internet, encompassing areas such as artificial intelligence and blockchain technology (Celeste et al., 2024).



The next sections will first outline the process of data collection, coding and clustering of the 321 documents, before illustrating the characteristics of the dataset itself. Thereafter, this report goes on to describe the four discourse coalitions identified in the course of the actor-principle network. Finally, we discuss the relationship between technology governance paradigms and discourse coalitions, the limitations of the approach, including in the context of the ACF, and data availability.

2.1. Creating the Digital Bills of Rights Dataset 1.0

DBRs are not a marginal phenomenon. They constitute a distinct genre within digital governance, with 321 examples documented in the dataset created for this analysis alone. Still, until the mid-2010s, academic research largely overlooked these documents, primarily due to their predominantly non-legally binding nature. As an early exception, in 2009, the first lexicon-content analyses of DBRs were published in a study that aimed to determine whether a coherent set of digital rights was emerging in the wake of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in 2003-2005 (Musiani et al., 2009). Another group of scholars focused on individual DBRs, such as the Brazilian Marco Civil da Internet, enacted in 2014 (Madeiros & Bygrave, 2015), the Declaration of Internet Rights, endorsed by the Italian Chamber of Deputies in 2015 (Pollicino & Bassini, 2015; Santaniello et al., 2016), or the the Internet Rights and Principles Coalition's Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet (Franklin, 2016).

A 2015 UNESCO report surveyed 52 DBRs to assess the extent to which they incorporated principles aligned with UNESCO's concept of "Internet Universality" (Weber, 2015). Broadly representative and comprehensive datasets of DBRs were created around the same time by various scholars, analyzing 30 respectively 32 (Gill et al., 2015; Redeker et al., 2018), 59 (Pettrachin, 2018) or even 187 (Celeste, 2017) such documents. In their examination of 59 DBRs, Santaniello and colleagues (Santaniello et al., 2018) observed that the discourse on digital constitutionalism is fostering a process of "hybrid constitutionalization". This process entails a "functional differentiation", whereby different categories of actors concentrate on distinct constitutional functions. In this context, parliaments have specialized in formulating "restrictive norms" and "exclusionary rights", ensuring the enforcement of digital rights through public authority intervention or binding legal provisions. In this way, these documents, even if often non-binding, contribute to a *societal* constitutionalization of the transnational digital governance space by carving out the discursive and then legal space for new constitutional values and principles (Celeste, 2019; 2022, Redeker et al., 2018).

In order to create an even more comprehensive dataset, the researchers of REMIT's Work Package 3 worked together with the interdisciplinary Digital Constitutionalism Network³ to expand an existing dataset of around 200 DBRs, largely going back to the data collection of Celeste (2017). As for criteria for inclusion in the dataset, it was required that the sampling criteria capture and express the nature of the genre of digital bills of rights and that they indeed allow us to analyze beliefs and values of actors within the transnational and multistakeholder field of digital governance in a comparative way. We established a core set of three criteria, which, following Redeker et al. (2018), are as follows:

- The document's "substantive content addresses broad and fundamental political questions that have an inherently constitutional character; they explore rights (whether collective or individual), articulate limits on state power, and advance a range of governance norms".

This criterion ensures that core mechanics of power in the digital environment, the power of private transnational corporations, is fully recognized and documents are included that express principles of

³ <https://digitalconstitutionalism.org/>



governance of these non-state actors. Rights and governance norms here are taken as a placeholder for beliefs and values, which have a constitutional character in that they relate not to individual situations or actors but express generalizable principles for ordering the digital society.

- The document represents an initiative that speaks to a particular and defined political community, either explicitly or implicitly.

The criterion for inclusion relates to the question of instrumentality of normative claims advanced by actors. Rather than thought experiments and mere policy analysis, the initiatives included should address an audience in a political way. The phrasing might be somewhat misleading: many of the documents do not literally define a specific addressee. Instead, we also included documents that target a general policy audience or even the generalized public.

- The document “aspires toward a formalized [...] recognition” within a community.

DBRs included in the dataset should be geared to demand or - in the case of binding or non-binding official documents of nation states or international organizations - affect the entrenchment of normative claims. The recognition of these values within a community pays justice to the diversity of approaches in the multistakeholder nature of digital governance. The mapping of the regulatory environment we conducted in D3.1 is limited to regulation by states (and international organizations), but in the multistakeholder governance approach, technical standards or platform rules can take effects similar to state regulation (Bygrave, 2015; Celeste, 2019; Suzor, 2019).

Only documents meeting these three criteria were included in the dataset. For sampling, we employed a two-pronged approach. First, we incorporated documents from datasets of Internet bills of rights compiled by Redeker et al. (2018), Celeste (2017), and Santaniello et al. (2018), provided they met our sampling criteria. Subsequently, we added documents from three additional datasets focusing on AI guidelines, ethics, and principles, developed by Fjeld et al. (2020), Jobin et al. (2019), and Palladino (2023). Further document searches were conducted using keyword searches, references in other documents, and recommendations from policy practitioners and academics. This sampling process continued until mid-2023. Three supplementary criteria - comprehensiveness (as opposed to single-issue focus), collectiveness in the drafting process (rather than the work of an individual), and the use of constitutional language - have been referenced in literature (e.g., Redeker et al., 2018). Instead of using these as strict inclusion criteria, we incorporated them into the metadata coding, allowing researchers to filter documents based on their needs.

Qualitative coding was conducted from Spring 2021 to early 2024⁴, primarily by a team of five coders, with additional input and feedback from across the Digital Constitutionalism Network and colleagues from the REMIT consortium. New coders underwent a training workshop and followed intercoder reliability protocols. While formal intercoder reliability measurements were not taken, 232 out of 321 documents underwent double coding by several coders to ensure consistency. Documents in Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Italian were translated into English using automated translation tools, with native or near-native speakers verifying *prima facie* accuracy. A structured codebook was employed and iteratively refined throughout the research process. Initial codes were drawn from prior studies and expanded inductively as new rights and principles emerged. At the onset of coding, 53 codes from Redeker et al. (2018) were utilized, with an additional 16 codes added inductively as more granular or novel principles were identified. The complete codebook, encompassing 69 substantive codes, is available in Annex 1.

⁴ In the first phase, predating the coding work under the REMIT project, members of the Digital Constitutionalism Network led coding work supported by a research grant provided by Facebook Research (now: Meta Research) and smaller preparatory grants provided by the Academy of Science and Humanities in Hamburg and the State of Bremen, Germany.



In addition to these substantive codes, additional metadata was recorded and coded. This includes the three soft sampling criteria mentioned earlier and a total of 18 codes. Metadata collected covered aspects such as authorship, document release dates (initial, most recent and coded), language availability, geographical scope, and the thematic focus of each document (specifically: artificial intelligence or content moderation).

