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## **Straddling Hegemony and Resistance in Internet Governance: The Soft Power of International Organizations**

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### **Introduction**

As the United Nations General Assembly prepares to review the WSIS+10 in December 2015, including the outputs of the CSTD working groups concerned with improving the IGF (Internet Governance Forum) and with enhancing cooperation related to international Internet public policy issues, it is particularly fitting to examine the roles of international organizations in the Internet governance ecosystem. Much attention has been paid to the private sector and to civil society in the context of multistakeholder discussions of Internet policy issues (Almeida, et. al., 2015; Brousseau and Marzouki, 2012; Cammaerts, 2011; Carr, 2015; DeNardis and Raymond, 2013; Epstein, 2013; Franklin, 2013; Gasser et al., 2015; Malcolm, 2008; Mueller, 2010; Pavan, 2012). There is also important scholarship related to the technical infrastructure of the Internet and its implications for Internet governance and related policy issues (DeNardis, 2009; DeNardis, 2014; Mueller, 2002; Musiani, 2015; Musiani et al., 2015; Radu et al., 2014).

Traditionally, international organizations including the United Nations system work at the behest of their member nations and play key coordinating roles. They are neither bottom-up type organizations nor do they necessarily have private sector or civil society organization type characteristics. In the last decade or so, research has extended beyond portraying their more hegemonic type government-down roles. Rather there is work (Schemeil, 2013) that portrays a more nuanced vision of post-2000 international organizations. But there is almost no research that examines international organizations in

the context of complex, cross-national and cross-sector Internet governance issues.

This paper reports on the strategies developed by several IOs to channel their main issues, positions and visions related to Internet governance using primarily the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). It then focuses on one case study, that of UNESCO and its roles in Internet governance, especially in the context of the post World Summit on the Information Society review activities. The case study research stems from the authors' larger three-year project on international organizations and Internet governance (Levinson and Marzouki, 2015a; 2015b).

This research uses multiple methods. Interviews with those individuals charged with Internet related policy functions at the international organizations we studied constitute a major data gathering function. Additionally, content analysis of documents and archival analysis amplifies and provides a foundation for interview findings. Finally, observation and participant observation at key meetings adds to data gathering and data analysis. For the specific analysis of the participation of IOs in the IGF proceedings since 2006, quantitative analysis of IGF sessions was also used.

## **International Organizations As Actors in Internet Governance**

In previous work, we have shown how IOs have managed to establish themselves as actors in Internet governance processes (Levinson and Marzouki, 2015a; 2015b). In summary, they worked hard over time to move away from a traditional view of their “facilitating role in the coordination of Internet related public policy issues” where paragraph 35 of the WSIS Tunis Agenda<sup>1</sup> confined them, in the shadow and at the service of their member states. Studying the UNESCO, the OECD, the Council of Europe, and the ITU (the latter only through its participation at IGF proceedings), our findings so far have shown the following main IOs actions to achieve this objective:

- In terms of intra-IOs developments and agenda setting: an evolution from coordinating mechanisms for nation-states (issues, preferences, participations, politics) to stakeholders in their own right (agenda and opportunities) in IG arenas;

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<sup>1</sup> All WSIS-related documents can be found at <<http://www.itu.int/wsis>>

- In terms of partnerships: from serving and interacting with member states to subtly broader focus on interactions with civil society, the private sector, and other contemporary stakeholders (such as the technical community) to help institutionalize IG processes;
- In terms of positioning themselves from periphery to core of IG: they heightened the link at each IO between IG policy issues/spaces and the IO's policy purviews and mandates as they change over time; they increased the number of people within the IO working on topics related to IG; they linked IG-related topics to more central/powerful elements/sections/divisions of the IO;
- In terms of issue/policy entrepreneurship efforts: From secretariat members role as "civil servants" ("*We are the member states*", as interviewed key leaders from different IOs repeatedly told us) to the crafting of their own ideas to link IG to their core missions and mandates, with help of allies/partners, mainly from civil society and technical community organizations (examples: The OECD made a strong link at the Seoul Ministerial meeting in 2008 between IG issues and the Internet economy; The CoE made human rights in IG a priority in its internal strategy; The UNESCO crafted the concept of 'Internet Universality' to channel almost all issues within its mandate in IG discussions, as detailed later in this paper);
- In terms of using the IGF as a main vehicle: IOs bringing back home and institutionalizing collective IGF work (example: the CoE Council of Ministers adopted a *Recommendation on a Guide to Human Rights for Internet Users* in 2014, that stemmed from the IGF's Internet Rights and Principles Dynamic Coalition (IRPDC) *Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet* developed in 2010 as a basis. This Recommendation was drafted by a multistakeholder CoE committee of experts which included members of this dynamic coalition); IOs as Backbone of IGF (Example: IOs involvement in IGF main discursive activity accounts for 31% of all IGF Workshops in the period from 2006-2012).

