Andreas Heuser
Jens Koehrsen (eds.)

Does Religion Make a Difference?

Religious NGOs in International Development Collaboration

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Foreword

This volume stands in connection with the fellow programme of the Centre for Religion, Economy and Politics, focusing on "Religion and Development in the Global South". This programme coordinated an international group of scholars of diverse disciplinary backgrounds at the University of Basel, Switzerland. Whereas a first publication of this two-year research collaboration focusses on Christian Faith-Based Organisations (Koehrsen and Heuser (eds.), Faith Based Organizations in Development Discourses and Practice, Routledge 2020), this volume offers multi-religious as well as inter-religious perspectives on the connection between religion and development. The majority of the contributions to this volume are revised papers presented at the conference "Does Religion Make a Difference? Discourses and Activities of Religious Development NGOs", organised by the Centre for Religion, Economy and Politics at the University of Basel, 9th-11th November 2016. Apart from scholars that presented their research at the conference, we have invited various authors to expand the range of case studies by including additional religious backgrounds and regional contexts. Put together, both publications provide insights into a broad array of religious non-governmental organisations, their areas of developmental practice and their religious profiles.

Various colleagues and institutions deserve our gratitude: special thanks go to Claudia Hoffmann; apart from contributing to this volume as one of the research fellows, she administered the fellow programme activities and organised the conference. Helen Gilroy, Anabella Da Pra, and Anna Kühleis assisted the editing of this volume. We also thank our colleagues from the Centre for Religion, Economy, and Politics and the Faculty of Theology at the University of Basel for their support of this fellow programme. In addition, the Swiss University Conference, the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Foundation for Basic Research in Human Sciences, and the Voluntary Academic Society Basel (Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft Basel) have sponsored the activities of the fellow programme.

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Andreas Heuser and Jens Koehrsen   Basel, March 2020

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From a Quiet Revolution to the Tolerance of Ambiguity: Religious NGOs in International Development Discourse

International discourses on development indicate a remarkable shift. For decades, secular notions of social change have dominated development theory. In an unanticipated juncture, more recent scholarship recognises the importance of religion in development dynamics, providing evidence for a cooling down of the "secularization fever" (Barnett and Stein 2012: 3) that has affected development theory across the globe. This shift is accompanied by proclamations of a postsecular "religious turn" in international development politics. If plausibility can be provided for a religious amnesia in classic concepts of development, nowadays, credit is given to religious social agency. In a radical shift of arguments, one can hear that "it is only a slight exaggeration to say 'no religion, no humanitarianism'" (Barnett and Stein 2012: 3). Despite such claims, religion remains contested, if not marginal, in current development politics. While there are exceptions, religion still is a comparatively underrated factor in current development politics (Oehlmann, Frost, Graeb and Schieder 2016). Although assertions of a "religious turn" in international development politics have been brought forward since the implementation of the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Program at the beginning of this century, in the formulation of the Agenda 2030 published in 2015, religion is not explicitly featured in the sustainable development goals.

The "discovery" of religion and religious non-government organisations (RNGOs) is part of what we term a postsecular quiet revolution in the world of development. However, this revolution has not yet come to an end due to the hybridity of RNGOs. Like other NGOs, RNGOs engage in "secular" fields and institutions of development. However, they differ from other NGOs in terms of their religious background.

Does this religious background actually make a difference? Some observers believe that it does and credit specific capacities to RNGOs, including, for instance, their grassroots reach as well as the integrity and motivation of staff due to the faith identity of these organisations (Amri 2014; James 2009; Rice 2006). Others, by contrast, see no difference between RNGOs and their "secular" counterparts, suggesting that RNGOs

and NGOs engage in similar ways in international development (Carrette 2017; Ware et al. 2016).

This volume addresses the potentially distinctive character and capacities of RNGOs in the world of development, asking whether religion makes a difference. Its contributions tackle this question from different disciplinary angles and with regard to different religions and regional contexts. In the remainder of this introduction, we chart some of the main episodes of the slow and mostly reluctant discovery of religion in the world of international development and describe the hybridity of RNGOs. Based on this hybridity, we suggest that a greater tolerance of ambiguity might allow RNGOs to come into play more strongly for the goals of international development. In the final part of this introduction, we map the contributions of this volume and present an outlook.

A Quiet Revolution

Around the turn of the millennium, former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan (1938–2018), spoke of a "quiet revolution" in development politics. In his view, the quiet revolution included a change towards participatory bottom-up strategies in international relations and the field of development politics (Annan 1998). For a long time, development policy was dominated by state-driven agency guided by technocratic visions of catch-up develop-ment. Since the 1960s, development concepts were framed in a grand nar-rative whose codes were defined by economic and modernist repertoires, nurturing images of linear, predictable social change. The "revolutionary" component of Annan`s diction refers to the irruption of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) into such etatist development concepts. Disquieting experiences of inefficiency caused reorientations in global development policy in the 1980s and affected questions of agency, structures and inten-tions of development. Disillusioned by the grim economic outlook of post-colonial states, international development policy implemented structural adjustment programmes and promoted economic liberalisation processes. A significant feature in all these shifts was the continual entrance of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) into public political arenas. Participa-tion of civil society affected all fields of development policy, at local and global levels. NGOs were recognised as development partners coping with the political "agencies of restraint" (Kappel 2000: 227), the proverbial insti-tutional weakness of postcolonial states.

At the level of civil society, religious groups of different backgrounds played an important role in questioning the postcolonial architecture; partly due to the 'bad governance' performances, partly due to increasing social misery, poverty and unemployment (Bayart 2009: 256–257). Obviously, religion remained an influential part of private and public life and marker of identity in postcolonial societies. Drawing on statistical material on religious belonging, for instance, in contemporary Africa (PEW 2010), one "could hypothesize that religion has even become the primary identity for most Africans, perhaps above national identity, which is seen as more unstable" (Abbink 2014: 87). In retrospect, the importance of religion seemed to be growing in contexts of politically weak postcolonial states, by providing a sense of identity and security, and addressing existential needs for survival.

In this context, NGOs came into play as allies against the exploitative ethos of state elites. NGOs were surrounded by an aura to subvert the postcolonial "politics of the belly" (Bayart 2009). They were seen as noticeable partners against authoritarian regimes accumulating national wealth and supporting patrimonial forms of redistribution. The supposed impact of non-governmental actors resonated in prospects of an "NGOisation" of development. Whether the appearance of NGOs marked a profound breakthrough of civil society or was, actually, a romanticisation of grassroots-oriented social change, remained unresolved (Nuscheler 2012: 555).

Surely, Annan`s perception of a "quiet revolution" still transported both the uncertainty and the high expectations about the "revolutionary" role of NGOs in the future texture of global development governance. Yet, the second, more discreet component of his formula relates to another marker in the field of development policy around the turn of the century. Concealed in the ambiguous "quiet revolution" is the agency of religious-based non-governmental organisations (RNGOs), a specific type of NGOs. Almost invisible in the previous history of development decades, RNGOs began to feature within development discourses. Religion appeared as a factor for social change. Again, the subtle part of the quiet revolution encapsulated another ambivalence that concerned the role of religion in development politics: whether religion is "a help or hindrance to development" (Mtata 2013), whether it mobilises or obstructs social change.

The Reluctant Discovery of Religion

Engrained in the notion of a quiet revolution is the slow and "reluctant discovery" of RNGOs. Early voices asking for a deeper recognition of the religious impact on socio-economic change remained scarce (Lueken 1989). Also, the religious legacy of RNGOs remained an unspecific referent in development circles. Since post World War II the few pioneering RNGOs operating within UN developmental networks were simply seen as any other intermediary organisation and therefore not recognised as "religious" (Lehmann 2016). And seen from a broader RNGO perspective, the historic narrative around RNGO is anchored within global Christianity.

Historically, RNGOs emerged around the 1950s in a context in which global development policy was taking shape. Some pioneering organisations with a Roman-Catholic background formed part of the early networks linked to the UN. Christian NGOs became more engaged with the proclamation of the "first development decade" in 1960 which had a particularly strong impact on mainline Christianity. This legacy is still felt today, as the vast majority of RNGOs at the UN has a Christian background (Koehrsen and Heuser 2020). The emergence of Christian development agency deserves a closer look.

The announcement of the first development decade by the UN was a conscious step into a global framework of development. It gave way to the formulation of development theories, and paid closer attention to methods and practices in the implementation of development projects. Predominant discourses of development, however, tended to exclude religion from the picture and mostly focussed on economic development. Against this backdrop, religious actors raised criticism against prevalent notions of development which they perceived as too economic-centred and neglecting broader concepts of self and visions of social life.

In global mainline Christianity, political theologies of different kind requested a Christian contribution to social change in the so-called Third World. Contextual theologies described root-causes of poverty and "underdevelopment", asking churches to venture away from benevolent charity programmes to consider structural issues and demanding participatory practices in development-related projects. In this broader horizon of social transformation, churches offered their participation as agents of change.

Ideas for a professionalisation of Christian development agency materialised already around 1960. Two major Christian NGOs were founded in Western Europe to be part and parcel of the new development policy era.

In 1959, *Bread for the World* was founded in Germany, seconded in 1964 by ICCO (Interchurch Coordination Committee for Development Projects) in the Netherlands. Others followed in due course. Their establishment undermined the functional separation into secular and religious spheres, heeded in political development discourses of the time. Equipped with enormous fundraising capacity and a definite mandate to operate in developing countries, these RNGOs inserted peculiar faith-based perspectives into the global tapestry of development and social change at large. Driven by the performances of Christian NGOs, the idea of contributing to development expanded within Christianity, reaching a rising number of Christian communities.

These developments climaxed on a global scale in the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) at Uppsala (Sweden) in 1968. The outcome of the WCC Uppsala Assembly marks the "formal beginning of the intentional and organized engagement of the ecumenical movement for development cooperation" (World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation and ACT Alliance, 2018: 25). The Uppsala Assembly formulated some key terms and principles of church-related development work. It affirmed mutual participation and transparency in development projects across diverse socio-cultural contexts. The Uppsala claims constructed a more complex notion of development, overcoming the sole development criteria based on needs of the *homo oeconomicus*. The Uppsala Assembly emphasised the need for grassroots legitimacy of any development work. This included responsiveness to local communities and the call for accountability in the use of resources. In addition to principles of responsible administration and accountability, critical self-evaluation was part of the Uppsala call for professionalisation of church-related development work (Moltmann 2008). Uppsala 1968 shaped the development agency in mainline Christianity. In some respect, it prefigured quintessential requirements for sustainability discussed today. In any case, in a long-term effect it oriented Christian international development towards issues of justice rather than models of charity: Christian NGOs became interested in transferring the power to the recipients of development work in the long run.

However, the continuing dictum of secularisation still nourished a neglect of religion in development circles. The "reluctant discovery" of RNGO gained pace only in the late 1990s. In a review of development theories and policies at that time, Kurt A. Ver Beek still testified a negligence of religious dimensions in development policies. In a self-critical note, he stated that "little is known about the role of spirituality in the development

process, and little or no guidance is given to development practitioners as to how address spiritual issues, resulting in less effective and even damaging development efforts" (Ver Beek 2000: 38). The religiousness of RNGOs received some more attention with the coining of the UN *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) in 2000. Inspired by turn-of-the-millennium enthusiasm, the MDGs designed a plain purpose of international development policy. They articulated eight main goals, a clear time frame and a prime purpose of action, namely to halve poverty in the Global South by 2015. In order to do so, the MDGs envisaged consolidating grassroots participation. By expressing several key goals, the MDGs no longer strategised development in the linear, material growth-based vision of previous development decades. On the part of RNGOs, the MDGs found strong support as the "longest standing paradigm that has ever emerged in developmental thinking" (ACT Executive Committee 2013: 2). Inversely, the MDGs accelerated a sensitivity for RNGO-participation in development politics.

RNGO agency gradually became more discernible in the context of a new era in developmental geopolitics. In the early 2000s, the growing awareness of RNGOs became apparent in a number of new initiatives on a national and international scale. Bretton-Woods institutions pioneered the scenario (Haynes 2007). From 1998 until 2005, the World Bank organised a consultation process, headed by Wold Bank president James D. Wolfensohn, and the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey. The joint initiative resulted in the foundation of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD).

Already in 1999, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) staged a programme on "Social Capital, Ethics and Development" that brought together political and religious leaders as well as political economists. In analogy the World Bank department on Development Dialogue on Value and Ethics was founded in 2000 in order to build up stronger relations with RNGOs. Subsequently, numerous national development agencies built up clusters on religion and development and conducted research projects about the impact of religion on development. In Europe, the Swiss Development Cooperation launched a long-term research project about religion and development in 2002. On the one hand, this project provided case study approaches on development in diverse countries, and in view of different religious actors, cultural and social contexts. On the other hand, the findings supported the ambivalence of religious agency in development processes, including sometimes destabilising effects and support of fundamentalism (Holenstein 2009). Similarly, the British Department for International Development instigated the 'Religions and Development Program'

from 2005–2010. Its research focus was on religious norms and values in a multi-religious perspective, resulting in a set of 'Faith Partnership Principles' (Rakodi 2011). Other initiatives by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs or, in case of US development policy the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, founded in 2006, provided platforms for interaction of political development agencies with RNGOs (Berkley Center 2012). They expressed a need for long-term cooperation and aimed at creating awareness for the peculiar challenges in development cooperation between state and religious institutions. Above all, the mapping of potentials and risks longed for more intense studies on the specific profiles of RNGOs, their diverse approaches, and institutional backgrounds. A few years later, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development authored a Future Charta that conceptualised earlier findings. In 2014, the Ministry coined its novel concept of a value-based development policy: "Religion Matters" sought to safeguard cultural and religious plurality and to fully respect RNGOs as potent partners in development cooperation (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2016).

By then the political narrative of RNGO discovery opened another decisive page. In 2015, the UN implemented the Agenda 2030, heralded as a decisive passage into a "great global transformation" (Nuscheler 2012). The global arena of development politics went into the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet, the story of a reluctant discovery of RNGOs continues on another page.

The Great Global Transformation

Officially designated as "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", the SDGs present a comprehensive set of general aims and a broad range of targets (http://www.un.org/sustainabledevel opment/). Signed by 193 countries, the Agenda 2030 seeks continuity with the Millennium Development Goals, at first glance. As such, the first goal of the SDGs affirms to end poverty in all its forms and everywhere. However, in the MDGs, the optimistic prospect to drastically curb poverty rates by 2015 turned out to be illusionary (Grin, Rotmans, Schot, and Geels 2010). Soon any hopes of eradicating poverty levels were contradicted by a persistent "bottom billion", signalling "large islands of chaos" in which one billion poor people live alongside six to seven billion people under remarkably better conditions (Collier 2007). "The twenty-first-century world of

material comfort, global travel, and economic interdependence will become increasingly vulnerable to these large islands of chaos. And it matters now. As the bottom billion diverges from an increasingly sophisticated world economy, integration will become harder, not easier" (Collier 2007: 3–4). The agenda's preamble already indicates ways to handle such "islands of chaos". First, it mentions sustainable development as an integral process. Second, and in difference to the MDGs priority on the Southern hemisphere, the SDGs pursue sustainable development on a global scale. Third, the "great transformation" envisions sustainability by a collection of 17 development goals with related 169 targets. By consequence, the SDGs widen the scope of development and invite for more flexible approaches in development practice. Sustainable development signifies an enormous complexity of parameters and practice characterised by an interplay of sustainable modes of production, consumption, and resource use. The SDGs combine social and ecological justice, addressing violations of human rights, gender inequality, and measures to combat climate change. Amongst others more, the agenda promotes well-being for all and across generational lines. The visionary-like SDG 16 is committed to establish "peaceful and inclusive societies", providing "access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". In sum, the Agenda 2030 offers an aspiring platform welcomed by large sections of RNGOs, as the contributions in this volume illustrate.

In fact, the Agenda 2030 is the result of a consultative process. In contrast to the implementation of the MDGs, which were coined by a selected number of experts, it is characterised by a multi-stakeholder, participatory and value-oriented approach to sustainable development. Amongst the stakeholders in civil society contributing to the formulation of the Agenda 2030 were numerous RNGOs, representing diverse faith traditions and religious communities. Surprisingly, however, the Agenda 2030 contains no single reference to religion. How about all the studies and programmes on the impact of "religion" that had appeared following the adoption of the MDGs? By the time of the adoption of the SDGs, religion had become a prominent topic in academic debates about development: the once criticised religious illiteracy had turned into an appreciation of the connection between religion and development (see, for instance, Boehle 2010a; Bornstein 2002; Berger 2003; Carrette and Miall 2017; Clarke 2013; Haynes 2007; Marshall 2014; Mtata 2013; Sider and Unruh 2004; Stensvold 2017). In development theory, RNGOs were increasingly profiled as identifiable development actors in their own right. The Agenda 2030 orientation towards human rights, rural and grassroots issues consolidated long estab-

lished options in the development work of RNGOs (Clarke 2008; Baumgart-Ochse and Wolf 2019). This had stirred a growing interdisciplinary attention given to RNGOs, accentuating the transformative potential of religion (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011; Lehmann 2016). Academic contributions were even suggesting a substantial "religious turn" in developmental geopolitics (Jahnel 2018), as the quiet revolution seemed to be breaking through in an overwhelming diction as a "newfound enthusiasm" (Occhipinti 2015: 333) over RNGOs.

Against this backdrop, it is astonishing that the involvement, collaboration and participation of RNGOs is only stated implicitly in the envisaged Great Global Transformation. The impression of a "religious turn" in international development politics appears as premature, if not a chimera. The "newfound enthusiasm" about the transformative potentials of RNGOs had continually been met with a hermeneutics of suspicion, as the assumed potentials were subject to substantial critique (Jones and Petersen 2011). One can discern a cyclic return of criticisms that highlight the dualistic features of RNGOs in international development. As such, still today RNGOs cannot escape the "help or hindrance" (Mtata 2013), the numinous "visible and invisible actors" (Carrette and Miall 2017) and the "polarizers or mediators" (Baumgart-Ochse and Wolf 2019) dualisms in development politics. In sum, the Agenda 2030 continues with the reluctant discovery of RNGOs, as the "quiet revolution" prolongs into the Great Global Transformation.

RNGOs' Abilities in Sustainable Development

Apparently, the development agency of RNGOs is troubled by an innate ambiguity. This ambiguity nuances the "newfound enthusiasm" about religion and identifies limitations of RNGOs in development work. This demands a more accurate look at RNGOs.

Generally speaking, RNGOs share some of the advantages and also some of the disadvantages of NGOs. Both NGOs and RNGOs are part of and engaged in mobilising civil society. They access the social and moral capital of a society for the sake of greater grassroots participation in pursuing common goods. They seek to provide resources for long-term social transformation, including advocacy in critical issues of sustainable development. On the other hand, RNGOs also share weaknesses of NGOs. In most cases, they pursue small-scale projects that have little impact on broader structural development issues. Like some NGOs, RNGOs are also

known for applying moralising strategies in fund-raising activities (Nuscheler 2012: 558–561). But how to classify the (potentially) distinctive abilities of RNGOs?

RNGOs' grassroots orientation places strong emphasis on basic needs in the field of poverty eradication, but they may also engage for goals that are related to the newly established focus on environmental sustainability in the SDGs (Koehrsen 2018). RNGOs are known for their ability to establish trust-building relationships at the margins of any society. Their expertise in mobilising civil society in the fields of education and ecology, of public welfare and in conflict mediation facilitated their increasing integration into participatory bottom-up discourses (Boehle 2010b; Olivier 2016). In addition, RNGOs can rely on local networks needed in the global outreach of the Agenda 2030: they can usually draw upon the support of long-standing local faith communities (Berger 2003; Kirmani 2012; Ware et al. 2016). RNGOs are intertwined with global and local networks, at times built-up in long-standing, historic relationships between institutional partners in both Northern and Southern hemispheres. This enables them to use existing communication channels, indispensable for advocacy activities. Due to their normative orientations, RNGOs can also produce effective counter-publics that challenge established elites or confront official development policies. Furthermore, they often have established extensive fundraising networks over many years that facilitate the continuous influx of resources from private and public donors. Other advantages are sometimes lower administration costs, coupled with management expertise of small-scale, but also of large-scale projects. Moreover, the integrity of leadership and the access to skilled staff appear to constitute additional features (World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation and ACT Alliance 2018: 55–57). Put together, RNGOs seem to unite characteristics of trusted social agency in sustainable development.

However, disillusionment about RNGO-based development projects is also part of the RNGO narrative (Nuscheler 2012; Stockmann 2016). Entangled in the implementation of projects are cases of corruption. Hierarchical structures and gender imbalances sometimes mitigate the success of development projects. RNGOs "should therefore be self-critical when affirming their own strengths and distinctive values" (World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation and ACT Alliance 2018: 75).

At closer look, there is one characteristic suspicion against RNGOs: they would follow a hidden proselytism agenda (Bornstein 2002; Clarke 2008; Haynes 2013). Such controversies can be identified in secular development milieus, on the one side; and on the other side, they are even raised between

religious actors in projections about development ideologies of other-religious communities (Barnett and Stein 2012). The reservations are serious in matter, as they suggest that RNGOs are violating the humanitarian ethos of development by promoting their religion or exclusively favouring the adherents of their faith tradition. Instead of subscribing to the consensus of impartiality, non-discrimination and equality, development activities of RNGOs run the risk of limiting the outreach to specific constituencies (cf. World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation and ACT Alliance 2018: 70–75). However, RNGO development approaches depend on the types of RNGOs involved as well as on their ideological anchorage (Sider and Unruh 2004). The contributions in this volume show that RNGOs differ in degree and shape; they also show that the controversial issue of proselytism is treated with utmost care within (most) RNGOs (see, for instance, the chapters by Gez, Maya and Benvenisti and by Langewiesche in this volume).

The dispute over proselytism is intimately connected to another major concern often voiced by secular development actors: in their perspective, the normativity of RNGOs is seen as problematic, indicating limitations in developmental vision and practice. This concern relates to a central feature of RNGOs: their religious identity and normativity. It is precisely the normative distinctiveness of RNGOs that caused their rather slow discovery in developmental geopolitics. Contributions in this volume highlight the fact that RNGOs do not play out their religious identity card by all means. They differ enormously in making their religious identity in public. Most, though not all (see, for instance, Dehn; Petersen in this volume), RNGOs open their humanitarian ethos to all humans irrespective of their religious belonging. More importantly, normativity guides all development practice and social action, including those of secular actors (Paech 2012; Ziai 2014; Marshall 2014; Stockmann, Menzel and Nuscheler 2016). No development practice can escape normative foundations. Notwithstanding, the religious identity of RNGOs continues to provoke qualms over their legitimate participation in development politics.

Given the aforementioned criticisms, any romanticisation of RNGOs seems out of place (Heuser 2019). RNGOs appear as hybrid actors moving between the world of religion and secular development circles. Therefore, we suggest to handle RNGOs by a "tolerance of ambiguity".

Tolerance of Ambiguity

Tolerance of ambiguity paves a way for another variant of the "quiet revolution": It challenges "othering" discourses on RNGOs, still prevalent in the political development milieus of the Agenda 2030 era. As described above, the "quiet revolution" has lead to the reluctant discovery of RNGOs. The integration of religious agency in development discourses intensified from the 1980s and accompanied the "NGOization" of development governance. However, its slow acceptance endures in the era of the SDGs.

The critical perception of RNGOs mostly refers to their ambivalent, or "hybrid" profile (Berger 2003), blending the arguably separated – worlds of religion and secular development. RNGOs undertake development activities potentially guided by a religious background and mix them with secular language and development practices. On the one side, RNGOs are characterised by their rootedness in distinct religious traditions and their connections to specific religious communities. On the other side, they have become successful players in the national and international arenas of development, and are equal partners in development initiatives. Tolerance of ambiguity deals with this hybridity and the uncertainty that it may cause. It allows "secular" development actors to engage in collaborations with RNGOs and avoids the "newfound enthusiasm" as well as the "hindrance" discourses. Rather than perceiving the normativity of RNGOs as problematic, tolerance of ambiguity depicts it as central to their developmental productivity. Tolerance of ambiguity involves the ability to navigate between different discourses of development. By offering this term, we suggest a constructive understanding of the ambivalent nature of RNGOs. Their hybrid character even facilitates their adaptability to diverse political and religious cultures.

Elsewhere we termed RNGOs as "boundary agents", with reference to (mainly protestant) Christian RNGOs (Koehrsen and Heuser 2020; cf. Koehrsen 2017). This volume presents empirical case studies which allow for expanding the notion. The contributions provide evidence that non-Christian RNGOs can be understood as resourceful "boundary agents": RNGOs adapt their visions, their language, and their approaches to changing contexts and allow for mediating between different stakeholders of international development (e.g. state actors, religious donors, grassroots recipients). The hybridity of RNGOs facilitates their collaboration with other development actors in various fields. Despite their hybridity, they have clear normative and religious foundations that guide their develop-

ment objectives and encourages them to promote particular notions of development in international development discourses. Through their religious value systems, RNGOs turn into what we call "developmental entrepreneurs" (Koehrsen and Heuser 2020a). Our plea for tolerance of ambiguity acknowledges the autonomous boundary agency of RNGOs and testifies the sometimes precarious balancing of their hybridity (Baumgart-Ochse and Wolf 2019). Tolerance of ambiguity considers the innate multidimensionality of RNGOs' development practice and refers to the ability of bearing equivocalness.

Multireligious Case-Studies

This volume supports tolerance of ambiguity by adding to the scholarship about international development in two ways. First, it provides empirical studies on RNGOs still "underrepresented in the academic debate" (Braungart 2019: 8–9). Second, this volume forays into the multireligious arena of RNGOs. It seeks to situate RNGO agency in a multireligious perspective and offers insights into the development activities, normative backgrounds and organisational features of RNGOs from diverse backgrounds of faith and geographical regions.

The spectrum of religious traditions represented here has a strong corpus on monotheistic Abrahamic religions, portraying, for instance, Muslim and Jewish RNGOs. The studies about Buddhist and Hindu-based developmental engagement provides insights into an emerging sector of RNGOs. Some articles are comparative in nature, while others engage in internal debates over normative directions of development agency. The focus on empirical cases helps to be cautious when it comes to generalisations. As such, the sample of cases from different backgrounds includes particular descriptions of the peculiar competencies linked to single RNGOs. It is also concerned with at times heterodox, self-reflective voices of RNGOs in overall discourses on development. This becomes evident in cases of RNGO engagement with particular SDGs, be it, for instance, ecology and climate justice, gender, or migration. The studies show that RNGOs are oriented towards poverty reduction and basic existential needs; many are known for their advocacy in human rights protection and some are engaged in conflict resolution, specifically in inter-religious constellations. The cases reveal the organisational strengths of RNGOs in development politics. In many cases, RNGOs are able to generate significant financial resources. At the same time, most RNGOs are part of international

networks and are embedded in both political and religious contexts. Given their financial, organisational and network features, they are often capable of handling small-scale and large-scale development projects.

Outline of the Volume

The volume is organised around five sections. Following this Introduction on the slow discovery of RNGOs in international development discourse, Section I is mapping Religious NGOs and International Development Politics. In her opening contribution, KATHERINE MARSHALL reflects on religious engagement in development work in general terms. Recent discussions about religion in contemporary international affairs tend to focus on social tensions. They stress conflicts and violence driven by diverse forms religious extremism. Less appreciation is given to constructive aspects of religiously motivated agency in multiple arenas of development. Marshall seeks to map the complex roles of religious actors in the wider global agenda as reflected in the UN 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An underlying premise of her argument is that the global agenda of sustainable development is not possible without taking religion into account. The central message is that religious institutions and beliefs matter for each SDG. By defining terms, she differentiates between a belief-centred approach involving cognitive dimensions and "lived religion" that centres on practical expressions. In the context of development, this includes institutions and service delivery, various forms of partnerships, and the shaping of core ethical norms that underlie social cohesion. She points at the prime importance of context, also in order to avoid generalisations that contribute little to the understanding of religious agency. She observes that institutions are taking on new roles especially in fragile states and in times of violent conflicts. The chapter outlines various contemporary efforts to engage religious actors in more systematic ways. In order to facilitate purposeful religious engagement, Marshall highlights several topics that call for dialogue and development action. Among them, she includes religion and violence, corruption and employment opportunities, the issue of proselytisation, controversies on gender, human rights, and the quality of education. Against the backdrop of the SDGs, she asserts that the engagement with such highly complex topics is demanding but essential.

JEFFREY HAYNES argues that the ability of religious NGOs to make a difference depends on whether non-religious development circles accept them as relevant actors. His contribution examines the collaboration

between religious and non-religious actors against the backdrop of the MDGs and SDGs. Haynes sees increases in both openness for collaboration between religious and non-religious actors as well as the number of such collaborations, with the MDGs and SDGs creating a productive environment for these exchanges. However, despite increasing collaborations and the sharing of similar development goals in the context of the SDGs, there is still scepticism vis-à-vis religious organisations in secular development circles. Moreover, religious and non-religious actors differ in their perceptions of development (e.g. poverty). These differences may obstruct long-term collaborations, as Haynes shows for the case of the vacillating collaboration between the World Bank and the WCC. Whether and how religious perspectives (e.g. on poverty reduction) can be implemented in the development strategies of non-religious organisations and governments remains a central question. Haynes indicates that among actors from both sides, there is a need for openness and mutual learning.

RICHARD FRIEDLI´S contribution is a comparative approach to "transculturation grammars" in secular and religious NGOs. Friedli suggests two basic preconditions for development work: (a) flexibility as a balancing identity and (b) capacity to differentiate between the fundamentalist vs. fundamental shift. He illustrates these two preconditions for the case of Rwanda challenged by genocide and peace-building process. In Rwanda the shift from fundamental to fundamentalist grammars contributed to the genocide. The ongoing reconciliation activity therefore consists in returning to fundamental grammars. Friedli argues that knowledge about and respect for religion plays a crucial role for development activities. However, he also points out that it is not fruitful to distinguish in a general manner between religious and secular forms of action, as "both styles of acting can produce hardening or mitigating social repercussions" (Friedli). Instead, the crucial difference would concern "orthodoxy" vs. "openness" that relates to the aforementioned pre-conditions of development work.

SECTION II is charting RNGOs in diverse religious traditions. MARIE JUUL PETERSEN outlines the emergence and contemporary context of transnational Muslim RNGOs in the Sunni tradition. Muslim RNGOs are increasing in numbers and visibility in the field of development and humanitarian aid. Petersen presents historical trajectories of Muslim RNGOs, laying emphasis on the post 9/11 Islamic aid field. Based on case studies of two pioneering Muslim NGOs, the chapter explores the ways in which these organisations conceive of the nexus between religion and aid. One of the oldest, biggest and most influential transnational Muslim RNGOs is IIROSA, established in Saudi Arabia in 1979. IIROSA is formally part of

the Muslim World League and cooperates primarily with other Muslim organisations. It hardly entertains relations with Western development organisations. The majority of donors are Kuwaiti and Saudi Muslims; likewise, recipients of aid are mainly situated in Muslim-majority countries or in Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries. IIROSA envisions a strengthened umma in the sense of a transnational community of shared values, not a pan-Islamic political unit. The second RNGO is Islamic Relief, established in 1984 by Egyptian immigrants in the UK. Islamic Relief is arguably the largest Muslim RNGO. It is part of a wide range of networks and entertains formal collaborations with Muslim, Christian and secular development NGOs. Its projects are directed towards both Muslims and non-Muslims. Islamic Relief operates similarly to other, mainstream, development and humanitarian organisations and supports notions of sustainable development, professionalism and neutrality. Peterson concludes that for Islamic Relief religion is "not a defining factor but an 'added value' facilitating access, communication and a religiously sensitive approach to recipients". Her analysis shows how heterogeneous the field of international Muslim RNGOs is; it underlines different kinds and degrees of organisational religiosity as well as it demonstrates different concepts of development beyond the divides between 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim', or between 'religious' and 'secular' worlds.

ULRICH DEHN surveys the social engagement with regard to exemplary Buddhist movements and one Hindu oriented organisation. He explores their religious backgrounds and portrays the social thinking of their founders and main thinkers. Dehn addresses first far spread prejudices about the absence of social thinking and ethics in Eastern religions. Branches of Hindu religion and Buddhism are stereotyped as aiming primarily at individual salvation or enlightenment. The chapter deals with the most prominent Buddhist social movement at present, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), founded in 1989 and based in Thailand. It was preceded by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, related to the US-based International Fellowship of Reconciliation. INEB soon became a worldwide movement embracing many Buddhist thinkers and social activists from Europe, the USA, Australia and other countries. Dehn captures the concepts of some of its most important figures, such as Buddhadasa, Santikaro, Aitken, Thich Nhat Hanh and MARUYAMA. He states some inter-religious influences in the making of INEB, mostly related to Christian RNGOs. A second example is the social neo-Buddhist movement of B. R. Ambedkar in India. Ambedkar is a key figure in India`s postcolonial politics and linked to a mass conversion movement of Dalits. He set up

social projects to fight discrimination towards socially marginalised populations in India. Dehn also traces two Hindu organisations that are ideologically related to each other. He compares the Sarvodaya Movement in India, which stands in a (multi-religiously inspired) Ghandhian tradition, with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka. The village-oriented Sarvodaya Movement of India relates to the caste system, which is not accepted by Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka with its stronger anchorage in a Buddhist context. Dehn`s analysis shows that both Hindu and Buddhist RNGOs support their foundational theories by inter-religious exchange and conceptual adaptations. In their social practice they do not differ substantially from non-religious NGOs, besides a weaker professionalisation.

YONATAN N. GEZ, ADI MAYA, AND IDO BENVENISTI explore a diverse range of Jewish RNGOs, working in East Africa. They consider the popular notion of tikkun olam as the guiding principle of Jewish RNGOs. Tikkun olam is described as an "often-vague Jewish imperative to make the world a better place, which has become the rallying cry of Jewish development activities". An undercurrent of their argument engages with the question of proselytism in development practice. In contrast to some Christian and Muslim RNGOs, Jewish RNGOs usually avoid proselytising activities. This, however, seems to contrast with their findings on 'Jewish outreach', observed in two case studies involving Jewish RNGO projects in Ethiopia and Rwanda. Despite Jewish aversion to proselytism, the authors analyse missionary-like activities in those projects, albeit towards Jewish volunteers and staff. Jewish outreach is not directed toward the local population. Jewish RNGOs seek to strengthen Jewish identity, specifically among secular or assimilated Jews, who feel disconnected to Judaism as a religion. Following Gez, Maya, and Benvenisti, Jewish international development practice can be seen as a response to isolationist Jewish exclusivism, on the one hand. On the other hand, Jewish RNGOs address internal Jewish dynamics aimed at countering the loss of religious attachment in the diaspora and in Israel.

SECTION III discusses inter-religious contexts and comparisons in more detail. Based on research about Christian and Muslim RNGOs in postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina, LEIF SEIBERT critically studies the assumption that religion is inherently conservative and, therefore, cannot contribute to social change, possibly even prohibiting it. He describes this assumption as the "'cosmological constant' that defines religion *a priori* as a conservative societal force". In regarding unestablished and reformative actors in the religious field ("prophets") as using 'borrowed' religious symbols, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, like many of his peers, subscribes to this view. Seibert

challenges this perspective by exploring the role of RNGOs in the religious
field of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He shows that unestablished religious
actors enjoy a high credibility, effectively countering the positions of the
religious establishment, and managing to challenge or even dictate the
"rules of the game" in the local religious field. Given their importance in
the religious field, these more reformative actors cannot be *a priori* excluded
from it. Moreover, Seibert uses Habitus-Analysis to study the cognitive dis-
positions of 19 members from three RNGOS (Caritas, Merhamet, and
SOZ). The analysis reveals that staff of the very same organisations endorse
two divergent narratives about social progress: on the one hand, they regard
progress as the result of properly religious mentalities; on the other hand,
they describe progress as the condition for proper religious practices. The
first narrative represents the cosmological constant view, regarding faith as
a precondition for social change and thereby distracting attention from
transformative action. However, the second narrative opposes this view: it
provides no religious consolation that could stabilize the societal status quo
and calls for action, thereby constituting a subversive faith. Finally, Seibert
argues that it depends on our understanding of religion as to whether we
perceive it as a changing or conservative force: however, if we regard reli-
gion *a priori* as a conservative force, we cannot witness its progressive power
because we will always categorize its creative elements as "non-religion".

SINAH KLOSS focusses on Hindu and Christian RNGOs and studies how
religious identities of development organisations are socially constructed. In
the context of Guyana, she finds that actors are labelled as "religious"
according to their performances, and that this labelling can have strong
implications for the activities of development actors. Here, the term "reli-
gion" is strongly politicised and has negative connotations. Thus, potential
beneficiaries may avoid organisations that are labelled as "religious" and
reject its development activities. In this case, "religion" makes a negative
difference for development work, as it hampers development work on the
ground. Therefore, it is found that development actors are likely to avoid
labelling themselves as "religious" and instead use more positively charged
concepts such as "spiritual". Kloß concludes that there is no universal
difference that "religion" could make in development work: whether and
what difference "religion" makes depends on the local cultural context and
what "religion" means for local actors in this context.

SUWARTO ADI explores a church-based foundation (*Yayasan*) which locates
itself in between specific Christian motivations and inter-religious action in
developmental processes in Indonesia. Yayasan was founded by a Javanese
Pastor in Central Java, with a majority Muslim population. Although recog-

nisable as a local Christian RNGO, *Yayasan* seeks to engage the community as a whole, irrespective of religious belonging. Informed by a Good Samaritan theology and also by Liberation Theology, the Pastor has initiated an educational programme for children of poor families, a socio-economic programme aimed at capacity building for community members, and also an inter-religious peace-building programme. Adi argues that these programmes are carried out to promote peaceful social transformation and interreligious tolerance. He reframes a prominent myth in Indonesia that the Christian RNGOs are primarily intended as means to convert Muslims to Christianity.

Intra-religious transformations and changes within RNGOs are in focus of Section IV. The contribution by Dena Freeman questions whether there is a fundamental difference between secular and religious development work. Studying how the religious NGO Tearfund reorients itself to bring a stronger evangelical focus into its development work, Freeman shows that even these efforts lead to a development work that is not substantially different from those of secular NGOs. In the 1990s, Tearfund starts the reorientation process that seeks for a stronger focus on the religious dimension of development. The process draws upon the theology of integral transformation: this holistic approach encourages believers to work towards the Kingdom of God and argues that the transformation should become manifest in spiritual as well as social transformations. Based on this approach, Tearfund restructures its development work around the idea of envisioning processes that are subsequently undertaken in its local partner churches. These processes focus on the local community and its needs (e.g. identifying local problems). They require the church to draft plans to solve local issues, undertake targeted action, and evaluate the activities in feedback processes. Although this approach is significantly different from the earlier development approach of Tearfund, the difference to secular development organisations remains unclear: In the meantime, many secular organisations have overtaken a similar approach, emphasising small-scale local projects. Consequently, Freeman concludes with regard to the development activities of religious NGOs that their "faith may provide the motivation for their work, but it does not shape its design or implementation".

Andreas Heuser discusses the social agency of African Pentecostal megachurches. Recent studies remain sceptical about significant contributions of African Pentecostalism to development and social change. They perceive Pentecostal theologising of society as dysfunctional, portraying a dense texture of primitive impulse, negative theology, or enchanted vision of the world. Whereas most discourses on Pentecostal societal relevance

emphasise the controversial concept of Prosperity theology, Heuser identifies Dominion Theology as a new Pentecostal master theorem of society. Widely unnoticed Dominion Theology crosscuts Pentecostal megachurch networks to exert hegemony over diverse "spheres" of society; this concept includes the economic sphere with allusions made to the notion of "development". The material base exemplifies two prominent megachurches from Ghana, Action Chapel International led by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, and International Central Gospel Church, founded by Mensa Otabil. In order to analyse Dominion Theology, Heuser chooses a 'thick description' of a first "Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit" (2017), organised by Duncan-Williams. A clear Dominion Theology imprint is visible also in a subsequent case study on Mensa Otabil's "Greater Works" conferences (2017/2018). However, Dominion Theology euphoria to transform society is contradicted by an empirical disaster, the insolvency of a private bank with close links to Otabil. The ensuing public discourse shows limits of the dominion theological agenda to "conquer the economic sphere". The chapter finally demarcates some prospects on Dominion Theology as a Pentecostal social theory of change. First, Dominion Theology evolves as a visionary Pentecostal script to analyse society, organised into different spheres. This script has already made it into the arena of development policies in Africa. Second, the public discourse on Dominion Theology reveals an internal Pentecostal debate on its future directions. This debate is about constructive Pentecostal participation in social transformation. Third, Dominion Theology offers a broad repertoire of rhetoric codes to express hegemony over economic and financial spheres. Yet, the transition from visionary to structural implementation and structural permanency seems fragile. Dominion Theology paves the way for continuous socio-political consciousness within Pentecostal networks; however, it has not surpassed an experimental state in terms of sustainable social practice.

KATRIN LANGEWIESCHE provides an in-depth analysis of Humanity First, a Muslim RNGO and its local branch in Burkina Faso. Humanity First was founded by the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* to engage in religiously motivated development cooperation. This chapter examines the history of Humanity First since 1995 and its development activities. Moreover, it investigates the religious values and moral motivations of its members. As in general, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Burkina Faso faces a twofold minority situation: it is a minority within Islam, mostly considered heretic by majority Islam, and it represents a demographic minority. While the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community puts a strong emphasis on missionary commitment and supports proselytism, Humanity First is devoted exclu-

sively to humanitarian aims. Langewiesche argues that its activities benefit the entire population and are explicitly not associated with proselytising practices. Humanity First focusses on social welfare programmes; it funds hospitals, schools, orphanages, and other types of infrastructures for villagers. It organises medical camps and emergency aid in crisis situations. In order to situate the humanitarian work of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community*, Langewiesche compares Humanity First with two other Muslim minority groups engaged in welfare activities around the world, the Tablighi Jama'at and the Gülen Movement. She evaluates their organisational structure and mobilisation strategies respectively. Common characteristics of all three movements are related to individual agency. Langewiesche identifies individual responsibility, personal piety, and a lesser importance of the material as such common features; she also points at a joint attitude of disengagement in formal politics. This is remarkable in view of the ongoing controversy on alleged involvement of the Gülen movement in Turkish politics. Langewiesche thus portrays the effects of Muslim minority RNGOs on social life, and situates their transformative potential within the wider transnational and political landscape.

While all preceding contributions take a case study approach, SECTION V sets a focus on RNGO activities in selected fields of sustainable development. CLAUDIA HOFFMANN charts the quest for gender equality (SDG 5) in recent development discourses. The article follows international declarations on gender to be one of the major "cross-cutting solution areas" in development politics. The general survey on issues of gender equality in development contexts is followed by a case study on Mission 21, based in Basel, Switzerland. Mission 21 has a historic legacy, as its origins are linked to Basel Mission, one of the oldest Protestant mission societies in Europe. This long-standing heritage layers down in measures by Mission 21 to achieve gender equality. Mission 21 continues Basel Mission policy and aims at quality education as a main contribution to gender equality. The focus on education is kept irrespective of religious contexts and local conditions that sometimes support gender inequality. Hoffmann thus states that historic mission organisations predate current debates on gender equality. Following her analysis, such RNGOs can even claim a comparative advantage over secular NGOs and partly also governments in the educational sector. In view of Mission 21, the shaping of current development projects benefits enormously from long institutional experiences in the field. In sum, the implementation of education-related projects by RNGOs that have close links with modern mission history are successful in reducing gender inequality. The chapter thus questions classic stereotypes on Christian mis-

sion as powers of domination, as some historical Christian RNGOs antici-
pated current development discourses and practices.

