

The Politics of Regulatory Expansion

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Abstract

The diffusion of regulation as a mode of governing has been under the spotlight for nearly two decades. Regulatory explosion, regulatory growth, the rise of the regulatory state, diffusion of regulatory devices have all been largely analysed and discussed. This new order of governing by rule and oversight (Hood) has generally been associated with transformations of capitalism (Levi-Faur), the rise of multi-level governance in entity such as the European Union (Majone), explosions of audit (Power) and indicators, or diffusion processes at horizontal level or across regions, expressing isomorphic dynamics, power disputes and imbalances worldwide.

Still, at a more micro level, how can we explain the expansion of regulation at present? Expansion can be about the diffusion of regulation to new domains, but it is also about the fact that, once in place, regulation seems to ever expand its remit. The same applies to (autonomous) regulatory agencies, which have in some jurisdictions moved from a protective and passive role to becoming more purposeful and active parties, expanding outwards into new areas of policy (and politics). Regulatory agencies as diplomatic negotiators and international network members, knowledge brokers, policy advisors or actual planners have all been somewhat new and idiosyncratic roles recently acquired by regulatory institutions in different states. Even beyond the usual suspects of regulation that are agencies, regulatory expansion can be observed in regular areas of public administration, where 'regulatory' entrepreneurs may favour the use of rules and oversight.

In light of these debates, a first challenge is to characterise, theoretically or empirically regulatory expansion: how can we define it at both organizational and governance level, or even more broadly as a political phenomenon? Is regulatory expansion a zero-sum game, growing at the expense of non-regulatory modes of policymaking? Or is regulatory expansion affecting the very nature of governance, furthering or fixing failures associate with New Public Management reforms, the same ones that were supposed to have enticed de-fragmentation agendas in the 21st century and the renewed popularity of the centre of government?

Another pivotal aspect is the 'politics' of regulatory expansion: Under what conditions regulatory expansions happen? Who and what factors drive regulatory expansion? What is the role of regulators themselves in this process? Can we identify patterns of expansion? Or reversely, what may impede regulatory expansion, and how do politicians promote, prevent or respond to regulatory expansion?

Each one of these topics and others will be of interest to this Panel, which ultimately seeks to develop an inquiry into the expanding component of regulation in the post-agencification age in different parts of the globe.

To submit a proposal, you will need to create a MyECPR account and submit the following information by **14 February**:

- Your name, academic affiliation and email address
- The title of your paper
- An abstract of up to 500 words.
- 3 to 8 keywords

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