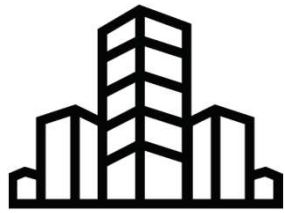# Multistakeholder Content Governance in South Korea

Inyoung Cheong* (University of Washington)
Pardis Emami-Naeini (Duke University)
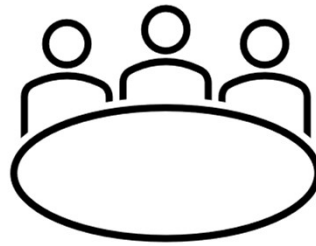Tadayoshi Kohno (University of Washington)

9/29/2023
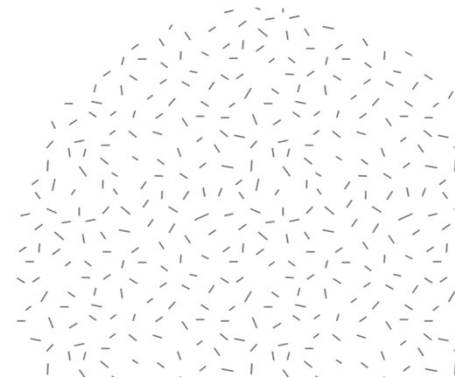
Content
moderation

"Historically unprecedented, concentrated
control of so much speech
in the hands of a few private parties"
(Thomas J., 2021)

More legitimate
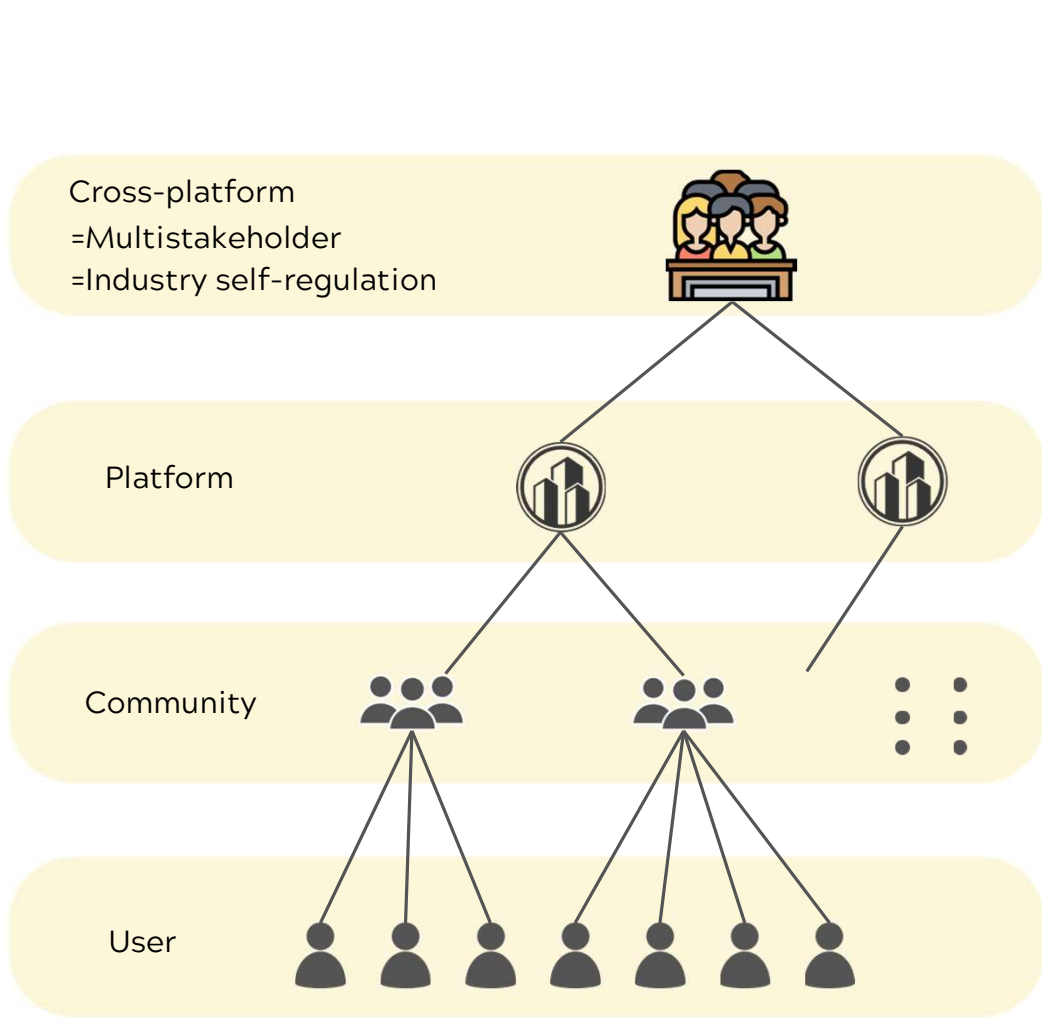governance?

