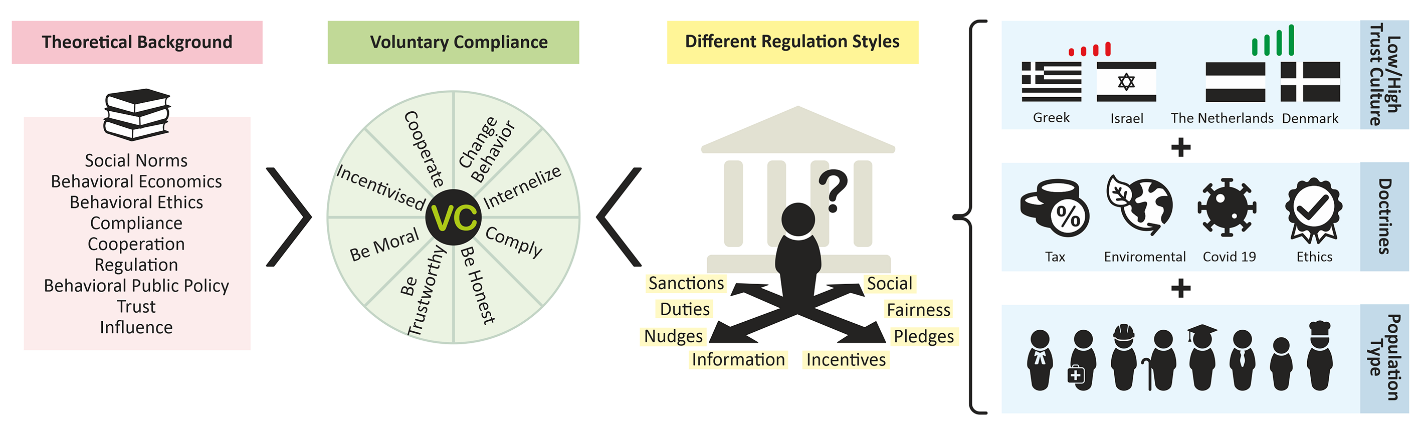
**Generating Voluntary Compliance Across Doctrines and Nations: Interlocking the Behavioral and Regulatory Aspects of Governments’ ability to trust the public’ Cooperation, Ethicality and Compliance**

**VCOMP**

**Cover Page:**

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* Duration of the Proposal (60 months, 5 years)

Enhancing voluntary compliance (VC) by the public has been a desirable form of governance due to its distinct advantages but the ability to use it depends on the extent that governments and regulators can trust the public without jeopardizing regulatory purposes and harming other social values. Understanding the antecedents of VC across doctrines and countries is important for both theoretical understanding of the underlying nature of the interaction between countries and their residents, and understanding the relative efficacy of the behaviorally based regulatory tools. We propose a new conceptual model and a methodology which will allow for a systematic comparison of their relative efficacy across different doctrines, nations. The project will be based on proposing, examining and developing of a multi-layer model which will account for national , organizational, situational and individual factors and will merge literatures such as behavioral ethics, behavioral public policy, social norms, compliance, trust and cooperation to understand how to advance VC. The project will explore empirically In 5 Work packages, if and to what extent VC and greater trustworthiness by the public could be achieved across countries (high trust & low trust), regulatory tools ( nudges, pledges, incentives, sanctions, morality) and doctrines (tax, environment, covid, ethics). Understanding VC will include not just effect sizes but also factors such as proportion of compliers, sustainability of compliance, impact on social norms and likelihood of positive externalities (e.g trust enhancement) following the enactment of the regulatory tool. Better insights into VC can help advance the descriptive and normative understanding of the nature of the interaction between countries and their residents especially in cases where the quality of voluntary cooperation is superior to enforced compliance or when the means, policy makers could employ to coerce cooperation are limited or too costly.



**Section a: Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal**

The cheapest, easiest, and most just is if the government can just tell people to do the right thing. But will people do it? how many of them? in what personal costs? and for how long? or maybe at the you always you need coercion, fines, or at least nudges? Recent Covid crisis demonstrated this dilemma in its purest form.