The chapter by PHILIPP ÖHLMANN, MARIE-LUISE FROST AND WILHELM
GRÄB investigates the potential of African Initiated Churches (AICs) in
South Africa for sustainable development. With AICs, they focus, first, on a
long neglected and politically marginalised section of churches that repre-
sents the majority population in Southern Africa; and 2) with a sample of
rural and township-based AICs they draw on notions of development and
sustainability from the perspective of AICs themselves. Their sample under-
lines the importance of spiritual dimensions of development (e.g. spiritual
healing) as well as family and gender-related ethics, and questions of unem-
ployment and poverty as core values in AIC approaches to sustainable
development. The authors identify a high ability of AICs in coping with
pressing issues at the grassroots level. AICs depart from liberating the indi-
vidual from life's adversities and fundamentally affirm a person's agency.
AICs prove a capacity to transform behavioural sets of individual people
and (small) communities. They assist people and families affected by the
rampant HIV/AIDS pandemic; they address and redirect intra-family con-
flicts and domestic violence. AICs also implement network structures in
contexts of social need, for instance, in establishing burial associations.
Öhlmann, Frost and Gräb identify such individual and social coping-strate-
gies as basic markers of how AICs shape development priorities. These are
an integral part of the churches' holistic and spiritual worldviews. The
authors conclude with an exploration of the potential of AICs as partners
of international cooperation for sustainable development. AICs tap values,
attitudes and motivations of individuals and communities at the grassroots
level and make them the core of their actions, resources needed for
enabling comprehensive, long-term change.

The contribution by JENS KOEHRSEN addresses the role of Muslim NGOs
in environmental sustainability. Reviewing empirical studies on this topic, it
discusses the potentials and challenges of Muslim NGOs to promote envi-
ronmental sustainability. Crucial resources for this endeavour are the envi-
ronmental teachings of Islam and the grassroots reach of these organisa-
tions. Religious scholars often stress the rich scriptural resources of Islam
for tackling environmental issues. Moreover, unlike other (secular) NGOs,
Muslim NGOs can reach local populations in Muslim-majority countries
where they usually enjoy high credibility. Existing studies mention
numerous initiatives of Muslim NGOs to advance environmental sustain-
ability, among them radio campaigns, tree-planting activities, environmental
awareness and education programmes, the dissemination of environmental

knowledge through religious leaders, the issuing of fatwas to declare logging illegal, and the implementation of sustainable resource management in Muslim organisations. Nevertheless, there are also important challenges to this environmental engagement. The Islamic environmental ethics that environmentally concerned Muslim scholars and activists highlight reflect their own perceptions of Islam but not necessarily that of the broader Muslim population. As such, at the grassroots level, there is often low acceptance for Muslim environmental initiatives that have, consequently, little impact. In total, while bearing specific potentials for reaching wider populations through its grass-roots reach, Muslim environmentalism often remains limited to the environmentally concerned Muslim organisations and activists.

CHRISTINE SCHLIESSER'S contribution examines the role of religious NGOs in building sustainable peace. Religion is frequently perceived as divisive and leading to conflict. Acknowledging the ambivalent role of religion, Schliesser points to the positive potentials of religion in creating sustainable peace that have received comparatively little attention. To examine the constructive resources inherent to religion, Schliesser discusses the reconciliation activities of the Presbyterian Church (*Église Presbytérienne au Rwanda or EPR*) in post-genocide Rwanda. Supplementing the official top-down "Politics of Reconciliation" of Rwanda's government, the Christian churches engage in various bottom-up approaches to facilitate sustainable peace and reconciliation between perpetrators and victims of the Rwandan genocide (1994). Based on the case study of the EPR, Schliesser highlights several capacities of Christian NGOs in peacemaking: (a) the Christian message of peace, healing and forgiveness, (b) the creation of spaces where emotions are socially acceptable in order to address traumatic experiences, (c) a mixed approach that combines specifically religious (e.g. prayer, worship, sermons, Lord's Supper) with secular resources (e.g. mediation, trauma therapy, conflict resolution), (d) building long-term relationships and trust with both perpetrators and victims, and (e) a holistic approach that connects spiritual healing with practical and material help (e.g. development projects).

Taken together, the contributions illustrate that RNGOs constitute hybrid actors, as they move between the world of religion and "secular" development circles. As actors with a religious background, they may draw upon religious networks as well as the normative and motivational resources of their faith. Nevertheless, they often parallel other NGOs in their development activities. They show little difference in the type of projects that they implement and the way in which they undertake them. In

the end, to what extent a RNGO brings in specific abilities into the world of development depends on its individual characteristics and the context in which it operates. Despite the arguable post-secular turn in development politics, religious organisations still feel encouraged to hide away their religious identity in international development settings. Against this background, a tolerance for the ambiguity of RNGOs may help to create an atmosphere in which RNGOs feel more comfortable when drawing on their religious resources to promote sustainable development.

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SECTION I:
RELIGIOUS NGOS AND
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLITICS

Katherine Marshall

Religious Engagement in Development Work: A Continuing Journey

Introduction: the "resurgence" of interest in religious matters

One protagonist describes the bitter conflict in the Central African Republic as pitting Christians against Muslims, while another argues vehemently that religion has nothing whatsoever to do with the conflict.[1] As international agencies mobilized vast resources to address the Ebola pandemic in 2014, they focused strategic attention on the positive and negative roles of religious leaders only after public health officials recognized that popular reactions against undignified burials of the dead exacerbated the spread of the disease (Marshall et al. 2015a). A recent global commission on the path ahead for education barely mentions religious institutions and related issues that play vital roles for education systems (cf. The Education Commission 2016). These situations illustrate how religious dimensions of important global agenda issues can be distorted, ignored, overstated, or sidelined. They reflect an all too common pattern that results, in part, from legacies of the Cold War (and, it could be argued, centuries of European and Middle Eastern history) that cast religious topics in largely political terms, together with a "secular assumption" that often associates religion with private beliefs, tendencies to evoke tensions, and rather archaic practices and institutions.

This picture is changing, albeit slowly and unevenly. In many countries and institutions, sidestepping of religious matters is giving way to more systematic and evidence driven approaches. This shift in focus at times results from clear-eyed reflections on global affairs and contemporary challenges that up-end many earlier assumptions but it can also be seen as driven by a herd tendency. The latter contributes to the phenomenon of erratic approaches: a new focus is often not sustained or coherent, and may be based on insufficient analysis both of the history and the stakes involved.

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1 The author has witnessed several such discussions, including during a 2017 exchange at a Ministry of Foreign Affairs sponsored event in Helsinki.

Recognition of what is sometimes described as a "resurgence" or at least a "revelation" of religion has prompted both academic reflection and a range of policy and institutional initiatives. Several persistent and ugly conflicts in different world regions are driven by at least an element of religious tension. The sharper focus in recent years on religious dimensions has therefore tended to focus on extremism and violent conflict. There is less appreciation that religious actors play multiple and complex roles in far wider global agendas. Yet contemporary events underscore a reality that religious institutions, beliefs, and practices are vitally important for large segments of the world's population (more than 80 percent, according to a study by a think tank, the Pew Forum (2015). The large institutional assets of religious institutions of many kinds play significant political, social, and economic roles that extend well beyond their core spiritual functions.

This chapter examines forces that underlie the renewed interest in religious aspects of international affairs and especially development and peacebuilding. It begins with a brief discussion of definitions, then highlights topics where doubts have emerged and where exploration of religious dimensions enriches understanding and impact in development programs, and concludes with a discussion of outstanding issues that merit research, dialogue, and policy action. The objective is to highlight and clarify major topics that are debated within operational circles, pointing towards better quality and more just development programs. An underlying premise is that full human development is not possible without regard for essential religious values.

Definition challenges

No discussion of religious topics can escape questions that involve core definitions. What, after all, is meant by religion? Faith? Spirituality? Secularism? Who are religious leaders? Where should we draw lines between culture and religion? The term secular is used quite widely (at times pejoratively) as a contrast to religious, though the boundaries between secular and religious are complex and contested. The meaning of each term is fiercely debated, complicated by different usage and understandings in various disciplines, for example theology, anthropology, politics, and psychology, not to speak of different languages.

The many questions that these debates pose about the nature and impact of religious beliefs and practices are beyond the scope of this discussion; it is vital, nonetheless, to underscore their significant impact on attitudes and

behaviors and the ways in which they reflect deeply held views and approaches to existential as well as daily life matters. There clearly are no perfect definitions and recognizing different uses of terms and underlying understandings is vital. This author prefers to avoid the term "religion" as overly broad, instead using "religious" as an adjective pointing to, for example, leaders, institutions, beliefs, and practices. A different but related topic is concerns and sensitivities around what is termed "instrumentalization", referring to a tendency or perception that religious actors are "used" rather than viewed as respected and equal partners.

A significant distinction that has particular relevance in exploring various forms of partnerships is between a belief-centered approach involving intellectual dimensions and what many term "lived religion". The former might, for example, center on religious teachings about economic motivations, while the latter pertains more to the way in which individual behavior and life attitudes are influenced by religious teachings or community engagement. The distinction is illustrated by debates around female genital cutting/circumcision (FGC). While most religious scholars and leaders state unequivocally that no religious mandate exists for the practice, many people continue it, giving various justifications including often their understanding that it is required by their religion (Gaul 2012). Many topics, including approaches to education, land tenure, agricultural practices, nutrition, health care, and relationships between men and women have both theological dimensions and are influenced by religious institutions and beliefs. Another pertinent topic involves leadership. While most formal religious leaders are men, women play critical but often hard-to-pinpoint roles. Appreciating the complex realities of formal religious teachings and structures versus "lived religion" and its impact on daily life and change is both an intellectual and a practical challenge.

It is equally important to appreciate that definitions surrounding what we call development are equally fraught and demanding, and also involve complex boundaries, notably with humanitarian action and peacebuilding. Understandings of what constitutes development and what is good and bad are contested and change over time. It is telling that the World Bank recently dropped use of the term "developing" countries because the distinction between "developing" and "developed" countries is no longer clear, any more than using the term "third world" is meaningful today, long after the "second" world took on very new forms.

The focus in this chapter is on institutions and their practical roles. A wide variety of institutions inspired by different religious traditions and communities are directly engaged in development programs. Many are

prominent in debates and action involving development and humanitarian affairs. This includes notably the large group of organizations affiliated with or inspired by religious communities that work transnationally (Caritas Internationalis, World Vision, Islamic Relief Worldwide, for example) or at national and community levels (Marshall 2013; see also Marshall 2017a). A far larger group of religious congregational structures like the Vatican, Islamic education systems, or Buddhist *sanghas,* play significant roles as do spiritual movements like the Community of Sant'Egidio, and the Ramakrishna movement. Interfaith organizations like Religions for Peace and United Religions Initiative, and intrafaith or ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches engage directly on various issues and aspire to leadership and coordination roles. Individually and collectively these institutions bring substantial assets and resources to development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding work, and many engage in partnerships with international and national institutions, public and private.

Global agendas, religious involvement

At the turn of the millennium in the year 2000, world leaders met to revitalize the post World War II framework embodied in the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[2] that emerged involved soaring visions but also measurable targets with deadlines. In 2015, (when a set of those deadlines came due) a new and broader framework was developed, this time following a remarkably broad participatory process. It defined seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These, too, look to the discipline of targets (169), indicators, and deadlines.[3] The complex structure extends well beyond "development" as conventionally understood, and is designed to include all countries and societies. It is summarized in five "Ps": peace, prosperity, people, planet, and partnerships. The goals thus encompass and constitute a broad global agenda, applicable to all countries and communities.

   A pertinent question is how religious topics are involved in various aspects of this global agenda and to what extent religious communities share responsibility for their implementation. Indeed there are religious implications and relevance across the full spectrum of issues, although this

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2 http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/.
3 For the Sustainable Development Goals framework see http://www.undp.org/content/u ndp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html.

fact is far from universally appreciated and recognized. Various deliberate efforts to understand and to engage with the complex array of actors and institutions involved include a standing United Nations task force[4] and efforts linked to the annual process of great power consultations known as the G20.[5] The German government, USAID, and several other multilateral and bilateral aid organizations are supporting a consortium known as the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development or PaRD that includes both governmental and intergovernmental actors and faith-inspired organizations.[6] The global interfaith organizations like Religions for Peace and the United Religious Initiative support the global goals. These and other structures aim both to assure active involvement of religious experience and concerns in SDG implementation and to shape the continuing global agendas in areas ranging from peace and security to global health and action on global climate change.

The following section focuses on reasons why religious facets are often ignored and some doubts that have hindered more productive partnerships. That discussion should be set in the context of the numerous positive reasons for engaging religious actors, and the many assets they bring. Such assets notably include high levels of trust in religious leaders and institutions; in many surveys in different world regions religious leaders are the most trusted (politicians often are the least trusted occupation).[7] Widespread admiration for Pope Francis is an example, as is the enduring impact of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Desmond Tutu. Religious entities and infrastructure are often the most visible institutional presence in communities and they are active in delivering services, notably health and education and providing social safety nets, especially during natural disasters and conflicts. Religious entities play vital if often underappreciated roles in fragile and poorly governed states and communities. Religious actors are noteworthy for their communication skills and increasingly work today with social media as well as more traditional preaching, radio, television, and print media. And religious actors frequently wield considerable financial and political power, not least the power to mobilize volunteers, both within countries and internationally. In reflecting on "assets and liabili-

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4 http://www.partner-religion-development.org/fileadmin/Dateien/Resources/Knowledge_Center/UNIATF-ToR-and-2014-Overview.pdf.

5 https://www.g20interfaith.org/.

6 http://www.partner-religion-development.org/.

7 Among numerous examples are the World Bank Voices of the Poor studies, BBC and Gallup polls, Philippines Weather Station, and both Lationobaromotro and Africabarometer studies.

ties", perceived and actual, that religious institutions bring to the work of development, it is useful to bear in mind that religion can be part of the problem as well as part of the solution.

The religious landscape in development work

Today religious actors of many kinds engage on development issues in countless ways. In practice, all development and humanitarian actors (whether they acknowledge it explicitly or not) confront a multitude of questions about whether and how religious beliefs and practices are relevant for their work. Religious institutions especially in fragile states but also in wealthy communities are taking on new roles, at a time when violent conflicts and tensions around pluralism color a far wider discourse that has development and equity as its focus. Grievances that fuel anger and the unsettled spirit of our times on topics ranging from gender roles, quality of education, employment opportunities, and corruption also have religious dimensions.

Contemporary approaches to religious engagement by global and national institutions working in international development have emerged through various paths. The development programs of various countries (Norway, Germany, and Switzerland are examples) were in practice strongly influenced by church-related and missionary groups, especially in their formative years. Several United Nations specialized agencies have taken on engagement with religious institutions as a matter of course, UNICEF and UNHCR, for example; others more recently launched increasingly purposeful approaches (the World Food Programme is an example). For various multilateral agencies (the World Bank among them) personal leadership from upper echelons has played influential roles. The ecumenical World Council of Churches has had a longstanding interest both in health policy and in various economic approaches underpinning development work. And a wide range of non-governmental organizations originated largely in response to the demands of humanitarian crises but have evolved over time to focus on broad-based development programs (institutions that are part of Caritas Internationalis, Islamic Relief Worldwide, and World Vision are examples). The result is a patchwork of experience and a complex web of institutions and of coordinating mechanisms.

The overall focus on religious matters in international relations generally and with respect to international development has changed and increased over time. Notable turning points were the Iranian revolution of 1979 that

shone a spotlight on religious matters, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 that forced a confrontation with terrorism couched in religious terms. Overall there has been a trend towards broader and more institutionalized approaches. These have come with controversies, as some governments have questioned the merits of deliberate engagement with religious actors in public policy settings.[8] The present situation therefore is mixed, with various United Nations, bilateral, and other development agencies engaged in efforts to understand and build partnerships with religious institutions while others maintain a policy of distance or deliberate neutrality. Given concerns about possible bias towards or against religious actors, institutions and individuals may mask or fudge their religious approach and nature, even internally among their own staff. Features of the aggregate picture include poor coordination (this is a central problem across international development work), scattered documentation and evaluation, and a focus that depends unduly on senior leadership that results in a somewhat erratic, stop and go rhythm in focus and action.

Meanwhile, the development field has become far more varied and complex. As an example, private financing of development activities has outstripped OECD/DAC funding and civil society and private sector institutions (including foundations) have multiplied and are changing rapidly in their structure and roles. Likewise, NGOs and other non-state institutions (including many with religious inspiration and links) have taken on new roles and forms, at transnational, national, and local levels. There is increasing differentiation among different country groupings, notably middle income countries with strong management capabilities, low income countries, and fragile and conflict-riven states. The complex reality today is that different countries and societies are at very different stages of modernization, prosperity, and income equality, and have very different needs.

A bumpy path to religious engagement

The path to constructive engagement and partnerships has in practice been quite bumpy with numerous and often persistent hesitations about religious roles. Some of the concerns along the path are specific to religious institutions, though others (for example around appropriate civil society roles and

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8 An example was the World Bank experience under president James D. Wolfensohn launched in 1999–2000. The Executive Directors, representing member states, voiced serious doubts as to the wisdom of a systematic interreligious dialogue about development.

aspects of core economic models) relate more broadly to the evolving policy and institutional evolution of development work. The path involves both international perspectives on development and institutional approaches and local issues, focused at national level; examples there include the development roles of entities like the Muslim Brotherhood and Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka, with its strong Buddhist links. Focusing on some of the obstacles and questions is instructive in appreciating the complex landscape of contemporary approaches to religious dimensions of development practice.

Central concerns turn around understandings of the appropriate relationships between religious and public institutions. This applies especially in countries where constitutions or traditions emphasize the importance of distance (the United States and France are clear examples) or of synergy (several Islamic states, for example). In various settings this can translate into both institutional and individual unwillingness to engage with religious actors (and sometimes vice versa with secular actors). A related issue involves understandings of appropriate political roles of religious actors. If the view is that religious institutions are political actors or that religious involvement in policy is inappropriate, this can translate into unease at engagement in a wide spectrum of issues, for example health or education policy. Religious actors in practice are not infrequently seen in as highly politicized, with clear interests that include power, adherents, and financial benefit. And in many settings religious actors are seen as intrinsically conservative, essentially opposing changes that are associated with social and economic development. Various challenges follow from these issues, some legal, and some attitudinal.

An analysis by scholar and public intellectual Michael Ignatieff illustrates the complex interplay of politics, religion, and economics in broad understandings of how religion relates to geopolitics and thus to development: "We fell prey to an illusion dear to the generation of 1914, that economics would prove stronger than politics and that global commerce would soften the rivalries of empire […] Until the hopes of the Arab Spring were dashed, the moderate, globalized middle classes in the region believed they had the power to marginalize the forces of sectarian fury." (Ignatieff 2017) In short, as scholar Peter Berger observed, the world is "ferociously religious" and that reality today is hard to ignore (Berger 2015).

A second set of concerns relate to the perceived legitimacy and authority of religious actors to engage on development topics, notably where development is perceived as a technical, often purely economic domain. Lutheran World Federation leader Martin Junge, speaking at an interfaith

gathering, addressed such challenges to religious engagement in blunt terms. As a religious leader he is asked, directly or otherwise, "Do you actually know what you are talking about?" Does he, as a theologian, a pastor, have any right to engage in a debate about economic issues? He responded that indeed he did. "The pastoral ministry of churches all over the world exposes us to realities of poverty and marginalization. We know and we serve the people and the populations who for reasons often totally beyond their control are sentenced to a life in abject poverty, or see themselves sliding inexorably down into vulnerability and exclusion. We know of entire generations migrating to other countries, or entire villages migrating to the cities."[9]

This reflection highlights a theoretical challenge that takes practical form in the critical question of who sits at the tables where policy is discussed and decisions are made. Junge's argument and message is that religious institutions have an incontestable right to engage because they have direct knowledge about the realities of poverty and broader social matters. This is especially true when the focus is on misery, inequities and inequalities, from global to local levels. This argument also applies where conflict and peace-building are concerned. However, bringing these insights and experience to the table is complex because religious communities are by their nature decentralized, with few denominations positioned to address issues in the terms that development actors, and notably development economists, can absorb. The religious insights vary widely as does experience.

A third issue follows from this observation, turning about authority and "representativity": who can speak for the large religious communities? Clearly there is no single religious voice or perspective, and rarely are formal religious leaders (even, for example, the Catholic Pope) "representative" in a democratic sense. This links to significant issues around women's roles and gender norms. Religious community positions fall along a wide range, notwithstanding a common assumption that there are fixed religious positions reflecting patriarchal attitudes. In practice religious voices include some of the strongest advocates for women's rights as well as opponents to them (United Nations Population Fund 2016). Nonetheless formal religious leadership tends to be heavily dominated by men and not all of them embrace the principle of full equality between men and women. Since women's empowerment is a central tenet in development approaches, exclusion of women from many decision-making circles is problematic and

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9 Exchange reported by the author who was on the same panel at the Sant'Egidio Prayer for Peace meeting in Antwerp, Belgium, September 2014.

counterproductive. Engaging women is possible (indeed an irony is that women tend to rank higher than men on religiosity indices) but it takes a special effort.

Differences in priorities and starting assumptions present other challenges. A recent exchange (that I witnessed) about education in the Middle East, involving a priest and a development economist, illustrates some of the issues involved. Both were keenly interested in the topic but approached it from quite different perspectives. The priest launched into a discussion of a proposed exchange program between a UK theological college and Al-Azhar University in Egypt that would enhance knowledge and understanding among religious leaders. The economist saw no interest in the topic. When I asked how far he engaged on the content of curriculum he asserted that his goal was value-free education, to the priest's horror. In this instance, the challenges of educating religious leaders was not on the economist's priority agenda so he was poorly equipped to appreciate operational issues, and his reference to values-free education (by which he meant non-ideological, non-rote) fed the priest's worst preconceptions of secular approaches. The discordance brought the discussion to a halt. More broadly, while both religious and non-religious institutions have a keen interest in education from many perspectives, differences in priorities and even vocabulary can be barriers to meaningful dialogue and partnership.

Approaches colored by understandings of a "clash of civilizations" represent further obstacles to constructive engagement around religion. The current focus on CVE/PVE, or countering or preventing violent extremism, highlights religious dimensions, often in highly simplified terms. Religious tensions dominate many discussions as does a focus on such tensions within Islamic communities, even where extremist tendencies among numerous religious traditions are acknowledged. Analysis of religious dimensions thus tends to focus on links to violence and conflict. The potential peacemaking and peacebuilding roles of religious actors receive increasing focus (witness, for example, the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, supported by the Finnish government)[10], but primarily in the context of a focus on violence and extremism. Religious dimensions of conflict and roles in fragile states have great significance but the focus on violence including funding of research and action detracts from broader agendas.

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10 https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org/.

A further concern centers on the common perception that religious engagement frequently if not necessarily involves efforts to convert those involved to a religious community. Proselytism is widely perceived as a primary motivation for religious engagement in humanitarian and development work, even though international norms and the missions of leading faith inspired organizations are clear that linking evangelism and development work is inappropriate, especially when any quid pro quo or conditionality is involved. There is need for clearer codes of conduct both to reassure those concerned about the issue and to offer clear guidelines as to where appropriate boundaries lie.

A final obstacle is limits in knowledge and understanding of the complex worlds of religious institutions and practices. Many professionals working on development issues have benefitted from scant educational exposure to religious history and contemporary institutions: "religious literacy" is as much an issue for them as technical "development literacy" may be for religious actors. Various efforts are underway, for example a Harvard Divinity School program[11] and a series of strategic learning exchanges within the United Nations[12], to remedy this issue but when lack of understanding is compounded by preconceptions and over-simplified views partnership is especially difficult. On other topics, for example roles of gender and remittances in development situations, research and solid evidence has played vital roles in changing attitudes and shaping policy. Similar marshaling of evidence on religious experience is indeed needed and can make a significant difference. However, the topic is vast and the knowledge gaps are not easily filled, especially if analysis is colored by efforts to "prove the case". Religious data is notoriously complex and difficult to come by. Efforts to provide operational analyses of religious landscapes and engagement on development topics are an important first step.[13] Rarely will it be possible or indeed desirable to demonstrate that religious engagement is intrinsically different from other approaches. However, better information and analysis is a critical need, for example in moving forward towards sound partnerships on topics like education and smallholder agriculture where religious roles are significant but quite poorly mapped.

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11 Harvard Divinity School Religious Literacy Project, https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/.
12 See for example https://www.unfpa.org/events/strategic-learning-exchange-faith-and-d evelopment.
13 The country mapping work of the Berkley Center/World Faiths Development Dialogue for Cambodia, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Kenya, Senegal, Nigeria, Philippines, and others are examples of such work. See https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/wfdd/countries.

Eight live topics to address on religious engagement

Religion and violence

Concerns about religious roles in conflict and violence tend to dominate many approaches to contemporary discussions about religion, including in diverse aspects of development work. This has operational importance both because it contributes to unease in positive engagement with religious institutions and because religious actors play vital roles in many if not most fragile state situations but are rarely engaged in conflict resolution, reconciliation, and development in strategic ways. Recent history in South Sudan and the Central African Republic are examples. One reason, highlighted by scholar Karen Armstrong in her book, *Fields of Blood* (2015), is the tendency to blame violence and conflict on religion (as the scapegoat) far beyond what is reasonable. This can obscure a sober analysis of the complex roots of conflict and paths towards conflict resolution The CAR example cited in the opening paragraph is a case in point as are debates about the nature of religious engagement in the complex conflicts in Nigeria. What is needed is an open-eyed analysis and a sharper focus on the peacemaking and peace-building potential of religious actors.

Motivations and boundaries: the issue of Proselytizing

In many world regions, a central concern is the disruptive potential of active proselytizing aimed at conversion. This stands in contrast to human rights principles that look to freedom of religion and belief and evidence of the benefits of religious freedom. Where development and humanitarian programs are concerned, the primary concern is the actual and perceived links between development work by religious organizations (for example as first responders following natural disasters, providers of health care, support to orphans, and running schools) and efforts to evangelize within the affected communities. Enticements to participate linked to benefits and possible discrimination are particular concerns. In humanitarian situations, both practical guidelines and agreed ethical norms are quite well established (Geneva Conventions), though some religious organizations contest them, arguing that spiritual comfort must be an integral part of humanitarian relief. Most faith-inspired organizations, however, fully adhere to humanitarian norms. The issues are more complex where development programs are concerned, as there is a dearth of clear and explicit codes of conduct.

This is significant because of the widespread perceptions that link religious organizations and proselytizing. Further, there are grey areas, for example in appropriate curricula in religiously run schools and in care for vulnerable populations, notably orphans and people rescued from situations of trafficking. There is a need to sharpen dialogue on issues and solutions and to advance important work undertaken to date to define appropriate norms and codes of conduct (Marshall 2015b).

Controversies on gender

Equal rights for women and programs that work to empower women, starting with equalizing gender enrollment in education at all levels, are a core strategic objective embedded in the MDGs and SDGs and in most development strategies. This involves in most societies significant changes in gender roles and norms, as a fundamental facet of modernization and development. Much progress has been made, notably with enrolling girls in schools and in family planning, but there are still stubborn areas where progress is slow, for example in ending child marriage and practices like female genital cutting (FGC). The issue of rights of LGBT communities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) is proving especially contentious, with over 70 countries with discriminatory legislation on their books. The roles of religious bodies in these areas is complex. There are religious communities that actively support reforms and changes in norms. However, in many situations there is unease, outright opposition, or backlash and backtracking. Some topics are well defined, for example sexual rights and abortion, where there is organized opposition. The issue extends beyond these visible areas of tension. For example, at national levels or at the United Nations, even efforts to end domestic violence encounter opposition grounded on religious arguments (the interests of preserving family unity, for example). The rather slow progress in implementing UN resolution 1325 that aims to engage women in peacebuilding extends also to still slower progress in engaging religiously affiliated women. Common perceptions equate religious institutions with persistent patriarchal norms and behaviors. These are not fictional: a Bangladeshi newspaper in August 2013 reported the voice of a madrasa principal arguing: "You women should stay within the four walls of your houses. Sitting inside your husband's home you should take care of your husband's furniture and raise your children, your male kids. These are your jobs. Why do you have to go outside?" He compares women with a tamarind, "a fruit that any man would like to

taste", and asks, "Why are you sending your daughters to work in garment factories?" Girls should stop school after four or five years, just enough to keep their husband's accounts (Marshall 2017a).

Given the importance of women's rights to progress towards equitable and prospering societies, deeper understanding of the obstacles and dialogue aimed at changing attitudes has particular importance in this area, which stands as one of the major obstacles to progress in engaging religious actors more constructively across development fields.

Coordination and harmonization

The question of who coordinates development work and who is coordinated has particular sensitivity where religious actors are concerned. A first issue is that there is a tendency to fragmentation of activity and a lack of harmonization of work by religious institutions, whether led by international organizations or local communities. The lead responsibility for aid coordination normally falls to governments who often do not integrate an understanding of religiously led work in their strategic plans. There are varying roles of large players and smaller institutions. This is a significant challenge that is rarely well addressed.

Governance issues

Governance, a term used in a wide variety of ways, poses numerous core and complex issues, ranging from constitutional and practical relationships between government and religious institutions as well as international partners, to more specific issues such as efforts to curtail corrupt practices. As noted above, the political roles of religious institutions are often at issue, as is the caliber and role of the state in managing development policies and programs. Accountability is a central concern: to whom, and by whom, and how is it defined, measured, and judged? Transparency involves access to information about financial transactions and policy approaches, for example toward extractive industries and management of state budgets. Roles of religious actors on all these fronts are at issue.

Corruption is a special issue and concern, and given the impact on poor communities and its ethical nature, there are reasonable expectations that religious actors would play leading roles. This does take place on occasion, but less than might be expected. The reasons for muted religious roles are numerous and include the fact that the financial affairs of many religious

organizations are often less than fully transparent and defensible. Some religious actors tend to set their understanding of corrupt practices in a broad setting of social justice involving inequality and global power relations. The "bottom line" here is that there is a need for more active and effective advocacy in many countries and, globally, for stronger religious presence and voice in integrity alliances, for example in the Transparency International organization and in the biannual IACC (International Anti-Corruption Conference).

Instrumentalization debates

Religious actors bristle at the suggestion that partnerships will involve them serving as implementors of development strategies and programs designed without their active engagement. This does occur in too many settings. The reverse can also apply, with religious actors seen as "using" their development partners to their own ends. The importance of balanced and carefully thought through partnership arrangements is thus important. It is crucial (if not always easy) to assure reasonable approaches to engaging relevant partners, including religious actors, in policy discussions that can range from varying visions of the models that underlie development programs to practical program planning. The "power of the purse clearly plays vital roles in relationships, but one key to stronger partnerships is to assure that non-financial knowledge, relationships, and contributions are valued.

Human rights

Human rights are core principles of United Nations, and provide the ethical scaffold for many organizations, including some that are religiously inspired. They involve fundamental notions of respect. However, various religious actors are uneasy about or contest aspects of human rights, sometimes arguing that the Universal Declaration is in essence "Western". This may lead to tepid support and questions, for example on LGBT and women's rights and freedom of speech. The common gulf between advocates of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and broader human rights poses questions that deserve response.

Debates about models

What is the "right" development model? The appropriate "theory of change"? The ideal society aspired to? The Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si!* (2013) is an example of fundamental questions about care of the earth, the role of markets and capitalism, the need to distinguish good management from the nature of the essential, core model that underlies policies as well as the role of state, role of consumption, and debt and interest. The potential for constructive dialogue on these interwoven topics has rarely been taken to a satisfactory level.

Monday morning: what comes next?

The following are priority areas for action:

- Support leadership among development actors so that they recognize, engage, broaden visions, and offer training to encourage strategic engagement by religious actors;
- Engage key countries/governments at national level or regional levels (e.g. ASEAN) more directly on these topics;
- Pursue thoughtfully the need to enhance both religious and development literacy
- Address the question of how to enhance formal religious engagement at priority policy "tables", along the lines of religious engagement in UNAIDS;
- Tackle priority issues where there are noteworthy tensions between secular and religious entities (for example extractive industries, gender roles, financing for development, private sector engagement, entrepreneurship, and youth engagement;
- Address specific areas of tension like proselytizing linked to development work;
- Support research and information dissemination;
- Address religious roles in fragile states more boldly and strategically, starting with a systematic review of religious landscapes in several fragile states and engaging with the G7+ organization which represents those countries;
- Build on ecumenical and interfaith alliances and approaches starting with specific priority sectors and linked to the SDG framework (e.g. health and education).

There has been progress towards reflecting better the array of religious roles on development topics, but there is far to go before this is a mainstream part of development work. Next steps should involve appreciating, learning, and acting in the light of experience that highlights the complexity of religious dimensions. Resilient religious values can help development actors to enrich their diagnoses and prescriptions for action. Looking ahead, sharp divisions between "people of faith" and "others" need to be avoided. Seeking to engage a "faith" sector" as a distinct, separate entity can involve pitfalls; there are too many institutions involved and far more complexity than a simplistic approach would warrant. Defining understandings of what religious engagement involves is obviously needed by the pertinent institutions; measures to develop better data about religious institutions and activities, as well research to enhance understanding of the impact of varying levels of religiosity is a priority need, as is stronger evidence about how religious experience intersects with other dimensions (for example evolution of private markets for health and education).

The key questions, though, are often subtle and call for nuanced reflection and dialogue: what new ideas does appreciation of religious roles bring? And what are the implications for policy and action? How can constructive voices best be identified, amidst what can seem a cacophony? Some religious actors are at leading edge of global reflections: true prophets. Some, however, conform to stereotyped images of patriarchy, support for autocratic regimes, and resistance to change. While it is important to understand the concerns of and work with formal leaders and institutions, it is equally important to seek out religiously linked women, younger voices, and different, often emerging types of institutions and leaders. New geopolitical roles of religious actors on topics like fighting atrocities can also have significance for development work.[14]

Mahatma Gandhi offered wise advice in his admonition to seek the best in religious teachings and institutions (for example the focus on solidarity and compassion), while ignoring what is less fine, for example discrimination like caste and racial bias. Similar counsel is pertinent both for religious actors committed to implementation of the SDG framework and working to address global issues and to the development actors who seek to engage with them as partners.

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14 Faith central to hope and resilience, highlights UN chief, launching initiative to combat atrocities. http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57183#.WWpTy9PytsO.

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Jeffrey Haynes

The United Nations and Development: What do Religious Actors Add to Debates about Achieving Better Outcomes?

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) has long been concerned with seeking to improve international development outcomes in the global South. At the UN, discussions about improving international development outcomes typically involve both state and non-state actors, including religious actors. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs; 2000–2015), a blueprint to improve development outcomes, were a result of such deliberations. The MDGs helped inform the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; 2015–2030), agreed at the UN in September 2015. The SDGs are ambitious, with wide-ranging goals. Unlike the eight MDGs, which focussed exclusively on the global South, the 17 SDGs are worldwide in scope, involving 169 objectives.

The aim of the chapter is to examine (a) why many religious leaders and organisations have a higher profile today in relation to development issues compared to a few decades ago and (b) the impact of this change in terms of their involvement at the United Nations in the context of the MDGs and SDGs. The first section of the paper discusses the role of religion in development at the UN. The second section of the paper is a brief case study of the relationship between a religious organisation the World Council of Churches (WCC) and a UN entity, the World Bank, in relation to the MDGs. The third section of the paper looks at the involvement of several UN entities and religious actors in relation to the SDGs. The paper concludes that in the decades since the MDGs were introduced up until today, with the SDGs in the process of being institutionalised at the UN, there is more openness regarding the idea of secular and religious entities working together in pursuit of development goals. On the other hand, some secular actors continue to express uncertainty about what they see as the ambivalence of the role of religion in development, while some religious organisations continue to see secular development objectives as being unconcerned with spiritual outcomes. In sum, in relation to the main question of the book "Does religion make a difference?" the chapter makes the following

observation: with regard to development policy at the UN, selected religious actors bring their philosophies to improving development outcomes while also showing high levels of pragmatism, manifested in their willingness to work closely with secular actors in pursuit of shared development objectives. Yet, whether they can make a difference at all will depend on their acceptance in "non-religious" development circles.

Development concerns at the United Nations

The United Nations is the world's only universal international organisation, founded in 1945. The UN has long had both secular origins and ethos. It emerged following World War II, when religion seemed not to be an issue of concern for international relations, at a time of burgeoning secular ideological division between the USA and the Soviet Union. More recently, however, the UN has increasingly paid attention to what it refers to as 'faith-based' organisations (Haynes 2014). Religious organisations are often involved in development efforts, especially on the ground in many countries in the global South (Offut, Probasco and Vaidyanathan 2016). Already active in many areas of development including health, education, and poverty relief there is clearly overlap between what religious and secular actors do in relation to development; the UN is a forum where they often interact. Yet, this is not always trouble-free, not least because secular development agencies and religious organisations that engage in development work have different ways of measuring human welfare, and this is reflected in different guiding principles; each 'side' needs to respect those of the 'other'.

   The background to the increasing involvement of religious organisations in development efforts in the global South was the general failures of economically liberal structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the 1980s and 1990s, which paved the way for the formulation and founding of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite significant commitment and contributions from several UN agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), SAPs had failed to overcome development shortfalls in the countries where they were applied, and led to strong critiques from many quarters, including: secular NGOs, grassroots movements, and some religious organisations, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC). A 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). Religious critics of SAPs wanted to see a shift away from state and market-led approaches to broader, more holistic, conceptions of development, focussing on interactions of civil society, human development, and grassroots participation, informed by religious values. To pursue this different vision of development, some religious actors, including WCC, developed 'human development' outlooks, which focussed, *inter alia*, on opening development spaces to non-state, including religious, actors, in order to augment development work undertaken by governments and non-state international development agencies.

More generally, the MDGs helped to stimulate the involvement of religious organisations in international development issues, including at the UN, leading to some, such as World Vision and Islamic Relief, becoming "legitimate actors in the field of development and humanitarian aid" (Petersen 2010: 2). However, while the focus of religious organisations differed, generally they were interested both in the general thrust of improvements to international development, often with specific interest in the following MDG goals: arresting the spread of HIV/AIDS, and, in relation to gender issues in particular, reducing infant deaths, providing universal primary education and reducing adult illiteracy (Haynes 2007; 2013).[1] In addition, working on the premise that there can be no real or sustained improvements in global justice without peace as a starting point, many religious organisations work at the UN for conflict alleviation, conflict resolution and peace-building, which can complement work on improving development outcomes in the global South.

In sum, there was increased involvement of religious organisations at the UN from the 1990s, especially in the areas of development and conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The MDGs coincided with a new global public policy focus on civil society involvement in development which included both secular and religious entities which sought to move on from the egregious failures of SAPs to arrive at improved methods to achieve qualitative international development improvements.

The rise in numbers of religious organisations at the UN since the 1990s 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, focussed in questions of global justice (Haynes 2007; 2013; 2014). This occurred in the context of post-Cold War, deepening globalisation, which led to many questioning the values and norms of international behaviour. Today, partly as a result, faith

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1 MDGs are listed at http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.

views and opinions are frequently heard in relation to ethical and moral controversies in the context of post-Cold War globalisation, in relation to, *inter alia*: increasingly polarised international development outcomes, "climate change, global finance, disarmament, inequality, pan-epidemics and human rights" (Carrette and Miall 2012: 3); that is, core global justice concerns. Put another way, contemporary campaigns at the UN for improved global justice are often significantly 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" (Carrette and Miall 2012: 3). More generally, this attribute, that is, an awareness of the morality of better and more widely shared development to incorporate those left behind in the context of post-Cold War globalisation, is a shared attribute of many non-state religious actors at the UN.

Pimbert *et al.* (2005) identify four main factors responsible for polarised development outcomes: (1) growing power of multinational corporations (2) diminishing land and water resources (3) climate change and deforestation, and (4) the impact of free market, neo-liberal economic policies. First, Pimbert *et al.* (2005: 2) point out that in recent years small numbers of multinational corporations (MNCs) have acquired a large degree of control over the world's food system. These MNCs control not only seed, livestock and agrochemical industries but also transport, processing and retailing; in the process they take a large and growing share of the price paid by consumers. The result is that farmers around the world including the developing world are compelled to accept falling farm gate prices. Some, as a result, face bankruptcy. Second, diminishing land and water resources around the world exacerbate both hunger and poverty. The situation is made worse by the apparently uncontrolled appetite for industrially produced livestock, typically fed on grains and starchy vegetables, a process that uses millions of hectares of land that could be used for food production for humans. In addition, huge areas of land in developing countries employed for intensive farming in the post-1960s 'green revolution' are now poisoned by pesticides; some are also salinised by poor irrigation. The consequence is that yields are stagnating or falling, while pressure mounts to convert land to produce biofuels for the affluent (Pimbert *et al.* 2005: 2). Third, environmental catastrophes including climate change and deforestation are the main causes of both lower rainfall and drought in many parts of the developing world. These factors can fundamentally affect the ability of small farmers in the developing world to produce sufficient for their own needs. This has become a major problem for food production. The problem is caused by less frequent yet inordinately heavy rainstorms, with

declining numbers of trees causing erosion, reducing soil quality and producing meagre harvests (Pimbert *et al.* 2005: 21). Finally, according to Mulvany and Madeley (2006), "free market, neo-liberal economic policy has encouraged and justified the elimination of small-scale food producers" in the developing world. The result, Pimbert *et al.* claim, is that small-scale "farmers and indigenous peoples are seen as 'residues` of history people whose disappearance is inevitable. Throughout the world, small farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and indigenous peoples are increasingly being displaced" (2005: 1) by powerful economic interests.

In sum, efforts to build stronger and better development in the global South are fighting a losing battle against powerful economic interests, including multinational corporations. In addition, linked to post-Cold War globalisation, the impact of the free market, neo-liberal economic policies coupled with environmental factors including diminishing land and water resources and accelerating climate change and deforestation, is leading not to improvements in human development but to its opposite.

The World Bank, the WCC and the MDGs

A World Bank study, *Voices of the Poor* (2000), highlighted the potential importance of religion in the context of development, not least by the assertion that many poor people in the developing world had more confidence in their religious leaders than in their own governments. The MDGs coincided with this new global public policy focus on civil society involvement in development which included both secular and religious entities which sought to move on from the egregious failures of SAPs to arrive at improved methods to achieve qualitative international development improvements.

Among the eight MDGs was a key goal: eradication of 'extreme poverty and hunger'. When governments met in early November 2006 in order to assess the extent of progress made in achieving the goal of a 50 % cut in food hunger by 2015, there was a worrying lack of progress to report, an issue that many religious organisations, including the WCC, had noted (Kobia 2006). Data released contemporaneously by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation indicated that there had not been a reduction as planned but in fact an increase of more than 25 million chronically undernourished people during 1996–2006 (www.fao.org/). As a result, there were 850 million such people, more than 13 per cent of the global population of 6.5 billion. According to Mulvany and Madeley (2006), this was 'testament

to how current global policies, far from working, are consigning the hungry to stay hungry'. Failure to achieve progress on this issue, according to an NGO active at the UN, World Forum for Food Sovereignty, was not due to a *lack of* but *too much* political will. The Forum pointed to "advances of trade liberalisation, industrial agriculture, genetic engineering and military dominance", claiming them to be the chief causes of the growing problem of hunger and poverty in the developing world ('Final Declaration of the World Forum on Food Sovereignty', 2001).

