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# Internet Governance in Political Science: A benign neglect?

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# Internet Governance in Political Science: A benign neglect?

Yves Schemeil, Salerno, 12 October  
2017

# Summary

1. Internet governance as an issue in political science
2. Governance of the “root” or the “network”
3. Towards an interdisciplinary research on Internet governance

Part 1

# **INTERNET GOVERNANCE AS AN ISSUE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

# Internet as a source of new objects in PS

Cyber war

Political campaigns

Norm dissemination

New diplomacy

# Governance as an old concept in PS

Governance means: one step below  
Government

No central authority, little hierarchy

Central and local, public and private  
stakeholderism

# Benign neglect from PS

Little interest for Internet governance

Too technical? Or ethical ?

Tool, rather than goal?

Lack of concern for neighboring disciplines

Communication studies

International studies

Organization theory

Part 2

# GOVERNANCE OF “THE ROOT” OR “THE NETWORK”.

# Political sociology

Sticks to the sociology of influence

Misses the social network turn

# International Studies

Discard the autonomy of classical IOs

Stick to weak concepts such as:

- international regimes

- Regime complexes

- “Governance”

New IOs are more challenging

- Meta organizations

- Meta networks

# International Studies

Regime complexes or institutional complexes:

“an array of partially **overlapping** and **non-hierarchical** institutions governing a particular issue area” (Raustila & Victor)

Or: **across several issue areas**  
(Schemeil)

**Linkages, density**; “messiness” (Marzouki)

# Move one step forward

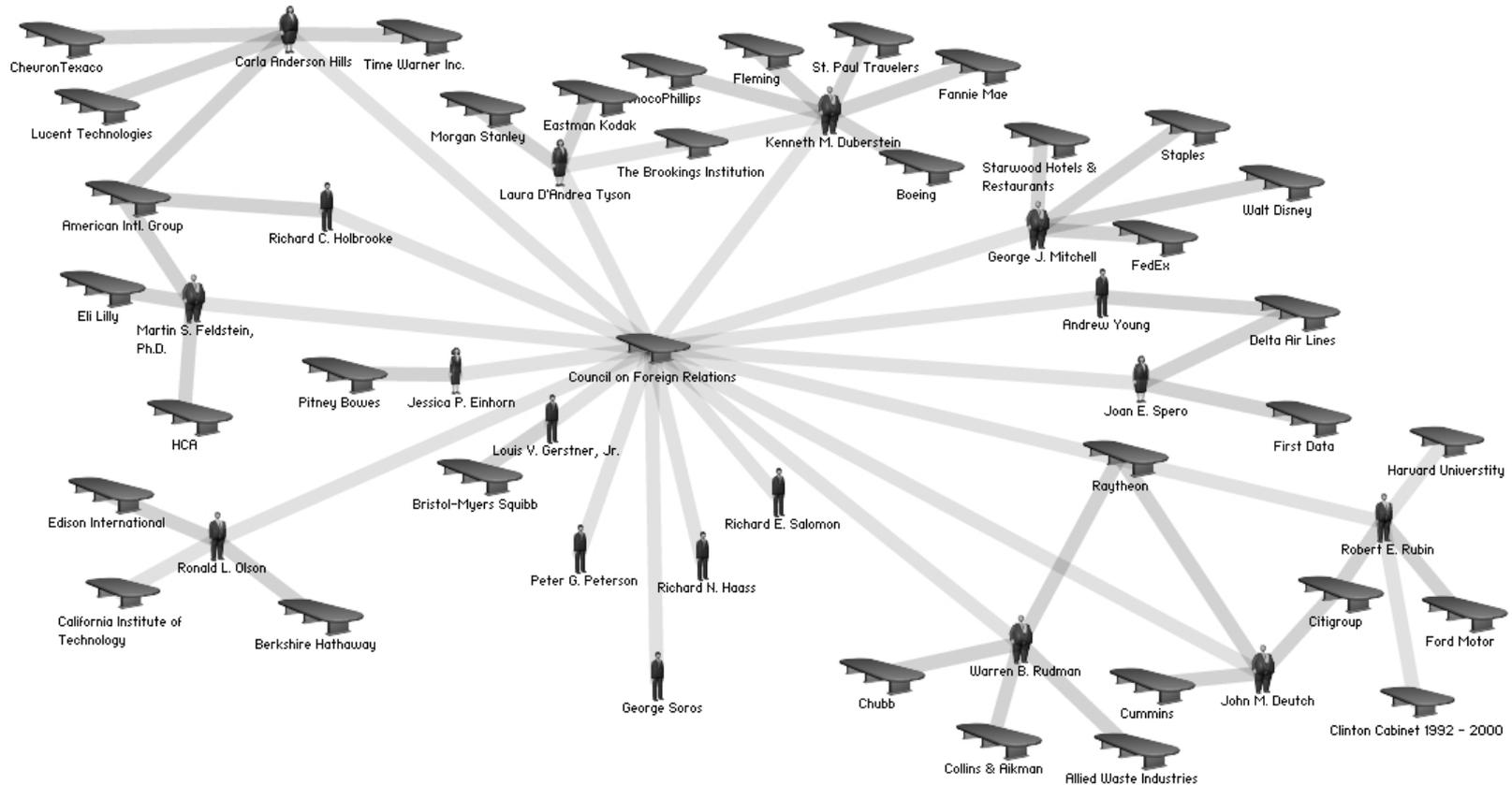
Abandon classical and critical sociology