2.2. Description of the Dataset

The resulting dataset of 321 documents represents the largest such collection of digital bills of rights. The documents cover a period of 31 years from 1992 to 2023. The earliest document we found in our search was the Council of Europe’s Convention 108, originally published in 1981, though we coded the 2018 version. DBRs vary significantly in length. Some, like the European Charter of Rights of Citizens in the Knowledge Society, are as short as a single page, while the longest, the Privacy Online OECD Guidance on Policy and Practice, counts 386 pages. However, the majority are just a few pages long, with a median length of eight pages and an average of 21 pages. Accurately determining page counts can be challenging, as many documents are originally published as websites; to standardize the count, we downloaded these and converted them into PDFs. A very large majority of documents is (also) available in English and has been coded in from such original English version or official translation.

Around 30% of the DBRs in the dataset focus specifically on artificial intelligence. These documents are generally recent, with the earliest AI-specific DBR in our dataset dating back to 2014. However, AI-specific documents rapidly increased in number, reaching 40 in 2018 alone. Between 2017 and 2019, AI-specific DBRs outnumbered non-AI-specific DBRs in the dataset (see Figure 1). The growth of AI-focused DBRs, often in the format of ethics and principles documents, including official recommendations, is remarkable. An entire genre of studying these documents has emerged, as evidenced by recent survey studies that also fed into this dataset (e.g., Fjeld et al., 2020; Jobin et al., 2019; Palladino, 2023). The shift of the debate toward the topic of artificial intelligence is not - as in other fields - mainly driven by the emergence of high-performance generative AI tools in 2022. Instead, this debate captures the general interest and concern of various actors for the development and deployment of automated-decision-making tools and other AI-based applications, in the second half of the 2010s. When examining discourse coalitions over a period of over three decades, it is important that we keep in mind not just the absolute growth of the number of documents after 2010, but also the shift in focus.

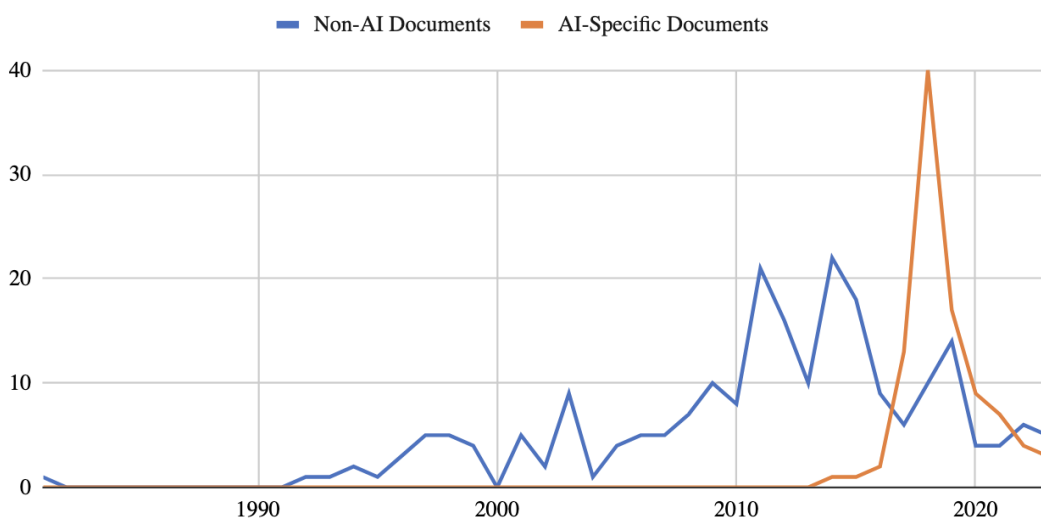
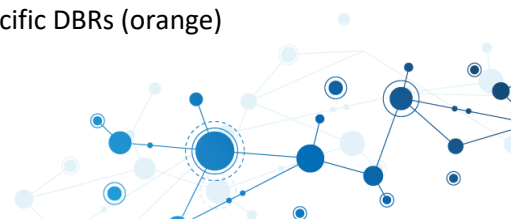


Figure 1: Number of DBRs per year, non-AI-Specific DBRs (blue) and AI-specific DBRs (orange)



In order to better illustrate the multistakeholder nature of the dataset and its international character, in the following, we shift toward an actor-centric description of the dataset. There are, as indicated above, 583 unique actors involved in the creation of the 321 documents. Most documents are proposed by several actors, some of them exhibit dozens of proposing organizations, states or individuals. That we counted a total of 883 individual expressions of beliefs by 583 actors means that some actors support several DBRs. The Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are among the actors, who support or have issued the largest number of DBRs. It should be noted that we coded expressions by international organizations as such and not as an expression of all their member states, even if a vote, e.g., in a general assembly of an organization is the basis for the expression.

The dataset demonstrates the multistakeholder nature of the policy discourse in the transnational field of digital governance. We find that among the 883 expressions, 475 can be associated with actors from civil society, followed by 147 expressions defined as governmental, and 136 associated with intergovernmentalist actors such as UNESCO or the International Telecommunication Union. The remaining expressions of normative positions can be associated with private companies (73), multistakeholder groups and associations (36), and actors from the technical community (9). Over time, the composition of authors of DBRs changed. Figure 2 shows, sorted by year, which stakeholder groups are represented and to which extent they were active supporters of DBR in each year. The data shows that, before 2009, DBRs were mostly written by intergovernmental organizations and groups. The share of documents authored by civil society, in turn, increased to a high share of the total in 2009 and remained relatively high. 2014 saw more than 100 civil society expressions of normative beliefs and values in the field of digital governance. Apart from 2011, governmental actors expressed normative demands largely starting in 2015.

