



Measuring religion in global civil society.

**Bush, Evelyn L. *Social Forces* University of North Carolina Press June 2007
Periodical**

Across the social sciences, research has accumulated focusing on what has been termed a "global civil society" (Cox 1999; Wapner 1996) and a corresponding "global" or "world culture." (Boli and Thomas 1999; Featherstone 1990). Although scholars of global culture vary in terms of the questions they pose and the arguments they advance, there is one point upon which they tacitly seem to agree: global culture is a secular culture, where action is informed by rationalist principles and modes of organization. The literature on transnationalism is filled with accounts of cosmopolitans (Hannerz 1990), epistemic communities (Haas 1992), principled issue networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and other agents speaking the languages of science, economics and law as they pursue goals, such as democracy or rights, that resonate with the principles of the Enlightenment. Religion, if addressed at all in this literature, is a challenger, an exception that proves a rule about the pervasiveness of this secular world culture. Or, it is epiphenomenal, a mode of expression that legitimates or defends what are ultimately economic or political interests.

This orientation is especially pronounced when we turn our attention away from radical religious mobilization (Barber 1995; Huntington 1996; Juergensmeyer 2003), and toward transnational religious participation in global institutional politics, about which social scientists have been largely silent. This omission cannot be explained in terms of any lack of religious involvement in global institutions. On the contrary, in recent years, religious groups have wielded considerable influence in the drafting of United Nations documents pertaining to a variety of issues such as human rights for women, HIV/AIDS, and population and development (Buss and Herman 2003; Sundar 2002). Similarly, since the mid-1990s, the World Bank has sponsored conferences aimed at bringing religious leadership into closer dialogue with the Bank and the international development community. The European Commission likewise has been the site of concerted efforts to allow religious leaders and communities to influence "the meaning, spiritual direction, and ethical dimension of European unification and the policies developed in this context." (Jansen 2000:104) The empirical reality of religious assertion in world politics raises an important question for social scientists: How has so much religious activity escaped integration into mainstream research on global civil society and culture?

Religion scholars have elsewhere described the social historical circumstances that have inhibited social scientists from empirically assessing assumptions about secularization, or the decline of religion in public life (Berger 1999; Dillon 2003; Hadden 1987; Hammond 1985). This article will complement their work, first, by presenting a brief overview of the literature on global culture, describing how it continues to take for granted certain secularist assumptions. Second, it will show how these assumptions are not confined to researchers' analytic frameworks but structure the very data that are used to make claims about the cultural content of world society. Two analytical problems and their methodological counterparts will be described.

First, analysts of global culture take for granted an official discourse that is constructed and disseminated within an organizational stratum of global civil society that is dominated by the world's largest and most resource-rich international nongovernmental organizations and the intergovernmental organizations around which they mobilize. These analyses are often supported with data collected to meet needs of IGOs themselves. As Tarrow (2001:14) points out, IGOs and the INGQs that mobilize around them comprise "a cosmopolitan, transnational, activist elite." Following Peter Berger (1999:10), I would add that this cosmopolitan elite is largely secular in its orientation. If we take for granted that the principles espoused within this elite segment of the world polity are representative of those that guide advocacy closer to its grassroots, we paint a distorted picture of world culture. One feature of that distortion might be an underestimation of religion as a source of motivation and a vehicle for engagement in the global public sphere.

Second, world society research fails to treat religion comprehensively insofar as it takes for granted classification

schemes that assume from the outset a critical feature of secularization--institutional differentiation. Specifically, official sources of data on international organizations categorize religion as a distinct sector of social life, without systematic consideration of its overlap with other public arenas. As a result, research that relies upon these sources fails to capture the full extent of organized religious participation in the public sphere.

The implications of these methodological problems will be illustrated through an analysis of religious NGO participation in the world polity using two different sources of data: an official UN source, the Yearbook of International Organizations, and an alternative source, the Human Rights Directory compiled by Human Rights Internet. First, the two data sources will be compared in terms of the types of organizations that are included in each, with a focus on variation in indicators of power, including organization size and IGO consultative status. Second, religious NGO foundings will be measured, but in a way that does not assume religion to be privatized. Instead of treating religion as a distinct, differentiated field of activity, the analysis will examine religious mobilization within one organizational field--Human Rights. Human Rights is a field with religious origins but, over the course of its development, has come to embody the rationalist world culture described by world society scholars. As such, it provides an opportunity to evaluate one of the core tenets of secularization theory--that rationalism and religion are negatively related.

Secularization and World Culture

In sociology and political science, research has accumulated illustrating the influence of culture on transnational political and economic processes. International relations theorists, for example, have shown how norms influence international relations in arenas such as security and human rights (Finnemore 1993; Katzenstein 1966; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999). Importantly, they have done so by incorporating non-state actors into their research, arguing in some cases that the world is witnessing the emergence of a "global civil society" (Kaldor et al. 2003; Koehane and Nye 1971; Sikkink and Smith 2002; Wapner 1996). At the same time, scholars engaged with world system theory have critiqued that framework's earlier economic determinism (Wallerstein 1974) by debating the existence, dynamics and limits of a "global culture" that legitimates the global organization of social relations in terms of market principles (Featherstone 1990; King 2003). Neoinstitutionalists (e.g., Powell and DiMaggio 1991), in the form of "world polity institutionalism" (Boll and Thomas 1999; Meyer 1980; Meyer et al. 1997) have articulated what is perhaps the most detailed account of this global culture by explicitly delineating its constituent "world cultural principles." The principles they identify resonate closely with those of the Enlightenment and include universalism, individualism and the ever-expanding rationalization of states, organizations and life-worlds (Boll and Thomas 1999a; Meyer 1997). The homogenizing influence of world cultural principles is illustrated through empirical studies demonstrating transnational isomorphism among nation-states and nongovernmental actors in a variety of sectors, including education, environmental protection, population control and human rights (Boll and Thomas 1999a; Frank 2000; Meyer 1980; Meyer 1991; Meyer et al. 1997; Ramirez et al. 1997; Strang 1990; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2003).

