NR43 / Governing Complexity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Law, Policy, and Development in the Global South

Topic : Research

Chair : Niharika Kumar (University of Lucknow)

Second Chair : Shobhit Singh (University of Lucknow)

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

1. **General Objectives and Significance of the Panel**

The Global South faces a unique constellation of interconnected challenges, including the imperative for sustainable development, rapid technological and urban transformation, and persistent digital and social inequality. Traditional, often Western-centric, governance models struggle to offer effective frameworks for these complex, interconnected issues. The extant literature highlights major governance challenges such as-weak institutional capacity and fragmented governance; corruption, lack of transparency, and poor accountability; persistent economic, social, and digital inequalities; urbanization and environmental/sustainability governance failures; digital & technological governance gaps and power asymmetries; and political instability, weak rule of law, and institutional fragility.

This panel aims to move beyond the mere diagnostic of governance challenges in developing economies, focusing instead on the innovative and context-specific intersections of law and policy that address critical issues such as climate change, digital transformation, and the protection of human rights. It seeks to advance scholarship by synthesizing theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions that critically interrogate existing interdisciplinary frameworks. The panel aims to propose new conceptual and analytical tools that more accurately capture the complex, multi-scalar realities of governance, including institutional fragility, socio-digital inequalities, urbanization pressures, and environmental vulnerabilities. Ultimately, the discussion aspires to bridge theory and practice, offering contextually grounded pathways for policy innovation that are equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the unique political, social, and technological dynamics of the Global South.

The panel's scientific relevance lies in its commitment to an epistemological shift by positioning the Global South as a crucial source of theoretical insights, thereby challenging the scientific limitations of Western-centric governance models. By focussing on analysis of localized policy innovations, bottom-up learning, and the unique dynamics of state-society-technology interactions, the panel provides the necessary conceptual tools and methodologies to advance global governance science beyond reductionist models toward a more holistic, contextually grounded, and scientifically robust understanding of contemporary development challenges.

It proceeds on the following objectives:

a. Advance Global South Theoretical Contributions: To position the Global South as a producer of theoretical insights.

b. Develop Interdisciplinary Analytical Frameworks: To aggregate and propose novel interdisciplinary frameworks (combining fields like law, political economy, and data science) capable of analysing governance challenges characterized by radical uncertainty (e.g., climate change) and rapid technological shifts.

c. Identify and Analyze Context-Specific Governance Innovations:To gather empirical and comparative evidence on innovative, context-specific law-policy intersections emerging within the Global South in areas such as digital infrastructure, climate change, and urban planning.

d. Inform Novel and Inclusive Regulatory Responses: To identify the key challenges at the nexus of technological governance, digital inequality, and climate change, and to translate research findings into actionable policy recommendations.

e. Illuminate Transferable Lessons from State-Society Interactions: To examine the unique dynamics of

state-society-technology interactions, bottom-up policy learning, and the role of non-state actors in the Global South to generate insights that are transferable to global debates on law and public policy.

2. **Research Questions**

The panel seeks contributions addressing the following core questions:

1) How can the Global South generate contextually grounded theoretical frameworks that reconceptualize governance under conditions of radical uncertainty and what implications do these frameworks have for broader global policy and legal discourse?
2) How can interdisciplinary analysis help identify and assess governance innovations in the Global South-especially in digital infrastructure, urban planning, and climate resilience-and how do these insights shape more adaptive, inclusive regulations?
3) How do state-society-technology interactions in the Global South shape bottom-up policy learning, the emergence of non-state governance actors, and novel law-policy intersections, and what transferable lessons can be derived from these dynamics to address global challenges of technological governance, digital inequality, and climate change?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Call for papers

This panel invites papers that moves beyond merely diagnosing the governance deficits in the face of challenges posed by technological changes and other uncertainties. The aim is to position developing economies, and particularly the insights emerging from Asia and Africa, not merely as case studies but as crucial leaders/producers of theoretical insights that can inform global debates on law and public policy. The panel seeks to illuminate the innovative, context-specific law-policy intersections being forged locally to manage global risks. The anticipated papers are expected to illustrate how bottom-up policy learning, South-South cooperation, and the unique dynamics of state-society-technology interactions in countries like India are generating transferable theoretical insights.

Contributions can relate to methodological innovations (Papers presenting new methods for studying law-policy intersections), theoretical contributions (Papers that develop or refine theoretical concepts for governance that are rooted in the experiences of the Global South), and/or comparative empirical studies(Detailed case studies with comparative elements across countries in the Global South on themes such as digital inequality, urban transformation, or climate adaptation law).

The following suggestive themes may be considered:

1. Theoretical innovation and knowledge production from Global South contexts
2. Case studies of law-policy innovations in digital public infrastructure, climate adaptation, and urban planning
3. State-society-technology interactions, bottom-up policy learning, and non-state actor participation.
4. Regulating Algorithmic Justice and Human Rights
5. Data Sovereignty, Privacy, and Monopoly Power
6. Climate Law and Policy for Adaptation
7. Resource Governance and Inequality
8. Hybrid Governance and Non-State Actors
9. South-South Cooperation and Policy Learning
10. The Governance of Rapid Urban Complexity

Potential Papers

Paper 1: Policy Proliferation vs. Adaptation: Lessons from the Transfer of India's Digital Public Infrastructure to African Nations

o Author: Mr. Rajvendra Singh, JRF, Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow, Lucknow.

Paper 2: Beyond Privacy: The Legal-Policy Response to AI-Driven "Data Colonialism"

o Author: Dr. Kanieka Arora, Guest Faculty, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Paper 3: The Role of Regulatory Sandboxes: Balancing Innovation and Risk in FinTech in Emerging

Markets.

o Author: Mr. Siddhartha Singh, JRF, Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow, Lucknow.

Paper 4:Hybridization: How Global South States Combine External Policies With Local Institutions

Author: Mridul Kumar, Student, Llyod Law College, Greater Noida.