To date, our understanding of when and to what extent can the public be trusted in a given situation is weak both theoretically – since most of the relevant literatures (e.g. compliance, ethics, regulation, cooperation) fails to create a unified concept of voluntary compliance (VC), and empirically – since most studies focus on one type of behavior in one context on a given sub-population it fails to examine broader questions needed to under when is voluntary compliance feasible[[1]](#endnote-1). As a result, risk-averse policy makers[[2]](#endnote-2) resort to monitoring and coercive measures and signal lack of trust to the public, simply because there is not enough theoretical knowledge and empirical findings neither on the gains from VC nor the costs in areas such as harm to equality, communication costs, uncertainty and enhanced risk to the public as well as the benefits in terms of its effect on autonomy, resilience, quality of compliance and enhanced trust relationships[[3]](#endnote-3). For example, the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis led some countries to resort to sanctions and fear-based rhetoric to gain public cooperation given the first signs of certain level of non-compliance, with limited ability to understand whether taking harsher steps and fear-based rhetoric actually improved all aspects of compliance, not to mention the possible negative effect on long term intrinsic motivation[[4]](#endnote-4). The proposed project will try to synthesize and test the mechanisms which could identify the contexts in which more cooperative regulatory approaches might work better descriptively and desirable normatively.

1. **Objectives and Research Questions**

In this project we will unify the literature -- bring the concepts together, validate and differentiate the different compliance measures accounting also for cross doctrinal and cross-country aspects to gain the full meaning of when VC is possible and desired. We will also create a taxonomy in which the different dimensions of VC will be examined (e.g., whether VC is spontaneous or induced, how aware is the decision to voluntary comply and how coercion free is it)

Methodologically, this requires: integrative literature review which will focus on creating conceptualizations of competing literatures on the what does voluntary compliance mean (using meta-analysis) 2. A series of experimental tests on large scale representative samples which will allow an understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which different regulatory measures effect on variables related to VC (size of effect, duration of effect -- using panel studies), heterogeneity, quality (beyond compliance), willingness to pay (using incentive compatible experiments) and positive and negative social externalities) 3. Exploration of the variation in context and countries to explore hypotheses about importance of whether the country is high/low trust and whether the doctrine is such that the behavior in question is likely to be internalized. Following these stages, the project will develop in the normative and ingratiate final stage a responsive behavioral regulatory theory on the when, how and to what extent can different cooperative regulatory approaches across different nations, societies and regulatory contexts lead to cooperative behaviors by the public, when balancing all of the behavioral benefits and costs of voluntary compliance and ability of governments to trust the public.

Accordingly, the research questions which we will address are:

**RQ1:** What are the behavioral and institutional antecedents of the heterogeneity of compliance, quality of compliance, public reactions to cooperative vs. coercive regulatory approaches and how these reactions interact with VC related factors (e.g. perceived interpersonal trust, honesty, pro social behavior, willingness to cooperate, behavioral change and perceived duty to obey)

**RQ2:** What is the variation in the contribution of different types of cooperatives (e.g. nudges, incentives) and coercive (e.g sanctions, duties) based regulatory approaches to the different dimensions of VC by the public (proportion, intensity, duration/sustainability, internalization, externalities towards trust enhancing and reduction) across different regulatory contexts

**RQ3:** How societal and national factors (e.g. trust[[5]](#footnote-1), solidarity, legitimacy, honesty, rule of law) and different regulatory contexts (e.g. Covid, Tax, Environment, Ethics) **interact** with regard to the likelihood of VC under cooperative based vs. coercion based regulatory approaches.

**RQ4:** How can we decide in each regulatory context and country on what is the best regulatory approach to use, normatively and descriptively, to gain a sustainable behavioral change when accounting for the pros and cons of each regulatory approach from a broader behavioral perspective.

1. **Scientific Background and State of the Art**

**The Compliance Literature:** VC and its importance have been recognized across a number of dimensions.[[6]](#endnote-5) VC, especially if driven by intrinsic motivation,[[7]](#endnote-6) is usually considered preferable and more sustainable than coerced compliance when the government is afraid to trust the likelihood that the public will cooperate, which tends to be short-term and sensitive to the existence of sanctions.[[8]](#endnote-7) In addition, reliance on VC is more likely to increase trust among regulatees,[[9]](#endnote-8) entail lower enforcement costs,[[10]](#endnote-9) and is likely to result in a higher quality of cooperation.[[11]](#endnote-10) However, the ability to compare whether we get overall “better compliance” among different segments of the population when trying to get VC is still an open question.

