Internet Governance:

Toward A National Collaborative Internet Development

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The aim of this research

○ An important gap is that the social origins of Internet governance (IG) are too often left implicit and under-theorised. The famous 'so what' question of IG remains unaddressed or is assumed by most authors. Beyond a small band of Internet community, why should anyone care?

○ The literature on governing the Internet suffers from gaps such as technocratic conceptions of Internet governance; insufficient attention to governance dynamics within countries; and limited appreciation for the micro-level social roots of governance.

Why have Internet governance researchers failed to acknowledge the importance of governance at national level and focus their researches elsewhere at a global level and adapt their approaches accordingly?

○ For empirical work, studying a centralized institution is a lot more convenient than having to identify and study a number of disjointed, messy and non distributed processes that together produce governance

○ The interactions of people and Internet stakeholders at IGF meetings are much easier to observe than the interactions among hundreds of Internet stakeholders in their daily challenges defending their own interests.

Theories applied on Internet Governance

○ The governance of the Internet provides one of the most important arenas in which theories from different disciplines can be applied and tested.

○ The Internet governance includes issues such as:
- ✓ The changing role of the state and the private sector
- ✓ The relationships between technology, regulation & policy and governance
- ✓ The political, technical, economic and cultural integration at the Internet Governance Forum.

Internet governance, field definition and disciplines

○ Internet governance (IG) research is based on a broad view of the literatures that is relevant to the problem

○ Example: Building upon a recent review of the field by Milton Mueller (2010), the scholarly literature on IG can be fitted into four distinct fields of studies, with its own conferences, associated journals and its own commonly used field designator:
  ○ 1) Internet governance
  ○ 2) Telecommunications policy
  ○ 3) Information security economics
  ○ 4) Cyber law

Searching for a Multistakeholder Internet Governance Model

○ Efforts to study and practice Internet governance start from the premise that the Internet should be governed by an innovative, unusual 'multistakeholder' model involving shared governance by private industry, governments, Academics, Technical Community and civil society.

○ This model is well understood by the Internet community but not by many governments. The complexity is that Internet governance is not a monolithic enterprise but rather involves governments, private sector, civil society, academic and international bodies at different levels that keep the Internet operational (, ICANN, RIRs, ...)
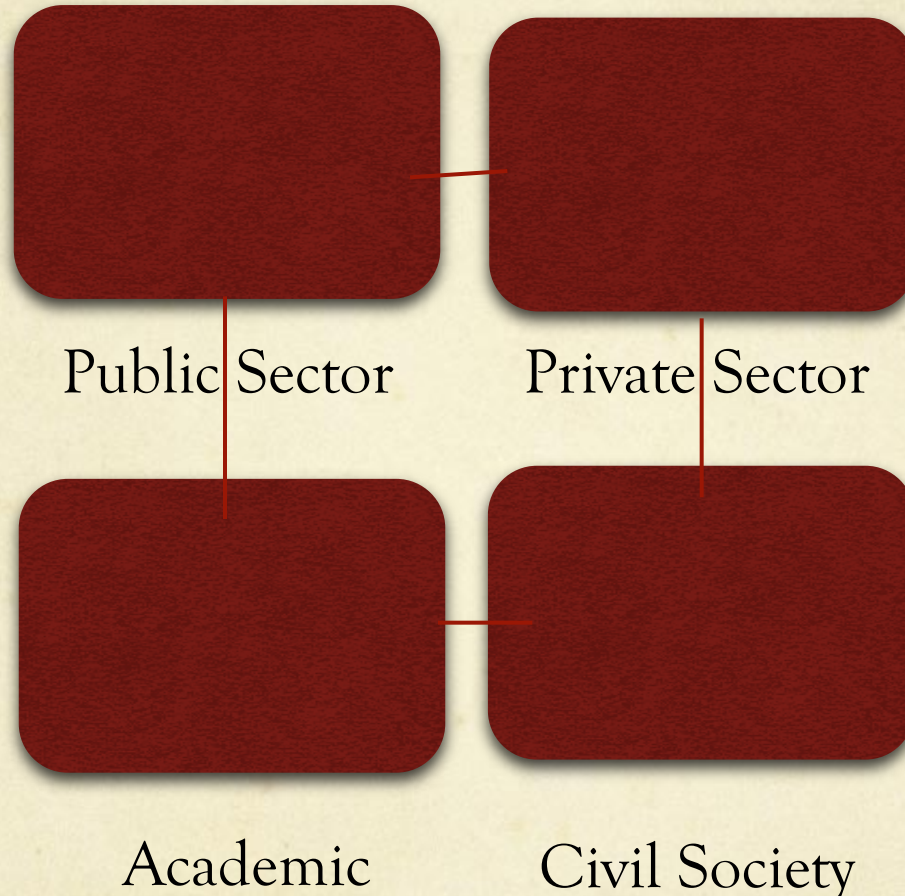
Multistakeholderism

○ There are many possible types of multistakeholder governance, produced by variation on at least two dimensions:

○ The types of actors involved: In order to qualify as multistakeholder governance, we argue that at least two classes of actors must be involved

○ The nature of authority relations between actors: An essential element of governance is defining the rights and responsibilities of various classes of stakeholders to participate effectively in and influence the rapidly evolving governance systems.