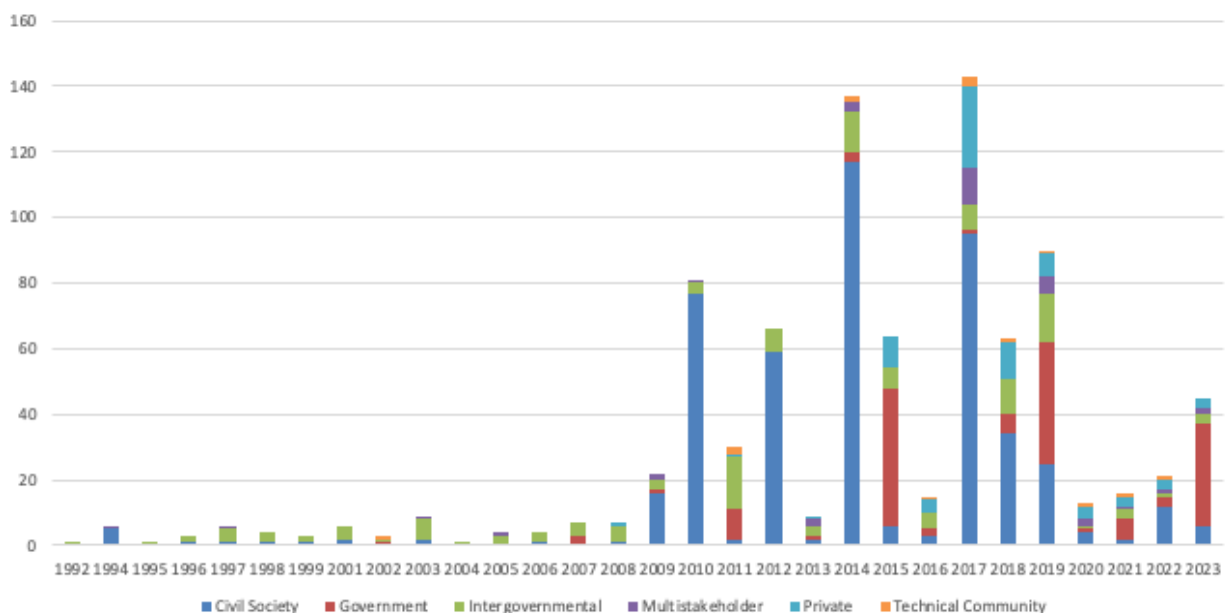


Figure 2: Actors supporting a DBR in a given year, by stakeholder group

The dataset of 321 digital bills of rights is not only diverse in terms of stakeholder types, it is also representing normative demands from around the world. Figure 3 shows that a large share of the actors included are based in Europe, of which about half of actors belong to the civil society group of stakeholders. European governmental stakeholders are more active than their peers in other world



regions and particularly more active than governments in North America and Africa when it comes to proposing digital bills of rights. Large shares of actors also hail from North America and the global category. The latter is the only non-region and attains its status as a very significant group of actors from the international NGOs and international organizations such as the OECD or the ITU. Only few actors can be attributed to the regions of Oceania and the Middle East. Asia, Africa and South America also appear to be underrepresented based, e.g., on shares of world population. Oversampling of European, North American and global documents, due to language limitations, may explain part of the gap. However, it is also likely that the differences are driven by global inequalities and the limitations of many actors in the Global South to be an effective part of the global digital governance discourse to which DBRs would provide input.

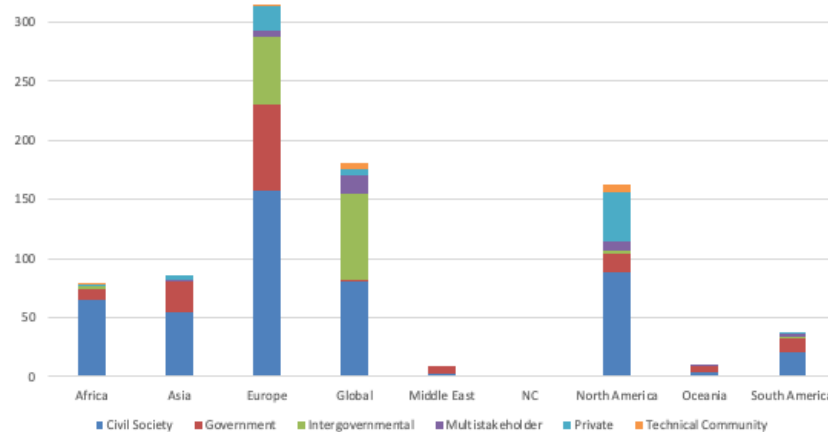


Figure 3: Actors supporting DBRs by world region and stakeholder type

Another important descriptive statistic relates to the frequency of mentioned beliefs and values. Among the 69 principles for which we coded the 321 documents, there is a stark difference concerning how often individual principles show up. Figure 4 provides an overview of the 21 most-included substantive principles. The top of the list is dominated by liberal rights (first generation human rights) and governance principles that fall in the good-governance category, e.g., “accountability” or “transparency”.

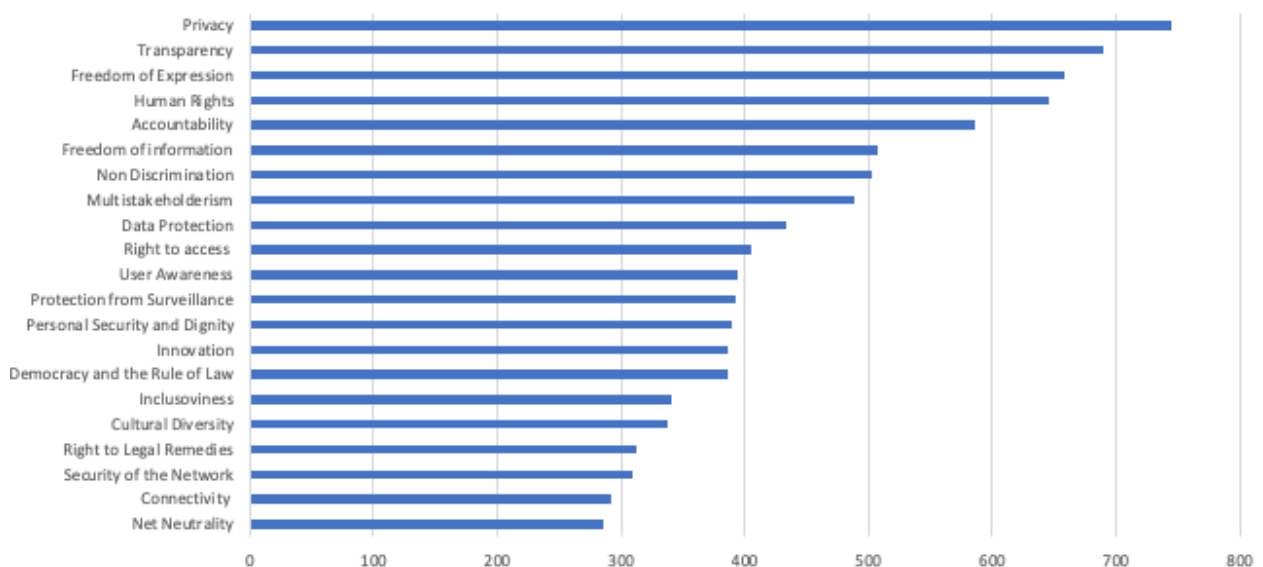


Figure 4: Occurrence of principles in the corpus



The relative occurrence of principles within a corpus has been early-on recognized as a standard research practice among those who study DBRs (Gill et al., 2015; Pettrachin, 2018). However, the need to test the idea of digital governance paradigms requires us to conduct an analysis connecting these principles to the (groups of) actors expressing particular values, i.e., the discourse coalitions.