**The regulation literature** has recently begun studying the potential of softer trust based approaches to elicit voluntary compliance as a way to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden and its economic and behavioral costs. Two especially relevant paradigms are responsive regulation,[[12]](#endnote-11) a widely discussed paradigm that advances a more flexible and customized approach whereby smarter, less coercive regulatory measures are targeted at those parts of the population for which coercive measures are not needed. Another emerging area is that of self-regulation,[[13]](#endnote-12) which focuses on transferring responsibility for the creation of standards and their enforcement to the regulated parties or businesses.

**The behavioral public policy literature** has also been very instrumental in contributing increased variety of regulatory tools available to policy makers (e.g., nudges, framing, pledges[[14]](#endnote-13), etc.). While the greater number of tools available render the instrument choice dilemma more difficult, they do offer concrete, quantitative means to measure and compare their efficacy.[[15]](#endnote-14) The nudge approach, based on the influential work of Thaler and Sunstein,[[16]](#endnote-15) represents an important addition to the regulatory choice dilemma, leading numerous scholars to examine when nudges can be relied upon to replace more mandatory rules.[[17]](#endnote-16) While nudges being seen as maintaining people’s choice the fact that they are employed with limited awareness might view them as a more sophisticated form of coercion[[18]](#endnote-17). **Behavioral ethics** is another relatively new field exploring peoples’ ethical decision-making processes.[[19]](#endnote-18) My recent book,[[20]](#endnote-19) *The Law of Good People*, examined the challenges faced by governments that need to regulate people who don’t view themselves as needing regulation in view of their ethical and legal perception, or, more accurately, misperception of their own behavior. However, connection between honesty and compliance to rules which are not solely related to honesty was not studied it is not clear whether proportion of honest people are different from cooperators or compliers?[[21]](#endnote-20) Are honest people more likely to care for the environment or for the greater good? Accounting for this literature is also important in order to understand the proportion of “good” people in a given population who might not exploit greater trust by authorities. **The Trust literature:** Institutions, Interpersonal and Social Capital. The fourth body of literature involves the growing recognition of the importance of trust and legitimacy in achieving VC. Numerous studies across almost all the social sciences have sought to understand what builds trust[[22]](#endnote-21) and how trust contributes to the creation of a just and functioning society.[[23]](#endnote-22) However, most of this literature focuses on the ways by which people can trust public and legal institutions,[[24]](#endnote-23) and overlooks the other way around – the regulatory mechanisms state institutions need in order to trust the public.[[25]](#endnote-24)**Social and Community Norms:** Social and organizational norms as governing the behavior of people with limited involvement of the state, either as a consequence of regulation (as in cases such as using children’s car seats, where VC was achieved by applying reason and science),[[26]](#endnote-25) or even without regulation, where the social and community norms emerged without any state involvement (such as in the case of allocation of fences costs among the farmers in Shasta County[[27]](#endnote-26)). However, it is impossible to generalize from the few well-known examples, such as that of people learning not to smoke in public places, or the changing norms with regard to, say, sexual harassment[[28]](#endnote-27) and apply them, without empirical investigation to other regulatory contexts.

1. **Originality and novelty**

**The literatures mentioned** above[[29]](#footnote-2), notwithstanding the literature on cooperation, pro social and morality, which are highly related to voluntary cooperation but they all suffer from the fact that is almost no discussion for their interaction with regulatory policy as well as with the ability to create a systematic shift in states’ regulatory policy, based on literatures which provide only partial contribution to the ability to actually treat VC as a viable alternative. It is not even clear whether compliance is considered voluntary only when people *want* to cooperate? Or is compliance voluntary also when people are not being coerced, but, rather, incentivized to act in a certain way directly through incentives, or indirectly, through community norms or reputational mechanisms? In addition, current research doesn’t differentiate between different types of intrinsic motivation, usually assume that all of them (trust, reciprocity morality, procedural fairness) function in a similar way. Finally, the literature on VC assumes its desirability but has very little research on VC effect to aspects such as the distribution of compliance, sustainability and quality of compliance and its negative externalities to society. This lack of understanding of the interaction between cultural, social, behavioral and institutional factors which predict public’ cooperation with more modern regulatory interventions which are built on trust enhancement, led to a situation where the data on the relative success/failure of regulatory interventions employed in one country could never be used in another context or country without new data collection since there is no empirically based conceptual framework which would allow for a meaningful comparison between the national and regulatory contexts. To better clarify the issue of compliance, it is critical to approach it both from a behavioral bottom-up approach, understanding the level of ethicality and willingness to cooperate with the law by the public as well as the contribution of regulators views towards to the public and regulatory style (monitoring, sanction, reasoning, etc.) which in itself has a huge effect on the trustworthiness and cooperative behavior of the public. This project will also focus not just on size of regulatory affect but also on factors which are more important for VC such as proportion of compliers[[30]](#endnote-28), sustainability of the effect over time, quality of compliance and effect on feeling of trust and trustworthiness but regulates. Finally, the project will not stop short in analyzing descriptively what regulatory approach work in what contexts but also engage in the last phase of the project in discussing from a normative perspective what type of regulatory tools are desirable based on the information on the pros and cons of each regulatory approach.

