

**Governance of online creation communities:
Provision of infrastructure
for the building of digital commons**

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Online creation communities (OCCs) definition

are a set of individuals that communicate and collaborate, mainly via a platform of participation hosted on the Internet with the common goal of knowledge-making and sharing integrated into a common resource.

Exemples

Wikipedia

Comunitats de software lliure

Wikihow

Connexions

Wikitravel

Crisis commons

Common-based peer production
(Yochai Benkler terminology)

versus

Online creation communities

Build a digital common only under certain governance
conditions (to recall Elinor Ostrom tradition)

OCCs governance: Research question

How do OCCs organize and govern themselves?

Does governance shape the OCCs? Does governance determinate the OCCs “success” in terms of their capacity to increase participation and collaboration in the achievement of their goals?

Analytical process



Main methodological features

- 1) Large N statistical web analysis of 50 cases
- 2) Four case studies comparison

Combining online and offline methods

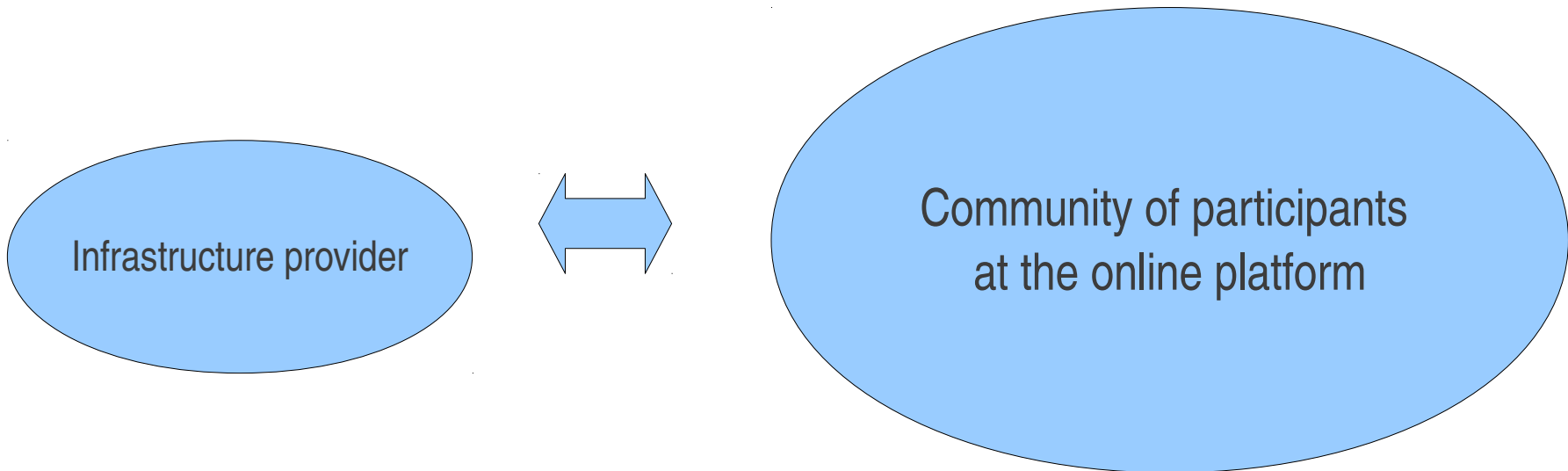
Virtual ethnography & participative observation

Interviews

Governance of OCCs:

Two components

Example: Wikimedia Foundation - Wikipedia



Infrastructure provision
one of the key sources of **power**
in **network society**

Dimensions of OCCs infrastructure governance

- 1) Level of community involvement (**self-governance**) and transparency in the **decision-making** (infrastructure provision, rules and policies of participants interaction, among others)
- 2) Level of **freedom and autonomy** of the participants in regards to the infrastructure (embedded in the Intellectual Property regime)

Black-box conditions (Proprietary software & copyright license)

versus

Netenabler conditions (Free software & free license)

Dimensions of OCCs infrastructure governance

Major Freedom and Autonomy
(Free software & license)

Closeness

Openness
to decision-making
(Self-governance)

(Proprietary software & copyright license)

Dependency

Models of OCCS infrastructure governance

Major Freedom and Autonomy

(Free software & license)