How?

Oversight Board

GIFCT
Global Internet Forum
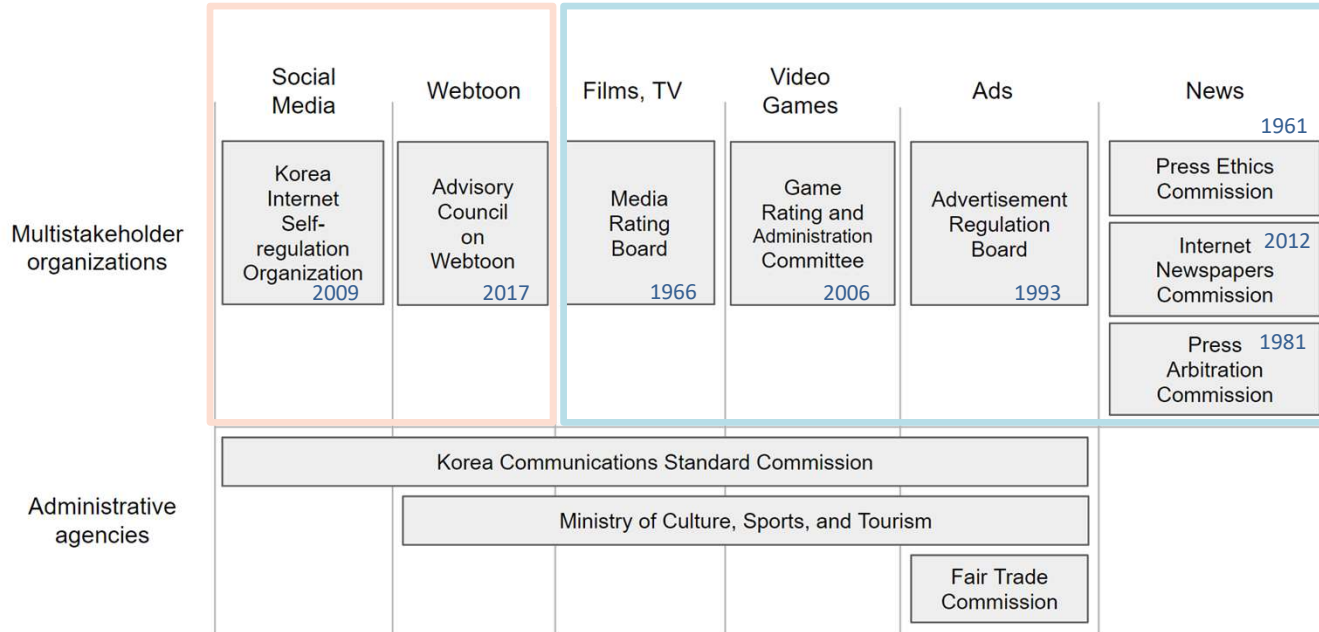to Counter Terrorism

We need
something
like
IAEA

Jhaver, Frey & Zhang (2021). Decentralizing Platform Power: A Design Space of Multi-level Governance in Online Social Platforms

