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Not all authors are affiliated with TPI. We do not necessarily agree with everything, or even anything, in these papers, but find them interesting.

TPI's Research Roundup is our semi-regular compilation of recent outside research of interest to tech policy nerds. If you've read a paper you think might be interesting to include in the next Roundup, feel free to send it to nlovin@techpolicyinstitute.org.

The Macroeconomic Impacts of Digitalization in Sub-Saharan Africa
Felix F. Simione and Yiruo Li

Their question: How does internet penetration in Sub-Saharan Africa affect GDP growth and economic development?

Their answer: They estimate that each percentage point increase in internet penetration increases real GDP growth by 0.37 percentage points. This study is unique because it uses the not-quite-natural experiment of the arrival of submarine cables to separately identify internet adoption.

Why does it matter? The results suggest that increased attention to internet adoption in SSA may contribute to further economic development.

Media Slant is Contagious
Philine Widmer, Sergio Galletta, Elliott Ash

Their question: Does change in local audience size of cable news affect other local media coverage?

Their answer: The authors find that the slant of local newspapers changes with the share of local audience that views Fox News relative to CNN/MSNBC.

Why does it matter? These results suggest that media coverage bias can change with popular demand for particular biases.

GDPR and the Lost Generation of Innovative Apps
Rebecca JanSSen, et al

Their question: How did GDPR affect mobile app development?

Their answer: GDPR caused about 1/3 of apps to leave the Google Play Store while new app entry decreased by about half.

Why does it matter? Platform regulation can have costs, and policymakers should take those into account when considering new rules.

The four-fifths rule is not disparate impact
Elizabeth Anne Watkins, Michael McKenna, Jiahao Chen

Their question: Do AI computer scientists misinterpret the four-fifths bias rule?

Their answer: The "four-fifths rule" holds that an AI is biased if the share of an unprivileged group that receives a positive outcome is less than 80% of the share of a privileged group that receives a positive outcome. The authors argue that the $\frac{4}{5}$ rule is too simplistic and misses important legal and contextual nuances, possibly resulting in biases that could otherwise be corrected.

Why does it matter? This paper shows how experts in different fields need to work together to derive workable "rules of thumb" for identifying bias.