Where does the Internet Governance come from?

○ Internet governance comes from a social formation, which consists of interactions among elites in four sectors of the economy:

○ Government

○ Private Sector

○ Academic and Research

○ Civil Society

The Social Formation (SF)

Public Sector
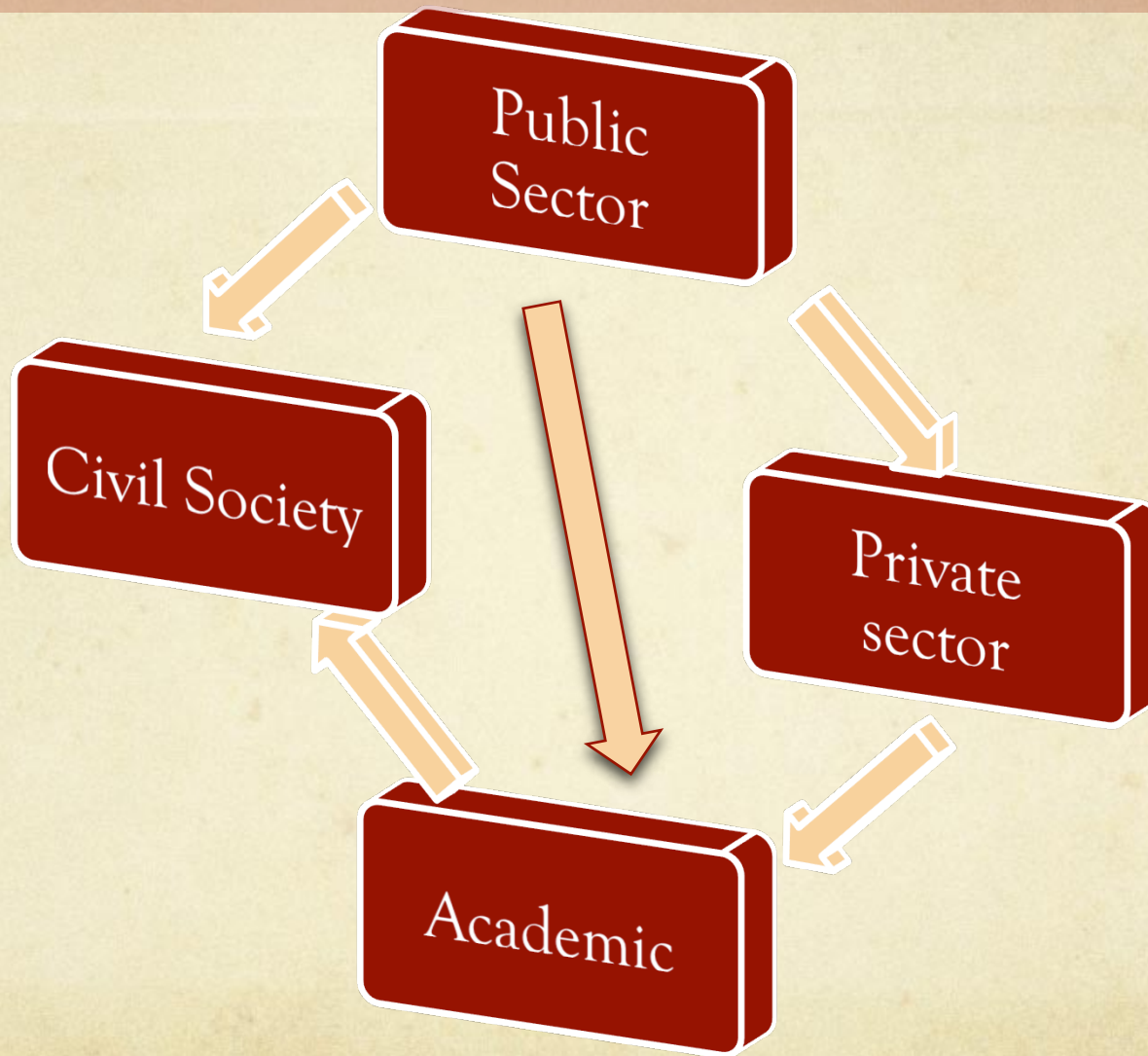
Private Sector

Academic

Civil Society

The rules, regulations and norms to govern the Internet emerged out of these negotiated interactions.
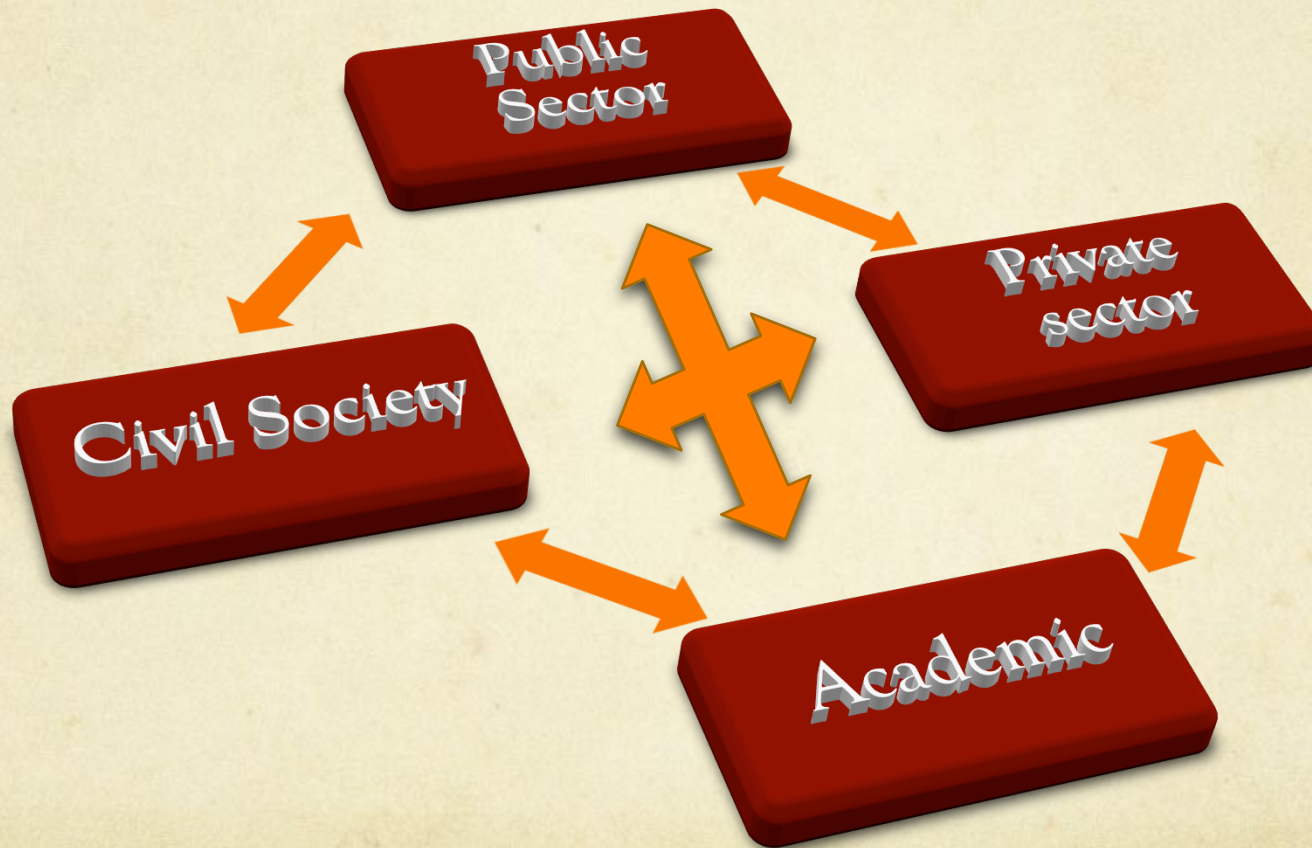
The IG Theory

○ One of the hypotheses of the IG theory predicts causal relationships between the architecture of this "social formation" (SF) on the one hand, and the performance of the ICT sector (including the Internet) on the other.

○ More specifically, we can hypothesise that the more robust the architecture of the "SF", the better the performance of the ICT sector as a whole.

Non-Robust Weak Architecture

Robust Strong Architecture

What and Why?

By defining the social origins of IG in the context of the Social Formation, by exploring the micro-foundations of governance and by discussing Internet Governance (IG) at the national level, I hope that this research will be able to provide some answers to the 'what', the 'why' and the 'so what' of Internet Governance.

Thank you

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