Get rid of realist accounts of IR

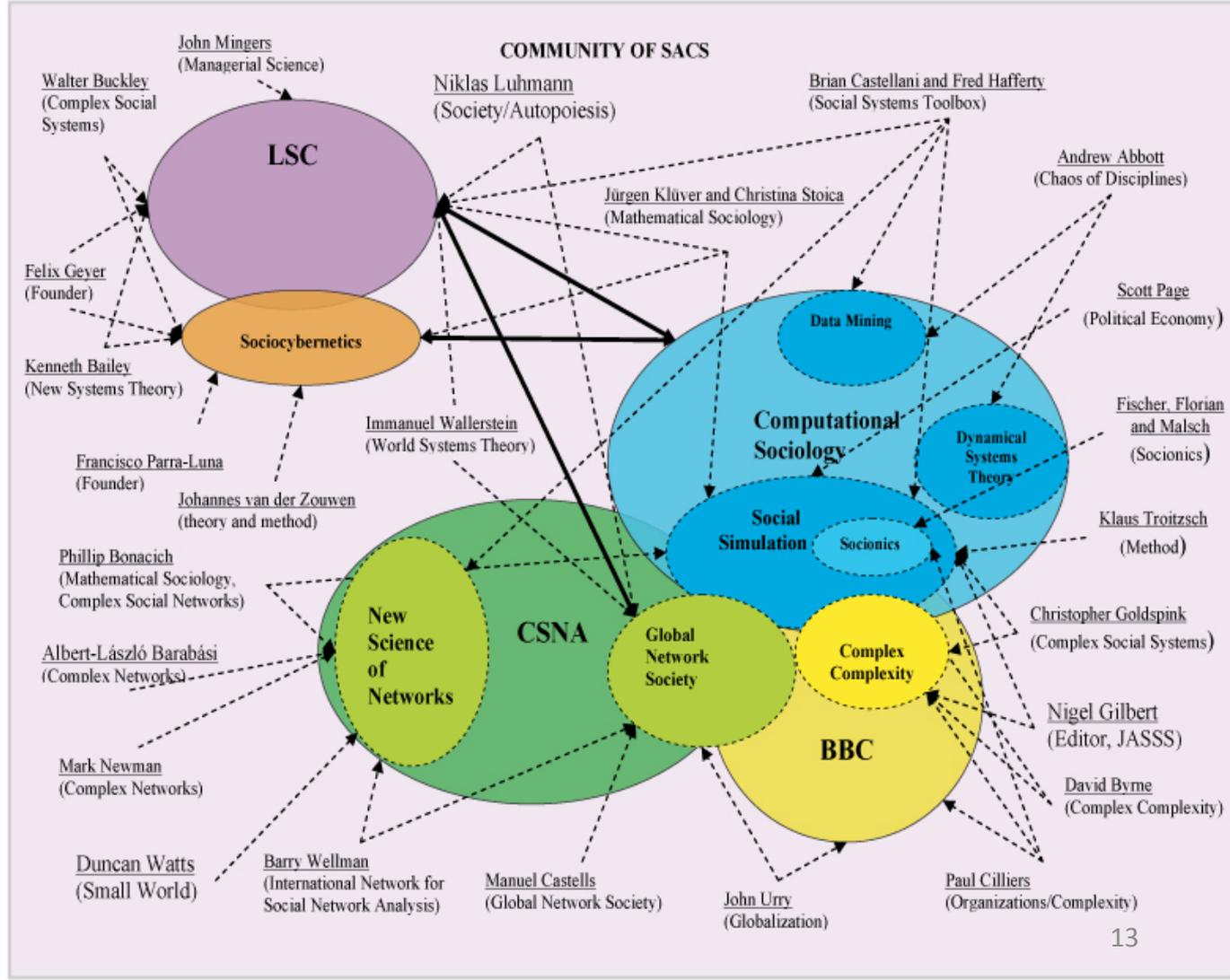
Complexifies theories of the social networks