Building on these preliminary results, this paper develops the analysis of IOs' strategies in the course of their participation in the IGF proceedings over time. While many IOs with different mandates participate each year in the IGF, we have identified four that

demonstrate a more regular and important participation; these four IOs are: the OECD, the UNESCO, the CoE and the ITU. Furthermore, it focuses on the UNESCO as a more in depth case study.

## **IOs and the Internet Governance Agenda Setting**

In (Levinson and Marzouki, 2015a) we concentrated our analysis on how IOs crafted their role at IGF mainly on the level of their involvement through the relative amount of IGF workshops (co-)organization and participation. We worked on the skeletal structure of IGF events, composed of the following types of sessions:

- Main sessions: 4-5 sessions, each focusing on one of the substantive themes chosen the given year (e.g. 'Security, Openness and Privacy' or 'Critical Internet Resources' have become established themes), plus generally one session dedicated to 'Emerging Issues' and one to 'Taking Stock and the way forward'.
- Workshops (WS): a series or sessions related to each Main session, to feed its discussions and further develop the related substantive theme.
- Open Forum (OF): as described by the IGF, "All major organizations dealing with Internet governance related issues are to be given a workshop slot, at their request, to hold an open forum in order to present and discuss their activities."
- Best Practice Forum (BPF): again as described by the IGF, their objective is "to demonstrate, in a multistakeholder environment, some of the good practices that have been adapted with regard to the key IGF themes in general and to the development and deployment of the Internet in particular. The sessions can have either a thematic or a country focus."
- Dynamic Coalition Meetings (DC): loose structures described as "informal, issue-specific groups comprising members of various stakeholder groups." It has to establish itself with an action plan and minimal coordination means, and show that its membership comes from at least three different stakeholder categories. It is subject to registration with and approval by the IGF Secretariat. At each yearly IGF meeting, dynamic coalitions are given a specific time slot for a public meeting, and must provide a public report of this activity.

Going further with the analysis of this data, we consider in this paper all kind of sessions, not only the workshops. Each year, the IGF publishes a report book where all workshops are documented. This was the basis of our previous data collection. In order to consider all kinds of sessions, as described above, we turned to a living archive of the IGF meetings since Athens in 2006. “Friends of the IGF<sup>2</sup>” is a community-based project set up by a small consultancy company based in New Zealand<sup>3</sup>. It provides a searchable and browsable repository of transcripts and video of all IGF sessions. Currently, there are all in all 1035 sessions archived, from IGF Athens 2006 to IGF Istanbul 2014. It is, to our knowledge, the most complete IGF sessions archive and could constitute a good basis for empirical research on the IGF discussions. Available sessions on the “Friends of the IGF” website are summarized in Table 1.

	<b>Main</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>BPF</b>	<b>OF</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Athens</b>	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
<b>Rio</b>	14	39	28	9	10	10	110
<b>Hyderabad</b>	14	62	9	7	9	2	103
<b>Sharm</b>	14	69	16	9	7	1	116
<b>Vilnius</b>	12	69	1	6	12	14	114
<b>Nairobi</b>	13	79	1	5	9	10	117
<b>Baku</b>	8	97	0	7	8	26	146
<b>Bali</b>	13	92	1	20	9	25	159
<b>Istanbul</b>	10	91	5	11	11	22	160
<b>Total</b>	108	598	61	74	75	119	1035

**Table 1. Number of available IGF sessions in corpus, by meeting and by type**

Considering that only the 10 main sessions are available for the Athens 2006 edition of the IGF, we will discard this meeting from our analysis.

A first metric that we considered is the level of involvement of the four identified IOs (OECD,

<sup>2</sup> Available at <[friendsoftheigf.org](http://friendsoftheigf.org)>

<sup>3</sup> Chalmers and Associates. See the project description at <[http://chalmers.associates/pdf/FoIGF-info\\_sheet.pdf](http://chalmers.associates/pdf/FoIGF-info_sheet.pdf)>

