

Laudation

For the Stein Rokkan Prizes 2024

The Jury has this year chosen to award the prize to Anu Bradford of Columbia Law School for her book *Digital Empires: The Global Battle to Regulate Technology* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

The jury had the following to say:

The Jury found *Digital Empires* to be a path-breaking book that deals with one of the major challenges of our time: the regulation of the digital economy. The book analyses in depth how the three dominant regulatory powers in the world – the United States (US), the European Union (EU) and China – develop distinct public policies to manage, confront and respond to the digital economy, how they deal with innovations, and how they try to co-opt and steer the big tech players in the digital economy.

Drawing extensively on her legal background, Anu charts in detail the major regulatory developments in China, the US, and the EU and discusses their economic, social and political implications. We learn how each of the three polities organises the regulation of the digital economy around, respectively, the state, the market, or the digital rights of citizen.

The regulatory developments are analysed in their full cultural and social complexity, placing this book on the cutting edge of much social science. The author shows how these models often come into conflict with one another both horizontally (between governments) and vertically (tech companies versus their governments). The book poses important questions about the eventual model that may dominate the regulation of the digital economy in the future. The author poses that the US free market model is losing terrain in favour of one that favours more regulation – drawing support for this change even from the US public. By contrast, China already favours a more interventionist approach and does not hesitate to constrain its tech companies, something that has been more difficult for democracies.

This bold and provocative book forces us to reflect on these challenges that will shape global politics in the decades to come.

Amy Verdun

On behalf of the Stein Rokkan Prize Jury
European Consortium for Political Research