Taken together, world society perspectives provide a potentially useful conceptual framework for the study of religion in global civil society. They do so by taking as their analytic starting point a cultural context against which to examine how transnational religion, relative to other cultural forms, is waxing, waning or otherwise transforming. Nonetheless, empirical studies of religion in world culture have been slow to evolve, despite calls for more research on the competing cultural forms and "recursive processes among constituent parts of world society." (Boll and Thomas 1999a:47; Meyer et al. 1997:151)

The slow progress on this front is rather curious, as the identification of religious advocacy is not uncommon in the world society literature. But when religious actors are identified, their presence is usually not problematized, or religion is described in terms consistent with long-held assumptions about secularization. For example, Keck and Sikkink's *Activist Beyond Borders* includes many accounts of religious NGO activism. However, the authors claim that "While many activists working in advocacy networks come out of these traditions, they tend no longer to define themselves in terms of these traditions or the organizations that carry them" (1998:15) Likewise, Chabbott's study of the development sector details the integral role played by religious organizations in the early development of that sector (1999). Yet, in the author's explanation for current development discourse and its "concern for the poor and its willingness to impose restrictions on the nation-state," (p. 243) religion drops out of the picture as the story shifts toward one predominantly focused on the influence of science and rationalism. In a similar vein, Frank et al.'s discussion of the scientization of environmental protection describes how "existential justification shifts from sacred fiat to means-end chains." (Frank et al 2000:109) In none of these cases is it clear what exactly happened to religion as a result of rationalization in each of

these arenas. The implication is that there has been a decline in religious organizing, or religious organizations have themselves secularized, but these outcomes are not supported with systematic evidence about NGOs themselves. Rather, they are deduced from the secular contexts in which the NGOs participate.

The historical process assumed in this research is consistent with the modernization paradigm that has prevailed in sociology throughout much of its development (Berger 1967; Weber 1958; Wilson 1985). On the one hand, scholars consistently identify the role played by Christendom in the development of "the West" and in providing the structural foundation for the emergence of the modern world system (Boll and Thomas 1999a; Meyer 1991; Robertson 1985; Tenbruck 1995; Thomas 2001). On the other hand, the world society framework ultimately rests on a model of a rationalized, secular world polity--one that has been emancipated from its religious foundations and presents as an antagonistic force steadily usurping religion's influence. This model is most explicit in world polity institutionalism, whose proponents describe religion as "out of step with world cultural principles." (Boll and Thomas 1999a:43) Claiming that "the individualism of world culture works against collectivist forms of transnational organizing," they describe a world culture that "competes with religions for providing the moral grounds to public and private life." (Thomas 2001:517; see also Meyer et al. 1997:148-149) Robertson describes this secularization thesis as having also been assumed and supported in the early development of world-system theory. "Indeed," he states, "it may well be the case that mainstream world-systems theory ... represents the absolute high point of the secularization thesis. For it has implicitly claimed to see the thorough secularization of the entire world." (Robertson 1985:348) (1)

But if secularization theory reached its pinnacle in studies of the world system, it has also been increasingly rejected by sociologists of religion who argue that religion is not in inevitable decline and that it can actually co-exist with modernization quite comfortably (Berger 1999; Dillon 2003; Finke and Stark 2003; Warner 1993). In research on Islam, for example, scholars have advanced a conceptually more fluid approach to religion and modernity, illustrating how "Islam and modernity are not in contradiction nor do they evolve in opposition but rather they mutually constitute each other." (Yavuz 2001:2; see, also Adelkah 2000; Asad 2003; Bamyeh 2002). Likewise, both American and Iranian fundamentalisms are shown to have been aided by modernization in their respective contexts (Riesebrodt 1993). Rational choice scholars have demonstrated that competition within religious markets is associated with the flourishing of religious life in America and Western Europe (Finke and Stark 1988; Stark and Iannoccone 1994; Warner 1993). Research on the Catholic Church has shown that religion-state differentiation actually positions the Church to more effectively take oppositional stances on certain public issues (Burns 1992; Casanova 2001; Smith, Christian 1991). And, most important for the purposes of this article, Casanova (2001) and Beyer (1990) each advance arguments that the coincidence of institutional differentiation and globalization will not result in privatization, but in the movement of religious authority to the public sphere of global civil society.

These developments in the sociology of religion do not require that we deny the existence of an expanding, rationalist world culture. But they do suggest that claims about world culture's relationship to secularism are over-determined, and that the capacity of religion to thrive in rationalized environments is underestimated. If so, rather than decline, we could expect either no relationship or even an increase in religious mobilization accompanying the rationalization of the world polity.

Unfortunately, quantitative studies of INGO mobilization in the world polity are currently inadequate for assessing these competing hypotheses because modernist assumptions are often built into the research itself. For example, Boll and Thomas support their argument about the secularism of world culture by comparing INGOs operating across different sectors of activity (economy, politics, medicine) and observe that "organizations promoting 'primordial social forms-- religion, family, ethnicity or cultural identity--account for about 6 percent of the [global] INGO population." (Boll and Thomas 1999:42-43) Likewise, Kaldor et al., in a more general discussion of global civil society, report that religion accounts for only 5.2 percent of global NGO organizing (2003). The problem with these findings is that the data used to produce them 1.) only examine a particular stratum, or class, of organizations oriented toward the world polity, and 2.) measure religion as a distinct sector of social life. The following section will elaborate upon these measurement problems and their implications for research on world culture through an analysis of the commonly used source of data referred to in the studies just described, the Yearbook of International Organizations (Yearbook or YBIO).