3. Actor-Principle Network: Four Discourse Coalitions

Discourse coalitions share a common narrative, language, or storyline about a particular issue (Hajer, 1993; 1995). They can include diverse actors (e.g., NGOs, media, states, international organizations) who align around a particular discourse. After the coding was concluded, we conducted a quantitative network analysis in order to inductively identify discourse coalitions. Here, we chose to apply semantic and affiliation network analysis to the corpus and to use an automated clustering algorithm to identify discourse coalitions. Discourse coalitions are thus technically defined as actors who share a support for documents that entail certain principles. By definition, actors who have authored or supported the same document tend to be closer to each other. However, unbeknownst to them, other actors and documents may be in close discourse proximity, too, with no coordination whatsoever. For the analysis, we did not specify a number of discourse coalitions that should result in order to not insert a bias in favor or against the assumption of three paradigms of global technology governance. The network mapping has been produced using the 'Force Atlas' algorithm, which

“simulates a physical system in order to spatialize a network. Nodes repulse each other like charged particles, while edges attract their nodes, like springs. [...] The force-directed drawing has the specificity of placing each node depending on the other nodes [...] the technique has the advantage of allowing a visual interpretation of the structure. Its very essence is to turn structural proximities into visual proximities” (Jacomy et al., 2014, p. 2).

In other words, the graphical analysis provides an overview of the mutual co-associations among the nodes in the network. The more they are associated (meaning that they share edges) the closer they appear within the network. Hereby, the size represents the frequency of the principle being mentioned (see above).

The network that resulted from the analysis can be seen in Figure 5. The network exhibits four distinct discourse coalitions, three of similar size and one significantly smaller one. Based on the content of the principles included in each of these actor-principles clusters, we assigned names for them. In Figure 5, the cluster seen on top can be understood as the “Security and Legitimate Purpose Discourse Coalition”; the smaller cluster on the bottom can be considered to represent a “Content Governance Discourse Coalition” coalition, whereas the cluster on the left of the figure is the “Inclusionary Rights Discourse Coalition”, a distinct cluster from the “Human Rights and Internet Self-Governance Discourse Coalition” on the right. In the following, we describe the characteristics of each of the four discourse coalitions in some detail.



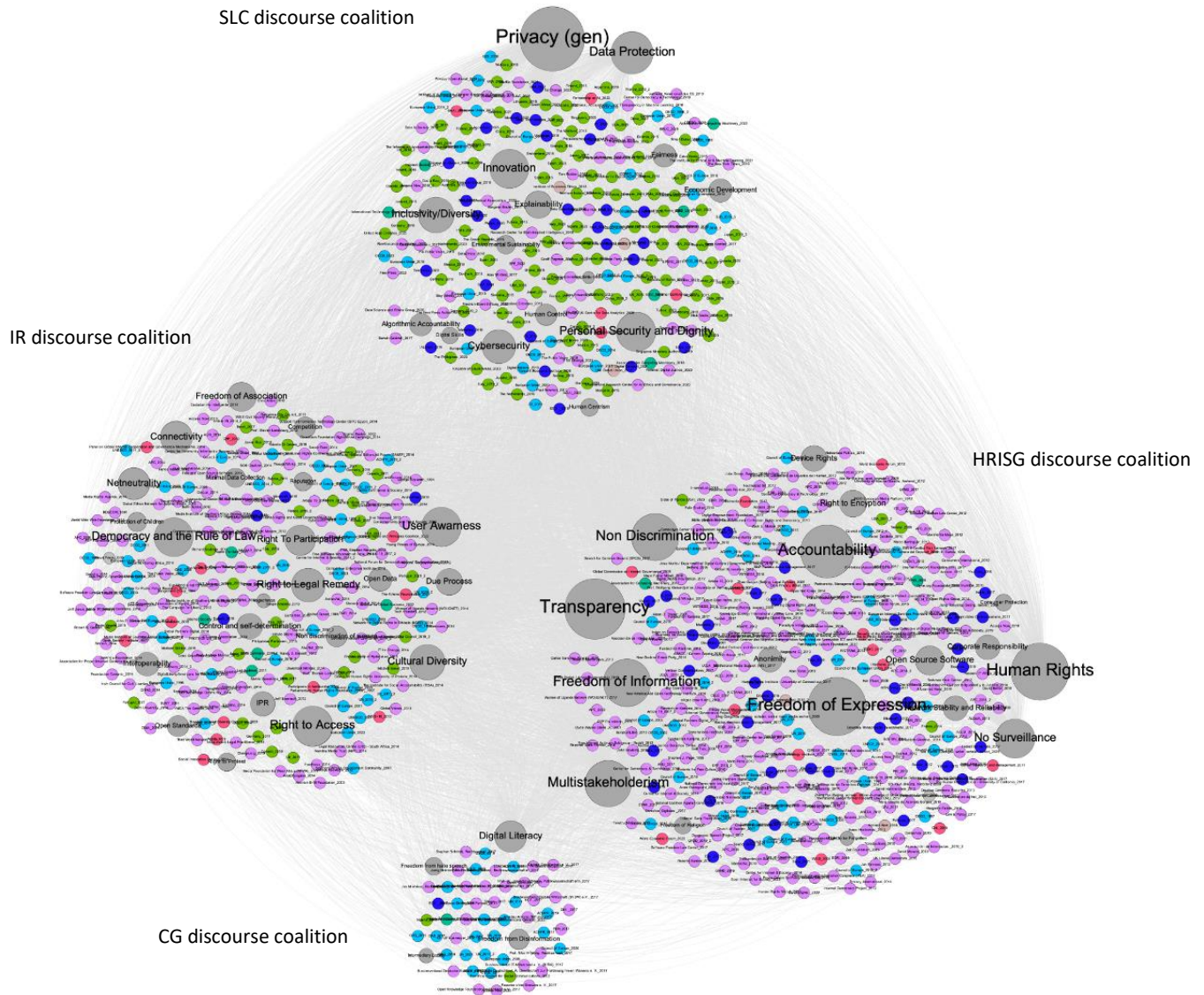


Figure 5: Actor-Principle Network based on corpus of 321 DBRs⁵

The *Security and Legitimate Purpose Discourse Coalition* (SLC coalition) is characterized by a large share of government actors (43%), followed by civil society actors (25%) and intergovernmental organizations (14%). Albeit at a low level, this discourse coalition brings together the largest share of statements of actors from the technical community. Hence, arguably, this coalition has a strong state and inter-state character. The digital governance values most important in this discourse coalition are privacy, data protection, personal security and dignity, innovation and inclusivity/diversity. These principles relate to what Gunther Teubner refers to as exclusionary rights (2012). Exclusionary rights, in contrast to inclusionary rights (see inclusionary rights discourse coalition), are legal mechanisms that protect autonomous social systems (such as markets, science, and digital platforms) from external interference. These rights shield particular domains (or subsystems) - whether economic, scientific, or digital - from regulatory overreach, state control, or external social demands that could disrupt their self-governance.

⁵ In this depiction of the network, the principles are marked in grey, whereas the actors appear in the remaining colors as follows: apple green = government; purple = civil society; bright blue = intergovernmental organizations and processes; dark blue = private actors; pink = multistakeholder organizations, conferences and processes; mint green = technical community



The SLC coalition appears to possess overlapping features with a sovereigntist coalition as defined by Santaniello and Palladino (2022).