It was not only secular development actors who noted the polarising impact of globalisation on development outcomes in the global South. Lynch (2012) notes that when religious organisations ponder international development they typically move from an initially moral dimension to consider a highly material factor: "neoliberal competition of the 'market` [in] international development". From there it is but a short jump to consider how more current conditions of globalisation encourage or exacerbate an already unjust and polarised world, where the rich benefit disproportionately. It has however taken the UN a long time to get to the stage where it recognises religion as an equal partner in efforts to improve development outcomes in the global South.

The situation noted in 2006 by the WCC followed a decade of action led by James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank between 1995 and 2005.[2] The World Bank is one of the main UN agencies concerned with development, and the fact that Wolfensohn was a keen supporter of increasing the role of religion in development policies and programmes was an important step forward in the UN more generally recognising the potential importance of religious organisations in advancing the development agenda. There were two main reasons for this: First, Wolfensohn saw failure to involve religious organisations in development as irrational, given their great importance to many people in the global South. Second, the late 1990s and early 2000s were a period when the UN generally and the Bank in particular were actively seeking to engage with civil society, following criticism during the furore about the disappointing outcome to most SAPs, that the Bank was not always willing to listen to voices from below to improve them (Interview with senior World Bank employee, 23 January 2012). Wolfensohn believed that it was a missed opportunity not to harness potentially productive resources for improved development outcomes. For

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2 Wolfensohn was strongly supported in his efforts by Katherine Marshall, see also her chapter in this volume.

Wolfensohn, religious organisations could play an important role in in relation to development, 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 religious organisations would necessarily be easy. He saw involvement of religion in development as rational for the following reasons:

- Religious organisations 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.
- Religious organisations 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.
- Religious organisations may share many values. Coming together in pursuit of development could help not only to achieve improved development outcomes but also, as a result, assist religious/cultural understanding in developing countries.

Developing relations between the Bank and religious organisations were exemplified in the burgeoning relationship of the World Bank with the World Council of Churches (WCC). The WCC was founded in Amsterdam in 1948. It is an international, interdenominational Christian organisation which brings together around 345 Protestant, Anglican, and Eastern Orthodox churches. WCC headquarters are in Geneva.

   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 ('The WCC-IMF-WB high-level encounter', 2004). From then until 2015, a period of nearly seven years, there were no further meetings between the Bank and the WCC

('WCC general secretary meets president of the World Bank', 2015). Relations between the Bank and the WCC deteriorated following the departure of Wolfensohn. Subsequent presidencies of the Bank saw individuals leading the Bank who appeared unsure of the legitimacy and value of including religious organisations in development. It was not until the appointment of Jim Yong Kim in 2012 that the Bank overtly resumed its relationship with religious organisations, including the WCC, in the pursuit of improved development outcomes.[3]

The WCC became sceptical about the benefit of 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). There were at least four reasons why the World Bank/WCC relationship cooled for several years from the late-2000s. First, the two organisations had apparently incompatible worldviews which apparently made it impossible for them to work together. 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-religion initiative. Third, many Bank employees at both junior and senior levels were uncertain about how practically religion 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 religions are often divisive within many countries, including in the global South (Interviews with former and current senior World Bank employees, 25, 26, 27 January 2012).

Fourth, the perceived 'neo-liberal' orientation of the Bank focussing on issues such as 'liberalisation', the 'private sector' and 'privatisation' did not chime well with the WCC's outlook, which corresponded to a wish to see a structural reform of the global system, with more influence in the hands of countries in the global South. This focus is understandable when we bear in mind that 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. Most of the WCC member churches come from the global south, including: 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,

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3 After Wolfensohn, the presidency of the World Bank was filled by Paul Wolfowitz (2005–2007), Robert Zoellick (2007–2012) and from 2012, Jim Yong Kim.

when members mainly came from Europe and North America. The WCC's ideological position can be seen in a WCC mission statement from 2013, 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". ('About us. What is the World Council of Churches', 2013)

In sum, while the language of the Bank in the late 1990s and early 2000s emphasised the perceived desirability of 'liberalisation' and 'privatisation', that of the WCC stressed the importance of 'serving human need; and seeking justice and peace'. These apparently incompatible goals were clearly in the short-term not conducive to developing a beneficial relationship between the Bank and the WCC, despite an initially promising initiative in the context of the MDGs. The result was a cooling of relations for several years.

The World Bank, the WCC and SDGs: Building Cooperation between Religious and Secular Development Actors

The SDGs, running from 2015 to 2030, followed the MDGs. The SDGs broaden out the aims of the MDGs, specifically pursuing global concerns in relation to sustainable development.[4] Important religious organisations, such as the WCC, and development-focussed religious NGOs, including, World Vision and Islamic Relief, worked in pursuit of the introduction of the SDGs (Karam 2015).

The SDGs are a context and stimulus for a renewed focus on relations between the UN and religious actors, including that between the World Bank and the WCC. In February 2016, Dr David Nabarro, the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, spoke to a meeting of senior leaders of the ACT (Action by Churches Together) Alliance, Anglican Alliance, Caritas Internationalis and Lutheran World Federation, in a meeting convened by the WCC. During his

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4 SDGs are listed at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300.

address, Nabarro spoke of religious organisations' seven characteristics, which he believed were conducive to taking forward the SDGs:

- "Promoting the inclusion of different groups;
- Offering peaceful channels for conflict resolution;
- Upholding the human rights of the most vulnerable;
- Reminding political leaders of their duty to enable all people to realize their rights;
- Helping ensure that investment takes place in communities, with people at the local level making those investments with their own resources;
- Mobilizing people everywhere, especially young people;
- Sharing expertise on how to deliver services to those who are hardest to reach". (Tveit 2016)

The role of the WCC in convening the meeting with the UN was illustrative of its desire to work more closely with UN agencies, including the World Bank. Earlier, on 4 May 2015, the WCC's General Secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, met with Dr Jim Yong Kim, president of the World Bank, in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss 'possible collaborative actions to end extreme poverty' in the context of the SDGs. The meeting between Tveit and Kim followed a statement on the moral and spiritual imperative to end extreme poverty, signed by more than 30 global religious leaders in February 2015 (World Bank, 2015). After the February 2015 meeting, Kim invited the WCC to explore what could be done together, "in a kind of mutual commitment of the two organizations". The point is that the SDGs encouraged closer relations between the UN and religious organisations and this can be illustrated in the warming relationship between the World Bank and the WCC.

In addition, while the SDGs provided the context, the different approach of Kim, compared to his immediate predecessors, was instrumental in highlighting the importance of secular and religious entities working together if the goal of achieving the end of extreme poverty was realistically to be achieved during the SDGs. Kim noted that

"Faith-based organizations and religious communities are often doing the essential work on the frontlines of combatting extreme poverty, protecting the vulnerable, delivering essential services and alleviating suffering. We are looking to expand the World Bank Group's partnerships with faith inspired organizations toward reaching our shared goal to end extreme poverty within a generation." ('The World Bank Group's Engagement with Faith-based and Religious Organizations', 2015)

At their May 2015 meeting, Tveit commended the World Bank president on his efforts to end poverty by 2030 by addressing issues of inequality, human dignity and climate change. He said, "The WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace addresses structural, moral and political issues, and the WCC works collaboratively with other like-minded organizations to promote sustainable solutions to end poverty." For his part, "Kim shared his assessment of the global poverty situation and stated that faith communities and organizations play an indispensable role in combatting and ending extreme poverty. The World Bank is already working with faith communities in several countries through their governments, he noted" ('WCC general secretary meets president of the World Bank', 2015).

The World Bank hosted a major conference in Washington, D.C. from 7–9 July, 2015, entitled: "Religion and Sustainable Development: Building Partnerships to End Extreme Poverty". The conference brought together secular and religious entities to discuss working together to achieve the SDGs. In his address at the conference, Kim referred to the social teaching for "a preferential option for the poor", supported by the ecumenical movement as well as by the Catholic Church. In addition, he claimed that every religion shared this fundamental commitment to the poorest and most vulnerable and that this provided a common platform with the international development community aim to end extreme poverty. Kim also stated that: "We are the first generation in history that can say we can end extreme poverty in our lifetime. (…) We can't get there without all of you. We need prophetic voices to inspire us and evidence to lead the way" (World Bank, 2015).

The goal of bringing together secular and religious entities in pursuit of improved development outcomes was reflected in the make-up of the supporters and organisers of the conference. Convened and co-hosted by the World Bank Group, the conference also benefitted from involvement from: Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the USA's Agency for International Development, and the UK's Department for International Development. Co-sponsors included the Catholic Medical Mission Board, Catholic Relief Services, Islamic Relief USA, Tearfund, American Jewish World Service, IMA World Health and McKinsey & Company. In addition, other religious NGOs also attended, including: GHR Foundation, World Vision, and the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, a coalition of religious organisations and academic institutions. Overall, the conference attracted a varied group of 'movers and shakers', including: policy makers, multilateral and bilateral agencies, religious leaders, development professionals from religious organisations and

academics. The purpose of the conference was to build links between secular and religious entities in the context of the SDGs, specifically to connect "frontline policy makers to the evidence base and expertise to support more effective partnerships with religious and faith-based groups in the common cause of ending extreme poverty and promoting sustainable development" (World Bank, 2015).

The SDGs emerged at a time of significant global changes, many of which are linked to the impact of globalisation on people and communities around the world. In Europe, for example, many countries have seen increasing religious pluralism and multi-religious societies, as well as 'high' levels of migration and massive flows of refugees from war-torn and conflict-filled parts of the world (Haynes 2016). Religious leaders are seen to have an important role to fill in this context, focussing their efforts on building successful, stable and secure communities in the face of such pressures. In particular, religious leaders are looked on to not only to build cooperation across faith boundaries but also to show pronounced concern for justice, reconciliation and peace. How can this be built and implemented? It is widely recognised that fine words are not enough; what is essential is practical cooperation on the basis of shared values, concerns and goals, to provide necessary tools for increased and deepening common understanding and mutual recognition. This is the only way to defeat the extremists those who unleash religiously-inspired violence and justify terrorist activities by their lack of ability to live together with those of different faiths. But religious leaders should not only be concerned with and active in improving conflict resolution and peacebuilding; they should also be concerned about improving development, so as to make extremism less likely. But on what basis can religious leaders and their organisations work closely and fruitfully with secular entities in pursuit of peace and development? Today's leading development policy approach the rights-based approach refers to the idea that all people have certain rights and it is an imperative that development seeks to achieve them. The rights-based approach brings together development practitioners who agree on the need to bring about change at several levels, including: policies, practices, beliefs, values and ideas. Can one talk usefully and more importantly work successfully on implementing development policy about a rights-based approach when trying to integrate the work of secular and religious organisations?

As the General Secretary of the WCC, Olav Fykse Tveit (2016), points out:

"a fuller understanding of religion's role will help complete the picture. Hitherto, development actors have generally engaged mostly with the two top levels (policies and practices) and avoided engaging with the foundational level of 'beliefs, values and ideas`, even if this is probably the most important level for sustainable change. An example is the promotion of more equal gender relationships between women and men (SDG 5) or, in our [that is, the WCC] terminology, a Just Community of Women and Men."

Such issues were not only a concern of WCC General Secretary Tveit. Schelenz points to the desirability of including all members of a community not only those who adhere to a certain religious faith in order to reduce "discontent and frustration" and lead "to more harmonious and healthy community life. A rights-based approach to development" as supported by the WCC "is therefore important for the development of communities, countries, and regions" (Schelenz 2016: 11). Typically, in the context of the SDGs, UN initiatives, including those with WCC involvement, aim to bring together religious and secular organisations in pursuit of shared goals, including in relation to improved wellbeing for women and children in the global South, one of the SDGs. What motivates the partners in such development initiatives is shared commitment to improving health of children and women in the global South, while reducing men's violence against them. Perhaps the *only* language which is possible to combine activities of both faith-based and secular actors in this endeavour is rights-based.

A rights-based approach provides a firm basis for the coming together of secular and religious efforts toward ending extreme poverty and more generally towards the achievement of the SDGs. Yet, doubts have been expressed about the difficulties inherent in trying to achieve an undoubtedly ambitious and wide-ranging set of 17 goals along with 169 associated targets over a relatively short period of time (2015–2030). In addition, from the point of view of religion the SDGs lack any mention of what might be seen as core values. At a gathering of representatives from 24 religious organisations who met in a UK city, Bristol, in September 2015 to present to a UN representative their reactions to the challenges of the SDGs, a representative of the Baha'i faith, Daniel Perell, stated that in "Agenda 2030, words like selflessness, sacrifice, love, compassion, duty, generosity and charity are entirely absent". Perell's comment seemed to be taken seriously by the UN representative at the conference, Paul Ladd, in charge of mapping out a post-2015 agenda for humanity at the UN Development Program. Ladd stated that: "More than 80 % of the world's people express a religious affiliation (…) knowing this it becomes clear that the UN needs to work closely with faith communities over the next 15 years if the new

global roles for sustainable development are to be achieved" (The
Economist, 2015). The overall point is that the involvement of religion in
development and the potential for secular and religious organisations to
work more closely together in a sustained fashion to achieve desirable
development outcomes, both within countries and in the context of the
SDGs, is ambivalent, with both plus and minus points.

In a recent comment, Leininger and Striebinger (2016; see also
Öhlmann, Frost and Gräb in this volume), note the efforts of the German
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in
relation to incorporating 'religion' into development. BMZ hosted an inter-
national conference in Berlin on 17–18 February 2016 "to explore the
potential of religion for promoting sustainable development". The title of
the conference "Religion as a partner for change" suggests to Leininger and
Striebinger that for the BMZ, "religion has a fundamentally positive impact
on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals". They sug-
gested however that there is an ambivalence in the involvement of religion
in development, which implies that it should not be seen as an unequivocal
force for good in all circumstances and contexts. As with religion's role in
conflict resolution and peacebuilding, Leininger and Striebinger note that it
can contribute usefully to sustainable development, including at the UN.
This can be seen, for example, in the successful relationship that the United
Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has developed with women's pro-
choice faith entities, united in pursuit of the third MDG goal ('Promote
gender equality and empower women') and SDG5 ('equal gender relation-
ships between women and men'. In addition, the United Nations Develop-
ment Programme (UNDP) works closely with some conservative religious
leaders in the Arab world, especially in developing shared initiatives per-
taining to MDG goal number 6: 'Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other
diseases' and SDG3 ('good health and well-being').

Finally, as Leininger and Striebinger claim, "different religious positions
can serve to intensify societal and violent conflict". Although religious
believers would normally regard their chosen religious expressions as both
benevolent and inspiring, religious faiths are sometimes linked to violence
and conflict both between and within religious groups (or at least entities
with a religious veneer, for example, various armed groups around the
world, such as al Qaeda or Isis, which claim religious justification for their
often-murderous activities). In recent years, a growing literature has
appeared on religious contributions to both conflict and peacebuilding. Yet,
alongside the now conventional understanding that religious hatreds and
differences are central to many recent and current conflicts, especially in the

developing world, there is also a growing body of evidence that religious leaders and organisations can play constructive roles in conflict limitation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Haynes 2011)

In sum, the ambivalence noted here regarding the involvement of religion in pursuit of both development and peace makes it highly important that while international policy makers, including at the UN in relation to the SDGs, should seek to deepen and extend their interactions with religious leaders and their organisations, they should also be aware that engaging in dialogue with them and actively involving them in pinpointing and executing solutions is not a simple or straightforward process. Secular policy makers need to find common ground with religious leaders and their organisations, with both 'sides' moulding their view of the world to incorporate and draw on consensual values while agreeing to advance a shared outlook stressing a rights-based approach to development.

Conclusion

> "What we have stumbled upon through the MDGs is the common currency of development (…) so we share the determination to ensure that this framework is supported by all of us as we move beyond 2015." (Olav Kjörven, Deputy Administrator of UNDP and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy)

Religious organisations active at the UN in pursuit of improved development outcomes, especially in relation to the global South, have two key characteristics. First, they are in a good position to bring bottom up pressure on policy makers and consequential influence on policy formation. This may occur by engendering and/or influencing policy makers' values and outlooks, in turn affecting formulation of specific development policies. Second, especially as a result of interfaith dialogue efforts, religious entities are well placed to bring together or divide communities along faith lines. This could either improve or worsen pre-existing social and/or political conflicts centring on access to improved development opportunities.

Overall, whether religion can make a difference in relation to development outcomes, seems to depend on whether important secular development actors (such as the UN in general and the World Bank in particular) are convinced that religion can make a beneficial difference, encouraging them actively to collaborate with non-state religious entities. In other words, as the quotation above suggests, if religious actors are perceived as bringing in important specific capacities, there is a chance for them to help make a beneficial difference to development outcomes.

We saw that various UN entities including the World Bank, UNFPA and UNDP engage regularly with assorted religious organisations, including the WCC, to pursue improved development in the context of the SDGs. The UN's engagement followed realisation that both secular and religious entities share a pronounced concern with development outcomes in the global South, including in relation to ending extreme poverty, as a crucial first stage in more generally improving development outcomes. Common ground linked them to a growing consensus that underpins adoption of the SDGs.

We examined two main questions in this article: Why do many religious leaders and organisations have a higher profile today in relation to development issues compared to a few decades ago? What is the impact of this change in terms of their involvement at the United Nations in the context of the MDGs and SDGs? We started by highlighting the sobering failure of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s, which paved the way for the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals from 2000. Generally, SAPs led to disappointing outcomes in the global South and the MDGs reflected a wide recognition that a new approach to development was required. It also reflected an understanding that many religious leaders and the organisations they represent have the support of ordinary people to a degree that many governments lack. It is often uncontroversial, as a result, to think of religion and development working together not least because many ordinary people in the global South may well believe that it is entirely correct that religion should be an influential voice in helping resolve development problems and be part of the quest for improved strategies in this regard. Yet, many governments the huge majority of which are explicitly secular in their orientation and outlook tend to regard the prospect of religion's institutionalised involvement in development with apprehension or suspicion, a perception often linked to what they see as problematic involvement of religion more generally in secular political, social and economic issues. To an extent, although it is impossible to be precise at this early stage of the implementation of the SDGs, the UN can provide a crucial forum and environment where both secular and religious entities can work together in pursued of shared development goals.

Second, there are marked differences in perceptions of poverty and development between religious entities, on the one hand, and many governments and secular international development agencies, on the other. That is, while many governments and secular international development agencies see economic growth *per se* as the most important achievement, religious leaders and organisations often see things differently: they prioritise a range

of ways of understanding the notions of poverty-reduction and development, over and above achievement of higher incomes alone. The key practical question is *how* and *in what ways* can governments and secular development agencies constructively integrate religious perspectives into poverty reduction strategies, such as the SDGs? Or, to put it another way, *how* and *in what ways* can religion constructively influence governmental and secular development agencies' perspectives on poverty reduction strategies and by extension development in the context of the SDGs? It seems clear that while the SDGs theoretically provide a new impetus towards achieving better and more durable partnerships between secular and religious actors, in practice this is going to be a difficult issue to resolve, one that will require sustained commitment and involvement from all involved.

Finally, while often paying lip service to the involvement of religion in development, it may be that both governments and UN agencies either lack the ability or are simply not interested in integrating alternative including religious perspectives into wider development programmes and policies, including poverty reduction strategies. In the late-2000s, this issue strained the relationship and undermined confidence between the World Bank and the World Council of Churches and it took some years and a change of personnel at the top to get the relationship back on track. There is potential for such relationships now to burgeon and improve in the context of the SDGs. What is necessary for this to happen is both open minds and a willingness to compromise and the development of vigorous and constructive debate about poverty, followed by concrete and sustained steps to build on the MDGs in the context of the SDGs, consistently drawing on and learning from both secular and religious insights.

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Transculturation Grammars in Secular and Religious Development NGOs

Richard Friedli

1 Introduction

Having been involved for more than fifty years with "religious" and "secular" development agencies both as a direct actor and as a consultant the question "Does Religion Make a Difference?" is, to me, more than a topic for academic exercise. In fact, it is an invitation to: (1) evaluate and discuss past personal development experiences and religious options, and (2) to highlight two key skills that can be used within humanitarian projects, namely, the capacity to act as a "balancing identity" and the ability to differentiate the *fundamental* from the *fundamentalist* behaviour, whether this be in a religious or secular context. These are the tools I will use to review in the following two development contexts in which I was previously involved: (i) religious components in United Nations (UN) family planning programmes, and (ii) the religious factor in the context of the genocide in Rwanda. Combining these different theoretical and concrete inputs, in my concluding remarks I will present some personal reflections on the "religion" factor in terms of the profiles and preparations undergone by development agents actors in a predominantly transculturation process.

The concept of "transculturation" was introduced into the analysis on colonial policies by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. In that context, the term "transculturation" denounces forced "acculturation" in line with social models imported from the American and European West (Jobs and Mackenthun 2013). Of course, it is not with this denunciatory meaning that I am using the concept here but rather as a process of going beyond the international *status quo* towards a global future as designated by the recent United Nations Declaration on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. By "transculturation" I am referring to that horizon, under which present-day societies are invited to develop in the direction of a renewed international culture.

The article of Christine Schliesser on reconciliation processes in post-genocide Rwanda in this volume provides a concrete example of the complex undertaking of "dealing with the past" and building a new future. Given that, for the last 50 years, I have been actively involved with and con-

cerned by developments in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, these challenges continue to touch me on a personal level (Friedli 2012; Friedli 2013: 225–233; Friedli 2018: 82–84). It offers me the opportunity to actualize that Rwandan past in general and, particularly, my commitment in developmental projects and memory of the genocide events 1994, wherein many of my friends were involved both on the victims and on the perpetrators side.

In fact, by doing so, it is not so much a question of the overall tools taken from the comparative sociology of religions, but rather of my basic understandings of the terms *culture, religion, violence, conflict* or even *reconciliation* (Frazer and Friedli 2015: 10–15, 31). Each of these concepts is defined differently by dozens of theories and hermeneutic approaches (Hock 2002). However, to position myself, I work in the frame of the *Wissensoziologie* and, more specifically, according to the tradition of constructivism-functionalism (Berger and Luckmann 1966; 2004). And, as far as the methodology for facilitating the processes of integrated development and positive peace is concerned, the keys provided by Johan Galtung have proven most often to still be operational (Galtung 1998: 133–138, 341–363). I will not go back into that here.

In my article, I refer to the following set of conceptual options and theoretical choices:

Development

As mentioned, development processes are to be understood here as social changes qualified as "transculturation dynamics". This social transition can be described according to the "Economy and Humanism" school inspired by the economist Vincent Lebret as the passage from less "human" living conditions to conditions that are more "human". Of course, this approach is not yet highly operational because it does not give a clear indication of what "human" implies and how this is universally applicable. In fact, the human condition is always historically situated

Religion

Neither is it a question here of discussing the multiple theories on the religious factor - for example, the different schools of history, functionalism, constructivism, culturalism, comparative sociology, linguistics, ethics, theology and psychology, besides many other interpretations.

In fact, in our current discussion on the link between development and religion, suffice it for me to describe the religious factor as a *"socially enacted relation to an ultimate concern"*. I would, however, add to this the following comments because "religion" understood as "an ultimate concern" comprises two important elements that need to be taken into consideration in the field: (1) "religion" as, on the one hand, a public socio-political reality and a motivating option on a personal level, and (2) on the other hand, "religion" as a civic, secular, lay reality. In this way, "religion" defines the space held by the sacred as separate from the secular milieu, the area of permission and the taboo contexts. The spaces held by the "in-group" and "out-group", the included and excluded, are similarly delineated. Needless to say, these kinds of divides have important strategic consequences for all development planning.

Spirituality

However, "religion" also indicates an actor's personal choice his or her personal motivations for engaging in development work and his or her choice in terms of values. This form of "religion" as a personal lifestyle is frequently designated with the term "spirituality".

Still in relation to this term "spirituality", it is, however, not easy to find a common denominator from among the various historical religions. Currently, and in line with the logic of my description of "religion", I would like to propose the definition of "spirituality" that was elaborated on at the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP III Princeton 1979), namely: "The consciousness of responsibility rooted in an ultimate concern". This foundational reality, "an ultimate concern", is not an abstract formulation. It derives from the historical and biographical socialisation particular to the development actor, for example, clan ancestors, the Buddha, Christ, the Quran, the resurrection, human dignity, human rights, the revolt against injustice in the world. In this way, the motivation to become part of a development project can be both "religious" and "secular".

Secularity

Therefore, in the logic of the sociology of knowledge to which I am referring here, the foundational element of an "ultimate concern" can take both a "religious" and "secular" form. What is essential is that development

agents have a non-negotiable personal foundational reference, which is applied within the concrete space of a project.

In this limited framework, I find two competencies to be useful- Evidently, between others, competencies such as empathic capacities, confidence building, or language skills are useful, however, in this limited framework, I find two competencies to be of primary use in facilitating development projects and international cooperation:

1. Acquiring a "balancing identity"
2. Being able to make the semantic distinction between the "fundamentalist" configuration and the "fundamental" option.

I would like to go into these two skills a little more deeply in the two sections that follow, appying them to the context of the Rwandan Genocide in section 4.

2 The "balancing identity" skill

Personal and social identity underpins an individual's basic personality. It is the element learnt from the prevailing culture. Culture here is understood, in the constructivist line of cultural anthropology, as the complete set of internalised codes, which permit members of a society to survive materially, socially and religiously/ideologically (Berger and Luckmann 2004: 36–39, 49–72). According to this perspective, the social goal is, therefore, to guarantee the survival of a society in economic, political and religious terms. We will come back to the social factor "religion", but I would like now to emphasise that I am referring here to "religion" as a relative cultural factor and not as an absolute transhistorical reality. Given my personal sensitivity for the religions connotations in political contexts, I would like to examine two of them a little more deeply here: (a) Elements of cultural anthropology and the sociology of religions and (b) Elements of communication skills.

2.1 Elements of cultural anthropology and the sociology of religions

Ensuring the "identity" of members of the new generation is, the outcome of the process of "primary socialisation" ensured by "significant others" (signifikative Andere), who are responsible for the 'integration' of a person into his or her "basic community" parents, elders, teachers, religious authorities (Berger and Luckmann 2004: 51–98, 118–124). However, what interests us in our discussion on "development NGOs secular or religious" is

the psychological quality of the actors who have decided to work as *go-betweens* in a development process aimed as "transculturation" partial or complete.

   We are, therefore, concerned with a specific identity the outcome of a "secondary socialisation". I am referring here to the role of a "facilitator" or "mediator", which necessitates in addition to a person's basic identity the specific competency that the communication specialist Ludwig Krappmann has designated as a "balancing identity" (Krappmann 1971). For this German pedagogue, "balancierende Identität" characterises a type of personality that is solidly structured, but which is, at the same time, sufficiently flexible to be able to enter into the logic of a different personality to be able to understand the underlying origins of that logic and the ways in which it is expressed and justified. In short, a core socialisation that remains, however, open to other options. And it is within these kinds of different ethical and religious systems that solutions based on responsible and viable compromise need to be elaborated. As such, in line with my understanding of development as a process of transculturation, towards responses that are "more human", acquiring the competencies of a "balancing identity" is an essential precondition. The anthropologist and economist Amartya Sen a well-known expert in projects dealing with literacy, health, agriculture and micro-credit banks in India stresses that identity is multi-faceted (Sen 2006).

2.2 *Elements of communication skills*

The profile of an identity is not only multi-faceted in terms of the historical, culture-based context, but also as far as its psychosocial configuration is concerned. It is in this way that Manuel Castels a Spanish specialist in inter-personal communication and social media distinguishes between the "traditional identity" and the "utopian identity" and, in the face of the developmental transition towards modernisation, various forms of "resistance identity" often developed (Castells 1999: 428–435). In order to be able to work in this kind of fluid socio-political context, development workers should, therefore, have a "balancing identity" profile and this in relation to each of the three large cultural areas, namely, economics, politics and religious factors. Therefore, in addition to their own socialised cultural grammar, development workers have to learn the grammars, logics and "languages" used by the partners economically, socially, culturally. They need to learn a new way to express themselves, understand and give value to things under the horizon of a new perspective on a common reality. It is

a process of going beyond (Berger and Luckmann 2004: 142–148). Not wanting to look for this kind of common "transcendence" must be designated as mental colonisation and "epistemic" violence. A purely "technical" transfer of occidental instruments to other inculturated contexts is not possible. As mentioned in my introductory remarks, this type of imposed cultural change is rejected by Fernando Ortiz as colonialist transculturation. But, in our understanding, transculturation is a dynamic process.

To sum up, "balancing identity" is an indispensable prerequisite for all development actors be they secular or religious. It is the capacity to effectively articulate themselves in multiple grammars and cultural logics.

3 The differentiation skill: "fundamentalist vs fundamental"

In the prevailing international political context for instance, south-eastern Myanmar or Sri Lanka, the Middle East or Sub-Saharan Africa the "religion" factor is clearly a divisive element (Frazer and Friedli 2015: 9–15, 31). This "religion" factor can be either a real or an exploited-instrumentalized element, depending on the context and political leaders. Here again, like with the anthropological and sociological connotations of the concept or tool of "balancing identity", it is clearly not possible to open the debate on the definition of "religion" in the science of comparative religions (Geertz 1973: 44–95; Hock 2002; Saler 2000).

3.1 Conceptualizing religion

In the core group of Culture and Religion in Mediation CARIM (Research group at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, ETH Zurich), we began our guidelines on "Approaching Religion in Conflict Transformation" by making an inventory and analysing more than two dozen schools/theories on "religion" including the "atheist" variant. Initially, we grouped them under five categories religion as community, religion as teaching, religion as spirituality, religion as practice, religion as discourse. But for the *go-betweens* and *facilitators* in the field, both in mediation and development, it still proved to be too complicated to understand and work with the respective grammars and logics on the ground, for example Shamanistic, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian or Islamic, not to mention their local or even sectarian variants. In the end, we decided to stick to the following working definition: "R*eligion*" can be understood *as a socially enacted relation to an ultimate concern*. But the practitioners on the ground still did not find this semantic contraction to be

easy to use. Therefore, we opted for the practical choice of considering *"religion" to be whatever partners on the ground designate as their fields of "religion"* (Frazer and Friedli 2015: 9, 13).

In contrast, when it comes to development projects, it seems to be of much more operational value to know how to diagnose the fundamentalist variants and the fundamental options in any religion. Thus, here also, some semantic clarifications and definitional differentiations should be made around the unclear journalistic, and even academic, use of the term "fundamentalism", to distinguish, for example, between dogmatism, fanaticism, orthodoxy and ultra-orthodoxy, or extremism and radicalisation (Marty and Appleby 1996: 15–47; Mayer 2001).

3.2 Fundamentalist and fundamental

The interiorisation and socialisation of a given ultimate reference be it religious or secular is attained either in a rigid and repetitive way or in a flexible and situational manner. I qualify the normative and closed method of applying moral precepts as "fundamentalist". In contrast, I designate as "fundamental" a contextual approach based on values which, although certainly unconditional, can be interpreted according to the concrete needs and emergencies on the ground. In short, it is a question of guaranteeing the "fundamentals".

These mentalities either fundamentalist or fundamental can be observed within development policies, be these "religious" or "secular". The "fundamentalist" label, in particular, often remains very vague and controversial. Which is why, in order to render such categorisations operational, it is critical to indicate the different levels on which they can have an impact. For this reason, in this article, I more concretely discuss four "fundamentalist" analytical aspects: doctrinal; moral; psychological; and political; along with their "fundamental" correlations.

It is not always easy to perceive this shift, but this is where the transition towards hard "fundamentalist" aspects in communication happens. In order to be able to analyse and possibly break down these kinds of psycho-social dysfunctions, I find it useful to disentangle, in a very emotional, communicative, often blocked "fundamentalist", the different levels on which a "fundamentalist" attitude manifests theoretically and practically. Without forgetting that, on the ground, it is, actually, nearly always the other person who is "fundamentalist", never one's self. Nevertheless, the results of a

developmental project are conditioned by the clear analysis and perception of these fundamentalistic oppositions to any social and cultural change.

3.3 Fundamentalism and fundamental options: sociology of comparative religions

In order to render visible some of the issues underlying the shift between "fundamentalist" and "fundamental" perspectives, I will begin by presenting a taxonomical table that contrasts the "hard" and the "soft" elements of a religious mentality or, as John Lederach said: the two distant shores "fear" and "love" (Lederach 2005: 41–43).

Table 1: Comparison between "hard" and "soft" religions

ASPECTS	FUNDAMENTALIST FORMS OF RELIGION	FUNDAMENTAL FORMS OF RELIGION
1. THEOLOGICAL ROOTS	MONOTHEISTIC PRINCIPLE The transcendent god is both the absolute source of life and the implacable judge of good and evil. Totalitarian political organisations gain their legitimacy through him.	OMNIPRESENT DIVINE MILIEU The profession of faith in a universal god relativizes every historical religious institution and every dogmatic formulation. All temporal reality is conditioned.
2. SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES	PROSELYTE DYNAMISM This kind of absolute affirmation justifies the conviction of possessing the truth. This sort of religious understanding is not apt for consensus. On the contrary, it is formulated around an aggressive mission.	EMPATHIC AVAILABILITY The dichotomy between "us" and "them" is abolished. "De-enemising" love breaks down the walls of separation and bridges divides through "compassion".
3. PSYCHOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR	DEMONISING LABELS The transcendent god is opposed by the absolute force of evil in the world. These kinds of satanic forces are identified in the social sphere and have to be eradicated.	RIGHT TO RECOGNITION Hateful denial of the other becomes a ridiculous form of gesticulation. Difference does not incite the need to destroy, but instead becomes an invitation to a convivial way of life.
4. STRATEGIC APPROACHES	MILITARISTIC MENTALITY In alignment with this kind of opposition ideology, humans are classified as "chosen" or "damned". This latent readiness to crack down can turn into an uncontrollably destructive rage over the smallest thing.	BEAUTY OF COMPROMISE The ideal model is not the crushing of the foreign non-believer or the softening up of any opposition, but the search for promising and productive synergies.

According to the operational description of these two types of behaviour, the "fundamentalist" mentality hardens contexts, whilst, on the contrary, the reference to the "fundamentals" of a basic tradition religious or secular can mitigate a context and facilitate cooperation. The capacity or competency that we are discussing here to discern involves understanding of the deep culture (Tiefenkultur) as a sort of container, which holds values and memories related to being both open to neighbours and closed towards others or strangers.

3.4 The fundamentalist radicality

The following are some of the characteristics of the "fundamentalist" grammar of a mentality:

i. Cognitive level: binary thinking

According to the monotheistic mentality, the transcendent god is understood to be the creator and source of life. He manifests his eternal will, to which obedient submission is required. He inexorably judges between good and evil, between what is allowed and what is taboo. In fact, I am describing here the monotheistic mentality according to the Jewish-Christian-Muslim perspective (Askari 1987: 129–132). However, according to the phenomenology of religions, the "monotheistic" point of view goes beyond historical facts in relation to Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions and designates any mentality that has "inclusion-exclusion", "choosiness-rejection" or "faithful-infidel" social polarisations (Galtung 1998), be it religious, philosophical or cultural.

However, in the context of development projects this exclusivist interpretation of God as an omnipotent creator often brings with it immediate consequences for developmental project implementation in relation to, for example, responsible family planning policies or other interventions aimed at emancipating girls and women (literacy, professional training, family model, homosexuality). The recourse to this monotheistic principle by delegations from Muslim countries or the Vatican resulted in the failure of the UN summits in relation to demography (Cairo 1994), human rights (Vienna 1995) and women's rights (Beijing 1996). On the ground, this "fundamentalist" theological reference can block or prevent projects that work to advance or protect women, mothers and their children (Friedli 2013: 233–237; Friedli 2018: 79–82).

ii. Social level: proselyte dynamism

The claim to be chosen by god ("choosiness" (Galtung 1998)) and, there-
fore, to possess the only salvific truth, is not apt for negotiating solutions in
changing social circumstances. It cannot foster consensus. On the contrary,
this "missionary" psychological profile engenders opposition in the com-
munity and political persecution.

iii. Psychological aspects: hardening around morals

The fundamentalist mentality can be characterised by its rigid mentality
("rigidity" (Galtung 1998)) and punitive attitude ("punitivity" (Galtung
1998)). These kinds of reflexes can of course play out reciprocally between
actors in a development project, and implementation can get stalled as a
result. The threat of withdrawal can be bandied around by one side and
another. There are examples of broken trust and actions taken to force
people out.

iv. Strategic procedures: eradicating the stigmatised reality

The fundamentalist perspective divides the world into "chosen" and
"damned". Johan Galtung calls this the "DMA syndrome" "Dogmatism,
Manichaeism, Armageddon/Apocalyptic" (Galtung and MacQueen 2008:
92–97). As indicated earlier, this psychological tendency is characterised by
"punitivity", which can result in violent interventions. Depending on the
circumstances economic, demographic and massmedial contexts this syn-
drome can easily turn into collective, even military (not to mention geno-
cidal and terrorist), destructiveness. This is the "fundamentalist" aspect,
which is the destroyer of any socio-political interventions.

3.5 The fundamental option

In order to ensure that a developmental project is not blocked, it is critical
to know how to capture, in the same "monotheistic" religious container,
the different constructive potentialities of the "religion's" own narrative,
which lie at the heart of its collective memory (Lederach 2005: 41–43, 141–
147). In fact, and in contrast to the destructive "fundamentalist" reactions, I
am referring here to the "fundamental" constructive dimensions of a given
religious tradition. In relation to development projects, it is precisely a

question of being aware of the risks inherent in the destructive "fundamentalist" spiral and trying to redirect the current towards a constructive "foundational" outlet instead. In parallel to the "fundamentalist" mentality, the following are, in the same tradition, some "fundamental" characteristics:

i. Theological cognitive level: axiological difference between the "divine milieu" and subsequent socio-political manifestations

The "fundamental" faith in a "universal god" relativises all related historical institutionalised expressions of faith. Only "God" is absolute. And the religious traditions are conditioned depending on their cultural history. Therefore, the Christian-catholic saying *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* ("Outside the Church there is no salvation") is a political reduction of this profession of faith, in which the "Church"- rather than "God"- is perceived as the absolute religious reference. And to take another monotheistic context, "Allah" transcends all the historical manifestations of Islam. On this subject, the Pakistani sociologist Hassan Askari continually emphasised that wanting to make external, historical manifestations of Islam absolute, the Ummah, is a blasphemy that has to be denounced as a disastrous fundamentalist schism (Askari 1987: 129–132). In short, the monotheistic affirmation of one transcendent God becomes a sort of "monolatry" a detrimental form of idolatry.

ii. Social level: empathic availability

The dichotomy between the "in-group" and the "out-group" has long been accepted in sociological research (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 122–138; Friedli 1974: 69–75). However, this dialectic between "in-group" and "out-group" in the biblical tradition is fundamentally relativized. In this context, the Jewish theologian Pinchas Lapide speaks of "Entfeindungsliebe" (Lapide 1984). This German formulation is difficult to translate other than by using a contrasting affirmation like "de-enemising love", but its social horizon is clear: take the emotionally aggressive association away from the enemies ("Feinde"), whilst allowing them to continue to be adversaries ("Gegner"). Inside this calmer space, doctrinal, organisational and even moral differences can and should be discussed, evaluated and negotiated. But they are no longer deadly. In the frame of this kind of dynamic, liberation theologists as well as Christians, Buddhists or Muslims speak of "compassion", "maitri/karuna" and "rahma".

iii. Psychological level: the right to difference

In this way, hard fundamentalist aspects become no more than empty ges-
ticulations. Which does not, of course, entirely remove their deadly threats.
However, under this "foundational/fundamental" horizon, the invitation to
convivence is affirmed, where the right to difference is respected. In this
context, the American ethicist Michael Walzer defines tolerance as "the
process that civilises difference" (Walzer 1998; Senghaas 2004: 30–52).

iv. Strategic level: beauty of compromise

The model of behaviour is, therefore, for neither to crush the other be it
the stranger or the non-believer nor to deny differences, but to search for a
lucid and constructive compromise. This kind of intellectual and practical
method is not an invitation to a harmonizing conversation, but rather a call
to a practical approach that I will qualify as "diapraxis" -dialogue beyond
dialogue - a dialogue on the practical consequences of a doctrinal system
and not a theoretical exchange on absolutely affirmed truths (Poli-
torbis 2011; Lindbeck 2009: 18-27, 59-74).

3.6 Findings on the "fundamentalist vs fundamental" shift

In the frame of my actual presentation on "fundamentalist vs fundamental"
transitions, there is no need to enter into further detail. What is important
is to shine a light on the four theoretical levels underlying social change
processes: doctrinal, moral, psychological and political. This is with regard
to both fundamentalist radicalisation and fundamental deradicalisation. In
fact, what is important here is to highlight the case that the personal obser-
vation skills and the practical clear-sightedness required by development
workers are the same, independent of whether they belong to a religiously
affiliated or to a secular NGO.

 The following is, therefore, our conclusion: there is no difference in the
approach to be adopted by a development project, be it religious or secular.
This is because both religious and secular NGOs must remain alert in order
to detect any slides of the "fundamental" theological option towards "fun-
damentalist" social radicality. However the risk of a "fundamental-funda-
mentalist" shift should be the concern of all partners in a development
project religious as well secular.

4 Development NGOs during the Rwandan genocidal processes

The sociological typology of levels that I am presenting here, according to which the fundamentalist mentality or the fundamental option can be defined, is the result of multiple past engagements. The most significant being in the context of the evolution of post-genocide Rwanda. My remarks should be considered as a further illustration of the reflections made by Christine Schliesser in this volume on recent socio-political developments in new Rwanda. In fact, Christine Schliesser describes in her article, in a very concrete way, the reconciliation and development initiatives currently offered by the churches in Rwanda. In contrast, I will provide a more generalised and strategic perspective. To do this, I started by interpreting the fundamentalist-fundamental issues in the line with the sociological concept typology. This kind of approach is more abstract and, therefore, less existential. However, it highlights and systemises certain socio-political historical factors, framing them within a holistic analytical perspective.

This article leaves aside the controversies that surround in the Rwandan context each historical reference and the, often contradictory, interpretations that have been made in their regard (Braeckman 1994; Scherrer 1997), I refer to the material and testimonies gathered as a member of a rogatory commission appointed by the Swiss Government as soon as the murderous events that occurred in Rwanda from April to July 1994 were brought to the public's attention by the international mass media. Swiss public opinion was all the more troubled by the news because hundreds of Swiss development workers, missionaries and NGO staff had worked for decades in Rwanda.

As a member of this commission of inquiry, made up of a professor of international law, an economist, a member of the Swiss Parliament's National Council and myself as a sociologist of religions, I participated from 1994 to 1996 in the hearings of more than a hundred political actors of the time and witnesses of the genocide. Because they lasted around four hours per person, the hearings took place in Switzerland, Belgium, France and Rwanda. Minutes were taken during each of these comprehensive interviews by the two secretaries assigned to the commission. These documents have been filed at the Federal Archives of Switzerland in Bern (Voyame 1996). I am using them now as a database to illustrate the typology of processes that are qualified as either "fundamentalist" or "fundamental".