The Yearbook of International Organizations

Since 1908, the Union of International Associations has been collecting information on international organizations for

publication in the YBIO. Being the most comprehensive source of data on INGOs (Kaldor et al. 2003a; Sikkink and Smith 2002), the Yearbook is commonly used by world society scholars, especially those who advance claims about how world cultural norms influence governmental and nongovernmental actors (Anheier and Katz 2003; Anheier and Themundo 2002; Boll and Thomas 1999a; Chabbott 1999; Frank et al. 2000; Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Kaldor et al. 2003; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Sikkink and Smith 2002; Smith 1997; Smith 2004; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004). However, use of the YBIO as a source of data for supporting claims about the sources and content of world culture is problematic, and for two reasons.

First, due to the history behind the UIA's formation and development, the UIA's data collection methods might be biased in favor of organizations that occupy the most elite stratum of the world polity. After World War I, the UIA began working in collaboration with the League of Nations and, since the end of World War II, has worked closely with the UN (UIA 2005/2006a). As a result of this collaboration, the UIA's criteria for inclusion in the YBIO are at times influenced by the UN's informational needs. For example, in 1978, the YBIO revised its classification scheme to more accurately reflect the types of organizations that have consultative status with the UN (Pei-heng 1981).

This collaboration raises a problem for the analyst in that, if the YBIO contains a disproportionate number of organizations that would be candidates for affiliation with IGOs, an organizational class bias might be at work. For example, the UIA publishes the most detailed information about organizations that it classifies as "conventional international." It is these organizations that are measured in quantitative studies that use the Yearbook. Among the criteria for inclusion as a "conventional international" organization are: membership that includes citizens from three or more countries, non-hierarchical structures and relatively equal financial contributions from each country, so that no one country's members dominate the others (Union of International Associations 2005/2006). These criteria are likely to result in the systematic exclusion of smaller NGOs that may target the international arena, or are oriented toward international issues, yet have only domestic or bilateral membership or operations, or are largely dependent upon financial resources from their members in wealthier countries. As a result, research using the YBIO might be missing a significant amount of global civil society activity, especially among organizations that are lacking in resources or networks.

But more than resource variation is at stake here; this limitation could also have important implications for how we think about world culture. The UIA's commitment to defining INGOs in ways that are consistent with the needs of international institutions have not been motivated solely by the practical advantages of doing so. Norms have also played an important role. Consider this excerpt from a memorandum by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, communicated to the League on Sept. 5, 1921:

"The principles and ambitions of the Union of International Associations were consecrated by the formation of the League. The very nature of the work carried out by the Union of International Associations before the war rendered it indirectly and within the means at its disposal, one of the promoters of the League of Nations. It had already expressly declared at one of the congresses that the principle of a League of Nations was the ultimate end of all international movements." (UIA 2005/2006a: 1815)

This close and principled collaboration between the UIA and IGOs suggests the need for caution when using the YBIO as a source of evidence for making claims about world culture. As the following section will describe, major international institutions such as the UN thoroughly embody the world cultural principles described by world society scholars. Therefore, any system of data collection (not just the YBIO) designed to identify organizations that IGOs deem legitimate is likely to contain a collection bias in favor of organizations that enact those particular principles. As a result, the data are likely to provide a skewed representation of the organizations that comprise world culture--unless, of course, we assume a cultural continuity across levels of a stratified world polity.

Scholars of religion have seriously questioned whether such continuity across classes can be assumed. As former secularization theorist Peter Berger points out, secularism is most prominent among a cosmopolitan, highly educated, international elite. In the context of an otherwise desecularizing world:

"There exists an international subculture composed of people with Western-type higher education, especially in the humanities and social sciences, that is indeed secularized. This subculture is the principal 'Carrier' of progressive,

Enlightened beliefs and values. While its members are relatively thin on the ground, they are very influential as they control the institutions that provide the 'official' definitions of reality, notably the educational system, the media of mass communication, and the higher reaches of the legal system ... what we have here is a globalized elite culture." (Berger 1999:10)

He contrasts this elite global culture with religious movements, pointing out that, "In country after country ... religious upsurges have a strongly populist character. Over and beyond the purely religious motives, these are movements of protest and resistance against a secular elite." (Berger 1999:11) If Berger is correct, and this secular subculture is the exception, and not the rule, for global culture more generally, than any finding of an elite organizational bias in world society research would suggest the need for more stratified analyses of world cultural principles. The analysis that follows will establish whether or not such a bias exists by comparing religious human rights NGO entries in the YBIO to those in an alternative data source designed to be more inclusive of nongovernmental actors at the "grassroots" of global civil society.

A second reason for caution in using the YBIO to support claims about world culture has to do with another feature of the UIA's classification system. As Boll and Thomas mention (1999a), religious orders, fraternities and secular institutes, often having hierarchical structures, seldom meet all of the criteria for a "conventional international" organization as outlined above. Such organizations are classified in a separate category, "R," presumably for "religion," and their Yearbook entries are abbreviated to include only organizations' names and contact information. Note that classification into a separate category is based in part on the structure and membership rules of an organization--not exclusively on the presence or absence of religious missions or activities. This means that a number of the INGOs classified as "conventional" in the YBIO may in fact be religious, but are not identifiable as such if the determination is made solely on the basis of their YBIO classification.

