

Religious Soft Power as Accountability Mechanism for Power in World Politics: The InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s)

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Abstract

This case study of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) from 2005 to 2010 expands the concept of "soft power" as an *accountability mechanism* to include *religious* soft power. This article explores the theoretical validity of a Faith-Based Accountability Mechanism (FAM) as a macro-level explanatory unit. The interfaith leaders exercise public reputational and peer accountability among their constituents in relation to the G8/G20 leaders. The theoretical validity of the dialogue process is not contingent on political leader responsiveness but is ascertained using a complex theoretical standard for assessing the legitimacy of global governance institutions against which observations are then gauged. The InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism is a specific illustration of a FAM that shows increasing compliance with the complex standard between 2005 and 2010. The Dialogue Mechanism FAM is a form of religious soft power that combines soft institution with soft technique. The next stage in the research is to identify specific characteristics of the FAM ideal type.

Keywords

accountability, legitimation, soft power, religion, governance

A renewed interest in religion and international relations has primarily focused on transnational religious actors as either *threats to* or *reinforcers of* the global system (Banchoff, 2008; Falk, 2001; Fox & Sandler, 2004; Haynes, 2007; Johnston, 2003; Petite & Hatzopoulos, 2003; Shani, 2009; Thomas, 2005). As the international state system has given way to globalization, Casanova (1994) describes a process of "religious deprivatisation" and Nye (2004) describes a change in transnational relations where the "hard power" of coercion has given way to include the "soft power" influence of persuasion. The reentry of religion into international relations theory initially reignited the "clash of civilizations" controversy; religious jihadism versus conservative U.S. evangelicalism—understood as Islam versus the West—carried with it an underlying assumption that religious soft power's influence primarily resided in fueling the abuse of power in world politics. Religious soft power has been characterized as either *denying* or *reinforcing* the legitimacy of the world system by either repudiating or affirming the foundational norms, values, and institutions on which it is based (Banchoff, 2008; Fox, 2009; Haynes, 2009). Although Haynes expanded Nye's original concept of "soft power" to include *religious* soft power, little attention has been given to apply this extended concept to one of Nye's important contributions to international relations theory: soft power as an accountability mechanism for power in world politics.

In this article, I extend Nye's notion of soft power as an accountability mechanism for power in world politics to

include religious soft power using illustrative data from a case study analysis of the InterFaith Leaders' Summits from 2005 to 2010. The annual "shadow summits" reflect an evolving peer accountability mechanism where religious leaders access their networks and the media to exercise reputational accountability on issues that affect the public's perception of the G8 leaders' right to rule. The informal dialogue mechanism provides the context where the interfaith leaders' ongoing affirmation (or denial) of the global governing institution's right to rule is left *indeterminate*, dependent on ongoing impartial assessment of G8/G20 performance over the ensuing years.

Governance Without Government

The recent increase of soft power influence in international relations stems as much from the *political vulnerabilities* of the situation as it does from the increased political activities of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). The last quarter of the 20th century was marked by a strong move toward the integration of national economies through foreign investment, technological change, international

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trade, and immigration. As countries have promoted the flow of goods and services across borders, there has not been any simultaneous integration of political regimes. Power has been slowly shifting away from the nation state's ability to hold multinational corporations accountable to serve the interests of citizens within their respective borders. As such, we have left the "statist" period where countries were the strongest arbiters of power and entered an era of globalization characterized by "governance without government" (Mayntz, 2002). The growing body of global regulatory governance mechanisms has been described by Kingsbury and Stewart (2008) as a spontaneously evolving, untidy regulatory mass without center or hierarchy that is largely *administrative* in character, reaching decisions by reference to sources as staff employment contracts, staff rules and regulations, and internal orders. While this curb on the exercise of public power promotes more orderly patterns of globalization, the highly fragmented, horizontally organized regimes function with considerable autonomy, outstripping any global governmental ability to control and legitimate regulatory decisions (Kingsbury & Stewart, 2008; Wallach, 2002). Administering globalization so that it unfolds with a measure of decency and order leaves huge accountability gaps that have drawn sharp criticism from concerned non-governmental organizations, citizens, and media who question the nature and direction of globalization itself. Because the hegemonic nation states are characterized by democratic norms, there is an *expectation* among people throughout the world that global governance be characterized by democratic norms. Although this global regime absorbs some democratic norms (i.e., transparency, participation, reasoned decision making, accountability, etc.) and democratic norms continue to expand, the pace is slow, the process is mostly internal, and the accountability gaps in governance remain large (Bäckstrand, 2008; Newell, 2008).

Governance as technique is incapable of offering a vision for human life. Langdon Winner reflects on the limitations of technique as a guiding principle for social life. "As we 'make things work,'" he asks,

what kind of *world* are we making? This suggests that we pay attention not only to the making of physical instruments and processes, although that certainly remains important, but also to the production of psychological, social, and political conditions as part of any significant technical change. Are we going to design and build circumstances that enlarge possibilities for growth in human freedom, sociability, intelligence, creativity, and self-government? Or are we headed in an altogether different direction? (Winner, 1986, p. 17)

At the turn of the millennium, heads of state and government gathered at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to reflect on how governments should respond, in an

increasingly interdependent and interconnected world, to address questions like these, particularly as it relates to the conditions of the most vulnerable people of the world. In September of 2000, they issued the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Within the year, a set of eight concrete development goals with measurable targets would emerge from this document. Despite the recession, all 192 United Nation member states and 23 international organizations have agreed to achieving the goals with measurable targets by 2015.

The promises associated with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become what Schelling (1960) refers to as a focal point by which global governance is judged by people throughout the world. From pop culture icon references to the MDG standards as the "Beatitudes for a Globalized World" (e.g., Bono, 2006) to international campaigns (e.g., Stand Against Poverty), progress centered around MDG promises are used to define minimally morally acceptable behavior for global governance, representing what "each person's expectation of what the other expects him to expect to be expected to do" (Schelling, 1960, pp. 10-43). Civic participation is encouraged to monitor progress on the eight goals and apply political pressure for governments to keep their commitments. As the MDG deadline of 2015 fast approaches, popular appeals for governments to keep their promises have intensified and become increasingly widespread.

Global governance is made vulnerable by problems stemming from accountability gaps because there are few mechanisms to ensure that those potentially affected by international norms have a say in making or enforcing the rules (Risse, 2004). As long as actors perceive the overall quality of the social order with its associated institutions and norms to be legitimate, actors voluntarily comply with the political order even at a great cost to citizens (Hurd, 1999; Weber, 1921). However, should the social order's legitimacy become questioned, compliance ceases to be voluntary and political upheaval can put the entire governing system at risk. When this happens, the social order faces a legitimization crisis. Robert Keohane reminds us that common values are lacking in what is a highly interdependent and violence-prone international system. "A universal global society remains a dream," says Keohane, "and one that may be receding from view rather than becoming closer" (Keohane, 2003, p. 136). Global society is inevitably *partial* rather than universal, *so how do we determine which entities have the right to hold agents accountable when the agents do not recognize a corresponding obligation* (Keohane, 2003, p. 142)?

