

Movement in the Making?

International Institutions, Transnational Civil Society and Communication-Information Policy

Introduction

This project performed a detailed investigation of transnational advocacy related to communication and information policy (CIP). It looked primarily, but not exclusively, at the politics of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a United Nations process that from 2001 – 2005 became the focal point of many of the transnational civil society actors attempting to shape CIP.

The following overview of our research has been prepared for an October 28, 2005 convening in New York City. The convening was supported by the International Institute for Education and the Ford Foundation, whose support we gratefully acknowledge. The purpose of the event is to put the research before a group of accomplished scholars and WSIS participants as a *work in progress*, so that they can provide insight and commentary capable of improving the final product. The assessment we are seeking involves a review of its theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, factual accuracy and methodological quality, as one might expect of an academic project. But we also want advice about how the research can be made more relevant and useful to citizens interested in shaping domestic and international communications policy. Thus the convening brings together an eclectic mix of people: political scientists, institutionalists, communication scholars, social network analysis experts, social movement researchers, human rights, consumer and internet governance advocates, and funders.

This overview provides the framework for the convening:

- Section 1 defines the basic concepts used repeatedly in the research, and briefly indicates which theories they are based on.
- Section 2 describes the research questions that guided the work.
- Section 3 describes our methods of data-gathering.
- Section 4 summarizes our preliminary interpretations of what we think are the results of the research.

1. Definitions

- What is communication-information policy (CIP)?

Communications and information policy refers to the way laws, regulations, politics and social institutions shape the deployment and use of communication and information systems. It embraces a collection of related but distinct areas: the regulations and constraints regarding the content of the mass media (broadcast, cable, print publication); intellectual property (copyright, trademark and patent) issues; policies regarding the development, regulation and use of telecommunications infrastructure; policies regarding the allocation, assignment and use of the natural and virtual resources for communications infrastructures (e.g. radio spectrum, unique numbers, rights of way); privacy, surveillance and information security issues; free expression/censorship issues; policies regarding access to government information and (arguably) areas of education and science policy. We advance an integrated concept of the policy domain because there is a revolution in information and communication technologies, characterized by digitization of all modes of communication and progressive reductions in the cost of our ability to process, distribute and store information. As this “digital convergence” has progressed, issue-areas that were once distinct legal and regulatory domains have become more interdependent. (Mueller et al, 2004)

- What is transnational civil society (TNCS)?

Most concretely, transnational civil society simply means non-state actors, both formal organizations and informally organized collections of organizations and individuals. The term *global civil society*, while increasingly popular, can have distracting connotations. We concur with Keane (2003, 20) in the view that the territorial boundaries of states are in some sense arbitrary constraints on human activity, and think of civil society as a “vast, interconnected and multi-layered non-governmental space that comprises many hundreds of thousands of self-directing institutions and ways of life that generate global effects.” But we also accept Bob’s (2005, 2-3) rejection of definitions that see global civil society as “an alternative political space distinguished by sympathy and cooperation rather than anarchy, self-interest and competition.” Such views conflate the stated norms of many civil society groups with the actual forces governing behavior at the macro level. While the motives and behavior patterns of civil society organizations are often qualitatively different from states and profit-seeking business, they can never be fully exempt from competition, self-interest and economizing. Bob’s corrective is especially important when considering the institutionalization of civil society participation in policy making processes. As policy and institutions shape the distribution of power and wealth, it would be naïve and potentially dangerous to design participation based on the assumption that civil society actors have only altruistic motives. Of course, we also recognize that only a (small) subset of TNCS actively participates in CIP policy processes.

