European University Institute

ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

EUI WORKING PAPERS

Faith-based Organisations at the United Nations

Jeffrey Haynes

European University Institute
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
RELIGIOWEST

Faith-based Organisations at the United Nations

Jeffrey Haynes

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

The Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS), created in 1992 and directed by Brigid Laffan since September 2013, aims to develop inter-disciplinary and comparative research and to promote work on the major issues facing the process of integration and European society.

The Centre is home to a large post-doctoral programme and hosts major research programmes and projects, and a range of working groups and *ad hoc* initiatives. The research agenda is organised around a set of core themes and is continuously evolving, reflecting the changing agenda of European integration and the expanding membership of the European Union.

Details of the research of the Centre can be found on:
http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Research/

Research publications take the form of Working Papers, Policy Papers, Distinguished Lectures and books. Most of these are also available on the RSCAS website:
http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Publications/

The EUI and the RSCAS are not responsible for the opinion expressed by the author(s).

ReligioWest

ReligioWest is a four year research project funded by the European Research Council and based at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy. It aims at studying how different western states in Europe and North America are redefining their relationship to religions, under the challenge of an increasing religious activism in the public sphere, associated with new religious movements and with Islam.

Abstract

This working paper examines faith-based organisations (FBOs) and their attempts to seek to influence debate and decision-making at the United Nations (UN). Increasing attention on FBOs in this context has followed what is widely understood as a widespread, post-Cold War 'religious resurgence', which characterises a novel 'postsecular' international environment. One aspect of the new postsecular environment is increasing focus on global public policy at the UN, from FBOs from various religious traditions, especially Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

The paper focuses on Christian, Muslim and Jewish FBOs at the UN because: (1) it is the largest inter-governmental organisation, with 193 member states, (2) it is the most important global public policy focus, and (3) hundreds of FBOs have an institutionalised presence at the UN, via official status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Overall, the UN regularly engages with more than 3,000 non-governmental organisations afforded 'official' UN status. Around 10 per cent are classified as FBOs, implying that their activities and goals are significantly moulded by religious orientations and principles. This does not necessarily imply however that FBOs at the UN are 'religiously pure', that is, unwilling to work with non-religious entities, including both states and non-state actors. Many FBOs are willing to interact at the UN with both state and non-state entities which share their ideological although not religious proclivities. The paper conceptualises and examines two categories of FBO: 'conservative' and 'liberal', in the context of three separate issue areas: women's sexual and reproductive human rights; international development; and 'defamation of religions.'

Keywords

Introduction

Why, how and with what results do faith-based organisations (FBOs) seek to influence debates and policy making at the UN? I present two main arguments in the working paper: First, the UN has global public policy making structures and processes dominated by decision makers seeking to make and implement decisions based on their preferences. Most of the more than 300 FBOs registered at the UN are small and medium-sized entities, without much in the way of individual financial, diplomatic or ideological leverage. Consequently, for FBOs successfully to influence UN policy makers they need to engage in coalition-building, working with either religious or secular partners. Berger (2003: 10) classifies FBOs along a dimension of 'pervasiveness' which conceives of an organisation's religious identity in terms of degrees of 'religiosity' rather than viewing their religious identity in absolute terms. The implication is that FBOs at the UN are necessarily strategic, goal-orientated actors, similar to other kinds of organisational structures. Hopgood and Vinjamuri (2012: 38) explain that small and medium-sized FBOs typically adopt two main strategies at the UN – alliance formation and specialisation – in order to compete in an oligopolistic NGO 'market' and try to achieve their objectives. The point is that even when FBOs are strongly motivated by a religious worldview, they still face the same challenges of earthly existence as confront secular NGOs: securing limited resources and maintaining donor loyalty.

As Barnett and Stein (2012: 23) argue, there is often more ideological variation among organisations from the same faith tradition than there is between faith-based and secular entities. For example, socially conservative Catholic actors like the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute have a very different worldview compared to Catholic 'liberal' groups, such as Catholics for a Free Choice. Among Muslims, a similar conservative/liberal split can be observed, for example, between the conservative Muslim World League, with close ties to a power Muslim intergovernmental organisation, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the liberal and autonomous Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies. As Berger (2003: 2) notes, FBOs compete with each other, pushing 'for change from both liberal and conservative platforms'. Petersen (2010) observes that FBOs regularly engage in alliances with secular NGOs at the UN which share their ideologically 'liberal' or 'conservative' goals. While these terms and the justification for using them will be explained later, for now it will be enough to note that when examining FBOs at the UN this ideological dichotomy underlines that 'religion' is not a fixed category or value with consistent meanings and understandings attached to the term. Many conservative FBOs would probably agree that the nature of the UN system – both liberal and secular – is to encourage values commensurate with a 'secular global order' that conflicts or competes directly with Christian (or other religious) values (Bob, 2010; 2012). Liberal FBOs, on the other hand, may well regard it as very important to try to counteract conservative forces, in order to put forward what they see as an appropriate religious view. Thus there are big ideological differences between 'liberal' and 'conservative' FBOs, and it does not take us very far analytically to work from the premise of a clear cut, generalised, 'secular' *versus* 'religious' split between FBOs and secular NGOs active at the UN (Berger 2003: 10).

Widespread FBO involvement at the UN and the issue of competing ideological worldviews and the impact on global public policy is a recent, under-analysed phenomenon. This is partly because a significant FBO presence at the UN has only developed since the early 1990s. It followed the end of the Cold War and contemporaneous deepening and widening of globalisation, which not only facilitated increasing communications both within and between countries, but also enabled religious ideas to spread between countries, significantly informing outcomes in international relations (Haynes, 2013a). The result was that 'religion' acquired growing power both within nation-states and at the level of global civil society. Religious voices 'also facilitated … the overall cultural turn in world politics and the UN's accommodating attitude [to them]. But not all has been harmonious. Religious actors rarely speak with one voice and often target each other.' (Kayaoğlu, 2011: 13) A key example of this religious disharmony, which we examine later in the working paper, was the long-running but

ultimately unsuccessful campaign of the OIC, leading Muslim countries and some Muslim FBOs,[1] to combat 'defamation of religions'. The OIC-led campaign was seen by many Christian and Jewish FBOs and some Muslim FBOs, as well as many secular NGOs and Western governments, to be a self-interested fight to privilege Islam over other religious faiths. As Kayaoğlu (2011: 13) notes, the main 'argument against the measure was that [opponents] believed that the anti-defamation resolution would not only threaten Christian life but also work to block missionaries from proselytising among Muslim-majority nations', as well as likely making harder for religious minorities, such as Ahmadis and Baha'is, in some Muslim countries**.**

I utilise a qualitative methodological approach in this working paper. To assess and analyse recent activities of FBOs at the United Nations, I rely mainly on analysis of both primary and secondary source written documents. In addition, I draw on recent interviews and conversations I have had with representatives of various UN agencies, including current and former World Bank, International Monetary Fund and United Nations Fund for Population Activities personnel. These interviews were conducted on a research visit to Washington DC which took place in January and February 2012.

The current study engages with an important yet so far under-analysed issue. The main aim of the working paper is modest: to acquire a preliminary understanding of some of the most influential actors among FBOs, including their arguments and motivating factors, in relation to three specific issue areas: women's sexual and reproductive health and rights; international development issues, including UN/FBO joint action on preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Arab world; and the recently concluded campaign to introduce an international measure against 'defamation of religions' in the context of inter-civilisational conflict. Note however the working paper is an introductory desk study on a little-studied field. As such it does not have a great deal of necessary qualitative data – such as, for example, a large number of interviews with relevant parties, including FBO representatives – that would be essential to fill out the rather general picture developed here. With this in mind, the paper puts forward preliminary conclusions only, with recognition of the need for much more work on the important issues it raises.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The next section seeks to answer terminological questions about FBOs. The section after that looks at how FBOs developed an important presence at the UN following a series of UN conferences in the 1990s which looked at various topics related to human rights and international development. The third section looks briefly at the history of the development of the UN, in the context of the general secular trend of international relations from the 17th century in order to place today's activities of FBOs at the UN in historical and contemporary context. The fourth section examines the role of FBOs in relation to three topical global public policy controversies: women's sexual and reproductive health rights; international development; and 'defamation of religions.' The final section is the conclusion, where overall findings from the study are presented.

Defining FBOs

The first task we need to do is define a key term used in the working paper. What are FBOs? In recent scholarly and policy literature, non-state religious actors – in local, national, regional, international and global contexts – are referred to in various ways. These include: religious NGOs, faith-based non-profit organisations, and faith-based organisations. According to Berger (2003: 1), religious NGOs are 'formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary

---

[1] Tadros (2010: 5, fn. 9) differentiates between what he terms 'Muslim FBOs, characterised as engaging with 'Islam as a spiritual religion' and 'Islamic FBOs' 'that follow a more political-religious engagement'. Tadros does not provide examples of the different FBOs that he has in mind, and I am not persuaded that the division between 'spiritual' and 'political-religious' 'Islamic' FBOs is a defensible one. In this paper, I shall refer to Islamic FBOs throughout in recognition that to engage in debate and interaction at the UN is necessarily to engage with 'political-religious' issues.

basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level'. For Petersen (2010: 5), religious NGOs 'describe and understand themselves as religious, referring in their name, activities, mission statements or elsewhere to religious traditions, values and ideas'. In addition, Berger (2003) claims that RNGOs are 'characterized by missions rooted in religious and spiritual beliefs' which 'rely on a variety of processes by means of which to reach their goals. Processes such as network building, advocacy, monitoring, and information provision (propaganda) are common to most NGOs while others including spiritual guidance, prayer, and modeling are a unique feature of RNGO operations'. Rather similarly, 'faith-based non-profit organisations' (FNOs) are defined as entities 'founded by a religious congregation or religiously-motivated incorporators and board members that clearly states in its name, incorporation, or mission statement that it is a religiously motivated institution' (Fitz, n/d). Both RNGOs and FNOs are defined non-state entities, rather like secular NGOs, but with recognisable and significant religious characteristics.

Ferris notes that while there 'is no generally accepted definition of an FBO', FBOs have one or more of the following qualities: affiliation with a religious body; a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values; financial support from religious sources; and/or a governance structure where selection of board members or staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation; and/or decision-making processes based on religious values. Ferris points out that while such categorisations are theoretically useful, they do have problems, not least because the 'variety of faith-based actors makes generalizations difficult.' Not least, she avers, is the problem of ideological differences between faith-based actors which may be greater than those between secular and faith-based organisations (Ferris, 2005: 312). Citing an unreferenced United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) source, Tadros (2010: 7) claims FBOs have four key characteristics: (1) 'faith-based and/or faith-inspired', (2) 'interfaith- or multifaith-based', (3) 'local congregations', and (4) 'ministries of religious faiths'. Wuthnow (2000) characterises an FBO as having a 'religiously-oriented mission statement, support from a religious organisation, or being founded by a religious institution' (quoted in Center for Faith and Service, n/d: 2). Castelli and McCarthy (1997) and Vidal (2001) divide FBOs into those based on (1) (national) religious congregations; (2) faith-based networks, which might be national or international denominations, or (3) 'freestanding religious organizations, which are incorporated separately from congregations and national networks.' According to Vidal (2001: 2), such connections occur when a FBO 'is based on a particular ideology and draws staff, volunteers, or leadership from a particular religious group.'.