Table 2: Rwandan genocide and reconstruction

Dimensions	Fundamentalist: Exclusive radicality	Fundamental: Inclusive option	Typology
Doctrinal Roots	1949: Rwanda conse-crated to Christ the King, to 1990: Ten Command-ments of the Muhutu	Imaana overall Rwandan presence; Ubuntu philosophy: Desmond Tutu	Dogmatism vs Globalised ultimate con-cern
Socio-Political Consequences	Radio/TV Mille Collines: animalisation: Batutsi = *inyenzi* = cock-roach	Banyarwanda detrib-alisation: Paul Kagame's policy	Fanaticism vs Togetherness BHN
Psychology	*Ubuhake* feudal system Tutsi-Hutu apartheid	*Twese hamwe* = widows solidarity; Muslims in Nyami-rambo	Fundamentalism vs Unconditional solidarity
Policy strategy	Radio/TV: *gukora* = weed = geno-cide April–July 1994; Death lists (8 April 1994)	*Gacaca* = popular tri-bunal *Umuganda* = solidarity work Reconciliation: Pres-byterian Church	Radical extremism vs Dealing with the past New beginnings

4.1 Fundamentalist Rwandan radicality

In order to avoid being a passive observer of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, it is necessary to identify its origins. In fact, it is not sufficient to understand this tragedy in the way I have often heard it referred to by people around me as a kind of unforeseeable epidemic that suddenly overran Rwanda. Instead, we ought to try to understand the related historical triggers.

This is not the place to go into an in-depth analysis of the factors that led to this tragedy in Central Africa. Even less so is it the time to debate the various explanatory theories that have been presented (Friedli 2013), for example, the Belgian colonial past, the Catholic mission, the demographic explosion, the influx of refugees in the region, urbanisation, the fall in the price of coffee or the international context of the Cold War.

Table 2 reflects my attempt at a typological systemisation by presenting an overview of the four levels of fundamentalist radicalisation and funda-mental deradicalization applied to the context of the genocide in Rwanda. In this way, I illustrate how complex it is for development NGO staff -whether religious or secular - to identify the socio-political realities that are at high risk of becoming deadly let alone to intervene in a practical way to break the spiral of violence.

i. A binary doctrinal argument

The ideological radicalisation of the two socio-ethnic groups in Rwanda, Batutsi and Bahutu, can be illustrated by two significant political-religious events: (1) the solemn consecration of Rwanda to Christ the King by the Catholic mission in 1949, and (2) the almost "biblical" affirmation of Hutu purity vis-à-vis the Tutsi tradition (Zürcher 2014: 65–94).

The solemn consecration of Rwanda to Christ the King by the Catholic mission in 1949 does not in itself pose a political problem (Rutayisire 1984). It concretises, within the Catholic Church in Rwanda, the spiritual affirmation proclaimed in 1925 by Pope Pius XI that the Kingdom of Christ is a religious weapon against the forces of destruction in the world. In fact, this dogma highlights the Christian vision according to which all nations should obey Christ's evangelical counsels. However, in the specific colonial and political context of Rwanda, where governance of the country was entrusted to the power of the king and the Batutsi chiefs, this proclamation sacralised feudal Tutsi power. At the time of the Social Revolution led by former Bahutu serfs from 1959–1961, during the great wave of decolonization, this political-religious consecration put the Catholic Church on the side of the Batutsi social enemies (Friedli 1997).

Nevertheless, the public space in Rwanda continued to be impregnated by Catholic catechism and sermons. This was evident on many occasions. One example being the *Ten Commandments of the Muhutu* published in December 1990 in the Kangura journal of the governing Hutu party (Chrétien 1995: 38–42, 373).

In the solemn style of the Old Testament in the Bible, this "Decalogue" of political correctness reminds the Bahutu citizens of their obligations and the behaviour that is expected of them vis-à-vis the Batutsi. The following are some of the commandments (Chrétien 1995: 39–40):

- *Commandment One: Every Muhutu must know that all Umututsikazi (Tutsi women), wherever they may be, are working for the Tutsi ethnic cause. Consequently, any Hutu is a traitor if he:*
  - *marries a Mututsikazi*
  - *has a Mututsikazi concubine*
  - *has a Mututsikazi secretary or protégée.*
- *Commandment Five: Strategic positions be they at the political, administrative, economic, military or security-level must be given to the Bahutu.*

- *Commandment Seven: The Rwandan Armed Forces must be exclusively Hutu. This has been taught to us by the war of October 1990. No soldier is permitted to marry a Mututsikazi.*
- *Commandment Eight: The Bahutu must stop taking pity on the Batutsi.*

ii. Socio-political consequences

The radio station Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (Chrétien 1995: 63–82), played a major role in the process of social division that occurred in Rwanda prior to the April-July 1994 genocide, by diffusing strong messages of segregation and hatred towards the Batutsi. In these radio broadcasts, the Batutsi were designated as they had been since the beginnings of the wave of decolonisation and democratisation by the nickname *inyenzi*, which means "cockroach" (Chrétien 1995: 127–138). This animalisation of men and women is a decisive ideological step that makes the murder of human beings acceptable since it is no longer considered a homicide but rather a cleansing of the public sphere and a clean-up of the environment like in Nazi Germany when the public space was purged of traces of members of the Jewish community, who were disqualified as weeds or vermin (Zimbardo 2007: 287–310).

Moreover, dehumanisation and commodification of the enemy are procedures used in military camps to take away from soldiers and torturers the innate human inhibition that prevents the killing of other human beings. Removing the human quality from men, women and children makes it easier for military personnel to execute the order to massacre them. It was in line with this dehumanising logic that the messages broadcast by Radio Mille Collines prepared the mentalities and psychologies in Rwanda for the acts of cruelty and genocidal murder that were to follow. Consequently, in the space of one hundred days, from April to July 1994, more than one million women, children and men were executed without the slightest remorse or inhibition (Hatzfeld 2015).

iii. Psychology hardening around morals

Much earlier than 1994, the socio-economic consequences of this racist vision had partitioned and stratified daily life and the economic system in Rwanda. I am referring here to the *ubuhake* system, a feudal structure that allowed the Tutsi lords to exploit the Hutu serf farmers and herdsmen who were in their service (Scherrer 1997; Friedli 1998). As we have just seen, this

type of relationship was made sacred by the Church's reference to Christ the King. In addition, and very secretly, rites of initiation and *kubanwa* shamanistic ceremonies consolidated this public authority structure by integrating the forces of *imâana* "chance". The Christian missionaries, from the Catholic, Protestant and Anglican confession, tried to combat this multi-formed and ambiguous *imâana* "witchcraft" by identifying the Christian God as the sole transcendent *Imâana* (Kagame 1976: 129–150; Coupez 1975; Friedli 1974: 172–173,188–192; Rapold 1999: 299–419). Consequently, the symbolic and religious environment became extremely confused and ambiguous right at the time when Rwanda was consecrated by the Catholic missionaries to Christ the King. In this artificial and complex context, all references to fundamental, humanitarian, and developmental ethics imploded.

iv. Police and military consequences

In the frame of this multifaceted religious confusion, the international context of decolonisation and democratisation was further strengthened. Political changes were announced and inexorably put in place. The Ten Commandments of the Muhutu mentioned earlier is an example of this. How could development aid workers and technical staff from Belgian, Canadian, Swiss and French humanitarian agencies orient themselves in this context? Not least because throughout the day the local radio was asking people to go out to "*gukora*" on the hills and in the valleys! Now, this verb *gukora* at first sight means to work or weed. However, the verb is polysemous. And the request to go out to "clean" can be understood as a call to "massacre" the detested Batutsi *inyenzi*. Thanks to this ambiguity, the spiral of genocidal massacres was set in motion. However, staff of the amentioned Swiss, Belgian, French and Canadian development aid NGOs understood these messages as a call to engage in rural development and reforestation (Voyame 148–150, 186–189).

4.2 Fundamental options in the Rwandan context

It was the fundamentalist descent to hell. How could the way back to Rwandan fundamental values and humane reflexes be envisaged? What were the ethical parameters needed in order for that to happen? How could the socio-economic conditions necessary for reconstruction be identified? How could people distance themselves in their daily lives from the mur-

derous fundamentalist reflexes and behaviours? Is it only a question of obeying the new political authority in Rwanda, as some theories suggest? According to this interpretation from cultural sociology, politics ordered the killings in the first place and now it was ordering the return to a way of life founded on good neighbourly relations. This interpretation seems to present an understanding of the genocide that is overly superficial. Indeed, in order for a new public order to be able to calm, heal and reconcile the Rwandan population, I would say it was necessary to evoke and internalise some renewed dimensions of the values that lie at the heart of the Rwandan fundamental deep culture (Sibomana 1997: 201–229; Friedli 2018: 83–84, 86).

In principle and, again, by way of a brief outline, it is a question of rene-gotiating and reorientating the four societal levels highlighted earlier with regards fundamentalist processes (cf. above Table 1): (1) from rigid dogma-tism with its exclusivist, binary logic towards the reference to non-nego-tiable, inclusive human values; (2) from exclusivist, moral demonization and dehumanization towards the unconditional will to be together; (3) from dualistic, ethnic extremism towards unconditional human solidarity; (4) from exclusivist, racist fanaticism towards the new horizon of supportive and inclusive beginnings of convivence. Although these four levels on which cultural change is based may sound like a good Sunday sermon, in actuality they represent the essential points of a consistent developmental roadmap in transitional justice, community healing and human security policy (Lederach 2005: 131–149). The following are some of the main related points:

i. The encompassing "divine milieu"

As we have seen, in Rwandan tradition, transcendent reality is designated as *imâana*. This can be interpreted as something that is beyond *Batutsi* and *Bahutu* ethnic divisions. However, was this interpretation still possible given the Catholic and Protestant churches had interpreted *imâana* as being a valid designation for the biblical monotheistic God? Moreover, a linguistic ana-lysis of Rwandan proverbs reminds us that the *imâana* energy field refers to the ambivalent role that fortune plays in the lives of *abantu* humans (Coupez 1975: 90–94; Rapold 1999: 299–419; Friedli 1974: 188–192). In his Bantu-Rwandan philosophy, the Rwandan philosopher Alexis Kagame (1976: 129–150) further reminds us of this characteristic of the Rwandan deep culture. It is for this reason that, in the context of the anthropology of *bantu* cul-

tures, South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu preferred the trans-ethnic dimension of the concept of *ubuntu* "humanity", which designates the human value of solidarity.

However, I doubt that in the 21st century this kind of return to precolonial Rwanda through the reference to *imâana* could have a mobilising effect, particularly among post-genocide young people. It might be more feasible, in the theological context of the Catholic Church, to consider a prudent reinterpretation both spiritual and apolitical of the theological affirmation of "Christ King of the Universe"?

ii. Fundamental empathy

These kinds of religious dimensions could be an invitation to go beyond the *Hutu-Tutsi* ethnic divide without ignoring the *banyarwanda* anthropological, foundational dimension. Moreover, Paul Kagame, the current president of Rwanda, has stressed this *banyarwanda* foundational reference in his politics for the new Rwanda. In doing so, his intention has been to detribalise both public opinion and political practice. In order to achieve that, of course, Rwandan history needs to be rewritten and, thereafter, taught to the new generation.

However, numerous local and international observers have pointed out that, notwithstanding the egalitarian official political discourse, striking human rights violations and new forms of clientelism, subtle clan systems are reappearing (Henkel 2011). In addition, there is a worrying, growing divide between the urban milieu and the living conditions in rural areas. Yet, how is it possible to verify these evaluations?

iii. Solidarity in difference

The following two initiatives demonstrate that even in the midst of the 1994 genocidal explosion and all the hateful and murderous fury it was still possible to behave in ways that were based on human solidarity:

- In the solidarity umbrella organisation "*Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe* nous les femmes ensemble", since late 1994 mothers and widows from different ethnic and social backgrounds have helped each other in order to (re)construct houses for their children and orphans. This women's support association enabled displaced and disorientated children to receive emotional counselling, food and shelter irrespective of their ethnic affiliation.

- The *Baswahili Muslim* community in Nyamirambo/Kigali saved many of
  their neighbours in the days of the genocidal hunt by hiding them in
  their homes during the daytime under the roofs of their houses and huts
  or even in their toilets and septic tanks.

These are two examples of significant actions that were based on the values
of hospitality, which are more fundamental than tribal divisions. Values that
are not broken by ethnic ideologies or religious cleavages.

iv. Political level

Some initiatives that referred to the fundamentals of the Rwandan culture
proposed the implementation of post-genocidal, post-trauma psycho-social
actions. These constituted an important step in the urgently-needed process
of engendering mutual support and, as it was said by Naason Munyan-
damutsa a Rwandan psychiatrist (1958–2016), helped in "reconstructing
souls". Nevertheless, these therapies remained at the personal level, mean-
while it was the entirety of the Rwandan society that had to be open to
living together again in a new way, in terms of its social structures, develop-
mental energies and political conditions. In order to achieve this, Rwanda
has some traditional negotiation and reconciliation processes called
"*gacaca*". This system of talks "under the tree" and "on the lawn" (= loose
translation of *gacaca*) was used in the past for neighbourhood conflict reso-
lution in the context of rural, self-sufficient societies and near-home rela-
tions.

   This kind of negotiation mechanism could not function without some
adaptation in the context of the one hundred days of genocide where there
was a need to bring to light the atrocities that had been committed
throughout the country, evaluate who was responsible, decide on appro-
priate punishments, avoid reprisals and guarantee new societal beginnings
(Rutayisire 2012). In order to do this, new juridical tools were required,
which would be complementary to the popular *gacaca* tribunals. The recon-
struction of post-apartheid South Africa and, appropriately, the leadership
and vision of Desmond Tutu were instrumental in highlighting transitional
justice procedures that could constitute the new juridical tools that were
needed (Clark 2010).

   Indeed, with the help of 150,000 judges, who were trained in the space
of a few weeks, popular tribunals held in the villages judged those respon-
sible for the atrocities and abuses committed during the three months of
genocide in 1994. Between 1996 and 2011, this work was done according to

the following four axes (Rutayisire 2012; Friedli 2013): right to truth, right to justice, adjudication of punishments and guarantee of non-repetition.

In addition to this judicial procedure by the newly adapted *gacaca* community-tribunals, another important contribution to the restoration of fundamental Rwandan values was monthly community service in the form of days of public *umuganda* reforestation, road maintenance, the repair of homes, communitarian fieldwork. This diapraxis being a way of building solidarity.

5 Outcomes and new beginnings on development and religion issues

This article on two development contexts and projects one international (UN) and the other national (Rwanda) demonstrates, in my opinion, that differentiating between "religious" and "secular" approaches is not helpful. Both "religion" and "secularity" can produce constructive or destructive consequences i.e. both styles of acting can produce hardening or mitigating social repercussions. The divide is not between "religion" and "secularity", but rather between "orthodoxy" and "openness" between the evangelical-secular radicalization complex on the one hand, and the human–spiritual capacity to "transcend" on the other hand. Rigidity or flexibility, repetition or creativity. The skills of a "balancing identity" and the "capacity to differentiate" are two decisive development competencies. They permit a person to understand and enter into the cultural grammar of the other, be it within a religious or a secular context.

In so doing, cooperation can start under a common horizon indicated by the Basic Human Needs approach: survival, wellbeing, identity and hope. In this contribution, I have presented two cognitive skills that are, in my opinion, indispensable preconditions to realise sustainable development projects, conceptualised as a desired process of "transculturation": flexibility as a *balancing identity* and discernment of *the fundamentalist vs. fundamental* shift. The *Rwandan context* we analysed -pre-genocide, genocide 1994, and post-genocide - dramatically illustrates how both competences are necessary for developmental agents working in complex human contexts, wherein in some way or another the factor of "religion" was involved (Marshall 2011: 10–13).

In all these areas, the knowledge of the "religious" factor plays a pivotal role on at least two levels:

(1) Religion as a tool: The "religion", even in its "secularised" form, is a key cultural component to know about and respect in order to enable a development project to advance.
(2) Region as spirituality: The experiences I have shared with go-betweens engaged in serious and long-term development projects and on the field of political conflicts have taught me that they are driven by what they themselves call "*spirituality*" (Frazer and Friedli 2015: 12–13, 21, 29–31).

However, for us, it is impossible to define this term "spirituality" in a transcultural manner. But we do think, that its meaning is to be sought in an "awareness of responsibility *rooted in an ultimate concern*" with socio-political consequences. The reference to this "ultimate concern" ought to be ascertained *in situ* as valuable religious grammar Buddha, the Resurrection, Allah, the Kingdom of God, Human Dignity, etc. The personal spiritual roots of agents in Developmental NGOs religious or secular should be understood as an individual basic choice, but not a public proclamation.

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SECTION II:
MAPPING RNGOS IN DIVERSE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Marie Juul Petersen

Islam and Development: International Muslim NGOs

Introduction

The last three or four decades have seen the emergence of an increasing number of international Muslim NGOs engaged in the provision of aid to the poor. This chapter is about two of them—the British Islamic Relief and the Saudi Arabian International Islamic Relief Organisation (in the following IIROSA).[1] Despite similarities in their names, the two organisations present two very different understandings of religion and its role in the provision of aid, and—consequently—of their own role in the field of development and humanitarian aid. Based on micro-sociological case studies of these two organisations, this chapter explores some of these differences, identifying and analysing dominant narratives on the nexus between Islam and aid. What is the role of religion in the work and identity of these organisations?[2] The purpose of the analysis is not to provide a comprehensive mapping of the field of international Muslim NGOs as such, but to present emblematic examples, or what Flyvbjerg (2006) calls paradigmatic cases, of different kinds of contemporary international Muslim NGOs and their conceptions of aid and Islam.[3] For this purpose, the selection of Islamic Relief and IIROSA seems apt, insofar as these two organisations represent two 'typical' examples of international Muslim NGOs; positioning them-

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1 This chapter builds in large part on previously published work, in particular the article 'Islamizing Aid', published in Voluntas 2011, and my book For Humanity or for the Umma, Hurst 2015. I would like to thank Voluntas and Hurst for permission to reprint.
2 Recent years have seen a surge in literature on Islam and aid provision. For literature on international Muslim NGOs, see e.g. Kaag (2016; 2017), Kirmani and Khan (2008), Palmer (2011), Lacey and Benthall (2014), Clarke and Tittensor (2016), Juul Petersen (2011; 2012a; 2015). For literature on local Muslim charities and aid organisations, see e.g. Harmsen (2008) and Wiktorowicz (2001) on Jordan, Sparre and Juul Petersen (2007) on Jordan and Egypt, Clark (2004) on Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen, or Salehin (2016) on Bangladesh.
3 Paradigmatic cases are, according to Flyvbjerg (2006: 232) cases that highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question, in this case the group of transnational Muslim NGOs after 9/11. As such, the selected cases are not paradigmatic in the sense of being 'average' or 'representative', but in the sense of containing the most information, the richest narratives, the broadest range of characteristics.

selves (and being positioned) in different ways in the aid field.[4] The first two sections of the chapter give a brief history of the emergence and contemporary context of transnational Muslim NGOs, outlining some of the main events and developments that have shaped the trajectories of these organisations. The third and fourth sections present the case studies of the two Muslim NGOs, analysing dominant organisational narratives on the role of religion in the provision of development and humanitarian aid. Finally, the conclusion sums up the main points of the analysis.

The Emergence of International Muslim NGOs

Naturally, international Muslim NGOs are not the first institutions of aid provision in the history of Islam.[5] Although not direct equivalents of contemporary development aid, traditions of charity (sadaqa) have existed since the birth of Islam, and historically, zakat and waqf have been important institutions for the redistribution of wealth in Muslim societies. Contemporary Muslim aid organisations, however, grew first and foremost out of a general Islamic resurgence. Starting in the early 20th century, the Islamic resurgence denotes a global movement of renewed interest in Islam as a relevant identity and model for community, manifested among other things in the introduction and strengthening of Islamically defined organisations and institutions (Lapidus 2002: 823). The Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'at-e Islami, the transnational and pan-Islamic missionary movements of the Gulf, and the Muslim migrant organisations in Europe and North America were forerunners to today's international Muslim NGOs, contributing in different ways to shaping conceptions of aid provision. For the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami, aid was about moral education, or *tar-*

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4 The majority of data for the analysis was collected during field visits to the headquarters and country offices of the two organisations. The visits were carried out in 2008 and 2009, each lasting between one and five weeks, altogether a period of approximately four months. During my visits I conducted a total of approximately 100 interviews, including interviews with headquarter staff in Britain and Saudi Arabia, and country office staff in Bangladesh, Jordan and Lebanon; as well as background interviews with representatives from other Muslim NGOs, Christian and secular NGOs, governmental donor agencies and intergovernmental organisations. Alongside interviews, observations were also carried out, in particular at project sites but also at staff meetings and meetings with partner organisations. Finally, documents about and by the organisations were collected, including, for example, website information, project documents, reporting formats, annual reports, brochures, policies, promotion videos, photos and newspaper articles.

5 FOR A MORE THOROUGH ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL MUSLIM NGOS, SEE PETERSEN (2012B), AND BENTHALL AND BELLION-JOURDAN (2003).

biya, aimed at building up the individual Muslim and strengthening the Muslim umma, understood primarily in a national context. The organisations from the Gulf, on the other hand, emphasised a more transnational approach, expressed in the provision of relief, missionary activities, networks and conferences on a transnational level. Finally, migrant Muslim organisations in Europe and North America introduced a focus on community activism, informal practices of transnational giving as well as professional NGOs, modelled after Western NGOs.

The end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s saw the emergence of some of the first international Muslim NGOs. As Yaylaci (2008: 14) notes, contemporary forms of Muslim aid mostly originate from a rally to support Muslims in catastrophic situations, essentially those in war and natural disasters. One of the first disasters to attract the attention of Muslim organisations was the famine in the Horn of Africa, motivating the establishment of several NGOs with the purpose of providing food aid, medicine, and other kinds of emergency relief to people in affected countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad and Somalia. Islamic Relief, founded in Britain in 1984, was one of these new organisations; IIROSA was another, established in Jeddah in 1979. Parallel to the involvement in Africa, Muslim NGOs increasingly got involved in other areas of the world, especially the war in Afghanistan—interpreted by many as an attempt by an atheist Soviet to intimidate a pious Muslim population. Drifting into civil war, the Afghan conflict was later replaced by the war in Bosnia as the Muslim cause par excellence, leading to another wave of Muslim NGOs. Financially, the surge of Muslim NGOs was partly facilitated by the explosion of oil prices in 1979, meaning that huge funds were suddenly available to Middle Eastern regimes, intergovernmental institutions, businesses and individual donors (Ghandour 2004: 329). Some of this money was channeled through Muslim NGOs, in particular the Gulf-based ones. Another flow of funds had its origin among Muslim immigrants in Europe and North America, who would pay their zakat to Muslim NGOs. Today, the aid field accommodates around 400 transnational Muslim NGOs. The majority of these are established in Europe and North America, in particular Great Britain, while the Gulf countries have also fostered a large number of organisations. Recent years have also seen the emergence of a number of Turkish NGOs.

International Muslim NGOs in the Post 9/11 Aid Field

International Muslim NGOs and the Global War on Terror

In the first decade or two of their existence, international Muslim NGOs were living an almost parallel life in the periphery of the aid field. Getting most of their funding from Muslim individuals, businesses and sometimes governments, they did not need European or North American donors; they cooperated little with UN and other international institutions; and they did not participate in international forums for NGO cooperation, placing themselves outside the reach of common mechanisms for control and accountability. Suspicions of involvement in militant activism would surge from time to time, in particular in relation to the work of Muslim NGOs in Afghanistan and Bosnia. Here, several NGOs were suspected of funding militant camps and facilitating logistical support to the mujahedeen. While US and other governments would initially turn a blind eye to such relations, seeing the mujahedeen as their ally in the fight against the Communists, this changed with the end of the Cold War and the shifting political dynamics. The alleged involvement of a number of Muslim NGOs in the 1993 and 1998 attacks on American territories—first the World Trade Center and then the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania—only strengthened this negative attention to Muslim NGOs, leading to increased control, arrests of individuals and bans of certain organizations. Muslim NGOs were increasingly seen Muslim NGOs were increasingly seen as de facto accomplices in radical Islamist terrorism. This assumed linkage intensified with the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers and Pentagon in 2001. Within a year of the attacks, a number of transnational Muslim NGOs had been designated by the US government, accused of supporting Al Qaeda. Several other governments followed suit, banning transnational Muslim NGOs from working in their territory. In the following years, a wide range of new laws, policies and regulations were introduced, attempting to prevent and obstruct NGO involvement in terrorist activities. Some of the most important measures in what came to be known as the War on Terror have been the so-called designation lists of organizations and individuals with alleged links to militant Islamist networks, including Al Qaeda, Hamas and Hizbollah. Aside from these lists, governments and intergovernmental organizations have introduced a number of strategies, policies and regulations, aimed at strengthening financial accountability and transparency of NGOs (Cotterrell and Harmer 2005: 19).

Religious NGOs in the Field of Development and Humanitarian Aid

These 'hard' measures to crack down on 'terrorist' NGOs were coupled with 'softer' counter-terrorism approaches seeking to encourage cooperation with Muslim NGOs in order to prevent radicalisation (Howell and Lind 2009: 47) and to strengthen relations with potential bridge builders. In this, governmental aid agencies have played an important role. In particular the British Department for International Development, DfID, has been active in strengthening cooperation with Muslim NGOs, and supports several organisations financially. In Switzerland, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs established an initiative titled 'Towards cooperation with Islamic charities in removing unjustified obstacles', also known as the Montreux Initiative (see Lacey and Benthall 2014); and in Germany, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GTZ (in English, German Agency for International Cooperation), launched a range of projects focusing on Islam and development aid, including 'Islam and Development Cooperation in Africa', and 'Instruments of Development Cooperation and Islamic Values in Asia'.

This focus on Muslim NGOs coincided with a general interest in religious NGOs (or faith-based organisations) among governmental and intergovernmental development agencies, as the chapters in this volume show. While religious organizations have historically played an important role in the provision of aid (see the chapter by Hoffmann in this volume), their efforts for many years went largely unnoticed among mainstream development agencies. Shaped by narratives of modernisation, dominant conceptions of development have historically been largely secularist, based on an understanding of religion as a traditional and conservative force, and as such an obstacle or, at best irrelevant, to development. Ver Beek's 2000 survey of the policies of several major development agencies testifies to this, concluding that none of them had any policies on religion or spirituality, and that they sought to avoid the topic in programmes and projects. Religion was, he claimed, a 'development taboo' (Ver Beek 2000: 31). Today, the taboo has been broken (de Kadt 2009). Failures in mainstream aid provision, among other things, have forced development agencies to look for alternative ways of providing aid—and in this, many have turned to religious NGOs, seeing them as the new panacea. Underlying this new interest is an understanding of religion as an 'added value' to development. Building on large constituencies and enjoying trust and credibility in local communities, religious NGOs are expected by development agencies to have great

potential as promoters of development and humanitarian aid, capable of galvanizing moral commitment, translating principles of aid into the idioms of faith and mobilizing popular support for donor initiatives (Clarke 2007: 80). In this perspective, the religious identity of organisations is considered an instrument in the effective implementation of aid activities, primarily serving as a tool for access to and communication with constituencies that may otherwise be unreachable.[6]

To sum up, this is (part of) the context in which contemporary transnational Muslim NGOs find themselves today. Historically, they have been largely invisible in the aid field, getting funding from individual Muslims, and avoiding European and North American donors. In particular, since 9/11 and the War on Terror, this parallel life is no longer possible—everybody is watching the Muslim NGOs, navigating in an environment of increasing regulation and control, but also with openings for cooperation and funding. Different NGOs have reacted differently to this situation. Some have withdrawn or have been pushed to the periphery, isolated from mainstream development actors, while others move still closer to the centre, cooperating closely with other actors in the field. The remainder of this chapter takes a closer look at two organisations that have had very different trajectories since 9/11, exploring the ways in which they understand religion and its role in development and humanitarian aid as well as the ways in which they understand their own position in this field.

International Islamic Relief Organisation: 'It's all in Islam!'

Established in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1979, IIROSA is the oldest of the two organisations discussed in this chapter—and one of the oldest transnational Muslim NGOs in the world. The IIROSA is formally part of the Muslim World League whose secretary general is the chairman of the IIROSA General Assembly. IIROSA has its headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with fundraising offices all over the country. The organisation is firmly anchored in a conservative Muslim environment. Founders, board and assembly members are all 'Islamic dignitaries' with strong personal and professional relations to key Islamic organisations and persons. All staff members in the organisations are practicing Muslims; many have experience with other Muslim organisations; and a few have experience with Western development organisations. Likewise, the vast majority of donors are Kuwaiti and Saudi Muslims wishing to pay their obligatory religious tax,

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6 For a critical discussion of religion as an 'added value', see e.g. Jones and Petersen (2011).

zakat, voluntary alms, or sadaqa; partners are primarily other Islamic orga-
nisations and institutions such as the OIC, the International Islamic
Council for Da'wa and Relief, national Ministries of Awqaf and Islamic
Affairs, as well as local Muslim organisations; and recipients are mainly
Muslim majority countries or Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries.

The IIROSA used to be one of the biggest and most influential Muslim
organisations. In the 1990s, it had more than 80 country offices all over the
world—including Latin America—and a budget close to $100 million USD,
employing several thousand staff members. By 2010, the budget had been
cut to less than $20 million USD (IIROSA 2011: np), and several country
offices and programmes had been closed. Since then, IIROSA's activities
have diminished further; there are even rumours that the organisation is
largely defunct today. One of the main reasons for this downfall is the per-
sistent suspicions of links with Al Qaeda and other militant Islamist groups,
leading to severe restrictions on the organisation's activities. These suspi-
cions have surrounded the organisation since its early years, in particular in
relation to its activities in Afghanistan and Bosnia, where the organisation
was suspected of supporting the mujahedeen,[7] but intensified after 9/11,
when IIROSA was accused of financing the instigators of the attacks. In
2006, the Philippines and Indonesia branches were accused of ties to ter-
rorist organisations by the US, claiming that they were 'facilitating fund-
raising for al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist groups'. At the same time, the
IIROSA has been subject to increasing control by its own government. The
organisation has, in other words, been subject to a wide range of 'hard mea-
sures' in the name of the War on Terror, leading to its deterioration and iso-
lation.[8]

7 Later, the IIROSA was suspected of involvement in the 1998 bombing of the US
   embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, leading to the ban of the organisation by the Kenyan
   government.
8 In August 2002, the organisation was, together with seven other NGOs, seven interna-
   tional banks, the Sudanese government and a number of individuals, sued by a group of
   families of the 9/11 victims (Saudia Online 19 August 2002, cf. Immigration and Refugee
   Board of Canada 2003). The case is still ongoing. The director of the Philippines office,
   Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, is the brother-in-law of Osama bin Laden and was considered
   by the US to be a senior Al Qaeda member. The Indonesia office was accused, among
   other things, of financing the establishment of training facilities for use by al Qaeda asso-
   ciates.The purpose of this analysis is not to determine whether this treatment is justified
   or not (to date, the organisation has not been convicted of any crimes).

A dignified life and a strengthened umma

Through its work, IIROSA "aims to alleviate the suffering of distressed and needy people worldwide".[9] As stated in one of the organisation's reports (IIROSA 2006: 8):

> "IIROSA drives inspiration from the blessed land of the Two Holy Mosques, adopting the prophetic guidance in relieving the distressed, helping the needy and consoling the grieved. It strives to provide food for the hungry, medical care for the sick, clothes for the unclothed, helps wipe tears of the orphans, provides shelter, social and educational care for those who have lost their homes due to wars or natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods and drought. […] Allah Almighty said in His Holy Scripture: {And they feed for the love of God, the indignant, the orphan and the captive (Saying), "We feed you for the sake of God alone: No reward do we desire from you. Nor thanks} (Verses 8 & 9, Sura 76/Holy Qur'an)."

Through the provision of aid, the organisations seek to enable the poor and needy to take care of themselves, so that they will no longer be humiliated and ashamed, but will be able to re-gain their God-given dignity, living "a decent and useful life" (IIROSA 2008b: 10). For IIROSA, poverty is not only about hunger, diseases, and lack of education; it is also about religious ignorance, humiliation and backwardness. Poverty is, in other words, both spiritual and material and as such, markedly different from secular development conceptions of poverty. This understanding of poverty builds on conceptions of the inseparability of the material and the transcendent, underlying most contemporary Islamic movements and groups.

By assisting individual Muslims, ensuring their right to Islamic education and encouraging "observance of Islamic morals, sharia virtues, [and] activation of da'wa" (IIROSA 2008a: 40), IIROSA not only ensures their self-reliance and a dignified life, they also contribute to strengthening the Muslim umma (see also Kaag 2008: 5). The umma is threatened at different levels: from within, by 'immoral' and 'ignorant' Muslims on one side, and religious extremists and fanatics on the other; and from the outside, by what is seen to be strongly proselytizing Christian NGOs, as well as by "baseless allegations" launched against Muslim NGOs by "some people in the West" in particular after 9/11 (IIROSA 2007: 2f). To be a good Muslim is not only about individual piety and dignity, but about rescuing and maintaining the distinctively Islamic character of society. As such, the moral reform of the individual is linked to that of society (Hatina 2006: 182),

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9 IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/eportal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=2 (last accessed, 28 April 2018).

strongly echoing Hassan al-Banna's ideas of Islamic activism. Aid provision, in other words, is not only for the poor individual, but for society. This is what Thaut (2009), in her analysis of Christian NGOs, calls an evangelistic humanitarianism: "they provide relief and development assistance largely with the goal of helping to extend the church, build up the community of Christians globally, and serve the spiritual needs of humanity" (Thaut 2009: 342).

For IIROSA, then, aid entails not only access to health, education, food and housing, but also religious education and facilities for worshipping. Aid is at once spiritual and material. As such, Islam is not restricted to a specific 'Islamic' department or programme for 'seasonal activities', but influences and shapes all sectors of the organisation's work. This is very visible and concrete in the Engineering Department, responsible for building and maintaining mosques, and in the Holy Qur'an and Dawa Programme, offering Qur'an memorization courses; but practices of aid and religion also merge—albeit in more intangible and indirect ways—in other programmes. An example is the Social Welfare Programme, which—at least at the time of the current study's fieldwork—offered financial support, education, medicine and basic necessities to almost 100,000 orphans across the world with a budget of almost $15.5 million USD. "The Prophet Muhammad himself was an orphan and he said that whoever took care of an orphan would be like this with him in heaven", people tell me, illustrating the closeness between the sponsor and the prophet by holding together two fingers. "That's why we have this programme". The purpose of the programme was to provide the orphans "with comprehensive care including food, medical care, social care, religious care" (IIROSA 2006: 18). Religious care was just as important as other kinds of care—this was reflected, among other things, in the annual evaluation of the child's welfare, sent to the child's sponsor. Here, staff members listed information as to the religiosity of the child, his/her ability to memorise the Qur'an (and if so what parts of the Qur'an), the name of the Qur'an centre he/she goes to, along with information as to his/her health situation, education and hobbies. Through lectures, sports and creative activities, IIROSA staff taught the children about topics such as social skills and good manners, health and hygiene, praying and fasting— "and it's all in Islam", I was told. A staff member of the orphans programme explained: "We show the orphans what Islam is like in an indirect manner, through our examples, through the way we do things". Through this lifestyle evangelism (Bornstein 2003), IIROSA staff sought to "build good people". "We teach them how to deal with other people", the staff member said, adding: "For me, it's about showing the children that Islam is

not just about praying and going to the mosque, it is about dealing with people in a good way".

"Islam is about the spiritual and social matters"

As can be inferred from the above description, then, aid in this context is not only about building wells, distributing medicine or teaching children to read and write; it is also about building a mosque, preaching, and teaching children to memorize the Qur'an. This understanding of aid as inherently religious is based on a particular understanding of Islam. Islam is not just about praying, going to the mosque and dressing the right way—it is also about education, social welfare services and relief. As one staff member said: "Islam is not just about the spiritual, it is about the spiritual and social matters". As such, the Islam promoted by the IIROSA is an all-encompassing and pervasive Islam, or, to use Lincoln's (2003: 59) terms, a maximalist religion, constituting the central domain of organisational community and influencing all organisational discourses, practices and structures. This means that Islam is a source of social action as much as individual piety, echoing ideas of Hassan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood. As people repeatedly say, "helping is better than praying". But it is not social action understood in political terms; instead, it is about education, culture, economy, social welfare, relief. The vision of the strengthened umma is not a vision of a concrete political umma, a rejection of the nation-state in favour of a transnational pan-Islamic political unit. It is a normative, moral vision, positing the umma as a transnational community of values.

Underlying this understanding of Islamic action are notions of solidarity and brotherhood. All Muslims are part of the same religious brotherhood, bound together in a global umma, and as such, closely connected, mutually interdependent and obliged to help one another. Muslims should engage in the provision of aid to the poor, because they are part of the same religious community, and as such, are obliged to help one another. Using terms such as an 'Islamic society', an 'Islamic brotherhood' and a 'Muslim nation', IIROSA nurses a strong sense of solidarity (Bayat 2005), emphasising "ties of interdependence, compassion and tender sympathy" (IIROSA nd) between members of this community and pointing out the responsibility of members to take care of one another. The donor gives to a fellow Muslim brother (or sister) in a country far away, because he sees himself and his fellow brother as members of a deep horizontal brotherhood, the umma (Kochuyt 2009: 106). By receiving the gift, the recipient likewise aligns him

or herself with the umma (Kochuyt 2009: 110). As an IIROSA publication notes, "the Islamic society is a closely knitted society where the well-off helps the poor and the elder cares for the younger" (IIROSA 2008b: 13), and furthermore, helping the poor and needy "illustrates the principle of solidarity that Islam encourages and calls for" (IIROSA 2010: 4).

"They don't have the same feeling of family as we have"

This particular conception of aid and Islam as closely intertwined, based on notions of solidarity and family, makes Islamic aid markedly different from other kinds of aid, staff would argue. As a former IIROSA staff member said, describing his experiences in Sudan:

> "When we went to Sudan, we would wear the same clothes as the Sudanese, we would eat the same food, do the same things—and many people there speak Arabic. So they felt that we were closer to them. We gave aid with no strings attached, we considered ourselves brothers in humanity. I felt that we were much closer to them—because we share the same life habits. Likewise, in Afghanistan, people received us with deep respect and love. They might have received the Christian organisations with respect as well—but not necessarily with love."

Other staff members agreed on this distinction. As one person said: "[Other organisations] don't have the same feeling of family as we have, that the orphans are a part of our family, that it's about humanity, family, about making the orphans feel important. For them, it's routine, it's just a job they need to do, it's about finishing work to get home to your own family". Another person added: "We have a different way of dealing with people. We make people feel the importance of their existence. People can contribute to building society, they are special. The poor are not just somebody you can treat like you want to. They deserve respect". This difference was explained by reference to Islam: "We take this from a hadith by al Hakim, it says that you can't buy people with your money. You have to deal with them in a respectful way, with good manners and a smile". Others mentioned the Muslim tradition of making sure that the person receiving the money has the upper hand as a symbol of the uniqueness of Muslim organisations: "The recipient should not have the lower hand. We care about these details, this is important to us". As such, IIROSA staff constructed a dichotomy between Muslim aid which is warm, caring and per-

sonal, and non-Muslim aid which is characterized by a somewhat cold and distanced professionalism.[10]

The War on Terror only seemed to intensify this dichotomy, adding a geopolitical dimension in terms of a war between Islam and the West. To most staff, the increasing control, restrictions and designations of Muslim NGOs were not seen as legitimate measures to ensure greater transparency of financial transactions, but as illegitimate attempts at destroying innocent organisations as part of the West's continued war against Islam. As one staff member said: "after [9/11], they wanted to crush the backbone of the Muslim world and they thought the most obvious was the charity organisations".[11] Further underlining the cruelty of the US authorities, people often emphasize the consequences of the War on Terror, directing attention to ways in which the ultimate costs of anti-terrorism measures are often borne by the poor (Kroessin 2007). "The orphans were crying", a person said, telling me about the Bangladeshi government's closing-down of a number of orphanages in Bangladesh (allegedly following pressure from the US government), which left more than 9,000 children without assistance. "We used to provide them with everything—food, school bags, medicine, clothing. And suddenly we cannot help them anymore. You feel very sad because of that". In the context of aid provision, then, the War on Terror is

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10 See e.g. Bornstein 2009 for a discussion of this dilemma in an Indian context. She writes: "To coerce the impulse to give into rational accountability is to obliterate its freedom; to render giving into pure impulse is to reinforce social inequality" (2009: 643). According to this rationale of religious solidarity, personal care and compassion are more important qualities than efficiency and professionalism; in fact, professionalism may even be counterproductive to the sense of solidarity. An illustrative example of this is an incident an IIROSA top manager tells me about. He had been invited to a coordination meeting with other organisations working with orphans to discuss possibilities for coordination and cooperation: "Some suggested to make a control mechanism, to make sure that orphans don't get money from two different organisations. But I didn't like this idea, I was the only one who protested. I don't think we should minimise the income of the orphans. This is their only salary, and 20 or 30 dollars is not a lot. Some of them need more, they might have bigger families or different circumstances. You can't give the same to all. I don't think we should give all the same. So we cancelled this coordination. One sponsor for each orphan is not enough, they need more sponsors, at least two. […] I was the only one who thought this way, but I have worked with orphans for 18 years, and I feel like their father, I feel responsible for them".

11 In an IIROSA Bulletin, published shortly after the ban of the IIROSA branches in the Philippines and Indonesia in 2006, Adnan Khalil Basha, then Secretary General of the IIROSA, scorns the US government, claiming that "[t]hese actions are aimed at preventing Muslim relief activities around the world" (IIROSA 2007).

seen as a war between Islam and the West, between the caring and the cruel.

To sum up, in IIROSA we find an aid that is at once spiritual and material, expressed e.g. in the construction of mosques and Qur'an education, but also more subtly in the provision of care and education for orphans, aimed at once at facilitating a 'dignified life' and strengthening the Muslim *umma*. Underlying IIROSA's conceptions of aid is an understanding of Islam as all-encompassing and relevant to all spheres of aid provision. As such, religion comes to be a defining factor in IIROSA's aid provision, making it radically different from the aid provided by non-Muslim organisations, whether secular or Christian.

Islamic Relief: "We have an understanding of religion that gives us an advantage"

Islamic Relief was established by Egyptian immigrants in Birmingham, UK, in 1984, making it one of the world's oldest international Muslim NGOs. With a budget of more than $130 million USD, it is arguably also one of the world's largest—if not the largest—Muslim NGOs (Islamic Relief 2017: 46). The organisation has its headquarters in Birmingham, with partner offices and branches in 18 countries, and activities in more than 30 countries. Staff and trustees make up an eclectic mix, including both people with little or no development expertise or training, as well as people with several years of experience and development-related training. Most are Muslim, but Christian and secular staff members also work in the organisation. Apart from individual donations, Islamic Relief also relies—increasingly—on institutional funding from donors such as DfID, ECHO and various UN agencies as well as organisations from the Middle East. Islamic Relief has formal partnerships with a number of Muslim, Christian and secular development NGOs, and is a member of a wide range of networks, including BOND, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership and the Disasters Emergency Committee. Recipients are both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Since the early 2000s, Islamic Relief has become increasingly integrated within the field of mainstream development and humanitarian aid, reflecting an increasing interest among development donors in cooperating with religious NGOs in general, as well as their desire to reach out to 'moderate' Muslim organisations within the context of the War on Terror. As a staff member in Islamic Relief noted with some amusement: "In these times, people want to be seen to be involving Islam". These developments

have been paralleled by an increasing interest within Islamic Relief to
engage more actively with mainstream development actors. In this, the
organisation was motivated not simply by a prosaic quest for additional
sources of funding, but also—and perhaps more importantly—a desire to
move from what they considered to be short-term charity and relief work
towards more long-term approaches to "address the root causes of
poverty", as noted on Islamic Relief's website.[12] Institutional funding was
seen as an important tool in facilitating this change. The organisational
involvement in long-term development was further facilitated by the inclu-
sion of new kinds of staff. While few first-generation staff members had
development experience, the organisation started employing more develop-
ment professionals, many with previous work experience from other devel-
opment and humanitarian NGOs. As one staff member from Islamic Relief
said, there had been a shift in staff from "people wanting to work in a reli-
gious organisation to people wanting to work in a development NGO".
Simultaneously, a new type of individual donor took stage, consisting of
young, well-educated second or third generation immigrants. Contrary to
older, more conservative donors, they were not satisfied with traditional
religious activities such as Qurbani sacrifices and Ramadan food packages:
they expected Muslim NGOs to be modern, professional organisations, on
a par with mainstream development organisations such as Oxfam and
CARE.