It is common to characterize “civil society” as a “third sector” that can be rigidly distinguished from the “private sector” (i.e., business interests). In WSIS (and other

venues), the United Nations institutionalized this distinction, setting up separate accreditation and administrative apparatuses for each sector. Because of UN practice, our study followed this distinction operationally, and we did not study closely private sector networks and participation. This is justifiable: research by ourselves and others (Berry 1977; Berry 1999; Mueller, Kuerbis et al. 2004) shows that there are empirically demonstrable differences between public interest groups and industry groups. But while operationally neat, we consider a rigid distinction to be suspect theoretically. It comes perilously close to reproducing the fallacy Bob critiques. We note that Keane and many classical definitions of civil society consider trade associations and other private sector organizations as part of civil society. We also note that there is a wealth of empirical data showing that states, especially developed western states, often fund and promote civil society organizations – a fact corroborated by our organizational case studies.

- What is a social movement?

Social movements are sustained popular challenges to governments, elites or powerful institutions that occur outside conventional political channels such as voting or lobbying legislatures. (McAdam, McCarthy et al. 1996; Snow, Soule et al. 2004) Tarrow (1998, 2) asserts that they can be defined not through their goals, but by the kind of actions they routinely engage in. They are “sequences of contentious politics that are based on underlying social networks and resonant collective action frames, and which develop the capacity to maintain sustained challenges against powerful opponents.” A key facet of social movement activism, according to Tilly (2003, 89), is to present themselves...as a solidary group” that is “worthy, unified, numerous and committed.”

- What is a transnational social movement?

Tilly’s historical take on social movements ties them as a mode of action to the rise of the nation-state, thus making the existence of *transnational* social movements theoretically interesting. The issue of transnational social movements has been dealt with most concisely in Tarrow (2001). His state-centric definition of a transnational social movement is:

Socially mobilized groups with constituents in at least two states, engaged in sustained contentious interaction with powerholders in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution, or a multinational economic actor. (2001, 11)

A transnational social movement must be rooted in “interpersonal social networks” that are the “foundation of domestic social movements.” (Tarrow, 1998, 185). Thus Tarrow defines them as transnational in terms of both their target and their constituents.

- What is an INGO?

We follow Tarrow’s definition:

International nongovernmental organizations are organizations that operate independently of governments, are composed of members from two or more countries, and are organized to advance their members’ international goals and

provide services to citizens of other states through routine transactions with states, private actors and international institutions. (2001, 12)

See also (Teegen, Doh et al. 2004), (Cooley and Ron 2002). INGOs as such are distinct from social movements in that their interactions with states are not normally contentious but take place within established channels. The definition clearly includes an INGO like the Internet Society (ISOC), a nonprofit that offers information and services (such as technical standard-setting) to business but is open to individual membership and participation and often assumes an advocacy role in Internet policy, which straddles the fence between civil society and the private sector. (Werle and Leib 2000) Within this conception of an INGO, however, there is room for the notion of a “social movement organization,” that is, an INGO that serves as one, formally organized node in a more diffuse social movement. An example would be the Free Software Foundation.

- What is a TAN/Issue Network?

We use the two terms interchangeably. An issue network or TAN is composed of domestic advocacy groups in different countries and international advocacy groups that exchange ideas and policy proposals on a sustained basis. INGOs and domestic NGOs are usually the nodes in a TAN. TANs “are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services.” (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Keck and Sikkink 1999) Examples of TANs in the CIP domain would be journalistic free expression advocates (such as Article XIX, IFEX, WPFC); CIP-oriented coalitions of organizations such as the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) or the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) Campaign; the large community of advocacy organizations focused on ICTs for development; INGOs focused on challenging copyright and patent interests within WIPO, and so on.

TANs are not the same as transnational social movements, in that they have more specialized expertise, are composed of formal organizations, and are more closely linked to international institutions and routine, non-contentious processes. Their basic function is to monitor and analyze rather than to orchestrate contentious politics per se; but they can become critical factors in the emergence of more contentious transnational social movements by forming international interpersonal networks, linking advocacy groups in different nations, publicizing issues, providing expert analysis to support and justify claims against power holders, etc.

- What is an institution/international regime?