The actors behind the document are mostly based in Europe (40%) and North America (14%), or they do not have a specific location due to their global or transnational nature (21%). A noteworthy DBR in the context of this analysis is the ‘Artificial Intelligence Standardization White Paper’ of 2018 (人工智能标准化白皮书). China Electronics Standardization Institute (CESI) is the actor included in the network through that document. CEIS is a think tank subordinate to China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. This particular coalition unites a discourse that occurred after 2015, suggesting a Snowden effect in discourse dynamics as it led to heightened concerns related to privacy and data protection (see e.g., Redeker et al., 2018). A close-up visualization of the SLC coalition can be found in Figure 6.

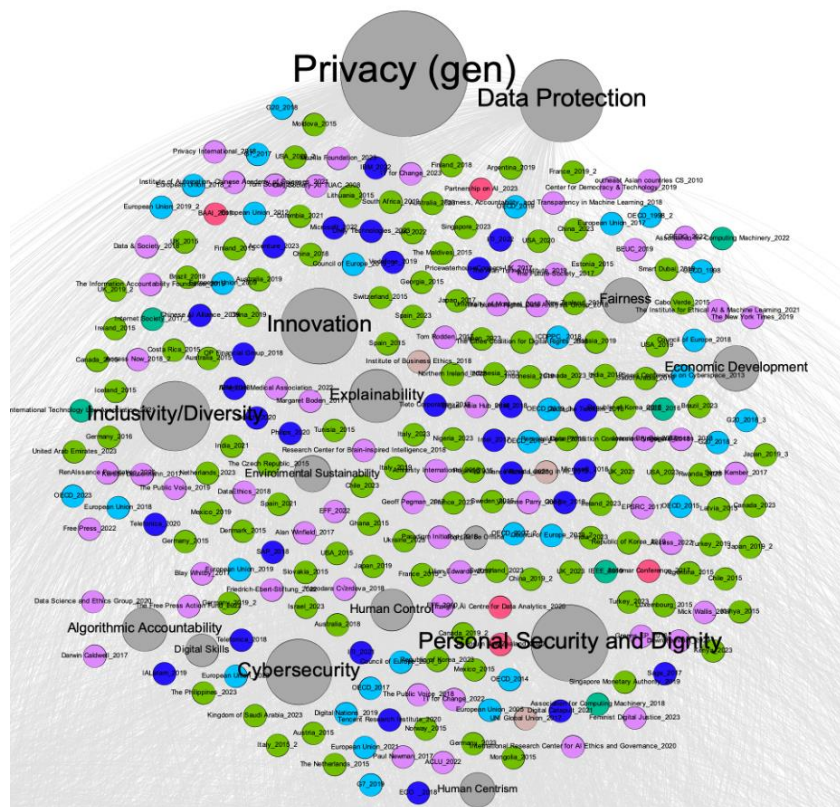


Figure 6: Detailed view of the Security and Legitimate Purpose discourse coalition

The *Inclusionary Rights Discourse Coalition (IR coalition)* has at its core, principles encompassing rights to access to technology, including the right to access, connectivity, and the use of open data and open standards. They also include key civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression and freedom of association, which are essential for influencing decision-making in the digital realm. Furthermore, inclusionary rights promote non-discrimination of women, inclusivity, and diversity - coded here as cultural diversity, while also safeguarding self-determination through user control and awareness. The rule of law plays a crucial role, ensuring democracy, due process, and access to legal remedies. Finally, an economic dimension emerges, emphasizing competition and intellectual property rights (IPR) as fundamental principles in the digital landscape. The discourse coalition has its name from the role that, according to Teubner (2012), inclusionary rights have in enabling actors to actively participate in the digitalization process, ensuring both the social shaping of technology and public control over its development.



The IR coalition is composed primarily of statements from civil society actors (65%), followed by intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, OSCE or the Council of Europe (15%) and governments (14%). The IR coalition is the coalition with the highest representation of African actors (22%), though European (24%) and North American (20%) contributions also carry significant weight. Globally or transnationally originating DBRs make up a further 22 percent. This coalition has been present from the beginning of the period covered by our dataset, reaching its peak in 2014 - the year the African Declaration of Internet Rights and Freedoms was released. It should be noted that the large number of co-authors of the document drives some of these statistics; the African Declaration has been authored as a Pan-African document in 2014 by African civil society actors from across the continent (Dinika & Redeker, forthcoming). A close-up visualization of the IR coalition can be found in Figure 7.

