LIBERAL ARTS

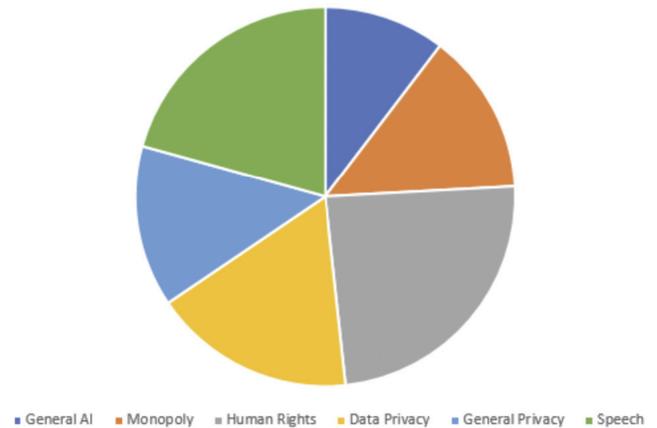## Global Governance Agenda-Setting on Big Tech

Student researcher: *Amanda Shie, Senior*

Technology has rapidly developed over the last twenty years, bringing both benefits and challenges. The virtual landscapes, including social media and the firms that create and operate them, remain largely unregulated and without a consolidated global governance response. Big Tech, or the most dominant technology companies such as Facebook, Apple, and Google, have been able to take advantage of the lack of regulation to expand their user base and economic scope transnationally.

The aims of this project are to identify how global governance institutions—both formal (United Nations, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Bank) and informal (G7, G8, G20)—have responded to the evolving challenges of Big Tech power relating to privacy, speech, and monopoly. This research project will catalog and evaluate formal and informal responses to Big Tech with a goal to characterize the global governance agenda-setting on Big Tech and identify what substantive focuses of Big Tech power elicit the greatest responses on an international scale.

To understand the global governance agenda-setting on Big Tech reform, data will be compiled utilizing the newsrooms of global governance institutions using search terms related to technology companies. Responses relating to Big Tech will be coded into substantive focuses such as human rights, data privacy, monopoly, speech, general privacy, and general artificial intelligence (AI). Responses include formal (official documents, task forces, and resolutions) and informal (statements, proposals, and expert discussions) material.

Substantive Focus of Global Governance Institutional Responses to Big Tech, 2003-2021

■ General AI ■ Monopoly ■ Human Rights ■ Data Privacy ■ General Privacy ■ Speech

Percentage of responses relating to substantive focuses on Big Tech: human rights (24%), speech (21%), data privacy (17%), monopoly (14%), general privacy (14%), and general AI (10%).

Only about 20% of the cataloged institutional responses are formal, meaning they were generated from an official working group, committee, or resolution, whereas the vast majority of responses were informal statements and expert discussions. In terms of substantive focus, this researcher found that global governance institutions paid the most attention to human rights (24%), followed by speech (21%), data privacy (17%), monopoly (14%), general privacy (14%), and general AI (10%).

Research advisor Swati Srivastava writes: "This research helps us track the global response to growing Big Tech power and influence. While global institutions are still in the early stages of crafting a coherent set of guidelines, it is important to set baselines now to measure progress down the line."