1. **Methods and Feasibility**

In order to address the research questions laid out above, we will combine competing literatures on cooperation, interpersonal trust, compliance and ethicality with a series of surveys, experiments, meta-analyses, interviews with regulators and econometric analyses and text mining to understand likelihood of sustainable cooperative behavior emerging in response to different types of regulatory interventions.

**County selection:** In order to obtain a more nuanced and generalizable understanding of voluntary compliance, that will enable us to develop a new innovative paradigm which will ensure broad global impact, the proposed research will focus four countries. Two high trust countries, Denmark and the Netherlands, and two low trust countries, Greece and Israel. Each country represents different cultural, economic and governmental approaches. Israel has relatively high rates of international tax evasion, as Greece had even higher rates. As is comes to Denmark, evasion rates were relatively very low, meanwhile the Netherlands had a high rate of international tax evasion[[31]](#endnote-29). While referring to pro social behavior, it was found that Denmark and the Netherlands had high rates accordingly, while Israel was around the average, and Greece was ranked at the low bottom of the chart with a very low score.[[32]](#endnote-30) Similarly, Denmark and the Netherlands have high rates of trust while Israel and Greece in particular have relatively really low rates of trust among the citizens.[[33]](#endnote-31) Referring to social cohesion indicates the same scores for the mentioned countries, while Denmark and the Netherlands are ranked with high rates of social cohesion within the country, Israel and Greece are at the top bottom.[[34]](#endnote-32) Interestingly, during the Coronavirus pandemic, stringency levels of the governments were distributed quite differently than what would have been predicted, based on other measures[[35]](#endnote-33). As for Environmental Regulatory Regime, Denmark and the Netherlands are relatively high whilst Israel and especially Greece is at the very low bottom of the chart rates.[[36]](#endnote-34) Furthermore, Since all four target countries come from Europe, to enhance our ability to examine how the different regulatory approaches affect the likelihood of VC gloabally in the last year of the project I will run experimental surveys from the three case studies in **Kenya[[37]](#footnote-3)** which will test the vignettes of most effective regulatory tools used in each one of WP on 3 a b c and examine its relevancy for non-European countries.

The Project will be performed by a team which consist of statisticians and law and behavioural science experts (4 Postdoc and 4 PhDs, statistician) which will be under the PIs guidance. There will be a post docs in each of the three countries (in addition to the one in Israel) that will be jointly supervised for a 3 years by me together country expert in each of the three target countries, Benjamin Van rooij from Amsterdam law school, Lucia Reisch from [Copenhagen Business School](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_org&hl=en&org=8531754682472345493) and Georgia Kaplanoglou from university of Athens. The concluding part of the project will focus on a normative taxonomy of advantages of disadvantages of VC, what regulatory tools are more desirable for each type of doctrine, each type of public segment and each type of culture.

**WP 1** The aim of WP1 is to create a new conceptual language and an integrated concept of voluntary compliance. In order to create a unified concept of VC we will: First, determine what factors which will combine concepts such as being honest[[38]](#endnote-35), compliant[[39]](#endnote-36), trustworthy[[40]](#endnote-37), moral[[41]](#endnote-38), normative[[42]](#endnote-39) and cooperative[[43]](#endnote-40) are more likely to predict people’s likelihood to cooperate with behaviorally driven regulatory approaches, using a meta-analysis approach[[44]](#footnote-4). This will be later combined in WP2 with the conceptual discussion in which we aim to understand the overall interrelations between the different measures of ethicality, the subject matter and the potential regulatory tools that could be employed. Second, we aim to understand which of the regulatory tools is more likely to create an effect that is either homogenous or at least as effective with regard to people who are low on the different measures of ethicality. We will do this by analyzing the distribution of people’s reaction to the different regulatory tools. This analysis will help understand both the factors we need to be sensitive about in regard to the likelihood of voluntary compliance as well as the relative efficacy of each regulatory approach.