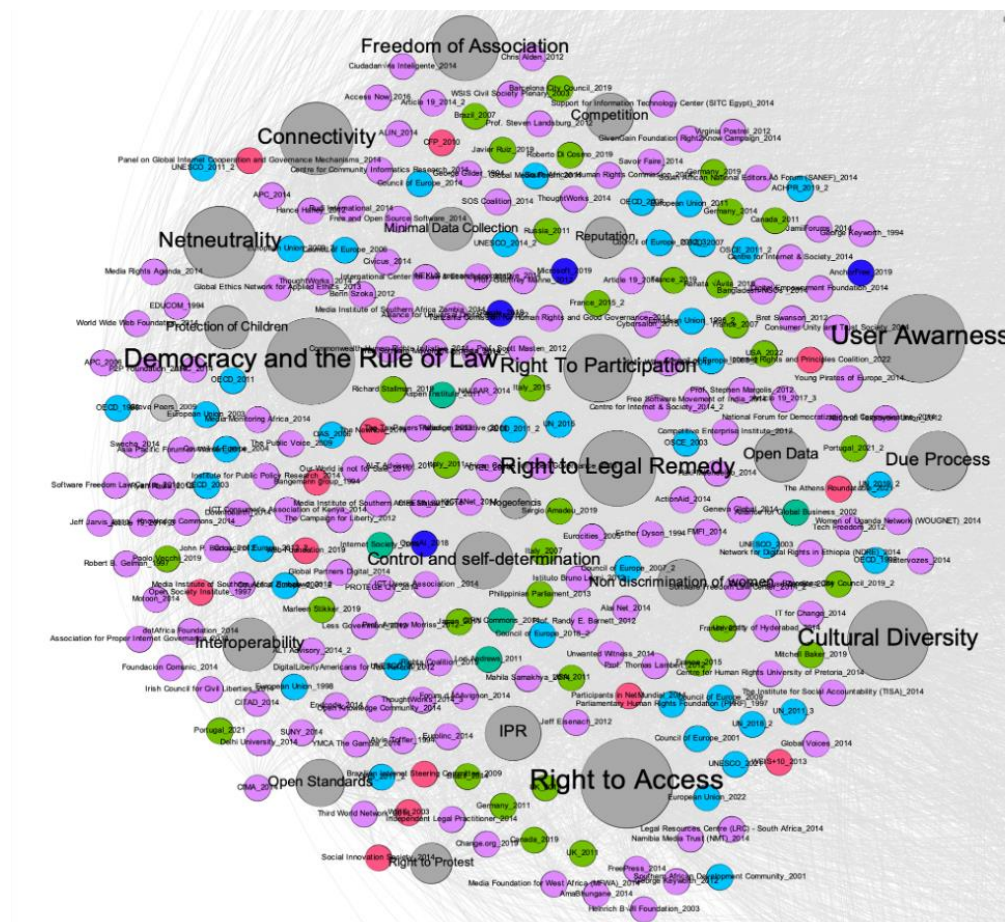


Figure 7: Detailed view of the Inclusionary Rights discourse coalition

The *Human Rights and Internet Self-Governance discourse coalition (HRISG coalition)* represents the largest of the coalitions arising from the network mapping, with 350 normative statements. The HRISG coalition primarily involves a set of constitutive norms and principles that apply to both digital operators and the institutions governing the Internet, which is largely treated as an autonomous policy domain. Key principles include transparency, accountability, multistakeholderism, non-discrimination, network stability and reliability, corporate responsibility, and human rights. Among these, freedom of expression holds a central role, reflecting a view of the Internet as fundamentally a communication network i.e., a tool for amplifying voices rather than merely an infrastructure enabling unprecedented control. The focus, therefore, is on protecting free communication and resisting censorship, particularly from state actors.

This discourse coalition primarily comprises civil society actors (66%), with smaller shares made up of intergovernmental organizations (14%) and private sector actors (11%), with the majority of



contributions coming from Europe (39%) and North America (24%), followed by globally and transnationally originating expressions (16%). The HRISG coalition entails expressions of statements that go back to the earliest DBRs entailed in the dataset. The relative focus is on the year between 2009 and 2019. Given its characteristics, it shares notable overlaps with a ‘neoliberal coalition’, identified by Santaniello and Palladino (2022). A close-up visualization of the HRISG discourse coalition can be found in Figure 8.

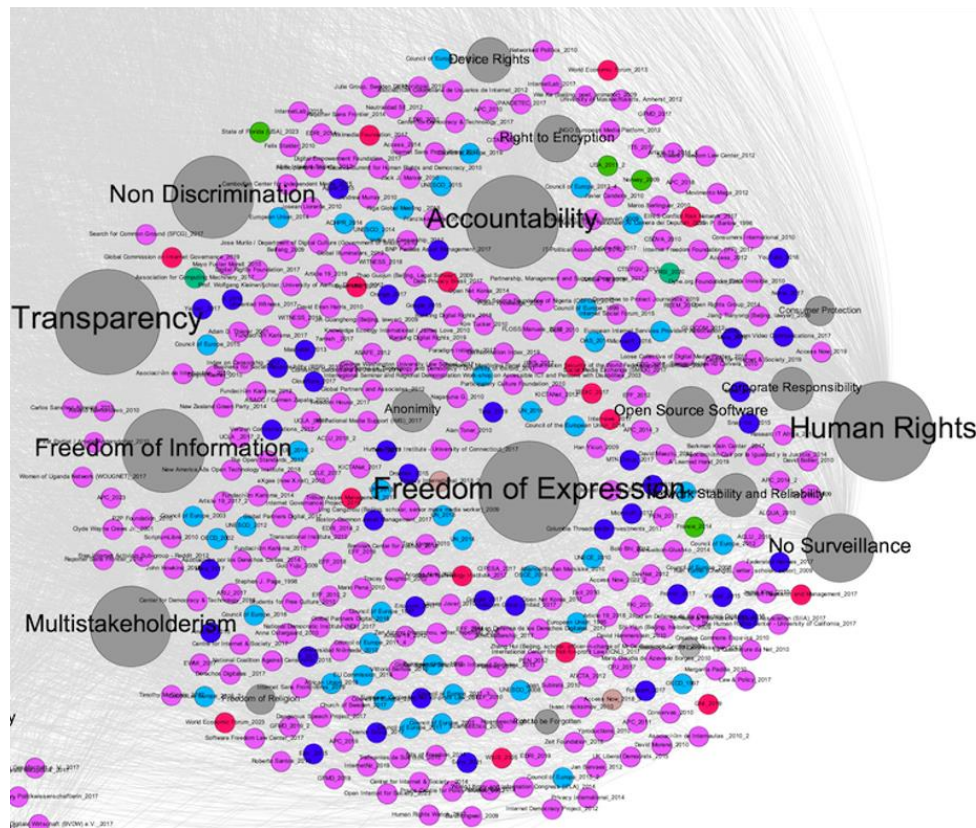


Figure 8: Detailed view of the Human Rights and Internet Self-Governance discourse coalition

The *Content Governance discourse coalition (CG coalition)* represents the smallest of the four coalitions with a mere 51 expressions entailed in DBRs. It peaked in 2017, the year after the first election of Donald Trump to the US presidency and the ensuing debates about foreign interference in US elections through social media, but before the Cambridge Analytica scandal broke in 2018. These normative expressions can be associated with the ‘techlash’ (Hemphill, 2019) against big tech and specifically social media companies. The CG coalition deals primarily with social media platform-related topics and principles. The most frequent principles entailed in the coalition are, in that order, digital literacy, freedom from disinformation and freedom from hate speech. Expressions entailed in this discourse coalitions hail only from three origins: Europe (71%) and North America (4%), and global or transnational (26%). Arguably, this coalition appears to represent a response by European, particularly German, actors and those engaged in global digital governance processes to US companies and regulators. Among the actors coded as transnational, the Organization of American States (OAS) appears three times, most strongly related to the principle of intermediary liability (or limitation thereof). The OAS appears to be a multilateral organization split in terms of approaches to platforms, with US-centric limitations of platform liability clashing with demands for regulation, from many of the other members of the organization. The CG coalition is primarily made up of civil society actors (53%) and intergovernmental organizations (37%), with only one or two representatives of the other stakeholder groups. A close-up visualization of the CG coalition can be found in Figure 9.



