Inclusive Anticipatory Governance:
Cyber Technologies, Absorptive Capacities & The Case of the United Nations OEWG

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Introduction

The term 'capacity building' is a decades old term, used way before the internet was created. Today this term still exists, alongside two more recent, related usages: absorptive capacity (Cohen and Levinthal,1990) and capacity development (Bolger, 2000). These two turns of phrase reflect a swing toward today's power of design thinking in the fields of social innovation and architecture and a bottom-up inspired focus in organizational management and computer science. Design thinking itself emphasizes the roles of users- the grassroots- in bringing about a change as opposed to a more traditional top-down or expert-down approach. This paper argues that the concept of design thinking also is synergistic with recent work on inclusive and anticipatory governance in a range of fields.

The modernization paradigm, popular especially in the nineteen sixties and used in the international development field, epitomizes the opposite of today's design thinking approach: it exemplifies a (still present in some settings) top-down approach. Note that the stage theory prevalent in related fields at the time of the modernization paradigm's origins shaped its creation. In other words, stage theory shaped the perspective that developing nations needed to proceed though stages to achieve modernization; and scholars then described (or critiqued) the concept, a western model of development, as being a one size fits all that could be disseminated from western developed nations to those less developed. It, similar to the term, capacity building, connotes a unidirectional progression.

This unidirectional approach also implicitly shapes perspectives on capacity building: it underlies what can be termed a donor-recipient model in the

international relations/development field. (Additionally, in almost all early cases, the unit of analysis for the 'donor' is the nation state or western 'developed' nation states.) This model parallels early communication studies theory focused on knowledge or innovation transfer (see Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971) where new knowledge or innovation is transferred from an originator to recipient. In a prescient working paper, Kerr (2003) understood this movement present in the international development and innovation fields and highlighted for the international relations/secuirty field the incipient dialogue between a state centric view of security and the more recent human-centric view of security.

Paralleling this often-bumpy trajectory from state centric to a more human centric perspective is the similarly bumpy trajectory from state centered governance (government) to a more inclusive governance stance. Focusing on U.S. nanotechnology policy, Guston (2014) wrote compellingly about the need for anticipatory governance. This led to increasing research in the fields of environmental policy, food security, genomics and health. Each of these fields shares characteristics with cyber governance: interrelationships among technologies and politics, connections between local and global, rapidly changing and converging technologies, cultural and geopolitical differences, and uncertainties. Yet the cyber governance field has scant work on anticipatory governance with a few exceptions. Chatham House is leading discussions on inclusive cyberspace governance (Taylor and Hakmeh, 2022). There is also incipient research in the artificial intelligence arena (Kolliarakis & Hermann, 2020).

The backdrop of the pandemic has added challenges for these research areas, highlighting inequalities and divisions, setting the scene for the research reported here that brings inclusive anticipatory governance (Yu, et. al., 2021) to the fore in cyber-related governance studies. Anticipatory governance itself refers to "governance processes in the present that seek to use anticipation to engage with uncertain futures in order to guide action in the present." (Muiderman et. al. 2022,1)

Three elements emerge as key to contemporary anticipatory governance: foresight (tools and capacity-building regarding the future); engagement (idea exchange usually limited to experts and policymakers); and integration (institutional processes and capabilities development reflecting values or norms). This paper addresses anticipatory governance frameworks from related fields as they may apply to global cybersecurity

work in the context of two cyber-related United Nations Working Groups: the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and the Open-Ended Working Groups (OEWG I and II) 2019-2021 and 2021-2025.

Muiderman et. al. (2022) in their analyses of anticipatory governance examine the roles of political negotiation in these processes. Key questions arise: what organizations or institutions are involved in such negotiations; to what extent are negotiations inclusive? Indeed, most anticipatory governance studies limit their scope to technology experts and relevant policymakers. This paper extends the work on anticipatory governance by examining understudied questions of inclusion in possible anticipatory cybersecurity governance processes at the United Nations where inclusion may not be merely focused on technical experts and governmental/diplomatic policymakers. It recognizes that for governments and other organizations to participate in inclusive governance processes, they must have awareness of and commitment to such processes and equally important, capacities for coping with and engaging in anticipatory governance processes (Croxatto, 2020). Such capacities include requisite knowledge and interorganizational learning across state and nonstate actor boundaries to engage effectively.