Strengthening accountability is currently a complex, messy process with well-intentioned actors often working at cross-purposes. For example, Koppell (2005) identifies five dimensions of accountability (transparency, liability, controllability, responsibility, and responsiveness) to explain how conflicting expectations born of different conceptions of accountability can undermine a global organization's effectiveness. There are competing models of accountability

that destabilize even-handed assessments. Intergovernmental networks tend to favor “delegation” models; INGOs tend to favor “participation” models (Grant & Keohane, 2005). Although Steffek and Ferretti (2009) identify potential trade-offs between these two approaches, civil society organizations tend to be torn between their deliberative and watchdog functions. More recently, disclosure of information has become a heavily relied on tool used to strengthen accountability, so much so, that transparency has become a moral and political imperative in global governance (Gupta, 2008). Much of global politics has taken a “procedural turn” where “getting the process right” has become so overemphasized that “governance-by-disclosure” often becomes counterproductive, diverting time and resources from substantive outcomes, ultimately undermining the emancipatory potential of information (Vidal & Watts, 2009). As Stasavage (2004) argues, requiring transparency in bargaining “may make governments more accountable,” but it may also “prompt officials to posture, leading to more frequent breakdowns in negotiations” (p. 668).

Buchanan and Keohane (2006) note how the “soft power” of INGOs operates in a transnational civil society channel of accountability as *broad accountability*¹ mechanisms under terms of *broad transparency*² where reliable information gets used to assess some of the most fundamental goals of the institution in the pursuit of global justice. In the absence of global government, the soft power of INGOs influences the functioning of global governing institutions with regard to the people whose interests they believe the governing institutions should represent. In the absence of democracy, Buchanan and Keohane note that legitimacy is highly dependent on the activities of these institutionally organized INGOs that function as *external epistemic actors* in the transnational civil society channel of accountability. From this perspective, the legitimacy of global governing institutions can only be assessed *in relationship* with the informed ongoing contestation of INGOs. INGOs often tackle the most difficult accountability challenges, representing the “voices of the weak and powerless.” Willetts (1996) refers to them as the “conscience of the world,” exercising a form of accountability that is *claimed from below* rather than *conferred from above* (Newell, 2008, p. 124). INGOs face their own problems of internal accountability (Risse, 2004), but their effectiveness often rests on their claim to moral authority and their use of “shaming” tactics to affect the reputation of organizations through media exposure (Keohane, 2003). Because INGOs are more single minded and agile than states, they have an advantage over states in media struggles. INGOs actively lobby governments and, because they command the allegiances of large constituencies, they are able to influence public opinion. Their activities augment statist politics with civic life politics, playing on the fact that governments and corporations are vulnerable to public opinion. INGOs use knowledge as a form of power to shape the nature and terms of the debate through evolving norms and ideas

that serve to either strengthen or undermine the legitimacy of the global system (Risse, 2002).

The ad hoc aspects of INGO activism can also be destabilizing. Which INGOs should be taken seriously and why? The security costs of G8/G20 summits continue to rise (Kirton, Guebert, & Tanna, 2010). Despite the spending of an unprecedented sum on the 2010 G8/G20 summits, overturned burning cars and citizen face-offs with police in riot gear still dominated summit coverage on the nightly news; the controversial costs exceeded 1 billion in Canadian dollars and were considered unjustified by most Canadians (Canseco, 2010). Pointing to the ad hoc manner in which this INGO accountability mechanism operates, Buchanan and Keohane (2006) identify the need for a complex standard for assessing the legitimacy of global governance institutions’ right to rule. The complex standard would help the broader horizontal network of leaders identify valuable INGO accountability partners for holding political leaders accountable even when the leaders do not recognize a corresponding obligation. A complex standard, were it to be widely accepted by governing institutions, would provide a principled proposal to bring order to the messy process that currently characterizes the assessment of global governance. Their proposed complex standard would help guide reform efforts in an evolving historic context. Their *ideal* “external epistemic actor”—composed of individuals and groups outside the institution in question—appeals to a normative concept of justice that is separate from the standard used to assess the legitimacy of the global governing institution. That is, the external epistemic actor would have content-independent, noncoercive reasons for their choice to comply (or not comply) with the institution they assessed.³ The external epistemic actor would gain knowledge about the institution, use their own norms to interpret and assess that knowledge, and exchange it with others in ways intended to influence institutional behavior. “The complex standard almost makes it clear,” according to Buchanan and Keohane, “that whether the institution is legitimate does not depend solely upon its own characteristics, but also upon the epistemic-deliberative relationships between the institution and epistemic actors outside it” (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006, p. 411).

Buchanan and Keohane’s (2006) proposal for a complex standard is their proffered solution to the governance issues that arise from situations where people want to hold governing bodies accountable for redress but the governing bodies do not recognize a corresponding obligation. Their proposal is not rooted in any specific historical illustration, but is offered as a temporary, fluid guide with the suggestion that, “were such a standard widely accepted, it could bolster public support for valuable global governance institutions that either satisfy the standard or at least make credible efforts to do so” (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006, p. 406).

Religious nongovernmental organizations (RNGOs), like INGOs, are global in scope. RNGOs are also part of the nascent “third sector” of civil society that lacks state

authority, employs value rather than profit-based motivation, and is characterized by networks of citizens in free association seeking to change the status quo in the interest of an assumed public good (Berger, 2003). RNGOs blend religious beliefs and activism to fulfill explicit public missions. Berger (2003) defines them as

formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operate on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level. (p. 15)

Although RNGOs are subject to the same laws as secular civil society, they *differ* from INGOs in that they claim a moral authority focused on *ends* rather than on means that is unavailable to secular nonprofits (Heferen, 2007). The sacred writings and traditions of RNGOs provide uniquely content-independent, non-coercive criteria (unavailable to secular INGOs) that strengthen their ability to function as external epistemic actors in global politics. Unlike most INGOs, even the largest of RNGOs are connected to faith networks deeply rooted in local communities, representing some of the best-organized civil institutions in the world (Berger, 2003). The sacred nature of RNGOs employs duty-oriented language that emphasizes obligation, a concern for justice, and a belief in reconciliation and the transformative capacities of people and society (Falk, 2001). In recent history, RNGOs have played pivotal roles during times of political turmoil and social change such as when Apartheid in South Africa was abolished in favor of the new South Africa and the Solidarity Movement rose to power in Poland (Berger, 2003). In both situations, the amount of bloodshed was far less than anticipated with RNGOs heavily involved in the respective situations where legitimation crises were resolved with a transition to new political regimes.