The use of an exclusive, separate category to measure religion is not unique to the YBIO. It is a common feature across several official international classification schemes, including the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations, the International Standard Industrial Classification and the Classification of the Purpose of Non-profit Institutions, each of which is utilized and endorsed by the UN (United Nations 2003). Equally important, quantitative studies engaging the secularization debate in the sociology of religion also use indicators of religiosity such as frequency of attendance at worship services, frequency of prayer, donations to churches or recruitment to the clergy, that assume a practical and organizational boundary between religious and secular life. (2) That is, the data assume from the outset one of the central tenets of the modernization paradigm--institutional differentiation. This method is inadequate for measuring religion in global civil society since it is not sensitive to the presence of organized religion in public domains such as politics, education or healthcare. (3)

One response to this critique might be that world culture is primarily embodied or expressed in the forms of organization (i.e., rational, bureaucratic, goal-oriented), not in the discourses or goals, that agents use to legitimate their actions. For example, in a discussion of rational voluntarism, Boll argues that, "global organizations whose goals or means include something like compassion (world peace, harmony, fellowship, mutual understanding, tolerance) are not at all rare but few of these [INGOs] allow compassion to play a major role in their internal structures or operations. Most are much too rationalized for that." (Boll 1999a:276-277) The problem with this argument is that it is difficult to determine, for purposes of comparison, what would constitute a "non-rational" mode of organization. What would "compassionate organizational structure" or "compassionate means" look like? In the absence of a clear distinction between rational and non-rational modes of organizing, we are left to infer that any attempt to organize instrumentally--that is, any attempt to organize--is, by default, evidence of conformity to the rationalist values of the world polity.

Equally problematic is the claim that organizations that explicitly state that their goals are inspired by compassion, are really just "[incorporating] compassion mainly as a source of motivation for the commitment to rational purposes." (Boll 1999:176) In other words, compassionate ends are actually just means for achieving the real end, which is organizing according to rational means. In the absence of a clear distinction between motivations and strategies (i.e., means vs. ends), or clear distinction between rational and non-rational modes of organizing, we are left with an untestable hypothesis about the antagonism between a rationalist world culture and religious forms of agency.

The following analysis represents an alternative approach, by allowing for the possibility that rationalism and religion are not incompatible, and that instrumental rationalism may be a strategy for the pursuit goals that are defined through

or motivated by religion. It does so, first, by measuring religious INGO foundations within an organizational field, rather than across fields, avoiding the a priori assumption of a differentiation between religious and secular spheres. Second, although it examines NGO participation in a highly rationalized field--human rights--rather than deducing organizational secularism from participation in that field, it takes at face value organizations' descriptions of their motivations. Taken together, these methods allow for a more accurate account of religious mobilization in one sector of the global public sphere.

Why Human Rights?

Several characteristics of the human rights field make it ideal for a study of the relationship between a rationalist world culture and religion. To begin, the "origin myth" of Human Rights is that the field emerged as an outcome of enlightenment rationalism and the embrace of secular individualism as the cornerstone of rights protections. It would be difficult to argue that enlightenment principles did not play a role in the field's development. It is obvious that they did. However, this popular account of Human Rights origins conceals the field's earlier roots in the abolitionist movement of the 19th century--a movement that was comprised of predominantly Quaker, Presbyterian and Methodist activists (Keck and Sikkink 1998). This movement was organized in networks that spanned continents but nonetheless lacked a centralized, institutional base.

However, with the establishment of the UN in 1948, and the codification of human rights norms into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights activism increasingly cohered around the centralized structures of the UN and other international institutions, which have since served as the field's institutional core (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tsutsui and Woptika 2004). This institutional structuring has been accompanied by an underlying rationalism that is evident in the marked bureaucratization, standardization and professionalization that have occurred within the field over the past half-century.

As for bureaucratization, IGOs are large bureaucratic structures, comprised of complex systems of classification, documentation, formal procedures, and chains of command. Human rights advocates who wish to have their grievances heard at the UN must organize in ways that enable them to navigate these bureaucracies.

A second form of rationalization is standardization. Although Human Rights is quite diverse in terms of the cultural and national identities of participating NGOs (Smith 1997), by and large, today's human rights NGOs exhibit common characteristics and behaviors that allow for the effective coordination of their operations and signal their legitimacy within the field. These characteristics typically include public statements of support for the UN, the use of either English or French as a working language, facility with western technology and models of bureaucratic management, and the use of standard sets of procedures for reporting human rights violations.

Related to standardization is a third feature: professionalization. Today's human rights advocates are often members of professional NGOs and are, themselves, professional advocates. As of 2001, Human Rights Internet reported worldwide 96 professional associations, 389 academic or university-based programs, 283 educational and training institutions, and 620 legally-oriented organizations (e.g., bar associations, law firms, legal resource centers) that focus on human rights. In other words, the Human Rights field not only has international institutions at its core, but it is also embedded in array of linked institutional structures that provide it with legitimacy, material support and coherence.

The substantial presence of universities and legal establishments is associated with an important cultural transformation in the field--the transformation of human rights discourse away from its roots in natural law and religious traditions, to a firm anchoring in the languages of positive law and science (Keck and Sikkink 1998). As a result of this shift, Human Rights as a field is defined through a secular discourse that closely resonates with enlightenment rationalism and the world cultural principles associated with it. One need only read the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for explicit endorsement of such principles as universalism, individualism and world citizenship, a language that has consistently been used in human rights covenants, conventions and declarations since the Universal Declaration. In Human Rights, world cultural principles are elaborated in ideal typical form.

If the classical secularization paradigm assumed in research on world society is correct, then this type of

rationalization should be associated with an exclusion of religion from the global public sphere. As a result, we should find a decline in foundings not only of religious NGOs, but also of religious human rights NGOs beginning just after the mid-20th century, with the structuring of the human rights field through the UN. Alternatively, if secularization theory's challengers are correct, rationalization and religion can co-exist or even mutually reinforce each other. If this is the case, then we should find either no decline in religious NGOs foundings or an increase in religious mobilization around human rights subsequent to the founding of the UN, as transnational religious authority transfers from the private realm to the public realm of global civil society.

Data and Methods

Two sources of data were used in following analyses: the Yearbook of International Organizations (described above) and the online Human Rights Directory (Directory) compiled by Human Rights Internet. HRI (www.hri.ca), which was founded in 1976, is an internet-based organization whose main purpose is the ongoing collection of information on human rights organizations worldwide in order to facilitate networking. HRI describes itself as being especially focused on the dissemination of information to NGOs in the global south, and highlights its emphasis on bringing together "various, sometimes remote human rights organizations." HRI does not use organizational structure as a criterion for inclusion in its Directory. Therefore, human rights organizations that do not meet the structural criteria for inclusion as a conventional organization in the YBIO are included in the HRI Directory. Therefore, it is inclusive of, and presents more complete information on, a wider variety of organizational forms than those that are given priority by the UIA and within the UN system.