We follow the definition of Jack Knight (1992): “Social institutions are sets of rules that structure social interactions in particular ways. These rules (1) provide information about how people are expected to act in particular situations, (2) can be recognized by those who are members of the relevant group as the rules to which others conform in these situations, and (3) structure the strategic choices of actors in such a way as to produce equilibrium outcomes.” Knight, Libecap (1989) and others have documented how the structure of institutions affects the distribution of power and wealth. Knight claims that the collective benefits of institutions are merely a byproduct of the way interest groups work out conflicts over distributional issues, and that the emergence of institutions can be

explained better by focusing on the process by which distributional conflicts are resolved than on purely functionalist accounts of the realization of collective benefits. (Knight, 1992, 27-47)

A theory of institutions specifically focused on the international arena is regime theory. In Krasner's (1983, 19), canonical definition, international regimes are "implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations." Regimes do not play a role in areas where states can realize their own interests directly through unilateral applications of leverage. Rather, regimes come into existence to overcome collective goods dilemmas by coordinating the behaviors of individual states. See also (Young 1980; Young 1986; Krasner 1991; Young 1993)

- What causes institutional change?

There is no simple answer to this question, but our preferred theory of institutions focuses attention on how changes in technology, ideas, relative prices, or relative wealth might alter the distributional effects of institutions, or create new distributional conflicts. A technological and economic change such as the rise in the economic and political importance of the Internet, for example, created a need for re-negotiation of existing communication-information policies and a need for the creation of new kinds of property rights. New ideas or interpretations could also lead to institutional change by reshaping perceptions of what is a "fair" or "unfair" distribution, or by uncovering harms that existed before but were unknown to the victims. See (North 1990; Clemens 1993; Eggertsson 1996; Dokeniya 1999; Fountain 2001; True and Mintrom 2001; Kruse 2002; Rosenau and Singh 2002), and (Cowhey 1990; Drake and Nicolaidis 1992; Drake 2000)

2. Research questions

Our subtitle identifies the three basic components of the study: international CIP, transnational civil society, and international institutions. Understanding this trilateral relationship is fundamentally what the study is about. We were interested in a particular policy domain (CIP); within that domain, we were interested in the activities and influence of non-state actors: public interest groups or NGOs, individuals, transnational advocacy networks (TANs), social movements, and to a lesser extent private sector businesses and associations. (As the definitions show, we do not conflate or confuse those categories; we recognize that they refer to separate types of actors, though with somewhat blurry boundaries.) And finally, we were interested in the international institutions, such as the United Nations, ICANN, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and treaties or conventions that define norms, policies and rules. It is the concept of institutions that holds the package together. Institutions set the boundaries of the policy domain and provide the structures wherein state actors and transnational civil society interact. Institutions also embody particular distributions of wealth and political power, setting the stage for political challenges and claims.

There are many studies that deal with one of those three elements; there are some that deal with two of the three. There are very few that coherently relate all three into an analysis of international political process. (Drake 2001; Bennett 2003; Bennett 2004; Calabrese 2004) Most research in this area does not deal with CIP at all. The few that do tend not to look at CIP as a whole but focus on one issue-area. (Galperin 2004; Sell and Prakash 2004) Usually, analyses of civil society involvement in CIP are not placed in the framework of a theory of institutions or institutional change.

With that in mind, here are the research questions that animated the study:

RQ1: Which civil society actors and groups got involved in WSIS? How extensive and deep are the social networks supporting civil society action in WSIS and across the CIP domain? More colloquially: Who are these people? How much public support do they have? How much funding do they get and where is it coming from?

This proved to be a fairly straightforward descriptive task, although conclusively assessing levels of public support proved to be outside the capacity of this study.

RQ2: Can the groups involved best be described as a collection of distinct issue networks or can they be characterized as a cohesive and integrated transnational social movement around CIP?