The various definitions of FBOs noted here make it clear that conceptually, to qualify as a FBO, an entity must be clearly connected – organisationally, as well as in terms of religious belief and tradition – with an 'organised' faith community. I use the term FBO in this working paper because alternative terms noted above – such as RNGO and FNO – are unduly conceptually restrictive in the context of this paper, which seeks to focus on a range of relevant religion-based entities at the UN. To do this, we need to move beyond a narrow non-state civil society-based conceptual formulation, to include other important religion-based actors, including: the Vatican, the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Vatican is uniquely both a state and a religion-based non-state actor. The WCC describes itself as '[a]n international fellowship of Christian churches, built upon the foundation of encounter, dialogue and collaboration', which had 354 member churches at the end of 2012 (http://www.oikoumene.org/en). The OIC 'is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with 57 states spread over four continents'. The OIC's purpose is to act as 'the collective voice of the Muslim world' working 'in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world' (www.oic-oci.org). Like the Vatican, the OIC is unique in international relations: a state-based entity whose remit is to defend the interests of the world's over one billion Muslims.

FBOs and international conferences at the United Nations in the 1990s

FBOs are usually examined in local and/or national contexts. Only rarely is the focus on international and/or transnational activities. In recent years, a small but growing number of scholars – including, Berger (2003), Boehle (2010), Haynes (2012, 2013a, 2013b), Kayaoğlu (2011), Knox (2002), Petersen (2010) and Leaustean (2013) – have examined FBO activities in relation to regional, international or transnational milieus, including in the contexts of the European Union, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the United Nations. In this paper, I focus on international and transnational activities of UN-focused FBOs, whose numbers have grown significantly in recent years, now amounting to over 300 entities, around 10 per cent of the more than 3,000 non-state entities with institutionalised access to the UN via the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Knox (2002: 5) traces the beginning of increased involvement of FBOs at the UN from the early 1990s. This was a time of increasing global public policy concerns, following the end of the Cold War and the contemporaneous expansion and deepening of globalisation (Haynes 2005; Haynes *et al.* 2011). Such concerns were innovatively focused in a unique series of international UN conferences, on: human rights (Vienna, 1992), the natural environment (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), population growth (Cairo, 1994), human development (Copenhagen, 1995), women and gender (Beijing, 1995), and social development (Geneva, 2000). Collectively, these conferences provided crucial focal points for FBOs to move to the forefront of UN-focused activism, key foundations of institutionalised FBO involvement, which quickly expanded in the following years.

Most FBOs active at the UN are both Christian and northern-based, while Jewish FBOs are also well-represented. On the other hand, southern-based FBOs, including Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist entities, are significantly under-represented. The over-representation of mainly northern-based, Christian FBOs can be ascertained from the 2008 ECOSOC list of more than 3,000 registered NGOs. [2] Of the 3,183 entities listed, Petersen (2010) identifies 320 (10.05 per cent) as 'religious'. This number includes: 187 Christian (58 per cent), 52 Muslim (16 per cent), 25 generically 'spiritual' (8 per cent), 22 Jewish (7 per cent), 14 Buddhist (4 per cent), 11 'multi-religious (3 per cent), six 'others' (2 per cent), and three Hindu (1 per cent). A more recent estimate of FBOs at the UN was presented by Carrette in November 2012 in London. According to Carrette, three-quarters of FBOs at the UN are both Christian and northern-based, and their overall significance is linked to three structural characteristics of international relations: (1) 'The international political system is a development of the Judaeo-Christian beliefs', (2) The UN's modus operandi favours certain types of religion and religious NGO', and (3) 'There is a convention [at the UN] not to talk about religion, and not to talk in religious terms' (Carrette, 2012)

In the course of a major research project over three years (2010-2012) focusing on FBOs at the UN, Carrette and Miall (2012) found that 75 per cent of FBOs registered with ECOSOC are Christian and northern-based – that is, located in North America or Western Europe. Many among them are wealthy, well-organised and influential both with the UN and with individual governments. Such an observation is not altogether new. A decade ago, Berger (2003) noted that three USA-based, Christian FBOs – the Salvation Army, World Vision, and Catholic Relief Services – had combined annual revenues in 2001 of over US$1.6 billion. More than 150 million people were involved in international and transnational FBO networks connected to these entities (Berger 2003: 2). World Vision's annual income alone in 2011 was 'approaching $3 billion' (Hopgood and Vinjamuri, 2012: 37), while that of the Salvation Army was US$2.83 bn. in the same year (http://www.forbes.com/companies/salvation-army/). Catholic Relief Services' income lagged behind the other two, although it still received nearly US$1bn. in 2010 ($918 million) (http://crs.org/about/finance/pdf/AR_2010.pdf).

---

[2] By September 2012, the number of NGOs with formal consultative status with ECOSOC had grown to 3,735, an increase compared to 2008 of 17 per cent. The full list of ECOSOC-registered NGOs can be found at http://csonet.org/content/documents/E2012INF6.pdf (Last accessed 22 May, 2013)

Over a decade (2001-2011) the combined income of these three US-based, Christian FBOs more than quadrupled: from $1.6 bn. to around $6.75 bn. Their massive growth in income was not however the only key asset that such US-based, Christian FBOs enjoyed. Their income and hugely influential networks enabled them to exploit UN arrangements and norms both organisationally and ideologically to increase their advantage and leverage. According to Carrette and Miall (2012), this is linked to the fact that both 'formation and structure of the UN [are] shaped by the Judaic-Christian heritage which constituted the modern forms of international politics, including the notions of sovereignty, secularism, civil society and individual belief.' Berger (2003: 17) asserts that, 'it is possible that involvement with the UN and NGO creation is compatible with Christian culture and ideology, given the involvement of churches in the formative process of the UN (e.g. World Council of Churches), their desire to influence the secular polity and their access to material resources.' Mainly northern-based Christian FBOs at the UN are, for example, active at the Human Rights Council helping shape protocols on various issues, including: child soldiers, the rights of women, and the condition of prisoners in gaol. Yet, to be influential at the UN, FBOs do not 'just' need to have significant financial resources and networks of supporters and followers. In addition, it also helps greatly to have major and sustained commitment and appropriate specialist expertise as well as ability to build and maintain support of both governments in order to make sustained progress on human rights issues. This is not to say that all FBOs are equal in their abilities in these regards. As Carrette and Miall (2012) explain, there are

> significant differences in funding and access to diplomats between NGO groups … Religious NGOs at the UN in New York are involved at all levels of activity in initiating issues, advocacy, network and representation on UN committees … Religious actors depend on the support of States for actions that support awareness of religion and its significance to peace and security

In sum, for FBOs to progress their objectives at the UN it helps to be rich, organisationally astute, savvy about how to achieve goals, and demonstrate consistent willingness to work with a variety of entities, including other FBOs, secular NGOs, states and other entities.. Typically, northern-based, Christian FBOs have more of the necessary assets in these regards, compared to other types of FBOs. The influential position of northern-based, Christian FBOs at the UN does not reflect current demographic realities of Christianity, which is now increasingly a southern-based religious faith. By 2010, more than half the world's Christians lived in three developing regions (Asia Pacific, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa), while numbers of northern-based Christians – mainly living in North America and Europe – were declining. This is part of a long-term demographic trend: between 1910 and 2010, the global proportion of Christians living in Europe declined from two-thirds (66.3 per cent) to one-quarter (25.9 per cent) (Pew Forum, 2011). During the same time, the percentage of Christians living in the Americas grew from 27.1 per cent to 36.8 per cent although this was mainly due to growth of Christianity in Latin America rather than North America (Csillag, 2013).

Apart from the issue of where Christians live it is also the case that Christian FBOs registered with ECOSOC are over-represented among FBOs at the UN. Globally, there were approximately 2.18 bn. Christians in 2010 (Pew Forum, 2011) and about 1.65 bn. Muslims. As there were around seven billion people (7.067 billion) at this time, then we might anticipate that Christians (30.8 per cent) and Muslims (23.3 per cent) would have similarly percentages of FBOs at the UN. Yet, as already noted, Petersen (2010) identified 58 per cent of FBOs at the UN as Christian, while Carrette and Miall's recent (2012) survey identified 75 per cent of UN FBOs as both Christian and northern-based. Muslim FBOs amount to only one-sixth of ECOSOC-registered FBOs at the UN. Thus, Christians (30.8 per cent of people in the world) are 'over-represented' at the UN (as Christian FBOs are between 58 and 75 per cent of total ECOSOC-registered FBOs at the UN). Muslims (23.3 per cent) are significantly 'under-represented', with just 16 per cent of ECOSOC-registered FBOs at the UN. In addition, in 2012 there were an estimated 13.76 million Jews in the world, less than two per cent of the global population, whereas Jewish FBOs accounted for 7 per cent of the total number of ECOSOC-registered FBOs at the UN; thus, Jews too are over-represented at the UN compared to their global numbers,

while, not only Muslims, but also Hindus (14 per cent of global population/2 per cent of ECOSOC-registered FBOs) and Buddhists (7 per cent/4 per cent), are significantly under-represented.

Finally, while hundreds of (mainly Christian) FBOs are entitled to be interlocutors with officials and policy makers at the UN via their institutionalised status afforded by ECOSOC-registration, this does not necessarily imply that they are able to exert influence consistently on global public policy debates. Trying to exert such influence is especially problematic when FBOs try and act alone, employing solely religious arguments. To acquire and exercise influence at the UN necessitates that FBOs seek partners and allies, including: other FBOs, secular NGOs, and states. Why should such entities ally themselves with FBOs to try to influence policy debates at the UN? Such alliances occur, according to Bob (2012), in pursuit of shared ideological goals. In other words, various entities – both secular and religious entities – work together because they share goals, not necessarily out of shared religious convictions, but as a result of shared ideological convictions. On their own, FBOs struggle at the UN to be taken seriously, with no automatic right to be heard in global policy debates; in this context, seeking allies to pursue goals is crucial. In addition, FBOs must learn to adapt to UN norms and conventions, in order to be heard and accepted. This means that to be significant players in global public policy debates, they must necessarily adopt and adapt to the terms and rationale of liberal – that is, non-religious - discourse, *even when they do not agree with it*.

According to Kayaoğlu (2011: 2) '[t]he adoption of liberal discourse by religious groups' at the UN makes Muslims 'vulnerable as liberals set the parameters of their discourse'. This highlights, more generally, how Muslims are in a difficult position at the UN and other international fora. In particular after September 11, 2001, Muslims are widely perceived in the West as linked to illiberal and authoritarian views. More generally, Kayaoğlu (2011) notes what he refers to as an intellectually dominant 'Habermasian postsecularism' (Habermas, 2007) which, characterised by a non-religious liberalism, serves to 'marginalize Islamic discourse in the (international) public sphere'.

Kayaoğlu is identifying an important issue here, of direct relevance to the concerns of this working paper: how and why do FBOs interact with each other and with secular actors at the UN, and with what results? To what extent are FBOs willing to 'sign up' to the UN's official 'liberal' and 'secular' values, in order to gain entry into debates and discussions at the UN? The point is that FBOs *must* accord with the UN's secular, liberal and irreligious values, and this is obviously a problem for entities whose very *raison d'être* has its foundation in religious values. When assessing the impact of FBOs at the UN, it is crucial to bear in mind that the UN is a secular organisation, built on non-religious values, which reflect the characteristics and global spread of a post-Westphalian Western-directed and focused international order (Haynes *et al*, 2011).