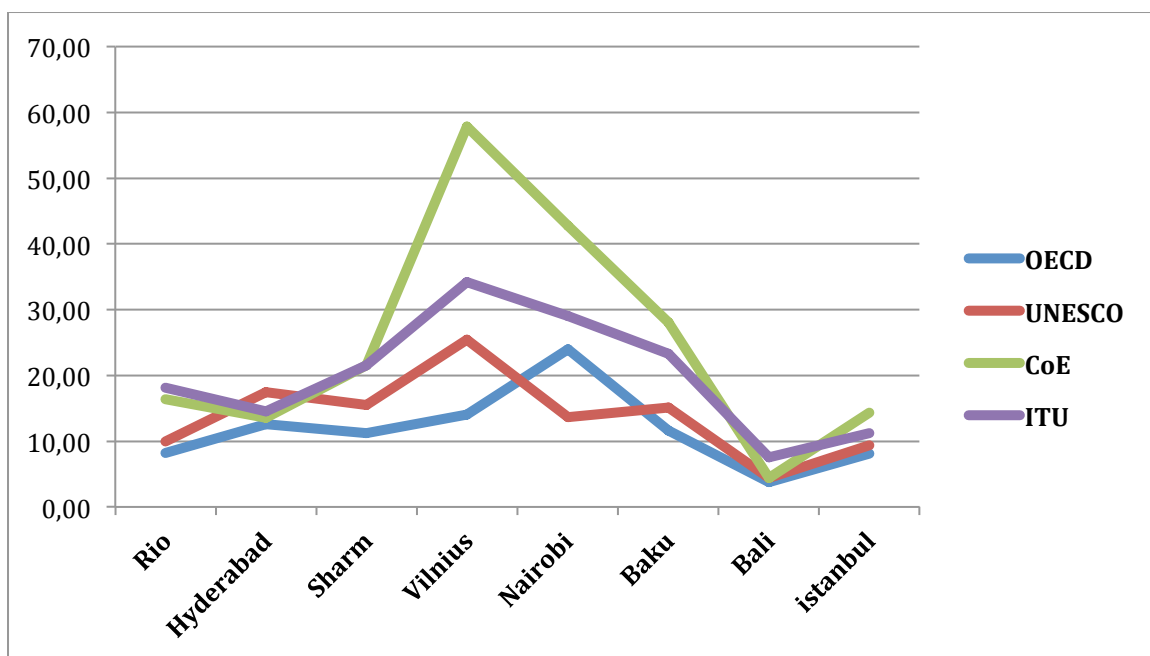
UNESCO, CoE, ITU) in IGF sessions, either as organizer, co-organizer or participant in a given session of any kind. We also wanted to evaluate the evolution of this involvement over meetings, from Rio in 2007 to Istanbul in 2014. To this end, we evaluated for each IO the number of sessions in participated, and calculated the percentage of the total number of sessions this participation represents, as shown in Table 2 and represented in Figure 1.

	<b>OECD</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>ITU</b>
<b>Rio</b>	8.18	10.00	16.36	18.18
<b>Hyderabad</b>	12.62	17.48	13.59	14.56
<b>Sharm</b>	11.21	15.52	21.55	21.55
<b>Vilnius</b>	14.04	25.44	57.89	34.21
<b>Nairobi</b>	23.93	13.68	42.74	29.06
<b>Baku</b>	11.64	15.07	28.08	23.29
<b>Bali</b>	3.77	4.40	4.40	7.55
<b>Istanbul</b>	8.13	9.38	14.38	11.25

**Table 2. Rate of IOs participation in IGF sessions, per meeting (%)**

With the exception of the Bali meeting, where all four IOs drastically reduced their attendance, and thus their participation to IGF sessions, due to budget issues, we can identify a rather strong participation of IOs to all sessions (as a reminder, we mean by participation either taking part in the organization of a session or at least speaking as panelist). Figure 1 also singularly highlights the role of the CoE among other IOs, with a major involvement in IGFs. As we already have qualitatively analyzed in a comprehensive manner in [Levinson and Marzouki, 2015b], the CoE managed to become an inescapable actor of the IGF – and, more generally speaking, of the whole Internet governance ecosystem – by succeeding in putting the main issue of its mandate, human rights, at the center of any Internet governance process. The Vilnius meeting was the first to show the effectiveness of this strategy. Further, Figure 1 shows the Vilnius meeting as the peak of participation for all IOs besides the OECD (for which the peak is rather at the Nairobi meeting). This can be explained by the fact that the Vilnius meeting, in addition to being

held in Europe – where all IOs have their headquarters thus involving relatively limited costs to attend - was held in 2010. That year, the renewal of the first 5-years mandate of the IGF was at stake, with some controversies surrounding the expected decision from the United Nations General Assembly, as reported by the press<sup>4</sup>. IOs for which the IGF continuation was of outmost importance showed thus a strong presence at the 2010 meeting. An additional explication of the massive CoE presence in Vilnius is that this meeting was held only two years after the inception of the European regional implementation of the IGF, the EuroDIG series of annual meetings, which started in 2008 in Strasbourg<sup>5</sup>. Note that the CoE being the main organizer of EuroDIG, thus the Vilnius meeting was also an opportunity to publicize more in this part of the continent this regional achievement.