Recently, scholars have drawn on Nye's (2004) notion of soft power to describe religious influence on international relations (Gözaydin, 2010; Haynes, 2007, 2009; Thomas, 2005). Religious actors exercise soft power by persuasively encouraging policy makers to incorporate into their policies certain values and norms so that the policy makers come to want what they want. Religious soft power is discussed positively as faith-based diplomacy, negatively as fueling an evangelical conflict with Osama Bin Laden radicals under the Bush administration, or simply as clearly influential (Banchoff, 2008; Falk, 2001; Fox & Sandler, 2004; Voll, 2006; Wessels, 2009) with a few recent attempts at understanding *how* religious actors exercise their influence through either cooperation or conflict (Haynes, 2010). Unlike Nye, however, the discussion of religious soft power stops short of understanding soft power as an accountability mechanism for governance institutions. In the pages that follow,

I contribute to the understanding of *how* religious actors exercise their influence by extending the notion of soft power as an *accountability mechanism* to include religious soft power. Instead of a model of cooperation and conflict, religious soft power is exercised as *indeterminate* and *contingent* on the behavioral outcome that emerges from dialogue with the political leadership. In keeping with what Buchanan and Keohane (2006) argue with regard to INGOs, I illustrate how the soft power of RNGOs can operate in the "third sector" transnational civil society channel of accountability as broad accountability mechanisms under terms of broad transparency where reliable information gets used to assess some of the most fundamental goals of global governance institutions. The case study of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) illustrates the exercise of religious soft power as peer accountability and reputational accountability. The purpose of this article is to establish the theoretical validity of Faith-Based Accountability Mechanisms (FAM). I do this by applying Buchanan and Keohane's complex standard to the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism from 2005 to 2010. I will argue that, to the degree that the ongoing dialogue satisfies the standard, the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) represent a credible and valuable accountability mechanism for global governance institutions—even if the G8 leaders do not recognize them as such. For a more complete typology of FAM, see Steiner (2011a).

The Case Study: The InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s)

The InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) are hosted by a network of religious organizations, the majority of which are RNGOs that are global in scope. The InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) grew out of a Christian ecumenical gathering that met as a shadow summit to the G8 meeting in England in 2005. This first statement was written in the distinctively Christian religious tradition. The InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) have continued to meet as shadow summits to the G8 meetings in Russia/Moscow (2006), Germany/Cologne (2007), Japan/Kyoto/Sapporo (2008), Italy/Rome (2009), and Canada/Winnipeg (2010). Each shadow summit culminated in the issuing of a statement that was delivered to the G8 political leaders at the beginning of their meetings with the expectation that the concerns expressed in the InterFaith Leaders' Summit statements would influence the politicians, and the public meaning of their decisions, in subsequent deliberations over time. For the first 5 years, the InterFaith Leaders' Summits were hosted by one primary hosting body that passed the leadership on to the next one. For example, when the 2006 meetings were hosted by the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, they passed the hosting responsibilities on to the Evangelical Church of Germany for 2007. In 2009, an International Continuance Committee was formed consisting of representatives of each of the G8 countries that has hosted, or will host, the summits. The

International Continuance Committee works mostly between meetings by email and conference call. In 2010, the Canadians formed a national InterFaith Partnership, comprising 47 denominations, faith groups, and faith-based organizations (FBOs) that worked together to host the meetings partnered with the University of Winnipeg.

Method

The purpose of this article is to extend existing theory (rather than test theory) and to ascertain the theoretical validity of this extended theory using a theoretical standard against which observations are gauged. Data are used to make empirically informed judgments about the theory, functioning as evidence to make knowledgeable decisions about whether to continue with the theory as it is, reformulate it, or reinterpret it (Freese & Sell, 1980). The historical sociological method is used to theoretically abstract historical concepts that are grounded in time and space, rooted in genuine historical structures and processes (Ragin, 1987). Although this is an ambiguous method, which is subject to contextual and exegetical selectivity that prohibits methodological certitude (Roth, 1993), proof of causality is not the goal of this research. The benefits of being able to pay close attention to historical context and complexity outweigh the methodological drawbacks; I compensate for the selectivity biases by making my assumptions explicit.

Regarding contextual selectivity, I assumed material causality for social change in accordance with the methodology of Max Weber. Ideas (such as religious statements) are presumed to influence the unfolding of history in interaction with a complex constellation of factors *only* at critical junctures in specific contexts (Zeitlin, 1968/1981). The current historical moment associated with globalization, the peak of oil, and the ecological crisis is presumed to be a juncture where ideas might influence the unfolding of history (Steiner-Aeschliman, 1999).

Regarding exegetical selectivity, Grant and Keohane (2005) identify *seven* mechanisms of accountability in world politics: (a) hierarchical, (b) supervisory, (c) fiscal, (d) legal, (e) market, (f) public reputational, and (g) peer. Each of these mechanisms was explored for its relevance to the relationship between the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) and the G8.⁴ Public reputational accountability and peer accountability were the two forms deemed relevant to this case study. Public reputational accountability was considered appropriate because it refers to ways in which soft power is exercised by shaping the preferences of other people; it is "meant to apply to situations in which reputation, widely and publicly known, provides a mechanism for accountability even in the absence of other mechanisms as well as in conjunction with them" (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006, p. 37). Peer accountability was considered appropriate even though it refers to the *mutual* evaluation of organizations by their counterparts. Clearly, the leaders of the InterFaith Summits consider themselves to be peers of the

political leaders of the world's nation states or they would not be holding shadow summits, developing statements, and delivering them to the G8 political leadership, but the relationship is not mutual. Because accountability gaps in global governance are precisely what are at issue, however, the value of the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism cannot logically be determined by lack of mutual response by one party in relation to the other. To *systematically* address this question, I drew on Buchanan and Keohane's (2006) proposal for a complex standard of legitimacy and analyzed the extent to which the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) met the six criteria they propose for a complex standard for assessing the ongoing normative legitimacy of global governance institutions. The theoretical validity of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) FAM rests on the extent to which the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism satisfies the criteria set forth in the complex standard.

For data, I drew on a variety of material to illustrate the theory put forward. I did content analysis of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) statements, press releases, and website information from 2005 to 2010. I also did content analysis of press releases, presummit responses to the draft, and website information from the organizations represented by InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) participants. To estimate the size and diversity of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s), I collected data from the participants of the 2010 meeting. To discuss Buchanan and Keohane's (2006) complex standard of legitimacy, I additionally drew on the UN MDGs and the sacred texts and traditions of the diverse religious traditions.

Results

The first task was to identify the sample of organizations that are representative of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) as a whole. A total of 68 semistructured short interviews of participants of the 2010 InterFaith Leaders' Summit were conducted using open-ended questions between August and October 2010 through a combination of methods including phone conversations and email correspondence. Approximately 24 organizations were contacted by email to determine the size of the constituency they might potentially contact for purposes of advocacy. Responses to the question "How many people do you represent?" given by RINGO representatives revealed the difficulties in defining an organization's constituency. A representative from the Canadian Council of Imams was unable to answer the question claiming that "representation at all Summits was never based on number, but faith No one can claim that they were representing all adherents of their faith," adding that "we are a Canadian Organization" (email correspondence with 2010 Summit attendee, August 20, 2010). The distinction between "participation" and "representation" was equally challenging for a Japanese representative who mentioned difficulties between Eastern and Western understandings of religion, language barriers, and differences in organizational networks between Shinto shrines, Konko churches, and Shugendo and Bahá'í congregations. The

Table 1. Religious Orientation of RNGOs at the InterFaith Leaders' Summits

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Catholic	Buddhist	Buddhist	Buddhist	Buddhist	Bahá'í
Protestant	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic	Buddhist
	Hindu	Hindu	Hindu	Hindu	Catholic
	Jewish	Indigenous	Indigenous	Indigenous	Hindu
	Muslim	Jewish	Jewish	Jewish	Indigenous
	Protestant	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Jewish
	Shinto	Protestant	Protestant	Protestant	Muslim
		Shinto	Shinto	Shinto	Protestant
			RFP ^a	RFP	Shinto
					Sikh

Note: RNGOs = religious nongovernmental organizations; RFP = Religions for Peace.