"Lasting routes out of poverty"

Unlike IIROSA, the primary language of Islamic Relief is that of main-
stream development and humanitarian aid, for example as reflected in its
mission statement:

> "Exemplifying our Islamic values, we will mobilise resources, build partnerships and
> develop local capacity as we work to: Enable communities to mitigate the effect of
> disasters, prepare for their occurrence and respond by providing relief, protection
> and recovery; Promote integrated development and environmental custodianship
> with a focus on sustainable livelihoods; Support the marginalised and vulnerable to
> voice their needs and address root causes of poverty."[13]

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12 Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.org/about-us/ (last accessed, 3 Jan-
    uary 2018).
13 Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.org/about-us/ (last accessed, 3 Jan-
    uary 2018).

Underlying this is an understanding of poverty as a question of individual vulnerability and lack of capabilities: 'Many people are stuck in a poverty trap because they do not have the resources to develop their skills and work their way out of destitution' (Islamic Relief 2007: 19), Islamic Relief noted in its previous strategy. In 2008, Islamic Relief's research and policy department developed a *Policy Stance on Poverty*, defining poverty as

> "a multidimensional phenomenon, best understood in terms of capability deprivation, encompassing not only material deprivation (measured by income or consumption) but also other forms of deprivation, such as unemployment, ill health, lack of education, vulnerability, powerlessness, and social exclusion". (Islamic Relief 2008: point 2.8)

This understanding of poverty reflects mainstream development approaches found in organisations such as UNDP and Oxfam. But it also differs little from an Islamic understanding, the paper argues, outlining "five groups of activities and things which make up the human needs in Islam. These are: (a) Religion, (b) Physical self, (c) Intellect or Knowledge, (d) Offspring & Family, and (e) Wealth" (Islamic Relief 2008:point 3.0) "In particular", the paper notes, "the last four types of basic activities and things that make up basic human needs in Islam are similar to the indicators in the Human Development Indices, which stress the importance of income, education, and health" (Islamic Relief 2008: point 3.1). What is more problematic, is the first type of human need—that of religion, understood as the "ability to know about and practice one's religion". The paper states somewhat ambiguously that this is "not commonly part of the development and relief 'package', and Islamic Relief's willingness to consider religious deprivation and its measurement warrant discussion" (Islamic Relief 2008: point 4.1). It is difficult to align conceptions of poverty as—at least partly—spiritual with secular development conceptions of poverty. Instead, Islamic Relief discusses religion as part of poverty in the form of lack of religious freedom and discrimination against religious people; topics that do not challenge development principles of neutrality and non-confessionalism. In this perspective, a multi-dimensional notion of poverty does not, as in IIROSA, refer to the equal importance of spiritual and material needs. Instead, it is about including considerations as to rights and capabilities rather than relying on a strict monetary understanding of poverty.

Responding to poverty, then, does not require 'religious' activities such as mosque building or Qur'an education.[14] Instead, Islamic Relief's activities include mainstream development and humanitarian activities, including 'innovative disaster-risk reduction', 'climate-change adaptation', microfinance programmes, projects to fight 'disability exclusion', women's empowerment projects, and advocacy campaigns against gender-based violence. In the concrete implementation of these activities, Islam does not seem to play a major role. "When we work, we don't go to the Qur'an to see what to do. We work from a development perspective", noted a project manager, responsible for a water and sanitation project in Bangladesh. Visiting one of Islamic Relief's project sites in Bangladesh, I met with a group of women, the beneficiaries of the project who gathered for their weekly meeting with the 'village motivator'. Here, they learned about topics such as 'group dynamics', 'income generation activities', and 'disaster preparedness', all of them (stereo)typical activities of mainstream development aid. "This way, we try to develop their capacity, so they can join the development mainstream", one staff member explained. When the women were asked if they talked about Islam at their weekly meetings and they all laughed and shook their heads. "We talk more about practical things", a woman said. A staff member added: "Our main objective is to provide an input to beneficiaries—what they are doing in relation to Allah, to their God, that's their own business, that's not really our business".

Likewise, religion does not restrict the choice of beneficiaries. As stated in an annual report (Islamic Relief 2008: 2): "We provide help where it is needed most and wherever we are best placed to assist. We do this regardless of race, colour, political affiliation, gender or belief and without expecting anything in return". The orphan sponsorship programme includes Christian children and donors; several recipients of microfinance loans are Hindus; even Ramadan food packages are distributed to non-Muslims. A staff member told me: "We tell people that we have come to work for them, whether they are Muslim, Hindu, Christian, it doesn't matter to us. The important thing is that you are a human being". In this, Islamic Relief bears strong resemblance with certain Christian NGOs, such as DanChurchAid and Christian Aid, which also have religious roots but

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14 The few specifically religious activities that Islamic Relief does engage in—primarily slaughtering of Qurbani meat for Eid al-Adha and distribution of food packages during Ramadan— are 'developmentalised', justified with reference to their function as tools for promoting Islamic Relief and introducing activities such as microfinance and health programmes to new areas.

whose operations do not have a religious goal, characterised as 'accom-modative-humanitarian' (Thaut 2009: 333) organisations.

The advantage of religion

Unlike in IIROSA, then, the religion we find in Islamic Relief is not a maximalist religion, tangible and visible and influencing all aspects of aid provision. Instead, we might characterise the religiosity of Islamic Relief as minimalist (Turner 2003: 59), relegated to the sphere of underlying values and principles. Islamic Relief is, in its own words, "guided by the timeless values and teachings of the Qur'an and the prophetic example (*Sunnah*)".[15] More specifically, the organisation lists five values, explaining how these influence conceptions of aid:

> "Sincerity (Ikhlas) In responding to poverty and suffering, our efforts are driven by sincerity to God and the need to fulfil our obligations to humanity.
> Excellences (Ihsan) Our actions in tackling poverty are marked by excellence in our operations and the conduct through which we help the deserving people we serve.
> Compassion (Rahma) We believe the protection and well-being of every life is of paramount importance and we shall join with other humanitarian actors to act as one in responding to suffering brought on by disasters, poverty and injustice.
> Social Justice (Adl) Our work is founded on enabling people and institutions to fulfil the rights of the poor and vulnerable. We work to empower the dispossessed towards realising their God-given human potential and develop their capabilities and resources.
> Custodianship (Amana) We uphold our duty of custodianship over Earth and its resources, and the trust people place in us as a humanitarian and development practitioner to be transparent and accountable."[16]

Religion is not only a question of values. According to staff, Islamic Relief's religious identity gives the organisation a certain advantage compared to other, secular, organisations in terms of implementation. A common religion, they would argue, creates a symbolic sense of community with beneficiaries. Muslim NGOs are in other words better suited (than secular or Christian organisations) to work in Muslim areas and with Muslim actors because, as one staff member said, "We have an understanding of the culture and religion that gives us an advantage". Because of their religious identity, for instance, Islamic Relief claims to be able to access 'hard-to-

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15 Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.org/about-us/ (last accessed, 3 January 2018).
16 Islamic Relief, website http://www.islamic-relief.org/about-us/ (last accessed, 3 January 2018).

reach communities' that others have difficulties in accessing. Likewise, their religious identity allegedly gives them an advantage in terms of communication. Staff members expressed how religion can be a helpful tool, facilitating communication of development principles to a pious population. As noted by a top manager in Islamic Relief's headquarters, referring to the organisation's health activities: "The effect is much stronger if Islamic Relief says the prophet Muhammad encouraged breast feeding than if someone says that professor so and so encourages it". Finally, many also mentioned sensitivity and provision of culturally appropriate services as an organisational strength, compared to other, secular or Christian, organisations. Discussing the work of Islamic Relief in Pakistan, one person from the headquarters explained:

> "When we work there, we respect for instance gender separation and we have to make sure that only women teach women. We worked in South Pakistan, which is very, very conservative, and we first worked with the male community organisation and it took two years before we were allowed to work with the women. I don't think other organisations would have been allowed."

"They are perhaps not the most sophisticated"

In their descriptions of the 'added value' of Islamic Relief, staff invariably compare themselves to secular or Christian organisations, thus seemingly relying on the same dichotomy as IIROSA between Muslim and non-Muslim organisations. But while for IIROSA, religion makes a fundamental difference between organisations, for Islamic Relief religion is what gives the organisation an added value rather than what makes it fundamentally different. Islamic Relief is, in many ways, similar to other mainstream development organisations, whether Christian or secular. The values that the organisation builds its work upon are aligned with the values of mainstream development and humanitarian aid as the activities they engage in are the same and the recipients they target are the same. Staff in Islamic Relief often express close allegiance with Christian and secular organisations, just like partnerships and cooperation with these organisations are promoted in organisational material and on the website.

The dichotomy between 'charity' and 'development' seems to be much more important for understanding the ways in which Islamic Relief positions itself in relation to other organisations: "The classical way of doing charity is about building a mosque, digging a well, distributing sewing machines", one person explained to me. "This is fine, it is helpful. But in Islamic Relief, we have decided not to build mosques. We find that funds

can be used to something more important such as reducing poverty, building capacity". This dichotomy is often exemplified in a distinction between Islamic Relief and the Middle Eastern NGOs: "The Middle Eastern NGOs are very narrow-minded in their approach. Its only relief, only about Qurbani, distribution of food, those kinds of things. We do that as well, of course, but only as a small part of our programme. Our main focus is development". According to staff in Islamic Relief, 'good' development is not only about sustainability, it is also about transparency, accountability and professionalism—something which is not always found in the Middle Eastern NGOs. As one person said: "They are perhaps not the most sophisticated, they don't use LogFrame and all these things". Others tell me that their organisational set-up is not professional and that certain NGOs have had problems with corruption. Some people connected this lack of professionalism with the role of religion in the organisations: "The [Middle Eastern NGOs] are led by religious people—not development professionals. They are good people, but they don't know". Here, the War on Terror discourse on 'moderate' and 'fundamentalist' Muslims also plays into the dichotomy, introducing a relation between secular religiosity and development on one hand, and pervasive religiosity and charity on the other. According to many people, Middle Eastern NGOs may do a valuable job helping the poor, but they are also missionary and discriminatory, presenting a 'strict' image of Islam. Islamic Relief, on the other hand, is 'neutral', 'universalist', and 'tolerant', promoting a 'moderate' image of Islam: "We will present Islam with a better image. We need another face, we need to represent Islam from a different side", a staff member said.

In sum, the aid we find in Islamic Relief is in many ways indistinguishable from that of other, mainstream, development and humanitarian organisations, predicated on notions of sustainable development, professionalism and neutrality. In this, religion is not a defining factor, but an 'added value' facilitating access, communication and a religiously sensitive approach to recipients. As such, Islamic Relief does not consider itself fundamentally different from non-Muslim organisations; many staff members consider themselves closer to Christian and secular NGOs than to other Muslim NGOs, seen to be too charity-oriented and un-professional.

Bridgebuilders or defenders of Islam?

The above analysis of Islamic Relief and IIROSA has provided empirical insights into the organisational identities of contemporary international Muslim NGOs, exploring the ways in which these organisations understand Islam and aid and the nexus between the two. IIROSA presents a kind of aid that responds to material as well as spiritual needs of recipients, aiming to ensure individuals a 'dignified life' and contributing to the strengthening of the umma. Insisting on an intimate connection between Islam and aid, the organisation displays a pervasive organisational religiosity embedded in and influencing all aspects of aid provision, from the choice of recipients to the kinds of activities and sources of funding. In the perspective of IIROSA, this connection is what makes their aid 'warm', 'caring' and 'personal', in contrast to Western, secular, aid practices which are seen as 'cold', effective' and 'routine'. Islamic Relief on the other hand promotes aid that is coined in terms of 'sustainable development', aimed at 'empowering' recipients and building up their—largely material—capacities. In this, religion is almost invisible, shaping neither the choice of recipients, the kinds of activities nor the sources of funding. Religion does play a role, there is no doubt about that—but not in a way that is dichotomous to secular aid. Instead, religion comes to serve as an 'added value' to an aid that is otherwise almost identical to mainstream development and humanitarian aid. The real difference for Islamic Relief, it seems, is between organisations that engage in 'charity' and those that engage in 'development'.

The insights from these two international Muslim NGOs, detailed in this paper, show wide differences in how they operate and how they view their role within the aid field, leading to the proposal that Muslim NGOs cannot be seen as a homogenous group. This therefore raises the question of whether it is in fact counterproductive to rely on terms such as 'Muslim NGOs' as an analytical category. As this analysis has shown, in the case of Muslim NGOs, the divides between the 'Muslim' and the 'non-Muslim', or between the 'religious' and the 'secular' for that matter, are far from always the most relevant divides if we want to understand the ways in which these organisations understand and position themselves in the field of development and humanitarian aid. Instead, other divides, such as that between minimalist and maximalist kinds of religiosity, seem to be much more relevant. This is not only a relevant dichotomy in relation to Muslim organisations, but is mirrored among Christian NGOs, supporting the argument that differences between kinds of religiosity internally among Christian or

Muslim organisations are more important than differences between Muslim and Christian NGOs, or between religious and secular NGOs, for that matter. In her typology of Christian aid organisations, Thaut (2009) places so-called accomodative-humanitarian organisations such as Christian Aid at one end of her spectrum, and evangelistic-humanitarian organisations such as Samaritarian Purse at the other. While Christian Aid and other accommodative-humanitarian organisations argue for a sharp distinction between aid and religious mission, Samaritan Purse and other evangelistic-humanitarian organisations have an express goal to save lives and souls through their work (Thaut 2009: 325).

Furthermore, some kinds of religiosity seem to be more easily aligned with mainstream development and humanitarian aid. The normative and regulatory forces of mainstream development and humanitarian aid are incredibly strong, leaving little room for different kinds of religiosity. IIROSA's maximalist religiosity, insisting on the inseparability between religion and aid, is difficult to align with mainstream development ideals of non-confessionalism, universalism and neutrality. In Islamic Relief, on the other hand, religion is an 'advantage', facilitating access, communication and context-sensitivity but without radically shaping the ways in which aid is provided or to whom it is provided. This minimalist religiosity fits well with donor expectations of an 'added value' while at the same time adhering to principles of non-confessionalism, universalism and neutrality, opening up for inclusion into the field of mainstream development and humanitarian aid. Over time, this inclusion seems to further strengthen dichotomies and alliances, reflecting the strongly-homogenizing tendencies of the field of mainstream development and humanitarian aid. Those Muslim NGOs that are included in the field come to look and act more and more like any other mainstream development NGO. As noted by a staff member from another Western Muslim NGO, also firmly positioned within the field: "[T]he donor funding is the same, the reporting mechanisms are the same, the places we work are the same, the way we implement projects is the same. So how could there be any differences [between us and secular NGOs]?" Thus, if we want to ensure greater religious pluralism in the field of development and humanitarian aid, perhaps we should not focus so much on breaking up the religious/secular divide, but more on revisiting dominant principles and practices in the field of development, opening the field up not only for different religious expressions, but for different kinds of aid and different kinds of organisations.

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Ulrich Dehn

Religious Philosophy, Social Work and Social Engagement of Buddhist and Hindu Movements

Introduction

Buddhism as well as Hinduism (in its various branches and varieties) have for a long time been considered as quietist religions which are not concerned with social and political issues. Buddhists in general used to claim that all ethical action towards the world is founded on the personal constitution of the individual being. A person on the way to enlightenment and detachment from all desires and thirst for belongings will almost automatically be a nucleus of peaceful effects for his/her environment. Everything starts with contemplation and individual spirituality. This still is a far spread mentality among Buddhists.

Hinduism, particularly Vaishnavism, is placed between a traditional ethical set which is not substantially different from other religions, on one hand, and caste ethics which suggest that a faithful Hindu should behave along the lines of his or her place in traditional society. This conflict of traditional ethics and caste ethics is formulated in the Bhagavadgita[1] in the dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and God Krishna. More than Krishna, it is the God Rama about whom the idea of a just and peaceful rule called *ramraj* has been generated. It is part of the belief of many Rama-believers such as was the family of Mohandas K. Gandhi, particularly his mother. Gandhi elaborated the concept of *svaraj* (self-rule) in combination with *ramraj* (God's rule) according to him stemming from the Bhagavadgita which should be a realisation of God in the hearts of all people leading to internal and external self-rule. This he also defended against Muslims who claimed that Rama was a Hindu Goddess and could not be apt for being the basic concept for all Indians. For Gandhi, after all, Rama was another name for God in general, thus for Allah (Klimkeit 1981: 296–299).

Starting from the 1980s, worldwide Buddhism has been reshaped by Buddhist action groups and movements which operate in networks and cooperate with Christians and other non-Buddhist groups. The Dalai Lama

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1 The Bhagavadgita is the chapters 25 to 42 of the 6th book of the great epic work Mahabharata.

and the Japanese Buddhist monk and writer Maruyama Teruo pointed out that Christian social activities and networking have been a major source or motivation for Buddhists to join hands in social justice oriented action and to create international links. One major place for this engagement was the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) which was founded in Thailand in 1989 in the monastery Suan Mokkh ('garden of liberation').

This chapter draws attention to concepts of 'engaged Buddhism', followed by considerations on the Sarvodaya movement in India and Sri Lanka, inspired by Gandhi and others. The bulk of this chapter, however, will give some insights into the foundation and history of the two major Buddhist networks and introduce some major thinkers and patrons of engaged Buddhism like Thich Nhat Hanh, Sulak Sivaraksa, Maruyama Teruo, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and the economic concept of Robert Aitken. Finally, the chapter focusses on the question of whether social justice is originally a Buddhist claim or rather a 'side effect' or part of other philosophical elements (see Jones 2003; Kraft 1992). In considering this question, this chapter also explores how social justice became part of Buddhist activities along with the human rights networks of other religions.

The major Buddhist movement associated with the issue of social justice is the INEB, the term engaged Buddhism has allegedly been coined by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh and is supposed to be close to 'worldly Buddhism' or 'Buddhist humanism'. The latter definition alludes to concepts which are popular in new religious movements like the Japanese Sōka Gakkai and Risshō Kōsei-kai. The work of Thich Nhat Hanh has been very important for popularising ideas of socially and ecologically engaged Buddhist thinking which has already been there before.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship

A major predecessor of INEB is the US-based Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF), closely related to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. "In 1968, Buddhist poet Gary Snyder wrote a challenging piece called 'Buddhism and the Coming Revolution'. In it, he says, 'The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both'."[2] Telling its own history, the BPF refers to this poem by Snyder when it was founded ten years later in 1978 by Robert Baker Aitken and Anne Hopkins Aitken as well as Nelson Foster

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2 http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/about-bpf/history/ (last accessed, 5 March 2019).

in Hawaii. It now has its headquarters in Oakland in California.[3] Its major focusses are non-violent action, disarmament, environmental issues and social justice issues. Two major tools of public relations and political education are the *Turning Wheel Media* and the curriculum *The System Stinks* (which was a favourite protest sign of Robert Aitken, cf. Aitken 1996a) which is a one-year curriculum. *The System Stinks* gives a systematic view to the roots of Buddhism according to BPF along the five precepts of Buddhism with the aim of true peace and building social justice in today's world.[4] After having had its locations concentrated in Hawaii and the San Francisco Bay area, BPF can now be found at many places across the USA and has a membership system at the time of publishing embracing several hundred people.[5]

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)

INEB was founded 1989 in Thailand mostly initiated by the Thai philosopher, human rights activist and publisher Sulak Sivaraksa and the Japanese Nichiren Buddhist thinker Maruyama Teruo. Maruyama was a monk in a monastery of Nichiren-shu who left the temple for some years to be active as a writer and returned to the temple in the 1990s. Other leading figures of the early INEB were the Thai monk Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and his translator and disciple Santikaro Bikkhu. The INEB held its annual meetings in Thailand, mostly in the monastery Suan Mokkh, and entertains an office in Bangkok. The international meetings now have switched to a biennial rhythm and take place also in other countries like Sri Lanka or Malaysia. The INEB has a *think sangha* which has its own meetings and is moderated by Jonathan Watts with an office in Kamakura (Japan). The INEB is not an organisation with membership structures but functions through people being linked and many of them subscribing to the magazine 'Seeds of Peace' published from Bangkok three times a year. The meetings are attended by members of human rights groups, political activists and interested individuals, the focus is on networking for Buddhist social action

3 http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/about-bpf/history/ (last accessed, 9 October 2016).

4 http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/our-work/training-and-education/the-system-stinks/tss-2013/; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_Peace_Fellowship (last accessed, 9 October 2016).

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_Peace_Fellowship (last accessed, 5 March 2019). There are no precise membership numbers as the BPF is a loose network and has no membership administration.

groups, many of them in Buddhist minority situations, looking for international solidarity and encouragement.[6]

Buddhist social thinkers

Bhikkhu Buddhadasa

Buddhadasa (1906–1993) was one of the great pioneers of Buddhist social thinking in the second half of the 20th century. Until his death in 1993, the INEB conferences were held at his monastery Suan Mokkh, and he was a popular dhamma talker during the conferences. His controversial idea of a dictatorial dhammic socialism or dictorial dhammic socialist democracy was an attempt to counter the dehumanising effects of modern economic systems. Buddhadasa defines the term as being against tyranny and arbitrary decision processes and figures an expeditious economic process which efficiently handles matters as he feels that democracy may be too long-winded and slow. "We tend to shy away from the word *dictatorship* because we are so infatuated with liberalism" (in Thai language: saerri niyam). The term dictatorship has two meanings: As a principle of action or an idea as, for example, a political ideal, it is not acceptable. But as a method of action it can be useful for it simply means to handle things expeditiously. If a socialist country is fully democratic, when problems seem to take a long time to solve, they will be treated 'dictatorially', i.e. they will be dealt with expeditiously and it will be an 'expeditious democracy'. A dhammic socialist democracy is 'dictatorial' in this sense" (Buddhadsa 1989: 185; Sivaraksa 1990; Zöllner 2006). Buddhadasa has the vision of a return to the society of the Indian emperor Ashoka (3rd century A.D.) which according to Buddhist tradition was a time of communal belonging and using of resources in accordance with the ten Buddhist precepts. Nobody shall own resources in excess, people share with each other. Buddhadasa has attracted criticism in basing his ideas on the feudalistic structures of Thai agriculture and being incompatible with modern economic thinking developed by politically involved Buddhists, like e.g. Robert Aitken, as outlined below (Dehn 2004: 105).

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6 http://www.inebnetwork.org/ (last accessed, 9 October 2016).

Santikaro

The American monk Santikaro has been active in the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and used to translate the dhamma talks of Buddhadasa and edit their English versions. He interprets the idea of dictatorial dhammic socialism in a way which is close to the thinking of Mohandas Gandhi: small economic units which produce for their own needs and need trade only within a very limited range. He elaborates on decentralised political units which can easily administrate and manage themselves and provide social justice to everybody as there is social control of resources and no space for accumulation. Santikaro reformulates the Four Noble Truths as a guideline to solve social problems, along these questions: (1) What are the problems? (2) Where do they come from? (3) What are they aiming at? (4) How do we go about proceed (Santikaro 1996: 86–133)? He points out that suffering (dukkha) needs to be understood as social suffering in close connection with personal suffering. He explains structures of selfishness and greed in Buddhist terms:

- greed (*lobha*) is generating capitalism with all its consequences, ideology of consumption, exploitation, and poverty;
- anger (*kodha*) leeds to militarism, unjust economic structures, gender inequality, unjust international trade relations;
- hate (*dosa*) leeds to discrimination of various types, racism, prejudices against Islam, thinking in terms of class hierarchies, mental marginalisation of social groups;
- unknowing (*moha*) concerns the realm of education and media and all dynamics of disinformation, public lies, deprive people of education and of knowledge of their rights.

Unknowing is the root cause of all individual and social suffering. Santikaro expresses it according to the world view of Thai: Unknowing means to forget or to not take into account that we all are friends and intertwined in birth, aging, illness, and death, in short 'comrades in suffering' (Santikaro 1996: 94–104). He explains the Noble Eightfold Path of traditional Buddhism as the Noble Elevenfold Socially Relevant Path consisting of considerations towards correct religion, correct education, correct leadership, correct organisation and government, correct communication, correct culture, correct economy, correct ecology, correct play, correct control, correct community and correct solidarity (Santikaro 1996: 129).

Robert Aitken

Robert Aitken (1917–2010), the co-founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellow-
ship, elaborates upon some ideas about a social and economic system
according to Buddhist concepts, drawing from E. F. Schumacher's *Small is
Beautiful* (1973) (Aitken 1996a). He again refers to Buddhadasa who gave a
contemporary explanation of the teaching of pratitya-samutpada which
means existing or being in mutual interdependence because all beings have
originated and grown in mutuality for eternal times. He quotes Buddhadasa:
"The whole cosmos is like a cooperative. Sun, moon and stars co-exist in a
cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees and the earth.
The parts of our bodies function as a cooperative. When we become con-
scious that the world is a cooperative company based on mutuality, and that
all humans are friends in the process of birth, aging, suffering and death
then we can build a noble, a truly heavenly environment. If ever our life
should not be based on this truth, we will all perish" (Aitken 1996b: 52,
retranslated by UD). Aitken supposes that the future of not only the Bud-
dhist community but also of society at large will be in the hands of small
independent sanghas in accordance with the pattern of the original sangha
of the Buddha. They will be independent but networking spiritually and
economically and using the power of the small unit which is independent
and at the same time connected. Aitken holds the Basic Christian Commu-
nities of Latin America as an ideal. He asserts that big units and corpora-
tions are deemed to perish; only the small and intertwined cooperating
bodies will survive and be able to provide a humanising and sustainable
living including social justice for its members. He points out that banks can
have a very positive function through fostering culture and by offering
loans helping people to afford things which they would not be able to
achieve, but demands that, as in some Islamic countries, interests should be
abolished and banks use other means to get their activities refinanced
(Thich 1994: 1–7).

Thich Nhat Hanh

One of the major masterminds of social and ecological thinking in world-
wide Buddhism is the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926) now
living in his community *Order of Interbeing* in Plum Village (*village des Pruniers*)
150 km southeast of Paris. He is one of the patrons of the INEB. Thich
Nhat Hanh offers an interpretation of pratitya-samutpada which indicates

traditional Buddhist thinking beyond its borders. He differentiates between the 'small self' (the subject of self-centeredness) and the 'big self' which includes and embraces the world of all beings. "The human being breathes and thinks that this activity is limited to the lungs inside the human body. But the woods, the ozone layer, the air, rivers are part of my big self and of my living and breathing. My true self is the wood, is the river, is the ozone sphere. He points to the interbeing of all things and beings which means that all wounds which are cut somewhere into a tree, killing animals, killing people far away from me, reducing woods and other natural areas for building highways etc. are wounds which hurt all other beings".[7] They may not be aware of it. The same may apply to exploitation or lack of social justice which affects me even if I am not the one to be deprived of a just and equal living and of human rights. The order of interbeing is actively involved in social action and peace projects, and Thich Nhat Hanh was proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967 by Martin Luther King Jr.[8]

Maruyama Teruo

MARUYAMA Teruo (1932–2011), one of the masterminds of the INEB, explicitly refers to his exposure to the Philippines in 1980 where he found socially active Christians who were thinking about a 'potato theology' of the poor and oppressed people, in contrast to a grassroots theology potatoes can be eaten by humans, not so much grassroots (Maruyama 1991: 29–32). He frequently quotes the 13th century Buddhist monk, Nichiren for his social involvement and his criticism towards the socially and religiously unbalanced policy of the powers of his time. Similar to Christian theologians of liberation, Maruyama demands in line with his teacher and patron UEHARA Senroku that religion be challenged by its present context, the social, political and historical problems (Maruyama 1991: 70). He sharply criticises the individualistic and subjectivist approach of most Buddhist schools, and Japanese Buddhist sects which concentrate on Zen meditation and Yoga exercises caring only about the personal path to enlightenment without looking at society and its problems. For Maruyama, it is not the interpretation of the Buddhist scriptures which shall guide the approach to reality, but he demands first of all to have a close look at the social reality

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7 Direct and indirect quotation from Thich Nhat Hanh 1994: 1–2.
8 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%ADch_Nh%E1%BA%A5t_H%E1%BA%A1n h; http://plumvillage.org/about/thich-nhat-hanh/; http://www.intersein.de/ (last accessed, 9 October 2016).

and from this context and the questions arising from it dig into historical research and get answers to the questions (Maruyama 1991: 71).

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar

The Indian lawyer and politician Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956) was one of the leading figures after Indian independence and the first law minister and mastermind behind the Indian constitution. He used Buddhism as a weapon against social injustice by converting to Buddhism on 14th October 1956 in Nagpur, the city in which emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century B.C. is said to have converted to Buddhism as well. It was Ambedkar's intention to protest against discrimination towards Dalits, the 'untouchables' of Indian Hindu society, by escaping the Hindu system. His formal conversion taking the three refuges and the precepts on this particular day was the final point of a path which had begun in 1950 when he caught interest in Buddhism. Before he had considered converting to Sikhism because there he also found strong appeal in fighting injustice of the cast system, but finally turned to Buddhism. Along with him around 500,000 Dalits took the same way.[9] Ambedkar died several weeks after this event but his followers initiated a movement of New Buddhism protesting against social injustice and the cast system and marking the 14th October as a yearly day of conversions to 'Ambedkar Buddhism' (Ambedkar 1995; Omvedt 1994).[10] Ambedkar used the teaching of the Buddha which ascribes Buddha to nature and the capacity to enlighten every human being irrespective of cast (and class), and made it a tool for protest, taking mass-conversion as a political measure and demonstration.

Buddhist social action

Besides the various new approaches to social thinking in Buddhism there has been a large range of social actions by Buddhists fighting political oppression, social injustice and human rights violations. In many cases the opposed projects were connected with ecological aspects, such as the

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9 Other sources speak of 388,000 Dalits, e.g. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhimrao_Ramji_Ambedkar. In http://ambedkar.org/ "millions of followers" are mentioned who embraced Buddhism together with Ambedkar on 14 October 1956 in Nagpur (which probably is an exaggeration) (last accessed, 3 May 2019).

10 http://www.ambedkar.org/; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._R._Ambedkar (last accessed, 9 October 2016).

petroleum gas pipeline of Myanmar and Thailand which is proposed to connect the Yadana gas fields in the Burmese Gulf of Martaban and the power plant in Ratchaburi in Thailand. This would require the removal of 17 hectares of jungle and areas which are home to many rare animals. Buddhist monks "ordained" many trees in this area and made them "holy" by their action. For the government this meant they needed to neglect tradition and culture in order to pursue their plans in fact it had reports issued but was finally given the green light to proceed under the condition that the loss of jungle wood is compensated by replanting (cf. Bangkok Post, 3 November 1997).

The Cambodian monk Maha Ghosananda has for many years conducted peace marches starting from Phnom Phenh which are strictly under the condition of "non-violence, neutrality, and the spirit of compassion". The participants are prepared with a two-day-training on how to react non-violently to violent attacks (cf. BuddhanetzInfo No. 8/1999). In Vietnam it was the self-immolations of Buddhist monks in opposition to the Diem regime at the beginning of the 1960s and against social injustice until the present. Self-immolation has been a controversial issue in Buddhism regarding its value as a demonstration toward the ruling powers as well as regarding its legitimacy according to the Buddhist scriptures (Pali canon).

The Sarvodaya Movement in India and the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka

The Hindu aspect of this paper is much smaller than the Buddhist one and rather mediated as more often than in other religions social ideas of Hindu thinkers profit from secular social and economic concepts, as it was prominently the case with M. K. Gandhi.

The Sarvodaya Movement in India is a movement mostly connected with the Gandhi-follower Vinoba Bhave. He made use of the sarvodaya idea stemming from the thus titled book of Gandhi which was a paraphrasing translation of John Ruskin's *Unto this Last*. The term had been invented by Gandhi from the Sanskrit words *sarva* (all) and *udaya* (uplift). He used the book for formulating and propagating his own ideas which were the dignity of labor, an equitable distribution of wealth, communal self-sufficiency and individual freedom (Naravanasamy 2003). Gandhi focused on a realisation of his ideals in his own ashram as the major elements were a decentralised form of independent economy based on autarky and democracy in small rural units. As 'Objects of Sarvodaya Movement' in its website it states:

"The Sarvodaya Movement has as its target the establishment of a whole network of such self-supporting village communities. The family relationships which are confined at present to the blood group will be extended to cover the whole village where distinctions based on race, creed, caste, language and so forth will completely be eliminated. Agriculture will be so planned that all the people will have enough to consume. Industry will be conducted on a cottage basis till all the people in the village are gainfully employed. The needs of the village will be determined by the people of the village themselves, through Village Council, representative of the whole village."[11]

Furthermore as for the economic objectives, it is stated in the policy page of the movement:

"Village industries are promoted by encouraging the production and sale of Khadi clothes, honey, soap, leather goods, ghani oils, etc. This is to provide the village with a means to arrest the exodus of their youngsters to the city in search for employment."[12]

The Sarvodaya Movement in India is not explicitly a Hindu religious movement. The sources it draws from, especially M. K. Gandhi and Vinobha Bhave, have been nurtured by Hindu ideas and transposed into social thought and economic ethics. For that matter, the movement may not be typical for a NGO applying religious dimensions, but for a movement whose ideas cannot be understood in its details without a look to the sources it uses as its inspiration. It is also dedicated to research and to the documentation of the work of Gandhi who as to his popular fame and for most people has been more a politician and congress leader than a religious thinker.

The Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, which was founded by the Sri Lankan Buddhist A. T. Ariyaratne in 1958 and has as its full name Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, is now one of the biggest NGOs in Sri Lanka and Asia at large. It is by claim a movement within the range of Theravada Buddhism but has adopted many elements which stem from Hindu background. It starts with aspects of the philosophy of M. K. Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave, first of all the principle of *ahimsa* and other ethical foundations which are taken from the set of Buddhist ethics and contemporary Hindu social action thinking. After some time Ariyaratne increasingly tried to distance himself from the Sarvodaya movement in

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11 Dr Shubhangi Rathi, Gandhian Philosophy of Sarvodaya & Its Principles (http://www. mkgandhi.org/articles/gandhi_sarvodaya.html (last accessed, 19 January 2017).

12 http://www.mkgandhi.org/about-us.html (last accessed, 19 January 2017).

India and stress the particular Buddhist background of the Sri Lankan movement. There are also issues which are part of the Sarvodaya philosophy in India, such as the caste system (Dalits), but not in Sri Lanka. There are more similarities than differences as Gudrun Löwner in her comparison between Indian and Sri Lankan variants of Sarvodaya stresses (Löwner 1999: 185–187). As for the philosophy of the Sri Lanka movement, the website offers the following explanation:

> "Drawing inspiration from teachings of the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi, and based on the principles of Truth (*satya*), Non-violence (*avihimsa*) and Selflessness (*pararthkami*), our philosophy includes… Four sublime abodes for *individual awakening:* Loving kindness *(Meththa),* Compassion *(Karuna),* Joy of living derived from making others happy *(Mudhitha),* Equanimity *(Upeksha),* & Four treatments for *group awakening:* Giving *(Dana),* Kind and Intelligible Words *(Priya Wachana),* Right Livelihood *(Artha Charya),* Equality *(Samanathmathawa)."*[13]

The claim and vision of Sarvodaya is rather universal and all-embracing:

> "Create a no poverty, no affluence, and a conflict-free society. Uplift and empower the most disadvantaged people in Sri Lanka. Total Awakening and Well-being of All (individuals, family, village, nation, and the world) on every plane (spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political)."[14]

Sarvodaya has a clear-cut missionary approach leaving no doubts about the Buddhist background by using the Lotus symbol at every occasion. The activities aimed toward rural development based on Gandhian principles have happened in various kinds of relation to the government, cooperative, neutral or antagonistic whereas Sarvodayas claim is to be a liberation movement (Löwner 1999:188).

Concluding Remarks

The concepts, groups and movements mentioned in this paper as well as the examples of action against social injustice and political oppression show that Buddhist thought has a rather mediate relation to issues of social and political life, justice, and human rights. As for Hindu NGOs, in most cases there are Gandhian ideas in the background and even more mediated than Buddhist concepts as Gandhi was not primarily a Hindu social thinker but rather broadly based on the ideas of the Bhagavadgita, the Sermon on the

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13 http://www.sarvodaya.org/philosophy-and-approach (last accessed, 9 October 2016).
14 http://www.sarvodaya.org/philosophy-and-approach (last accessed, 9 October 2016).

Mount in the New Testament (Matthew Ch. 5–7) and others, and social concepts focussing on decentralisation. In Buddhism, for social issues the most frequently used idea of pratitya-samutpada points to the universal linkage of all living beings and to the interdependence of everything. This track of argumentation is taken by thinkers like the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, as it can be used for ecological visions and for the claim of solidarity. Another line is the view of history which is taken by Maruyama Nichiren, the 13th Century Japanese monk, as a sample of socio-political involvement which links karmic thinking to correct social performance of the ruling powers. Santikaro takes a more general approach and reinterprets the basic Buddhist message of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold/ Elevenfold Noble Path as a social message for involvement in society.

They all have in common their close contact with activities beyond Buddhism and Hinduism, with Christian action groups which network in broad scope, as well as with secular groups and networks of other religions which have social activities closer at the heart of their philosophy. Maruyama explicitly claims this has been influenced by witnessing the effectiveness of Christian NGOs in the Philippines. It can be called another form of syncretism on a level which is usually not embraced by this concept, but might as well be part of it as ethical and practical influences may also have repercussions on the philosophical and dogmatic level.

Trying to reflect on the issue of what might be the surplus of NGOs with Buddhist or Hindu inspiration compared to social action groups working on a purely secular basis. As to these observations, there is no significant difference in the substance of activities, besides the differences regarding professionality. In general, religious groups or organisations work on a motivational base which is sustainable and would also hold them with involvement even in case of failures, backdrops, or lack of money. But there are motivations beyond religious ones such as humanist attitudes or a fervent ardour for a new society as many secular social action groups would harbour, it should have the same function. Beyond the intrinsic aspect of motivation of the activists there is the aspect of funding: it might make sense but is beyond the scope of this chapter to search whether religiously oriented groups and organisations have better chances to acquire funds from public fund holders, donations etc. As to my knowledge Buddhist and Hindu thought oriented groups are doing an important job which usually as to its social components and ideas is compatible to the rationale and standards of professional secular (non-religious) organisations. Anyway, the complexity of the many groups and their backgrounds and histories does not allow any detailed comparison beyond selective perceptions.

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Yonatan N. Gez, Adi Maya, and Ido Benvenisti

Tikkun Olam and Jewish Outreach within Jewish Faith-Based Organisations

Introduction

In recent years, we have witnessed substantial growth in the literature on religious non-governmental organisations (RNGOs), the majority of which revolves around the work of Christian organisations. Unsurprisingly then, studies on RNGOs and on their difference from NGOs have largely been cast in the image of Christian RNGOs, with special emphasis put on questions of development and proselytism and its limitations. While an emerging body of literature recognises the importance of studying non-Christian RNGOs, little has been written on the work of Jewish organisations and on the research questions that such studies may evoke. The present chapter responds to this gap by introducing and exploring some of the preoccupations, practices and dilemmas within Jewish RNGOs. Methodologically, the chapter combines theoretical discussion, practical experience based on work with several Jewish RNGOs, and interviews with actors in the field.

Judaism is by far the smallest of the three principle Abrahamic faiths. While estimates suggest that there are upwards of two billion Christians and one and a half billion Muslims worldwide, the size of the world's Jewish population is commonly gauged at around fourteen million. Considering these minuscule numbers in global terms, one may assume that a religion this small would have little to contribute to the global development campaign. Such sentiments may further be fed by recognition that, while Judaism has a wide global scope—historically, the term diaspora has been primarily associated with Judaism—it is largely an ethnic religion, and as such, it tends to be inward looking and preoccupied with its own community. And yet, Jewish organisations and individuals have a disproportionally high presence in the forefront of the development sector.

Arguing that Jewish RNGOs provide a fascinating case study, we note that one intriguing facet of Judaism's engagement in development is the religion's longstanding, resolute avoidance of proselytism. While this positions Jewish RNGOs as a counterpart to many Christian and Islamic

RNGOs and the academic debates about them, in this chapter we propose that the work of Jewish RNGOs can indeed serve as missionary-like activity, albeit towards its Jewish volunteers and staff, many of whom are secular or assimilated, and feel little connection to Judaism as a religion. In the second part of this chapter, we address this missionizing tension through the exploration of two concepts: '*tikkun olam*'—a popular and often-vague Jewish imperative to make the world a better place, which has become the rallying cry of Jewish development activities—and 'Jewish outreach', by which we refer to missionary-like tendencies aimed not at host populations but exclusively at the development initiatives' Jewish staff and volunteers. We demonstrate the principles behind these concepts by appealing to two case studies: Project TEN in Ethiopia, an initiative by the Jewish Agency for Israel focused on multiple aspects of community development, and the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village in Rwanda, a Jewish-American private initiative aimed at supporting young orphans.

In approaching this chapter, we emphasise from the onset that Judaism is a complex label, whose understanding varies across individuals and groups: for some the term serves primarily as a spiritual and moral compass, for others it is a national anchor, for some it offers a sense of ethnic belonging, and for others it serves as cultural orientation. As Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin suggest, "Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialectical tension with one another" (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993: 721). Indicating how the Jewish category pervades over simple notions of religious identity registers is the application of such seemingly paradoxical terms as "non-Jewish Jew," as proposed by historian Isaac Deutscher (1968).[1] In discussing Jewish RNGOs, we must keep in mind this inherent diversity.

Jewish Engagement in Development

As a largely decentralized, international religion, Judaism's involvement in development may be read through the prism of its multiple diasporas, of which we can consider the American and the Israeli as dominant, and in terms of gradual opening up towards service provision outside the community. Thus, writing on Jewish communal social service institutions in the

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1 Making a similar argument, Woolcock (2014: 11, n13), following Benovil (2012), proposes that the ambiguity regarding Judaism is akin to that which stems from the English term "Russian", which dissolves the Russian language's original distinction between ethnic Russian ('*russkiye*') and a citizen of Russia ('*rossiyane*').

United States, Rabbi David Ellenson (2006) explains how Jewish institutions such as hospitals and senior citizen centres were once staffed almost exclusively by Jews and catered to a decisively Jewish population, but over the years they expanded their services and employment opportunities to non-members. As Ellenson explains, when Jews began arriving in the United States in large numbers in the 19th century, discriminative practices forced them into erecting their own social service-provision organisations. As this barrier diminished over the years, Jewish-originated institutions began to accommodate non-Jews, a process that is, in Ellenson's view, "faithful to the genuine Jewish spirit that resides at the heart of Judaism" (Ellenson 2006: 130).