Refine organizational theory uses of networks

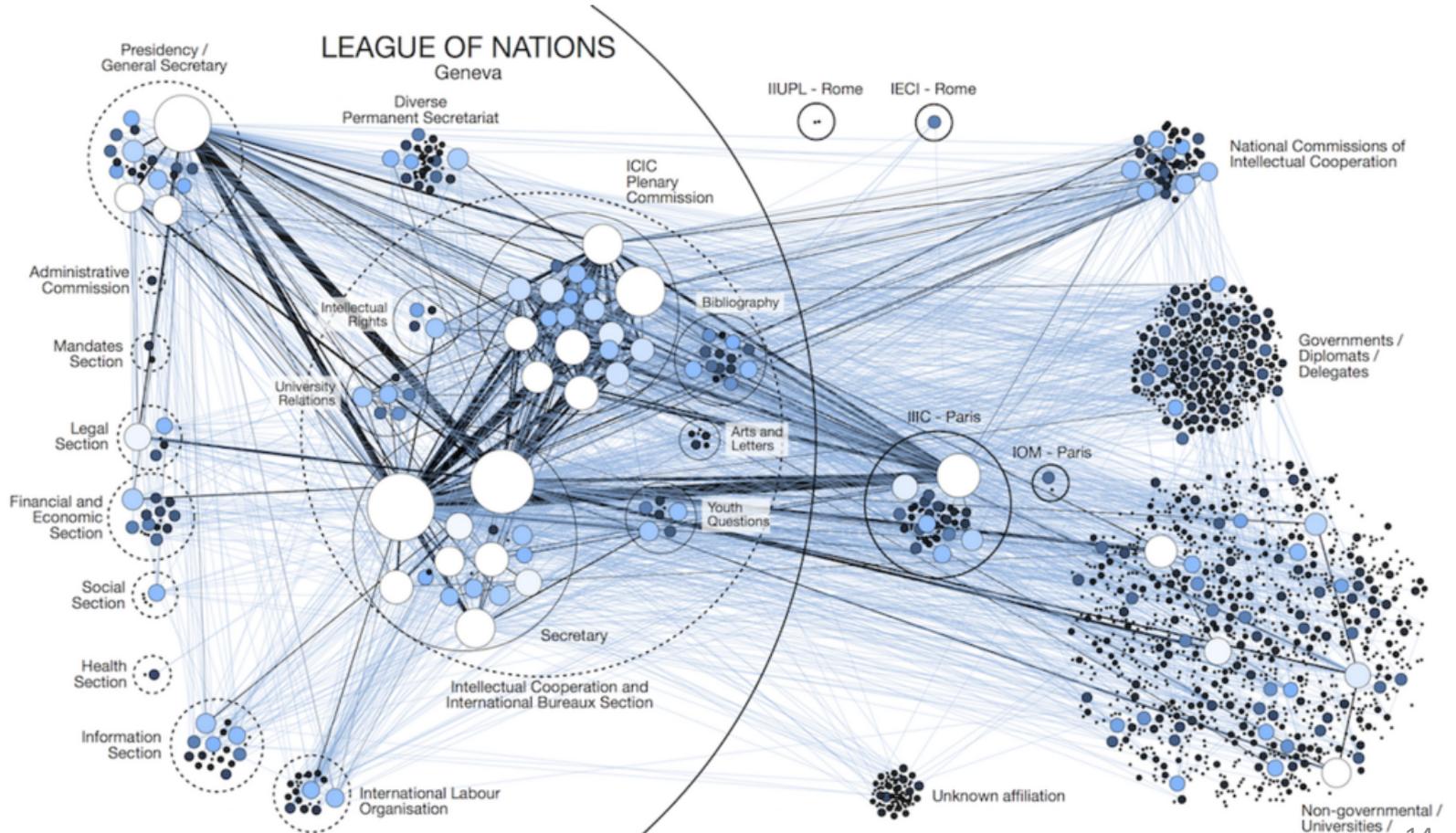
# Classical Sociology: Networks of influence