There is also little work that addresses the connections between multistakeholderism (Raymond & DeNardis, 2015; Hofmann, 2020) and anticipatory governance in internet governance policy and politics venues. In highlighting this connection, the paper analyzes organizational boundary-spanning and adds treatment of organizations' absorptive capacities regarding anticipatory governance processes and emerging/converging internet-related technologies. Methods used include a review of anticipatory governance literatures and the limited relevant inclusive anticipatory governance research in the broadly defined internet/cyber governance field. Additional methods included content analyses from the literature reviews as well as content analysis and observational research related to cybersecurity governance policy dialogues/outcomes and possible inclusion at the two United Nations venues (GGE and OEWG I and II) studied here. These methods provide a foundation for exploring the question of inclusivity of nonstate actors in the primarily multilateral context of the United Nations.

Extending beyond notions of multistakeholderism (involving nonstate actors in governance-related discussions and debates), this paper highlights

complex interorganizational and cross-national processes, and recognizes cultural and geopolitical contexts as well as interconnections with technologies themselves. Findings possess implications for inclusive absorptive capacity-building at organizational levels and recognition of interorganizational learning processes especially regarding the three elements of anticipatory governance: foresight, engagement and integration. It identifies the presence or absence of inclusive terminology in such processes, outlining what cyber governance can learn from related fields regarding inclusive anticipatory governance.

A Google Trends search focusing on the term 'cybersecurity' sets the scene; this search finds that 'cybersecurity' as a search term did not really take off until 2015. The usage of 'cybersecurity' was flat from January 2004 until 2015 when its usage began to increase sharply. Interestingly, Google Trends accessed in June 2022 indicates not enough data regarding searches on 'human centric cybersecurity' whereas 'human centered design' is the subject of numerous searches.

A more recent approach, possibly shaped by the design thinking field (and the studies of failed development projects that employed the donor-recipient model), is the earlier noted use of the term 'capacity development' which has a less linear and more collaborative connotation.
The work on capacity building and even capacity development rarely pays attention to the actual cross-organizational processes involved in these processes. How do ideas cross organizational boundaries (if at all) and what are the hindering and facilitating factors? The Project reported on here explores cybersecurity discussions at the United Nations regarding the dissemination of capacity building as an idea and related ideas as to what organization types should be involved and in what manner. This exploration includes analysis as to whether capacity development notions are present or not.

Focusing on the two United Nations entities, the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and especially the two (2019-2021and 2021-2025) Open Ended Working Groups (OEWGI and OEWGII) (all related to cybersecurity), this paper analyzes the 2021 Consensus Reports of the OEWG I and the GGE as well as documents and meetings related to the 2022 kickoff of the second rendition of the OEWG, amidst now the backdrop of continuing COVID challenges and Russia's war in Ukraine.

The paper underlines a progression from a totally nation state and intergovernmental process at the United Nations—one where there has been no evidence of inclusive and/or anticipatory governance, to one where, today, the two Groups studied, are grappling with how, if at all, to involve stakeholders (civil society, academe, private sector) other than nation states in their dialogue and work including the boundaries of what that work may include. The advent of Russia's invasion of Ukraine punctuates this grappling and, as this paper argues, shapes dramatically or reshapes in a back to the future, geopolitical way the early stages of the OEWG II's work and discussions regarding the roles of nonstate actors and the 'modalities' of participation. This geopolitical backdrop also highlights stark disparities between capacity building and capacity development perspectives in these working groups.

This brings us to the term 'human centric', introduced in consultations prior to the writing and consensus words of the Final 2021 OEWG and GGE Reports. Human-centric approaches to cybersecurity call for inclusion on several levels: inclusion of non-state actors in the second OEWG's meetings as well as in the topic areas included in discussions and in Final Reports (primarily, human rights, gender, and international development). There is, as of now, no one definition of human centric, although civil society organizations use this term in dialogues and in written submissions at the UN.

