P110 / The Global War of Discourses: Critical Philosophy, Interpretive Policy, and the EU-US-China AI Governance Contest

Topic : Discourses, Ideas, and Narratives

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

General Objectives

The global governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly shaped by a triangular normative and geopolitical contest among the European Union, the United States, and the People's Republic of China. While a growing body of literature analyses these three poles, current research remains largely tied to legal-institutional comparison: the EU's horizontal, risk-based AI Act; China's vertical, security-oriented architecture; and the United States' fragmented, innovation-led framework organised around technological leadership, national security, and global competitiveness. What remains profoundly understudied is the communicative, interpretive, and discursive dimension through which these different models are justified, projected, and translated into policy choices beyond their own jurisdictions.

This panel argues that the EU-US-China relationship cannot be fully grasped as a technical divergence among regulatory systems; rather, it demands the lens of Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) and critical philosophy to deconstruct a global struggle over "authoritative discourses" regarding responsible digital statecraft. Through distinct strategic narratives, all three actors project normative authority and shape global debates. The EU positions AI within a macro-discourse of trust, fundamental rights, and ethical oversight, extending the "Brussels Effect". China constructs AI through discourses of national sovereignty, social stability, and state-led efficiency, projecting its model through initiatives like the Digital Silk Road. The US constitutes a third pole centred on innovation, entrepreneurial freedom, and technological leadership, reinforced by a federal agenda aimed at removing regulatory barriers, expanding domestic AI infrastructure, and exporting full-stack solutions to allies.

These are not fixed models, but competing narratives structuring markets, alliances, and policy choices. The Lusophone world offers a revealing laboratory for observing how third spaces negotiate, combine, resist, or strategically hybridise these governance repertoires. This investigation is especially timely for 2027, when the EU's rules enter a new stage of application, the US consolidates its AI leadership strategy, and China expands its global governance model for generative AI.

Research Question and Hypotheses

Applying a tripartite heuristic—Discourse, Framing, and Narrative—this panel addresses the following question: How do the competing strategic discourses of the EU, the US, and China shape, discipline, and constrain the digital public policies and sovereignty of third spaces, particularly within the Lusophone world?

We explore three main hypotheses:

The Discursive Tripolarity Hypothesis: The dominant macro-discursive structures promoted by the EU (rights-centric), the US (innovation-centric), and China (state-centric) create a tripolar field of normative competition that marginalises alternative local conceptualisations of digital common goods.
The Strategic Framing of Autonomy: Middle powers within the Lusophone space strategically "frame" domestic AI policies by selectively combining European rights-based vocabularies, American technological ecosystems (cloud and semiconductors), and Chinese infrastructural partnerships, enabling them to manoeuvre among competing centres of influence.
The Counter-Discourse Resistance Hypothesis: Micro-interactional "plots" deployed by local policy networks, peripheral developers, and civil-society actors resist or reinterpret imported "authoritative discourses" to reclaim local data, linguistic, and technological sovereignty as a requirement for epistemic justice.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Global War of Discourses in AI Governance

A triangular normative contest among the European Union, the United States, and China shapes the global governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Beyond legal-institutional comparisons (the EU's risk-based AI Act, China's state-centric architecture, and the US's innovation-led framework), this panel investigates the understudied communicative and discursive dimensions through which these models are justified, projected, and translated beyond their jurisdictions.

Using Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) and critical philosophy, we approach this triangular competition as a global "war of discourses" where actors struggle over what constitutes responsible digital statecraft. The Lusophone world offers a revealing laboratory to observe how third spaces negotiate, combine, resist, or strategically hybridise these dominant European, American, and Chinese governance repertoires. This investigation is especially timely for 2027, as the EU's high-risk rules apply, the US consolidates its infrastructure leadership strategy, and China expands its generative AI model.

Core Research Question

How do the competing strategic discourses of the EU, the US, and China shape, discipline, and constrain the digital public policies and sovereignty of third spaces, particularly within the Lusophone world?

Thematic Axes and Hypotheses

We invite papers addressing, testing, or problematizing three main hypotheses:

1. Discursive Tripolarity: How dominant macro-discourses marginalise alternative local conceptualisations of digital common goods.

2. Strategic Framing of Autonomy: How middle powers (specifically in the Lusophone space) engage in discursive bricolage, combining global repertoires to maximise domestic policy autonomy.

3. Counter-Discourse Resistance: How local policy networks, researchers, and civil society deploy micro-narratives to reclaim data, linguistic, and epistemic sovereignty.

Submission Guidelines

We welcome theoretical, empirical, or methodological contributions utilizing critical discourse analysis, narrative frameworks, or post-colonial critiques. Please submit an abstract of 300 words and a short biography by the deadline.

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