HRI also has a search engine that allows users to search for human rights organizations by religious affiliation. Although this feature made it considerably easier to identify religion-based NGOs, each profile was nonetheless checked to ensure that the organization was indeed religion-based and not, for example, a secular organization promoting religious freedom. For each organization identified, information was collected on its title, mission statement, membership, activities and leadership. Where possible, information from the database was supplemented with information from the individual organizations' websites. An NGO was included in the dataset only if it met at least one of the following criteria:

- 1.) A mission statement that explicitly identifies a religious doctrine or tradition as the primary ideological framework for participation in human rights.
- 2.) An agenda that explicitly includes the mobilization of religious persons or groups on behalf of human rights.
- 3.) Activities which include evangelism or the explicit promotion of theocracy.

The Africa Faith and Justice Network is an example of an organization that meets all three of these criteria. Its mission statement reads in part:

"AFJN stresses issues of human rights and social justice that tie directly into Catholic social teaching ... AFJN's support base is primarily built on the Catholic missionary community in the U.S. and in Africa. AFJN is an extension of missionary witness in the difficult yet important arena of U.S. political decisions that affect African people." (4)

The YBIO was used for two purposes. First, it was used to create a trend line illustrating the decline in foundings of organizations that would be classified as "religious" according to official organizational classification schemes (i.e., those organizations that were classified as "R" in the Yearbook). Although the YBIO does not provide detailed entries for organizations classified as "R," the appendices of the YBIO do contain data on numbers of such INGOs founded each year for the past century.

Second, the Yearbook was used as a second source of information on religious human rights NGOs. Using the 1999-2000 edition of the YBIO, I searched for human rights NGOs and foundations whose entries contained evidence of religious affiliation according to criteria described above for the HRI search. This allowed for a comparison between

YBIO and HRI data. An organization was not included if it was identified by either data source as "defunct."

For each organization, information was also collected on organizational size and consultative status. Although the YBIO and HRI each provide information on organizational size, they do so in different ways. The YBIO lists the countries represented among each organization's members. HRI, on the other hand, contains information on geographic focus and level of operations, indicating for each organization whether its focus and operations are national, bilateral or international. For the analysis that follows, an organization was coded as "international" if HRI reported that it had an international focus or operations OR if its YBIO entry indicated that it had citizens from three or more countries among its members. Both sources of data indicated if an organization had consultative status with a major international institution.

Findings

Prior to excluding national and bilateral organizations from the data set, the HRI Directory and the YBIO, in combination, yielded a total of 583 religion-based human rights organizations. However, the differences between the two sources of data were remarkable. Of those 583 organizations, only 117 of them were listed in the YBIO as either "conventional" or as "foundations," while 546 of them were listed in HRI's Directory.

As stated previously, researchers who use the YBIO usually restrict their analyses to foundings of "conventional organizations," which only include INGOs with three or more countries represented in their memberships. In order to provide for a meaningful comparison, only "international organizations" were included, rather than all 583 organizations identified. Human rights organizations that are strictly national or bilateral in structure were excluded, as were cases for which information on this variable was missing.

Information on organizational size was missing for 53 (9.1 percent) of the cases. Of the 530 remaining organizations, only 189, or 35.7 percent, were "international." Three hundred forty-one (64.3 percent) of the organizations in the dataset were either national or bilateral. Not surprisingly, given YBIO criteria, most (98.9 percent) of the organizations that were excluded from the analysis on the basis of size were from the HRI Directory. However, even after these exclusions, HRI still contained 71 religious human right organizations that were not listed in the YBIO.

The fact that 64.3 percent of the religious human rights organizations identified did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the YBIO as conventional INGOs, presumably due to their size, raises serious questions about whether the conventional YBIO data adequately represent the majority of the world's advocacy and activist organizations. This question is especially pertinent to Human Rights, where even national NGOs are likely to need the assistance of international allies who can advocate on their behalf in the face of intransigent and repressive domestic governments. What is more, "where national human rights NGOs are absent ... international human rights work is severely hampered." (Keck and Sikkink 1998:117) Given the inherently transnational nature of human rights we cannot assume that a national organizational structure indicates a strictly national-cultural or strategic orientation.

The differences between the two data sources are also quite dramatic when we examine INGO consultative status. Specifically, cross-tabulations using the 189 international organizations revealed that INGOs listed in the YBIO were significantly more likely than INGOs listed in HRI to have consultative status with a major international institution. While 71.9 percent of YBIO INGOs had consultative status, the same could be said for only 43.9 percent of the INGOs listed in HRI's Directory. Of the INGOs that were listed in HRI but not listed in the YBIO, only 24 percent had INGO consultative status. Taken together, the variation across data sets in terms of organizational size and consultative status suggests that research using the YBIO is indeed biased toward the more powerful organizations in the human rights field.

Turning to the issue of religion, Figure 1 compares the foundings of "religious organizations" identified by the classification "R" in the Yearbook (the descending dashed line, n = 220) with the religion-based human rights organizations identified according to the criteria delineated for this study (the ascending solid line, n = 189). That is, the ascending solid line represents currently active international human rights organizations that are, in fact, religious in motivation or action. As the figure reveals, although foundings of narrowly-defined "religious organizations" have

declined over the past century, transnational religious participation in human rights has steadily increased over the same period. The most dramatic increase begins around 1955 and continues during the two decades following the establishment of the UN--that is, during a period of marked rationalization within the human rights field, entailing in part the institutionalization of secular world cultural principles. Foundings dropped somewhat between 1975 and 1980, but held steady since then, with approximately 15-17 religious human rights INGO foundings during every five-year period until 1990.