^aRFP is a sort of "United Nations" for religion consisting of interreligious bodies in more than 70 countries, led by 60 senior religious leaders from around the world representing all major religious traditions.

pivotal issue in discerning the size of the constituency was self-identification rather than an independent measure. In the case of the International Anglican Communion, respondents expressed ambivalence as to whether the entire international network should be included, and because the Church of England does bring issues to the attention of the entire Anglican Communion on *rare* occasions, I included the entire network as a potential resource for advocacy. The InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) began as an ecumenical movement that became Interfaith in 2006 (see Table 1). The interreligious diversity became far more nuanced once Religions for Peace (an interreligious network representing all major religious traditions) joined the summits.

Public reputational accountability. To establish that the InterFaith Summit(s) exercise public reputational accountability, I illustrate that the InterFaith network is capable and intentional about exercising political agency. To study the political agency of the InterFaith network, I drew on Berger's multidimensional framework for analyzing the organizational, governance, strategic, and output dimensions of RNGOs involved in the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s). Berger (2003) considers four significant dimensions: (a) religious orientation and pervasiveness; (b) organizational representation, geographic range, structure, and financing; (c) strategic process; and (d) orientation, geographic range, and beneficiaries of service. Any attempt to measure the size of RNGO constituencies is fraught with measurement issues. Some of the RNGOs do not keep records of the size of their networks and some of the RNGO participants did not respond to my queries (e.g., Finland, France, India, Italy, and South America). Even so, participants at the 2010 InterFaith Leaders' Summit reported a constituency that altogether added up to more than 800 million, but this sum should be cautiously interpreted. Some of the RNGO constituencies overlap, but religious people are more likely to be influenced and politicized if they hear

consistent messages of moral concern from multiple RNGOs that they respect, so an overlapping constituency, although numerically problematic, is nevertheless meaningful. Regarding pervasive national representation, Canada, Germany, England, the United States, and Japan were all countries with significant Interfaith representation. In the case of Saudi Arabia, pervasive national representation is a reflection of how church and state are socially organized. The delegation represented the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in Saudi Arabia—a government agency that licenses and supervises all of the mosques in the kingdom; there are about 15,000 mosques, each with a membership of 400 to 800 worshipers. In some cases, religious representation of the RNGOs claimed to pervasively represent their regions. The Anglican Communion represented a significant portion of the United Kingdom. The Russian Orthodox Church, a hierarchically organized monolithic RNGO, claimed to represent 73% of the Russian population in 14 nations. The Pacific Conference of Churches and World Vision Africa also claimed pervasive regional representations; they are much more loosely organized than either the Russian or Saudi Arabian delegations, and their constituencies are politicized from the effects of rising ocean waters, poverty, and illness. Finally, the Anglican Communion, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), and the Salvation Army had significant international representation. The WEA is more loosely organized and more politicized than the Anglicans; the WEA explicitly uses their network of 420 million to advocate on issues relating to poverty, anti-human trafficking, religious freedom, peace and reconciliation, and nuclear weapons. The Salvation Army is a hierarchically organized monolithic RNGO that is more oriented toward social services among at-risk populations than advocacy, but the chairman of the International Doctrine Council indicated a willingness to advocate their constituency of 1,400,000 people. Several of the RNGOs indicated that they had already posted the most recent

statement to their websites and held press releases about the event in their home country.

The first indication that the InterFaith network is intentional about holding G8 politicians accountable rather awkwardly appears in the public statements of 2008:

This proposal attaches a time frame of a year, within which this forum will monitor progress under areas 1, 2 and 3 above. It will also scrutinize its own constituent bodies' progress in engaging and educating their followings, and produce a balance sheet by the time of the 2009 G8 Religious Leaders Summit. (Faith Leaders' Statement—Japan/Kyoto, 2008, p. 3)

No balance sheet was forthcoming, but the Interfaith leaders' statements continued to use accountability language. In the 2010 statement, religious leaders promised continued evaluation of the results "of these global political summits in the coming years while building political support for the changes we seek" (Faith Leaders' Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 4). Statements such as "we will monitor the decisions our government leaders take" and "we expect follow-through on past promises" indicate an increasing self-awareness of their accountability role (Faith Leaders' Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 4).

The 2010 statement was the first one that consistently identified problematic accountability gaps in global governance:

Military power and economic dominance are the basis for inclusion in a G8 and G20 global leaders' summit. The voices of the other 172 members of the United Nations are absent. In our faith traditions, we strive to listen to the weak and the vulnerable. Their voices must be included in decisions that affect them and all of us. (Faith Leaders' Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 1)

The 2010 statement elaborated on three themes from the MDGs: poverty, environment, and peace. In the body of each section, the religious leaders identified a problem point in global governance, specifying misplaced priorities of wealthier countries, and leadership expectations of wealthy and developing countries.

The InterFaith leaders indicate a growing awareness to use their influence to affect the public reputation of the G8 political leaders through the media. Many of the religious organizations post the statement on their websites in their own language. The annual meetings are orchestrated media events. At the 2010 gathering, a session was held just for media and the actual meeting proceedings were posted live on the Internet.

Peer accountability. I have identified six indicators of peer accountability: (a) shared governance concerns, (b) scheduling of the meetings, (c) delivery of statements to the G8 leaders, (d) meetings with government officials, (e)

similar involvement in the issues, and (f) request for formal dialogue mechanisms. The leaders of the world's religions share governance concerns with the political leaders of the world. The majority of represented RNGOs have transnational or global religious constituencies (see Table 2). For example, the leadership of the Anglican Communion works with a constituency spanning 140 nations, the Salvation Army network spans 121 nations, and the WEA spans 128 nations; the network of Religions for Peace has affiliated interreligious bodies in 70 countries that is networked at the national, regional, and global level throughout an untold number of countries. These organizations understand many of the issues associated with global governance because they, like the G8 leaders, have a constituency experiencing tensions related to transnational issues of poverty, the environment, and shared security. Although some world religions have more monolithic organizational structures than others, even loosely organized religious networks such as the World Evangelical Fellowship provide a network of potential relationships, decentralized organizations, and religious communities that contribute to a subcultural emphasis on moral achievement and religious experience in an international context fraught with a variety of inequities that pose any number of challenges to claims of moral authority. This shared sense of concern for global governance is reflected in summit statements as early as 2006:

We feel responsible for the moral condition of our societies and want to shoulder this responsibility in working together with states and civil associations enabling a life where ethical values are an asset and a source of sustainability. (Faith Leaders' Statement—Russia, 2006, p. 1)

The InterFaith religious leaders have been quite explicit about their interest in contributing to global governance:

Religion has the potential to bind together diverse peoples and cultures despite our human fragility, particularly in today's context of plurality and diversity. . . . We need to build a world order which combines democracy . . . and respect to the moral feeling, way of life, various legal and political systems, and national and religious traditions of people. (Faith Leaders' Statement—Russia, 2006, p. 1)