Self-provision Assembly (Indymedia)

Mission Enterprises (Wikihow)

Representative Foundations (Wikipedia)

Close

Open

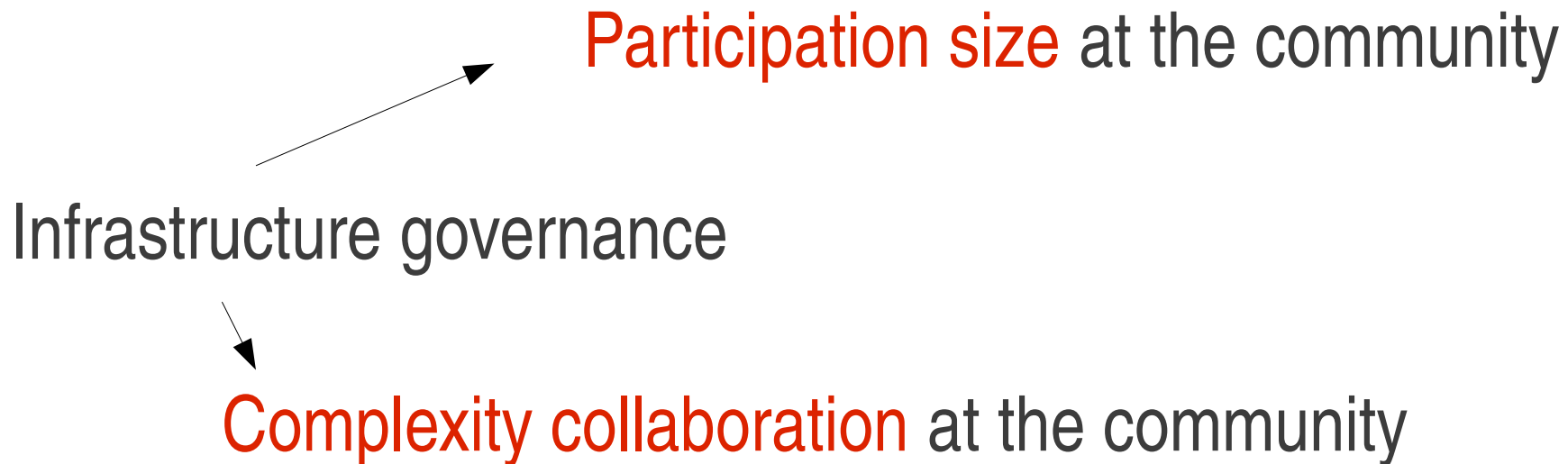
Corporate services (Flickr)

(Proprietary software & copyright license)

Dependency

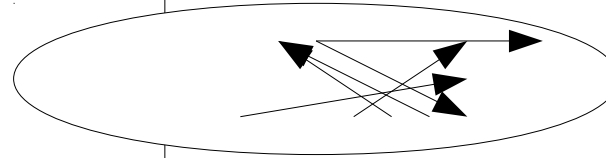
How does infrastructure governance shape the communities generated?

Analytical process



Models of OCCS infrastructure governance

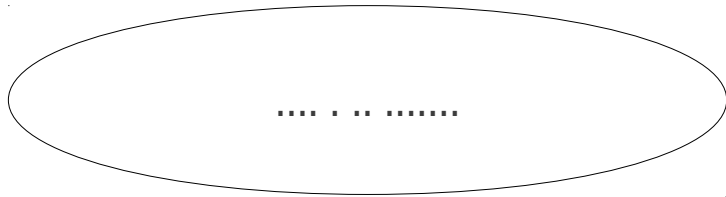
Major Freedom and Autonomy
(Free software & license)



More Collaborative

Closeness decision-making

Openness



Larger

(Proprietary software & copyright license)

Dependency

Success in terms of **scale of participation involved** does not tend to require empowering conditions (self-governance) and could be developed under dependency and control conditions of the infrastructure provider.

Success in terms of achieving **complex goals** tend to be more achieved with empowering (self-governance) and freedom and autonomy conditions.