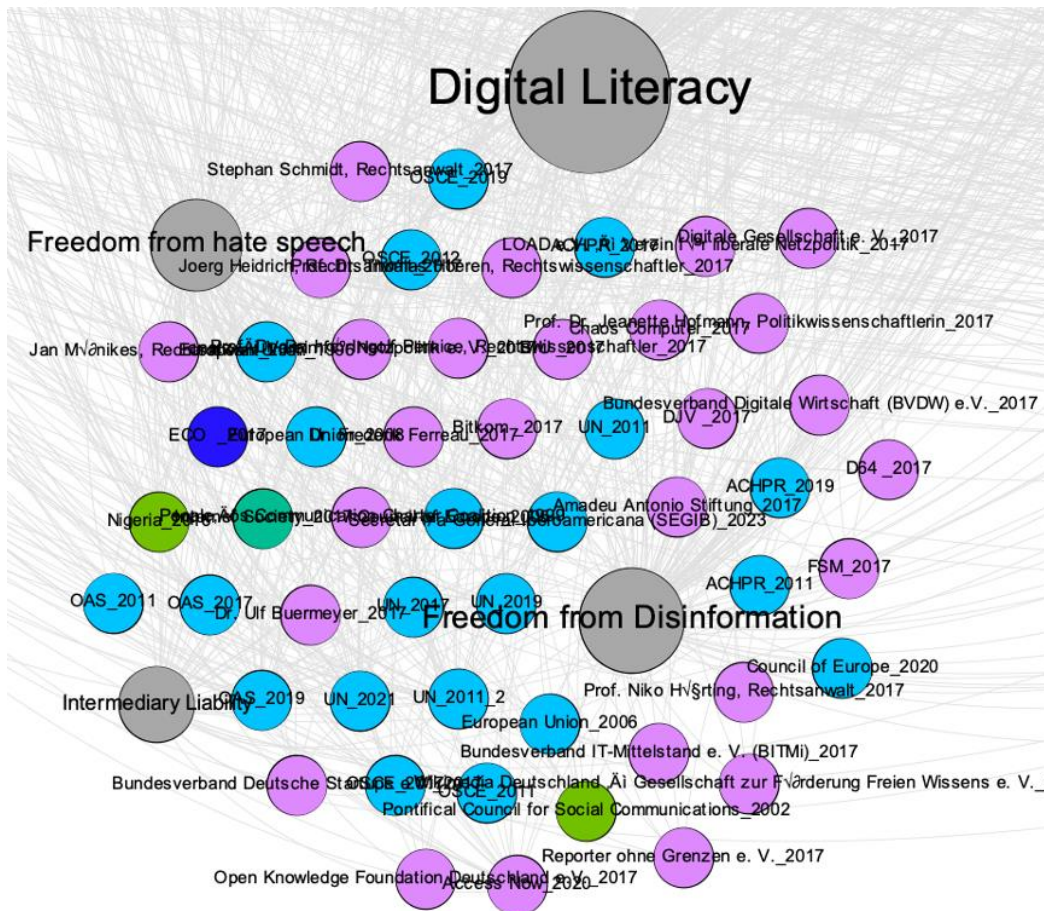


Figure 9: Detailed view of the Content Governance discourse coalition

Having analyzed the proximity of actors and principles within an automatically clustered visual network, we now move on to discuss how the four digital governance discourse coalitions map onto or otherwise relate to the three paradigms in global technology governance we defined early on in the REMIT project.

4. Implications for Technology Governance Paradigms

To recall, one of the overarching objectives of the REMIT project is to examine the three tech governance paradigms: a European, an American and a Chinese. The popular notion about the existence of such paradigms can be traced back to, most notably, the 2018 speech of French President Emmanuel Macron, who, at the UN Internet Governance Forum in Paris, provided the audience with his administration’s perspective on the tech governance world. In the speech, Macron argued that Europe should find its place apart from the “two models [that] exist: that, on the one hand, of complete self-management, without governance, and that of a compartmented Internet, entirely monitored by strong and authoritarian states [and instead], through regulation, [...] build this new path where governments, along with Internet players, civil societies and all actors are able to regulate properly” (Internet Governance Forum, 2018). Santaniello (2021) argues that Macron’s priorities for a European third paradigm contain elements of state-centric thinking yet could also encompass a fundamental rights-based approach, given they “involve the formalized, guaranteed, and balanced involvement of multiple interests in the decision-making process” (p. 30) leading to binding rules.

Anu Bradford (2023) developed a similar typology that entails market-led, state-led, and value-led characteristics in the digital technology governance approaches of the United States, China and the EU.



These three paradigms reflect key assumptions about desirable forms of (state) governance and interact with the social and political structure of the three powers that embody them. Traditionally, the US is characterized by a market-driven, lightly regulated model, prioritizing its technological industry's global leadership. In contrast, the EU has embraced a rights-based regulatory framework, requiring companies to uphold citizens' rights. This is exemplified also, but not only, through EU legislations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) or the Digital Services Act (DSA). Meanwhile, China has pursued a governance model, in which data and technology is leveraged to support its authoritarian capitalist trajectory, aligning closely with the interests of the Chinese Communist Party (Bradford, 2023). These approaches can be categorized as the “three Cs”: the *Californian* model in the US, rooted in Silicon Valley's market-oriented ethos; the *constitutional* model in the EU, emphasizing rights and regulation; and the *Chinese* (or *closed*) model, which prioritizes state control over technology governance. These typologies expand upon existing Internet governance models, aligning with broader technology governance frameworks, such as Santaniello's (2021) constitutional, neoliberal, and sovereigntist ideal types.

How do the findings in the current analysis relate to these three global technology governance paradigms, from which WP3 approaches multilateralism in technology governance? First of all, it is important to stress the differences and similarities between Internet governance model ideal types (Santaniello, 2021), digital empires (Bradford, 2023) and - subsequently - technology governance paradigms (REMIT) on the one hand, and discourse coalitions based on digital bills of rights on the other. The arguably most crucial similarity between these constructs all concern normative dimensions of how governance ought to be organized - substantially and also in terms of procedural principles. In other words, actors' values are embedded in Bradford's and Santaniello's characterization and they are also expressed in DBRs. There are differences, ontologically, between these theoretical frameworks. Bradford's approach focuses on major powers in the state-system and their respective ideologies, socio-economic characteristics, and, most importantly, approaches to technology governance. Even if intertwined with a dose of transnationalism, Bradford's approach effectively does not treat as equals large states and small states, nor civil society groups, companies or international organizations. The issue of (geopolitical or geoeconomic) power, therefore, is not reflected in the discourse coalitions we identified based on our analysis of DBRs (and also features less prominently in Santaniello's typology). Compared to Bradford's definition, our approach avoids the pitfall of overemphasizing the role of (a limited number of) states in a governance field where multistakeholderism remains important and small states have made substantial contributions in developing norms and building networks for their promotion.

The choice to not only focus on states' expressed values and beliefs but to be more inclusive is, therefore, embedded in the multistakeholder logic that still has great strength in the field of global technology governance. Even if not perfectly implemented, multistakeholder governance is distinct from inter-state multilateral governance in the field of technology governance as the recent process toward the UN's Global Digital Compact demonstrated. That process even shows how different elements in the UN system operate either in the inter-state or the multistakeholder logic, with New York being the center of gravity for inter-state logics and Geneva - with the ITU, the Human Rights Council and the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum among others - representing a transnationalist center in the system, at least for the digital governance field. By definition, when opting for the multistakeholder approach in this analysis, we emphasize and maybe “oversample” smaller actors such as civil society organization such as Ranking Digital Rights or the Media Institute of Southern Africa - Zambia, companies such as Telefonica and Bosch, and even individuals, who are part of the supporters of individual DBRs. Along the spectrum of stakeholders, there is likely a varying degree of strategic expressions of preferences. States or private companies may be driven by commercial or sovereign interests that make it more likely state one preference in terms of norms for digital governance but that their acts reveal another set of value. No free from strategic expressions either but perhaps to a lesser extent, civil society



organizations and technical experts could turn out to be more trustworthy in terms of the values and beliefs expressed in DBRs.