InterFaith leaders have adopted the same meeting language and format as the G8 summits; they have organized according to a national, and sometimes regional, delegation model (which may, or may not, make sense given who they are), and the location of annual meetings has been chosen to coincide with, and immediately precede, the G8 annual summit. After each InterFaith Summit, the statement is formally delivered to the G8 political leaders. In 2010, this was an orchestrated media event with full television and press

Table 2. Constituencies of More Than a Million at the 2010 InterFaith Summit

Organization	Constituency	Location
Anglican Communion	78,000,000	International (140 countries)
Canadian Council of Churches	22,000,000	National (Canada)
Catholic Church in Germany	25,000,000	National (Germany)
Churches of the Reformation in Germany	24,000,000	National (Germany)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	4,540,000	Regional (Americas)
U.S. Jewish Council of Public Affairs	2,500,000	National (the United States)
Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Saudi Arabia	6,000,000	National (Saudi Arabia)
National Council of Churches USA	50,000,000	National (the United States)
Pacific Conference of Churches	5,600,000	Regional (14 island countries)
Russian Orthodox	164,000,000	Regional (14 countries)
The Salvation Army	1,650,000	International (121 countries)
Turkish Muslims in Germany	3,000,000	National (Germany)
World Evangelical Alliance	420,000,000	International (128 countries)
World Vision Africa	8,000,000	Regional (25 countries)

coverage. The statement was officially received at the Summit by the Honourable Steven Fletcher on behalf of the Canadian government, was immediately sent to the Canadian G8 office, and was replied to within hours. InterFaith leaders have consistently met with lower level political officials from the beginning. In 2005, InterFaith leaders met with the U.K. Chancellor of the Exchequer in London. In 2010, several lower level Canadian politicians were involved in the summit program and politicians discussed the issues at InterFaith MP dinners held across Canada before, and after, the Summit. InterFaith leaders represent FBOs that are similarly involved in the social issues being discussed by political leaders. As noted in the Bahá'í response to the 2010 statement draft,

Religious communities are membership-based, so they understand the suffering that poverty, economic instability and inequity, and environmental distress causes individuals, families, and local communities. They are not single-issue organizations but communities that are often complex and diverse in their make-up. (InterFaith Partnership, 2010, p. 13)

RNGOs such as the International Economic Development arm of the Catholic Church, Tear Fund, Mennonite Central Committee, and the Salvation Army are heavily involved in poverty alleviation, child health and welfare, and other issues associated with global governance. World Vision International—a consistent participant in the summits—operates in 96 countries with 80% of its funding from private sources. As of 2009, their organization sponsored 3.8 million children in 1,600 communities and disbursed 684,000 loans to microentrepreneurs raising the standard of living for 2.2 million children who experienced increased family income (Jenkins & St. Amour, 2009, p. 1). The Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services, and the Jewish Federation are well

known for their involvement in social services, and mosques are known in many regions of the world as the place where suffering people can find assistance. Religious leaders represent the oldest and most fundamental of social institutions outside of the human family and the only alternative to community life when the political economy fails:

Collectively, our religious communities are the world's largest social networks which reach into the furthest corners of the earth and include countless institutions dedicated to caring for people . . . Mobilizing these great social, moral and spiritual dimensions of the world's religions in service of the common good is essential for the well-being of the human family. (Faith Leaders' Statement—Japan/Sapporo, 2008, p. 1)

InterFaith leaders have requested formal dialogue with the G8 leaders since 2006:

to develop dialogue with the adherents of non-religious views, with politicians, with all civil society structures, with international organizations . . . This dialogue should be conducted on an equal footing, in a responsible way and on a regular basis, with openness to any themes, without ideological prejudice. We believe that the time has come for a more systemic partnership of religious leaders with the United Nations. (Faith Leaders' Statement—Russia, 2006, p. 2)

Rome/2009 marked the first call “for the establishment of mechanisms for dialogue between religious communities, political leaders, international organizations and civil society structures” (Faith Leaders' Statement—Italy, 2009, p. 4), and this was repeated again in 2010 (Faith Leaders'

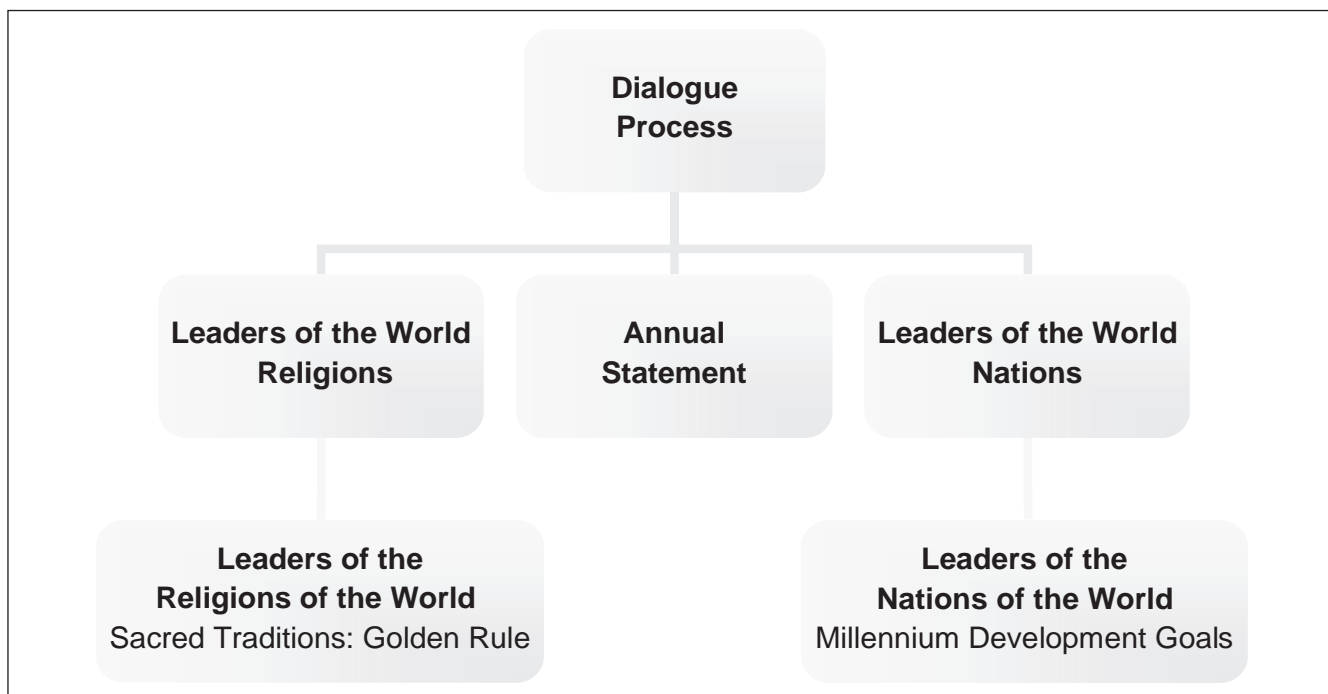


Figure 1. The informal Interfaith leaders' dialogue mechanism

Statement—Canada, 2010). Although the G8 leaders have not engaged in mutual conversation, lower level political representatives from hosting countries have engaged in conversation with the InterFaith leaders from the beginning. In 2009 and 2010, the Canadian G8 office gave a detailed response to the InterFaith Partnership statement within hours of its receipt. The G8 formally acknowledged the 2010 InterFaith Summit in their official publication by the Munk Centre/G8 Research Group about the G8/G20 meetings (a book that is read by governments all over the world). Although the G8 is beginning to recognize the InterFaith leaders, some of the InterFaith Summit organizers are quite aware of their limitations:

One of the problems we face is that some religious leaders are not opportunistic enough or canny enough to maximize the potential for influencing politicians and others. . . . I cannot see that the G8/G20 political leaders (Prime Ministers, etc) are going to give as much attention to a conference of people who are low down even their own religious food chain as they would to their equivalents . . . [T]he Summit needs to be *higher level*—producing a statement that can be agreed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope, the Dalai Lama, etc. a couple of months prior to the actual G8/G20 meeting. (Rt. Rev. N. Baines, personal communication, August 28, 2010)

Unless the most senior leaders of the world religions become involved, it is unlikely that the G8/G20 leaders will engage in dialogue. But there are other reasons why the

InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) should be considered significant in the transnational civil society channel of accountability in global governance. It is to that which we now turn.

Standardization. Buchanan and Keohane (2006) recognize that the chaotic activities of INGOs are valuable for global governance; if the ad hoc activities of INGOs could be *standardized*, global governance might become more productive. So, Buchanan and Keohane propose a complex standard for assessing the legitimacy of global governance institutions. They hope that, were “such a standard widely accepted, it could bolster public support for valuable global governance institutions that either satisfy the standard or at least make credible efforts to do so” (p. 406). For my purposes here, Buchanan and Keohane’s proposal is used as a theoretical standard against which observations are gauged.

Although the G8/G20 leaders have yet to establish a formal mechanism for dialogue, an informal mechanism already exists (see Figure 1).

In 2010, the InterFaith Partnership expanded this dialogue mechanism to include a series of InterFaith dinners and dialogue sessions in federal ridings with members of Canada’s Parliament.

Buchanan and Keohane (2006) identify six criteria that any complex standard of legitimacy must meet. We will consider each one in turn. It is important to note that Buchanan and Keohane emphasize that the standard is itself a complex, evolving, relational approach that may very well be only a temporary “solution” to what is a complicated messy process of global governance.

1. *The standard must provide a reasonable public basis for coordinated support of the institutions in question on the basis of moral reasons that are widely accessible in spite of the persistence of significant moral disagreement about the requirements of justice.*

In other words, the standard is able to steer a middle course between not demanding too much and not demanding enough. Is the partnership able to maintain high standards of justice while also acknowledging the limitations of governance? The 2005 statement seemed more concerned with moral judgment than with moral feasibility. However, the 2010 InterFaith Partnership provided evidence of a reasonable public basis for coordinated support that encouraged and maintained high moral standards that were true to sacred traditions even as it exhibited dialogue about what could be morally achieved given realistic limitations. To encourage transparency with the G8 throughout the entire process, the InterFaith Partnership invited the G8/G20 Research Group to be a member of the partnership and to send observers to the summit. Eight months prior to the gathering in Winnipeg, the InterFaith Partnership made a draft statement available to the public and actively solicited, and made public, responses to the statement from all faith communities. Responses were publicly posted on the Internet, which provided a public outlet for sacred traditions to voice their concerns from within their own tradition. Responses were posted from the Eagle Clan of the Anishnabe Nation (representing Indigenous support), the Bahá'í, the Tengye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Temple, the Canadian Baptists, the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the United Church of Canada, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues, the Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto, and the Canadian Yeshiva and Rabbinical School. The moral basis about the requirements of justice that was expressed in each of these publicly posted statements was derived from the diverse array of sacred writings and traditions of each specific religion. The InterFaith partnership exhibited respect and honor for this diverse array by including diverse sacred involvement in the actual meeting proceedings. For example, the opening session was closed with an Anishnabe prayer, and a sacred fire burned throughout the meetings. The InterFaith Partnership also hosted a presentation of the Holocaust Oratorio, "I Believe," that was composed and produced by Zane Zalis of Winnipeg. Diverse input was also solicited from each delegation during the final crafting of the statement that occurred during the meetings held June 21-23, 2010; public observation of this process was freely available via live webcast, and a media event was held to solicit public support.

The religious leaders cultivated diversity but rejected conflict. Although the differences between world religions are persistent and disagreement between them is ongoing, the InterFaith leaders' network condemned religiously

motivated terrorism and extremism and committed to "stop the teaching and justification of the use of violence between and among our faith communities" (Faith Leaders' Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 3). As Falk (2001) notes, the sacred nature of the RNGOs employed duty-oriented language that emphasized obligation, a concern for justice, and a belief in reconciliation and the transformative capacities of people and society. While the diverse sacred writings and traditions contributed to diverse conceptions of justice, the InterFaith leaders were united in their shared concern that the G8/G20 leaders are also obligated to fulfill *their* duty in accordance with the promises that they made to their own constituency *via their own standards* as expressed in the MDGs. In their appeals to the G8/G20 leadership to adjust their "misplaced priorities," the InterFaith leaders frequently included an *appeal to authorities they believe the G8/G20 will accept* (e.g., science, economic scholars, etc.) for establishing the current state of affairs and the reasonableness of their expectation that G8/G20 leaders keep their promises. For example, KAIROS spoke to the feasibility and consequences for financial markets regarding the expectation that the G8 fulfill their obligation to devote 0.7% of their Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance, as promised (InterFaith Partnership, 2010).

Despite the diversity represented by the many religions and nations of the world, there are two shared moral commonalities that form the basis around which the ongoing dialogue occurs. For the faith traditions, it is the "golden rule": that we should treat others as we would have them treat us. For the G8/G20, it is the MDGs, a document agreed to by all the nations of the world at the turn of the millennium. Just as the sacred texts and traditions inform the religious leaders about how they should behave, the religious leaders claim that the MDGs inform the political leaders about how they should behave.

2. *The standards must not confuse legitimacy with justice but nonetheless must not allow that extremely unjust institutions are legitimate.*

Initially, InterFaith leaders did not clearly distinguish between legitimacy and justice. However, by 2010, the InterFaith leaders in Canada included a civil society statement that recommended policy changes in G8 governance on the basis that a "forum recognized as legitimate and credible by all will be far more effective in addressing today's critical global issues" (InterFaith Partnership, 2010, p. 38). The Canadian Council for International Cooperation recommended that the African Union be included in G20 meetings, recognizing that although a global leaders' forum may need to be limited in size, "to be legitimate and credible, it must also be representative" (InterFaith Partnership, 2010, p. 40). The Canadian Council for International Cooperation also recommended increased transparency and accountability to strengthen legitimacy claims for purposes of governance:

“Just as the G8 has begun to modestly tackle transparency and accountability for decisions taken, . . . the locus of power has shifted to an institution that is even less transparent and “accountable (InterFaith Partnership, 2010, p. 40).” They recommend measures to address these deficiencies by extending an Accountability Framework to all G20 commitments that makes publicly available on websites all meeting schedules, participants, expert lists, agendas, and background documents, including an accountability report 30 days prior to the G20’s annual summit (InterFaith Partnership, 2010).