This is a matter of analysis and interpretation that must be grounded in theory. As noted in the definitions, Tarrow (1996; 2001) erects a sharp distinction between transnational *social movements* and transnational *issue networks*. A transnational social movement would be something comparable to the anti-globalization protests (focused on trade issues) that erupted around the Seattle and subsequent WTO meetings. The distinction is important, touching as it does on the degree to which transnational policy issues have penetrated domestic politics.

RQ3: To what extent did the WSIS process act as the cause of the convergence of the diverse, distinct issue networks in communication-information policy?

This is a context-specific way of asking a more general question: how can we describe and understand the relationship between international institutions and civil society collective action? How much convergence and coordination of CIP issue networks is happening around WSIS? Or are there still distinct, more or less fragmented issue-networks? If convergence is happening, was WSIS a significant cause of it, or simply a continuation of something that was happening anyway? When WSIS is over, will it continue or will the integration of CIP networks lose momentum?

RQ4: Is there an important change taking place in the relationship between non-state actors and the intergovernmental institutions that govern CIP?

Is there a shift away from intergovernmental, sovereignty-based global governance in the CIP sector? In particular, is the participation of civil society changing the structure and procedures as well as the outcomes of these institutions?

RQ5: What impact will institutionalizing the influence of civil society have upon civil society itself? How does it deal with the democracy and legitimacy deficits that it shares with the international institutions?

If the answer to RQ4 is Yes, then transnational civil society is itself becoming an institutionalized actor within the process. And it becomes important to know how civil society actors are organizing themselves, deliberating, making decisions and intervening in these processes, and what implications this has for ideals of better global governance.

3. Methods

The researchers combined empirical social science methods with more qualitative observations. The qualitative methods provided the context and “tacit knowledge” required to understand the significance of events and processes; the objective, quantifiable data we collected provided a stronger basis for analysis.

- Social Network Analysis (SNA)

As was evident from the definitional discussion of social movements and TANs, the concept of *networks* or organized relationships among actors seems to be indispensable to the understanding of the relationship between civil society and policy making institutions. (Heinz, Laumann et al. 1990; Knoke 1990; Diani 1995; Knoke and Boli 1997; König and Bräuninger 1998; Coleman 2002; Anheier 2003; Diani and McAdam 2003) So the core of our method was to perform social network analyses of as many of the WSIS civil society actors as we could. We learned many things about the strengths and weaknesses of this method, but those will be highlighted in more detail in the convening segment on social networking. Here we simply describe the procedures.

Our collection of SNA data was based on the “mapping” document (attached as Appendix 1). The Mapping Protocol gathered information about four different kinds of relationships the interviewee might have: 1) people, 2) organizations 3) publications and 4) events.

For “people,” the instrument asked civil society actors to “Name 10 individuals that you correspond with/meet regarding communication and information policy most frequently and consistently overtime.” This was intended to identify the subject’s interpersonal network with respect to CIP. Individuals were told that they could rank order the list and that they could name fewer or more than 10 if appropriate.

For “organizations” the instrument asked civil society actors to “List 8 organizations that you work with most closely. Think of organizations you are working with now or have worked with in the last five years.”

For events, the instrument asked subjects to “list international meetings related to CIP attended in 2002, 2003, 2004.”

Finally, for publications, the instrument asked subjects to “List 10 publications or web sites/e-mail lists or newsletters you consult frequently and consider valuable in your work.” The publications did not have to be exclusively devoted to CIP.

In total, we approached nearly one-hundred advocates, securing mapping surveys from fifty-three individuals. The advocate network revealed 427 individuals linked by 677 interpersonal relationships. More than 260 organizations were identified by advocates, ranging from loosely affiliated or time limited working groups and caucuses to formally structured domestic or international NGOs and intergovernmental institutions. In addition, advocates listed 387 separate events occurring on almost every continent, involving a wide array of governmental, private sector, and civil society actors.

