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PARADIGM PARADOX: HOW EMERGING CYBERSECURITY COMMUNITIES MODERATE EU GOVERNANCE

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While interaction between public and private actors is daily fare in European Union (EU) cybersecurity governance, two contrary paradigms pervade discursive rhetoric. On the one hand, a co-regulatory, inclusive allure of multistakeholderism. On the other hand, state-centric and autarkic ideas of digital sovereignty. Surprisingly little is known about links between –often informal –public-private interaction and high-level rhetoric. Given this: What explains public-private alignment behind contrary paradigms?

This paper makes the case that overlooked everyday struggles over authority pre-empt better understanding of ordering processes around digital infrastructure. Integrating practice-theoretical thinking with cybersecurity scholarship, the paper introduces the framework of emerging cybersecurity community (ECC). The ECC framework enables a new understanding of the puzzling disconnect between the aligned everyday practices of interaction, and the contrary governance paradigms –sovereignist and multistakeholderist. The complementary theories congruence analysis helps juxtapose the Brussels effect with norm entrepreneurship theorising. Surfacing explanatory shortcomings of these alternative accounts for either hybrid public or private influence illustrate ECC's utility for integrating both. The framework systematises cluttered understandings of interests, institutionalisation, and technopolitical interdependencies. Zooming in on the domain of EU cybersecurity governance offers a context-sensitive window for this paper as a point of departure for filling a broader gap in extant literature on public-private interaction across governance domains.

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