In sum, the paper reports findings from this author's study (2021) examining the following research questions: Is there interorganizational idea-sharing especially regarding inclusion of human rights and gender among state and nonstate actor organizations related to the cybersecurity discussions at the two UN groups (GGE and OEWG I-II)? What are factors related to such idea sharing? What do these findings mean for inclusive anticipatory governance processes in these settings? The organization of this paper is as follows: sections on the conceptual framework, methods/constraints, findings, and conclusion.

Conceptual Framework At A Glance
To explore the above research questions effectively, the paper uses concepts from communication (knowledge transfer) and international development studies, interorganizational sociology and public policy (regarding cross-sector learning processes and absorptive capacities); political science/IR (roles of states and nonstate actors, human rights,

gender) and design thinking from innovation studies and architectural studies. This cross-disciplinary framework helps track the flow of ideas across nation state and nonstate actor organization boundaries and their outcomes, as measured here by the inclusion of an idea in a submission and final reports or related documents.

Findings

To set the scene for the findings as of August 2022, it is useful to share a 1997 United Nations definition and a 2021 resolution. In 1997, way before the term 'cybersecurity' became popular, the United Nations defined capacity-building as: "capability or ability of individuals and institutions to perform assigned functions efficiently, effectively, and sustainably. Capacity-building refers to the process of enhancing individual skills or strengthening the competence of an organization or set of organizations to undertake specific tasks."

Turning to the OEWG II itself, the United Nations General Assembly in 2021 voted to convene a second version (2021-2025) of the OEWG (see Paragraph 4 of the UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/75/240). That paragraph defines the work of the second OEWG as dealing with security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 and notes the OEWG II "may decide to establish thematic subgroups, as the Member States deem necessary, with a view to fulfilling its mandate and facilitating the exchange of views among States on specific issues related to its mandate, *and may decide to interact, as appropriate with other interested parties, including businesses, non-governmental organisations and academia.*" (Italics and underline added here for emphasis).

Consonant with the 1997 UN definition above, interestingly, Creese, et al. (2021) studied 78 nations and developed a 'cybersecurity capacity maturity model' (CMM) for nations. This recent model focuses on the nation state, recognizes social and cultural contexts but does not include direct mention of gender or human rights. Such a model is consistent with the traditional nation state centric focus at the United Nations. The research reported here goes beyond the recognized Creese and colleagues' model to interrogate current UN GGE and OEWG approaches to capacity building or capacity development with a focus on cybersecurity.

The organizational sociology field provides a concept that facilitates the analysis of factors facilitating or hindering the transfer of ideas among different types of organizations: the earlier mentioned concept of absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). As Levinson & Edling (2019) have pointed out, there are different types of absorptive capacity including an organization's capacity for 'absorbing' technical knowledge or even an organization's capacity for interorganizational learning itself. Such capacities are shaped by numerous factors including an organization's past experience, its intellectual capital and personnel expertise, its own organizational culture and the occupational and national cultures (Hofstede, 1993) in which it is embedded. This paper adds another understudied key dimension that shapes absorptive capacity: the geopolitical context.

As is clear from member states' submissions prior to the OEWG's 2021 consensus Final Report, some nation state governments had and have very different conceptions regarding the involvement of nonstate actors in their Group's deliberations. Part of this is cultural and historic: certain cultures are more hierarchical in nature (what Hofstede (1993) termed the power distance dimension); and some cultures have a specific history/viewpoint toward state and nonstate actors' relationships, especially in authoritarian regimes. Underlining the period just prior to and following Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a prelude to understanding the role of geopolitics assists in analyzing the absorptive capacity for interorganizational learning or the absence of 'stickiness'/absorptive capacity for certain new ideas.