- Organizational case studies

Building on our prior research, we were also very interested in the organizational manifestations of transnational civil society advocacy in CIP. We want to know what organizational forms their efforts are taking, how these organizations are governed internally, who funds them and at what level, how they define their identity, strategy and mission, and how these things have evolved and changed over the years. Thus, we performed detailed organizational case studies of four organizational actors in TNCS:

1. The Free Software Foundation
2. The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
3. World Association of Community Radio (AMARC)
4. The Campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS Campaign)

The case studies proved to be highly complementary to the SNA data; network analyses of both organizations and individuals within the organizations could be performed and the understanding of the quantitative data greatly enriched by the more descriptive and qualitative understanding of the organizations’ activities and history.

- Participant/observation of WSIS and other international activities (ICANN, WIPO, World Social Forum)

The researchers attended many international meetings to perform first-hand observation of the processes and politics, as well as to perform the SNA mapping protocol and to engage in structured interviews of the actors. WSIS Phase 1 Summit, Geneva, December 2003; the UN ICT Task Force meeting on Internet governance, March 2004; ICANN Rome meeting, March 2004; OurMedia/IAMCR, Brazil, July 2004; Future of WIPO Conference, September 2004; First WGIG open consultation, September 2004; ICANN and WSIS Civil Society Bureau meeting, Capetown, December 2004; World Social Forum, Brazil, January 2005; Second WGIG Open Consultation and WSIS Phase 2 Prepcom 2, Geneva, February 2005; CFP 2005, Seattle, April 2005; ICANN

Luxembourg, July 2005; WSIS Prepcom 3, Geneva, September 2005. We also monitored and participated in the WSIS Plenary and Internet Governance Caucus email lists.

- Qualitative, structured interviews of civil society actors, especially those involved in advocacy

In the course of administering the survey, especially during the early stages of the study, we spent an hour or two conducting open-ended interviews of civil society advocates, especially those in leadership positions in the organizations we studied. Actors were asked about their personal history and how they got involved in CIP and in WSIS, their policy preferences, their strategies and tactics for achieving their goals, the processes employed by their organization, their theories or understandings of social change, and funding sources.

4. Preliminary findings

This part of the discussion is intended to be more thought- and discussion- provoking than rigorous and precise – it indicates the direction of our thinking rather than its final resting point. Empirical results backing these impressions will be discussed in more detail in other parts of the convening.

RQ1: Which civil society actors and groups got involved in WSIS?

- If we count those who were persistently active, the WSIS-CS network was fairly small (500-700 people) and could best be described (following Tarrow 2001) as primarily composed of the “cosmopolitan, transnational activist elite that staffs INGOs.” The following distinct issue networks (in no particular order) were visible in WSIS civil society:
 - “ICT for Development” (ICT4D). A large TAN with many INGOs, ICT4D is almost an industry unto itself. Its members and organizations are well-integrated into the processes and funding mechanisms of the United Nations system. This issue network provided one the main sources of participation from the “global South” and had very close relations to government and intergovernmental organizations. Exemplar organizations include African Civil Society for the Information Society, IT for Change (India), UNECA, Francophonie, UNDP, Asia Pacific Development Information Project, Canadian development agencies.
 - Human rights advocates. This well-established international network of INGOs includes both general HR advocacy organizations and organizations that apply human rights principles specifically to CIP, in areas such as censorship, privacy, gender and racial equality. Exemplar organizations include European Digital Rights Initiative, EPIC, CRIS campaign.
 - ICANN/Internet Governance. This group refers to civil society organizations and individuals who became involved in transnational advocacy through ICANN’s constituencies and processes. People associated with this issue network came to dominate the WSIS-CS Internet governance caucus, which became very prominent and influential during Phase 2 of WSIS, because Phase 2 focused on ICANN and Internet governance issues. The composition of the caucus, which

