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978-1-107-02173-0 - The Origins of Global Humanitarianism: Religion, Empires, and Advocacy

Peter Stamatov

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## The Origins of Global Humanitarianism

Whether lauded and encouraged or criticized and maligned, action in solidarity with culturally and geographically distant strangers has been an integral part of European modernity. Traversing the complex political landscape of early modern European empires, this book locates the historical origins of modern global humanitarianism in the recurrent conflict over the ethical treatment of non-Europeans that pitted religious reformers against secular imperial networks. Since the sixteenth-century beginnings of European expansion overseas and in marked opposition to the exploitative logic of predatory imperialism, these reformers – members of Catholic orders and, later, Quakers and other reformist Protestants – developed an ideology and a political practice in defense of the rights and interests of distant “others.” They also increasingly made the question of imperial injustice relevant to growing “domestic” publics in Europe. A distinctive institutional model of long-distance advocacy crystallized out of these persistent struggles, becoming the standard weapon of transnational activists.

Peter Stamatov is currently Associate Professor of Sociology at Yale University. His work has appeared in *The American Sociological Review*, *Theory and Society*, and *Contemporary Sociology*, as well as in Hungarian and Brazilian scholarly journals. He is a past winner of the Bendix Prize of the Comparative Historical Section of the American Sociological Association and was a recipient of Cátedra de Excelencia (Excellence Chair) at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

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# The Origins of Global Humanitarianism

*Religion, Empires, and Advocacy*

PETER STAMATOV

*Yale University*



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32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107021730](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107021730)

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First published 2013

Printed in the United States of America

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Stamatov, Peter, 1967–

The origins of global humanitarianism : religion, empires, and advocacy / Peter Stamatov, Yale University.

pages cm. – (Cambridge studies in social theory, religion and politics)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Indigenous peoples – Colonization. 2. Europe – Territorial expansion.
  3. Europe – Colonies – History. 4. Imperialism – Moral and ethical aspects – History. 5. Humanitarianism – Religious aspects – Christianity – History.
- I. Title.

JV305.S73 2013

361.7'509-dc23 2013017439

ISBN 978-1-107-02173-0 Hardback

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... for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

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## Acknowledgments

Let me start by acknowledging the “civilians” from outside of academia who supported me through the long years of research and writing: Gabriel Bravo, Ildikó Krén, Miguel Otero, George Perez, and Laurence Winkworth. And where would I be without the support of my family, Katia, Sako, Zlati, and Philip? The “life-course” of this project coincided with the cruelly brief life of my dog Seven who I still miss enormously.

Rogers Brubaker and Rick Biernacki taught me how to be a sociologist. My interest in the questions this book addresses began to take shape in Budapest of the mid-1990s, in classes taught by Judit Bodnár and István Rév. In Los Angeles I was lucky to be able to discuss ideas with Mabel Berezin, Jon Fox, Robert Gedeon, Mara Loveman, Mick Mann, Eyal Rabinovitch, and Stephanie Limoncelli. Hannah Brückner and Chris Wildeman have been special in New Haven. Thanks also go to colleagues and students at Yale: Julia Adams, Jeff Alexander, Ateş Altınordu, Jen Bair, David Bargeño, Shai Dromi, Phil Gorski, Andy Junker, Alondra Nelson, Sam Nelson, Jensen Sass, Rachel Sherman, Sam Stabler, Luke Wagner, and Jonathan Wyrzten. In Budapest, again, I had long conversations with Stefan Detchev, João Gonçalves, and Jon Stewart. And then my *familia madrileña* adopted me: Juan Díez Medrano, Juan Fernández, Roberto Garvía, Marga Torre, and Celia Valiente. I’m also indebted to Angela Alonso, Rossi Guentcheva, Maartje Jensen, and Damon Mayrl.

I would like to acknowledge the staff of several libraries that made my research possible: the UCLA Research Library; the former Social Science Library at Yale; Kati Deseő and Hédi Erdős at the, again, former library of Collegium Budapest; the Friends’ Library in London; the British Library; and the María Moliner Library of the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Eric Crahan at Cambridge University Press believed in the project and gave it its title. I thank also Lew Bateman, Susan Thomas, and Shaun Vigil.

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*Acknowledgments*

Research funding provided by the following institutions is gratefully acknowledged: the Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Studies, the Griswold Fund of the Whitney Humanities Center at Yale, the University of California Institute for Global Conflict and Cooperation, the Social Science Research Council, and Yale University. This book is being published with the generous assistance of the Frederick W. Hilles Publication Fund of Yale University.