**WP 2** At this stage we are intentionally not focusing on any specific doctrinal context but rather on comparing measured scales from the literatures integration of WP1. As our aim will be to provide validation for the relationship between the We will run attitudinal surveys on large samples of nationally representative samples. The results will help us to create a cross national empirical baseline for all of the studies of the projects. Additionally, we will perform experimental surveys[[45]](#footnote-5) which will focusing on identifying the causal effects of different behaviorally based regulatory design[[46]](#footnote-6) when the dependent variables measure participants reported likelihood of behaving in ethical, cooperative and complaint way in randomly assigned hypothetical vignettes. Another series of online experiments will test the cross-country effect of cooperative vs. punitive framed[[47]](#endnote-41) pledges on different type of ethical behavior and compliance.[[48]](#endnote-42) We will conclude this WP with incentive compatible experiments which will measure willingness to pay for various ethical and cooperative behavior under competing regulatory mechanisms. Finally, we will identify optimal regulatory approaches (such as nudges) that were proven as effective with regard to increasing ethical behavior in organizational contexts. The findings of WP 2 are expected to create a very strong baseline to many other regulatory and compliance related projects which will attempt to understand how each of the specific attributes of voluntary willingness of the public to cooperate is expected to be affected by different regulatory styles. It will allow also an understanding of the shift in distribution of cooperators and non-cooperators which in many contexts is far more important than just the size of the effect.

**Wp 3 a b c Three Case Studies aimed to expend our understanding of VC’s contextual aspects** To further the understanding of the meaning of voluntary compliance and how different regulatory approaches could affect, different segments of a given population, short term and long term behavioral changes and broader attitudes towards the state, the law and society, we will engage in additional three large scale cross national studies. As will be explained in more details in each of the workplans, each one of them allows for additional important dimensions. **Covid**, focus on array of behaviors which are not typical behaviors, where **cooperative behavior** is necessary for the success of Covid regulation. **Tax** law is the ultimate context in which people’s **honesty** is mostly aligned with **pure compliance**, it is an area in which there are less room for concepts such as trust in science or goals but mostly around a social dilemma domain. Finally, the **environmental** workplan will bring to the table an important component of **behavioral change** which is far beyond classical compliance (e.g. buying an electric car or not flying) and will include following behavioral changes in which coercive approaches are limited[[49]](#endnote-43).

**WP3a Covid,** we will focus on the existing literature on covid studies on various regulatory success and failure studies in different countries. We will perform a meta-analysis on the existing studies, focusing on cooperation across covid related behaviors. Our intention is to examine to what extent taking an approach which was more trusting led to higher compliance over the different waves of Covid.[[50]](#endnote-44) Additionally, we will use[[51]](#footnote-7) an analysis of government rhetoric (e.g. to identify punitive sentiment) across different countries and their measured impact on behavior regarding Covid regulations.[[52]](#endnote-45) On the next task we will concentrate on evaluating the effect of incentives in covid context. We will focus on the existing evidence on the usage of incentives in encouraging people to get tested and to get vaccination. In the last task related to Covid we will conduct of large-scale experimental surveys and compare attitudes towards some of the leading behavioural based regulatory interventions. In all three case studies we will also adopt a panel study approach where we will return to participants every six months for a period of two years will allow us to understand also the ability of the different regulatory tools to change ethical preferences over time as well as well as to affect behavior in other contexts

**WP3b Tax,** What can be learned from the various studies focusing on ethical nudges, such as signing at the beginning of tax forms,[[53]](#endnote-46) as well as on various pledges which might reduce the need of states to monitor the ethicality of the people?[[54]](#endnote-47) In many countries, various initiatives to get public cooperation were suggested with some clear advantages to these approaches over coercive power based tax collection[[55]](#endnote-48). Much research done in the area of tax compliance by tax compliance scholars such as Krichler[[56]](#endnote-49) and Wenzel[[57]](#endnote-50) have stated two competing forces of power of authorities vs. trust in authorities. We will start with a review of behaviourally based tax compliance policies around the globe, then we will engaging in identifying, what factors were proved to be successful moderators of increased tax compliance, we then move to Panel data analysis on longer term impact of regulatory styles on tax attitudes, we will also engage in a series of online incentive compatible tax experiments across 4 countries including surveys.