The current OEWG materials and the March 24, 2022 informal consultation between the OEWG II Chair and representatives of nonstate actor organizations provide evidence of a primarily geopolitical disjuncture, surrounding the roles of non-state actors in OEWGII processes. The Chair, H.E. Ambassador Gafoor, in his opening remarks at the informal event he convened for stakeholders prior to the second substantive session of OEWG II reinforced his own "commitment to engaging stakeholders", while recognizing that the OEWG II was still debating modalities for engaging stakeholders. He promised that he would "do his best next week to reach an agreement", while also noting that "patience is important". At the same time, he recognized that the OEWG and the UN are "dealing with larger geopolitical issues" that create a challenging environment at the UN, one which requires "dialogue"- "we need to talk to each other". He went on to

add that the OEWG itself is a confidence building measure- needed in moments of heightened tension; he is committed to "preserving the value of the OEWG as a platform for dialogue". (All quotes come from the author's notes from this informal Chair/Stakeholder online session.)

The findings here indicate that the changing context for the kickoff of OEWG II plays a key role in understanding the controversy surrounding how to include nonstate actors in the work of the OEWG. After the OEWG (2019-2021) on 18 March 2021 issued its consensus report, the nonstate actor community was somewhat optimistic. That report included references to nonstate actor involvement in cybersecurity (in their appropriate roles) and also to gender and to human rights. It even used the term "human centric". While the GGE Final Report (with consensus) issued on 28 May 2021 has scant mention of gender or human rights, it does include a statement almost directly borrowed from the OEWG I Final Report that also mentions capacity building, gender and human rights. Indeed, it used the exact term, 'human-centric'.

Recognizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and the broader geopolitical arena helps frame the Spring 2022 controversy regarding modalities of stakeholder participation for the OEWG II. It also helps frame a related idea, a Programme of Action mentioned in the OEWG Final Report 2021. The Programme of Action, proposed in 2020 by France, the EU, and then 47 countries, called for a more regularized institutional dialogue and a more structured involvement of nonstate actors. The OEWG 2021 Report by consensus took no stand on this proposal and placed this item on the agenda for discussion at the OEWG II. Submissions to the 2019-2021 OEWG by Russia and China (prior to the consensus Final Report) set forth their strongly held viewpoint that civil society actors and topics related to international development, human rights and gender belonged elsewhere at the UN and not in the cybersecurity venue for discussion. However, both China and Russia signed off on the 2021 OEWG Final Report and the 2021 GGE Final Report, indicating a 'stickiness', even if slight, regarding civil society roles, still in their proper perspective, and a more 'human-centric' focus.

As this author has demonstrated elsewhere (2021), there is a direct linkage or "idea galaxy" within the 2021 OEWG Final Report and the GGE Final Report among the following word clusters: human rights, gender, and sustainable development, especially when these terms occur in consort

with discussion of capacity building. (Note again that the 2021 GGE Report gives less mention to this 'idea galaxy' but this Report does include a reference to 'human centric'.) Indeed, nonstate actor organizations were optimistic about their future role in OEWG deliberations and especially about the incorporation of a human centric approach to cybersecurity issues, an approach they, along with some member states, advocated.

What occurred, then, between the dissemination of the 2021 Final Reports and OEWG II's kickoff in December of 2021? An 8 June posting by Chatham House's Adam Kowalski (2022) portrays the broader geopolitical (and related disinformation campaign) context prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Kowalski notes that Russian spending on mass media increased 433% between February and March 2022. He also notes dramatically increased postings by Russian-controlled media outlets in targeted regions such as the Middle East. Interestingly, in the UN context during this time period, Russia seems to have reverted to its earlier stand regarding nonstate actor roles at the OEWG. While informal negotiations and hallway conversations at the UN are not reported, the results of formal meetings are recorded. Thus, documents from the first substantive session of the OEWG II reflect the absence of consensus on the OEWG II work program and, importantly for this study, the role or 'modalities' of participation or inclusion for nonstate actors.