The decidedly secular ethos of the UN extends to what Carrett and Miall (2012) identify as 'a convention not to talk about religion [at the UN], and not to talk in religious terms.' In this respect, Hurd (2011: 1) recounts an undated yet recent conversation at the UN between two Harvard University professors: Father Bryan Hehir, a Catholic priest and Secretary for Health Care and Social Services in the Archdiocese of Boston, and John Gerard Ruggie, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Business and Human Rights. [3] According to Hurd, Hehir said to Ruggie: 'Where is religion at the UN?', to which Ruggie replied: 'There is none.' On the face of it, Ruggie's reply is puzzling, given the fact that the UN is a focal point for hundreds of FBOs, as well as for certain states

---

[3]   Bryan Hehir is Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Religion and Public Life at Harvard University. John Gerard Ruggie is Berthold Beitz Professor in Human Rights and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and Affiliated Professor in International Legal Studies at Harvard Law School. Ruggie served as United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning from 1997 to 2001, a post created specifically for him by then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. In 2005, responding to a request by the UN Commission on Human Rights (now Human Rights Council), Annan appointed Ruggie as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Business and Human Rights, a post he continued to hold until 2011 under Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. Ruggie's main task was to propose measures to strengthen the human rights performance of the business sector around the world. (http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/johnruggie/index.html)

and other entities fundamentally inspired by religious worldviews (including, the Vatican, the OIC, the WCC and various governments, including those of Iran, and Saudi Arabia). It is only possible to make sense of Ruggie's comments when we see them in the context of the UN's secular and liberal 'party line'. This is publicly to deny the salience of 'religion' and 'religious values' as an important component of what motivates the UN in terms of policy making and execution. We can see the significance of this factor in the following quotations from two senior UN employees:

> *As a secular organization, the United Nations has no common religion*. But, like all the major faiths, we too work on behalf of the disadvantaged and the vulnerable. … I have long believed that when Governments and civil society work toward a common goal, transformational change is possible. Faiths and religions are a central part of that equation (my emphasis; Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, 3 November 2009)
> http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sgsm12585.doc.htm

> Assessing partnerships between UN Agencies and FBOs was one of the primary goals of the consultations. The kind of challenges underlying such partnerships had been addressed before by UN staff at the UN Inter-Agency Consultation on FBO Engagement, held at UNFPA headquarters on July 9, 2008. During those proceedings, UN agency representatives noted the following challenges: *Unease in engaging religion within the United Nations system* (emphasis added; Karam, 2012: 19).

In the first quotation, UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, refers to what is historically a key focus of the United Nations: its secularity and its failure to take seriously religion. Today, however, and the second part of the quotation points to this, the UN, in seeking to diminish and ultimately do away with gross disparities by improving 'development' outcomes, especially among the world's poorest people and countries, now takes religion more seriously. Yet, improving development outcomes are not an isolated goal of the UN, but fundamental to building greater collective security, because developmental polarisation between rich and poor is understood to be a major global driver of conflict and insecurity. This concern was a driving force behind the UN's current collective initiative in relation to international development: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000 -2015). As we shall see below, the MDGs were noteworthy not least because of their significant and novel involvement of development-focused FBOs. This represents for the first time the significant collective involvement of both state and non-state actors in seeking to deliver wide-ranging international development goals. Earlier, FBOs had not formally been involved in international development objectives; instead they were regarded with suspicion by many secular development actors (Haynes, 2007; 2013b).

In the second quotation, a Senior Advisor on Culture at the United Nations Population Fund, Azza Karam, points to a key factor when seeking to understand and assess the role today of 'religion' at the UN: '*Unease in engaging religion within the United Nations system'*. In recent years, despite its secular foundations and ethos, the UN has found itself grappling increasingly with moral and ethical issues, which very often overlap with FBOs' religious concerns. This has come about in the context of global public policy, and it is a key factor that has facilitated the growing significance of religion at the UN, and more widely to the global public realm. Consequently, today hundreds of FBOs now have the right to engage with the UN via ECOSOC registration. As long as they ostensibly and consistently conform to UN values [4] then they are able to act at the UN as credible – albeit sometimes controversial – interlocutors on various moral and ethical issues, including international development, human rights, and gender issues, with both capacity and opportunity to take part in various kinds of discussions and debates linked to global public policy formation and execution.

In sum, contrary to what Ruggie avers, there is *plenty* of religion at the UN, manifested in relation to various core UN concerns, including: the value of democracy, improved governance, and better

---

[4] 'UN values' highlight the value of democracy, improved governance, and better human rights. For details, see http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/democracy/ Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

human rights, including improved development. As we shall below, various UN entities and agencies, including, *inter alia*, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, UNFPA, the UN Development Programme, and the Human Rights Council regularly engage with FBOs in relation to such issues.

The United Nations: a secular organisation in a postsecular world

Karam (2012: 23) notes that the 'United Nations is first and foremost an intergovernmental body that owes its existence and is accountable to its 192 (sic) member states.' This implies that the UN's primary referral point is the collected body of world governments, grouped together in the UN General Assembly. This structure of governance was created primarily to give credence to the UN's overarching human rights mandate and today provides the context and explains the ways that the UN provides support to both governments and civil society actors. But in order to comprehend why 'religion' is now taken seriously at the UN, we need briefly to examine the UN's development over time. We also need to factor in the impact of today's widespread religious resurgence, leading to a 'postsecular' international environment.

The UN was founded in October 1945, following the end of World War II. It was an era of secular international relations, and few if any anticipated that religion would ever again be an important international actor. This was not a novel position but reflected a situation extant for hundreds of years, following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which marked the end of Europe's long-running and deeply destabilising religious wars. The Peace laid foundations of an irreligious international system dominated by secular states, with three secular cornerstones: the balance of power, international law, and international diplomacy. The nature of the international system was ideologically informed by the decidedly secular values of the American (1776) and French Revolutions (1789), and subsequent turn to nationalism, colonialism and imperialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries and, after World War I, a focus on economic nationalism and extremist ideologies. Following the slide into global conflagration in 1939, the UN was primarily animated by a collective desire to rebuild collective security, so such a conflict would never happen again.

From the 19th century onwards, many issues were identified as global not exclusively national in character and, as a result, states sought to develop collective, consensual outlooks and strategies. Examples include the successful fight against slavery in the 19th century and from the second half of the 20th century, a focus on human rights, including gender equality and religious freedom, as well as the fight against nuclear weapons proliferation and environmental degradation and destruction. Following World War II, the UN took a global lead in relation to such issues, establishing itself in the process as a key form for the development of global public policy.

According to the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, the UN seeks to pursue improved peace and security, human rights, equality, justice, international law, social progress, 'better standards of life' and 'economic and social advancement of all peoples.' [5] To help achieve these goals, UN agencies formally work with both states and non-states, including selected NGOs (Stone, 2008: 3, 15, 18). In its early years, the UN interacted almost exclusively with secular NGOs, before expanding operations to include institutionalised dealings with selected FBOs, especially via ECOSOC. This reflects the fact that numbers of international and transnational FBOs have recently grown, sharing a goal to influence global public policy. This development also reflects a situation whereby the UN is now 'officially' willing and able to interact regularly with selected FBOs, whose position has been collectively enhanced a widespread religious resurgence, which informs morally and ethically-informed values in debates about global public policy.

---

[5] The Charter of the UN, including the Preamble, are reproduced at the International Court of Justice website: http://www.icj-cij.org/documents/index.php?p1=4&p2=1&p3=0

While the extent and institutionalisation of current interactions with FBOs at the UN is novel, they are not *de novo*. The UN has long had an institutionalised relationship with selected NGOs – that is, those that conform to and support UN values. Article 71 of the UN Charter states that the UN will 'consult' with NGOs in order to carry out related work through ECOSOC. ECOSOC seeks to facilitate 'international cooperation on standards-making and problem-solving in economic and social issues' (http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/). In addition, the UN Charter does include a reference to religion, albeit in the context of a fundamental UN focus: human rights. In this context, the UN recognises religious belief as part of human rights and human freedom. A 'Committee of Religious NGOs' was established in 1972, three decades after the founding of the UN,[6] followed in 2004 by creation of a 'NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values, and Global Concerns'. [7] The existence of these two entities emphasises that even though the UN was founded on secular values, religious and spiritual entities have sought to influence it for 40 years. Yet, it is only recently – that is, since the 1990s – that FBO numbers have grown significantly, focused in enhanced activity at the UN, including institutionalised FBO presence to UN committees in both New York and Geneva, as well as FBO interactions with many UN Committees and UN Commissions, including, for example, the UN Commission for Social Development (Carrette and Miall, 2012).

Overall, the growing FBO presence at the UN reflects two main developments. First, there is a well-documented, recent increase in significance of religion in international relations (Fox and Sandler, 2004; Haynes, 2013a; Thomas, 2005). Second, there is increased international focus on 'values', norms' and 'behaviour' following the end of the Cold War and contemporaneous deepening and expansion of globalisation. In particular, many FBOs have concern with various aspects of human rights at the UN, including an interest in how poverty-stricken people in poor and undeveloped countries can improve their positions. However, achieving improved and more equitable international development is not simply a moral or theological concern. As Lynch (2012) notes, when FBOs ponder international development they typically move from initially moral dimensions to consider a highly material factor: 'neoliberal competition of the "market" [in] international development'. From there it is but a short jump to begin to ponder on how more generally the conditions of globalisation appear to encourage or exacerbate an unjust and polarised world, where the rich benefit disproportionately. In sum, the past 20 years – that is, the post-Cold War era – was a time of deepening globalisation, which has coincided with an international religious resurgence and increased prominence of ethical and moral (often overlapping with religious) concerns in debates about values, norms and behaviours (Haynes, 2005; 2007; 2012; 2013a). Today, as a result, religious views and opinions are frequently heard in relation to ethical and moral controversies focusing on the nature and impact of post-Cold War globalisation, in relation to: increasingly polarised international development outcomes, as well as 'climate change, global finance, disarmament, inequality, pan-epidemics and human rights' (Carrette and Miall 2012: 3). In sum, the focus, values and content of global public policy at the UN are increasingly influenced 'by the moral resources that "religions" offer and agencies of global governance need an awareness of what religious actors are doing and sensitivity to religious difference.' (*ibid.*)

Post-Cold War deepening and widening of globalisation paved the way for the new, highly unexpected, opening for religious and spiritual energies in international relations, a development with variable impacts. Today's religious resurgence is not one-sided or easily interpreted. It can perhaps best be understood as part of a double-edged post-Cold War impact of religion in international relations, including in relation to global public policy issues. On the one hand, inter- and intra-religion

---

[6] In 2013, the Committee of Religious NGOs is an institutionalised entity which produces an annual report of activity and has 38 different religious groups as members, including Christian, Jewish, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Hindu and Zoroastrian entities. There are no Muslim members. (http://rngos.wordpress.com/member-organizations/).

[7] 'The NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values, and Global Concerns (NY) envisions a global culture of peace based on justice, solidarity, inclusiveness, shared responsibility, harmony, cooperation, compassion, love, wisdom, goodwill and reverence for the sacredness of all life through active peaceful engagement.' (http://www.csvgc-ny.org/)

conflicts in many regions and countries are a significant, maybe increasing, source of domestic and international strife. On the other hand, it is widely accepted that if 'benign' and 'cooperative' religious principles and practices could be applied meaningfully in relation to conflicts then such 'emancipatory religious and spiritual perspectives in world order thinking and practice' might improve matters (Falk, 2004: 137). Falk conceptualises this as a shift to what he calls 'humane global governance', which he understands as a moral and ethical regime which may well involve religious worldviews. For Falk a focus on global public policy which involves only secular (state and non-state) actors explicitly excludes an important component from the study and practice of global public policy: religious and spiritual dimensions of human experience. In this context, the UN, as the world's only universal international organisation, offers the most potentially useful environment. The World Conference on Religion and Peace (sometimes referred to as the 'UN of Religions'), asserted in 2001 that

> religious communities are, without question, the largest and best-organized civil institutions in the world today, claiming the allegiance of billions of believers and bridging the divides of race, class and nationality. They are uniquely equipped to meet the challenges of our time: resolving conflicts, caring for the sick and needy, promoting peaceful co-existence among all peoples" (World Conference on Religion and Peace, 2001; no page number supplied, quoted in Berger 2003: 2)

Discussions of international religious resurgence and its impact on global public policy overlap with another current debate in international relations: the extent to which today's international environment is no longer overwhelmingly secular but is instead increasingly affected by religious norms, beliefs and values, leading to 'postsecular' international relations. Reflecting these concerns, the UN has moved over time from a position where 'religion' was largely absent from its deliberations to one where it is more prominent. Reflecting this change, global public policy debates and discussions at the UN have undergone a shift in emphasis from exclusively secular and material to include moral and ethical issues, which frequently overlap with faith-based concerns.