- placed many of its members into the WGIG, spans a spectrum from important private sector stakeholders in the ICANN regime, such as ISOC, IETF, and the Regional Internet Address Registries, to critics and reformers of ICANN (APC, NCUC, ALAC, EPIC).
- Intellectual property/Free software. This issue network was present in WSIS civil society, but played a relatively minor role. Although its ideas and policy norms were widely shared within WSIS civil society, some of its key actors clashed with other civil society members and/or focused more of their attention on advocacy within WIPO. Exemplar organizations include CPTech, Free Software Foundation (FSF), EuroFSF, Latin American Free Software groups, IP Justice.
 - Alternative / Community media. Networks and people associated with alternative media were present in WSIS and in related venues (e.g., UNESCO), but not that prominent in the social network. Community media can be conceived as both a resource issue (involving spectrum management) and a mass media regulation issue. Exemplar organizations include AMARC, Indymedia.
 - One organization, the Association for Progressive Communication, rose to prominence because of its experienced leadership and its ability to span all of the different issue-areas. One of its leaders, Karen Banks, emerged as the most central figure in the WSIS-CS network. APC is an organization of organizations and could be characterized as a formally organized TAN devoted specifically to a broad range of CIP issues, including ICANN-related issues, gender, domestic telecommunication policy, and development.

RQ2: Can the groups involved best be described as a collection of distinct issue networks or can they be characterized as a cohesive and integrated transnational social movement around CIP?

- We would not characterize WSIS-mobilized actors as an integrated social movement. Not yet. WSIS played a big role in bringing pre-existing advocacy networks together, and established stronger interpersonal relationships among the “cosmopolitan elite” of civil society actors. But this convergence seems to have been limited to the level of TANs, and did not extend deeply down into mass domestic politics in multiple polities.
- We also saw evidence that even within these TANs, two notable fissures remained. First, most pre-existing CIP-related issue networks had to be introduced to ICANN and Internet governance issues for the first time; many are still digesting this issue. Many civil society actors mobilized during Phase 1 of WSIS found it difficult to get excited by the focus on Internet governance during Phase 2. Second, the involvement of intellectual property and F/OSS advocates in WSIS and in ICANN was limited.
- Only two of the CIP-related issue networks involved in WSIS seem to have widespread public support and strong connections to domestic politics: free software and community media. Of those, only FS could be unambiguously classified as a “transnational social movement.” This is a very important and influential social movement indeed, however. Through processes of replication and convergence it is expanding the range of policy issues and international organizations affected (see the case study on FSF). Organizations in this area are more focused on WIPO and to a lesser extent, UNESCO, than on WSIS. (While community media advocates have

succeeded in promoting their norms transnationally through WSIS, many of the most salient policy issues remain national.)

- Internet governance proved to be a far more significant battle ground in transnational CIP than most people expected. It dominated the second phase of WSIS. Objectively, the issue is important. But there is no social movement around it, and the TANs and NGOs around it are surprisingly weak. The issue posed problems for transnational civil society actors, illustrated most pointedly by the inability of major WSIS-CS actors such as CRIS and AMARC to adopt a coherent position on it. There were regular debates over how to conceptualize or frame it: is it a “development” and resource distribution issue? A civil liberties/human rights issue? An “oppose US hegemony” issue? An arena in which non-state actors can capture and retain greater self-governance powers? It could be all of these, but each frame pulls in different directions politically. Many civil society actors felt they lacked enough knowledge of the issue. Internet governance is in some ways more like the emergence of a new issue network than an integrated domain that converges all of them.

RQ3: To what extent did the WSIS process act as the cause of the convergence of the diverse, distinct issue networks in communication-information policy?