**Figure 1. Representation of IOs participation rate in IGF sessions**

Going beyond the sole numerical involvement in IGF sessions, we concentrated on the

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. “Controversy Over New IGF Mandate, UN Role In Internet Governance” at: <http://www.ip-watch.org/2010/11/04/controversy-over-new-igf-mandate-un-role-in-internet-governance/>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.eurodig.org>



sessions' topics, to trace the specific interests of the four identified IOs, especially with respect to their respective mandates. At the IGFs and since Athens in 2006, sessions are organized under a limited number of main topics. The "Friends of the IGF" website that we use as the source of our corpus of data labels the sessions according to the following topics:

- Access
- Critical Internet Resources (CIR)
- Diversity
- Enhanced Cooperation (EC)
- Human Rights (HR)
- Internet Governance for Development (IG4D)
- Internet Governance Principles (IG Principles)
- Multistakeholderism (MSism)
- Openness
- Other
- Privacy
- Regional and National Initiatives (Reg&Nat Init)
- Security

Substantive topics correspond to the main topics organizing the IGF over time, with some new topics emerging at some points, either because they have matured and can be one of the focus of a given IGF session or because, eventually, their political acceptance has been granted after some years of controversies: the "human rights" topic typically corresponds to the latter category. Also, over time, some topics have been grouped to form an overarching one: one example is the merging of the "Access" and "Diversity" topic into a single one, combining a variety of issues to realize Internet access to the greatest number of people, including through an increased linguistic diversity of content. In the same way, "Privacy" and "Security" topics have sometimes been combined, although "Security" extends in some discussion cases to issues such as child protection and the fight against harmful content on the Internet. "Openness" groups into a single IGF topic issues such as freedom of expression, freedom of information, open access, commons, Free/Libre and open source software and, more recently, network neutrality. "Critical Internet Resources" concerns the management

of Internet names and numbers, as well as protocols, in one word, the main topics substantive topics dealt with by ICANN, as well as, for some of them, by the ITU. Finally, “Internet Governance for Development” speaks for itself.

As for procedural topics, “Enhanced cooperation” is a code word stemming from the WSIS Tunis Agenda<sup>6</sup> (paragraphs 69-71) that has been a source of controversies since then, mostly between those with a multilateral view of Internet governance and those with a multistakeholder view of this process. To express it as a caricature, it relates to the old “ITU model vs. ICANN model” of the Internet governance controversy. The “Internet Governance Principles” topic is a more generic way of identifying the discussions relating to Internet governance processes institutionalization, and “Multistakeholderism” addresses process issues as well, while focusing on the participation of all stakeholders and their interactions. With regards to the last two categories, “Regional and National Initiatives” is mainly used for sessions reporting on regional and national implementations of the IGF; and “Other” categorizes such sessions as opening and ceremonies, etc.

Considering this understanding of topics used as labels by the “Friends of the IGF” website, and considering the fact that there has been an evolution of sessions labeling over time by the successive IGF meetings, we have decided, from a methodological point of view, to regroup some of the topics and to discard some others in our further analysis, since this paper is concerned with the role of the four identified IOs in shaping the IG discussions agenda through channeling their own issues and mandates in these global debates. In other words we are interested in their participation by topic in different kinds of IGF sessions.

We thus discarded all sessions labeled “Regional and National Initiatives” as well as those labeled “Other”. Unfortunately, the 160 sessions of the Istanbul meeting in 2014 have not yet been labeled on the “Friends of the IGF” website (as for now, they all are labeled “other”). We have thus discarded the 160 Istanbul sessions as well from our analysis. In total, this analysis is consequently based on 656 sessions (from IGF Athens in 2006 to IGF Bali in 2013) instead of the 1035 available.

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote 1 supra

Following some label grouping, we used the following labels:

- Process/GoodGov: this new label regroups “Enhanced Cooperation”, “Internet Governance Principles” and Multistakeholderism”. In other words, it concerns sessions discussing Internet governance processes and good governance principles;
- IG4D: “Internet Governance for Development” kept as is;
- CIR: “Critical Internet Resources” kept as is;
- Acc/Div: this new label regroups “Access” and “Diversity”;
- Openness: kept as is;
- Sec/Priv: this new label regroups “Security” and “Privacy”;
- HR: “Human Rights” kept as is.