Reinicke (2000: 44) explains that 'global public policy networks' are best understood as loose or even *ad hoc* 'alliances of government agencies, international organizations, corporations, and elements of civil society such as nongovernmental organizations, professional associations, or religious groups that join together to achieve what none can accomplish on its own.' Thus global public policy networks can bring together both state and non-state actors in pursuit of shared objectives. The UN is a major meeting point of such networks, concerned with a variety of objectives, some of which, involving selected FBOs, we examine in the case studies that follow in the next section.[8]

In conclusion, the recent 'return' of religion to international relations led to a renewed focus on how to understand formative influences on global public policy. Numerous, albeit mainly Christian and northern-based, FBOs now have a consistent voice in global public policy debates at the UN. In the next section, I examine the injection of faith-based concerns in current global public policy debates at the UN. I do this via three case studies. Two examine different *human rights* issues. The first focuses on women's sexual and reproductive health rights, an issue which pits two sets of FBOs against each other. One set wants to preserve what it calls 'family values' while the other emphasises 'a woman's right to choose'. The second of the human rights-focused case studies examines competing values and the impact upon outcomes in relation to international development, by surveying differing worldviews of the World Bank, the World Council of Churches, and the United Nations Development Programme. The final case study looks at the controversial issue of *defamation of religions* which, championed by the OIC and several Muslim governments and FBOs, was strongly

---

[8] FBOs and other religious actors are rarely accorded much attention in discussions of global public policy. For example, Stone's (2008) wide-ranging and widely-cited article on global public policy includes not one reference to 'religion' or 'faith'. Between publication in 2008 and mid-2013, Stone's article had garnered nearly 100 citations. Yet her ignoring of FBOs and religion more generally is not an isolated aberration. This is underlined by the fact that the flagship journal on global governance, *Global Governance*, featured *no* articles concerned with 'religion' or 'faith' between 2004 and 2013. See http://journals.rienner.com/toc/ggov/19/2 for list of articles over 2004-2013. Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

opposed by many Western governments, as well as by many Christian and Jewish, and some Muslim, FBOs.

FBOs at the UN: Global public policy controversies

> As of February 2012, the total number of UN staff was over 37,000, and the number of UN agencies, bodies, offices, and departments easily amounted to sixty, each with its own staff and many with headquarters and field offices. In short, the United Nations is a huge entity with multiple facets and a plethora of forms, acting on every conceivable aspect of human development. Many FBOs often either refer to this organism as though it were one homogenous entity or complain about the confusion engendered by so many bodies all being part of "the UN." This is a very real concern because unless there is a deep knowledge of the system, which many in the UN themselves struggle to acquire, it can take a lifetime to understand whom exactly to reach out to, let alone partner with, and how best to do so (Karam, 2012: 11).[9]

> Whether liked or disliked, 'religious' actors shape governance issues in a global world and awareness of their involvement, value and contribution is vital for justice, peace and reconciliation on a wide range of policy issues. Religious values and concerns inform and shape decision-making and there is much need for more public awareness of the work and significance of religious actors at the UN in achieving (or sometimes subverting) the goals of justice and human rights. (Carrette and Miall, 2012: 1)

> Why does international policymaking succeed or fail? What explains the shape that policy takes? Conflict among policy networks is not the only answer to these questions—but it is one important and neglected factor. … How does opposition affect international activism and policymaking? (Bob, 2010: 2)

These quotations point, first, to the incredible complexity of what I have referred to so far in this working paper as 'the United Nations'. Karam emphasises just what a massive set up the UN is, involving tens of thousands of personnel and dozens of agencies and other entities. What this points to is that any focus on the UN has to be selective as a comprehensive coverage of the entire organisation is not possible in a working paper of this length. The second point is that, suggested by Carrette and Miall, increasing global public involvement of religious actors – including, FBOs – emphasises the controversies it raises. Third, Bob notes that when FBOs try to influential they necessarily have to build coalitions in order to be influential in global public policy making at the UN.

This section of the working paper examines these issues via a focus on three specific issue areas: (1) women's sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) (2) international development in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, and (3) defamation of religions. Each is very controversial, with the UN a focal point for conflict and competition among global public policy networks, involving religious and secular, state and non-state, entities. Each grew in importance from the 1990s, with roots in UN conferences. Each is also marked by growing polarisation between views of 'conservative' and 'liberal' actors. We shall see that, like other sorts of actors at the UN, FBOs can be *either* 'conservative' or 'liberal', and their stance on the issues we examine below is linked to an ideological view of the world rather than the result of religious characteristics *per* se. This underlines that hundreds of FBOs active at the UN cannot be understood in isolation from activities of wider global public policy networks. Given the secular norms and values of the UN, FBOs necessarily use 'UN-approved' arguments – not overtly religious one – to advance their goals. For example, the issue of women's rights is articulated by reference to 'family values', or by a 'woman's right to choose', international development debates highlight the moral and ethical necessity of advancing the position of the poorest people, while that of defamation of religions is characterised by the secular language of human rights and condemnation of 'religious hate talk.

---

[9]   A 'UN System Organizational Chart' is reproduced at http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/structure/pdfs/un-system-chart-color-sm.pdf Last accessed 24 May 2013.

(1) Women's sexual and reproductive health rights

> 'Conservative religious groups have for years engaged in clashes over family policy. Much of their activism aims to preserve traditional families against what they decry as an *onslaught of feminism, abortion and gender politics'* (emphasis added; Bob, 2012: 14-15)

> While health policy is usually framed as a part of the secular political domain, it touches upon combustible religious values and engages powerful alliances across religious divides. *Catholics and Mormons; Christians and Muslims; Russian Orthodox and American fundamentalists find common ground on traditional values and against SRHR issues at the UN* (emphasis added; NORAD, 2013: 1)

The first case study focuses on FBOs at the UN, with different views on women's 'sexual and reproductive health rights' (SRHR). This highly controversial issue pits conservative FBOs against liberal FBOs. Each seeks to enlist– both religious and secular – allies to try to advance their goals. The key point is that a shared 'conservative' outlook brings activists together and it does not seem important in this respect what their religious outlook is. For example, campaigns at the UN in pursuit of 'family values' brings together Christian actors from a variety of Christian faiths – Mormons, Catholics, Protestants, and the Russian Orthodox Church – as well as conservative Muslims. This inter-faith bloc constitutes an influential grouping at the UN, projecting a distinctly conservative social agenda. Liberals regard the conservatives as motivated by 'pre-modern' ideas about gender issues, family politics and women's health, working in effect to resist the advance of women's sexual and reproductive health rights. For the liberals, the conservatives work 'ceaselessly to contest, obstruct and delay the development of relevant UN agendas. Their influence does not reflect their number but is largely due to a striking ability to build alliances across religious boundaries as well as elicit the support of religious communities around the world.' (NORAD, 2013: 1)

Why should it be that FBOs rely on non-religious arguments to make their case at the UN in relation to issues related to women's sexual and reproductive health rights? As we have already noted, as a secular forum, debates at the UN necessarily 'take place in the context of a secular global public policy sphere'. This produces norms, values and expressions which strongly influence potential 'non-liberal' ideas by 'causing' them to 'align [their] frame to match the dominant [liberal] discourse' (Kayaoğlu, 2011: 17). Thus, conservative FBOs seeking to oppose what they regard as liberal SRHR policies at the UN do not believe it appropriate or feasible if they want to make progress to express their arguments in terms of their religious values (based on community, personal responsibility, and traditional patriarchal understandings of the family and women's place within it). Instead, they couch their concerns in religiously-neutral concerns with an ambiguous notion – that is, 'family values' – enabling them to overcome what openly expressed conservative religious values would produce: 'limited access to discursive and institutional opportunities at the UN.' (Samuel 2007, cited in Kayaoğlu, 2011: 17). Consequently, if anti-SRHR groups wish to be successful they find it necessary to 'concentrate on countering the pro-abortion' – that is, liberal – groups' agendas and declarations through blocking or weakening the pro-choice language in UN documents. They also adjust the frame of their discussions by arguing for concepts like the "natural family" and referring to God as the "creator" in order to bypass theological differences and find non-Christian language (*ibid.*).

Conservative groups' strategy in relation to SRHR has developed over two decades. The starting point for their campaign was two UN conferences in 1994 and 1995: Cairo ('population growth') and Beijing ('women and gender'). At the 1995 Beijing conference, 'conservatives claimed that lesbians had launched a "direct attack on the values, cultures, traditions and religious beliefs of the vast majority of the world's peoples"' (Bob, 2010: 2, quoting Human Rights Watch 2005, 84-85). These conferences marked the beginning of a concerted anti-liberal campaign in relation to SRHR, initially led by the pope, the Vatican and, more generally, the Catholic Church. As Chao (1997: 48) notes, at this time, 'the Catholic Church became a leading actor on the conservative wing'. This propelled the then pope, John Paul II, to overall leadership of the global conservative faith-based struggle. This was directed against 'what the secular world would call progressive: the notion, for example that humans

share with God the right to decide who will and who will not be born' (*ibid.*). This is not to imply however that to be Catholic is *necessarily* to be conservative. Instead, we can note a polarisation between 'conservative' and 'liberal' Catholics, a competition played out at the UN. 'Catholic NGOs with ECOSOC accreditation range from the liberal "pro-choice" activist group Catholics for choice (sic) to the most fervent "pro-life" campaigners in American Life League.' (NORAD, 2013: 11)

Conservative Catholic campaign leadership was added to by supportive involvement of mainly US-based Protestant evangelicals and conservative Muslims from various countries. Bob (2012: 36) refers to this alliance as the 'Baptist-burqa' link. [10] The augmentation of the conservative Catholic campaign from additional conservative religious sources highlights the entities' shared conservative ideological orientation and their dispersed geographical locations: conservative Catholics from Italy were joined by traditionalist Muslims, from, *inter alia*, Egypt and Pakistan, while right-wing evangelical Protestants joined the campaign from their bases in the USA. These people were united not by shared religious worldview but b ideological agreement of the necessity of weakening or, better, blocking pro-women's choice language in UN documents.

The conservatives' 'pro-family' concerns extended to denial of equal rights for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) people. This emphasises that it is not only one specific concern – women's rights – which animates conservative Catholic, traditionalist Muslims and right-wing Protestants' activities. In addition, the issue of LGBT rights raises the conservatives' perception that this too constitutes a significant attack on 'family values', the result of an excess of 'liberalism' at the UN and more generally in global public policy. Bob (2010: 2) recounts the story of a Brazil-sponsored UN resolution in 2003 which claimed that homosexuals should have the same rights as heterosexual people. This claim propelled the conservative coalition into swift action, following the unexpected introduction of the resolution by Brazil at a UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva. The Brazilian government's aim was to spread the notion of human rights as a universal right for all people, regardless of sexual orientation. The resolution expressed 'deep concern' at violations based on sexual orientation, and declared that 'enjoyment' of human rights should not be 'hindered in any way' by a person's sexual orientation (United Nations, 2003).