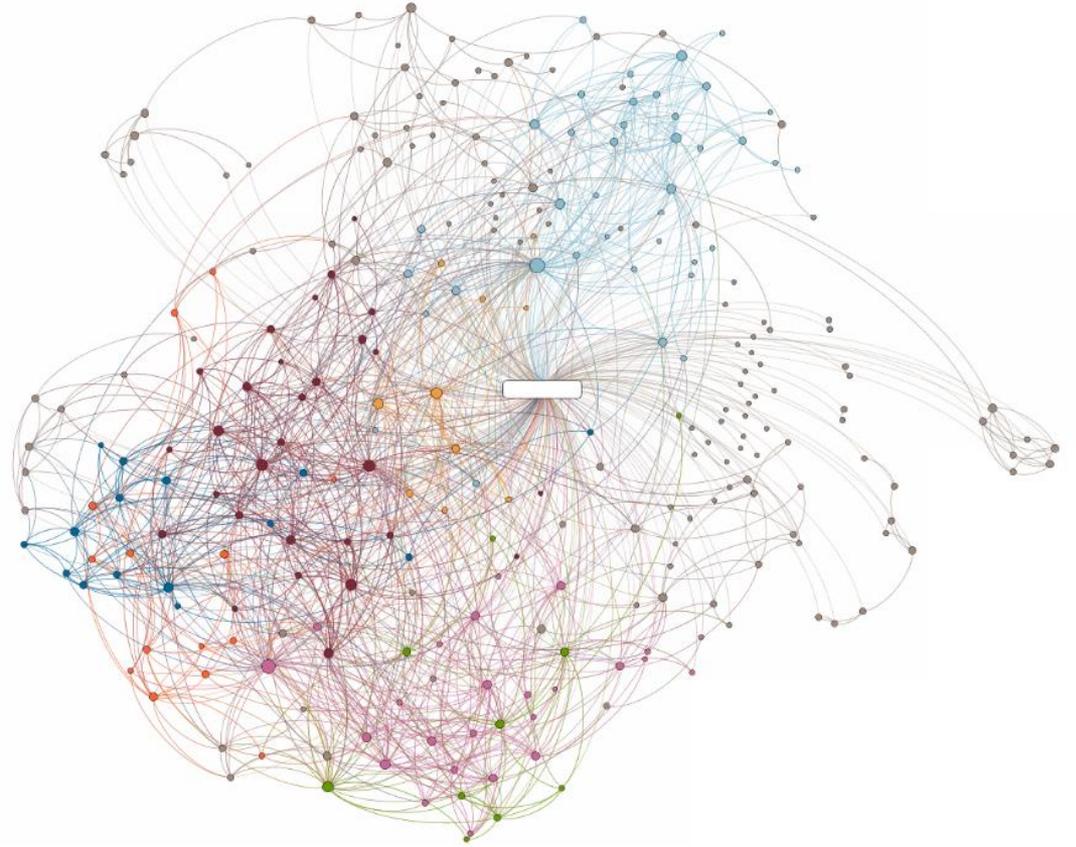
# Complex sociology



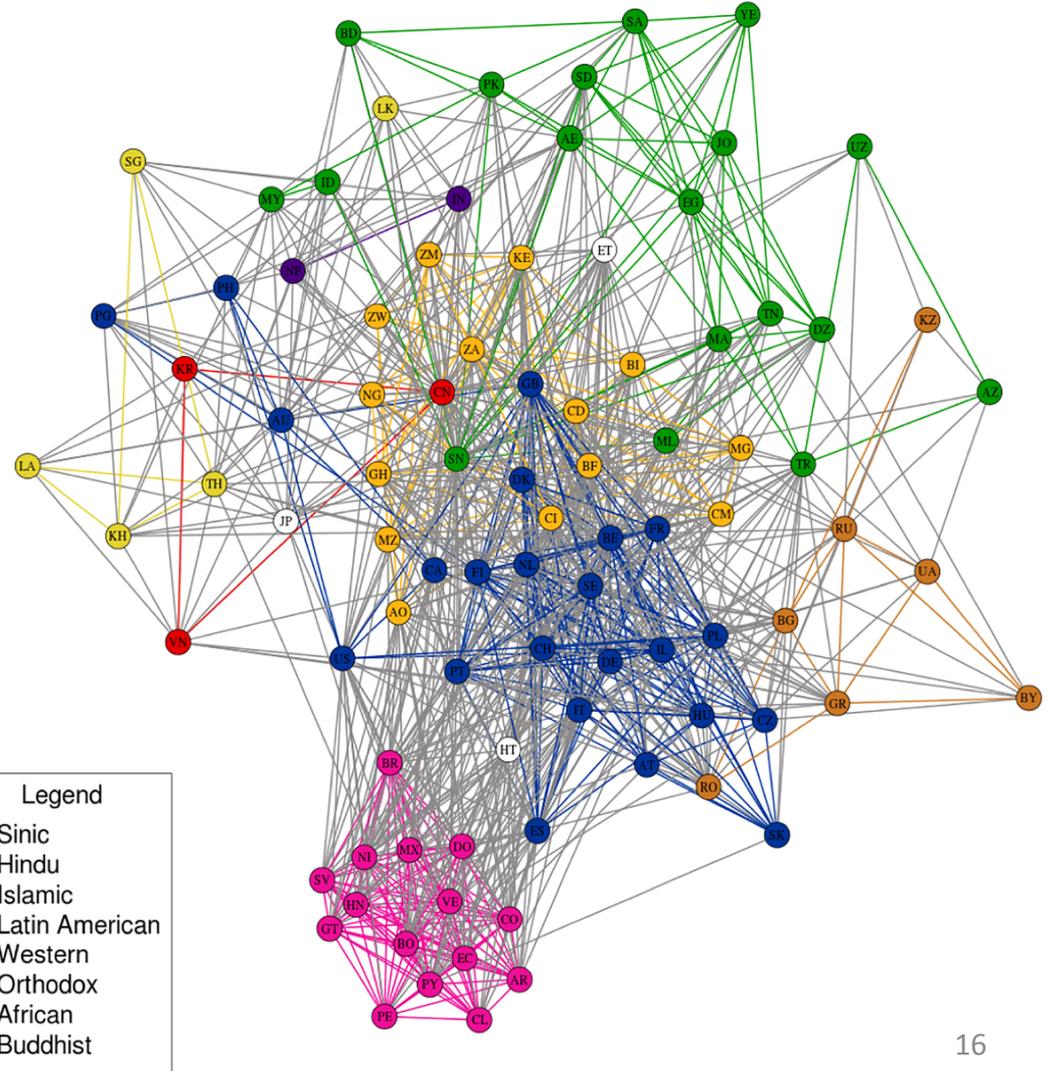
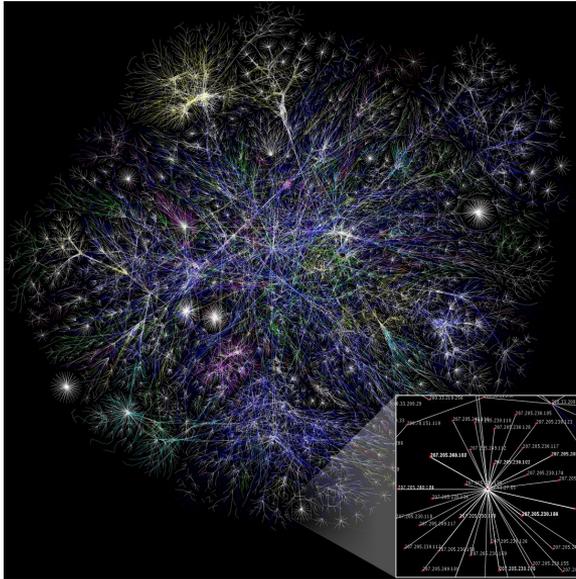
# Networks in International studies