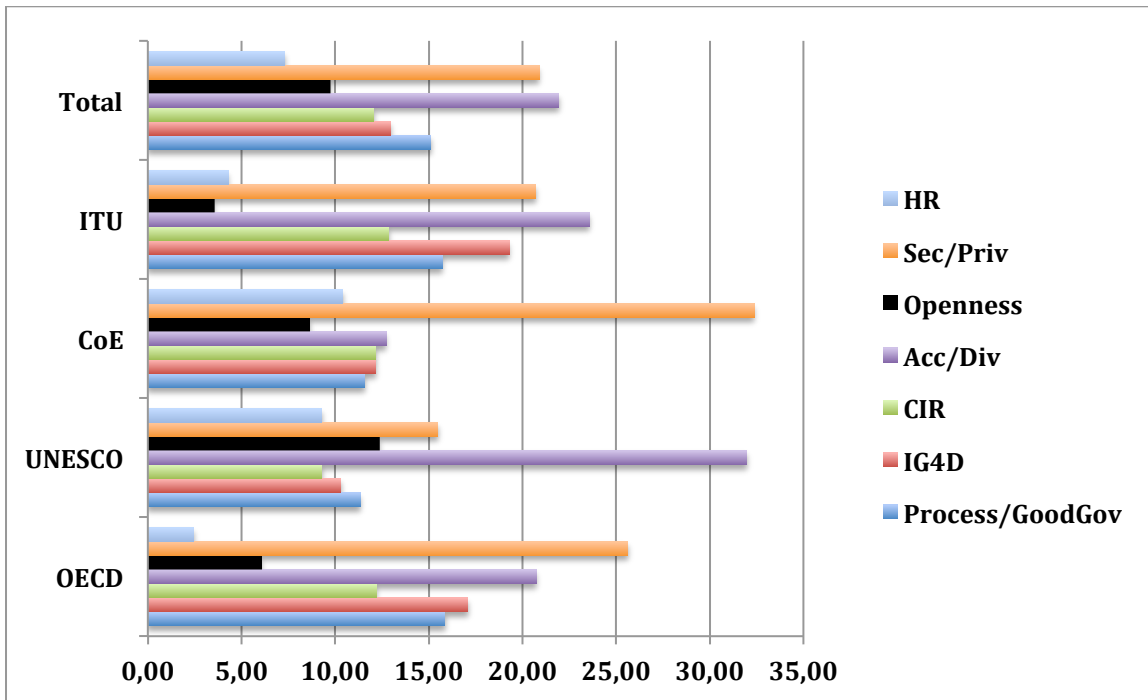
On this labeling basis, Table 3 shows the repartition by topics of sessions where the four identified IOs were involved.

	<b>OECD</b>	<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>CoE</b>	<b>ITU</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Process/GoodGov</b>	13	11	20	22	99
<b>IG4D</b>	14	10	21	27	85
<b>CIR</b>	10	9	21	18	79
<b>Acc/Div</b>	17	31	22	33	144
<b>Openness</b>	5	12	15	5	64
<b>Sec/Priv</b>	21	15	56	29	137
<b>HR</b>	2	9	18	6	48
<b>Total</b>	82	97	173	140	656

**Table 3. Repartition of IOs sessions topics**

Two kinds of information can be derived from Table 3 data. First is the distribution by topic of a given IO’s involvement in IGF sessions. This information, depicted in Figure 2, informs on the importance given to each topic by the considered IOs. The second information is the distribution of the respective weights of all four considered IOs in the discussions on each

topic. This information is depicted in Figure 3.



**Figure 2. Distribution of each IO's involvement over all topics (%)**

Figure 2 also includes, for comparison purposes, the distribution of all topical sessions among the total number of sessions. Two IOs show very distinctively a dominant topic on which they put most of their involvement, while other topics are given a fair distribution of their efforts. They are: the Council of Europe on “Security and Privacy” issues and the UNESCO on “Access and Diversity” issues. These two cases are also far above the distribution among the total number of sessions. To a much lesser extent, we can note a similar case with the OECD and the “Security and Privacy” topic. The importance of this latter topic for the OECD is due to the willing of this IO to channel at IGF two of its main non binding instrument: the *OECD Security Guidelines*<sup>7</sup> (adopted in 2002 and which revision process started in 2012) and the *OECD Privacy Guidelines*<sup>8</sup> (adopted in 1980 and revised in 2013, at the end of a process started in 2011). The OECD Secretariat is thus using the IGF to raise or increase awareness on its instruments in this global while much less constraining