[FIGURE 1 OMITTED]

Figure 1 illustrates quite a profound shift in religious NGO orientation, especially when we consider the fact that the ascending line illustrates religious NGO foundings in only one sector of public engagement. If secularization is defined as privatization, or a retreat of religion from the public sphere, then the comparison reveals that the decline in the number of "religious organizations" discernible from the YBIO is not evidence of secularization. Rather, the decline is associated with a population-level organizational shift away from privatized religion (i.e. religion that does not engage public issues) and toward organizational missions and activities that place religious NGOs squarely within the public sphere of global civil society and culture.

Secularization or Public Religion?

But an important question immediately follows from Figure 1 : Does the movement of religious organizations into a secular field constitute an increase in the public exercise of religious authority or, instead, the secularization of religious NGOs? After all, participation in Human Rights could entail the abandonment or modification of spiritually motivated missions, and the adoption of secular rationalism as a framework for action. If so, the rise in religious NGO foundings could be interpreted as an accommodation to a rationalist world culture. This shift in orientation could occur through strategic choice, co-optation, or an unintentional drift toward secularism (Voye 2000). It would follow then, that while NGOs might be religious in name, they would cease to be religious in spirit or function.

Although this is a reasonable argument, the evidence does not support it. First, the data used in this study only include organizations that explicitly and publicly prioritize religious motivations or goals as the impetus for participation in Human Rights. Second, previous research shows that religious groups working with the UN do not for the most part adopt the UN's ideological premises. On the contrary:

"Although most religious organizations view the United Nations as legitimate, none thinks of it as the source of authority for human rights. Each organization appeals rather to its own highest authority, finds human rights to be supported or required by that authority, and then concludes --more or less systematically--that the international covenants adequately express its human rights commitment and that the United Nations is the appropriate agency to monitor the fulfillment of those rights." (Livezey 1989:76-77)

As sociologists of culture and social movements have pointed out, individuals can draw from any number of transposable "schema" (Sewell 1992) or "frames" (Johnston and Klandermans 1995) to interpret or legitimate action, and this certainly holds true for Human Rights. Rather than having to choose between secular and religious principles, activists can interpret human rights in terms of multiple worldviews. Instead of "watering down" faith, human rights activism can be an expression of faith, a way of "doing religion" in global civil society.

It cannot be argued, however, that secularization has not occurred in any way in the human rights field. The fact remains that the ideological framework that now defines the field as a whole, unlike the Christian framework that defined its abolitionist origins, (Keck and Sikkink 1998) has a distinctly secular tone. The decoupling between the religious principles operating at the organizational level of analysis and the almost exclusively secular principles that define the field more broadly needs to be addressed.

It is my contention that scholarly claims about hegemonic world cultural forms accurately describe official discourses such as those elaborated in Human Rights declarations and conventions. However, while it is true that NGOs seeking legitimacy vis-a-vis human rights institutions must adopt at least some elements of this discourse, the latter may or

may not serve as an ideological compass for the culturally diverse actors operating within organizational fields. Rather, it is more likely that research on global culture has captured a particular and elite stratum of organizational activity, one whose principles are only partially representative of activity in the lower organizational strata. The implication is that diverse and even counter-hegemonic forms of advocacy and activism, religious and secular alike, might be differentially, but also predictably, distributed throughout world society. What needs to be established is whether greater organizational diversity is likely to be found among organizations in some strata more so than in others.

In terms of religion, I would predict that religious motivations are more likely to be evident in the organizations and discursive forums that are furthest removed from power. If so, to adequately understand religion's influence on world culture will require that we look beyond official discourses and consider the civil society formations that coexist and compete across organizational fields at multiple levels of engagement. As Hefner (2001:499), in a discussion of civil Islam, reminds us:

"Viewed from the ground of everyday practice rather than the dizzying heights of official cannons ... in all societies there are values and practices that hover closer to the ground than official discourse and carry latent possibilities, some of which may have egalitarian or democratic dimensions. These low-lying precedents may not be heard in high-flying cultural canons. Nonetheless ... these messages are in some sense 'available' to those seeking guidance on what to become when the world takes a new turn."

By incorporating these "lower-lying precedents" and forms of activism into our research, we can more accurately assess religion's role in the construction of world culture. From there, we will be better positioned to systematically address outstanding questions with important theoretical and practical implications. For example, social scientists know very little about conflict among religious and secular NGOs competing for resources in transnational organizational fields. Within competitive fields, what advantages and disadvantages do religious NGOs face? What strategies and tactics do NGO leaders use to negotiate between their religious commitments "on the ground" and the need to maintain legitimacy within pluralist, elite contexts such as international institutions? Other questions remain about how religious and secular aspects of world culture influence the stratification of NGOs in global civil society and how international relations, and differences in power among states, play into these dynamics. More generally, an emphasis on organizational heterogeneity will move ideological competition and conflict to the foreground, and allow for more careful consideration of the role that politics and power play in the creation and legitimation of both secularity and religion (see, for example, Asad 2003; Gill 1991 ; Gorski 2003). By turning to these questions, we will not only enrich our understanding of diverse culture forms that mix and mingle in the world polity, but we can also begin to theorize the more formal, institutional dimensions of global religious conflict.

The author wishes to thank Sidney Tarrow, Penny Edgell, Michael Lounsbury and David Strang for their close reading and advice on earlier drafts of this paper. I would also like to acknowledge the insightful suggestions of three anonymous reviewers at Social Forces. This research was made possible in part through a grant from the National Science Foundation, award #SES-0110788. The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author and do not reflect those of the National Science Foundation. Direct correspondence to Evelyn L. Bush, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Fordham University, 441 East Fordham Road, Bronx, NY 10458-9993. Email: ebush@fordham.edu.

References

Adelkhah, Fariba. 2000. *Being Modern in Iran*. Columbia University Press.

