

Public ownership of key technologies

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Research group: Innovation Studies

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Project description

After decades of leaving the ownership of technologies to the market, there is a renewed interest in government ownership of key technologies such as renewable energy, social media, and AI. Increasing geopolitical tensions between China, the European Union and the US have contributed to this development. Also enhancing societal benefits such as sustainability or access drive a return towards public ownership.

A particular interesting question concerns public ownership of platforms or corporations that operate across many countries. This project considers alternative public ownership scenarios: should governments together nationalize AI or other forms of digital infrastructure and what would this look like? Should the European Union just buy Whatsapp and treat it as a public utility? The project also considers the analysis of existing corporations owned by multiple nations, such as Eurostar or Airfrance-KLM. A final element considers the public values at stake. What are relevant public values in innovation and how can key technologies be developed that contribute to these values.

Christiaens, T. (2024). Nationalize AI!. *AI & SOCIETY*, 1-3. Nationalize AI! | AI & SOCIETY (springer.com)

Eaves, D., Mazzucato, M., & Vasconcellos, B. (2024). Digital public infrastructure and public value: What is 'public' about DPI?.

Meelen, T., & Sluijs, J. P. (2024). Government-owned Enterprises and Sustainability: Review and Research Agenda. *Available at SSRN 4933651*.

In the project, your tasks can involve:

- Conducting qualitative research interviews
- Developing an inventory of global empirical examples
- Reviewing and synthesizing scientific literature
- Developing scenarios
- Organizing a workshop with European stakeholders

Job requirements

- A willingness to undertake exploratory research
- An independent and critical mindset
- Openness for interdisciplinary research
- Basic qualitative and quantitative data analysis skills