<sup>7</sup> See <<http://oe.cd/2002sg>>

<sup>8</sup> See <<http://oe.cd/privacy>>

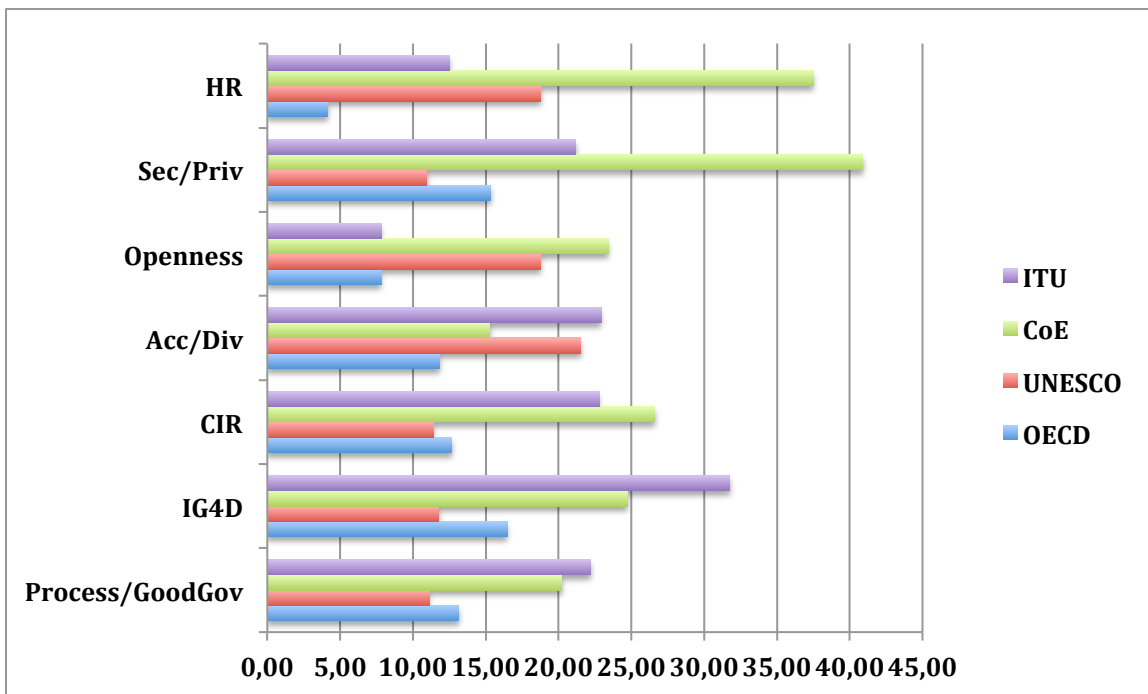
setting than its own formal meetings; as one of our interviewee from this IO acknowledged: *“The role of the Secretariat is to be forward-looking; we are a bit provocative”; “We can engage people who are not on our table – or don’t even know about us – and identify who is important in the field”*. This interviewee also appreciates the diverse views that can be heard only at IGF: speaking specifically on the post-Snowden’s revelations Bali meeting in 2013, s/he added: *“What we heard, we couldn’t hear elsewhere than at IGF. It helps understand the context. Of course, I read blogs and stuff, but all are Anglo-Saxons. At IGF, you can hear other voices”*. With regards to UNESCO, “Access and Diversity” is the topic at the heart of its mandate, and through which UNESCO tried to “regain its place” in the post-WSIS game after having been marginalized, as one of our interviewee from this organization told us. With regards to the Council of Europe, although Privacy is one of the main human rights issues on which the organization has been focusing in Internet governance discussions, it could appear surprising at first glance that the “Privacy and Security” topic is given so much importance with regards to e.g. “Openness” or “Human rights”; however, a careful analysis of the CoE involvement in IGF meetings show that, like the OECD, the CoE took advantage of the IGF to channel its own instruments as well, a main one in this context being the *Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime*<sup>9</sup>: two different divisions of the CoE’s “Information Society and Action Against Cybercrime” Directorate<sup>10</sup> joined force to achieve this strong involvement.

The latter remark also explains, on Figure 3, the dominant weight of the Council of Europe on the “Privacy and Security” topic. The same applies to “Human Rights” topic, while it appears from Figure 2 that this topic is far less important with regards to others, for all IOs including the CoE. The explanation is here that, while CoE has been the most active IOs on human rights in terms of involvement in IGF, the topic itself emerged rather late in the IGF proceedings as a topic on its own, due to strong reluctance of the IGF MAG (Multistakeholder Advisory Group), especially its government members, to highlight this sensitive issue as an IGF topic during many years.

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<sup>9</sup> See <<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/FR/Treaties/Html/185.htm>>

<sup>10</sup> See <<http://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-rule-of-law/information-society-and-action-against-crime-directorate>>



**Figure 3. Respective weights of IOs in each topic's discussions (%)**

Figure 3 also highlights that the ITU is the most important IO dealing with “IG4D” (Internet Governance for Development), in line with the core mandate of this IO. ITU also shows the same interest as, rather surprisingly, the CoE regarding the “CIR” (Critical Internet resources) topic. On this issue, the ITU obviously had to maintain a strong involvement, especially with regards to the ITU vs. ICANN “battle” mainly during the early IGF meetings. Regarding the CoE, one explanation could be its strong involvement in IGF discussions as a whole, much more than other IOs (as shown in Figure 1), being “beaten” only by one IO or another on the core topic of this IO’s mandate (such as ITU and UNESCO for “Access and Diversity” or ITU for “IG4D”). Regarding the “Openness” topic (which is larger than solely Freedom of expression to also encompass issues such as open content, open data and open software), unsurprisingly the UNESCO played a major role, together with the CoE.

Finally, the most interesting finding shown in Figure 3 is certainly the respective weights of the four considered IOs with regards to the “Process/Good Governance” topic that, as a reminder, regroups discussions on “Enhanced Cooperation”, “Internet Governance

Principles” and Multistakeholderism”, in other words, mostly each stakeholder’s role in Internet governance processes and their interactions. Figure 3 shows that ITU was the most involved in such discussions (again, beyond the sole “ITU vs. ICANN battle”, the “multilateral vs. multistakeholder battle” model), immediately followed by the CoE, and then, far beyond, the OECD and the UNESCO.