The unexpected Brazil-sponsored UN resolution led to pro-family FBOs swiftly responding. For example, the US-based United Families International (UFI), which has had special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1999, immediately dispatched its Communications Director, Lynn Aldred, to Geneva to assist in the fight against the resolution's adoption. For UFI, Aldred's trip was essential because 'pro-family' groups must "show up everywhere marriage and the family [are] under assault, [or] . . . those who oppose marriage and family will win by default."' (Bob, 2010: 2) Other conservative Christian groups soon joined in with UFI, yet they collectively faced a serious problem. As NGOs, their influence was limited. So, the conservative NGO activists turned to another wing of their loose-knit network: friendly states, including, the governments of Egypt, Pakistan and several other Muslim countries (*ibid.*) and the 'pro-family' administration of George W. Bush.

Pressure from UFI and other 'pro-family' entities in respect to Brazil's pro-LGBT resolution was not an isolated aberration. Instead, as Kayaoğlu (2011: 8) notes, '[w]ith respect to state actors and religion, … even secular states', such as the USA, 'are not immune from religious pressures'. Skilfully using the open nature of the US political system and the capacity to exploit both personal and corporate relationships, forceful 'pro-family' religious groups learned how to be effective in pressurising the government to adopt their preferred position on various causes at international fora (Haynes, 2008). For example, during the presidency of George W. Bush (2001-2009), several 'pro-family' FBOs enjoyed strong government support for their 'anti-abortion' campaigns at the UN, being included in official US delegations to the UN on the issue. Among such FBOs were the Mormon

---

[10] Seeing mutual benefit in working together via a shared concern with 'pro-family values', the 'Baptist-burqa' coalition manage to endure, overcoming such setbacks as 9/11, whose impact otherwise was to divide the Christian and Muslim worlds from each other.

Church-affiliated World Family Policy Center (defunct since 2008), the Howard Center, the Catholic Family and Human Rights (known as C-FAM), and the Family Research Center (NORAD, 2013: 7, 23, 34, 35; Petersen, 2010: 13). This was despite the fact that several of the entities did not have registered ECOSOC status, normally a *sine qua non* for formal FBO involvement at the UN (Samuel 2007, cited in Kayaoğlu, 2011: 8).

This is not to suggest that conservative 'pro-family' FBOs have it all their own way. They are challenged by liberal, 'pro-choice', FBOs at the UN. Globally, this women's 'pro-choice' network brings together 'liberal' FBOs, friendly secular NGOs, and supportive mainly Western governments, including those from Norway, Switzerland and Canada. This 'pro-choice' liberal network is significantly coordinated by a NGO umbrella group, called: WomenAction 2000. It comprises 30 mainly regional networks from Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America (http://www.womenaction.org/). WomenAction 2000's running costs are met by a number of agencies and governments, including: WomenWatch (a UN 'interagency gateway'), the San Francisco-based Shaler Adams Foundation (whose strapline is: 'women's rights are human rights'; www.shaleradams.org), the Canadian International Development Agency/Agence canadienne de developpement international (CIDA/ACDI), HIVOS ('an international development organisation guided by humanist values'; http://www.hivos.org/about-hivos) and the Swiss Development Agency (http://www.womenaction.org/). FBOs included in the 'pro-choice' network include: Catholics for a Free Choice and Ecumenical Women 2000+' (Petersen 2010: 13). 'The liberal Catholics for Choice (sic), which has been accredited to ECOSOC since 1998, … strives for gender equality and reproductive rights as argued by Norway and the EU. However, this is the exception to the rule which illustrates the fact that Catholic NGOs are not ruled or run by the Vatican' (NORAD, 2013)

Perhaps the most important liberal player at the UN in relation to SRHR is the UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Activities, now called the UN Population Fund). UNFPA has partnerships with over 400 different FBOs in over 100 countries (http://www.unfpa.org/public/News/pid/1320). UNFPA sought to build links with various faith leaders, including Muslim imams in sub-Saharan Africa and Bangladesh ('Married adolescents ignored in global agenda, says UNFPA', 2004; conversation with Azza Karam, Senior Advisor on Culture at the United Nations Population Fund, at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 20 November 2011). UNFPA also collaborated more widely with religious leaders in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as taken part in educational programmes and programmes to advance women's rights in respect to SRHR. As Tyndale (2004: 6) notes, collaborations between UNFPA and FBOs became possible when both 'sides' accepted that neither alone had the entire answer to development quandaries.

For example, in October 2008 in Istanbul, UNFPA organised the 'Global Forum on Faith-based Organizations for Population and Development.' The meeting drew together 160 key participants from earlier regional meetings – held in: Sub-Saharan Africa; Asia and the Pacific; 'Arab states'; and Latin America and the Caribbean between December 2007 and September 2008. The Istanbul meeting collected religious leaders and representatives from FBOs and UN agencies, including UNFPA, World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, UN-Habitat, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Development Program, and United Nations Children's Fund.[11] The main purpose was to discuss successful practices and ways to move forward in partnerships with UNFPA in the following areas as they relate to women and girls: reproductive health and rights, gender equality, and population and development issues. The Istanbul conference ended with the launch of a Global Interfaith Network on Population and Development, with FBO leaders and representatives – from Buddhist, Christian,

---

[11] Details of the Istanbul meeting at: http://www.unfpa.org/culture/docs/global_forum_summary.pdf Last accessed, 28 May 2013.

Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities – pledging commitment to strengthen cooperation on human rights and development, especially as they relate to girls and women. [12]

In conclusion, 'conservative' and 'liberal' networks, comprising in each case, ideologically similar FBOs, friendly secular NGOs and supportive governments, have developed over the last two decades in relation to women's sexual and reproductive health rights. Following foundational UN conferences in the 1990s, the networks developed into antagonistic, broad-based, highly-competitive coalitions which focus on the UN as the key forum to advance their conflicting campaigns. A wider point is that from the 1990s, several UN agencies, including not only UNFPA but also the World Bank and UNDP, began to take faith engagement seriously and sought to build relationships with faith leaders and FBOs in developing countries. We examine this issue in the next case study.

(2) International development

> It is a powerful idea—to tap the strengths of religions as development actors. Consider economics, finance and administration as disciplines that are deeply ethical at the core....they are about poverty reduction and employment creation. A vision without a task is boring. A task without a vision is awfully frustrating. A vision with a task can change the world (James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, 1995-2005 ('James D. Wolfensohn Presidency 1995-2005: Faith and development', 2013)

Some in the international development community believe that there is a generic 'faith sector' involved in international development, including in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (Tadros, 2010). Some observers believe that such a division is analytically unhelpful, posing significant analytical problems (Haynes, 2007; 2013b). First among these is that it creates a misleading dichotomy between secular and religious actors, asserting a strong difference between them, even though in some cases those differences might actually be small in terms of ideological and policy preferences. As a result, seeking to identify and work on the premise of a 'single "faith sector" … elides significant differences among religious actors by grouping progressive, human rights–oriented organizations with organizations that might be opposed to the values expressed in the UN Charter.' (emphasis added; Karam 2012: 17). This is a way of saying that lumping together all FBOs which are interested in international development and assuming that they come at the issue in the same way and with the same beliefs, overlooks often clear ideological differences between them.

Just as FBOs' involvement in the issue of women's sexual and reproductive health rights at the UN have been significant over the last 20 years, so too have FBO contributions to debates about international development and how to improve outcomes. The UN-sponsored Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were an important focal point from the late 1990s in this regard (Boehle, 2010). It is not however that surprising that many FBOs are interested in international development, as it is an issue intimately tied to many theological interpretations of the world. In this context, we can note the important involvement of various Christian FBOs – including, the World Council of Churches, United Methodist Church, Religions for Peace, and Caritas Internationalis – in formulation of the MDGs. Muslim FBOs, including Islamic Relief and Qatar Charity Organization, also worked with UN development agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, in relation to the MDGs. In short, announcement of the MDGs at the end of the 1990s led to a focus of FBO activities in seeking to help redress international development shortfalls, especially in the poorest developing countries. FBOs were interested both in the general thrust of improvements to international development, with specific interest in the following MDG goals: arresting the spread of

---

[12] Details at http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2009/global_forums_fbo.pdf) Last accessed 28 May 2013.

HIV/AIDS, and, in relation to gender issues in particular, reducing infant deaths, providing universal primary education and reducing adult illiteracy (Haynes, 2007; 2013b). [13]

The MDGs were stimulated by egregious failures of economically liberal structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the 1980s and 1990s. Despite the huge ideological and financial commitment from several UN agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), SAPs' general failure to overcome development shortfalls in developing countries where they were applied led to strong critiques from many quarters, including: secular NGOs, grassroots movements, and some FBOs. The common accusation was that both the World Bank and the IMF promoted and supported a narrowly economistic conception of development via SAPs, which crucially lacked a holistic focus on human development (Joshi and O'Dell, 2013). Critics of SAPs wanted to see a shift away from state and market-led approaches to broader, more holistic, conceptions of development, focusing on interactions of civil society, human development, and grassroots participation. To pursue this different vision of development, many FBOs developed 'human development' outlooks in the 1990s, which focused, *inter alia*, on opening development spaces to non-state actors, in order to augment development work undertaken by both international agencies and states. The result was that from this time, development-orientated FBOs became 'legitimate actors in the field of development and humanitarian aid' (Petersen, 2010: 2). The World Bank's own study, *Voices of the Poor* (2000), helped to cement the importance of FBOs in the context of development, not least by the assertion that many poor people in the developing world had more confidence in FBOs than in their own governments. In sum, the advent of the MDGs in the late 1990s coincided with a new global public policy focus on civil society involvement in development – including activities of both secular NGOs and FBOs – which collectively sought to move on from the egregious failures of SAPs to arrive at improved methods to achieve qualitative international development improvements.

Like the issue of women's sexual and reproductive health rights examined in the preceding case study, the issue of how to improve international development outcomes in the developing world was an issue that led to competitive interactions between ideologically different FBOs. In the previous case study, I referred to the significance of a liberal UN agency, UNFPA, which has provided encouragement for pro-SRHR entities and activities. In relation to international development in the context of the MDGs, Joshi and O'Dell (2013) identify two key UN agencies with different conservative and liberal ideologies: the 'conservative' World Bank and the 'liberal' UNDP.[14] Both the Bank and UNDP have long had 'international development' and how to achieve it as a consistent focus of concern. Analysing recent reports of both organisations, Joshi and O'Dell (2013: 260) conclude that the Bank's ideological outlook is characterised by a preference for 'liberalization', the 'private sector' and 'privatization'. The UNDP, on the other hand, has an ideological outlook characterised by 'leftist key words', including: 'basic needs', 'full employment', 'egalitarianism', 'fair trade', and 'redistribut[ion]'.

I engage with two key questions in this section. First, why was the outcome of the Bank's engagement with the World Council of Churches ultimately disappointing? Was the problem the 'conservative' ideology of the Bank which made long-term working with the 'liberal' WCC impossible? Second, I examine the much more satisfactory relationship of UNDP with FBOs in the Arab region in relation to HIV/AIDS prevention. What explains this outcome? Was it the UNDP's liberal orientation?

---

[13] MDGs are listed at http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/ Last access 28 May, 2013.

[14] While Joshi and O'Dell (2013) do not classify the World Bank as a UN agency, the UN describes the World Bank as an 'autonomous organizations linked to the UN through [a] special agreement', employing the 'coordinating machinery' of ECOSOC. In this case study, I treat both the Bank and UNDP as UN agencies. See http://www.un.org/Overview/uninbrief/institutions.shtml for details of the Bank's relationship with the UN. Last accessed 24 May, 2013.