South Korea's Content Governance

Funded by platforms

Funded by the government

	Social Media	Webtoon	Films, TV	Video Games	Ads	News
Multistakeholder organizations	Korea Internet Self-regulation Organization 2009	Advisory Council on Webtoon 2017	Media Rating Board 1966	Game Rating and Administration Committee 2006	Advertisement Regulation Board 1993	1961 Press Ethics Commission / Internet Newspapers Commission 2012 / Press Arbitration Commission 1981

Administrative agencies: Korea Communications Standard Commission / Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism / Fair Trade Commission
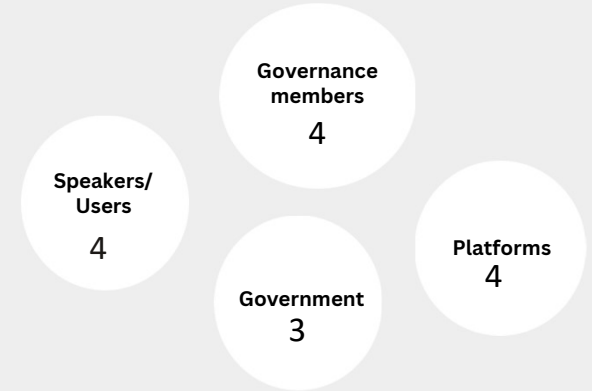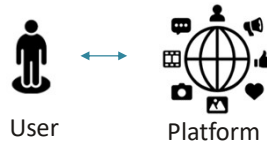
Research Methods

Document analysis (~2022)
(Statutes, policy statements, transcripts)

Qualitative interviews (2022)
(15 decision-making stakeholders)

Governance members 4

Speakers/ Users 4

Platforms 4

Government 3

Platform-driven v. Creator-driven

	User-generated content User ⟷ Platform	**Webtoon** User ⟷ Platform & creator
Name	Internet Self-regulation Organization (**KISO**, 2009-)	Advisory Council on Webtoon (**ACW**, 2017-)
Established by	Law	Agreement with the gov't
Examining matters	**Social media companies'** **moderation decisions** (Defamation, privacy invasion)	**Webtoon platforms'** **rating decisions**
# of board members	8 (Appointed by **platforms**)	8 (Appointed by **artists association**)
# of employees	10	1
# of complaints handled (2022)	334	27
Annual budget (2022)	$1 million/year (platforms)	$50K/year (platforms)
Compliance rate (2022)	**100%**	**100%**

Why do they persist?

Participants are acutely aware of **tangible and ongoing regulatory threats**.

The governance has **never** faced normative challenges.
Legislatures, courts, and executive branches *confirm the legitimacy of multistakeholder governance through their decisions.*

Participants believe that the body has demonstrated its **efficacy**.
*"For the past 15 years, I've never seen KISO make an unreasonable decision. Some may argue that **KISO's presence has diminished in recent times**, but that's largely because member platforms have **seamlessly integrated KISO policies into their own**. Over time, we only refer a very limited number of challenging cases to KISO, such as the recent incident involving gender discriminatory slurs, which require broader deliberations." (Platform Executive)*

Operating the governing bodies **does not cost much** (less than $1 million/year).

The governing bodies are increasingly focused on establishing **high-level, substantive policies**.
[KISO] Biography Policy (March 2021), Hate Speech Policy (April 2023), Chatbot Ethics Policy (August 2023)
[AWC] Anti-Discrimination Policy (April 2022)

Perceived Benefits

It insulates platforms from the **politically high-stakes decisions**.

It safeguards creators and platforms from **extremist users**.