A similar trajectory was noted in the field of international development, in the case of major Jewish organisations such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Hadassah, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which were established in the US in the first half of the 20th century. While their original *raison d'être* was to provide assistance to Jewish communities around the world—grappling, most notably, with the task of promoting the establishment of the Jewish homeland and supporting Jews throughout the Holocaust—by the turn of the 21st century much of their operations involved development and relief work among non-Jewish communities. It should be made clear that these organisations' high international presence is not unique. Back in 2003, Julia Berger noted, in her random selection of RNGOs associated with two UN bodies, how Muslim and Jewish organisations have roughly the same size in her sample, "despite the fact that Muslims outnumber Jews worldwide by a factor of 100 to 1", a substantial representation that she explained in terms of "the large Jewish presence in the United States, the material resources of the Jewish community, as well as its emphasis on advocacy and social justice" (2003: 34; cf. Haynes 2014: 21).[2] What seems to be new, however, is the passion with which Jewish organisations in recent years have discovered the field of international development. An umbrella platform for Jewish RNGOs called OLAM, itself established in 2014, suggests that, according to "modest estimates", more than half of the organisations with which it partners were founded over the last ten years, and nearly a third were founded over the last five years (Wolfe 2015: 3; 43, n2).

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2 To these she added that, seeing as her data was based on UN affiliation, it may also reflect Jews' political interests in the maintenance and security of the State of Israel—in which the UN plays a major role.

This trend is observable in Israel, where investments in the field of development—once heavily promoted by the government—have dwindled since the 1970s, but were picked up again in recent years, largely thanks to the work of non-governmental initiatives. From the late 1950s up to the early 1970s, under the leadership of politicians such as David Ben Gurion and Golda Meir, Israel was highly involved in international development, especially in Africa. These activities were processed through the Department for International Cooperation or MASHAV (Hebrew acronym).[3] These strong ties, however, began to dissolve following the 1967 Six Days War and largely came to a halt after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. While they began to enjoy partial restoration since the 1990s, Israel's current allocation of resources towards international development, whether channelled through MASHAV or elsewhere, fall substantially short of expected OECD standards. In the context of this chapter, it should be stressed that MASHAV's work has never been regarded as explicitly Jewish, but was, however, inspired by Jewish experiences and 'values'—a trend that continues up to this day.

Currently, with limited state support for international development, Israeli engagement in the field is channelled primarily by private organisations. The Israeli branch of the Society for International Development (SID), a global umbrella platform for international development organisations, claim sixty-six Israeli member organisations (SID-Israel 2018). Similarly, OLAM claims ties with forty-six partner organisations that are Jewish, Israeli, or both. The organisation also points at a dramatic disparity in Jewish organisations' economic abilities: alongside the veteran, well-funded Jewish organisations, who have been centers of the Jewish aid and relief for decades, nearly two thirds of OLAM's partners have an annual budget of under half a million USD (Wolfe 2015). According to OLAM's Executive Director, Dyonna Ginsburg, many Jewish RNGOs operate as 'hybrid organisations', combining multiple types of development-based activities including, alongside ongoing development projects, short-term VSOs and humanitarian disaster relief. Ginsburg notes that themes such as refugees

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3 During those decades, Israel has sent over 2,700 experts to Africa for development initiatives, and tens of thousands of others were trained in Israel—relations that were qualified by *Newsweek* as "one of the strangest unofficial alliances in the world" (Decalo 1971: 162). Scholars suggest that the country's motivation in engaging so heavily in development was due both to expediency—seeking political alliances in response to the Israeli-Arab conflict—and to ideology and identification with the political awakening and long-lasting suffering of African and other people at the hands of European colonisers (Oded 2011; Bar-Yosef 2013).

and genocide, which echo past Jewish suffering, are particularly appealing to Jewish RNGOs (Ginsburg, 22 November 2016). It is no coincidence, for example, that many Jewish RNGOs—such as Agahozo Shalom Youth Village discussed below—operate in post-genocide Rwanda.

Judaism as a Non-Evangelising Religion

In the field of research on RNGOs, a special emphasis tends to be put on the question of proselytism. While, as the present volume shows, many RNGOs are not involved in active proselytism, others, such as conservative evangelical groups, consider it central to their agenda.[4] International bodies and scholars often show suspicion towards RNGOs' missionary tendencies, cautiously taking into consideration organisations' active employment of their activities to promote their faith and win converts (Clarke and Jennings 2008). Recognising that RNGOs are not all of the same ilk, scholars propose yardsticks for assessing organisations' religious orientations, what Berger (2003) terms "religious pervasiveness". While Benedetti (2006) notes that pervasiveness is difficult to measure with precision, she draws a distinction—or rather, continuum—between secular/moderate RNGOs (who, for example, employ non-religious staff based on credentials or share a universalist orientation) and militant RNGOs (who, for example, only hire members of their faith group or see their primary goal as proselytization). Benedetti adds that, when it comes to collaboration with mainstream NGOs, such pervasiveness is crucial: seculars/moderates are likely to find a common language of cooperation with mainstream development agendas, whereas militants position themselves as an alternative to them from the onset. A basic taxonomy is offered by Thaut (2009), who identifies four dimensions of analysis for "the significance of religion" within development organisations: (1) The organisation's expressed mission (2) Ties to a religious base or religious organisation (3) Staff policies and their stated affiliations (4) Sources of donor support.

As previously mentioned, concern with RNGOs' attempt at 'winning souls' rather than simply promoting development is responsible for much of the suspicion with which 'secular' international organisations approach RNGOs. For example, the termination of the short-lived collaboration between the World Bank and faith leaders in the mid-2000s has been explained, among other things, by concern in regard to many RNGOs'

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4 Conversely, one may also reflect on how 'secular' development agendas can be claimed to engage in forms of proselytism (Rist 1996).

emphasis on proselytization (Haynes 2013; Marshall 2013). From an ethical standpoint, the missionary tendency raises dilemmas: on the one hand, from the perspective of people's own belief system, sharing their truth—or rather, Truth—might be the greatest gift they can bestow, while on the other hand, an appeal to convert populations in need might take advantage of their fragility.[5] To make matters more complex, religious standpoints often cast doubt on the very division between material and spiritual goods, such as through emphasising how the "redemption of the soil" is intrinsically related to the "redemption of the soul," or by proposing close connection between "good living" in the sense of improved living standards and "good living" in the sense of virtue and adherence to Christian teachings (Bornstein 2002: 9).[6] Writing on Christian RNGOs in Zimbabwe, Erica Bornstein commented that, for the organisations' employees, "the world was divided into two realms: evangelised/developed and unevangelised/undeveloped. It was through acts of development that the world could be reached, touched, and transformed" (Bornstein 2002: 7). But while Bornstein recognises that development is instrumentalised by certain Christian RNGOs for the purpose of evangelisation, she also recognises diversity in shades and degrees of this proselytizing agenda across Christian RNGOs.

On this backdrop, Judaism's well-known disinterest in, even aversion to, evangelisation offers a stark contrast. As an ethnic religion, one that has often been persecuted throughout history, Judaism maintains an inherent reluctance about conversion. Converting to Judaism, though not impossible, is a lengthy and complicated affair. To illustrate this point in the context of the global South, an interview with Jacob, a Kenyan computer engineer and a second-generation sympathiser of Judaism, provides an illuminating example.[7] Jacob described how, when his father first went to the only active synagogue in Nairobi and asked to convert, the head of the community replied that "we do not do conversions". Jacob then explained the complications of converting to Judaism in a country like Kenya:

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5 It might be argued that it is not only FBOs that take advantage of local fragilities to redirect people's beliefs, but that 'secular' NGOs and governments similarly impose structural changes and shifts in values in moments of crisis (Klein 2007).

6 Or, when it comes to prosperity teachings, to treat material prosperity as a gift of God may render economics "intrinsically spiritual" (Bradshaw 1993: 41, 116).

7 Interviewed in Nairobi by Yonatan N. Gez, as part of a Swiss National Science Foundation project tilted "*Structures anthropologiques du religieux: butinage et voisinage*", which ran from 2010 to 2015 (project number 100013–130340 and 100013–146301).

> "Judaism is really hard to practice outside of a community. Where do you get your kosher food, how do you interact? You know, it becomes very difficult if you want to convert and live in Kenya for that matter. On the other hand, the conversion process is quite difficult, to say the least; it is expensive."

Jacob's words attest to a unique feature of the work of Jewish RNGOs in the global South. Without a missionary agenda, and often equipped with a liberal ideology, Jewish RNGOs may appear to score very low on the pervasiveness scale as presented above. As a Jewish staff member at a Jewish American RNGO was quoted saying, "[w]hen you start talking faith-based, it's like what are you talking about? Our organisation is really non-sectarian. I mean, we'll work with anyone. And we're not going to preach to them anything in particular. But I think when you go to other faith-based organisations, they will" (Netting, O'Connor, and Yancey 2006: 277). Berger (2003: 34) similarly notes that Jewish RNGOs "make few references to God or religion, focusing instead on the social justice teachings of the Torah as the basis for their advocacy oriented missions" (e.g. Rose, Green Kaiser, and Klein 2008). Thus, by and large and compared to other RNGOs, Jewish RNGOs—to the extent that they fit into existing categories—tend to belong to the end of the spectrum, which Benedetti (2006) qualifies as secular or moderate RNGOs.

Tikkun Olam and Jewish Outreach

As mentioned above, most leading Jewish RNGOs date back to the first half of the 20th century, when they were established with the explicitly political purpose of supporting the creation—and later on, the flourishing and safe existence—of a homeland for the Jews, or otherwise to save Jewish lives (Haynes 2014: 22). At the same time, and since the establishment of the State of Israel in particular, the work of Jewish RNGOs did not limit itself to the promotion of so-called Jewish interests, bringing to the fore the perennial tension between universalism and particularism as a central axis informing Jewish thinking in general and with regard to development in particular. This tension is embodied in the characterisation of the Jewish God, who is both the Lord of the earth, the one and only maker of the entire earth and its countless human groups, but at the same time is the God of the Jewish people, who has spoken to individuals and directed history along the blueprint of a covenant made exclusively with the patriarch Abraham and his chosen descendants. As Rabbi Ellenson (2006: 130) suggests,

"it is instructive to note that within Judaism there have always been universalistic and particularistic dimensions, and this dual approach to the world, as well as the relationship of God both to the Jewish people and all humankind, finds expression in the concept of covenant (*brit*) that lies at the very heart of the Bible and Jewish religious tradition".

In contemporary parlance, this tension—and the conflicting obligations that they imply—has come to be embodied through twin logics. On the one hand, there is the often-quoted injunction that one must tend to "the poor of one's own city" before assisting other people—a post-biblical rabbinic idea.[8] On the other hand, there is the notion of *tikkun olam* as a central axis informing Jewish thinking about the obligation to engage in making the world a better place. It should be stressed that, in and of itself, the notion of *tikkun olam* is not incommensurable with the biblical idea of the Jewish people's special election—indeed, the moral imperative may be suggested to naturally flow out of the idea of the Jews, as the Chosen People, being a "light unto the nations" (Isaiah 49,6). As Kliksberg (2003) indicates, solid strands of global justice can certainly be gleaned from the Hebrew Bible, including: responsibility of one person for their fellow humans; commitment to the eradication of poverty; preserving the dignity of the poor; avoiding gross inequality; providing opportunities for the poor; and volunteerism as an ethical obligation (cf. Davis 2009). As the founder of a leading Jewish RNGO told us in an interview, "*tikkun olam* can have various interpretations in our global world, and social justice is at the core of Judaism."

   Looking at the work of Jewish RNGOs, it is expected that the dedication to ameliorate conditions among other populations implies a clear leaning towards Judaism's universalist strand. But while that may be true, this chapter proposes that often the working of Jewish RNGOs contains a strong inward-looking agenda. This takes into account both the application of the concept of *tikkun olam*—which has become something of a foundation and default motto of liberal Jewish RNGOs and progressive Judaism more broadly—and the particularist tendency as embodied by the concept of 'Jewish outreach'. With these two concepts clarified, the remainder of this chapter will turn to discuss how this tension is put into action in the working of two Jewish development initiatives.

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8   See, for example, Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah, 251:3.

Jewish Outreach

In the context of international development, the term outreach designates an organisation's involvement with a host community, but in the context of missionary work, this meaning has the added implication of winning souls and gaining converts. The dual meaning is particularly poignant in the case of RNGOs' development work, which may combine inclusive provision of services with some emphasis—at times subtle, at times less so—on the possibility of religious change. By contrast, in speaking of Jewish outreach, we focus on actions intended towards members within the religion—actions that arguably qualify the idea of Judaism as non-proselytizing. For example, in Israel, countless initiatives aim at attracting secular Jews to the observant-orthodox world, whether through downtown activists handing women Shabbat candles and urging men to publicly don *tefillin* (phylacteries), or through state-level initiatives promoted by religiously-informed political parties, such as making religious studies mandatory in secular state schools. Chabad*,* a prominent Hassidic movement, has been at the forefront of Jewish outreach initiatives, and created an impressive network of centres or 'houses'—including many in the global South. Led by *shlichim* ('emissaries'), Chabad Houses engage in Jewish outreach by organizing events for Jewish travellers and residents, including non-practicing ones, such as celebrating Jewish holidays and obtaining kosher food (Fishkoff 2003). As we will see in the following section, the notion of Jewish outreach appears apt to describe a significant aspect of the work of Jewish RNGOs, namely, activities aimed at the organisations' Jewish facilitators themselves.

This idea of a Jewish-only outreach as found in the case of Chabad requires a recognition of the multiplicity of voices within the Jewish world. The prevalence of a secularist worldview among global Jewry results in that, for many Jews, when it comes to development-related matters, tradition may not function as a central source of inspiration. As Tirosh-Samuelson points out with regard to Judaism and environmentalism, "[i]n Israel and in America, the religious sources of Judaism do not inform the identity of most Jews, and secular Jews do not appeal to them in their attempt to address environmental concerns" (Tirosh-Samuelson 2006: 55). Among those who explicitly appeal to tradition for moral guidance, the very question of what it means to be a 'good Jew' is highly debated. Judaism is a largely decentralised religion, with multiple and competing voices claiming authenticity and representativeness—a fact shown by Martha Nussbaum (2000), who demonstrated how approaches to a core issue such as women's

rights can be met with diverse responses among Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Jews.[9] Granted, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel has something of a monopoly in Israel, but it does not represent global Jewry as a whole—not even in Israel, and certainly not in the diaspora, where liberal and progressive forms of Judaism are much more common. In recognising the debate over Jewish hegemony, it is worth evoking scholars' observation whereby religious discourse functions not only on the descriptive, but also on the normative level, regulating legitimacy and excluding undesired voices (Amesbury 2010: 63-64; Pearson and Tomalin 2008).

Tikkun Olam

The term *tikkun olam* is borrowed from the Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism): according to the central Kabbalistic book of the Zohar, the 'vessels'—the receptacles of primordial divine light—broke under its abundance, leading to a reality that is flawed and imperfect (Scholem 1965). To mend the vessels, Jews must not only follow the commandments of the Torah, but also engage in various good deeds and extraordinary spiritual rituals that can restore divine harmony through acts of *tikkun* ("repairing").

With its mystical overtones, the concept of *tikkun* was for a long time marginal within mainstream Jewish discourse. According to Cooper (2013), the now-popular concept *tikkun olam* ("mending the world") is a recent manifestation of an assimilation of values that became widely circulated in 20th century American culture, mainly throughout the civil rights movement.[10] The two traditional strands that have given rise to this notion—the mystical strand, and the modern call for social justice—should be kept in

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9 As Wuthnow (1988: 218-222) discusses, value gaps between liberals and conservatives within the same religious tradition can be at least as fierce as those that separate people of different traditions.

10 Despite its Hebrew source, as Avraham Infeld suggests, the term *tikkun olam* "is probably better known to American non-Jews than it is to Jewish Israelis" (Infeld, 10 March 2012). The term's distinctly Jewish-American appeal may be understood in terms of perceptions of guiding values. According to a Pew Research Center poll comparing between Israeli and American Jewish worldviews (Pew Research Center 2016), 56% of American Jews stated that working for justice and equality is an essential part of their Jewish Identity, whereas only 27% of Israelis held the same belief. But while the concept of *tikkun olam* may be less central in Israel than in the United States, it is central to Israel's international development scene—in part by its appeal to Jewish liberal values and possible sponsors associated with diasporic Jewry.

mind when considering how the concept of *tikkun olam* has been popularised in recent years into becoming a recognisable commitment to the pursuit of justice worldwide, as manifest by the common use of the term within Jewish RNGOs' names and mission statements. At the same time, our study among Jewish development workers attested to the wide range of interpretations that the term evokes (Maya 2015). This interpretative diversity may lead to criticism whereby the term "has become a cliché, used so often that it offers little real guidance for social justice efforts" (Kanarek 2008: 15), an overly ambitious yet unspecific imagination that is more of a wishful thinking than a true reflection of the engaged Jewish community's actual activities and achievements.[11] Similar critique may be leveled at other Jewish terminologies adapted to and prevalent across Jewish RNGOs, such as *tikkun halev* ("mending one's own heart"), *tzelem elohim* ("God's image"), *tzedakah* ("charity") and *tzedek* ("justice").

What does the centrality of the term *tikkun olam*, and the Jewish tension between particularity and universality more broadly, tell us about the work of Jewish RNGOs? In her study on religious RNGOs, Berger (2003) notes that the question, "[a]re you a religious NGO?" did not win a straightforward answer from the Jewish organisations' representatives that she interviewed. She claims one representative of the Jewish Women International (JWI),

> "was unable to respond to the above-mentioned question commenting that the answer depends on one's definition of 'religious,` adding that JWI 'is founded on the Jewish principles of *Tikkun Olam*' (repairing the world) and observes Jewish holidays. The distinction between 'religious' and 'secular' was equally challenging for the Zionist Organisation of America, which sees itself as 'more secular than religious but […] Jewish'" (Berger 2003: 21).

This observation fits with that of Jeavons (2004), whereby discussion on RNGOs' work tends to offer "too clean and facile" a division between personal beliefs and their manners of expression, echoing perhaps the Protestant Christian notion of separation of 'faith' and 'works'. The author then goes on to ponder, following questions raised, among others, by "Jewish friends": "what do we do with an organisation that is rooted in a religious

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11 For example, one of the volunteers of Project TEN in Gondar, Ethiopia, admitted that, in her view, "*tikkun olam* feels like such a big word, in comparison to what we've done here in Gondar, and does not reflect our work. We do not act to take care of the cause or the root of a problem, we only address the symptom. For example, we worked with people with blindness, but we do not try to prevent blindness in the first place. Is that mending the world?".

tradition that sees all acts of service and compassion toward others, or all efforts to 'mend the world,' as inherently *religious*—that is, as acts of devotion or even prayer?" (Jeavons 2004: 142).

Case Studies

Having considered the tension between the particularist and universalist stands within Jewish RNGOs, this will act as a lens through which to discuss the example of two Jewish RNGOs: Project TEN in Ethiopia and Agahozo Shalom Youth Village in Rwanda.[12] While these case studies share certain commonalities, the discussion refers to both in order to show how Jewish RNGOs are essentially heterogeneous in their approach to this tension. We will explore how these two initiatives manage their Jewish identity both outwards, towards their host communities, and inwards, towards their Jewish volunteers and permanent staff. While variations certainly exist in the religious pervasiveness of these projects, and while none of them engage in outward proselytism, their modes of inspiration and sources of funding result in a disproportionately strong religious consciousness, which partially, and arguably paradoxically, frame their development work as an exercise in intensification of Jewish identity. Thus, even as such initiatives are presented as a break from isolationist Jewish exclusivism, the development projects themselves might end up serving as a backdrop for inner-Jewish dramas aimed at countering assimilation and loss of Jewish-religious sentiments in the diaspora and in Israel. Many projects are designed as opportunities for inter-diasporic Jewish socialisation, and put a disproportionate emphasis on Jewish learning, inspirations, and practice among the Jewish staff. As one donor instructed, "whatever you do [in the field], do in a Jewish way."

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12 Information on Project TEN draws on Adi Maya's participatory research in Gondar in Ethiopia (2013)—TEN's first centre—conducted as part of her Master's dissertation in anthropology (Maya 2015). Information on the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village draws on Ido Benvenisti's participation as a volunteer advisor to the Liquidnet High School principle in 2010. For the sake of simplicity, we refer to all fieldwork data as reflecting our collective insights.

Case Study 1: Project TEN

The TEN programme (est. 2012) was initiated by the Jewish Agency, the world's largest non-profit Jewish organisation. The programme is aimed at young Jewish adults (aged 20–30), from Israel and the diaspora, who partake in a three-month volunteering cohort in one of the project's centers, in Mexico, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, Israel, or Ethiopia.[13] The name of the project, TEN, carries a double meaning: it is the English acronym of Tikkun Empowerment Network, but also alludes to the Hebrew verb for "giving". The Project's ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of (non-Jewish) populations in need, while providing a meaningful volunteering experience for young adults who are keen on infusing their backpackers' trip—a known rite of passage among Israelis, which usually takes place after their military service (Noy and Cohen 2005)—with social engagement and personal development. While the programme is open to Jews of whichever religious persuasion, in reality, most participants are either of a secular leaning or define themselves as conservative, with little to no representation among orthodox Jews.

Throughout their three-month residency, volunteers engage not only in development work—mainly in the fields of informal education, agriculture and public health—but also in intensive exploration of their Jewish identity.[14] In Ethiopia, we noted that intensive Jewish content learning was predominantly carried out in and around the celebration of the Shabbat day. Participants were expected to partake in preparing *chalot* (sweet bread for Shabbat), and engage in a Shabbat dinner on Friday evenings, preceded by a *kabbalat Shabbat* (religious ceremony for welcoming the Shabbat). The weekly Torah portion (*parashat hashavuah*) was routinely discussed, and the volunteers' house had to be kept *kosher*, a challenge resolved by a general ban on cooking meat. On "closed Saturdays" (or Shabbats), the TEN staff offered lectures about Jewish identity, including sessions on *tikkun olam* and Talmudic readings, while volunteers—including secular ones—were not allowed to leave the volunteer center. In addition, participants were expected to celebrate Jewish Holidays, such as *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). Most of these practices are far

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13 The centre in Ethiopia was shut down in 2016 due to political instability in the country.

14 The very choice of Gondar as a site for the project also reflected an emphasis on Jewishness, as the project's central target population was the Falasha, an Ethiopian Jews community who await confirmation from the Israeli government in order to immigrate to Israel.

from evident for secular Jews, indeed leading to murmurs of discontent by
some participants. As one secular volunteer pointed out:

> "To tell you the truth, I have a great affinity for Judaism, I've always said that it
> would be interesting to study the Talmud and all that. […] I assumed that this
> [Jewish content] will be present in the lessons, but not to that extent and intensity. It
> was too much of that, […] I really felt like I was living in a religious place, too reli-
> gious for me. […] I respect that, keeping the Shabbat and all, but nevertheless it was
> difficult and this is not what I had in my mind and it's not my way of life. To live
> inside of it, it was very difficult for me."

Beyond the actual Jewish content of the program, Project TEN's organisa-
tional goals include connecting Jewish communities from Israel and the
diaspora through the recruitment of Jewish volunteers and their transfor-
mation, ideally, into change agents within their communities of origin. This
mission was thus explained by one of the programme leaders: "Our target
is to prevent assimilation. There is 60 % assimilation in the US alone, and
that is the main reason why we're here". It is the programme leaders' inten-
tion to reach out—or rather, reach in—to potentially assimilated young
Jews, mainly from the diaspora, by showing how Judaism can be a value-
infused engine and a moral compass for engaging with the world at large.
We observed that, at times, these inner-Jewish goals seem to overshadow
the intended development goals of the initiative with regard to the provi-
sion of aid to local communities. As one of our interviewees put it: "they
[Project TEN] could have stressed more our volunteering projects and fur-
ther discuss why we are even here, instead of dealing and thinking almost
exclusively about ourselves."

Case Study 2: Agahozo Shalom Youth Village

The second case study, the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village in Rubona,
Eastern Province, Rwanda, represents a different model of an RNGO that
is rooted in Jewish tradition, but puts less emphasis on imposing a Jewish
agenda on its staff and volunteers. The village was established in 2009 by
the late Anne Heyman, a native of South Africa, who after working in the
Manhattan District Attorney's Office dedicated herself to philanthropy
both in and outside the United States. The Agahozo Shalom Youth Village
is an educational facility that is heavily based on the model and the philos-
ophy of the Yemin Orde Youth Village in Israel, one of many villages cre-
ated as a systemic solution to the great number of Jewish orphans who
immigrated to the newly established State of Israel after the Holocaust.

Heyman learned about the need for a solution to the orphan problem in Rwanda following the 1994 genocide and its aftermath in a lecture series she and her husband initiated at Tufts University's Hillel chapter[15] in 2005, which they titled "Moral Voices." Heyman made the connection between government officials and local agents in Rwanda, Israeli educators, and consultants from the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in New York.

The word *agahozo* translates from Kinyarwanda as "A place where tears are dried," and *shalom* is the Hebrew word for "peace." Thus, the very choice of the village's name symbolises the importance of the connection between Jewish tradition and local reality in Rwanda. Every year, the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village, together with the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and its Entwine Programme[16] selects up to a dozen volunteers who spend a full year working in the village. The volunteers are mostly in their 20s, and most come from either Israel or the United States. JDC volunteers must be Jewish, but the village selects its volunteers mostly according to skill and to the village's changing needs. Volunteers are given an advance orientation seminar to prepare them for the trip, revolving primarily around the notion of *tikkun olam*. While on site, and similarly to TEN, Jewish outreach rituals are practiced within the group, such as baking *chalot* and organizing *kabbalat Shabbat*. Those rituals are not exclusive to volunteers, and the local Rwandan staff are often invited to take part. To clarify, this inclusivity should not be mistaken for proselytism, but stems from the fact that volunteers and local staff share houses and common areas, leading them to take active interest in each other's lives.

The village is home to 500 Rwandan teenagers, and its goal is to enable them to realise their personal and professional potential. This is done by operating on two levels, which are presented to the local beneficiaries through a Hebrew terminology inspired by traditional Jewish teachings:[17] the first level is *tikkun halev* ("repairing the heart"), which offers the teenagers ways to overcome trauma with the support of a staff of counselors, house mothers, and social workers, as well as through arts, sports, debate clubs, leadership platforms, and other activities in which the youth can find an outlet. The second level is *tikkun olam*, where every week the

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15 Hillel is the world's largest international Jewish campus organisation.

16 Formerly known as the Jewish Service Corps, Entwine is a movement for young Jewish leaders, opinion leaders, and advocates who seek to make a meaningful impact on global Jewish and humanitarian issues.

17 In particular, inspiration derives from Maimonides' writing on charity in chapter seven of his famous *Mishneh Torah*.

teenagers leave the village to volunteer in the surrounding villages, helping locals to fix mud huts, teaching English to primary school children, and cleaning the regional clinic. The appeal to these universalised Jewish terms through the application of a pedagogical philosophy developed in Israel is interesting, considering that according to staff figures, 95 % of the teenagers in the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village are Christians and 5 % are Muslim.[18] Most of the teenagers attend church every Saturday or Sunday, with some denominations even offering religious services inside the village's community center. Since most of the staff are observant, participation in services is regarded as a component within the healing process. Needless to say, there is no Jewish proselytism on the part of the handful of Jewish facilitators. However, the teenagers are often curious about the Jewish religion, and may engage volunteers with questions about the holy city of Jerusalem or about their views on Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we examined the little-explored domain of Jewish RNGOs. We identified their unique features, dwelling on their collective motto of *tikkun olam* and their aversion to proselytism. This aversion we then qualified by drawing a distinction between missionary activities and Jewish outreach. In the last section, we appealed to two case studies, which showed how, while Jewish RNGOs strictly avoid missionary activities among their recipients, their initiatives must also be considered in terms of inner-Jewish goals of consolidating identity among facilitators and volunteers. This is done, among other things, through the regular organisation of Jewish learning sessions, celebration of religious festivals, and encounters between Jews of different diasporas and religious orientations.

Returning to the wider literature on RNGOs, it appears that, to the extent that one may generalise, Jewish RNGOs represent a unique category, as can be demonstrated by the question of religious pervasiveness. In some respects, Jewish RNGOs maintain high religious pervasiveness, for example by their tendency to insist on the Jewish identity of their staff and volun-

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18 Data retrieved in 2010.

teers[19], while at the same time, initiatives such as Project TEN and the Aga-hozo Shalom Youth Village show the dominance of a pluralistic tone, which is strengthened by a staunch non-missionary stance. Among the Jewish staff, Judaism is understood in a variety of ways, and for many it represents a basis of cultural, ethnic, and political belonging more than a theological dogma. While it thus appears that the emphasis on *tikkun olam* with its universalist focus and plurality of interpretations helps to establish Jewish RNGOs as moderate and as convenient partners in achieving global development goals, further research is needed in order to establish a taxonomy of Jewish RNGOs.

Beyond the specific context of Jewish RNGOs, our conclusion raises general questions regarding an RNGO's actual target audience. The study invites us to think beyond a project's formal beneficiaries and consider internally directed objectives as involving RNGOs' own religiously affiliated staff, volunteers, and religious community at large. Indeed, the case of Jewish RNGOs, with its formal aversion to proselytism, warrants a second look at the possibility of RNGOs' work as targeting global North facilitators themselves. We urge scholars to keep these observations in mind and to consider how religious outreach operates not only in relations to the host communities, but also inwardly within the organisation, its staff, and the religious community on behalf of which it claims to operate.

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19 In recent years, Project TEN has been moving towards hiring local country directors and coordinators. Nonetheless, the volunteer centres and communal houses where staff and volunteers reside still retain their clear Jewish orientation, and local personnel are expected to eat vegetarian food due to Kosher food restrictions, to learn about Jewish holidays, to partake in Jewish values and identity classes, and even to learn some Hebrew in order to maintain the Jewish 'character' of the house. By contrast, Christian holidays are excluded from formal discussion.

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SECTION III:
INTER-RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS AND COMPARISONS

Leif H. Seibert

The Methadone of the People: Not all Theodicies are Sociodicies

Introduction

In *The Bridge Betrayed*, Michael Sells famously criticised the inactivity of the international community in the face of humanitarian catastrophe and the trivialising news coverage of atrocities and genocide during the Bosnian war:

> "There are no angels in this conflict' has been a slogan used for the refusal to stop the killing as if angels, rather than human beings, deserve our empathy and support." (Sells 1998: 133)

Sells' critique is on point. The slogan he is attacking could not possibly be any more absurd, and Sells and others (e.g. Chandler 2000; Ramet 2002; Imamović 2006) have shown just how harmful these and similarly ill-informed and overly reluctant approaches to the conflicts during the breakup of Yugoslavia have been. Without taking anything away from Sells' original message, I would like to divert this quote from its intended use albeit still in the context of the Bosnian war in order to illustrate another common form of banalisation, only this time not in regard to the victims of war but rather with respect to the ones who actually show these victims the empathy and support they undoubtedly deserve: the members of local religious non-governmental organisations (RNGOs) providing humanitarian aid during and after the crisis.

With respect to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the Bosnian war (1992–95), religion is considered an important conflict factor, if only because early alliances between certain religious functionaries and the political opposition in Yugoslavia (Fetahagić 2012: 116) promoted the downfall of communism and subsequent rise of nationalist parties, who then used religious symbolism for the sake of nationalist agitation against religious out-groups, religiously grounded mobilisation, sacralisation of war crimes, and so forth promoting, eventually, a form of nationalism where ethnic separation, nationality, and religious belonging are inextricably convoluted (Mojzes 1998; O'Loughlin, Ó Tuathail 2006). Yet, there is also another side to religious practice in BiH. Both during the war and in its aftermath many

religious actors and activists have done their utmost to provide a counter-point to the nationalist agenda, engage in interreligious dialogue, and provide shelter and aid to the victims of war. Curiously, however, their engagement is often misconceived as 'not genuinely religious' in nature.

This brings us to the topic of this book: does religion make a difference? I approach this subject by exploring the question, just how religious can a soup kitchen possibly be? There are plenty of secular humanitarian organisations that run soup kitchens, so the moral imperative to 'feed the hungry' (Matthew 25,35) is apparently not a unique feature of Christian charity. So, what does it take to make a soup kitchen genuinely religious?

In the following pages, I will try to tackle this tricky question by denying it a target. Instead of directly answering the question, I will focus more on the functional understanding of religion that underlies it, namely the tacitly accepted assumption that 'genuine' religions can never actively promote tangible regulatory, reformative, or revolutionary contributions. First, I will explicate the line of reasoning that leads to this assumption; this explication will mostly focus on the work of Pierre Bourdieu as a modern representative, even though the basic ideas can also be found in many other scholarly works on religion (Weber, Marx, Feuerbach, and even Hegel). Then, I will firstly try to provide a theoretical counterpoint to the assumption by criticising its validity within the scope of the theory it originates from; secondly, I will show interview analyses of three local RNGOs providing humanitarian aid in postwar BiH (two Christian and one Muslim organisations) as empirical examples that directly contradict the assumption under scrutiny. In sum, this theoretical and empirical refutation aims to be a *nego majorem* of allegations against a merely 'borrowed' religious cause in humanitarian efforts. Albeit not the most elegant form of refuting an argument, this is hopefully more relevant to the overarching topic of specific religious capacities than a recipe for 'genuinely' religious soup. Not that I would be able to provide one after all, it is humans and not angels who get hungry, so it takes soup and not prayers to saturate their hunger.

Religious conservativism

The aphorism "theodicies are always *sociodicies*" is prominently put forward by Pierre Bourdieu, who reasons that "questioning the meaning of human existence (…) is fundamentally a social interrogation of the causes and reasons for social injustices or privileges" (1991: 16). This observation has become eponymous of Bourdieu's sociology of religion so much so that his

colleagues and heirs decided to use this stand-alone aphorism instead of an abstract for the back cover of the German edition of Bourdieu's collected papers on religion (Schultheis and Egger 2011). Interestingly, the underlying claim is not exclusive to Bourdieusian praxeology. On the contrary, it is not even an original insight of Bourdieu since he himself traces the argument back to Max Weber's studies on the 'theodicy of good fortune', and it does not take much imagination to go even further back and to recognise the basic idea as a permutation of the famous words in Marx's critique of Hegel:

> "Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo." (Marx 2000: 72)

Under conditions of misery, religion can provide solace and thereby ease the burden of suffering for the believer. The critique inherent to this observation is that taking comfort in religion simultaneously promotes acceptance and inaction because the religious symbolism obscures the real causes of said injustice. In consequence, religion becomes essentially a conservative societal force; solace and relief for the suffering individual stabilises the status quo. Once again, it is Bourdieu who addresses this effect in the most succinct words:

> "In a society divided into classes, the structure of the systems of religious representations and practices belonging to the various groups or classes contributes to the perpetuation and reproduction of the social order (…) (l) the systems of practices and representations (dominant religiosity) that tend to justify the existence of the dominant classes as dominant and (2) the systems of practices and representations (dominated religiosity) that tend to impose on the dominated a recognition of the legitimacy of the domination founded on misrecognition of the arbitrariness of the domination (...). This contributes to the symbolic reinforcement of the dominated representation of the political world and of the ethos of resignation and renouncement directly inculcated by conditions of existence." (Bourdieu 1991: 19)

Building upon this explication of religion as an essentially conservative form of practice, Bourdieu goes even further when he addresses the controversies between priests and prophets,[1] i.e. the role of ostensibly revolutionary or reformative actors who wield the power of prophetic discourse in order to challenge the established religious institutions as apologists of the status quo. He argues that "prophetic discourse has more chance of appearing in overt or masked periods of crisis" (Bourdieu 1991: 34): "In sum, the prophet is less the 'extraordinary' man of whom Weber spoke than the man of extraordinary situations" (1991: 35). However, according to Bourdieu, "there is doubtless no symbolic revolution that does not presuppose a political revolution" (Bourdieu 1991: 37). In this vein, revolutionary action is never a genuinely religious practice, and even though the challengers of the status quo "anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past", the prophet uses merely "borrowed language" (Bourdieu 1991: 37) because of the necessity to challenge the priest's *genuinely* religious narrative (and its stabilising function): theodicies are *always* sociodicies.

When the icons of modern sociology of religion and some of the most vocal critics of religion throughout history are in agreement that religion is essentially conservative and thus naturally opposed to progress, it is not surprising that we also encounter similar sentiments about the role of religion in society once we leave the ivory towers of our Universities. RNGOs who try to promote change in their respective societies often face accusations that resemble the aforementioned analyses: If a charitable religious organisation opens a soup kitchen for victims of war, their self-assessment as religious actors may be called out as a false flag because feeding the poor is not in itself a religious concern. After all, secular humanitarian actors also feed the poor. Similar to Bourdieu's prophet, the religious justification of their regulatory cause appears to be merely 'borrowed', not genuine. And when this organisation chooses to offer soup and blankets for 'widows and orphans' (James 1,27) instead of microloans and computer courses for young entrepreneurs, they are called out for merely alleviating grievances instead of attacking the cause of these grievances. In this sense, religious actors working under unsustainable conditions that they are trying to overcome are either genuinely religious but secretly harmful, or they are helpful but secretly secular.

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1 In Weber, the priest-prophet difference is a specific permutation of the church-sect dichotomy. Bourdieu uses the terms less strictly and even interchangeably (e.g. "the opposition between the *church and the prophet*" (Bourdieu 1991: 22)).

As attentive readers will have concluded from the title of this paper, I disagree with this, and in the following I will try to show by the example of charitable religious organisations involved in the peace building process in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) that *some* theodicies are not sociodicies.

From the church-sect dichotomy to religious field theory

As mentioned above, religious interpretations have gained enormous momentum during the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Bosnian war and its aftermath, and formerly communist societies in Southeast Europe have experienced a religious revival. Today, local religious actors claim to represent ideals of peaceful coexistence, intercultural dialogue, and reconciliation; however, religion simultaneously remains a conflict factor, not only because religious belonging, ethnicity, and nationality are inextricably convoluted, but also because of alliances between religious and political elites. In short, religion is a vector of both peace and division in BiH.

Even without going into the details of the turbulent power dynamics of the religious field in postwar BiH, it is understandable that this turmoil calls into question the adequacy of some characteristics of classical typologies of religious organisations. In particular, the assumption of a necessary relationship between religious complexity, exclusivism, as well as the contentual overdetermination of societal positions by specific types of authority is not apt for observations of the dynamics in the Bosnian peace process.

According to the classic typologies of religious organisation (e.g. Weber; Yinger; Bourdieu), churches and ecclesia stand for inclusivist moral codices that are harmonious to the social status quo: As highly institutionalised organisations, their internal hierarchisation and comparatively big memberships are evidence of them successfully establishing their religious convictions in the overarching society. On the other hand, sects and other religious organisations with low complexity are taken to represent fewer people and exclusivist morals that are at odds with the status quo insofar as they are relatively young organisations that convey an avant-garde message challenging the religious establishment. However, while these assumptions correctly attribute levels of institutional complexity to higher memberships and establishing processes that take time, they fail to acknowledge the possibility of abrupt disturbances of these continuous processes, such as a major war. The religious field of BiH (Seibert 2010, 2018) shows a situation that is the polar opposite: The big historical religious communities, i.e. the Muslim Community, the Serbian-orthodox Church, and the Catholic

Church, are in a position of apology. After the perversions of the Bosnian war, the majority of the population views representatives of institutionalised religion as spoilers rather than saviors. In the perception of the religious audience, the more something *looks like* a national church (i.e. a religious body of high complexity), the more it is susceptible of aggressive nationalism (i.e. a bearer of political compromise rather than authentic religion).[2] Even though most, if not all, religious actors in modern BiH are taking a stance for peace, the image of a priest blessing weapons in recent history lingers on in the public perception of institutionalised religion. In consequence, this 'credibility vacuum' has provided ample opportunity for smaller, weakly institutionalised organisations (e.g. RNGOs) to gain a foothold in the religious field by promoting inclusivist ideas that criticise contemporary religious practices according to a 'national key'. In this sense, in BiH's unstable religious field the religious actors that Yinger deems "empirically unlikely or even impossible" (1970: 261) are literally the standard, whereas the organisations that conform to the assumptions of Yinger's stage model are freak cases (two out of 15 actors).

On the one hand, this confirms Bourdieu's interpretation of the prophet as a man of extraordinary situations, an expert who "borrows" religious symbols and prospers in situations where their capacity for "crisis ritualization" (Bourdieu 1991: 36) is in high demand:

> "In fact, just as the priest is linked with the ordinary order, the prophet is the man of crisis situations, in which the established order see-saws and the whole future is suspended. Prophetic discourse has more chance of appearing in overt or masked periods of crisis affecting either entire societies or certain classes, that is, in periods where the economic or morphological transformations of such or such a part of society determine the collape [sic], weakening, or obsolescence of traditions or of symbolic systems that provided the principles of their worldview and way of life." (Bourdieu 1991:34)[3]

According to this reading of the controversy of orthodox churches vs. heretic sects, the prophet's credibility should indeed rise in scenarios under duress, whereas the priest's credibility should decline. Thus, the empirical data from BiH actually confirms Bourdieu's observations on the func-

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2 The actual involvement of religious bodies in nationalist discourse and in promoting the cause of war has not been nearly as evenly matched as the field positioning makes it out to be. Credibility, in this sense, is about *perceived* credibility, and certain field effects are yet another evidence of the assertiveness of relativism and consequential misjudgment in the aftermath of the war.

3 Weber *allowed* for 'situational' charisma, Bourdieu comprehends *all* charisma to be situational.

tioning of the religious field were it not for his 'cosmological constant' that defines religion *a priori* as a conservative societal force.

Now, there are three arguments against this cosmological constant: First, Bourdieusian field theory allows for 'eminent heretics' in other societal fields (explicitly the academic field and the field of cultural production) but not in the religious field. In field theory, scholars who reject the strictness of the code as resembled by the traditional *homo academicus* are functional equivalents to prophets who challenge the ritualised orthodoxy, and nowhere does Bourdieu suggest that academic or literary 'underdogs' are merely "borrowing language" from their well-established counterparts. In fact, the positioning of actors in the field of cultural production (Bourdieu 1983) even suggests the opposite.

Second, the argument that genuine religious discourse only occurs in complicity with the political status quo is borderline absurd if taken from an actor-centric perspective. If a Catholic priest from Rome boards a plane to visit the small parish in Banja Luka, his religious convictions do not magically become hypocritical between take-off and landing. In such a case as postwar BiH, it does not even make much sense from a structural perspective given that the current majority/minority-ratios (and, consequently, the structural makeup of dominant/dominated actors) are the result of ethnic cleansing campaigns during the war. It goes against the very basics of Bourdieu's conceptualisations of the interplay of habitus and field to imply that forceful intervention could *ad hoc* alter the course of incorporated and objectified history.