3. *The standard must take the ongoing consent of democratic states as a presumptive necessary, but not sufficient, condition; given the limitation of formal democracies, consent is incorporated when institutions satisfy the criteria of minimal moral acceptability, comparative benefit, and institutional integrity.*

The InterFaith leaders use the MDGs as the focal point for dialogue. This document was developed with the consent of all the nation states in the context of the United Nations. However, it is not enough that global governance institutions developed these goals; they must fulfill them if they are to govern with integrity. Hence the need for ongoing dialogue:

In a spirit of positive collaboration, acknowledging that both political leaders and faith leaders carry tremendous responsibility for setting the parameters for our common life, we will monitor the decisions our government leaders take, including decisions made at the 2010 political leaders’ summits in Canada. We expect follow-through on past promises. We expect bold new actions based on the values and recommendations outlined here. (Faith Leaders’ Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 4)

The annual InterFaith statements build on the MDGs in their statements, frequently making additional suggestions for G8 consideration, but the consistent theme that appears in every statement is that fulfillment of the MDG promises constitute the criteria for what is minimally morally acceptable.

4. *The standard should be consonant with democratic values but must not make authorization by a global democracy a necessary condition.*

The statements are addressed as leaders to leaders. Few religious organizations adopt democratic governance structures, but most religious organizations “embrace the imperative to treat all persons with dignity,” affirming that “no one person is more or less valuable than another” (Faith Leaders’ Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 1). Common values, not common governance structures, form the basis for dialogue with the political leaders:

We expect leaders to put first the well-being of the majority of the world’s population, of future generations and of the Earth itself. From our shared values we call on leaders to take courageous and concrete actions. (Faith Leaders’ Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 1)

This language of common values consistently draws attention to misplaced priorities and the need for courageous leadership that takes into consideration the needs of others; although the InterFaith leaders draw attention to issues of representation, at no point do any of the statements call for the establishment of a global democratic government.

5. *The standard must reflect the dynamic character of global governance institutions, able to respond to changing institutional goals, means, and conditions over time.*

The informal dialogue mechanism was structured so that each year a new statement was written that took into account changes in the economy, changes in the environment, and progress that had been made on the MDGs.

6. *The standard must be able to provide broad accountability in the context of the accountability gap through a functioning transnational civil society channel of accountability—addressing the problem of bureaucratic discretion and the tendency of democratic states to disregard the legitimate interests of foreigners.*

The InterFaith leaders represent faith organizations that are deeply rooted in local communities, commanding the allegiances of hundreds of millions of people. The religious leaders at the 2010 summit represented a constituency estimated at more than 800 million. To the extent that these networks become politically activated and increasingly engaged in these issues, they represent a network capable of providing significant broad accountability on behalf of some of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people. The 2010 statement speaks of “a shared responsibility to be and act for the change we want to see,” affirming their own commitment to call on their communities and members to explicitly “monitor the compliance of our governments in meeting the MDGs and, whenever possible, hold them publicly accountable for such compliance” (Faith Leaders’ Statement—Canada, 2010, p. 4). Consider what the Catholics had to say in their response to the 2010 statement draft:

Men and women of goodwill may suggest different ways to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for ending poverty, to address climate change, or to build peace. Not only do we expect disagreement about how to proceed, we

welcome it, since these practical differences can lead to authentic dialogue that aims to find practical solutions now. Christians want to be part of such a dialogue. But when international conversations become paralyzed by posturing, or when the interests of power are seen as more important than the basic needs of our brothers and sisters, then we must speak out. The community of all believers stands up with the victims of violence and war, with the poor and the broken, and with the whole of creation to remind world leaders of their obligations. (InterFaith Partnership, 2010, p. 22)

The Canadian Yeshiva and Rabbinical School similarly emphasized that leaders are judged by how they treat the needy and downtrodden of the earth. In their response to the InterFaith Leaders' 2010 draft statement, they prayed that the leaders of 2010 would consciously strive "to take the broad view, to join the world below with the world above" (InterFaith Partnership, 2010, p. 33).

Discussion

The InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism illustrates that there are RNGOs that, like INGOs, operate in a transnational civil society channel of accountability as a broad accountability mechanism. Religious soft power can do more than either threaten or reinforce the global system. The case study of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) illustrates that religious soft power can be *indeterminate*, functioning as a FAM for the responsible use of power in world politics. At more than 800 million strong, the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism FAM is a loose coalition of influential faith-based networks capable of exercising public reputational accountability. Measurement difficulties indicate that caution should be used when interpreting the meaning and size of "constituency," but for our purposes here, we can conclude that the credibility of the religious leadership and the networks they represent constitute significant cultural capital. The indeterminate language of continued watchfulness, persistent involvement, and ongoing intention to assess how well G8/G20 leaders deliver on past promises is consistent with the exercise of INGO soft power as an accountability mechanism in global governance.

Peer accountability operates through an informal dialogue mechanism that needs to include higher level participation among the leaders of the world religions. However, it is unlikely that involvement by the Dalai Lama and Pope Benedict XVI would be enough to elicit mutual dialogue with the convening G8/G20 leaders on these matters.

This does not mean, however, that the legitimacy of G8/G20 leadership is any less dependent on the dialogue that occurs with, or without, their mutual acknowledgment. Whether an institution is legitimate does not depend solely on its own characteristics but also on the deliberative relationships between the governance institution and the episodic actors outside of it.

The InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism is a form of soft power exercised as soft in institution *and* technique.⁵ This particular FAM is organized as an informal coalition made up of religious representatives who vary in their orientation to the state (Steiner, 2011b). Although there are participants in the coalition who represent hard institutions exercising soft technique, such as Saudi Arabia's ministry of religious affairs, the coalition's representation remains well over 800 million if only nonstate-sponsored religious participants are considered. The InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism exercises the soft power technique of dialogue to affect reputation rather than the hard technique of law. It is neither the role nor the responsibility of the religious leaders to ensure that governments deliver the MDGs by 2015. It is, however, soft power in action if religious leaders frame the *meaning* governmental "failure" has to their constituencies. This, in turn, affects the soft power that governments wield among their constituents (e.g., Are they still legitimate?). Governments and religions have overlapping constituencies. People evaluate "failures" differently depending on whether those who fail knew what they were doing was considered wrong.

Soft power as institution *and* technique is a form of accountability expressed as *service* not surveillance (Steiner, 2011a).⁶ At the "ground level" of social service delivery, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Population Fund regularly partner with FBOs because FBOs provide the majority of the world's social services to the most vulnerable of the world, they are the main point of reference in the communities where people turn for advice, and they are often the first on the scene during times of natural disaster. At the level of international elites, the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism represents "soft power in action" among their constituencies with reference to the G8. That is, they shape the *meaning of G8 behavior* among the general populace, thus affecting the G8's soft power. Few people, if any, would expect a religious statement to alter G8 political behavior. *Many* people, however, are likely influenced by the perspectives of their religious leaders when interpreting the meaning of G8 delivery on political promises via press releases, sermons, and so on. INGOs are already exercising soft power to help reframe the meaning of 2015 from that of failure to benchmark.⁷ With the "deadline" still 5 years away, a million dollars spent on security could not quell the public riots when the G8 met in Canada. As religious leaders make it clear to their constituencies that they have been paying close attention and monitoring G8 political behavior since 2005, they influence the impact and meaning of the deadline's arrival among their constituencies.