*"Extreme user groups pose a genuine threat to creators, and the noises often spiral into never-ending rabbit holes. These users **frequently express their emotions to the organization**, which responds in a neutral and reasonable manner as **a third-party arbitrator**." (Creator)*
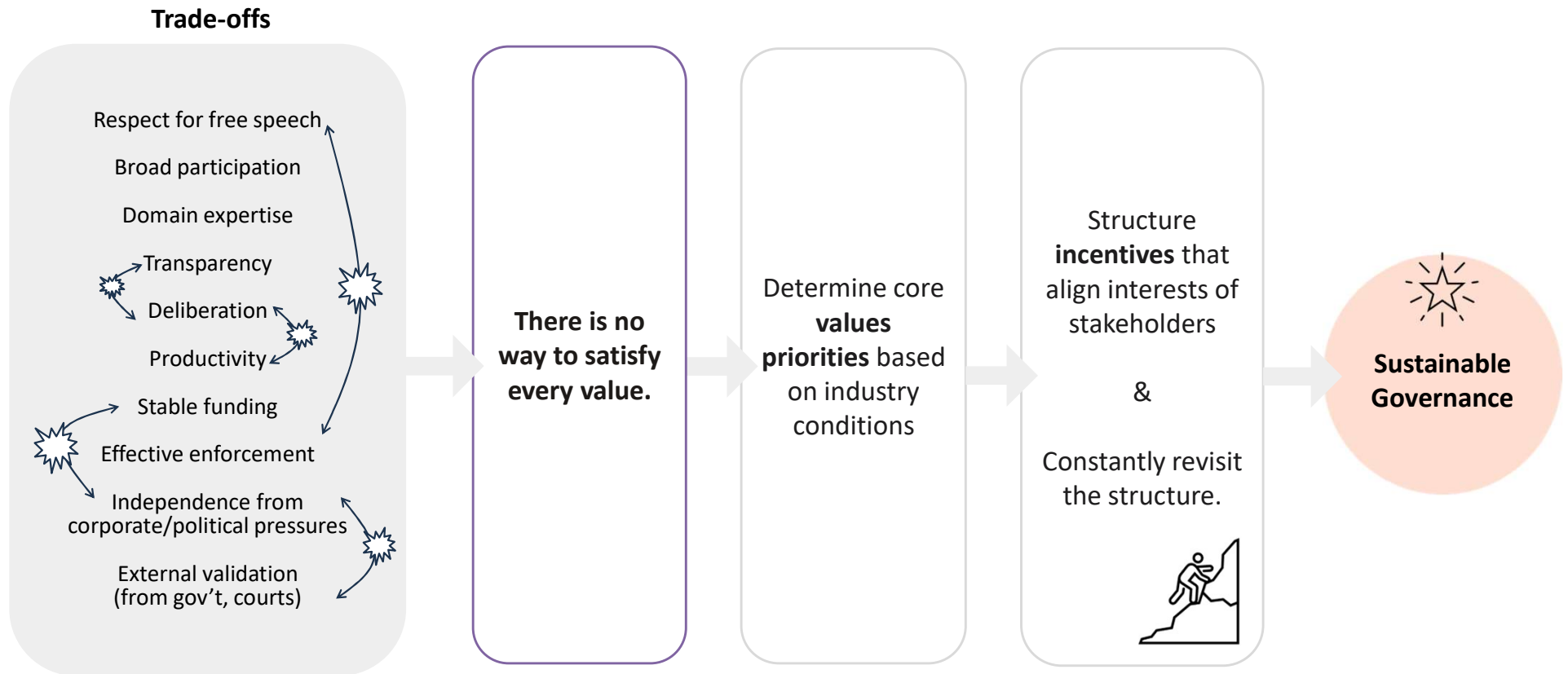
It establishes more adaptable and relevant norms based on **expertise and shared values**.

It accumulates **collective wisdom**, a case repository, and enhances platforms' decision-making.

Fundamental Challenges

Trade-offs

Respect for free speech

Broad participation

Domain expertise

Transparency

Deliberation

Productivity

Stable funding

Effective enforcement

Independence from corporate/political pressures

External validation (from gov't, courts)

There is no way to satisfy every value.

Determine core **values priorities** based on industry conditions

Structure **incentives** that align interests of stakeholders

&

Constantly revisit the structure.

Sustainable Governance

Key Design Questions

Creators
- Are creators **professional/full-time** or **casual/sporadic**?
- Is there an **organized creator community**?
- What is the relationship dynamic between creators?

Platforms
- What is the level of **competition** between platforms?
- Do platforms control **access to audiences** and creator **monetization**?
- Are platforms eager to avoid government regulation?