James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank between 1995 and 2005, was a strong supporter of increasing the role of FBOs in development policies and programmes. There were two main reasons for this. First, Wolfensohn saw failure to involve FBOs in development as irrational, given their great importance to many people in the developing world. Second, this was a time when both the Bank was actively seeking to engage with civil society, following criticism that the Bank was not willing to listen to voices from below during the furore about SAPs (Interview with senior World Bank figure, 23 January 2012). It is not however the case that the Wolfensohn, an Australian based for years in the USA, was especially religious – he is actually a non-practising Jew. So, his wish to involve FBOs in development was not necessarily because of his own faith inclinations; instead, it was largely instrumental. Wolfensohn believed it was a missed opportunity to harness potentially productive resources for improved development outcomes. For Wolfensohn, faith and, more generally, FBOs could play an important role in in relation to improved development outcomes, in two main ways:

- *Bottom up pressure on policy makers and consequential influence on policy formation*. This could occur by engendering and/or influencing policy makers values and outlooks, in turn affecting formulation of specific development policies;

- *Bringing together* or *dividing communities along faith lines*. This could either improve or worsen pre-existing social and/or political conflicts centring on access to improved development opportunities.

The second bullet point suggests that Wolfensohn did not believe that building three-way relationships between governments, secular development agencies and FBOs would be unproblematic. Yet he saw involvement of FBOs in development as rational for the following reasons:

- FBOs of various kinds – including, churches, mosques, religious charities and religious movements – are important aspects of civil society in most developing countries. Their involvement in development policies and programmes could potentially help achieve improved development.

- FBOs already play a key role in providing education and welfare in many developing countries, so it seems logical to involve them in development issues and outcomes.

- FBOs may share many values. Coming together in pursuit of development could help to only to achieve improved development outcomes but also as a result assist religious/cultural understanding in developing countries.

During his presidency of the Bank, Wolfensohn was the driving force behind the establishment of several initiatives involving the Bank and FBOs, in particular the WCC.[15] To this end, Wolfensohn personally created two faith-focused entities in the Bank in 1998: the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) [16] and the Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics (DDVE). [17]

---

[15] The WCC was founded in Amsterdam in 1948. It is an international, interdenominational Christian organisation which brings together around 350 - Protestant, Anglican, and Eastern Orthodox - churches. WCC headquarters are in Geneva.

[16] According to the WFDD website, 'The World Faiths Development Dialogue was set up in 1998 as an initiative of James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank and Lord Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury. Its aim is to facilitate a dialogue on poverty and development among people from different religions and between them and the international development institutions'. The focus is on the relationship between faith and development and how this is expressed, both in considering decisions about development policy and in action with impoverished communities all over the world.' http://www.wfdd.org.uk/ Last accessed 28 May, 2013

[17] The DDVE was a small unit at the World Bank whose purpose was to contribute to analytical work, capacity development and dialogue on issues related to values and ethics. Founded in 2000, for the next decade the DDVE served as the World Bank's focal point on the intersection of religion and development. In addition, the unit led a number of projects related to prominent development issues, such as the current economic crisis in Africa, with a focus on the difficult distributional trade-offs faced by various development actors in dealing with these issues. The DDVE was disbanded in July 2011 without replacement. See http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/PARTNERS/EXTDEVDIALOGUE/0,,contentMDK:

Following initial informal discussions, the Bank's formal dialogue with the WCC began in early 2002, continuing until August 2008, with a meeting in Accra, Ghana, which also involved the IMF. Since then, however, no further meetings have taken place between the Bank and the WCC and, at the current time, none seem to be planned ('The WCC-IMF-WB high-level encounter', 2004). Why was there a breakdown in the World Bank/WCC relationship following initially promising beginnings? Certainly, the WCC was sceptical about the benefit of continuing dialogue with the Bank, expressing 'far-ranging reservations about the motivations, governance structures, policies, and programs of the Bretton Woods institutions', including the Bank (Marshall and Van Saanen 2007: 196).

Why did the World Bank/WCC relationship fail to develop satisfactorily? On the one hand, the two organisations had apparently incompatible worldviews which made it impossible for them to work together over time. Second, there was a strong 'secularist' bias within the top echelons of the Bank. This meant that very few senior Bank figures openly sided with Wolfensohn in his pro-faith initiative. Third, many Bank employees – at both junior and senior levels – were uncertain about how exactly faith could be factored into development initiatives. Linked to this was a concern expressed by several senior Bank operatives. They expressed the belief that improving development outcomes is most likely to be achieved through secular development initiatives and that faith issues are *inherently* divisive, frequently leading to complications and strife within developing countries (Interviews with former and current senior World Bank employees, January 25, 26, 27, 2012).

An additional factor is that the conservative orientation of the Bank – focusing on issues such as 'liberalization', the 'private sector' and 'privatization' – did not chime well with the WCC's increasingly liberal outlook, which corresponded to the shift in focus of the WCC from the north to the developing world. The WCC groups together churches, denominations and church fellowships from more than 100 countries, representing over 500 million individual Christians from numerous non-Roman Catholic traditions. At the end of 2012, the WCC comprised 345 member churches, with most coming from Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and the Pacific. This contrasts from when the WCC was founded in 1948, when members mostly came from Europe and North America. The WCC's ideological position can be seen in the following WCC mission statement, whereby member churches:

- 'are called to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship;
- promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism;
- *engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace*, and upholding the integrity of creation; and
- foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service.' (emphasis added; 'About us. What is the World Council of Churches', 2013; http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us)

Thus whereas the language of the Bank emphasises the perceived desirability of 'liberalisation' and 'privatisation', that of the WCC stresses the importance of 'serving human need; and 'seeking justice and peace'. These incompatible goals were clearly not conducive to developing a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship between the Bank and the WCC, despite an initially promising initiative in the context of the MDGs.

Failure of the Bank's relationship with the WCC does not imply that UN agencies are generally unable to develop satisfactory relations with faith entities. In this respect the MDGs were an important practical 'shopping list' of goals. Whereas UNFPA developed a close relationship with women's pro-choice faith entities, united in pursuit of the third MDG goal ('Promote gender equality and empower women'), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has recently worked closely with faith leaders in the Arab world to develop shared initiatives pertaining to MDG goal number 6: 'Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases'. On the face of it, this initiative might appear

(Contd.) ──────────────

21966758~menuPK:5554943~pagePK:64192523~piPK:64192458~theSitePK:537298,00.html Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

surprising, given the general reputation for 'conservatism' that faith leaders in the Arab world have, especially in the West. Despite this, since 2004 a UNDP-led campaign has worked to try to end the stigma of HIV/AIDS in the Arab world. An initial meeting in December 2004, bringing together both Muslim and Christian leaders and FBO representatives, was followed two years by the 'Second Regional Religious Leaders' Forum in Response to AIDS in the Arab States', held in Cairo between 6-9 November, 2006. The meeting led to the Cairo Declaration, signed by 80 Muslim and Christian leaders, including the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, perhaps the most important (Sunni) Islamic institution, as well as the Coptic Pope, faith leader of some eight million Egyptian Coptic Christians, around 10 per cent of Egypt's population. The agreement was a ground breaking step which not only signified important practical efforts to try to deal the scourge of HIV/AIDS in Arab countries but also more generally served to increase inter-faith cooperation in trying to respond more generally to regional development challenges. Over the next few years, the initiative developed into the CHAHAMA initiative, 'a network of faith based organizations and leaders responding to AIDS in the Arab region' (UNDP /HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States, 2006)

In November 2010, Joseph Diess, the President of the 65th session of the UN General Assembly, awarded the coordinator of the UNDP Regional HIV Programme in the Arab States, a Tunisian woman, Khadija Moalla, the 3rd Annual Global South-South Development Award for the CHAHAMA initiative (Network of Multi-Faith Based Organizations in response to HIV) (Moalla 2012: 24). The award reflected the fact that the principles of the Cairo Declaration were effected throughout the Arab region, at community, national, sub-regional and regional levels. The overall aim of CHAHAMA was to bring 'together the hundreds of Christian, Muslim, female and male religious leaders in the Arab region who have been mobilized, trained and are making a difference in the AIDS response from community to regional level.' (Faith-based organizations at the forefront in the AIDS response in the Arab region, 2012)

In conclusion, there was a mixed outcome in relation to international development at the UN, involving FBOs. Regarding two specific issues, captured in two of the MDGs – 'Promote gender equality and empower women' and 'Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases' – there was progress, centring on development of UN agency/faith networks, involving in the case studies, UNFPA and UNDP. Each worked with separate groups of religious leaders and FBOs with a shared aim: to develop specific campaigns and foci to collect and disseminate human and material resources to pursue specific development-orientated goals. We also noted the failure of the World Bank-WCC initiative which eventually came to nothing, despite a promising start. Part of the reason for this was their mutual ideological incompatibility, which made continued progress in their relationship impossible to achieve.

Defamation of religions

This working paper has noted that 'religion' 'returned' to international relations after the Cold War. International organisations, including the world's largest and most important, the United Nations, now widely engage with FBOs. This development was noted a dozen years ago in a 'Religion Counts' report, *Religion and Public Policy at the UN* (2001: x), which identified 'clearly an increased religious presence at the UN.' In addition, as Bush (2005: 5) noted a decade ago, since the early 1990s, '[r]eligious groups have been adopting increasingly assertive stances at the UN'. We have already noted increased activities and numbers of FBOs at the UN, with influence in UN debates on various issues, including: human rights for women, HIV/AIDS, and population and development. We have also noted that development-focused UN conferences in 1990s were a key launching pad for FBO activities at the UN. Finally, we have seen that Christian FBOs are over-represented at the UN, while other religious traditions, notably Islam, are under-represented. While there has been recent growth in numbers of Muslim FBOs at the UN, overall Muslim FBO numbers with official consultative status at the UN are proportionately much less than enjoyed by Christian counterparts.

Despite the imbalance in numbers between Christian and Muslim FBOs at the UN, David Littman (1999) asserts that the UN has seen an increase in Islam's international influence and involvement, with 'Islamism grow[ing] stronger at the United Nations'.

Littman's reference to 'Islamism' at the UN is primarily an indication of increasing Muslim *state* activity. This is because, unlike conservative Christian FBOs noted above, Muslim FBOs do not form a recognisable bloc at the UN. Instead, the UN is strongly informed by, on the one hand, the activities of a number of governments of individual Muslim-majority countries – including: Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia – and a unique Muslim FBO, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The OIC is unique because it is the only significant international organisation structured by faith; there is, for example, no comparable Christianity-focused entity.

The OIC is a 57-member intergovernmental organisation, established in 1969. Its *raison d'être* is to be 'the collective voice of the Muslim world' which works to seek 'international peace and harmony among various people of the world.' (http://www.oic-oci.org/page_detail.asp?p_id=52) During the last four decades, the OIC has functioned as a forum for senior Muslim figures to discuss both religious political issues, while asserting the desirability of a path of moderation in international relations (Ahsan 1988). While the OIC's overall role in international relations has not been widely debated in the literature, most observers would agree that it has been relatively insignificant (Azbarzadeh and Connor, 2004; Esposito, 2002; Kepel, 2004; Roy, 2004). A key reason for this is that, whereas the OIC professes to be the primary voice of the *ummah*, working to extend the global growth and influence of Islam, it has instead been dogged for decades by competition between its leading member states: Egypt, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Haynes 2001). Dogan (2005: 1) avers that *if* the OIC could overcome inter-state rivalry, it would be more than capable of helping Muslims and Muslim states to pull together to deliver 'a unified ethical approach to such issues as international terrorism, international development, and democracy. This role of the organization is critical for both ending "clashes" between "civilizations" and bringing peace to the "Greater Middle East"'.

