

## **Call for Papers:**

### **Workshop: "A Non-Aligned Tech Movement? Emerging powers, geopolitical tensions and alternatives to the liberal mode of governance of the Internet, data and the data-based economy".**

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The Internet, data, and the data-based economy have until recently been governed by a liberal regulatory regime that includes regulation of the Internet as a global public good, free global data flows, free e-commerce, liberal regulation and taxation of global technology companies, and intellectual property rights. However, such a regime, combined with the technological dominance of the US and China, left many countries at a disadvantage. Accordingly, efforts to achieve "digital (or technological) sovereignty" and "strategic autonomy", i.e. developing local R&D and innovation capacities, gaining control over local data, making the Internet and social media more governable at the local level, can be observed in the EU, but also in emerging economies such as the BRICS, Turkey, other countries in the Middle East, Central, South and Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Many of these countries are trying to avoid being associated exclusively with the US or China and are looking for a "third way". Even if they have to accept the dominance of US or Chinese companies on their territory, they are working on solutions to reduce this presence in the medium term. They are passing data protection and localisation laws, regulating social media, taxing Big Tech, sometimes avoiding liberal trade agreements, supporting domestic technology companies, relying on open source software to develop their own products, and pursuing other industrial policies. For countries exposed to sanctions, such as Russia or Iran, the issue is even more pressing.

These efforts have been rhetorically captured as the "non-aligned tech movement" as a reference to the Non-Aligned Movement initiated in the 1950s. They are taking place against a backdrop of emerging countries developing political and economic ambitions and supposedly building a multipolar world order. And the digital economy and the technologies that enable it are, alongside military power, the main source of geopolitical power in today's world.

The aim of the workshop is to explore the triggers of the technological sovereignty/non-aligned tech movement, the specific policies and alliances it encompasses, and an emerging regulatory regime. Questions we are interested in include:

- What role do the practices of global big tech companies, framed as 'digital colonialism', play in provoking digital and technological sovereignty efforts in emerging economies? Is there a similar backlash against the data practices of Chinese tech companies?
- What is the role of EU data protection law, the Digital Services Act, the Digital Markets Act and AI regulation in promoting norms of technological sovereignty around the world?
- To what extent do digital and technological sovereignty policies challenge the existing liberal regulatory regime in the global governance of the internet, data and the digital economy? How should this emerging regulatory regime be assessed?
- Is part of the desire for digital sovereignty the desire to have a similar capacity for control and surveillance as in China?

The workshop aims to contribute to building a network of scholars working on digital and technological sovereignty efforts, the non-aligned tech movement, and digital industrial policy in emerging economies, and to pursue a joint publication project.

To apply, please submit a **250-300-word** research paper proposal related to the workshop themes by **31<sup>st</sup> May 2024**. Please submit abstracts to [nonalignedtech@gmail.com](mailto:nonalignedtech@gmail.com) with the email subject 'Submission to Workshop'. Decisions will be made by **15th June 2024**, and it is expected that participants will circulate draft papers by **10th November 2024**. The workshop will be held at the Cluster SCRIPTS, Edwin-Redlob-Str. 29, 14195 Berlin, from **5-6<sup>th</sup> December 2024**. For further information, please write to [nonalignedtech@gmail.com](mailto:nonalignedtech@gmail.com).