Anheier, Helmut, and Hagai Katz. 2003. "Mapping Global Civil Society." Pp. 239-58. *Global Civil Society 2003*. Mary Kaldor, Helmut Anheier and Marleis Glasius, editors. Oxford University Press.

Anheier, Helmut, and N. Themundo. 2002. "Organizational Forms of Global Civil Society: Implications of Going Global." Pp. 191-216. *Global Civil Society 2002*. Marlies Glasius, Mary Kaldor and Helmut Anheier, editors. Oxford University Press.

- Asad, Talal. 2003. *Formations of the Secular*. Stanford University Press.
- Bamyeh, Mohammed. 2002. "Dialectics of islam and Global Modernity." *Social Analysis* 46(2):81-101.
- Barber, Benjamin. 1995. *Jihad vs. McWorld*. Times Books.
- Berger, Peter. 1967. *The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Doubleday.
- . editor. 1999. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. W.B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Beyer, Peter E 1990. "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society." Pp. 373-96. *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*. Mike Featherstone, editor. Sage Publications.
- Boli, John. 1991. "Conclusion: World Authority Structures and Legitimation." Pp. 267-300. *Constructing World Culture*. John Boli and George Thomas, editors. Stanford University Press.
- Boli, John, and George M. Thomas, editors. 1999. *Constructing World Culture*. Stanford University Press.
- Boli, John, and George M. Thomas. 1999a. "INGOs and the Organization of World Culture." Pp. 13-49. *Constructing World Culture*. John Boli and George Thomas, editors. Stanford University Press.
- Burns, Gene. 1992. *The Frontiers of Catholicism: the Politics of Ideology in a Liberal World*. University of California Press.
- Buss, Doris, and Didi Herman, editors. 2003. *Globalizing Family Values: the Christian Right in International Politics*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Byrnes, Timothy A. 2001. *Transnational Catholicism in Post-Communist Europe*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Casanova, Jose. 2001. "Religion, the New Millennium, and Globalization." *Sociology of Religion* 62(4):415-41.
- Chabbott, Colette. 1999. "Development INGOs." Pp. 222-48. *Constructing World Culture*. John Boli and George Thomas, editors. Stanford University Press.
- Cox, Robert W. 1999. "Civil Society at the Turn of the millennium: Prospects for an Alternative World Order." *Review of International Studies* (25)1:3-28.
- Della Cava. 2001. "Transnational Religions: The Roman Catholic Church in Brazil & the Orthodox Church in Russia." *Sociology of Religion*, Winter(62)4: 535-50.
- Dillon, Michele. 2003. "The Sociology of Religion in Late Modernity." Pp. 3-15. *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Michele Dillon, editor. Cambridge University Press.
- Featherstone, Mike. 1990. "Global Culture: An Introduction." Pp. 1-14. *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*. Mike Featherstone, editor. Sage Publications.
- Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark. 1988. "Religious Economies and Sacred Canopies: Religious Mobilization in

American Cities, 1906." ASR 53(1):41-49.

--. 2003. "The Dynamics of Religious Economies." Pp. 96-109. Handbook of the Sociology of Religion. Michele Dillon, editor. Cambridge University Press.

Finnemore, Martha. 1993. "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms," International Organization 47:565-97.

Frank, David John, Ann Hironika and Evan Schofer. 2000. "The Nation-state and the Natural Environment over the Twentieth Century." ASR (February)65:96-116.

Gill, Anthony. 2001. "Religion and Comparative Politics." Annual Review of Political Science, 4:117-38.

Gorski, Philip S. "Historicizing the Secularization Debate: An agenda for Research." Pp. 110-22. Handbook of the Sociology of Religion. Michele Dillon, editor. Cambridge University Press.

Haas, Peter M. 1992. "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination." International Organization 46(1):1-35.

Hadden, Jeffrey. 1987. "Toward Desacralizing Secularization Theory." Social Forces 65(3):587-611.

Hammond, Phillip E., editor. 1985. The Sacred in a Secular Age. University of California Press.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., and Tsutsui Kiyoteru. 2005. "Human Rights in a Globalizing World: The Paradox of Empty Promises." AJS 110(5):1373-1411.

Hannerz, Ulf. 1990. "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture." Pp. 237-52. Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity. Mike Featherstone, editor. Sage Publications.

Hefner, Robert. 2001. "Public Islam and the Problem of Democratization." Sociology of Religion 62(4):491-514.

Huntington, Samuel. 1996. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. Touchstone Books.

Jansen, Thomas. 2000. "Europe and Religions: the Dialogue between the European Commission and Churches or Religious Communities." Social Compass 47(1):103-12.

Johnston, Hank, and Bert Klandermans. 1985. "The Cultural Analysis of Social Movements," Pp. 3-24. Social Movements and Culture (Social Movements, Protest and Contention, Vol. 4). Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, editors. University of Minnesota Press.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2003. Terror in the Mind of God. University of California Press.

Kaldor, Mary, Helmut Anheier and Marleis Glasius, editors. 2003. Global Civil Society 2003. Oxford University Press.

Kaldor, Mary, Helmut Anheier and Marleis Glasius. 2003a. "Global Civil Society in an Era of Regressive Globalization." Pp. 1-34. Global Civil Society 2003. Mary Kaldor, Helmut Anheier and Marleis Glasius, editors. Oxford University Press.

Katzenstein, Peter, editor. 1966. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. Columbia University Press.

Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press.

King, Anthony D., editor. 2003. *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*. University of Minnesota Press.

Koehane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye, editors. 1971. *Transnational Relations and World Politics*. Harvard University Press.

Livezey, Lowell W. 1989. "US Religious Organizations and the International Human Rights Movement." *Human Rights Quarterly* 11:14-81.

Meyer, John. 1980. "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State." Pp. 41-70. *Studies of the modern World System*. A. Bergesen, editor. Academic Press.

--. 1991 "Conceptions of Christendom: Notes on the Distinctiveness of the West." Pp. 395-413. *Cross-National Research in Sociology*. Melvin K. Kohn, editor. Sage.