Following the March 24, 2022, informal consultation between the OEWG II Chair and nonstate actor organizations, the Chair's office issued an invitation to "colleagues" (nation state members and nonstate actors who registered for the informal consultation on March 24th), to participate in a 'focused dialogue between member states and stakeholders', dealing with "*the role of the stakeholder community in supporting capacity- building.*" (Italics added here to highlight this linkage/idea galaxy.) The findings of the research project reported in this paper help to explain why the Chair selected this focus on 'capacity building' for the first such inclusive member state- stakeholder dialogue of the OEWG II, especially in the context of the absence of consensus on modalities of nonstate actor participation. Ambassador Gafoor himself stated at this meeting, open to all stakeholders and not just those nonstate organizations already accredited at the United Nations, that capacity building is "a gateway issue and a confidence building issue..a good place to start."

Levinson (2021), as noted earlier, has identified idea linkages or 'a galaxy of ideas' as a mode for enhancing the palatability of an action step or even a mention of an action step. Thus, for example, the 2021 OEWG Final Report adopted by consensus gives its most mentions to stakeholder roles in its capacity building section. Similarly, mentions of human rights, gender and international or sustainable development illustrate a 'galaxy of ideas': where one is mentioned, usually there will be mention of one or two of the others. Finally, these mentions are most prominent in sections of the Report centering on capacity building or confidence building measures. Levinson calls these "appropriate locations", echoing the use of "appropriate" in documents when referring to stakeholders other than nation state governments. For example, the 2021 OEWG Report (#56) and the 2021 GGE Report (#36) contain this or similar wording: "Capacity building should respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, be gender sensitive, and inclusive, universal and non-discriminatory".

The record of the 2019-2021 OEWG regarding informal consultations with nonstate actors differs dramatically from that of the GGE during the same period. The OEWG had 4 separate events /consultations/dialogues as compared with the GGE that only had two consultations: one with nation states not members of the GGE and the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and the second with regional organizations. Note that the 2021 GGE told nonstate organizations that they could provide input through the regional organizations (and not directly to the GGE). Interestingly, the 2021 Final Report of the GGE, also a consensus Report, issued after the OEWG issued its Final Report, echoed, as noted above, the wording in the OEWG Report regarding inclusion.

Another key phrasing in the 2021 OEWG Report that presages the work of OEWG II states "as capacity-building activities should be tailored to specific needs and contexts, all parties are active partners with shared but differentiated responsibilities, including to collaborate in the design, execution, and monitoring and evaluation of capacity- building activities". This wording resonates well with the design thinking concept discussed earlier in this paper and through its use of "shared but differentiated responsibilities" responds to both Russian and Chinese delegation concerns about state sovereignty. The donor-recipient model still exists in this 2021 Report. That Report also "recognized ..valuable contributions of other relevant stakeholders to capacity-building activities." One more key phrasing in the 2021 Report that assists in understanding the work of

OEWG II: "capacity building is an important aspect of such cooperation (to reduce risks) and a voluntary act for both the donor and the recipient".

In addition to the 2022 geopolitical contextual elements, it is important to highlight other influential elements emerging from the analyses: the ongoing COVID & variants pandemic that has made starkly clear the significance of core public infrastructure especially in the health arena. It also underlines the presence of major inequalities on a range of different dimensions from the global to the local. Taken together, these shaped the consensus surrounding the two 2021 Final Reports and are continuing to play catalytic roles in 2022, along with the uncertainties surrounding cyberattacks, the growth in such attacks, public awareness of these dangers stemming possibly from nation state governments and/or nonstate groups, and the expertise of the private sector and academe in these realms.

The Cybersecurity Tech Accord which represents industry in the cyber arena joined more than 150 other organizations, including 44 national governments, in calling for the 2022 OEWG (just beginning in December 2021) to identify clear modalities for nonstate actor participation in the OEWG II, per the 2021 OEWG Final Report. They specified five specific modalities, none of which were agreed to as of the conclusion of the March 24, 2022, informal meeting referenced earlier.