The purpose of this stage of the research process is to explore the theoretical validity of the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism FAM as an ideal type in transnational relations. FAM are theoretically valid to the extent that illustrative examples accurately represent those features of the phenomena that they are intended to explain (Winter, 2000). Whereas

Table 3. InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism Compliance With the Complex Standard

Complex standard desiderata	Estimated level of compliance
1. The standard must provide a reasonable public basis for coordinated support of the institutions in question on the basis of moral reasons that are widely accessible in spite of the persistence of significant moral disagreement about the requirements of justice	Partial compliance
2. The standards must not confuse legitimacy with justice but nonetheless must not allow that extremely unjust institutions are legitimate	Partial compliance
3. The standard must take the ongoing consent of democratic states as a presumptive necessary, but not sufficient, condition; given the limitation of formal democracies, consent is incorporated when institutions satisfy the criteria of minimal moral acceptability, comparative benefit, and institutional integrity	Compliance
4. The standard should be consonant with democratic values but must not make authorization by a global democracy a necessary condition.	Compliance
5. The standard must reflect the dynamic character of global governance institutions able to respond to changing institutional goals, means, and conditions over time	Compliance
6. The standard must be able to provide broad accountability in the context of the accountability gap through a functioning transnational civil society channel of accountability—addressing the problem of bureaucratic discretion and the tendency of democratic states to disregard the legitimate interest of foreigners	Compliance

quantitative approaches to validity involve demonstrating correlation and causality, *qualitative* approaches establish validity by attempting to ensure that the explanation for the results are feasible (Winter, 2000). In this case, the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism FAM is theorized as a valid actor in transnational relations to the extent that data indicate compliance with the Complex Standard proposed by Buchanan and Keohane (2006).

The Dialogue Mechanism of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) shows a remarkable level of compliance with the Complex Standard (see Table 3). The first two standards show weakest compliance and the last four standards show strongest compliance. One of the greatest strengths of this network—and the strength of their service to the G8/G20 leadership as dialogue partners—is their shared understanding of the moral vulnerabilities that stem from the accountability gaps of global “governance without government.” Senior religious leaders have heightened moral sensibilities on behalf of the most vulnerable people in the global community. But their strengths are related to their greatest areas of weakness. The otherworldly idealism associated with sacred vocations may not be sufficiently distinguished from this-worldly judgments of what is realistically possible for governments to achieve. Religious leaders live in tension between the ideal and the real, between what exists in “the now” and what is envisioned as possible in the “not yet.” That said, the legitimacy of political leaders is often outcome dependent on services rendered; thus, politicians are more interested in making decisions that are *probable* rather than *possible*. The dialogue that emerges between those concerned primarily with moral will and those concerned primarily with political will is a conversation that—if it does not collapse into posturing, dismissal, or condemnation—has the potential to push the language of probability toward objective possibility. Together, decisions can be

made that dare to ask, “as we make things work, what kind of world are we making?”

Soft power institutions using soft techniques are long-term processes that evolve over time. World religions coming together in dialogue to voice global ethics is historically unprecedented (Armstrong, 2007; Kung, 1992). The emergence of a summit process where leaders of the world religions engage in serious and consistent credible conversation with the political leaders of the world is entirely new. The InterFaith leaders have shown increasing sophistication and appreciation of the difference between justice and legitimacy since they first started meeting in 2005. It remains for further research to determine if this dialogue has resulted in increasing sophistication and appreciation of the difference between probability and possibility in the decision making among the G8/G20 political leaders. Religious leaders are still learning how this type of dialogue is done (Steiner, 2011a). The greatest challenge for the ongoing theoretical validity of the InterFaith Dialogue Mechanism FAM will likely hinge on the extent to which religious leaders maintain a clear understanding of the difference between justice and legitimacy as they challenge the political leaders to move beyond what is probable to achieve what is possible on behalf of the weakest and most vulnerable suffering people of the world. Sacred texts nurture the highest of ideals in their followers and stir some of their deepest passions. The future value of the InterFaith Leaders' Summit(s) FAM as a credible global governance soft power institution will likely wax and wane largely to the extent that the leaders are able to preserve their moral sensitivities even as they create expectations among their constituents, as well as their political peers, that are rooted in what is realistically possible. Their ability to challenge the misplaced priorities of G8 leaders in the context of realistic circumstances while maintaining the integrity

demanding by their sacred vocations will influence the effectiveness of their future role as an accountability mechanism for the responsible exercise of power in world politics.

This article has proposed a FAM as an ideal type using the methodology of Max Weber (1904/1949). Illustrative data from the 2005 to 2010 InterFaith Summits were used as informative evidence to develop—not test—the theory. Observational units were used at the micro level to explore the theoretical validity of the macro-level explanatory unit. The Complex Standard was used to establish the InterFaith Dialogue FAM as accountability mechanism in world politics as a feasible explanation. Max Weber said that social scientific knowledge is only constructed when explanation is constructed with interpreted ideal types to avoid reification. The next step in the research process is to identify characteristics of the FAM ideal type (Steiner, 2011a). Once the ideal type is clarified, further research can explore the influence of the InterFaith Dialogue FAM accountability mechanism on its religious constituencies and the G8 political leaders, and how that influence differs from the more common surveillance models of accountability. In particular, how does religious soft power influence the public negotiations over the meaning of G8 behavior as we approach the 2015 MDG deadline.

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Notes

1. Broad accountability offers provision for the contestation of the terms of accountability. Narrow accountability does not provide for the revision of existing standards of accountability.
2. Broad transparency is critical for the operation of broad accountability. Reliable information must be highly accessible by civil society to function as accountability mechanisms. If deliberations occur behind closed doors, INGOs cannot do their work.
3. The six desiderata are paraphrased from Buchanan and Keohane (2006), pp. 412, 417-419.
4. Hierarchical accountability was not applicable because it applies to relationships *within*, rather than between, governance organizations. Supervisory accountability was rejected because it only applies to relationships between organizations where one organization acts as principal with respect to the other. Fiscal accountability was rejected because it only applies when there is a funding relationship between organizations. Legal accountability was rejected as not applicable because there is no world government. Market accountability was rejected as not applicable because boycotts and disinvestment strategies have not been discussed at any of the InterFaith Leaders' Summits.
5. Vibert (2007) identifies four variations of soft power in international relations: (a) hard institutions/hard technique—binding international agreements with formal dispute mechanisms such as the World Trade Organization, (b) hard institutions/soft technique—treaty obligations with soft methods of implementation such as World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco, (c) soft institutions/hard technique—networks that sponsor hard domestic law such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), and (d) soft institutions/soft technique—networks that promote soft methods of implementation such as codes of conduct.
6. See Whitaker, Altman-Sauer, and Henderson (2004) for the applicability of a service model version of accountability between governments and nonprofits.
7. See <http://Beyond2015.org> for the global multistakeholder movement of more than 140 organizations to help create a legitimate post-2015 framework for the MDGs.

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