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SI 507: Information Policy Analysis and Design

Wk 12: Transnational Governance and Development

Modernization Theory (1950s-60s)

- Colonial management and the postwar international development project (bilateral aid, World Bank & IMF) – communication networks as tools of extraction and colonial governance (ongoing legacies)
- Take-off model of economic development – Rostow's 'stages of growth': 1. traditional society, 2. preconditions for take-off, 3. take-off, 4. drive to maturity, and 5. high mass consumption
- 'communication for development' – mass media would help effect a transition from 'traditional' to 'modern' societies in the developing world (psychological, cultural, institutional)
- Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society
  Wilbur Schramm, Mass Media and National Development

Dependency Theory (1960s-70s)

- **Cultural imperialism**: roots in economic dependency and world systems literatures of the 1960s (esp. Latin America) (Prebisch, Gunder-Frank, Wallerstein)
- Western domination of film (Hollywood), news agencies, television programming, commercial satellites, foreign ownership of telecom infrastructure
- Domestic actions: nationalization of telecom carriers (e.g. ITT in Chile); protectionist barriers against televisual imports; subsidization of domestic media industries; third world news and production pools
- Multilateral action: New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)

Structural Adjustment (1980s-90s)

- Shift from multilateral project to policy-based (or conditional) lending. (some typical features: shift to export orientation; elimination of tariff barriers; elimination of subsidies; sharp currency devaluations; downsizing or privatization of public enterprise; strict anti-inflationary measures; financial liberalization; etc.)
- Telecommunications enters as key sector in World Bank and IMF adjustment lending: rationalization, corporatization, and privatization (Latin America, Asia, Africa)
- Parallel 1980s discovery of telecommunications within the development community in general – ITU's 'missing link' report (The Maitland Report), 1985

ICTs for Development (1990s-now)

- World Bank infoDev program, Global ICT Department
- ICT4D projects / programs / divisions within bilateral aid or development research agencies (USAID, UK DFID, Canadian IDRC, Danish IDA)
- Multilateral reports: G8 Digital Opportunity Taskforce; UN ICT Taskforce
- Industry-driven initiatives: 'base-of-the-pyramid' market development
- Innovation and experiment: telecenters, Grameen phone, One Laptop Per Child, Global Handset Initiative

Understanding Transnational Governance: *Regime Theory*

- Emerges from 'institutionalist' variants of International Relations theory, in response to 'realist' (or 'neo-realist') traditions of realpolitik ('billiard ball' models, international 'state of nature')
- Attempts to explain rise and apparent durability of: a) **new transnational institutions** (e.g. UN); b) **new actors** (e.g. corporations, NGOs, 'epistemic communities') outside of states; and c) **dispersal of former state powers** (from government to governance; international to global)
- Issue areas: environment, collective security (transnational information policy)

Understanding Transnational Governance: *Regime Theory* (cont'd)

- Transnational regimes: "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors expectations converge in a given issue area" (Krasner 1982) © FAIR USE
- Defined by:
  '**scope**' – range of action / issues it covers
  '**strength**' – extent to which it constrains action (sanctions)
  '**durability**' – ability to withstand and incorporate change
- Policy fields as complex adaptive systems; questions of regime emergence, governance, and change

Regimes governing global information policy

EXAMPLES:

- International Telegraph Union (1865) (telecom standards, international settlements system)
- Universal Postal Union (1874)
- Broadcast satellite (INTELSAT 1964)
- World Intellectual Property Organization (1967)
- GATT / World Trade Organization

COMMON FUNCTIONS:

Information sharing among national bodies

Technical coordination (e.g. standards)

Financial compensation and cost sharing (e.g. settlement system)

Enforcement of treaty obligations (WIPO, WTO)

Occasional pull to broader sets of policy concerns, explicitly political concerns (cf. ICANN, NWICO, WIPO development agenda & "A2K" movement)

3.1 Questions

- How and where *might* ICTs contribute to broadly-based developmental goals (be specific!)? What are some of the common barriers confronting efforts to deploy ICTs in this manner?
- What role(s) can or should international summits (such as WSIS), ongoing consultative groups (e.g. Internet Governance Forum), or formally constituted treaty organizations (e.g. WIPO) play in the emergence and extension of transnational information policy regimes? Should they be regarded as significant, even formative, events and processes? Are there alternative mechanisms / processes available for coordinating global information policy in a more effective / transparent / equitable way? What characteristics would an *ideal* global governance regime have (be as specific as possible)?