Arguing that "to promote an online world that benefits all ..requires cooperation across stakeholder groups," they go on to say: "While ultimate decision making on matters of peace and security-online and offline- will always remain with Member States, the meaningful inclusion of nongovernmental stakeholders is essential to support states in making the most informed decisions, especially related to threats in cyber space." Further, they note that this is consonant with the earlier mentioned UN resolution establishing the second OEWG (2021-2025).

Based on these findings and the conceptual framework, there appear to be at least three overlapping factors influencing the presence or absence of interorganizational learning (the generation, transfer, and utilization of ideas across organizational boundaries) regarding both stakeholder engagement and inclusion of human rights, gender and development topics in the context of cybersecurity discussion in the two UN Groups studied. The first is the role of power and especially geopolitical power (made even more

stark considering Russia's continuing war in the Ukraine). Second is the absorptive capacity regarding new ideas of the nation state and nonstate actor organizations in dialogue (when dialogue is present). A third factor is a galaxy of ideas that links less palatable ideas to more palatable ones such as capacity building.

Power and geopolitical power here relate to a nation's view of national government's roles and responsibilities. State power has waxed and waned over the years. Haggart, Scholte and Tusikov (2021) examine the role of the state in internet governance and its relation to state power and state views of power. Additionally, one can look at China's Digital Silk Road Initiative or Russia's views of digital sovereignty as indicators of state roles and views as to its relations with nonstate actors. A vivid example is Russia's early submission to the OEWG I, emphasizing that topics such as human rights, gender, or development belong elsewhere at the UN and not in cyber discussions. It also is reflected in the Russian government view that nonstate actors do not have a role in intergovernmental discussions and negotiations. See Levinson (2021) for an analysis of clusters of nation states that band together in statements to the OEWG I.

Finally, on April 22, 2022, following two substantive sessions held informally 'because of the lack of agreement regarding modalities for nonstate actor participation', the OEWG Chair announced in a letter the modalities agreed to by member states for nonstate actor participation in OEWG II. There are five main points:
1. "Member states commit to engage with other stakeholders.
2. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) already accredited at the United Nations need only notify the Secretariat of their intended participation.
3. Other NGOs need to submit information regarding their organization and a wish to participate. Their participation in OEWGII would be subject to "non-objection" by member states. If a member state were to object, then that country would need to alert the Chair as to its reasons.
4. NGOs could then observe formal meetings, make statements at informal intersessional stakeholder meetings with the Chair, and post input on the OEWG website under the link for "Written Inputs Provided by Stakeholders".

5. Finally, the OEWG is "an intergovernmental process in which negotiations and decision-making are the exclusive prerogative of member states". (Gafoor, 2022)

Implementing this process beginning in May 2022 and requesting any nonstate actor organizations to apply to the OEWG Secretariat for accreditation review yielded the following result: according to remarks from the Microsoft representative at Ambassador Gafoor's July 21 informal meeting with stakeholders, over 1/3 of the organizations that applied did NOT receive accreditation that would allow their inclusion and formal participation in OEWG II. Dialogue at the July 21st meeting included recognition of this by the Chair, noting that "the modalities are not perfect" (although he did not refer to the number actually turned down).

 At the close of the July 21 meeting, the Chair urged all stakeholders "to build bridges with each other and to work as groups or coalitions to detail proposals". This reminder from Ambassador Gafoor recognizes well the power of sharing information across organizational boundaries, forming networks of organizations that facilitate this transfer and, in his own words, "to build a network—a community of activists and actors to support the OEWG…and to talk to delegations (the member states)."

As of the end of the third session of the OEWG II, there is no clear consensus on the inclusion of all stakeholders, even in 'appropriate ways' and, thus, no evidence yet of inclusive anticipatory governance. The final Progress Report, adopted by Consensus and published on the OEWG II website in late August 2022, does not even contain complete consensus regarding experts let alone other nonstate actors. Under the Capacity-Building Section F, the final section in the Progress Report, there is mention of possible roles ahead for experts: "Experts could be invited to make presentations on these topics (funding for capacity-building, exchanging knowledge on capacity-building efforts and initiatives, sharing best practices and lessons learned from public -private partnerships, and understanding the gender dimensions of security in the use of information and communication technologies) to facilitate further discussion." Note the limitation capacity-building regarding the possible role for experts- again an example of both the idea galaxy and the negotiated, diplomatic linkage with an acceptable domain, that of capacity-building.