Government
- What are the **free speech traditions and laws**? (strict or lax?)
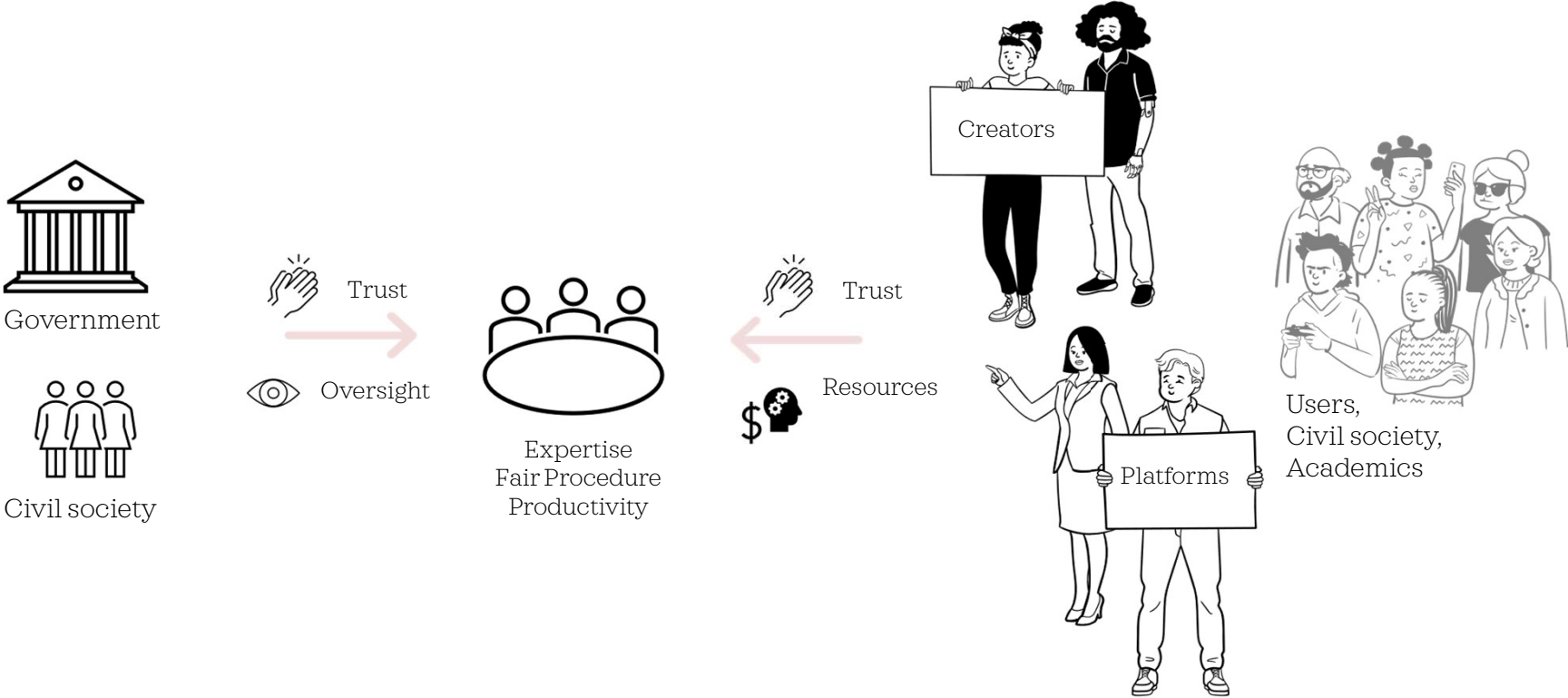- Has the government previously intervened in the industry?

Relationship
- What are the **trust levels between creators and platforms**?
- Do stakeholders share **common values and goals**?

Enforcement
- Can gov't have a **credible threat to compel governance participation**?
- Can platforms impose penalties like **account suspensions**?
- Can **creators self-police** like revoking professional credentials?
- Do **courts** support **active participation** in and compliance with governance?

Establishing multistakeholder governance is difficult.
It can be sustainable with the **strategic design** and
persistent commitments of stakeholders.

Government

Civil society

Trust

Oversight

Expertise
Fair Procedure
Productivity

Trust

Resources

Creators

Platforms

Users,
Civil society,
Academics

Thank you!