# Networks in Communication studies



# Networks in Internet studies



Part 3

# **TOWARDS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE**

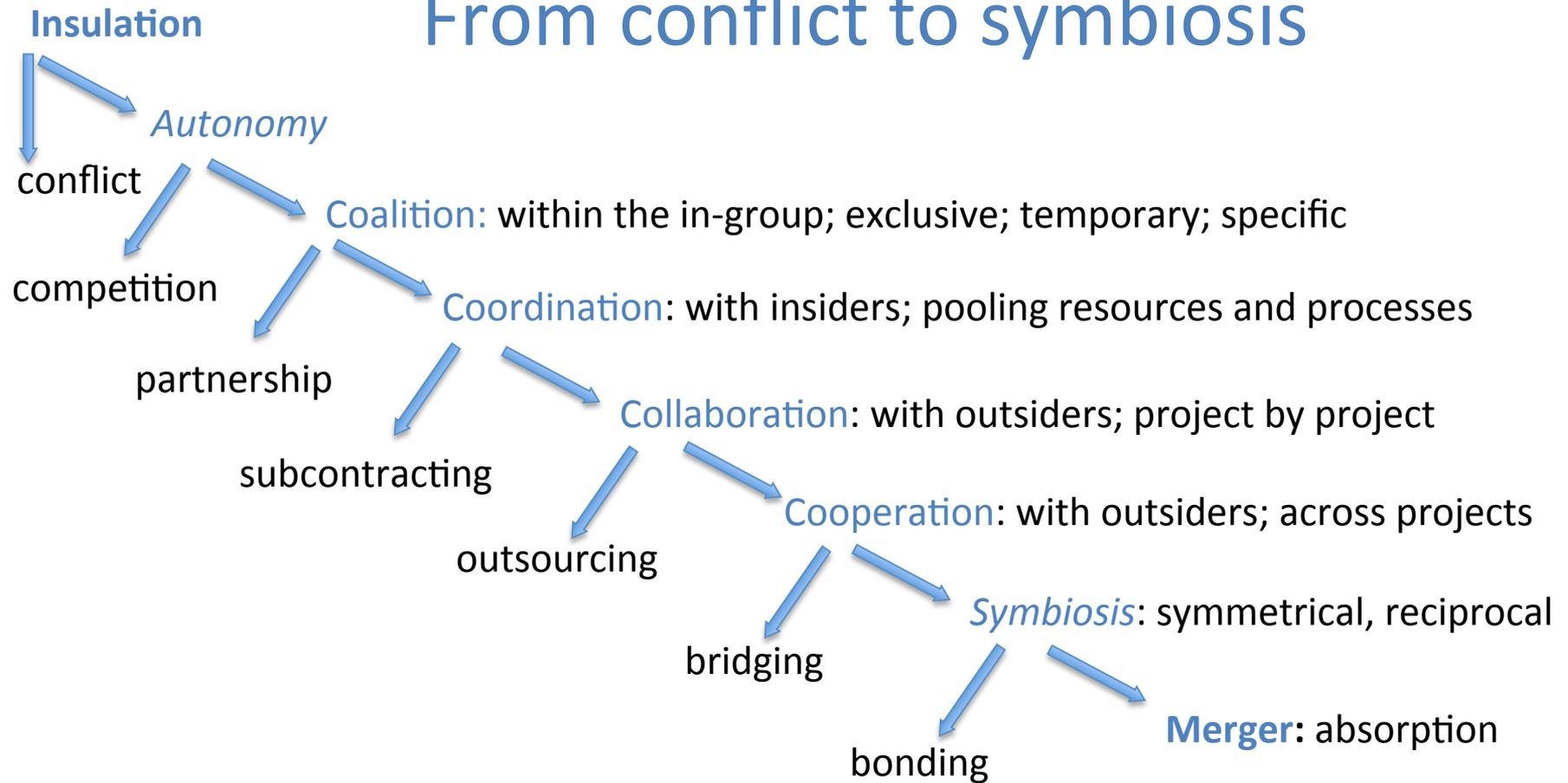
# A new theory of Governance

Networked Governance (draws from Organization Theory)

From competition to symbiosis (draws from Economics and sociology)

**From one step behind full government to one step beyond full cooperation** (draws from Political Science)

# From conflict to symbiosis



# A theory of IO networks

Collaboration among units = across time,  
space, and sectors

Transaction costs (TC) and coordination  
costs (CC) are in inverse proportion

Cluster = high TC, low CC

Network = Low TC, high CC



# Applied to internet Governance

A self governed and self sustainable system through mutual consolidation?

