

Abstract

Social media platforms have become deeply entrenched in contemporary social reality. For this, there has been a surge in scholarship investigating the numerous harms and risks such technoscientific artifacts pose to society. To tackle the risks, the European Union has put forward a set of policy initiatives and legislative proposals that ought to provide a comprehensive response to the increasingly fragile security environment. Despite recent efforts to take on this emerging security threat, there has been very little theoretical and empirical scholarship regarding the intersection between security, technology and law. One of the most intriguing, yet heavily understudied, areas of this intersection is the conceptual understanding of social media platforms. Based on recent insights from security, media and legal scholars, this thesis seeks to introduce a new agenda to the discipline of security studies by applying a novel concept, it being public utility, on social media platforms and thus producing crucial empirical evidence.

Utilizing the multiple streams framework, the thesis performs a qualitative content analysis on the EU stakeholders' contributions to the European Commission consultation on the Digital Services Act package. The analysis of the selected texts reveals a significant overlap between the theoretical conceptualization and the problem frames used by the stakeholders. For this, the thesis concludes that the platforms may be treated as public utility which allows for the introduction of much more stringent security provisions and opens an entirely new research agenda for security studies.