This analysis of IGF meetings over time, both in terms of numerical involvement of IOs in IGF sessions and in terms of the specific interests of the four identified OIs in IGF topics, especially with respect to their respective mandates, demonstrates how these IOs have developed strategies to channel, and sometimes even impose, issues at the core of their mandates in IGF discussions; and how they forged their own paths in such a multistakeholder arena. Such pathways include coalescing with other stakeholders around some issues of common interest (as demonstrated in [Levinson and Marzouki, 2015a], crafting research agendas, and allowing their Secretariats to smoothly circumvent some of their Member States positions and, as a result, producing positions and non-binding international instruments related to the most contentious IG issues. These outcomes have managed to overcome sometimes very conflicting positions among different stakeholders, through the processes and means IOs use to straddle hegemonic and resisting positions from other stakeholders, in particular by shaping dialogues and influencing best practices. The specific case of UNESCO provides an in-depth analysis of these patterns.

### **An In Depth Case Study: The UNESCO**

UNESCO presents a particularly interesting case because of its long history as a UN agency working directly with civil society. This dates to its creation in 1945—long before the Internet became a global communication medium. Indeed one can think of UNESCO as a ‘learning lab’ for other international organizations, in terms of its work with civil society. (See Levinson, 2015, for further analysis of complex organizations as learning laboratories in an inter-organizational setting.) For example, UNESCO, unlike the ITU, actually has and has had structural affordances (now called the Division of National Commissions and Civil Society) for working directly with civil society organizations. These predate by far those in

the OECD or the newer nonstructural attempts to incorporate civil society into some ITU activities.

These connections with civil society and with organizations in other sectors have revolved around UNESCO's priorities (Pohle, 2015). Our interview and documentary research indicates that while Internet governance was not initially or traditionally seen as a UNESCO priority, today Internet governance issues (and concomitant collaborations) are linked directly to UNESCO's mission and its priorities.

UNESCO began to lay the groundwork for a concept it coined 'Internet universality' in approximately 2012 and to link it directly to the core work of UNESCO. This idea seeding included designing and implementing a survey resulting in a UNESCO consultative multistakeholder study "within the framework of UNESCO's work on the World Summit on the Information Society" (see *Connecting the Dots: Options For Future Action Outcome Document, 2015*<sup>11</sup>). The draft study then served as the foundation for the 3-4 March 2015 culminating conference at UNESCO headquarters entitled "Connecting The Dots: Options For Future Action".

The Outcomes Document from this conference provides important evidence regarding our general argument concerning the roles of international organizations. First, it supplies key 'contexting' as we call it, inextricably linking Internet governance issues to core UNESCO functions and priorities. In 1.6 of the document, it lists as an "overarching option(s) for UNESCO", the "strengthen(ing) the cross-cutting role of the Internet in all of UNESCO programmatic activities, including Priority Africa, Priority Gender Equality, support to Small Islands Developing States and least Developed Countries, as well as in UNESCO's leadership of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures". The following sections (2-5) focus specifically on UNESCO priorities and highlight options for UNESCO related to a specific priority. These are: Section 2, Access to Information and Knowledge; Section 3, Freedom of Expression; Section 4. Privacy; and Section 5. Ethical Dimensions of

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<sup>11</sup> See

<[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/outcome\\_document.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/outcome_document.pdf)>



the Information Society.

The final two sections of the Outcomes Document are central to illustrating this ‘contexting’ feature of international organizations in 2015, especially with regard to Internet governance. Section 6 lists options related to crosscutting issues, highlighting the integrative nature of Internet governance issues across priority areas. The final Section 7 lists options related to UNESCO’s role. Here the document makes three vibrant points. The first is to ‘reinforce UNESCO’s contributions and leadership within the UN system, including continued implementation of the WSIS outcomes, the WSIS+10 review, the IGF and the post-2015 development agenda’. The second calls for “engage (ing) as relevant with partners outside of the UN system”; it lists 5 ways to do this plus a range of partners across the sectors. The 5 ways are:

- “Providing expert advice
- Sharing of experience
- Creating for a for dialogue
- Fostering development
- Empowerment of users to develop their capacities.”

The third and final point in this section and for the document as a whole is to “support Member States in ensuring that Internet policy and regulation involves the participation of all stakeholders, and integrates international human rights and gender equality.”

Second this Outcomes Document also seeks to establish the primacy of UNESCO’s role in the UN system with regard to Internet governance policy issues –through its historic missions and current priorities (Mansell and Tremblay, 2013; Souter, 2010).

Beyond the survey and the Outcomes Document, UNESCO also highlights elsewhere on its website its key roles in both the first and second WSIS+10 Review events. UNESCO actually hosted the first review meeting in Paris and served as a co-organizer for the second event in Geneva, hosted by the ITU. With regard to the first event, UNESCO underlines the outcomes of the event which it organized and hosted; with regard to the second event, it notes that UNESCO provided participants at that high level event a “compromise text on the Media Action Line” and notes that “after long negotiations, the UNESCO proposed text was finally accepted without amendment and therefore all Action line texts could be adopted with the

statement and vision texts, by the plenary by consensus”.