Last, and most importantly, the evaluation of religious semantics is based on the presumption that the hegemon of the religious field dictates the rules of engagement for the whole religious 'expert game', and that the other 'players' have to conform to these rules at least to a certain extent lest they would be excluded from the game.[4] Bourdieu deems the prophet's language to be "borrowed" from the priest because he assumes the church, rather than the sect, to be in the hegemonial position. However, according to his own explanations on prophetic discourse (see above), the position of the hegemon is subject to conjectural changes as well. In BiH we see a religious crisis situation that already lasts for an extended timespan from the struggles for religious freedom in the late period of Yugoslavia, throughout

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4 For instance, the religious *nomos* in Germany is largely dictated by the prototype of the big Christian churches. In consequence, there are constant calls for a 'churchification' of Islamic communities because, both in the public eye and in the interplay with other societal fields, this is deemed the 'proper' form of religious organisation.

the Bosnian war, and up to the current situation of critical international dependency. Since prophets present more adequate interpretations of the sacred during crises, they (rather than the priests) come out on top of the religious 'expert game' in BiH. The basic functioning of field dynamics stays the same: the hegemon still dictates the field's rules of engagement. However, due to the loss of credibility of institutionalised religion, the historical communities no longer find themselves in the position of the hegemon; in BiH, it is the priests, rather than the prophets, who have to conform to their counterpart's dictate largely a thorough moralisation of religious issues in the face of war atrocities, which forces representatives of 'national' religions into a state of constant apology. In short, the presumption of religion being essentially conservative seems to obstruct the view on the "empirically unlikely": If we ignore the *a priori* exclusion of sects with high credibility and churches with low credibility in his writings about religion, everything else about Bourdieu's reinterpretation of Weber still holds up and is indeed applicable to the case of BiH.

The ethos of religious peace builders

To take a closer look at the actual content of the relationship between theodicy and sociodicy, we will focus on three centric actors from BiH: the Catholic pastoral organisation *Caritas* (Caritas Biskupske Konferencije BiH, henceforth: Caritas), the Muslim charity organisation *Merhamet* (Muslimansko dobrotvorno društvo Merhamet, henceforth: Merhamet), and the *St. Sava Youth Community* (Svetosavska omladinska zajednica, henceforth: SOZ).

In this respect, 'centric actors' refers to their relative positioning within the dynamics of the religious field as collective actors, they received moderate credibility scores in our surveys and they are moderately complex organisations, which means that they fall to neither extreme in the dominant/dominated controversy. All three actors are humanitarian organisations involved in various charitable projects in BiH (though SOZ runs projects almost exclusively in the Republika Srpska), and each of them represents one of the three big religious and ethnic communities in BiH.

The data on these actors are from the project, 'The ethos of religious peace builders', run jointly by Bielefeld University and the Center for interdisciplinary postgraduate studies (CIPS) at the University of Sarajevo.[5] The

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5 https://www.unibielefeld.de/(en)/theologie/forschung/religionsforschung/forschung/schaefer/konflikt/projekt_ethos.html.

overarching sample of qualitative interviews consists of 90 complete interviews with an average length of about 53 minutes (79 hours in total). These interviews were analyzed using HabitusAnalysis, a methodological approach to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as a "system of dispositions" (Bourdieu 1990: 59) constituted by "cognitive and motivating structures" (Bourdieu 1990:56) that utilises the model of the praxeological square (Schäfer 2003, 2009, 2015) in order to classify relevant terms in the interviews as operators of practical logic according to their underlying logical relations. For Caritas and Merhamet, seven interviews were conducted, and five for SOZ. In total, this sub-sample includes 5285 primary codes connected in 2536 quotations from 19 interviews. Of these, 51 were omitted for privacy reasons. The codebooks are available online (Seibert 2004a; 2004b; 2004c).[6]

Figure 1: sample overview

	CODES						QUOTES	INTERVIEWS
	NEG EXP	NEG INT	POS EXP	POS INT	[PRIV]	TOTAL		
CARITAS	548	310	455	397	17	1727	666	7
MERHAMET	582	278	631	402	23	1916	996	7
SOZ	355	257	476	543	11	1642	874	5
TOTAL:	1485	845	1562	1342	51	5285	2536	19

In short, the central identity-forming transformations of the three actors are about *aid and relief*. They diagnose the central problems and crises as *Vulnerable social groups*, and *War* and *Poverty*; they try to overcome said problems by seeking refuge and guidance in the *Church* (Caritas and SOZ) and *True faith* (Merhamet) in order to foster *Charity* (Caritas and SOZ) and *Humanitarian work* (Merhamet). The central strategic transformations of Caritas, Merhamet, and SOZ are about *regulation*. The good practices of *Charity* and *Humanitarian work* find their purpose in acting as a makeshift arrangement for the shortcomings of a defective and corrupt *Government*

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6 Throughout this whole analysis, I am referencing results from my much more comprehensive analysis on religious credibility in postwar BiH. In this sense, this article is a focussed revisitation of *Religious credibility under fire* (Seibert 2018). Henceforth, I abstain from referencing this book individually because such references would be ubiquitary and thus trivial.

that fails to address the needs of *Vulnerable social groups*, and that promotes *War* and *Poverty*.[7]

All interviewees contrast their problem assessments by recourse to religious values. With respect to their religious convictions, the common theme in all interviews is the insistence on a principle of non-violence, as per the religious *nomos*. As members of humanitarian organisations, the interviewees are not subject to as much scrutiny as direct representatives of an episcopate or rijaset; however, they still work within confessionally-aligned organisations, and therefore are at least somewhat associated with those. In consequence, all interviewees though some more in-depth than others elaborate on their idea of religion in contrast to common allegations (unprompted in the interviews) of complicity in war atrocities. All of them respond in a very similar fashion, namely by distinguishing between 'true' religion, which they deem decidedly non-violent and apolitical, and 'false' religion, i.e. self-proclaimed believers who are either misguided or malevolent and merely pretending to be Christians or Muslims.

> "I think that, that, simply because here, most people in BiH… people … people who are angry, they simply have no real idea what religion is, and what it is that each of the three biggest religions in BiH represent. (…) It is tolerance, love for the other man, and so on. [²*Mhm…*,²] And there are people who simply, … people … people are somehow lost and don't have, don't see, and they turn to some other things and simply have a wrong view … view of religion. If they came back to the basic things (…) I think they are far, far (…) It would be much easier, there simply would not have been so much hatred, and, and things which were directed against one another." (Frist-Caritas 7:10.47)
>
> "That is, (…) all that is low in man emerged over the course of this war. Well, and several people who profess themselves as believers (…) they aren't actually believers. [²Q: *Mhm…*, *mhm…*,²] Because a man who can kill another because of his religion, because of his way of life, well, a personal thing that's unthinkable! But, see, it happened. (…) Not only in this war but in all wars." (Frist-Merhamet 2:31.39)
>
> "If he believes in God, he will not do (…) because he fears God, he will not do something bad to another. So, you have, for example, the crimes that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ehm…, it wasn't done, ehm…, it wasn't a devout man who did those crimes. Those who don't go to church, those who don't go to the mosque, … they don't know and aren't even interested in the church or God, and at that moment then you have a situation where one behaves like an animal." (Frist-SOZ 3:17.30)

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7 Words that are *italicised* and Capitalised denote specific semantic fields in the interviews, i.e. a set of logically equivalent and semantically similar terms that is allocated in relative proximity to the prototype example that simultaneously functions as the name of the respective semantic field. The interviews were analyzed in the original Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian; all translations used in this article were done by the author.

This conceptualisation of religion leads back to the problem of theodicy: The notion that (true) religion is inherently peaceful and therefore innocent with respect to the ongoing problems in BiH prompts explanations for violence and harm that occurred *despite* religion. Here, most interviewees argue that harm stems, first and foremost, from a *deficit* of true religion. Relevant operators from the interviews are, amongst others, *Manipulation of religion*, *Instrumentalization of religion*, *Abuse of religion*, *Degenerate religion*, *Lack of conviction*, *Lack of principles*, *No rule of law*, *Ignorance*, as well as anti-religious concepts and actors (e.g. *Communism*, *Scapegoating*, *Media*, and *Secularists*. By extension of the principle of non-violence, according to these interviewees, harm does not merely occur *despite* but actually *against* religion. In consequence, 'true' religion is depicted as being at odds with the current situation and the status quo. Religion appears as a force for change and progress.

Going one step further, it is interesting how this approach to theodicy relates to sociodicy: None of these actors advocate revolutionary action (because revolutions tend to be violent, which once again contradicts their guiding principle of religion being inherently peaceful); rather, they focus on regulatory and reformative practices. So, even though most interviewees are rather blunt when it comes to criticism of the social problems in BiH, they still take a moderate approach they are, after all, centric actors in the power struggle of the religious field in BiH.

Thus, on the one hand, their core message is that things have to change, which can hardly be interpreted as a 'sociodicy' in the stricter sense of a justification of the status quo. All interviewees are in agreement about the fact that the status quo is unjust and unsustainable. On the other hand, however, the advocated means to achieve this change at least presuppose that the status quo actually allows for productive reforms (and not necessarily revolution), so there is still that consoling element of 'hang in there', which critics of religion have pointed out as the reason why religious obfuscation tends to undermine consequential progressive action.

Theodicy and sociodicy in postwar BiH

HabitusAnalysis employs the praxeological square to translate terms from natural language into operators of practical logic, the underlying (and largely implicit) dispositions guiding social agency in accordance with an actor's know-how and competence in regard to their social framework. The praxeological square is essentially a permutation of the square of logical opposition (Parsons 2012) insofar as the four positions of the square are intercon-

nected via basic logical relations (contradiction, contrariness, sub-contrariness, subaltern opposition; different terms in the same position are logically equivalent). HabitusAnalysis describes terms as either negative or positive (bad or good), either an experience (of the interviewee) or an interpretation (i.e. how the interviewee interprets their experiences); the four classes *negative experience*, *positive experience*, *negative interpretation*, *positive interpretation* thus are technical shorthand for the logical relations of the classified terms vis-à-vis one another. At its core, this prerogative on logical relations allows for a pragmatistic reassessment of natural language, that is, a reassessment according to the use of specific terms: For instance, two interviewees may both speak about justice, and they may even both use the same word 'justice', but for the first interviewee *Justice* links to *Retribution* whereas for the second it links to *Forgiveness.*

The reason for this short digression into methodological roots is that the application of HabitusAnalysis on the 19 interviews in our focus allows for a logically positivist reevaluation of the relationship between theodicy and sociodicy. Specifically, it reveals an oddity in respect to the praxeological classes of terms denoting the actors' reformative propositions terms like *Progress*, *Change*, and *Advancement*, and furthermore their relation towards *Hope*, *Optimism*, *Serenity*, *Enthusiasm*, as well as, quite literally, *Faith.* At first glance, there is a catch: these terms are scattered throughout the positions of positive experience and positive interpretation, and identical words convey utterly different logical contexts.

Simply put, the interviewees observe a plethora of structural problems, and consequently they advocate practices that promote social change. Simultaneously, they complain about lackluster engagement, irresponsibility, and ignorance among those affected by these problems, and they argue that this mentality must change. Not surprisingly, all interviewees are in accordance although their narratives differ substantially with regard to the relationship between mentality and life situation. We can showcase these differences by contrasting two praxeological squares taken from the collective analysis of Caritas interviews,[8] both focussed on the operator Progress and its strongest (i.e. most common) logical relations.

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8 The respective praxeological squares for Merhamet and SOZ (centred around the terms *Progress* and *Change*) look remarkably similar, with the only major differences being that the operator *Harmony* is exclusive to Caritas; for Merhamet, the second-most important (in this context) operator of positive interpretation besides *Faith* is *Science*, for SOZ it is *Devotion*. Also, the members of Merhamet do not use the wording *Charity* and instead refer to *Humanitarian work* and *Helping each other.*

The first praxeological square (figure 1) can be read as follows: The core grievances (negative experiences) described by the interviewees are the problems of *Vulnerable social groups* and the feeling of *Helplessness* in the face of their problems. *Vulnerable social groups* means victims or war, children and elderly, disabled people, and persons living in poverty in short, all the 'clients' whom the interviewees as functionaries of Caritas are trying to help. And *Helplessness* connotes the desperation of a humanitarian aid worker who sees much more people in need of help than their prospective budget can possibly account for. These grievances are contrasted by *Faith* and *Harmony* (positive interpretation), two core tenets of the interviewees' religious beliefs that also come up in other contexts during the interviews. *Faith* simply means trust in God, i.e. the belief that even bad events have a purpose and that, ostensibly, senseless suffering is not all that senseless; *Harmony* is closely related to this insofar as it connotes the idea of a (divine) balancing of imbalances, often expressed in aphorisms like 'you can't have the good without the bad'. From these two religious principles, the interviewees derive their (former and anticipated) achievements and successes (positive experience), namely cases and projects where they indeed managed to promote substantial *Progress* in BiH. Insofar as this square position also depicts self-positioning and esteemed practices, it illustrates their self-perception as agents of change, i.e. the 'ground personnel' that foster the balancing of imbalances. As such, they perceive an antagonism towards the causes and roots of their grievances (negative interpretation), the ideology of *Nationalism* that tore BiH apart and the *Dayton Agreement* that perpetuated the ethnic division of the country. Both of these are literally seen as the antithesis of Progress *Nationalism* as recourse to pre-Yugoslav (or even tribalist) mentalities, and the *Dayton Agreement* as a reactionary covenant that eternalised the outcome of ethnic cleansings in the constitution of BiH.

Figure 1: Theodicies are sociodicies
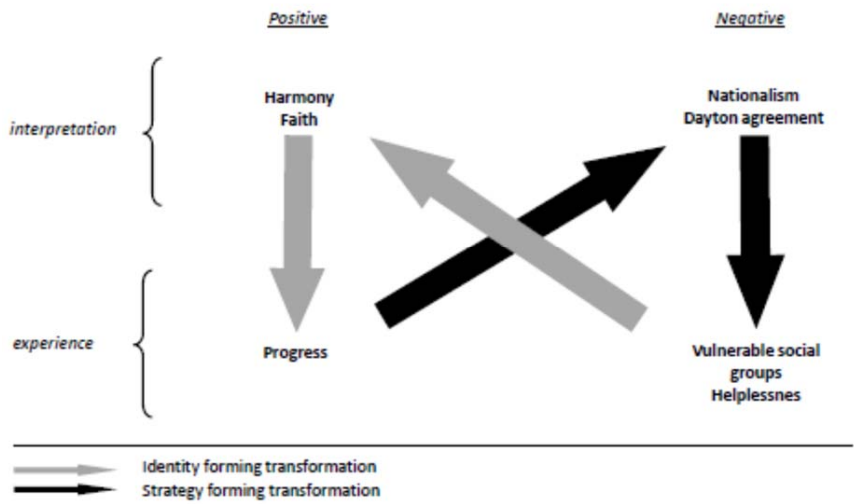
The second praxeological square (figure 2) looks similar, but there are a couple of crucial differences. Right from the outset, the grievances (negative experience) are analogous to those in the first square: *Vulnerable social groups* is the core term, only now it is more prominently associated with the *War* and all kinds of atrocities that made most of these people vulnerable in the first place. The causes for these grievances (negative interpretation) are also very similar, with *Nationalism* once again being the prime suspect, only now more closely associated with the *Instrumentalization of religion* for nationalist propaganda that promoted the cause of war. However, while the negative side shows merely another emphasis yet otherwise stays the same compared to the first square, the positive side is altogether different: *Progress* and *Change* (positive interpretation) no longer refer to esteemed practices and events (experience) but to the conditions and ideas behind them (interpretation). Here, *Progress* and *Change* both denote valuable improvements with a wider scope and connote the belief that change is a purpose in itself, that the future will hold improvements over the present because it occurs according to God's plan and thereby fosters the Christian practice of *Charity* and a situation of peaceful interreligious and interethnic *Coexistence* (positive experience). In short, *Progress* and *Change* are the conditions for *Charity* and *Coexistence*.

Figure 2: Theodicies are not sociodicies
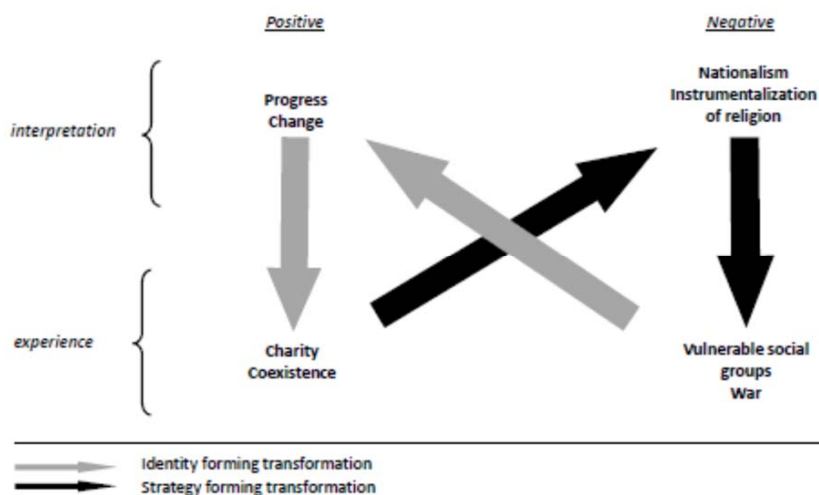
If we compare these two squares with a focus on the position of *Progress* as consequent of a conditional relation in the first and as antecedent of a conditional relation in the second, we can observe two rivaling views even within the same sets of interviews: On the one hand, the detrimental situation is perceived as the result of poor attitudes and, consequently, having faith in God is supposed to foster palpable improvements in society. On the other hand, the opposite line of causality suggests that progressive improvements are needed in order to justify positive practices. Basically, the actors see that bad mentality and bad conduct go hand in hand but while they agree that both mentalities and conducts need to change; their analyses differ fundamentally in regard to the question of where to position the lever. Consequently, even though the arguments for reformative practices seem well-aligned at first glance, the religious functionaries in BiH are sending mixed signals. Insofar as the argument boils down to 'If people have faith, then the objective situation will improve', the religious promise of salvation takes a form that reconciles theodicy and sociodicy. The gist of this message falls broadly within the type of religious contribution that has been criticised as the soothing message ("opium") that salvation will come if only people have faith: Insofar as a positive mentality takes precedence over social change for the better, it inevitably calls for putting on a brave face during dire circumstances, thereby making pressing issues appear less

acute and implicitly suggesting that the dire situation already bears the seed for improvement. If, on the other hand, the argument is that, 'if the situation changes, people will become more charitable', theodicy and sociodicy are disparate. Here, *Progress* and *Change* are not the goal but rather the path to salvation, and consequently there is no way to talk the talk without actually walking the walk. This message contains no element where a religious narrative would imply solace or consolation in the face of injustice and thus actually promote or obscure the status quo by means of a mere promise of eventual salvation and as such, it would be a best-case example of an expression of "subversive faith" (bhs.: "subverzivna vjera"), as Marković (2008: 113) calls it.

> "I say in jest, they [the religious officials] care for the dead, we take care of the living." (Frist-Merhamet 2:28.45)

Remarkably, there are no public disputes about this fundamental difference in BiH: Everybody agrees that both the prevalent mentalities and the objective status quo are, *in toto*, bad, and that they should be changed. Even in our interviews, we cannot detect a particular pattern in regard to the primacy of (apprehended) causalities among the three focus groups; both lines of reasoning are present in each group, and although the strategic focus varies slightly (for instance, field workers are more eager to depict structural problems as causes than as results), the inter-group differences are smaller than the intra-group differences. The implicitness of the underlying ambiguity of the direction of causation, which, after all, was only revealed by an in-depth analysis that methodologically focusses on logical relations, leads us to assume that it flies under the radar of the actors themselves. In this vein, it must also be noted that it is, as far as considerations on factual correctness go, basically a case of hen and egg (or: being and consciousness).

Conclusion

In sum, we have seen that there is a cosmological constant that permeates not only Bourdieu's approach to religion, namely the a priori assumption that religion has to be a conservative force. A corollary of this assumption is that progressive efforts by religious actors are misconceived as either areligious in nature albeit with "borrowed" religious language or merely symbolical and thus an obfuscation of the real societal problems, to which religion even contributes by providing such an obfuscating symbolism. We have argued that this cosmological constant leads to inconsistencies within its own theory of origin, that it is at the very least counterintuitive if taken

from an actor-centric perspective, and that its justification rests on the specific (albeit common) case of a stable religious field with a well-established church constituting the monopoly of religious capital. Then, we have presented the case of BiH, a society with an unstable religious field, and although we did not develop the full model (Seibert 2010, 2018) here, we have briefly explained the most important reasons why the historical religious communities are currently occupying subdominant positions in the religious field of BiH. Against this background, we have used the example of three local RNGOs (Caritas, Merhamet, SOZ) to show that an in-depth HabitusAnalysis of interviews with their representatives reveals two rivaling lines of causality with respect to their understanding of *Change* and *Progress*. The first line of causality depicts tangible societal development as the result of improved mentalities, whereas the second describes it as the condition for charitable practice; the first resembles a mindset where theodicy and sociodicy are unified (a case where the cosmological constant holds true), the second where they are disparate (and thereby refute the cosmological constant). Yet, the same actors working within the same structures and on the same projects justify their efforts by recourse to both lines of causality and in both lines, the operator *Progress* is closely linked to other operators with a strong religious connotation (*Faith* and *Charity*, respectively). Hence, not only does there not seem to be a single reason that in fact justified the cosmological constant, there are good reasons to reject it.

What does all of this mean for religious contributions in areas like humanitarian aid, peace building, development assistance, and so forth? Of course, it does not mean that soup kitchens are a specifically religious contribution. However, what is or is not specifically religious rests by and large on the definition of religion that we apply to the practices under observation. With respect to BiH, postwar efforts in interreligious dialogue (such as the work of the Interreligious Council) might be a best-case example for *specifically* religious efforts in peace building. However, under the assumption of the cosmological constant, interreligious dialogue in a religiously divided society would have to be seen both as a case of "borrowed language" (because the division itself has a religious connotation) and as a largely symbolic and therefore possibly obfuscating effort that does not provide as tangible results as more mundane humanitarian programs.

Thus, it was not by chance that I have chosen the example of three more hands-on humanitarian RNGOs to provide a counterpoint to the allegation that religion is conservative by definition: With respect to progressive religious efforts, the cosmological constant is all-encompassing, and it leaves no room whatsoever for contributions that are both progressive and gen-

uinely religious. To object to this assumption by the example of facilitators of interreligious dialogue would have meant attacking the cosmological constant at its weakest point; by showing that it does not even hold up with respect to the directorate of soup kitchens, we were able to see that it does not even hold up where it seems strongest.

In conclusion, the reevaluation of the relationship between theodicies and sociodicies is a cautionary tale about the huge influence of our tacit assumptions when we try to field such questions for the specific contributions of religions in humanitarian efforts. If our own presumptions categorically exclude religious actors from contributions that lead to tangible successes, religious contributions will either be false flag operations or merely symbolic by necessity. The argument was never about soup; it was about the question of whether the notion of a 'genuinely religious soup' was any more misguided than the notion of 'genuinely secular soup'.

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Sinah Theres Kloß

Performing 'Religiousness': Negotiations of Religion and the Formation of Identity in Guyanese Development Organisations

Introduction

In the multi-ethnic and multi-religious society of Guyana, organisations engaged in development or humanitarian work define themselves as faith-based, non-governmental or both. While the category 'non-governmental' exists and is applied specifically among political leaders, the classification of being 'religious' or of doing religion is of greater significance to most organisations as well as to most charismatic leaders, religious practitioners and lay people. They frequently highlight that 'religious organisations' are those that 'talk about' religion and seek to convert. Classifications of specific organisations are thus not exclusively linked to doctrinal foundations or notions of faith and belief, but furthermore to performative practices. Similar to a person's process of identity formation, the creation of an organisation's or a group's identity is perceived as relational, influenced by the various socio-historical contexts, as well as by the self-ascription and ascriptions of others. From a Guyanese perspective it is based on both performative and essential notions of identity. This article therefore discusses processes of identity formation in and of organisations conducting development or humanitarian work in the specific local context of Guyana, raising the following questions: What is the relevance of being labelled and identified as religious in the context of development work? How do perceptions of doing and performing religion influence the work and identity of a development organisation?

I argue that although organisations may not consider themselves or their practices as religious, social actors and groups may interpret this differently on the basis of divergent definitions of religion and notions of which practices are labelled as religious. I conclude that any answer to the question, 'Does religion make a difference in development work?' has to consider the different and specific contexts of local communities, and cannot be generalized. To understand the specific conditions of the case study, I first analyse how Guyanese (re)construct ethno-religious group

identities and may classify development organisations as 'religious'. This, I argue in the second part, is also based on the relevance of action in the conceptualization of religion, as religion does not simply reflect doctrines, theology and beliefs, but is also performed. In the final part I elaborate on how this interpretation and evaluation of the doing of religion may influence the labelling (and hence efficacy) of development organisations as either religious or spiritual.

Group Identity and the Identification of Development Organisations

The buzzing community centre is filled with visitors, seated in rows on plastic chairs. Children play on the floor and on their parents' laps, volunteer staff hands out *channa* (a dish of chick peas) and sweet drinks, and a camera team documents the events of the medical outreach programme to post the material soon or immediately on social media. It is a noisy gathering in the otherwise quiet backstreet of the residential area in rural Guyana; the sound of fans, which stir the humid air, an organizer, who shouts registration numbers of patients into a microphone, and the voices of approximately one hundred people combine on this Thursday afternoon in August 2015. Vijay[1], who is managing the event together with his wife Shirley, sits down next to me in a shaded corner of the property's front yard to explain the proceedings of the medical outreach programme. Vijay is one of the founding members and on the executive board of the Nirvana Humanitarian Society (Nirvana) that owns the community building and that co-hosts the programme together with the Save Abee Foundation (Save Abee). Nirvana is a not-for-profit organisation that was established as a cultural and humanitarian organisation by Guyanese migrants in the USA in 1997. In Guyana it provides "assistance to the poor and relief to victims of disasters, help[s to] promote educational opportunities for economically deprived children, support[s] programs to assist abused children and women, sponsor[s] and encourage[s] programs and activities that allow for the development of art, drama and music"[2]. Similarly, Save Abee was registered in the USA in 2010 as a non-profit organisation, operating especially in rural areas of Guyana. Initially, the organisation opened a centre for children, where computer education classes were provided. Over the past years Save Abee has diversified its projects, which now include, for instance, medical outreach programmes and distributions of clothes and toys. Vijay is

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1   All names have been changed to ensure my informants' anonymity.
2   http://www.nirvanausa.org (last accessed, 24 January 2017).

in his forties, was born and raised in Guyana, but moved to the USA in the 1990s, where he lives in Florida and works at a bank. Together with Shirley he travels to Guyana two or three times a year to embark on what they call a 'working holiday', spending their leave on 'helping people and children in Guyana' and thus on 'serving humanity' (personal interview). The collaboration of Nirvana and Save Abee is based on a friendship among the founding members, and both organisations are run by Guyanese who have migrated to the USA, where a majority of funding is generated through ticket sales for popular events and cultural shows that they organize. During the bustling proceedings in the community centre, of which Vijay keeps track and in which he occasionally intervenes while we converse, he lays out the organisations' objectives and aims: the basic objective, he explains, is to improve the living conditions of Guyanese in the coastal countryside through development work and humanitarian efforts. He emphasizes that while Nirvana and Save Abee were originally focused on advancing children's computing skills, they now additionally offer scholarships to university students as 'part of development' (personal interview). Both organisations also engage in what he labels as humanitarian projects, including the restoration of houses and the provision of medical services. Although he refers to 'humanitarian' and 'development' work, he does not apply these terms as distinct concepts and practices but refers to them as intricate aspects of social work. To him and most of my informants, the differentiation of humanitarian and development work is irrelevant, a differentiation that reflects a 'Western' distinction and bias of different kinds of 'support' or 'aid', often differentiated along the lines of (material) disaster relief support and (immaterial) advocacy as support for sustainable development. This (non)differentiation is relevant, as it indicates the different understandings of development in the Guyanese context. Here, the notion of holistic development is commonly addressed, which differs from the Western notion of development, emphasizing the necessity of spirituality, as discussed in the following.

   Vijay's and my conversation took place as part of my anthropological study that I conducted in the capital Georgetown and two rural communities in Guyana, particularly in the region of East Coast Demerara, for four months in 2015. For the purpose of analysing the influence of ethno-religious identities on local concepts of development, I engaged in ethnographic fieldwork consisting of participant observation and ethnographic interviews. Throughout this research I was able to rely on earlier fieldwork experiences and interviews conducted between 2011 and 2013 for my analysis of transnational Hindu communities and the construction of Indian

ethnic identity in Guyana (Kloß 2016). Asking Vijay in this interview what he perceives to be development, he–like many other Guyanese informants–elaborates on the difference between material and spiritual development, and that both processes are mutually dependent on each other (Kloß 2020). According to him, material development cannot exist without 'spiritual development' and vice versa. Like many of my informants, he uses the notion of holistic development. With holistic development he refers to the understanding that any kind of sustainable development has to necessarily include spiritual enhancement and achievements, such as the creation of personal merit or the transformation of one's 'mindset'. These are a necessity to make material improvement and expansion effective and are often lacking in Western notions of development. In this context, he differentiates between material and spiritual development, but does not oppose these processes as different but interdependent. He explains that Nirvana and Save Abee are particularly interested in 'developing' the arts, indicating the notion and relevance of spiritual development to the organisations' work. He particularly emphasizes the need to host and organize cultural programmes along the coast, as the majority of the rural population 'has no distraction'; a problem especially for young adults and children, who due to a lack of alternatives may start to engage in drinking, smoking marijuana or criminal activities. Few people can afford to travel to Georgetown regularly, where they could become part of a band or perform in dance events or concerts. According to him, people in town furthermore have 'their own people' to perform, usually the 'rich people', so even if a person may be able to afford the cost of travelling, he or she would find it almost impossible to become part of an artistic group there. Nirvana and Save Abee thus frequently offer music and dancing classes and host theatre and musical shows in the villages, which are usually sold out and have become part of the organisations' fundraising. Vijay points out that he and other volunteers direct these programmes towards all people, regardless of their race or religion. This is a brief but meaningful comment that indicates local power dynamics and tensions within the Guyanese population, as discussed in detail later.

Vijay and most of the other volunteers are Hindus. Various traditions of Hinduism have developed in Guyana, which have been maintained and transformed since the arrival of the approximately 240,000 indentured laborers from India between 1838 and 1917 (Nath 1950; van der Veer, Vertovec 1991; Tinker 1993; Bisnauth 2000). In the predominantly Christian society of colonial British Guiana, Hindus have formed the minority. To achieve upward social mobility in the colonial society and to create

'respectable' status, Hindus and other non-Christians had to convert to Christianity, a practice considered as a threat to the maintenance of Indian identity and Hindu traditions in the community. Converts were often considered to be nominal Christians and were derogatorily called 'belly Christians' or 'rice Christians', terms indicating that a Hindu had converted to Christianity for material benefits (Jayawardena 1966; 1963). Narratives of discrimination and hardship remain intricate aspects of Hindu identity and collective memory in contemporary Guyana. Hindus continue to be a minority, constituting only 24.8 % of the Guyanese population in 2012 (Bureau of Statistics 2016: 32). In comparison, 63.9 % of the population is Christian and 6.8 % is Muslim (ibid.). My informants frequently narrate stories of Christian missionaries, who actively proselytize Hindus. For instance, Omadatt, who is a 43-year-old *pujari* (priest of the Guyanese Hindu 'Madras tradition') and who lives with his family in a rural area of eastern Guyana, explains in a conversation about his work:

> "But, on our religion particularly there was a victimization, whereby we were not allowed to worship freely. And a lot of the people were forced to become Christians. Most of our books was destroyed, because as our fore-parents came to this country, (…), well they didn't know how long they were gonna live here, so whatever of their religious text, they walk with them, but they were not allow to pray, they were not allow to worship. All they was allow to just to go and work and… and their living conditions was terrible. So there was a lot of, you know, *discrimination* (...)." (personal interview)[3]

Struggles for resources and high-status positions have resulted in inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts in the multi-religious and multi-ethnic Guyanese society. This development is reflected and reconstituted through the ethno-politicization of the Guyanese political system (Hintzen 2008; Garner 2008; Hinds 2011; Bissessar, La Guerre 2013). In this context, even religious denominations are identified with a particular ethnic group: Hinduism and Islam are considered Indian, Christianity predominantly as African, an aspect which I discuss in more detail later. Therefore, conversion from Hinduism to Christianity was and is conceived as a threat to the maintenance of the Indian community and its capacity to acquire or maintain economic and political power. Proselytization and conversion are highly charged topics in Guyana, and whenever the topic of development and religion was discussed my informants would almost instantly address questions of power and dominance. They usually linked development or social welfare programmes to processes and practices of creating a partic-

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3 Interview excerpts are transcribed verbatim and often include Guyanese Creole.

ular ethno-religious group's dominance over another. For example, when Vijay of Nirvana addresses the topic of conversion, he eagerly explains that there are specific Christian groups that convert people 'wholesale' and are particularly active in the *interior* (Guyanese hinterland, usually remote areas). He describes that one Nirvana volunteer, who used to work in the interior, had witnessed how 'Christian groups' provided material support and medical services only to Christians or people who will 'turn' Christian. According to this volunteer, Vijay states, a Christian group had been offering medical eye tests, but those who wanted to have their eyes checked had to convert to Christianity first. He does not specify which Christian group the volunteer referred to.

For the purpose of this analysis it is irrelevant to find out whether such practices are indeed conducted or not. It is more significant to analyse how, for instance, Vijay defines his organisation in relation to another group, e.g. proselytizing Christian groups, and how he distances it from them in order to establish morally higher and more respectable means of doing development. As processes of identity formation among individuals and in groups are based on processes of othering (Hall 1996, 2000), this creation of opposition is no surprise: all social groups are socially constructed and exist only in relation to each other (Banks 1996). Groups and group identity are established through the definition of constitutive others, as the definition of self necessarily requires the definition of an 'other'. Processes of group identity formation include the construction of inner-group similarities on the one hand and the identification of differences in relation to the opposed 'other' on the other hand. In Guyana and in the Guyanese diaspora, these processes are intricate in the construction of ethnic groups and, as indicated earlier, particularly the 'Indian' and 'African' ethnic groups are constructed in opposition to each other (Premdas 1992, 1994, 1996; Ramey 2011). Here, ethnic groups base their definitions of ethnic identity on descent and sociocultural practices. For instance, the Indian group usually describes a descent from Indian indentured labourers as a key aspect of being Indian, while members of the African group consider enslaved Africans to be their ancestors.

This ethnic identification must not be considered as marginal, but it influences and extends to all aspects of social, political and economic life in contemporary Guyana. It is not only people that are identified on the basis of ethnicity such as Indian or African, but furthermore events, residential areas, villages, places of worship and religious groups (Kloß 2016). Even political parties are defined as and sometimes actively engage in identifying along ethnic lines, taking advantage of and advancing the process of ethno-

politicization (Karran 2000, 2004; Misir 2001; Garner 2008; Hinds 2011). In the current social environment, it is impossible for any Guyanese political party to overcome its identification as either Indian or African. For example, when a party includes members of the 'other' ethnic group and provides them with leading or representative positions in order to claim a multi-ethnic identity, such inclusions usually do not have a long-lasting effect. As I have witnessed during the 2011 and 2015 national election campaigns, they usually lead to more general discussions about how the alleged representatives of 'other' ethnic groups, who have become party members, are 'not really' Indian or African. In the same line of argumentation, any organisation active in Guyana is labelled on the basis of ethnicity, including development and humanitarian organisations. Even international organisations that are not run by the Guyanese are commonly considered to be working in favour of one ethnic group or the other. This classification takes place despite an organisation's often continuous effort of inclusive social work.

Ethnic identities are massively influenced by religious identities and cannot be considered distinct. Hinduism and Islam are considered Indian religions in Guyana, and hence consolidate Indian ethnic identity, and consequently have to be understood as ethnic religions (van der Veer, Vertovec 1991). Christian denominations, on the other hand, are predominantly associated with African, Mixed and Portuguese groups (Bureau of Statistics 2016). The majority of the population therefore considers an organisation run by Hindus to be working in favour of the Indian ethnic group, regardless of its efforts and proclamations to work towards the benefit of all Guyanese. In the specific case of Nirvana, the mention of the Sanskrit term Nirvana and a self-description referring to the 'promotion of humanitarian and *Indo*-Caribbean cultural activities'[4] solidifies this assumption and emphasizes identification with the Indian ethnic group. Save Abee, which is Guyanese Creole and translates to 'Save us', is similarly linked to the Indian community through the use of 'abee'. In this context, any development organisation has to take the influence of local classifications and processes of identity formation into account as well as the fact that identities are neither fixed nor stable. Processes of identity formation are never complete, but are processual and contextual. Not only does a group's self-definition influence and transform its identity, but an outsiders' categorization of the organisation does also. Beneficiaries' classifications and ascriptions are often neglected in analyses of development work, a neglect that may lead to

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4 Emphasis added; cf. http://www.nirvanausa.org (last accessed, 24 January 2017).

the non-observance of their agency and one-sided analyses of identity formation, resulting in misunderstandings and inefficiency on the ground.

In addition, one has to consider that actions and specific modes of behaviour are part of identity constructions both at the individual and the group levels. For instance, despite my efforts of not being solely identified with the Indian or Hindu ethno-religious group, my conviction and attitude was difficult to convey to my informants throughout my research. Having been based in an Indian-Hindu family during and after my long-term doctoral fieldwork, engaging mostly though decidedly not exclusively with the Hindu community and attending numerous Hindu celebrations and ceremonies, some Indians and Africans automatically considered me as 'in favour' of the Indian-Hindu community. Most Guyanese found this involvement and interest of a White European and hence presumably Christian woman somewhat odd. They interpreted my behaviour in different ways, however. Friends and acquaintances jokingly but consistently commented that I was not a Christian missionary, who can be commonly found in rural Guyana, but a Hindu missionary by showing my respect to Hindu traditions. Sometimes, and usually among members of my extended host family, some people suggested that in my previous life I 'must have been an Indian' or that I must be the reincarnated soul of their hence Indian deceased child. Although I interpreted these comments as expressions of closeness and intimacy at first, upon reflection they also indicated their perception of my potential or hidden Indian-ness.

To my informants, the identity of a person or (ethno-religious) group is based on both essential and performative aspects. In this context, my ambiguity of being White but performatively (also) Indian was linked to an understanding of essential and performative constructions of ethno-religious identities. As discussed elsewhere, Guyanese interpret ethnic identities on the basis of both essential traits and performative practices, which are interdependent and influence each other (Kloß 2016). According to them, a person may be inherently or 'essentially' Indian. This means that his or her Indian-ness is based on biology and ancestral origins that are "genetically transmitted" (Williams 1991: 57). On the other hand, a person's Indian-ness is also constructed through his or her actions and performances. A person is only considered 'Indian' if he or she acts or 'does' Indian (Kloß 2016, 2017). Performances are regarded as indicators of a person's essential self. Similarly, a person only does or acts Indian, if there is a genealogical link to Indian ancestry. This link may be known or unknown, visible or hidden. In her ethnography on Guyanese society, Brackette Williams accordingly docu-

ments how her informants explained or indicated that "what is in the 'blood' will sooner or later show in one's behavior" (Williams 1991: 57).

To my informants, 'being' and 'doing' are not separate but intricately linked modalities. Neither exists without the other. On the basis of performance, one's ethnicity is not only revealed but affirmed and (re)constituted. In this context, my self-identification as White, atheist, non-Christian but spiritual varied from my informants' interpretations. My actions indicated that I was situated somewhere in between Christianity and Hinduism, and to them these actions revealed my hidden or inherited Indian-ness. While I could have easily dismissed these interpretations as wrong or as misinterpretations, as a social anthropologist who does not simply reject informants' interpretations as wrong or as belief opposing it to knowledge, over time these interpretations have affected my identity and self-perception; hence my personal process of identity formation and the research I set out to do, transforming my social relations. Simlarly, I argue, that a group's or development organisation's identity is influenced and transformed by 'other' interpretations and ascriptions, and a non-recognition or denial of this will negatively affect its work within a community. It is insufficient to point out that beneficiaries are wrong and to continue to defend internally defined identities as 'true' or 'authentic'.

My informants interpret and identify organisations hence also on the basis of their actions. Talking to Vijay at the medical outreach programme about the proselytization strategy of Christian groups in the interior, I ask him if Nirvana and Save Abee have intentions of promoting Hinduism as well. Vijay immediately negates, emphatically exclaiming: 'No, we are not religious! We don't talk of religion!' Although this response is no surprise to me, as most organisations do not want to be labelled as proselytizing in Guyana, the way Vijay indirectly defines 'religious' here and in other contexts is noteworthy. According to him, not being religious means to 'not talk of religion' a definition that takes action as its key factor. From this perspective, if an organisation is religious, it actively promotes a specific religion by talking about it. Numerous informants including beneficiaries express similar interpretations. They understand the label 'religious organisation' to refer to organisations that focus on actions directed at proselytization. When an organisation is classified as 'religious', this label implies or reveals specific political and economic motives that are to the benefit of the particular denomination. Such action is viewed suspiciously in the ethnically-tense context of Guyana, where the notion of religion often has ambiguous connotations, as discussed in the next section.

Religiousness and the Doing of Religion

What is perceived as religious varies in different contexts and over time, and when raising the question of the relevance of religion in development work it has to be kept in mind that there is not a universal interpretation and definition of religious or religion. The following questions thus have to be addressed to understand if religion or the doing of religion make a difference in development work: Who and which organisation is considered religious? What does this label imply? The specificity of local contexts and local definitions of religion have to be taken into consideration. Religion is no thing that exists in itself or that is out there and acts or does things, but is done by social actors (Nye 2000). Instead of analysing which actions may or may not be labelled as religious, it may be more useful to consider religion as something that is done. Rather than thinking about religion merely in terms of belief and believing, for the Guyanese context it seems more appropriate to remind oneself that religiosity may also be performed and manifested "through ethno-religious identity and tradition" (Nye 2000: 209), and that, for example, a performance of Indian-ness may also be considered as part of religion in the specific Guyanese context. Performative (re)creations of and the belief in religion, henceforth referred to as 'religiousness' in reference to my informants, are processes and modes of being and doing religion. Religion is not only based on thinking, but includes action, a consideration necessary to not reproduce a dichotomy of thought and action, mind and body. Religion does not simply reflect doctrines, theology and beliefs, but it is also performed. The emphasis on 'religion as belief' (Nye 2000: 206ff), which derives from and is influenced by Western discourse, is linked to the differentiation and hierarchization of thought and action, belief and performance, with an often inherent devaluation of action and performance. I do not argue that the Guyanese do not differentiate between thought and action, but propose that it is necessary to keep both aspects, belief and performance, in mind when discussing the relevance of religion in development work. Religion is an embodied practice, and hence the question of how specific organisations 'do religion' has to be raised. It is insufficient to merely look at self-definitions of organisations and how they apply various secular or religious identities to acquire funding, but it is necessary to consider how being identified as 'religious' impacts and affects the doing of development work. If an organisation is identified as religious in a community and whether this is evaluated as positive or negative depends on the local and socio-historical context.