- As noted above, we believe that WSIS played a big role in bringing pre-existing advocacy networks together, and established stronger interpersonal relationships among the “cosmopolitan elite” of civil society actors. Our analysis of event attendance networks shows that the WSIS summits and other meetings were the biggest central convergence point of any CIP-related event. Because its agenda embraced all of CIP, WSIS reinforced and strengthened transnational actors such as CRIS and APC with an ideology or mission that extended across the whole policy domain. This supports Risse’s (2000; 27) and Tarrow’s (2001; 15) “coral reef” conception of international institutions – they provide a structure which attracts, in a cumulative or accretive fashion, actors who have an interest in its mission and can benefit from the institution’s actions. While this convergence seems to have been limited to the level of TANs, it is entirely possible that TANs could provide the infrastructure for a deeper-rooted social movement later.
- One possible implication of these conclusions: as WSIS goes away, transnational CIP advocacy will once again become more fragmented into the arenas of action offered by the fragmented international institutions (e.g., WIPO, UNESCO, ITU, ICANN). Powerful state and business interest actors seem to share this view, which might explain their desire to truncate the WSIS followup process and their opposition to a framework convention or a new Multi-stakeholder Forum focused broadly on Internet governance – as those new institutional processes would maintain some momentum for convergence of civil society actors and a redistribution of power relations.

RQ4: Is there an important change taking place in the relationship between non-state actors and the state-dominated international institutions that govern CIP?

- Yes, but the change is not linear, as the world’s governments are deeply divided on this question.

- The “roles and responsibilities” of governments and other actors in the formation of policy was a central preoccupation of WSIS, and came to a head in the Internet governance/ICANN issue. During WSIS, there were numerous conflicts over the restricted role of civil society. Although governments and intergovernmental organizations did not ultimately afford CS equal status, they courted long term change by using a rhetoric of partnership and equal status, raising expectations. By dashing those expectations, they de-legitimized a purely intergovernmental model and fueled continued demands for reform. The experience of the WGIG, where parity among civil society, business and government representatives truly existed, reinforced notions of equality and moreover proved how badly governments need the expertise of civil society actors in CIP. ICANN was controversial among many governments because it gave policy making authority to non state actors; by the same token civil society actors who had become accustomed to the equal status they had within ICANN processes were shocked by second-class status within the UN system. In short, international institutions are sending dramatically mixed signals about participation, and these contradictions are likely to produce change rather than equilibrium.

RQ5: What impact will institutionalizing the influence of civil society have upon civil society itself? How does it deal with the democracy and legitimacy deficits that it shares with the international institutions?

- We noticed a great deal of interdependence between INGOs, international organizations, private sector actors, and states. While the more permeable boundaries do indeed capture greater expertise and diversity of views, it is also very easy for civil society actors to be co-opted or have conflicting interests. During the WSIS process, however, the most consistent and strong point of consensus among civil society actors – including the business interests – was that their rights of participation and voice should be strengthened. “Multi-stakeholderism” was the most common message to emerge from WSIS civil society.
- There was continual internal friction over civil society’s own procedures. In the CRIS Campaign case study, we touch on some of these issues, showing how civil society’s self-organized structures were very effective and open in some ways but had trouble dealing with problems such as growth in scale, the procedural demands of interacting with governments in formal processes, and organized disruption by hostile actors.
- In dealing with problems of procedure and decision-making, civil society suffered greatly from the *burdens of sustainability*. By that we mean the ongoing administrative and analysis demands of continual participation in international institutions. This imposed substantial burdens on essentially voluntary actors with little funding. These problems show up most acutely within ICANN, whose civil society organs, the Noncommercial Users Constituency and the At Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), have full-fledged participation rights but nevertheless suffer from small levels of participation. However, when participation is funded by the international institution itself (as is the case with ICANN’s ALAC), severe problems of co-optation and insulation from the real

currents of civil society politics arise. We view this as a very serious problem that civil society actors must develop a position on and creative proposals to solve.

This has been a relatively brief overview of the study, which attempts to tackle a host of complex intellectual and political problems that deserve much more detailed treatment. It is good, however, to attempt to look at the big picture at the outset.

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