Infrastructure governance: Conflictual logics

Major Freedom and Autonomy
(Free software & license)

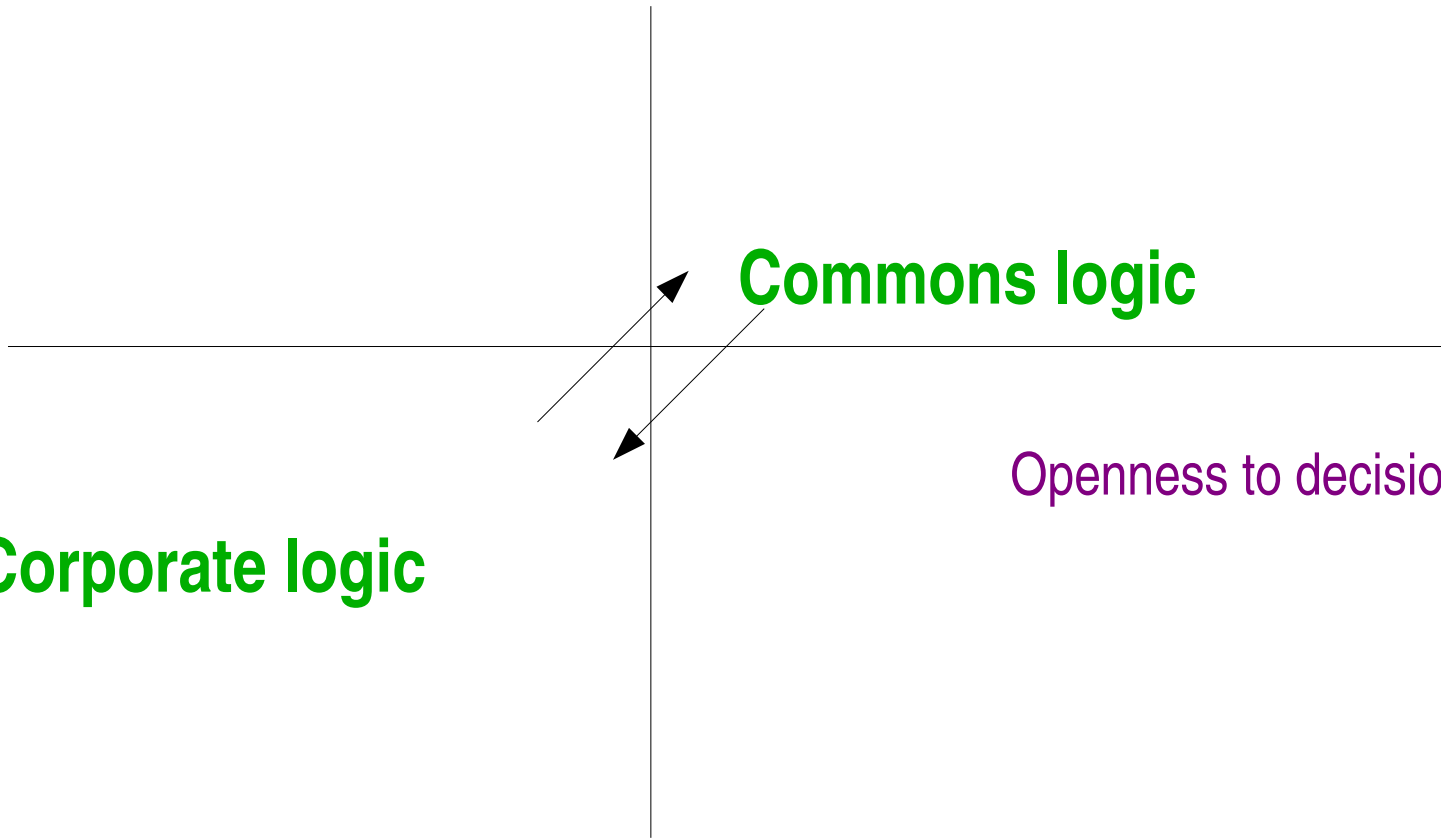
Commons logic

Close

Corporate logic

Openness to decision-making

(Proprietary software & copyright license)
Dependency

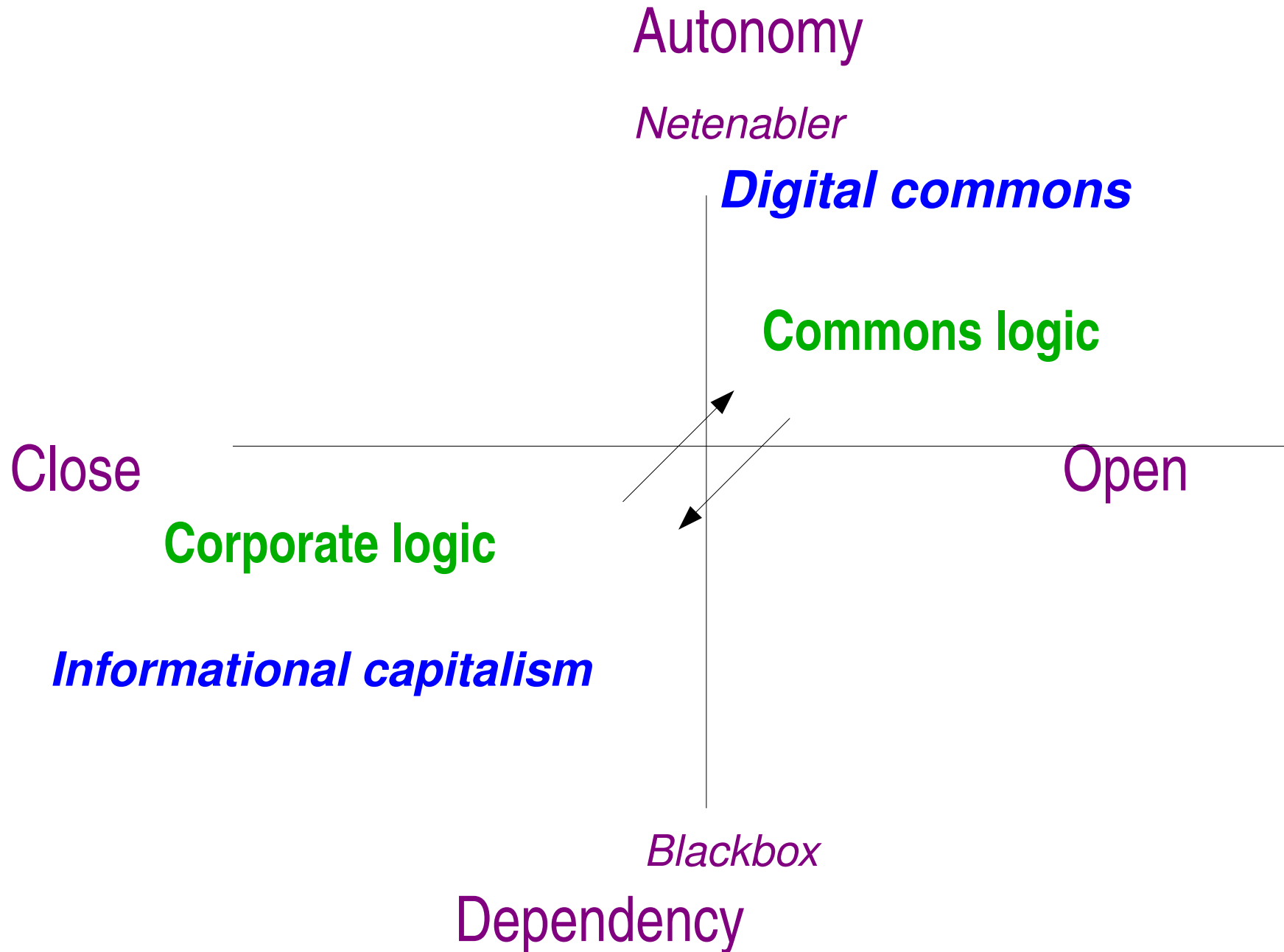


Digital Commons definition

Information and knowledge resources that

- * is **collectively created and owned** or shared between a community*
- * is (generally freely) **available to use and reuse** by third parties.*
- * the **community** of people building them can intervene in **governing** their interaction processes and the shared resources.*

Infrastructure governance: Type of outcomes



Conflict between **commons *versus* corporate logic:**

**Free Culture Movement and digital
rights movements**

Thank you!

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