Crowd-sourced by the community

Open community of discussions

A success story leading to an Unknown Political Object (UPO)

QUANGO (a quasi non governmental org)

Quasi Law (and bylaws), guidelines

Incomplete contract, no constitution

# Incomplete contract

“These core values are **deliberately expressed in very general terms**, so that they may provide useful and **relevant guidance in the broadest possible range of circumstances**. Because they are not narrowly prescriptive, the specific way in which they apply, individually and collectively, to each new situation will necessarily depend on many factors that cannot be fully anticipated or enumerated; and because they are statements of principle rather than practice, situations will inevitably arise in which **perfect fidelity to all eleven core values simultaneously is not possible**. The Board will exercise its judgment to determine which core values are most relevant and how they apply to the specific circumstances of the case at hand, and **to determine, if necessary, an appropriate and defensible balance among competing values** ». (ICANN website, Governance)

# The Internet Network

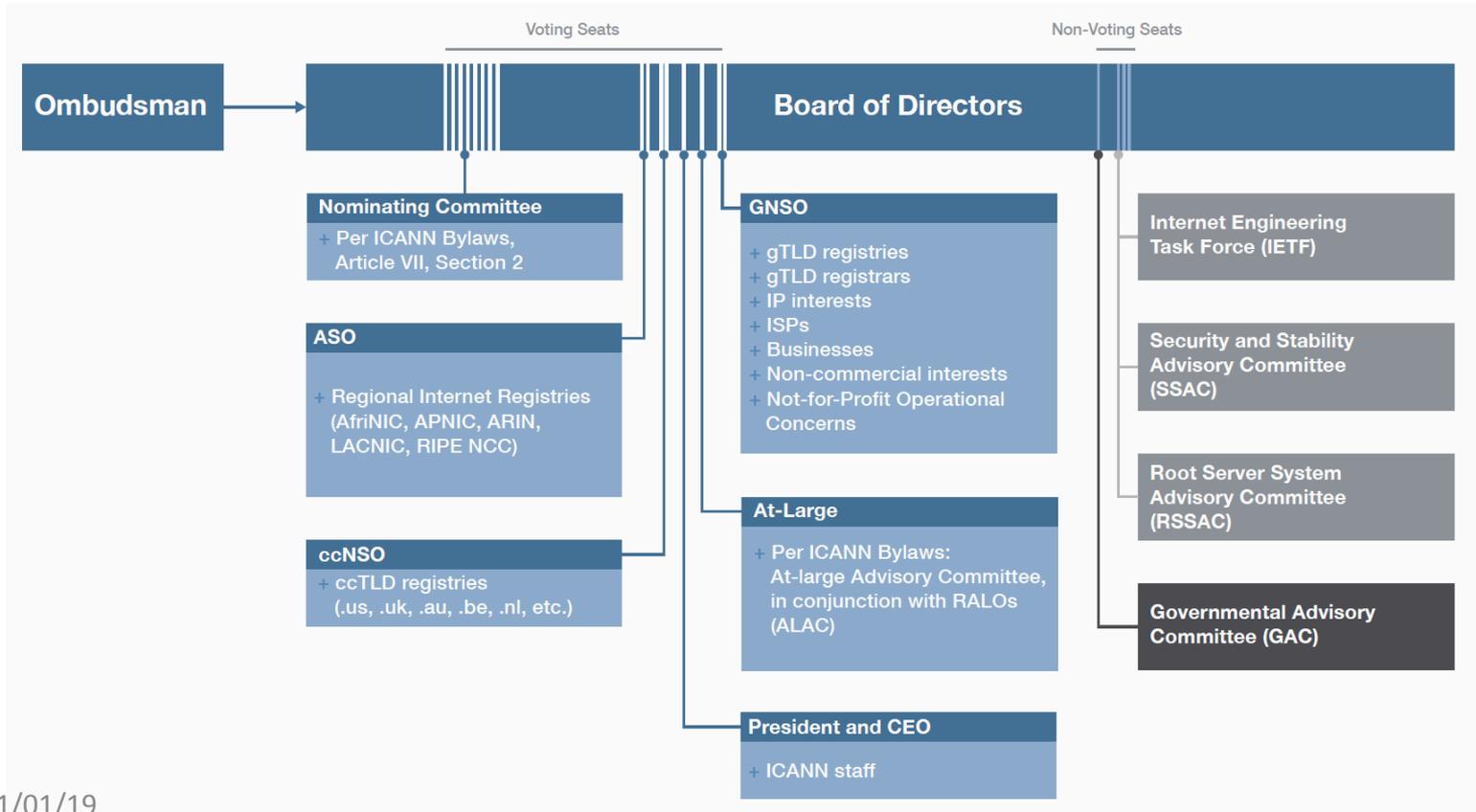
Three levels

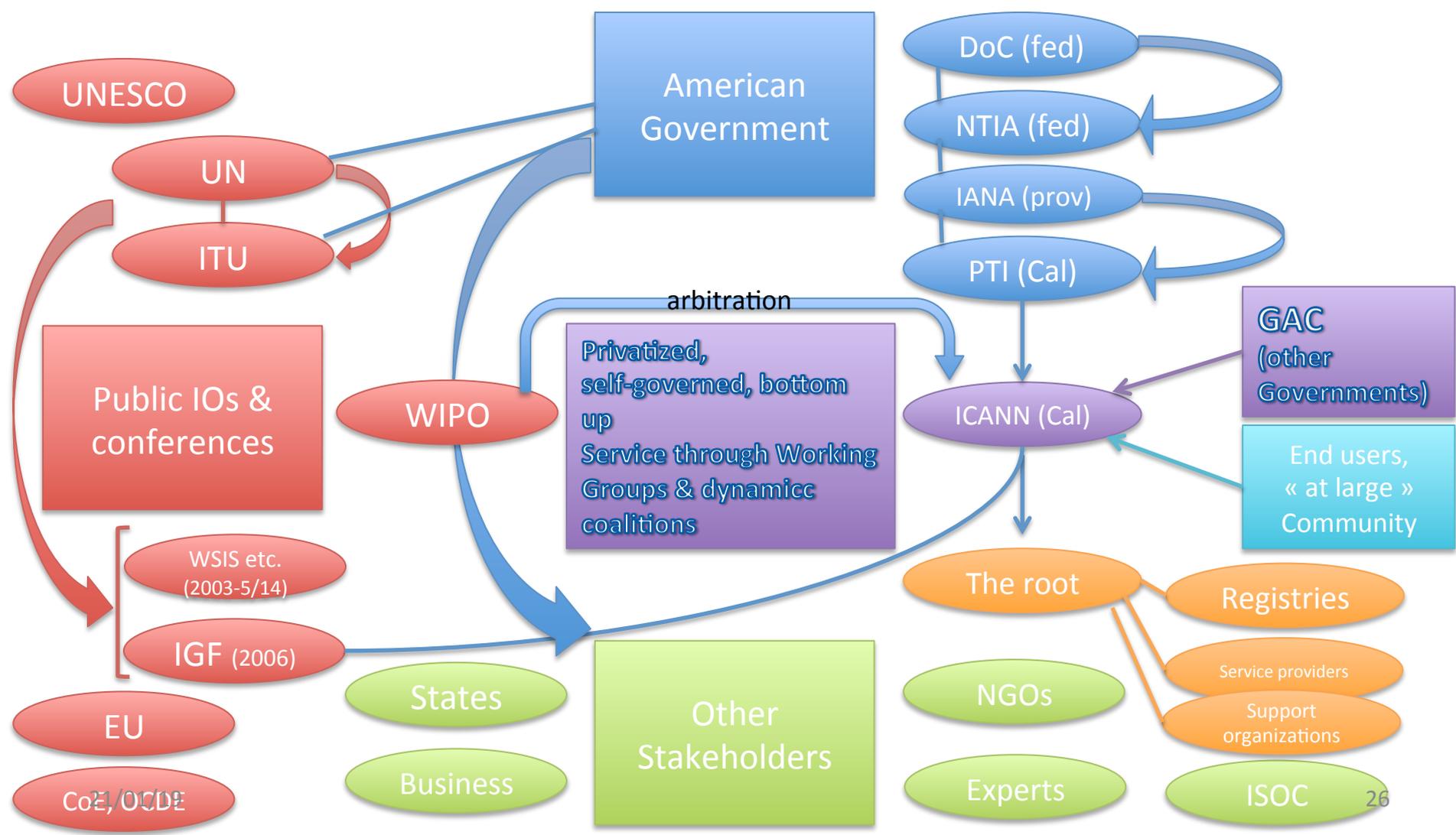
ICANN as a network

Internet issues are governed within a complex network  
made of complex hybrids

Hybridism of privateness and publicness

# ICANN





# Between privateness and publicness

**Private agency:** full decentralization

**Public status:** decisions are made by public bodies

**Public value:** a global public good is provisioned by a not-for-profit organization

**Public goal:** servicing the general public worldwide