In recent years, the OIC's involvement at the UN has focused on a controversial campaign concerning 'defamation of religions'. The campaign has been controversial for two main reasons. First, as we have already noted, the UN is a strongly secular organisation whose creation and development after World War II emphasises the secular turn in international relations from the mid-17th century, following the end of Europe's inter-Christian religious wars. Yet, although the UN is strongly secular in orientation, many of its member states represent communities of mainly religious believers. Kuru estimates that of 197 extant countries in the world (193 are UN member states), nearly two-thirds (117) are officially secular nations, while, in addition, he identifies five as Communist 'anti-religious' states. Kuru also identifies 12 'religious states', 11 of which have Muslim-majority populations. [18] Another 60 countries have an established religion. Note however that to have an established religion does not necessarily imply that religion has a consistently important public role (for example, the United Kingdom, Norway and Iceland all have established churches – respectively, the Anglican Church, the Church of Norway, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland – although each is noted as a strongly secular country). Fifteen Muslim-majority states have Islam as their established religion. Some of these have *Sharia* law as their primary legislative source. In addition, Kuru identifies another 20 Muslim-majority countries which are officially 'secular', that is, where no religion is privileged over others (Kuru 2009: 247-253). On the other hand, Kayiaoglu (2011: 7) notes that '[w]hile differences exist among the non-secular Muslim-majority states as well as between them and the secular Muslim-majority states, these states sometimes overcome their differences and present a formidable bloc within the UN. As in the Danish Cartoon Crisis, these states have increasingly brought Muslim agendas, grievances, and demands to the UN.'

---

[18] The eleven are: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Brunei, Iran, Maldives, Mauritania, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen. The Vatican is the only non-Muslim 'religious state'.

The second controversy is that the 'formidable bloc' of Muslim countries which Kayiaoglu refers to has an organisational focal point: the OIC. This is notable in relation to 'Muslim solidarity' in the context of the collective endeavour to get UN agreement on a binding international resolution condemning 'defamation of religions'. The issue was first raised in 1999, and over the next dozen years the OIC led the campaign. Over time, the measure, which was initially widely, albeit rather vaguely, supported by many UN members, including non-Muslim-majority countries, became highly controversial, and no agreement was achievable. The issue developed into an increasingly polarised confrontation involving, on one side, the OIC, Muslim states, and some Muslim FBOs, such as the Muslim World League. Opposing the pro-defamations of religion coalition was an alliance of Western states and non-state actors, including secular NGOs and FBOs. Under the leadership of the OIC, the Muslim campaign crystallised in series of resolutions at the UN. The starting point was to claim that the justification for the 'defamation of religions' measure was to be found in various UN human rights documents which made combating defamation of religions necessary and, as a result, governments were duty bound to take steps to this end. The argument was that, following September 11, 2001, and attendant talk about conflict between civilisations (Huntington 1993; 1996), there were strong reasons to increase religious dialogue and tolerance, and agreed defamation of religions measure was a necessary step forward. That is, if there was a strong measure to make religious hate speech unacceptable then there was said to be a greater chance to developing civilisational coexistence. While the plea was that governments should make all necessary efforts to combat 'defamation of religions', it was by no means clear what this measure would practically imply. Would it mean curtailing free speech, as opponents of the measure claimed?

A draft resolution at the UN against 'defamation of religions' introduced by Pakistan in 1999 was not accepted because of what was perceived by opponents to be 'overly religious and overtly partisan language'. Critics of the measure included liberal-secular actors, including: Germany (acting on behalf of the European Union), Canada, and Norway all proposed significant amendments to the draft (Kayaoğlu, 2011: 22). This did not amount to an outright rejection from the liberal-secular bloc of countries, but it did point to the problems that were emerging in ideologically incompatible worldviews involving Muslim countries, focused in the OIC, and liberal-secular countries focused in the European Union.

After 1999, several non-binding resolutions sponsored by the OIC and condemning 'defamation of religions' were passed at the UN. For example, in 2005 both the UN's Human Rights Commission and the General Assembly accepted a resolution entitled, 'Combating Defamation of Religions' ('United Nations Documentation: Research Guide', n/d). Five years later, in March 2010, Pakistan's government – acting on behalf of the OIC – put forward a further draft resolution to the UN's Human Rights Council. It sought to proscribe activity that would 'fuel discrimination, extremism and misperception leading to polarization and fragmentation with dangerous unintended and unforeseen consequences' (Human Rights Council, 2010: 3).

Pakistan's 2010 draft resolution to the HRC did not get the necessary support. It was clear that 'defamation of religions' had become an issue which, perhaps more than any other, polarised opinion between the OIC, individual Muslim governments and some Muslim FBOs, such as the World Muslim League, and entities opposed to the measure. They included some religious groups, as well as human rights and free-speech activists. This bloc condemned the pro-'defamation of religions' campaign as *de facto* an unwelcome attempt to impose a generalised, international blasphemy law, to which they were fundamentally opposed. In addition, critics of the pro-'defamation of religions' campaign argued that, while masquerading as a human rights measure, actually it was a highly politicised attempt to strengthen domestic anti-blasphemy and religious defamation laws to the benefit primarily of authoritarian governments in Muslim countries. If introduced, the laws, critics contended, were likely to be used unjustifiably to imprison those expressing anti-government opinions in Muslim countries, including journalists, students and other peaceful political dissidents. In addition, critics noted that the resolution, championed by governments of countries with existing blasphemy laws, including: Iran,

Pakistan, and Egypt, might use the measure further to target already-vulnerable religious minorities, including: Pakistan's Ahmadi Muslims, Baha'is in Iran, and Christian Copts in Egypt (Fox 2008). In other words, the fear was that religious minorities with different views to majority religions – such as, Sunni Islam in Pakistan and Egypt and Shia Islam in Iran – might well be punished under the cover of the 'defamation of religions' measure. Over time, the anti-measure campaign acquired growing support to the extent that in, April 2011, it came to an unsuccessful end. The OIC accepted that it was impossible to get UN agreement to a binding 'defamation of religions' measure. As Kayaoğlu (2011: 19) notes, the controversy ultimately went beyond the specific issue of defamation of religions to include a more general 'normative polarization between Islamic and liberal voices', which tested the 'UN's liberal-secular limits in accommodating religions.'

It is important to note that the OIC-led campaign to bring in the 'defamation of religions' measure did not rely on religious arguments to make its case.

> As Islamic groups adopted the liberal-secular categories, they implicitly accepted the liberal-secular groups' prerogative in defining the meaning, scope, and applicability of these categories. In other words, the liberal golden straitjacket allowed Islamic voices to translate their argument into an acceptable language, but it also made them vulnerable to liberal groups' counter-claims on terminology. In this discursive conflict the liberals had the upper hand in deciding what key terms actually meant. Thus liberals continued to challenge the Islamic actors regarding the precise definitions of "defamation," "race," and "right" and questioned the necessity and feasibility of anti-defamation norms within international human rights. In all these interactions, liberal-secular groups largely avoided discussing the Islamic demands: combating Islamophobia can be a means of protecting Muslims' rights the West. (Kayaoğlu, 2011: 20)

Among the measure's most vocal opponents were a collection of NGOs from diverse secular, religious and ideological backgrounds. In March 2009, 186 NGOs signed a motion at the 'UN Watch' website, expressing 'deep concern' at the

> pervasive and mounting campaign by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to produce U.N. resolutions, declarations, and world conferences that propagate the concept of "defamation of religions," a concept having no basis in domestic or international law, and which would alter the very meaning of human rights, which protect individuals from harm, but not beliefs from critical inquiry (UN Watch Press Release, 2009).

Muslim, Christian and Jewish FBOs signed the motion. [19] Among Muslim FBOs who signed the petition were: the Muslim Council of Canada, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Muslims against Sharia, Council of ex-Muslims of Britain, Coalition for Defence of Human Rights in the Muslim World, American Islamic Congress, and American Islamic Forum for Democracy. Christian FBO signatories included: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, International Christian Concern, All India Christian Council, and Middle East Christian Committee. From the Jewish faith, petition signers included: World Jewish Congress, European Union of Jewish Students, International Council of Jewish Women, American Jewish Congress, Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations, World Union of Jewish Students, and Jewish Human Rights Coalition (UK). In addition, eight NGOs – none of which were signatories to the 'UN Watch' petition – submitted opinions to the UN's Human Rights Council; seven strongly opposed the Resolution. Among the seven NGOs were Christian evangelical organisations (the American Center for Law & Justice and the European Center for Law & Justice), a humanist entity (International Humanist and Ethical Union [IHEU]), and three liberal human rights organisations (International Center against Censorship, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, and Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies. 'The IHEU called the Resolution a *jihad* on free speech. Several

---

[19] http://www.unwatch.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=bdKKISNqEmG&b=1330815&ct=6859557 Lists 186 NGOs who signed statement entitled: 'Joint NGO Statement on Danger of U.N. "Defamation of Religions" Campaign'. Another NGO, the Israel-based UN Watch, initiated the "Joint NGO Statement on Danger of U.N. 'Defamation of Religions' Campaign." The Campaign website shows that the statement has been signed by 239 NGOs, including some Muslim NGOs.

NGOs, brought together by the American Jewish Congress formed an advocacy network, the Coalition to Defend Free Speech, specifically to oppose the Resolution' (The Coalition to Defend Free Speech, 2008). The overall thrust of these attacks was that the OIC-led campaign against 'defamation of religions' was in reality a generalised attack on free speech designed to protect Islam against sometimes warranted critiques.

The long-running OIC-led campaign to incorporate a wide-ranging 'defamation of religions' measure into global public policy ended in April 2011. From its beginning in 1999, it became increasingly clear overt time that it polarised FBOs and other actors at the UN, rather than uniting them. This is because the measure was seen by growing numbers critics to represent a cynical attempt by the OIC, Muslim governments and some Muslim FBOs, to introduce and disseminate a measure which, while ostensibly in place to try to deal with religious hate-speech and improve civilisational relations, might well be used by governments of certain Muslim countries to try to repress legitimate political opposition and already-vulnerable religious minorities.

Overall conclusions

- The UN has a strongly 'liberal' secular agenda, whose concerns, exemplified by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), focuses on a range of justice and human rights concerns.

- The UN's liberal-secular focus compels all actors at the UN, including FBOs which wish to influence debates and discussions, to adopt 'appropriate' UN-sanctioned language in their engagements with UN bodies.

- Between 58 per cent and 75 per cent of FBOs at the UN with formal representative status, via ECOSOC registration, are both Christian and Northern-based.

- Jewish FBOs are over-represented at the UN in terms of the proportion of Jews worldwide.

- Southern-based, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu FBOs are underrepresented at the UN.

- FBOs compete with each other primarily on ideological – not theological – grounds. This implies that, for example, socially conservative FBOs may well work not only with theologically conservative FBOs but also socially conservative secular state and non-state actors at the UN. On the other hand, 'liberal' FBOs, are likely to work not only with other liberal FBOs but also with 'liberal' NGOs and governments, in pursuit of shared goals.

- FBOs wishing to maximise their influence at the UN typically seek to link up with allies – including, other FBOs, secular NGOs, and friendly governments – which share their ideological – not necessarily theological – norms, values and beliefs.

- Some FBOs active at the UN manage to achieve persistent influence, via regularised and/or institutionalised access to opinion formers and decision makers located in friendly governments and intergovernmental organisations.

- Some FBOs are less favoured, without consistent capacity to enjoy such access and associated potential of building influence with significant players at the UN.

References

'About us. What is the World Council of Churches' (2013). Available at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

Ahsan, A. (1988) *The Organization of the Islamic Conference: An Introduction to an Islamic Political Institution*, Herndon: L IIIT Publishing.