There is one major caveat when it comes to mapping DBRs onto the three paradigms: even *a priori*, a closed system of digital technology governance that emphasizes the primacy of the state over rights and markets (e.g., Uzbekistan) is unlikely to produce or act as signatory of digital bills of rights. After all, these documents are meant to express values and beliefs but largely tied to the language of rights. These rights would then limit state power as they would potentially also bind companies. While authoritarian states at times refer to human rights language, they tend to relativize it by invoking, e.g., human rights with “Chinese Characteristics” (Chen, 2021, p. 1230), or tend to behave differently in practice. Drafting and publicizing a DBR is usually not a necessary step for a government to do, especially if it might fear to be held up to a standard it does not want to be measured by.

Hence, from the beginning we could not expect to sample many such documents from China, Russia or other authoritarian countries. Nonetheless, if only considering China here, we do find nine documents (and more individual expressions) that originate in China in the dataset. These are written by a variety of actors, with one appearing to be a critical voice, written by a group of Chinese academics in 2009, and the remainder being authored by the Government of China (two documents), the Chinese AI Alliance, the Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence (BAAI), the International Research Center for AI Ethics and Governance, the Institute of Automation, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Research Center for Brain-inspired Intelligence, and the Tencent Research Institute. Interestingly, all but the first of these documents are focused on AI rather than broader digital governance topics. Only two make references to “freedom of information” - the ones authored by the group of Chinese academics and the one published by the Tencent Research Institute, whereas none make a reference to “democracy and the rule of law”. It is not clear that these documents are indeed the most expressive of the values of a closed system. This is because the visual mapping finds relations between value expressions and principles, which have been included but not those that are not included. There simply is no discourse coalition that expressly formulates norms that would call for a state-centric or even authoritarian model for digital governance. Consequently, the subsequent mapping of our analysis onto paradigms should rather focus on the two remaining paradigms, the market-focused Californian and the rights-focused constitutional one. The prevalence of DBRs from authoritarian states, however, does mean that autocracies are also adopting the format in their efforts to influence global debates on norms in technology governance. Paying attention to possible efforts of norm subversion in this manner, may be warranted.

The goals of exploring the relationship between the two typologies are to examine how our three paradigms match with normative discourse coalitions. In addition, the analysis allows us to test the notion of three paradigms against a different dataset and to explore complexities or even missing paradigms. If we map the Californian and constitutional paradigms onto the four discourse coalitions, we see that there is some fit between the two typologies but also some complexity that the paradigms fail to capture. It should be noted that EU actors’ support for DBRs - and the associated closeness to certain principles - leads to the EU being well-represented in all four discourse coalitions. Consequently, the following findings represent a tendency rather than a clear-cut division.

Although it includes elements of other paradigms, the SLC discourse coalition appears to be closest related to a core element of the European regulatory approach in the digital governance field: a focus on privacy and data protection. Taken together with the principles related to personal security and dignity, and the normative demand to increase inclusivity and diversity, the SLC coalition tends to be more a rights-driven coalition rather than a market-driven one. What could also be described as the digital sovereigntist model in digital governance is most closely aligned with the SLC coalition. Nonetheless, principles identified as part of the discourse coalition are also prevalent in the literature about the market-driven or neoliberal paradigm.



The opposite tendency can be observed for the largest of the four discourse coalitions. The Human Rights and Internet Self-Governance coalition features principles at the core of the market-driven Californian paradigm: freedom of expression, freedom of information, and corporate social responsibility. These principles are at the core of a neoliberal Californian paradigm. Notwithstanding, European constitutional values and beliefs also feature strongly in this discourse coalition, most notably human rights.

The Content Governance coalition appears to be the clearest cut in terms of both empirical inclusion of US actors - or better lack thereof, and in terms of a strong normative vision for regulation of markets. The fact that an overwhelming majority of actors included in the CT coalition are based in Europe is further evidence of this link.

To explore what dimensions of global contestation about digital governance are omitted as a result of overemphasizing the US, EU and China as key powers setting the terms in this domain, the Inclusionary Rights coalition provides important leads. With a strong involvement of actors from the Global South and a normative commitment to Internet access provision and cultural diversity, this coalition arguably resembles the 'developmentalist coalition' identified by Santaniello and Palladino (2022) based on an analysis of WSIS+10 submissions. This discourse coalition also includes actors who otherwise find themselves in other coalitions at times (this is particularly true for the European Union) yet none of the paradigms' core values relates to this strong development normative discourse. Consequently, next to the market-based, state-based and rights-based paradigms, our study demonstrates there is a need to think more deeply about the countries and actors in the Global South as active participants and agents in global digital governance through the development-focused 'Developmentalist Paradigm'. As the importance of global, intergovernmental organizations appears to be growing as a result of the push towards reasserting state sovereignty, the urgency of widening the geographical outlook implicit in studies of global technology governance is evident.

4.1. Limitations

The general approach of working with digital bills of rights published over a period of more than three decades, rather than contemporary sources such as interviews or policy documents comes with major advantages but also several limitations. As demonstrated above, the quantitative network analysis across 30+ years allows us to identify cross-temporal discourse coalitions from the corpus. This bird's eye view of digital governance normative discourses allowed us to identify inductively four different discourse coalitions within the actor-principle network. The addition of the developmentalist coalition is particularly crucial and, arguably, allows us to add an important perspective to the paradigms or types assumed to exist in this policy space. The advantage of the inductive clustering procedure is that theory-driven assumptions could be tested effectively.

Due to the nature of the subject, rights-related normative statements, this approach is most apt for analyzing what is publicly expressed - i.e., what is included and how it relates to each other - rather than what is missing from this arena. In addition, although this is more generally the case, actors can express values that they actually do not live up to. Future analysis may also further explore the significance of the gradual shift in focus of global technology debates and, as a result, our corpus to AI, bringing with it new actors and principles, particularly since the late 2010s.



4.2. Data Availability

The full dataset of 321 digital bills of rights has already been published in a place and format in accordance with FAIR data sharing practices and the data management plan of REMIT. The publication occurred with GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences under the following reference:

Redeker, D., Palladino, N., Celeste, E., Santaniello, M., & Padovani, C. (2024). Digital Bills of Rights Dataset. GESIS, Cologne. Data File Version 1.0.0, <https://doi.org/10.7802/2731>.

The data is embargoed until 31 December 2025. The codebook is available on the linked GESIS repository site.



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