Meyer, John W., John Boll, George Thomas and Fransisco O. Ramirez. 1997. "World Society and the Nation-State." *AJS* 103:144-81.

Pei-Heng, Chiang. 1981. "Non-governmental Organizations at the United Nations." *Identity, Role, and Function*. Praeger.

Powell, Walter W., and Paul J. DiMaggio, editors. 1991. *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. University of Chicago Press.

Ramirez, Fransisco, Yasemin Soysal and Suzanne Shanahan. 1997. "The Changing Logic of Political Citizenship." *ASR* 62: 735-45.

Riesebrodt, Martin. 1993. *Pious Passion. the Emergence of Modern Fundamentalism in the United States and Iran*. Don Reneau, translator. University of California Press.

Robertson, Roland. 1985. "The Sacred and the World System." Pp. 347-58. *The Sacred in a Secular Age*. Phillip E. Hammond, editor. University of California Press.

Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber, and James Piscatori, editors. 1997. *Transnational Religion and Fading States*. Westview Press.

Sen, Puma. 2003. "Successes and Challenges: Understanding the Global Movement to End Violence Against Women." Pp. 119-47. *Global Civil Society 2003*. Mary Kaldor, Helmut Anheier and Marleis Glasius, editor. Oxford University Press.

Sewell, William. 1992. "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation." *AJS* 98(1): 1-29.

- Sikkink, Kathryn, and Jackie G. Smith. 2002. "Infrastructures for Change: Transnational Organizations, 1953-1993." Pp. 24-44. *Restructuring World Politics.* Transnational Social Movements, Networks and Norms. Sanjeev Khagram, Kathryn Sikkink and James V. Riker, editors. University of Minnesota Press.
- Smith, Christian. 1991. *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory.* University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Jackie. 1997. "Characteristics of the Modern Transnational Social Movement Sector." Pp. 42-58. *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State.* Jackie Smith, Charles Chatfield and Ron Pagnucco, editors. Syracuse University Press.
- . 2004. "Exploring Connections between Global Integration and Political Mobilization." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 10(1):255-85.
- Stark, Rodney, and Lawrence R. Iannoccone. 1994. 'A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the 'Secularisation' of Europe.' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33(3):230-52.
- Strang, David. 1990. "From Dependency to Sovereignty: An Event History Analysis of Decolonization." *ASR* 55:846-60.
- Sunder, Madhavi. 2002. "A Culture of One's Own: Learning from Women Living Under Muslim Laws." Pp. 149-64. *Nothing Sacred.* Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror. Betsy Reed, editor. Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books.
- Tarrow, Sidney. 2001. "Transnational Politics: Contention and Institutions in International Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* (4):1-20.
- Tenbruck, Friedrich H. 1990. "The Dream of a Secular Ecumene: The Meaning and Limits of Policies of Development." Pp. 193-206. *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity.* Mike Featherstone, editor. Sage.
- Thomas, George. 2001. "Religions in Global Civil Society." *Sociology of Religion* 62(4):515-33.
- Tsutsui, Kiyoteru, and Christine Min Wotipka. 2003. "Global Civil Society and the International Human Rights Movement: Citizen Participation in Human Rights International Nongovernmental Organizations." *Social Forces* 83(2):587-620.
- Union of International Associations. 2005/2006. *Yearbook of International Organizations: Guide to Global Civil Society Networks*, 42nd edition. Munchen: Union of International Associations and K G Saur Verlag Vols. 1B and 3.
- United Nations. 2003. *Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts.* New York: United Nations Publications.
- Voye, Liliane. 1999. "Secularization in the Context of Advanced Modernity." *Sociology of Religion* 60(3):275-88.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel M. 1974. *The modern World System I. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World System in the Sixteenth Century.* Academic Press.
- Wapner, Paul. 1996. *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics.* CUNY Press.

Warner, R. Stephen. 1993. "A work in progress toward a new paradigm in the sociological study of religion in the United States." *AJS* 98(5): 1044-94.

Warner, Carolyn, and Manfred Wenner. 2002. "Organizing Islam for Politics in Western Europe." Working paper. Politics, Religion, Economy and Society Series, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.

Weber, Max. 1958. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Talcott Parsons, translator. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Wilson, Bryan. 1985. "Secularization: The Inherited Model." Pp. 9-20. *The Sacred in a Secular Age*. Phillip E. Hammond, editor. University of California Press.

Yavuz, M. Hakan. 2001. "Vernacularization of Human Rights Discourse: The Case of Mazlumder in Turkey." Conference paper. *Human Rights and Globalization: When Transnational Civil Society Networks Hit the Ground*. Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz. Available online at: <http://www2.ucsc.edu/cgirs/conferences/humanrights/index.html>.

Notes

(1.) Since Robertson made this assertion in 1985, researchers engaging the world system perspective have incorporated religion into their theories of world culture, especially in discussions of anti-systemic movements and tensions between universalism and particularism (e.g., Featherstone 1990 and King 2003). But such efforts have yet to culminate in a comprehensive body of empirical research oriented toward religion in world society.

(2.) The use of these indicators is pervasive enough to preclude an exhaustive list of citations. But, Warner's (1993) influential piece on competing paradigms in the sociology of religion provides a useful review of the earlier findings of such studies.

(3.) Sikkink and Smith (2002) discuss the problems that they confronted when excluding organizations with primarily religious missions from their dataset of transnational social change organizations. They note that some of the most important actors in debt forgiveness and human rights campaigns were religious organizations that were not included in their data (p. 48).

(4.) <http://afjn.cua.edu/afjn.cfm>

Evelyn L. Bush, Fordham University

COPYRIGHT 2007 University of North Carolina Press

<http://socialissues.wiseto.com/Articles/166091557>

October 08, 2007.

© 2007 The Gale Group, Inc. All rights reserved.