Akbarzadeh, S., and Connor, K. (2004) 'The organization of the Islamic Confernce: Sharing an illusion', *Middle East Policy*, 22 June. Available at: http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-4433863/The-Organization-of-the-Islamic.html Last accessed 5 March 2008.

Barnett, M. and Stein, J. Gross (2012) 'Introduction: The secularization and sanctification of humanitarianism', in M. Barnett and J. Gross Stein (eds.), *Sacred Aid. Faith and Humanitarianism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Berger, J. (2003) 'Religious Non-Governmental Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis', Harvard University, September.

Bob, C. (2010) 'Globalizing the Culture Wars: The United Nations Battle over Sexual Rights'. Paper prepared for the American Political Science Association annual meeting, September 2.

Bob, C. (2012) *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boehle, J. (2010) 'The UN system and religious actors in the context of global change', *Crosscurrents*, Vol. 60, No. 3 ('Special Issue on Religion and the UN'), pp. 383-401.

Bush, E. (2005) *Transnational Religion and Secular Institutions*. PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, USA.

Carrette, J. and Miall, H. (2012) 'Big Society or Global Village? Religious NGOs, Civil Society and the UN'. Briefing Paper.

Castelli, J. and McCarthy, J. (1997) 'Religion-Sponsored Social Service Providers: The Not-So Independent Sector', New York: Aspen Institute Non-profit Sector Research Fund.

Center for Faith and Service (n/d) National Crime Prevention Council, 'Developing definitions for the faith-based and community initiative'. Available at https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/196/F_Definitions.pdf Last accessed 29 May, 2013.

Chao, J.K.T. (1997) 'The evolution of Vatican diplomacy', *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.1, no. 2, pp. 35-63.

Csillag, R. (2013) 'Canadians turning away from organised religion', Religion News Service, 15 March. Available at http://www.religionnews.com/2013/05/15/canadians-turning-away-from-organized-religion/ Last accessed 28 May , 2013.

Dogan, N. (2005) 'The Organization of the Islamic Conference: An Assessment of the role of the OIC in International Relations'. Paper prepared for the Third ECPR General Conference, Budapest, September 2005.

Esposito, J. (2002) *Unholy War*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Faith-based organizations at the forefront in the AIDS response in the Arab region (2012) Available at http://www.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/ourwork/hiv_aids/successstories/HIV-AIDS-arab-region/ Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

Falk, R. (2004) *Declining World Politics. America's Imperial Geopolitics*, London: Routledge.

Ferris, E. (2005) 'Faith-based and secular humanitarian organizations', *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 87, No. 858, June, pp. 311-325.

Fitz, J. (n/d) 'What is a faith-based non-profit'. About.com. Available at http://nonprofit.about.com/od/faqsthebasics/f/What-Is-A-Faith-Based-Nonprofit.htm Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

Fox, J. (2008) *A World Survey of Religion and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fox, J. and Sandler, S. (2004) *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Habermas, J. (2007) 'Religion in the public sphere', *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 1–25

Haynes, J. (2001) 'Transnational religious actors and international politics', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, April, pp. 143-58

Haynes, J. (2005) *Comparative Politics in a Globalizing World*, Cambridge: Polity.

Haynes, J. (2007) *Religion and Development: Conflict or Cooperation?*, Basingstoke and New York: PalgraveMacmillan.

Haynes, J., Hough, P., Malik, S., and Pettiford, L. (2011) *World Politics: International Relations and Globalisation in the 21st Century*, London: Pearson.

Haynes, J. (2013a) *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 2nd. ed, London: Pearson.

Haynes, J. (2013b) 'Faith-based organisations, development and the World Bank', *International Development Policy/Revue Internationale de Politique du Devéloppement*, No. 4 (Special issue on 'Religion and Development'), February 2013, pp. 49-64. Published in French as 'Les organisations confessionelles, le développement et la Banque mondiale', available at http://poldev.revues.org/1376

Hopgood, S. and Vinjamuri, L. (2012) 'Faith in markets', in M. Barnett and J. Gross Stein (eds.), *Sacred Aid. Faith and Humanitarianism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 37-64.

Human Rights Council (2010) 'Human Rights Council, Thirteenth Session, Agenda item 9,

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.' Available at http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/d_res_dec/A_HRC_13_L_1.pdf Last accessed 29 May, 2013.

Human Rights Watch (2005) *World Report*, New York: Human Rights Watch.

Hurd, E. (2011) 'International politics after secularism', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 38, pp. 943-961.

'James D. Wolfensohn Presidency 1995-2005: Faith and development' (2013) Available at http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/ORGANIZATION/EXTPRESI DENT2007/EXTPASTPRESIDENTS/PRESIDENTEXTERNAL/0,,contentMDK:20091872~page PK:139877~piPK:199692~theSitePK:227585,00.html Last accessed 28 May 2013.

Joshi, D. and O'Dell, R. (2013) 'Global governance and development ideology: The United Nations and the World Bank on the left-right spectrum', *Global Governance*, Vol. 19, pp. 249-275.

Karam, A. (ed.) (2012) *Religion, Development and the United Nations.* 'A Report of the Social Science Research Council'. New York: Social Science Research Council. Available at http://www.ssrc.org Last accessed 22 May 2013.

Kayaoğlu, T. (2011) 'Islam in the United Nations: The liberal limits of postsecularism',

Paper presented at the Conference "The Postsecular in International Politics," University of Sussex, 27-28 October.

Kepel, G. (2004) *The War for Muslim Minds. Islam and the West*, London, Harvard University Press.

Knox, G. (ed.) (2002) 'Religion and public policy at the UN'. A 'Religion Counts' Report, April.

Kuru, A. (2009) *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leaustean, L. (ed.) (2013) *Representing Religion in the European Union. Does God Matter?*, London: Routledge.

Littman, D. (1999) 'Islamism grows stronger at the United Nations', *The Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 59-64.

Lynch, C. (2012) 'Religious Humanitarianism in a Neoliberal Age'. The Religion Factor Blog, September 12. Available at http://religionfactor.net/2012/09/12/religious-humanitarianism-in-a-neoliberal-age/ Last accessed 29 May, 2013.

'Married adolescents ignored in global agenda, says UNFPA' (2004) UNFPA Press Release, New York, 4 June.

Marshall, K. and Van Saanen, M. (2007) Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart and Soul Work Together (Washington, DC: World Bank) http://www.google.ch/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CEcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsiteresources.worldbank.org%2FEXTDEVDIALOGUE%2FResources%2FDevelopment_Faith.pdf&ei=oCTfT_ieIoT1sgb628mmDQ&usg=AFQjCNFqsVgJgE36ncexqNVTCcmXVaGwtA Last accessed 18 June, 2012.

Moalla, K. (2012) 'Transformational Leadership in the Arab Region', *Kosmos*, Spring-Summer, pp. 24-28.

NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) (2013) 'Lobbying for Faith and Family: A Study of Religious NGOs at the United Nations', Oslo: NORAD.

Petersen, M.-J. (2010) International religious NGOs at the United Nations: A study of a group of religious organizations', *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, November. Available at http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/847 Last accessed 29 May, 2013.

Pew Forum (2011) 'Global Christianity. A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population', December 19. Available at http://www.pewforum.org/christian/global-christianity-exec.aspx Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

Reinicke, W. (2000) 'The other Worldwide Web: Global public policy networks', *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1999-2000, pp. 44-57.

Roy, O. (2004) *Globalised Islam. The Search for a New Ummah*, London, Hurst.

Samuel, J. 2007. *Adapting to Norms at the United Nations: The Abortion and Anti-Abortion Networks*. PhD Dissertation. University of Maryland, College Park, USA

Stone, D. (2008) 'Global public policy, transnational policy communities and their networks', Policy Studies Journal, Vol.36 (No.1). pp. 19-38.

Tadros, M. (2010) 'Faith-based organizations and service delivery'. Gender and development Programme Paper Number 11, September. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

The Coalition to Defend Free Speech (2008) 'Coalition to Defend Free Speech:

UN Vote Threatens Freedom of Expression', December 18. Available at http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/UN%20Vote%20Threatens%20Freedom%20of%20Expression.pdf Last accessed 29 May, 2013

'The WCC-IMF-WB high-level encounter' (2004) Available at http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/cs/news/2008/090308.htm Last accessed 29 May, 2013

Thomas, S. (2005) The Global Transformation of Religion and the Transformation of *International Relations. The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century*, New York/Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

United Nations (2003) "Human rights and sexual orientation," draft resolution, Apr. 17, E/CN.4/2003/L.92

United Nations Documentation: Research Guide (n/d) 'Resolutions adopted by General Assembly at its 60th session: A/RES/60/1-A/RES/60/289.' Available at: http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r60.htm Last accessed 29 May, 2013

UN Watch Press Release (2009) 'UN Watch and 186 NGOs call for rejection of "defamation of religions" campaign'. Available at http://www.unwatch.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=bdKKISNqEmG&b=1316871&ct=6859309 Last accessed 29 May, 2013

UNDP /HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (2006) 'Ending AIDS stigma and HIV infection in solidarity by 2015' Available at http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/religiousaids.pdf Last accessed 28 May, 2013.

Vidal, A. (2001) 'Faith-Based organizations in community development'. Prepared for U. S. Department of Housing and Community Development Office of Policy Development and Research, August. Available at http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/faithbased.pdf Last accessed 29 May, 2013.

Watt, N. (2013) 'UN must target poverty, not pay, says PM', *The Guardian*, 15 May, p. 13.

Wuthnow, R. (2000) 'How Religious Groups Promote Forgiving: A National Study', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 125-139.

Interviews

Interviews on one of the topics discussed in this paper – international development – were undertaken with current and former World Bank and IMF employees in Washington, D.C., between 23 January and 2 February 2012, and on 5 May 2012. All of those interviewed have had direct experience with faith issues and development during their time as employees of the World Bank or the IMF. Most were happy to have the interviews recorded. I provide a list of interviewees below. However, many interviewees were uncomfortable with being referred to by name in the paper, or linked with specific ideas or comments. Consequently, I refer to interviewees in the text generically and anonymously. Finally, I contacted the WCC to ask for an interview regarding the issues raised in the international development section of the paper, but the WCC chose not to respond to my request.

List of interviews

Lynn Aylward, former International Economist at the IMF, 30 January, 2012, Washington, DC.

Roberto Brauning, formerly IMF External Relations Department and adviser to Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the IMF (1987-2000), 24 January, 2102, Washington, DC.

Paul Cadario, Senior Manager at the World Bank, 25 January, 2012, Washington, DC.

Robert Calderisi, World Bank's Country Division Chief for Indonesia and the South Pacific (1987-89), head of the Bank's Regional Mission in Western Africa in the Ivory Coast (1991-94), the Bank's international spokesman on Africa (1997-2000) and Country Director for Central Africa (2000-2002), 5 May, 2012, Oxford, UK.

John Garrison, Senior Civil Society Specialist at the World Bank, 26 January, 2012, Washington, DC.

Stewart James, Alternate UK Executive Director at the World Bank, 2 February, 2012, Washington, DC.

Katherine Marshall, Director, Development Dialogue on Ethics and Values and Counsellor to the President (July 2000-2006), 27 January, 2012, Washington, DC.

Vasuki Shashtry, Chief of Public Affairs at the *IMF*, 31 January, 2012, Washington, DC.

Andrew Steer, World Bank Special Envoy for Climate Change, 23 January and 2 February, 2012, Washington, DC.

Quentin Wodon, head of the Development Dialogue in Values and Ethics at the World Bank (November 2008-July 2011), 25 January, 2012, Washington, DC.

Author contacts:

Jeffrey Haynes

London Metropolitan University

Calcutta House

Old Castle Street

London E1 7NT

UK

Email: jeff.haynes@londonmet.ac.uk