The University of Missouri – St. Louis
The Graduate School
Announcement

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

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The Impact of Globalization on Global Civil Society Expansion

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Place: 331 SSB

Abstract

Recently, global civil society (GCS) actors have emerged as important players in global governance. Global civil society organizations have elevated the policy agenda profile of human rights, women’s rights, and environmental concerns; overcome the objections of powerful countries to establish the International Criminal Court and the Mine Ban Treaty; and successfully opposed the Multilateral Agreement on Investments and WTO’s Doha Development Round. These notable successes demonstrate the need for a better understanding of GCS’s motives and its role on international public policy.

This dissertation, uses a 29-year panel regression of 122 countries to test four widespread explanations for the dynamic growth in number and influence of INGOs. This dissertation addresses a gap in the literature by assessing how well explanations based on democratic expansion, political integration, economic integration, and national capacity predict the distribution of INGOs globally. While all four theories receive some support from the analysis, the political integration explanation and economic integration explanation generate the most interesting findings.

Political integration dramatically influences on the number of INGOs active in a country. Increased political integration demands increased administrative responsibility; countries must figure out how to implement and comply with increasing international commitments. Often, INGOs partner with national governments to meet this administrative demand. This finding can be interpreted from a positive perspective – INGOs mitigate bureaucratic constraints; making programs more responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries. It can also be interpreted from a negative perspective – INGOs are drawn by available funding; raising fears that these organizations are more accountable to donor demands than the needs of their clients.

The economic integration explanation is at the heart of the anti-globalization movement, which triggered important procedural changes at the World Bank and the WTO. This study finds that economic integration explanation does not accurately predict GCS distribution and that national income levels further modify its effectiveness. These findings raise questions about the inclusiveness of the anti-globalization movement.

Both the political integration and economic integration findings encourage healthy skepticism about GCS’s ability to democratize international public policy.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Kenneth Thomas, Ph.D. (Chair)
David Kimball, Ph.D.
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