The HCSS Cyber Norms Observatory:
Making sense of the fragmented landscape

The cyber policy field is defined by a wide range of institutions and dynamics. Within this context, silo-ed approaches and fragmentation are among the most cited reasons for the slow process of creating cyber policy and norms. The fact that cyberspace is fragmented is well known, yet the *how* it is fragmented has not been adequately mapped.

It is precisely this question that drove the development of the prototype HCSS Cyber Norms Observatory[1]: "How is the cyber regime complex fragmented?". HCSS has developed a model that creates a network of over 900 norms in cyberspace to answer the question posed by the Observatory, and clusters these norms according to their similarity. The image below is the initial top-level result: in this network nodes (dots) are norms, principles, CBM's, and initiatives. Each of these nodes represents a written text that contains a normative principle on cyberspace, for a total of 906 nodes. Connections between nodes, known as edges, are made based on either thematic similarity or shared language between nodes.
The more central a node is within the network, the more commonly accepted the norm is. What we see in this network is a strong central cluster of norms that contain some of the oldest and most broadly
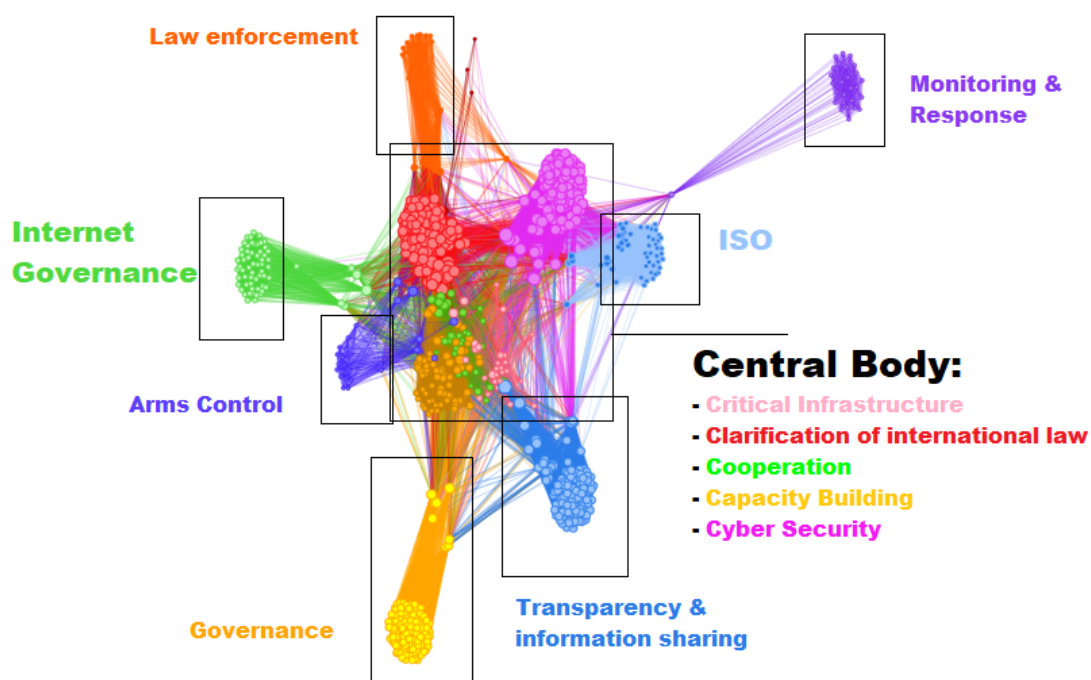

Figure 1: The cyber regime landscape

accepted norms within the network, including on critical infrastructure, clarification of international law, general cooperation, capacity building and cyber security. Towards the periphery of the network, we see more niche issues. The appearances of multiple smaller policy clusters indicate that the cyber regime complex is a varied field with multiple different angles of approach and interests.