In another section of its website, UNESCO discusses its contribution to the 2014 IGF held in Istanbul. It provides a listing of IGF sessions to which UNESCO contributed or where UNESCO served as a co-organizer. There is a webpage devoted exclusively to “UNESCO in the Internet Governance Forum”. It also emphasizes UNESCO’s response to the IGF MAG’s call for input on its impacts (or, in other words), “concrete actions and decisions that have been taken by different stakeholders as a result of the engagement and discussions of Internet related issues”. In sum, the UNESCO website points out in regard to UNESCO and Internet governance that “all of these elements (with regard to the Internet’s role in “fostering sustainable human development and building more democratic societies” and for enhancing the free flow of information and ideas throughout the world” are “essential for UNESCO to fulfill its mandate and mission entrusted by the Member States”.

It is also useful to note that UNESCO implemented its Internet Study as a result of UNESCO’s 37<sup>th</sup> General Conference Resolution 52 in 2013. It did this as a springboard for action at the 38<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO scheduled for November 2015. UNESCO implemented a yearlong consultative process prior to the study; and a global multistakeholder conference to review the study, resulting in the earlier discussed outcomes document. UNESCO’s Executive Board (196<sup>th</sup> Session) recommended the Outcome Document for member state deliberation at the November 2015 General Conference. At the same time the Board forwarded the outcome Document as a “non-binding input to the post-2015 Development Agenda” as well as to both the UN General Assembly overall WSIS review and the high level meeting of the General Assembly per resolution 68/302.

The UN Secretariat-prepared 10-11 June 2015 Informal Summary of the “Initial Stocktaking Meeting On the Process of the Intergovernmental Negotiations On the Review Of The Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)” provides data that helps track the role of UNESCO as it relates to Internet governance in the context of the UN system. The Summary notes that UNESCO as well as the ITU and UNCTAD provided reports to assist the General Assembly in reviewing WSIS. Indrajit Banerjee presented the UNESCO report, highlighting UNESCO’s “coordination of international

activities” and linked this to the organization’s “long standing goal of inclusive Knowledge Societies”. He then went on to talk about the Outcomes Documents from UNESCO’s February 2013 conference co-organized with the ITU, UNCTAD and UNDP, and its March 2015 conference outcome document on the future of the Internet (discussed earlier in this paper.)

In terms of documenting the role of international organizations as ‘idea generators’, the Geneva Internet Platform Initiative<sup>12</sup> newsletter, Digital Watch (Issue 1, 2015), offers a chart on “IG At A Glance - What is the Focus of IGF 2015<sup>13</sup>” that diagrams the general themes of workshops proposed for the IGF 2015. It uses the following categories and provides data that are not available yet from the “Friends of the IGF” database: Civil Society, Governments, Technical Community, International Organizations, and Private Sector. The largest number of proposals stem from civil society, and fall across the eight-identified thematic clusters, with the largest number falling in the Human Rights category. Those proposed by international organizations only occur in five of the thematic clusters, with the largest number also falling in the category of human rights. This compares with those proposed by the private sector, where the largest number is in the area of security. In this regard, it is interesting to report a comment from a UNESCO interviewee, reflecting on the “Connecting the Dots” Conference where the interviewee observes: “We should be speaking more to corporations”. The UNESCO website lists the Disney Corporation as a participant; Disney did provide a long submission and was an active participant at the Conference. Note that the interviewee approached corporations to invite them to the Conference. Some were interested and others not.

Focusing on nongovernmental organizations, UNESCO does participate in relevant NGO sponsored conferences. In fact, UNESCO promoted its ideas of ‘Internet universality’ and its survey at twenty different conferences around the world. It also speaks “from time to time” with the EU and would like to work more with them.

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<sup>12</sup> See <<http://www.giplatform.org>>

<sup>13</sup> See <<http://www.giplatform.org/sites/default/files/DigitalWatchNewsletter1.pdf>>, page 3

## Conclusions

This case study of UNESCO as an international organization working in the Internet governance ecosystem space highlights the themes we identified at the beginning of this paper. It shows how UNESCO staff (and ultimately its General Conference) re-envisioned and, indeed, reshaped the communication of its mission in a post-internet initiation era. Through linking the concept of ‘internet universality’ to its long-standing missions, and obtaining backing from its General conference, it has strengthened both its relevancy and organizational position/power since 2012.

The UNESCO case also illustrates in a more detailed way the patterns that emerge from our study in the first part of this paper on the IGF data provided by the “Fiends of the IGF” database. Similar to its sister international organizations, UNESCO is continuing to play a reinforced and amplified role in a relatively new but key global governance arena.

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