Disruption is the catchword of the decade. More and more books are written on how to disrupt and how to survive disruption, with cautionary tales of collapsing corporate empires in the face of disruptive innovations. Yet disruption is by no means a new phenomenon: it existed long before the 21st century, before Christensen coined the term “disruptive innovation” and even before Schumpeter’s “gales of Creative Destruction.” The invention of writing, the discovery of penicillin, the telephone, low-cost airlines and the Internet all disrupted societies and markets in once-unthinkable ways. Law itself can be viewed as an important form of disruption. The 21st century, in turn, has seen the rise of the Internet of Things, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, cryptocurrencies and many other disruptive forces that have been both hailed and criticized by the public. So are we entering an “Age of Disruption”? Might disruption and the resulting disorder be the necessary creative forces and the catalysts for a new system to emerge? Can disruption pave the way for a profound societal and global renewal? What should be the role of law in this process?

With the past, the present and the future of disruption in mind, we are inviting you to participate in a discussion on law as a response to external disruption, on law itself as a driver of disruption and on internal disruptions within the law. We are looking to cover questions such as: how successful different legal systems, disciplines and professions have been in keeping up with disruption, how law itself has disrupted individual lives and societies, what mechanisms within the law allow it to internalize disruption, what drastic shifts occur in legal thinking in response to societal changes and any other issues that one can imagine in the broader realm of law and disruption.

Contributions may view disruption as either endogenous or exogenous to law. As there is no agreed upon definition of disruption, contributors are encouraged to explore the concept and to critically assess its heuristic value as well as its theoretical and practical implications in their research areas.

We propose to reflect on the role of law in the following processes of disruption, although contributors are not limited to these examples:

- Technological disruption
- Social disruption (e.g. inequality and migration)
- Ecological disruption (e.g. climate change, resource scarcity)
- Financial disruption (e.g. disconnect between financial and real economy)
- Disruption and global governance
Understanding that all these forms of disruption are in many ways interconnected, we also welcome a more profound conversation on the fundamental pillars of modernity and rethinking of the modern legal structures.

We invite abstract paper proposals from all stakeholders, especially graduate students, academics, lawyers, institutional actors, actors from the tech world including startups, NGOs, consumers, and policy-makers which relate to the theme of law & disruption and disruption & law. We welcome all perspectives, be they national, supranational, global, comparative, from all areas of law and its interactions with other disciplines, such as natural sciences, sociology, or anthropology.

Submission Instructions

To submit an individual paper, potential participants must e-mail a Microsoft Word or PDF attachment containing an abstract of no more than 750 words long with a CV no later than April 15, 2018, to the following address: gradconf.law@sciencespo.fr. Submission can be made in English or in French. Published papers do not qualify, but papers that have been accepted for publication at the time of the Conference can be submitted. Submissions can be individual or co-authored.

Notification

Authors whose abstracts have been accepted will be notified by April 20, 2018. The presenting authors are required to submit a full paper or a presentation (a more developed text or a Power Point presentation including the main speaking points) by June 10, 2018. The Selection Committee will organize the selected papers into different discussion groups based on relevance and subject area. Concurrent discussions, led by moderators, will take place throughout the day at Sciences Po Paris. The Conference Program will be communicated after the selection process.

Publication

This year, the most innovative paper(s) submitted for the Conference will be published in La Revue des Juristes de Sciences Po (LexisNexis). Participants who submit an abstract within the submission deadline and whose abstracts are selected may then submit their final paper (not a presentation) by May 15, 2018 to gradconf.law@sciencespo.fr in order to be considered for publication. If you wish to be considered for publication, please indicate so in your e-mail message when submitting your paper.

Cost and Registration

There is no cost of registration. Science Po Law School will provide refreshments and lunch during the Conference. Attendees are in charge of their own travel expenses and accommodation and should seek funding from their home institution or other bodies. A limited number of small travel stipends may be awarded to those who demonstrate financial need. If you wish to apply for a travel stipend, please clearly indicate the reasons in your abstract submission.

If you have any queries, feel free to reach us at gradconf.law@sciencespo.fr