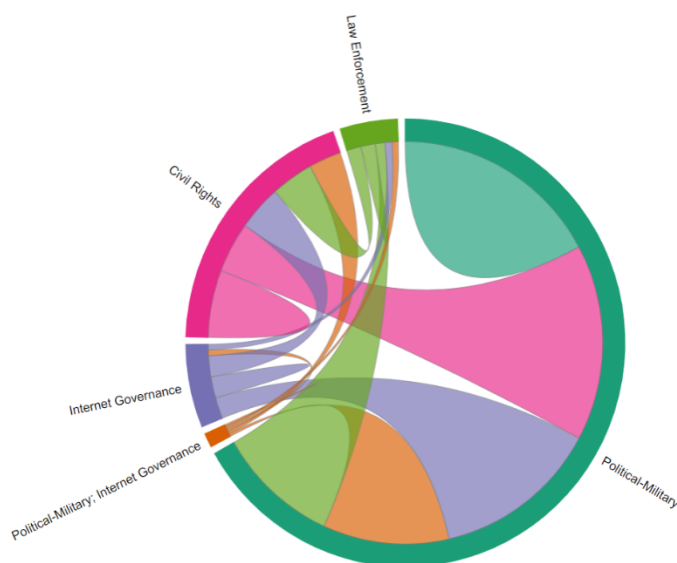[1] The prototype was developed for the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace

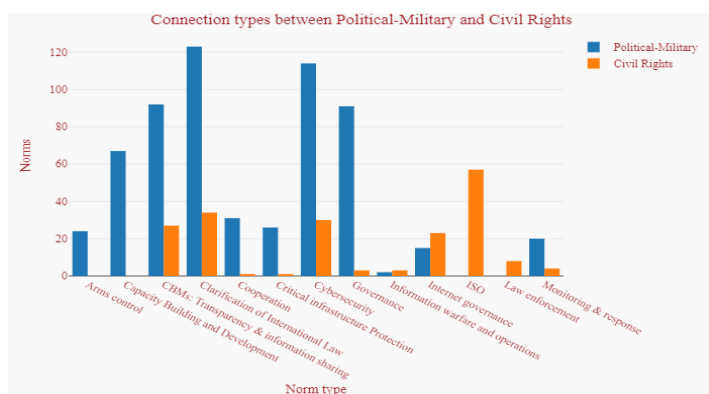**Figure 2: Regime groups in the cyber complex**

Figure 3: Thematic comparison cyber regime

In addition to a regime-wide overview, the HCSS Cyber Norms Observatory allows the user to see which actors share most connections, as shown in the Figure 2. Both the number of norms that an actor propagates as well as how well accepted these norms are within the network are indications of importance within the cyber regime landscape. This allows for a schematic and easily performed stakeholder analysis and accompanying drilldown on the specific interests of each stakeholder.

Finally, the tool allows for comparison between two actors: for example, the norms propagated by the United Nations Governmental Group of Experts, and those propagated by the Russian Federation are compared in figure 3. Such an analysis allows for the rapid identification of synergies and shared areas of interest between two actors and might provide policy makers with critical insights on where norms must be strengthened. Furthermore, it empowers policy makers to make more intelligent decision by combining strong content knowledge and quantitative data analytics.

The current iteration of the HCSS Cyber Norms Observatory is only a prototype, and will therefore undergo general technical improvements. Furthermore, the Observatory will acquire multiple additional functionalities that are under development; such as suggesting new norms to be developed and the inclusion of an interactive document database. Within that context, we hope to house the Cyber Norms Observatory under an institution that is broadly recognized and politically neutral, such as the Internet Governance Forum.

Any strategy requires situational understanding, and a first step towards this goal is mapping what space you and your enterprise inhabit. HCSS aims is to provide its clients with analytical insights to allow them to make more informed decision using data analytics. Should you be interested in our services, please do not hesitate to visit our website at www.hcss.nl, or contact us through the channels below

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