Thus far in the work of the OEWG II (having just issued its consensus Progress Report in August 2022), there appears to be an absence of significant progress on inclusive elements with some small and possibly encouraging nuggets, especially given the current geopolitical context. This final August 2022 Annual Progress Report for submission to the Annual General Assembly meeting includes mention of the OEWG II's commitment to engaging stakeholders "in accordance with the modalities agreed".
 In fact, the summer 2022 scenario seemed to be one of 'back to the future'. The 2022 Progress Report does provide evidence of the idea galaxy of gender and development and working with regional organizations –all in their 'appropriate' roles-- as linked to capacity-building. However, there is no use of the term human centric in this August Report. Nor is there use of the capacity development terminology.

The Chair, in announcing consensus on the Final Progress Report, noted that individual States could submit their comments on any parts of the Progress Report and that these would be posted on the official OEWG website. As of August 29th, only the final Progress report, adopted by consensus, following rather contentious debate, appears on the website. It remains to be seen if the idea galaxy linking gender and human rights and development to capacity-building will continue to constitute part of the OEWG II's future work or if another 'galaxy' may emerge. While not the focus of this research project, another 'idea galaxy' in the context of these cybersecurity discussions is the linkage of critical infrastructure to the present pandemic and global health inequalities and needs. We do know that the Chair of OEWG II continues to link multistakeholder engagement to capacity building discussions and that the Final Progress Report also includes these embryonic linkages, thus, providing a preliminary indicator.

With regard to absorptive capacity, several influencing factors appear to shape absorptive capacity for state and nonstate actor interorganizational learning in the context of possible inclusive anticipatory governance at the OEWG. One such factor is the presence of cultural contexts that value interorganizational learning and horizontal as opposed to hierarchical relationships. Additional factors connect back to geopolitical power. Such power, taken together with certain cultural contexts containing strict views of nation state roles and top-down perspectives, can deter or delay the presence of interorganizational learning regarding inclusion in anticipatory governance as it relates to cybersecurity discussion at the United Nations.

Conclusion

The next step in this research project is to identify the indicators or metrics related to the presence (or absence) and proximity of the factors discussed here in the upcoming meetings and future Reports. For example, the research reported here has identified using content analysis to determine the presence of specific terms such as gender or development or human rights in the body of reports and tracking to see whether they are included by consensus in a final report and where they appear. Thus, as noted earlier, the 2021 OEWG Final Report and to a lesser extent the 2021 GGE Final Reports as well as the newest August 2022 Annual Progress Report provide evidence of the presence of an 'idea galaxy' related to the inclusion of women or international development or human rights as linked with capacity-building.

The ongoing work of the OEWG II presents a distinctive opportunity to track the presence or absence of 'idea galaxies', how they may evolve over time, and how catalytic events such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine or the continuing pandemic may punctuate or 'delink' idea galaxies; and of any emerging consensus in the final work of the OEWG II regarding nonstate actor roles both in capacity building and in other arenas.

While capacity building regarding cybersecurity will continue to be on the United Nations' agenda, this research project provides fodder for arguing that scholars, policy makers and practitioners need to be on the lookout for the absorptive capacities of their own organizations, both alone and in concert or collaboration with other state and nonstate actor organizations. They also should be aware, as well-observed by Chair Gafoor, of the role of geopolitical power or context in inhibiting what this author terms interorganizational learning in nation-state governments' boundary-spanning settings such as that the United Nations. Will the boundaries extend to including additional previously vetoed nonstate organizations into 'appropriate' roles at OEWG II?   Finally, continuing attention needs to be paid to models of capacity building or capacity development and geopolitical as well as cultural factors as they impact absorptive capacity for cross nation-state and, importantly, multi-directional cross nation-state-nonstate actor information transfer and negotiation processes.

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