**WP3c Environmental**: is considered one of the most advanced regulatory areas where different types of innovative regulatory choices have been extensively examined and studied empirically [[58]](#endnote-51) A number of non-coercive approaches have been applied in the environmental field, with softer types of regulatory measures being tested and compared[[59]](#endnote-52) Studying the data gathered in this field, this phase will try identify and clarify what approaches have worked in this field, what were the best practices with regard to both corporate environmental compliance,[[60]](#endnote-53) and recycling norms.[[61]](#endnote-54) . The tasks are related to comparing public perception of existing regulatory intervention effects on peoples’ environmental behavior; Studying barriers to environmental cooperation (using experimental surveys); Studying public perception of the legitimacy hypothetical regulatory approaches and follow-up feeling of trustworthiness. Interviews with regulators (repeated for both tax and environmental WP); local vs. global harm as a trigger to voluntary compliance (using experimental surveys)

**Normative Contribution**: We will also ask if the normative legal theory is the desired relationship between states and their citizens. At first glance, any democratic states should aspire to convince its citizens why the state should be obeyed voluntarily, hence any legal instrument that aims to maximize voluntary behavior will be preferred, from a normative perspective we might need to evaluate critically, what are the costs of getting the public to cooperate voluntarily. Our empirical findings will help to clarify the following points: The focus on heterogeneity and distributive effects of law demonstrates for example that less educated and less privileged portion of the population might be more prone to the changing their preferences following an influencing campaign. Distributive effects might suggest for example a situation where less privileged members of a given government might be less likely to protect themselves in situations where self-regulation and limited monitoring by regulators might be preferred. Finally, another normative effect which is related to distributive effect which we will examine is related to the long term effects of such interventions of how people might feel that they trust their government and will follow these interventions[[62]](#endnote-55).

Here, we will also create a taxonomy of the different legal doctrines based on the need for proportion of cooperators, the sustainability of their compliance and its quality. Different regulatory contexts might have a different needs for cooperation from the public and in this strand we will integrate the findings to answer some of the preliminary questions in that regard. For example, within covid related behaviors, we might want to differentiate between mask wearing where quality and proportion is important to vaccination effort where proportion is very important but quality is less important. Another important normative discussion on regulation and VC is related to doctrine of proportionality[[63]](#endnote-56). According to this leading constitutional approach, states are allowed to use the least coercive measure needed for changing the behaviors of the public. If we will see that least coercive measures might have broader and more durable effect on public behavior than more coercive measures, the legitimacy of using sanctions will be limited. At the same time given the costs of behavioral approaches, it is not necessarily the case that command-and-control approaches are the greater evil we are dealing with. Based on findings also from wp 3 we will further discuss from a normative perspective, what are the proportion of cooperators we need to get in each doctrine and what regulatory tools we will need in order to get that level of cooperation. For example, in the context of wearing masks or getting the vaccine, getting a majority might be enough. However, in quarantine, few non cooperators might cause the pandemic to spread. Similarly, when focusing on changing the intensity of preference of people, it might be the case that in vaccine, we only need one type of behavior so we don’t want to people to do it too eagerly. However, when we focus on mask wearing, we do want the public to believe in it because we need them to do it even in areas that we cannot control (such as indoors gatherings). In the normative discussion we will also take into account questions that this project could answer such as to what extent do we want to use cross regulatory perspective? To what extent do we want to take into account people’s past behavior in general and in other contexts. What are the limits of allowing communities to use their own social governance power to change their behavior of people (e.g. in the environmental context). What did we learn about the sustainability of different types of intrinsic motivation which we would like not to crowd out? What regulatory instruments are less likely to vary based on national context? And are hence safer to implement from experience gathered in other nations. how data accumulated on individual cooperation across different regulatory domain, will affect the usage of algorithmic regulatory practices[[64]](#endnote-57)

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