CYBER POLITICS AND POLICY

CHAPTER FOUR: LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM, COOPERATION AND REGIMES

AT THE END OF THIS CHAPTER, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Define key terms related to the liberal internationalism paradigm, including regime, norm, public good
- Compare and contrast the Realist view of cyber power with the Liberal Internationalist view of global digital superpowers
- Articulate criticisms of Liberal Internationalist narrative of internet development

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM IS NOT A BATTLEFIELD, BUT A MARKET

BATTLEFIELD

States are adversaries or competitors

For a limited amount of resources

One state's gain is the other state's loss

International system is unstable, unpredictable, characterized by risk

MARKET

Firms (or states) are INTERDEPENDENT

Achievement of goals depends on actions of COOPERATING firms

Rewards are COLLECTIVE, as are RISKS

Markets create order, predictability and stability

LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM IN CYBERSPACE

- The internet is a **public good** or shared international space which states need to cooperate to preserve.
- A public good is one which no one can be prevented from partaking in, and also one which can only be produced collectively.
- Furthermore, one user's enjoyment of the good does not diminish other's enjoyment or use of it.

- Internet is a UTILITY, not a BATTLESPACE.
- **Digital economy:** All of those economic processes, transactions, interactions, and activities that are based on digital technologies.

REGULATING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

E-commerce structure designers (or architects) wanted the digital economy to be largely unregulated and free of state interference.

They hoped that the digital economy would become a 'pure market' which was **self-regulating** through the actions of market forces, with little government interference in the areas of taxation and regulation.

Today, states and international organizations regulate:

E-banking

E-commerce

E-government

THREATS/RISKS TO DIGITAL ECONOMY

- Threats TO physical infrastructure/critical infrastructure
- Threats THROUGH physical infrastructure (Weaponization of threats THROUGH internet)

- Not all states AGREE about risks presented by vectored threats.
- Many TARGETS are not states, but private corporations.
- Private corporations may think differently about these threats – not wanting to publicize the fact that they were attacked, not wanting to invest in threat protection, resilience as a state would.

REGIMES: STATES COOPERATING TO PROTECT AGAINST CROSS-BORDER THREATS

- Precedents in fields like public health

Regime may be

- Formally codified in a treaty, such as the Geneva Convention
- informal and more temporary in duration.

POOLED SOVEREIGNTY

- States choose to give up autonomy to cooperate with neighboring states –
- Give up some measure of state authority in order to craft bilateral or multilateral agreements, including changing national legislation within their states so that it conforms to a regional set of standards

Stop and think:

What are some PROS and CONS of establishing pooled sovereignty?

STEWARDSHIP

- In allowing a national or international trust to administer a resource, or to engage in stewardship of the resource, states again cede sovereignty to this trust or foundation

- Stewardship of the internet as a global resource which should be preserved for future generations
- Role of organizations like The internet society

CRITIQUING LIBERAL INTERNATIONALIST VIEW

- Is the internet actually a collective good?
- Is GLOBAL policy, INTERNATIONAL policy really global? Or does it reflect Western values and western interests?
- Are all states on a level footing to choose whether or not to participate in international initiatives (or do poorer, less developed states feel coerced?)

- Free Rider Problem: Do all states contribute equally to collective solutions for securing and growing the internet?
- Did the "internet market" truly EVOLVE naturally and organically or was it created by specific interests for their own self-interest?

STATES AND FIRMS AS ACTORS IN CYBERSPACE

Figure 4.1: Digital Superpowers versus States

State or Firm	Number of Citizens, users or Members	Annual Revenues (or GNP)	Size of the Workforce
United States	270 million	8445 billion USD	163 million
Facebook	2 billion	51 billion USD	25,000
Google	1.17 billion	100 billion USD	57,000
Belgium	10 million	374 billion	5 million
France	65 million	2647 billion	23 million

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- Do these digital superpowers have the same 'buy-in' that a state might have in terms of feeling compelled to maintain the international digital environment (or ecosystem) as a safe and stable place?

- Should content and infrastructure platforms be forced to spend their resources on policing these structures, to guard against cybercrime, child trafficking or terrorism? Are these issues which are better confronted by states, rather than private firms?