

# More than Mere Dead-Weight: How Regulators Initially Respond to Disruptive Technological Innovation in Advanced Industrial Democracies

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**Abstract:** Many note the speed of technological change and lament the inability of social institutions to keep up. Regulatory failures are loud and publicized while those which are something other than failure are far quieter. Since we need to understand the range of regulatory responses, not just failure, this study asks how regulators respond to disruptive technological innovation with a focus on how they become involved as rulemaker or stakeholder. It compares two paradigms of regulatory response along four axes: relationship, effect, access, and outcomes. The neoliberal model sees regulators as external rulemakers who are impediments to innovation because they have lower access to information than firms which leads to a single best regulatory arrangement outcome. By contrast, generalized regulatory politics models see regulators as internal stakeholders who may be an impediment or beneficial constrainer of innovation because they can have lower or higher access to information than firms leading to a range of optimal regulatory arrangements defined by the varying standards of stakeholders. These paradigms are applied to the cases of 3D printing and mobile payments in the USA and EU.

**Keywords:** Regulatory State, Governance, Disruptive Innovation, Emerging Technology, Regulation, Bureaucratic Politics, Adversarial Legalism, Science and Technology Studies, Advanced Industrial Societies, Varieties of Capitalism, Worlds of Welfare Capitalism

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