Numerous Guyanese hesitated to label themselves as religious during my research. They were often informants who considered themselves to be spiritual people and who opposed religion to a 'way of life'. For instance, Pujari Omadatt explains:

> "But for me basically, the worshipping is a way of life! It's not really a religion for me, in a sect, but it is a way of life, is a way of how people *live*. (…) So my experience in this worshipping, is that it more, it's more for us as a *living*, as a daily life, living, than being oriented as a *religion*." (personal interview)

Frequently my informants stressed the particular relevance of actions and deeds in these 'ways of life or living', explaining that although you may claim that you believe in the divine or that you are spiritual, a person can only prove this through his or her actions. They often explained that, 'Only thinking and believing does not make you a spiritual or religious person'. To the majority of my informants there are not separate religious and secular spheres of life. While Guyanese Hindus regard the dichotomy between religious and secular as a Christian concept, Guyanese Christians, particularly members of Pentecostal groups, similarly question this differentiation. Only a minority, mostly within the younger urban population, claim a secular, atheist or agnostic identity. To the majority of my informants, no practice is secular, and a denial of spirituality as a necessity for development would thus ultimately lead to failure in development work (Kloß 2019). They consider spirituality as an intricate aspect of development; as something that is performatively created.[5] As there are neither secular spheres of life nor secular actions, the opposition of secular and faith-based organisation is largely insignificant to my informants; all organisations are run by individuals and groups of people who necessarily belong to one or the other ethno-religious group. As faith and spirituality are ways of life, these are expressed through all kinds of actions. Accordingly, the Guyanese seldom raise the question of whether an organisation is faith-based or not, and, as indicated earlier, most organisations would reject being labelled 'religious'. This is due to a negative connotation and interpretation of the label 'religious' in the local context, discussed below. On the contrary, if they or any other person interpret their work as 'spiritual', this would express a more positive evalua-

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5 The term and concept of development have been constructed by Western governments and policy makers as part of the modernization and secularization discourse of the late twentieth century. Development was aligned with secular and liberal priorities and, as Philip Fountain addresses, hence "came to be seen among mainstream actors as a distinctly secular, universal and virtually unquestionable moral good such that 'religious' development could be imagined as an abnormal intrusion" (Fountain 2013: 25).

tion, as spiritual implies that the organisation is not involved in divisive activities. This interpretation is based on the differentiation and politicization of the notions of 'religion' and 'spirituality' and an understanding that 'religion' reinforces division.

When opposed to spirituality, my informants often refer to religion as a kind of imposition, as a kind of exterior force. For example, a Hindu priest discussed this aspect with me in an interview, which included the topic of the religious environment of Guyana and the various local Hindu traditions. He states: 'And that's how I will always say that in the [Hindu] Devi Temple there is no religion being cast upon it, because it's everybody's right to be there' (personal interview). He conceives of religion as a kind of orthodox structure that is imposed on a community and that is 'cast upon' people. He refers to religion as something rather formal and potentially divisive, as it restricts access to specific groups of people. According to him, his own 'way of worshipping' or in general the notion of spirituality indicates a more inclusive approach that refers to processes emanating 'within' a group or person. Hence, he states, they are more natural and authentic in relation to the traditions that African and Indian people have practiced prior to having been colonized. Generally, 'religion' and 'religious' are highly politicized terms in Guyana, and when applied in an inter-religious or postcolonial context they may indicate and may be linked to political and economic power struggles. As I discuss elsewhere, the emphasis on spirituality and spiritual development is part of anti-imperial and anti-colonial discourse and practice, linked to anti-religious discourse (Kloß 2020). When an organisation's actions are labelled as 'religious' and distinguished from the more positive 'spiritual', the morality and respectability of this organisation is often challenged.

Conclusion

This case study has demonstrated that there is no universal answer or approach to the question whether religion helps or hinders the work of development organisations, as there are no universal categories of religion and development. Instead of trying to find definitions of religious NGOs or FBOs, specific challenges and benefits should be discussed that may advance when referring to (self)classifications of 'religious' or 'faith-based' in a specific context. The current discourse in development literature concerning the so-called resurgence of religion thus has to be critically reflected as Eurocentric bias, as religion has always been part of development (Foun-

tain 2013). Instead of merely raising the question, 'how much religion is appropriate in development work?', and a strong focus on donors and funding, the actual practices considered as (the doing of) religion have to be taken into serious consideration. Not only is it relevant as to how an organisation chooses to identify itself, but processes of identity formation vary within a given context and over time, and are also influenced by the definition and categorization of beneficiaries. Even though organisations may not consider themselves or their practices as religious, this may be interpreted differently among the different groups involved. Generally, the label 'religious' impacts how social actors and organisations are perceived and the ways they can influence and implement structures. How communities construct organisations as 'religious' or 'non-religious', and more generally what 'religion' implies in a specific social environment, is of major relevance when raising the question whether religion makes a difference in development work. In some communities it may imply that certain groups will avoid a 'religious' organisation and dismiss its work and influence as offensive. From the perspective of this organisation, religion thus becomes an obstacle with negative impacts. Hence, whether religion makes a difference or not depends on what kind of difference religion makes for actors on the ground. There cannot be a general answer to the question, 'does religion make a difference?', but the specificity of local contexts and societies always have to be considered.

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Suwarto Adi

Keep it Altar or Alter Community? Re-framing a Myth of Conversion in Indonesia

Introduction

The history of missionaries to Indonesia is replete with stories of how missionaries used health, education and social ministries among the Javanese churches (GKJ, Gereja Kristen Jawa) as tools to convert people to Christianity (Sumartana 1993; Steenbrink 2008). Most of these ministries or programmes were institutionalised in the form of foundations or yayasan (Suwarto 2017: 157–162). Within Indonesia's history, this organizational unit is the origin of modern NGOs which emerged during the New Order regime from the mid-1960s (Ufford 1988; Fakih 1996; Hadiwinata 2003). A foundation is a legal form of organisation to implement a programme in a community. Through these foundations or NGOs, a church as a religious institution is able to enter the secular arena, dominated by the state. In the Indonesian context it also provides the legal basis of operation for NGOs (Sakai 2002: 165). By its foundation, an NGO is able to engage in development programmes for the community (Hadiwinata 2003: 90–91), and open a bank account to receive funds from abroad (Sakai 2002). This chapter narrates the effort of a local church in developing a social ministry; by forming an NGO the church expresses its motivation to play a significant role in social transformation.[1]

The NGO discussed here is IPSEM (Institut Pengembangan Sosial Ekonomi Masyarakat, Institute for Developing the People's Society and Economy). IPSEM is located in Sala, Central Java. Sala is known for its cultural heritage, being the historic center of the Javanese Kraton or Kingdom. Established in 1988 by a local Javanese church in the tradition of Dutch Reformed Churches, IPSEM's main objective was to provide poor families access to education for their children, particularly those living in ghetto-like conditions outside Sala. Later on, IPSEM changed its profile when the

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1 The data for this paper are collected in a fieldwork from January to March 2016; they form part of my PhD research on Christian NGOs in Java. I am grateful to Philip Michael Fountain for his valuable critics, and to my supervisor, Yahya Wijaya, for commenting on the first draft of this chapter.

Indonesian government implemented a programme of compulsory schooling for all children and is now focussing on socio-economic development. Although IPSEM is a localised religious NGO, it is also part of a larger network of mainly church-related organisations. In Java, IPSEM acts as an intermediary organisation (Riker 1995:94), receiving financial support from New Zealand Aid.

What encourages a local church to set up a foundation or NGO? Is the underlying motivation religious or secular? How does it navigate between religious motivations and secular action in society? How does this NGO encounter the myth Christian foundations frequently encounter, namely that Christian social action and programmes are stereotyped as means of Christianization? This paper seeks to answer these questions by narrating the history of IPSEM as an example of Javanese Christian NGOs, its policy changes, and its developmental designs.

GKJ Elang, IPSEM Foundation and Religious Entrepreneurship

This paper uses the framework of 'religious entrepreneurship' to discuss the work of a church that has established a foundation to carry out development work. In a simple way, the concept of religious entrepreneurship is used to refer to a socio-theological concept that locates pastors as agents of social change. In the given case, the religious entrepreneurship of a pastor shows through his ability to use self-reflection to connect religious values and spiritual experiences to social change (Suwarto 2017).

In elaborating on the concept of religious entrepreneurship, Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1999) offers useful inspiration. He argued that everyone seeks to struggle for their interests by using all 'capital' they have or can gain in the field. Capital is not simply about finances but also many other forms of social, relational, and political resources. Bourdieu opined that capital utilisation will result in patterns of capital mobilisation or transformation. Bourdieu's ideas, in some aspects, presumed a pervasive utilitarianism in which ethical values are largely sidelined for capital maximising behaviours. This limitation in Bourdieu's framework can be completed by Max Weber's understanding of 'value rationality', Wertrationalität (Weber 1968). Weber's theory of social action was based on the understanding that social action is influenced by two important things: the first is means-ends rationality or the idea that action is "determined by expectations as to the behaviour of objects in the environment and of other human beings. These expectations are used as 'conditions' or 'means' for the attainment of the

actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends". The second is value rationality or action that is "determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or another form of behaviour, independently of its prospects for success" (Ritzer 1992: 126). The understanding of this second form of rationality is important in order to make Bourdieu's ideas more complete.

GKJ Elang, the church that founded IPSEM, has an interesting history itself.[2] Founded in the 1960s, a characteristic feature in its history is the involvement of laypeople, particularly local school teachers and members of political parties, including a political party leader. It might seem surprising that a political leader supported the emergence of the church. Yet, in the years around 1965, if an Indonesian citizen did not have a religion specified on their ID documents they could suffer significant discriminations (Seo 2013).[3] This especially affected former members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI, Partai Komunis Indonesia). In the political contest around 1965 PKI failed to assume power. Portrayed in public as an anti-religion party, PKI had frequently been a scapegoat for all political violence and turmoil in that year. Eventually, ex-party members adopted a religion as a pass-card to get Indonesian citizenship. Many of them selected Christianity as their religion. In a sense, the politics of citizenship of ex-communist party members impacted the growth of Christian congregations. Another effect of this influx of lay members was that churches saw an opportunity of evangelization in the aftermath of the massive political violence. Encountering such a situation, Pastor Markus Noroyono of GKJ Elang sought to make use of the potentials of the new lay membership. Being aware of the political background of many members he opened the space for internal debates on how to develop a kind of a new, public identity. GKJ Elang under Pastor Noroyono's leadership became a progressive and creative church. The approach adopted was to connect church and (school) campus, in the form of a theological seminary, to enhance outside communication and to seek cooperation with other institutions or influen-

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2 GKJ is a pseudo name for a church located in one of the big cultural cities of Java. Elang means an eagle so that by using this name, it is to show how this GKJ is performing like an eagle that can cover the sky with its big and strong wings.

3 In his analysis of the failed PKI politics to assume power, Tornquist identifies a weak understanding of the peasant movement at the local level. PKI was operating with uniform concepts "unable to make a correct analysis of what kind of monopoly of land determined the decisive contradiction and hampered development in the rural areas" (Tornquist 1984, 240).

tial individuals for the sake of actively addressing community problems. All of it gained ground by operating as a religious NGO.

Church and Diaconia: Education for Children of Labour Family

Since his appointment as a pastor, Noroyono had been actively laying down a new basis for the relationship between church and pastor. First, for him the ministry is a sacramental office with the ability to minister to a church and with the function of celebrating the sacraments. A pastor could obtain a salary from anywhere, but his/her sacramental office cannot be replaced by someone else. Secondly, the relationship between a pastor and a church council is as equals; a pastor is not the "handyman" of the church council or parish, nor is a pastor a "director" or "architect" of church progress. Instead, all church programmes should be conducted by all governing bodies of the church in harmony. In order to enhance the capacity of change, this harmony between parish, church council and pastor is vitally important. In Pastor Noroyono's words:

> "I don't want to implement this change of paradigm alone by myself; therefore, I discuss it with some members of the church council that are supportive of this idea. Based on it, we can set up a 'core team` to progress this idea among church members. A pastor is not Superman! I need support from the church council."[4]

Before becoming a pastor, Noroyono had participated in training as a community organizer at YBKS, Yayasan Bimbingan Kesejahteraan Sosial (a local NGO). The instructors at that time included, among others, prominent figures such as George Junus Aditjondro, Arief Budiman, and Gus Dur.[5] They encouraged him to implement a theology of liberation. At that time the New Order regime was at the peak of its power. In political scientific nomenclature New Order Indonesia is categorized as a semi-authoritarian state. New Order Indonesia has taken place between 1967 and 1998, under the long-time leadership of President Soeharto. He had a military background and his regime enforced many restrictions regarding the

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4 Interview, FN_160216 and FN_080316. All field notes had been coded with FN, followed by the date of interview.
5 The first two persons are lecturers in Satya Wacana Christian University teaching on social movements, critical education and development. Both are graduates from US universities and close to the thinking of Gustavo Gutierrez and Paulo Freire. Abdurahman Wahid his nickname is Gus Dur is considered in Indonesia as a moderate Islam leader of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and has been the fourth Indonesian President. Defending human rights, he supported religious pluralism in Indonesia.

freedom of expression, such as strictly monitoring the press and cutting the right to form social organisations. Yet, this training at YBKS inspired Pastor Noroyono to envision a church which would transform into a movement for social change.

In order to manifest this idea in the community, Pastor Noroyono set up an educational foundation focused on children of poor families named Yayasan Pelita Pendidikan (YPP) in early 1990. This foundation did not replace church diaconal activities. Pastor Noroyono told me that: "This yayasan is an extension of church diaconia to society and is simultaneously an arena for doing practical theology". This yayasan sought to engage with education on the basis of theological thought. Since its beginning, YPP was not funded by a diaconia commission, but it raised funds independently from church members and other partners by implementing a foster parent programme. Pastor Noroyono explained:

> "The concept of the foster parent is not personal in nature, but it is managed by the yayasan. It means, if there is somebody who would like to help five children, for instance, the funds should be submitted to yayasan. Then, this yayasan looks for five children from poor families, so that they can go to school."[6]

At that time the main problem was the lack of a kindergarten, so the main programme set up by YPP was the construction of kindergarten facilities. This project was supported by many people and the eventual result was the construction of six school buildings, all of which were located in the areas where poor families were concentrated. The main objective was to help children of poor families get access to educational rights. In the long run, and after evaluations, the main objectives were fully achieved. Although the project was very successful, this yayasan was frozen. The political climate had changed completely.

Transformation of the Church's Diaconal Programme

By the year 2015 the Indonesian Government has been more successful in fulfilling educational access to poor people through its programme of wajib belajar sembilan tahun (compulsory learning for nine years). The pastor and church council had evaluated that YPP was no longer effective and therefore needed to be amended. The main objective to help the poor children had been accomplished. They decided therefore to change the yayasan into a foundation for social-economic improvement. The pastor told me that

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6 Interview, FN_090216_2.

"IPSEM is not part of diaconal church programme but it will give the church further space to do community service at large". Further, he stated:

> "IPSEM is able to be called as a means of social diaconia. The main program is micro credit. However, there are additional programs to support it, i.e. advocacy and community training. In implementing community development, IPSEM is stressing self-independence."[7]

Meanwhile, the church cooperated with outside development partners, especially New Zealand Aid. The church intended to make use of this international cooperation to support claims of self-independence. The strategy was to limit international cooperation to a certain time span. Regarding independence the pastor explained: "We are only eager to do a contract with New Zealand Aid for six years". His vision was to develop an independent community programme without any support from other parties. "How can we teach self-reliance in community", he explained, "if in our organisation there is no spirit of independence?" Based on such an idea, the six-year cooperation between IPSEM and New Zealand Aid implemented community programmes to form a spirit of independence. The core strategy was to link small projects with official governmental programmes. "Our target groups are connecting to governmental bureaus", he mentioned. "It is to prevent them being dependent."[8]

In fact, there were some organic farming groups receiving financial support from government. Therefore, to embody self-reliance, all target groups were encouraged to become a statutory legal entity. By becoming a legal entity they could independently arrange cooperation with government departments.[9] Today, even though the cooperation with New Zealand Aid has ended, IPSEM still conducts regular meetings with community members. In five years of providing community service, between 2003 and 2008, IPSEM had served five districts around Sala in the southern area of Central Java, and moreover, it reached out to Grobogan District, the northern area of Central Java.

IPSEM implemented microcredit programmes in five districts in three different forms: cooperatives (similar to credit unions); banking system cooperatives; and through a microfinance unit. For the first and second programmes, the source of capital was from members themselves who are oriented to attaining community independence. The last programme

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7 Interview, FN_100216.
8 Interview, FN_100216.
9 Interview, FN_240216.

intends to support IPSEM itself to stay independent. The capital from the third programme is derived from the cooperation programme with donor organisations; it acts as contingency fund for local partners, covering around 12.5 % of the total programme budget. This fund is now developed as an institutional fund. It is expected that by managing this capital, IPSEM can free itself from the need of further external funds in order to operate as an autonomous foundation.[10]

The important question here is: what social and theological thinking was underlying these church-run social services and how were such thoughts developed? "It is self-reliance and independence", Noroyono clearly answered, by which he means that the church as an institution should be independent and self-supporting. Yet, since he became a pastor, he has stressed that the church should not have a budget with a negative balance, but rather it should have a surplus. The first step to reach this is to cultivate the spirituality of church members. He explained:

> "First of all, among church members should be a growing spirit of giving. The other way is entrepreneurship. To reach this degree of independence, the pastor should have a spirit of entrepreneurship. If this is attained by the pastor, it could spread to other church members."[11]

He has developed this spirit of entrepreneurship through financial decentralization, marketing, and transparency. "Since its inception, it had already achieved financial decentralisation", he commented. Every church commission, foundation or any unit established by the church has the responsibility to manage its own finances. In order to access funds, programme marketing is another important tool. Any programme of a commission should be offered and 'sold' to church members. For instance, in its aim to provide a programme of education assistance to poor children, the diaconal commission should introduce its plans through an attractive proposal and should actively publicise this in the Warta Gereja (church bulletin) every Sunday. After attracting support from church members, the funds should be managed in an accountable and transparent way. "The good commissions are able to manage the funds independently", the pastor explained. There is one condition that all people should obey: the marketing of the programme is only conducted through Warta Gereja. "Here, since the beginning", the pastor insisted, "raising and collecting funds by door to door mechanism is

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10 Interview, FN_080316.
11 Interview, FN_090216.

not allowed".[12] This condition was implemented to prevent corruption and mismanagement. Warta Gereja became a significant platform to advertise such programmes. By this, the programme concepts are widely known and discussed among church members. In addition, the commission and other committees focus on their project designs, and projects are implemented only once the financial needs are sufficiently supported by church members.

   To stimulate these activities, the church cultivates a spirit of giving. Money collection in GKJ Elang differs from other churches. During Sunday service no collection plate or bag is distributed. "Because the spirit of giving among members is growing", Pastor Noroyono argued, all church members are pleased to put their collection into a box that is placed at the front of the church. Money collection can be carried out also outside Sunday service. This collection is usually intended to support the projects. "By doing such a thing", he remarked, "our weekly Sunday service collection is small". However, any kind of collection or donation should be accompanied by a clear message that supports the project idea. As a result, donations raise sufficient amounts of money for development programmes. All donations outside the Sunday offering are submitted directly to the commission:

> "This is a kind of financial decentralisation we are developing. In Klasis (regional church association) our self-reliance fund is small, because our weekly collection fund is very small. However, the other money collection is big. All collection money are put into the church bank account and then go to the commission. The church account is a kind of transitory fund. Finances are transferred to the commission."[13]

Does this church model run the risk of being too materialistic? Pastor Noroyono replied that the "danger of materialism" can be balanced by a "spiritual thirst". Therefore, the church proclaims a "spirituality of giving". The spirituality of giving addresses the need of material blessings. Food and earthly things are important for the life of human beings. Yet, the strife for material blessings is put into an eschatological perspective. Any earthly activity is done in the light of the Kingdom of God. A church can be materially rich, but she has to share it with people who are in need. Or, in the process of becoming rich, the church has to share continually. Thus, GKJ Elang has emphasized solidarity, a power of giving. It is not earthly things that are emphasized; both earthly things and the Kingdom of God are rather related to one and another.[14]

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12 Interview, FN_090216.
13 Interview, FN_090216.
14 Interview, FN_090216 and FN_160216.

The aspect of solidarity is coupled with the conversion of the heart. Pastor Noroyono does not stress material abundance as such but sharing in solidarity. The spirit of giving among church members aims at bringing about solidarity that supports one another. This is the essence of giving in the church. Pastor Noroyono refers to Luke 9,10–17. The feeding of the crowd of 5000 listeners to the message of Jesus by only five loafs of bread and two fish is a miraculous event already. But the climax of the story points at the "twelve baskets" of left-overs, interpreted by him as abundance. Because there is solidarity, a spirit of giving among people small material resources can bring abundance. By giving even something small, a person becomes rich. For Pastor Noroyono, the constant act of giving in solidarity with other church members will create material abundance.[15] At this juncture, the transparent management of resources comes into play. Accountability and methods of entrepreneurship are indispensable for Pastor Noroyono to develop social diaconia programmes. This is especially important, because such projects are intended to also benefit people outside the church.

The Development of Service: From Capacity Building to Peace Building

Pastor Noroyono insists on flexible responses to outside demands. In one interview, I asked the question: "Why was IPSEM, a social diaconia institute, closed?" Pastor Noroyono gave me a short answer: "This institute is just a diaconal tool, so it can be changed to answer the changing context of the church". Previously, this yayasan was intended to give poor children access to education. As the government began addressing this issue, the yayasan was transformed into IPSEM. Apparently, this institution can also be changed according to new insights and priorities designed by the church. Pastor Noroyono's idea is to change IPSEM into an institute for culture and peacebuilding studies:

> "As it is a tool, somebody can be easily tricked by IPSEM; because we want this institute to be a means of peacebuilding service now! Social service through microcredit is over. All target groups are self-reliant. Therefore, we stop here."[16]

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15 Interview, FN_090216, and FN_130216.
16 Interview, FN_090216.

Pastor Noroyono's new framework is a theology of peace building. Currently, according to him, inter-religious conflicts are emerging in several places. In his opinion, the vital interest in building peaceful relationships among members of different religions in the country is losing ground. Several radical religious movements are emerging in the area where GKJ Elang is located. They openly oppose religious pluralism. In this precarious situation, Pastor Noroyono likes to redirect GKJ Elang and make it a church-based yayasan for peace and inter-religious tolerance.

> "I don't want to perpetuate this institution without any revision. This institution is just a means. Once the objective is achieved, it should be evaluated! If it is forced to continue, it will probably become inefficient."[17]

The new programme was made known in public by services of transformation. The idea to support a culture of peace has been discussed in the church since 2011, and it has been discussed internally since then. The right occasion to implement the new approach was identified with a Kenduri Nasional (National Festival) in 2015, a New Year's Eve celebration. This festival was led by the Sala city's Mayor and attended by representatives and members of all religions based in the region.[18] The following paragraphs describe the process of discovering the church's peace-building potential in two sections, an internal church perspective is followed by an inter-religious perspective.

According to Pastor Noroyono the idea to concentrate on peace building has its background in internal conflicts.[19] In some local churches of GKJ, tensions were growing due to centralizing church politics. Pastor Noroyono identifies a local case over the appointment of a pastor as the root of conflicts. A local congregation, GKJ Rejosari, was suffering a dilemma in regard to the anointment of a pastor who had already transgressed the official age limit of fifty years. However, the candidate did not demand a salary with his appointment. This caused a problem in two aspects: first, the age of the person does not comply with the Tata Gereja (church guidelines); second, the candidate flouts the precedent by not requesting a salary. The Synod rejected the anointing process of the pastor-to-be. However, the local church supported the candidate and sought assistance from GKJ Elang to mediate this conflict. GKJ Elang saw this case as a misunderstanding. The mediation team separated the calling of a pastor from the

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17 Interview, FN_090216_2.
18 Interview, FN_0900216.
19 Interview, FN_160216.

question of salary. Therefore, GKJ Elang affirmed the inauguration of the pastor.[20]

The completion of this case marked GKJ Elang's first experience in successful conflict resolution. As a result, the church felt encouraged to extend the service from economic to peace building projects. But it was aware of the fact that in order to implement such a process, the basic structure of NGO work needed to be changed. One of the ideas the church strongly kept was that people are the subject of history.[21] Pastor Noroyono claimed that "church members should change their way of thinking: they are the actors of history". Without the agency of people, he opined, churches were difficult to change. In this context, Pastor Noroyono brings in a self-reflective note. He identifies the central position of pastors, like himself, in the church as one basic problem. Therefore, he insists on the empowerment of the church council which can even be traced back to the beginnings of GKJ Elang. Pastor Noroyono refers to the impact of the theology of liberation on his own thinking. He expressed that "the future vision of GKJ Elang is to have twelve pastors". The concept of the twelve-pastor church is symbolic. It means that the church should serve many aspects of life and it also hints at a new understanding of how to run a church in a context troubled by poverty and marginalization. A shared concept of pastoral ministry relieves the heavy load of responsibility for just one person. A twelve-pastor church also distributes the salaries of pastors to the congregation and to other institutions or yayasan. In GKJ Elang, the concept of entrepreneurship helps to generate the material resources for this kind of shared ministry. The twelve-pastor-church represents a multi-perspective ministry that can proof viable if the church develops a range of sub-divisions running their own projects autonomously. Overall, the concept of redirecting power pastoral to congregational levels has become an integral part of the peace-building vision for the church.

The idea of peace building intends to equip church council members with an awareness of conflict resolution. The need for peace-building arises on diverse, both local congregational and the broader GKJ levels. Referring to the conflict in GKJ Rejosari mentioned above, Ehud Saputra, a church council member, suggested that one principle issue of the church conflict is the pastor's salary: "Salary is one interesting factor in conflict resolution", he continues:

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20 Interview, FN_130216.
21 In some interviews he emphasized that people or church members are the real actors in history.

> "The calling of pastor is related to self-motivation and intention, while claiming a salary is a different thing. Shortly, both calling of a pastor and claiming a salary are not mixed with each other. To be a pastor and to accept a salary from the church is not a problem. So, if the pastor does not accept a salary from the church, this is not a problem as well. It is all dependent on the agreement between pastor and church (members) respectively. It is not fair however, if there is a pastor not claiming a salary and because of this is prevented from being a pastor. A calling to be a pastor is not the same as being a church employee."[22]

Ehud Saputro argues that the calling of a pastor is very different to the position of a church employee or corporate employee. For him, a pastor should be self-reliant which gives them a sense of independence. On the salary issue, he recommends a joint effort between pastor and church council. He opts for a non-hierarchical church. A pastor should be a partner, learning and growing together with the congregation. A pastor should not be in a higher or lower position than any church member. Conversely, church members should be independent from the pastor in theological aspects or congregational services (except in sacramental services). In short, the relationship between a pastor and a congregation is characterized by freedom and responsibility. If both freedom and responsibility are absent, churches make a pastor a slave, and conversely a pastor exploits the church members.[23] For GKJ Elang, the motivation to assist other congregations that are in conflict is supported by a theology of the Good Samaritan. From there GKJ Elang conceptualizes an ecclesiological reconstruction. Pastor Noroyono explained:

> "By this parable, Jesus sought to refuse particularism and to stress universalism. What is important here is the figure of the Good Samaritan. He is marginalised, but even he does help and saves someone other. He looks after the robbed; furthermore, he lifts him up on his donkey—a symbol of service to others; and then brings him to hospital, and he pays some money. But more so, he announces to return and make sure that everything is well. This is a picture of total salvation."[24]

However, the concept of conflict resolution so far refers to internal issues. For Pastor Noroyono it does strengthen the spirit of self-reliance. But what about interventions in inter-religious conflicts; what about peace-building going public?

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22 Interview, FN_130216.
23 Interview, FN_130216.
24 Interview, FN_090216.

Christian NGOs in Islamic Indonesia

The concept of a twelve-pastor church deserves a more detailed exploration. This symbolic concept is connected to the implementation of foundations, or yayasans. From an ecclesiological point of view, out of the twelve only one pastor would be based in the congregation. All others, although they are pastors, should work with foundations and Christian NGOs. As mentioned above, it is only through yayasans that the church can operate openly in society. Seo defines foundations as a kind of "church which is working in community" (Seo 2013: 120). We remember that church-based yayasan do abandon any goal of evangelization. By coining a programme directed to the poor community, IPSEM is GKJ Elang's tool to do service in society. IPSEM is a kind of Christian NGO which is likewise open to changes. When redesigned in terms of peace-building, IPSEM implements a Good Samaritan discourse in the church as well as in public. The first experience in conflict resolution was within GKJ. However, the appearance of church-run programmes in public has been long prepared in previous projects. It also shows in the theological flexibility and adaptation to different challenges. Part of IPSEM is a micro credit programme. It is a basic element of supporting projects of socio-economic improvement among the poor. The credit programme is based on the assumption that if a community can access capital it will be able to create opportunities to achieve a better life. Capital distribution is one key to community empowerment. Next to credit programmes, IPSEM also undertakes some advocacy programmes. They are especially directed at the local level to support the community empowerment programme. But the political goal of advocacy programmes is to convince the government to provide better facilities and resources for the poor. "It is a way to bring the government down to earth", Pastor Noroyono argued, and "to create a political equilibrium in society".[25] Changing government policy is not an easy task, especially in a country such as Indonesia with a particularly labyrinthine complex of government departments and political parties. The pastor's strategy to change policy for the better is aimed at creating networks. IPSEM foundation is a kind of umbrella institution through which Christians participate in a broader network of NGOs, operating at local and national level (Smet 2011:31–36). The pastor introduces Christianity to others "not by a verbal method" but "by meaningful social action".[26] GKJ Elang addresses societal

25 Interview, FN_090216.
26 Interview, FN_160216.

problems by adjusting the foundation. These transformations have kept the foundation relevant and dynamic within a changing context. In addition, such institutional transformations help prevent the church from being accused of Christianizing people. The changes demonstrate that GKJ Elang counters new social challenges and does not seek the conversion of Muslims to Christianity. From a historical point of view, the GKJ pastor realised that Muslim conversions to Christianity were a source of tension and conflict in the community (Seo 2013: 115–116). In other words, the institutional transformations of IPSEM are a strategy to avoid inter-religious conflict in Java. In addition, through such programmes of social development, people become more open to the work of the foundation. The foundation is presented as serving people regardless of their religious background. By engaging in social action, religion no longer contributes to disunity and violence, but it can become a source of peace and cooperation.[27]

A similar experience was made by another Christian NGO, Yayasan Kristen Trukajaya (Trukajaya Christian Foundation), which was established by the GKJ Synod. In order to avoid significant tensions with Muslim groups in rural areas, Trukajaya downplayed its Christian affiliation. It was expected that by abandoning the word 'Christian' all its programmes could be adopted and adapted by the people. Trukajaya was openly accepted by the people as long as it refused to convert people and as long as it chose a secular approach (Seo 2013: 118–120, Suwarto 2017: 156–158). Pastor Noroyono appears to build on such experiences. IPSEM's approach is to foster communal awareness. He applies the spirit of giving to maximise the foundation's funds in order to purchase land and property to enable social projects.[28] In addition to capacity building, IPSEM displays strong communication skills. Communication skills are of high priority in social movements especially in the area of peace building (Clark 1995; Diani 2006; Smet 2011: 91–93). The language that they use in society has accommodative nuances (de Mars 2005). Christian NGOs in Indonesia frequently use an accommodative language. They face double layers of threats if their political-advocacy language is too strong: the first danger is from the state banning NGO operations, and the second from Muslim groups accusing Christian NGO of converting people.

Accommodative language seeks to adapt an NGOs programme as close as possible to the language used by the government. For instance, in the micro credit programme a Christian NGO makes use of political terms. In

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27 Interview, FN_080316.
28 Interview, FN_090216.

addition, recruiting Muslim people as staff or as mediators with the Muslim community can be effective. Carrying out such a strategy has a double benefit: on the one hand it makes it easy to facilitate community projects in areas with Muslim majority, and on the other hand Christian NGOs function as a bridge between Islam and Christianity. Christian NGOs in Indonesia open up an arena of inter-religious encounter (Seo 2013: 123; Suwarto 2017: 263–265).

However, the success of Christian NGOs in the context of Muslim-majority Indonesia is mainly related to carrying out societal services not as a missionary programme, but as social diaconia. Diaconia has long been emphasized within the Calvinist tradition of Christian theology inherited and emphasised by GKJ. In comparison to other Dutch churches, the Reformed-Calvinist churches are oriented to a theology of the New Testament which grants significant space for diaconal services (Parker 2003: 112–118). If in other churches diaconia projects are occasionally abandoned, in the Reformed churches in Java they are a central issue (Soleiman 2012: 96–103; 161–170).

Social diaconia is a type of church developmental programme for society. By forming a yayasan the church's diaconal services support values of social change rather than charity.[29] By engaging in social transformation they can develop deeper inter-religious relationships through mutual cooperation. Projects are neither aimed at individuals nor at conversion, but rather at a whole community (Seo 2013: 120).

Concluding Remarks

The story of GKJ Elang's pastor discussed in this chapter shows that the pastor's perspective is one of social change. His vision is closely related to personal life. What is important is that the personal life of the pastor cannot be limited to private aspects, but it also affects the church and community at large. By using a lens of religious entrepreneurship, the social performance of Pastor Noroyono is replete of service innovation, and it is carried out creatively. This creative potential can bring about important changes in both church and community.

Religious entrepreneurship reacts to social realities, such as poverty and the ignorance of basic rights, for example access to education, or marginalisation suffered by church members. The social dynamics extends from services in the church to community at large. Pastor Noroyono carries out dia-

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29 Interview, FN_080316.

conal praxis along a 'three C' axis: church, school campus, and community. The tool to implement such projects in the community is setting up a yayasan as mode of operation.

Church-based yayasan operate in two forms that are also highlighted in theories of social movements: (1) public education programmes teach a community with the goal of changing behaviour (Smet 2011: 9); and (2) public advocacy is used to change public policy in order to support freedom, equality, and justice for all (Diani 2006: 231–233). Public education programmes are extending activities to raise awareness for the dignity of each person. By such a policy it is hoped that people might change their behaviour. There is some evidence that such behavioural changes are emerging, for instance in the field of inter-religious relations.

The entrepreneurial performance is based on theological creativity. The pastor inspires several theologies to orient the church's social praxis, reaching out from a theology of liberation to a theology of giving and social welfare. Being aware of accusations against the yayasan as a conversion tool, however, the use of secular idioms is a necessity. The use of secular terms also helps to propagate the concepts of projects in rural milieus. In this respect, religious entrepreneurship is developing a general attitude for social transformation. By using religious entrepreneurship as a theoretical framework, the secular/religious dichotomy becomes blurred. Moreover, by harmonising religious and secular perspectives, social transformation can happen in the context of religious pluralism in Indonesia. As a result, GKJ pastors are able to build a new social ethics in a developing democracy based on Christian values made public primarily through a Christian NGO.

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SECTION IV:
INTRA-RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATIONS AND
CHANGES WITHIN RNGOS

Dena Freeman

Development as Transformation: Tearfund and the New Evangelical Approach to Holistic Change

Introduction

In much of the writing about religion and development there is an underlying assumption that religious development NGOs, or faith-based organisations, FBOs, do development differently. This is found particularly in the debates about whether or not FBOs are more effective in carrying out development interventions, and thus should or should not be preferential partners for international donors (eg. Clarke 2006; Leurs 2012; Lunn 2009; Tomalin 2012). This paper seeks to challenge the assumption that FBOs *necessarily* do development differently from secular actors and suggests that in many cases they are simply religious actors carrying out much the same interventions as their secular counterparts. In the few cases where religion actually does make a difference to the way that FBOs carry out development work, this has generally been the result of a long period of internal learning and discussion and an explicit and conscious desire to bring a religious approach into their otherwise quite secular work. This paper tells the story of one such process and looks at how Tearfund, a leading evangelical development NGO and one of the ten largest development NGOs in the UK today, moved from carrying out development projects much like everyone else to developing their own distinctively Christian approach to development. Whilst this process led to a major change in the way that Tearfund carried out its development interventions, I argue that it is still unclear how much this new approach is really different from that of various secular development actors.

The chapter starts with a look at the origins and early workings of Tearfund in the 1960s and 1970s and shows how its work at this time was overwhelmingly secular in nature. It then discusses how staff at Tearfund, and at other evangelical development agencies, came to see this as a problem, and then traces the evolution of a solution to this problem, namely the genesis of a new evangelical theology of development. This new theology, known variously as integral mission or transformational development, outlines a distinctive evangelical approach to development and seeks to combine

material development with spiritual development into a holistic model of good change. The paper then explores how seeking to implement integral mission in its work with beneficiaries in the South has led Tearfund to massively change the way in which it works. Nonetheless, it remains unclear whether their new way of working is as distinctively Christian as they believe.[1]

The Formation and Early Workings of Tearfund

Tearfund was originally established as a committee within the UK's Evangelical Alliance in 1968.[2] In the years before that British Evangelical Christians had started sending sums of money to the Evangelical Alliance and asking them to do something to help with the famines and refugees crises that they were beginning to hear about on TV (Hollow 2008: 21). The Evangelical Alliance started making small grants to missionary organisations working oversees and eventually set up a separate committee the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund Committee to manage the process. As the number of donations and grants began to grow it was decided to incorporate the fund as a separate charity and in 1973 TEAR Fund (The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund) was officially registered in the UK.[3]

Tearfund shifted away from working with missionaries quite quickly and began to work more with indigenous church organisations from the mid-1970s onwards[4]. At this time many indigenous churches were setting up development wings and Tearfund started to give them grants to carry out relief and development projects. In many cases it was grants from Tearfund, and from other evangelical development agencies from different

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1   Research for this paper is based on in-depth interviews with staff from Tearfund and the Micah Network carried out between September 2015 and November 2016, analysis of published and unpublished documents from Tearfund and the Micah Network, and a review of relevant evangelical and academic literature.

2   In later years similar Tear or Tearfund organisations were set up by Evangelical Alliances in other countries, such as Australia (1971), New Zealand (1973), the Netherlands (1973), Belgium (1979) and Switzerland (1984). Unless otherwise stated this paper refers only to the work of Tearfund UK.

3   In the early days there was a lot of inconsistency as to the correct spelling and the organisation was variously referred to as TEAR Fund or Tear Fund. In 1998 it became Tearfund. I will use this term throughout this paper.

4   Tearfund also partners with local Christian NGOs, particularly in countries where Christians are a minority and there are no strong local church denominations.

countries, that led to the establishment of these development wings in the first place (Hollow 2008: 95–6).

During this period Tearfund funded these organisations to carry out projects very similar to those being carried out by secular development agencies. In the 1970s they mainly focussed on relief work, for example providing emergency food and seeds to drought-stricken communities in Ethiopia, or rebuilding houses that were destroyed by the Andra Pradesh cyclone in India. From the 1980s onwards they moved more into longer term development projects and for the most part they bought into the mainstream development thinking of the time that wealth transfer and improved technology would lead to development. Many of their projects consisted of agricultural schemes and public health programmes: they shipped out tractors, constructed large dams and built and staffed hospitals and clinics (Hollow 2008: 104, 112). All this was very much the same as what many secular NGOs were doing.

During this period evangelical development agencies such as Tearfund approached material change and spiritual change as largely separate matters, and they focused almost exclusively on the material side of things. There was as yet no specific theory of Christian development, or theology of evangelical social engagement, and thus Tearfund and the other evangelical development agencies mainly did the same type of projects as secular development agencies. Whilst there was a desire for evangelism to be a part of their development work, there was no clear approach for how this should be done. For the most part it was assumed that if evangelical missionaries or church leaders carried out development work, then surely they would evangelise while they did so. Thus evangelical development organisations generally focused on the material side of things, while assuming that evangelism would somehow be taking place alongside this work. Over the years many people began to find this approach to be rather problematic and different views emerged about whether and how spiritual development should be integrated with material development, or how evangelism should be combined with material improvement. One view held that development was 'good works' and a form of compassionate service that was a key part of Christian responsibility. In this view the one and only purpose of development work was to alleviate the poverty and suffering of others out of love. Another view was more instrumentalist and held that development was a means to an end, and that the final end was conversion. Tearfund supporters often asked if the development projects were leading to conversions, and a number of stories from Tear Times, Tearfund's supporter mag-

azine, indeed told stories of beneficiaries who had found Jesus as a result of specific development projects (Hollow 2008:192).

There was a commonly used metaphor around this time of scissors, where one blade represented evangelism and the other social action, and both were necessary to help people (Hollow 2008: 191). Stephen Rand, who worked with Tearfund from 1979 to 2004 remembers it like this:

> "There were varying degrees of integration and separation. In some cases Tearfund was working with Christian NGOs that were specifically social action organisations, so they were doing the relief work while another part of their denomination was doing the evangelism. I think there were some people who would even have argued that if Tearfund was supporting a development project in a country and there were Christians doing 'spiritual' work elsewhere in the same country, that was still integral because the 'two blades of the scissors' were seen on a national basis rather than on an individual project basis. What seemed to be missing was the idea that Christians would do relief and development work in a distinctively different way than non-Christian organisations." (Stephen Rand, quoted in Hollow 2008: 197)

Development as Transformation: The Theology of Integral Mission

During the 1980s and 1990s theoretical and theological discussions about what a distinctly Christian approach to development would look like, and about how the spiritual and the material could be brought closer together, began to take place in international Evangelical conferences and consultations. Starting in the early 1980s there was a growing concern among a wide range of evangelical development NGOs that Christian development looked remarkably similar to secular development. Between 1980–1983 the World Evangelical Fellowship convened a consultation on a theology of development. This consultation culminated in the statement released at the Wheaton Consultation in 1983, which set out a specifically Christian approach to development which built on the concept of 'misíon integral' developed by René Padilla and other Latin American Evangelical theologians some decades earlier (Carpenter 2014; Clawson 2012; Padilla 2002). Crucially, the participants chose to move away from the term 'development', with its connotations of modernity, materiality and sole focus on economic growth, and instead adopted the term 'transformation'. The Wheaton statement describes transformation in the following way:

> "Transformation is the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God's purpose to one in which people are able to enjoy fullness of life in harmony with God. This transformation can only take place through the obedience of individuals and communities to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whose power changes the lives of men and women by releasing them from the guilt, power, and consequences

of sin, enabling them to respond with love toward God and toward others (…). The goal of transformation is best described by the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God." (World Evangelical Fellowship 1983)

The statement goes on to talk about different aspects of transformation, and claims that to move towards living under God's reign requires not just the spiritual transformation of individuals, but also the transformation of economies, cultures and socio-political systems. It presents a vision of holistic change leading in the direction of the Kingdom of God. Unlike 'development', it is seen as something needed not only by poor countries, but also by rich countries, which also need to be transformed in various respects. Thus 'transformation' can be seen as a biblical type of holistic change that is applicable everywhere.

The 'development as transformation' or 'mission as transformation' movement grew in the 1980s and began to achieve greater prominence in the evangelical world. New institutions and journals were set up to develop the theology and spread it more widely.[5] As theorists and practitioners grappled with the idea various labels emerged, including 'holistic mission', 'integral mission', 'wholistic development', and 'transformational development'. In 2001 an international network of Evangelical relief and development agencies was formed with the express aim of promoting the vision and practice of integral mission. This network, known as the Micah Network, now has well over 500 members organisations and has national networks in over 80 countries, all working to spread the idea of integral mission and to make it more mainstream.

Integral mission is a theology of Christian engagement with the world. At its core is the notion that there should be no division between belief and practice and that therefore Christians should engage with the world *as Christians*, all the time, in their families, in their workplaces, and in their politics. In the theology of integral mission, religion, or spirituality is not a private matter to be kept separate from other aspects of life. Rather it is something that should infuse and permeate all aspects of life. Being a Christian is something that you should do fulltime, not just in church on Sundays.

The worldview underlying integral mission theology is based on the doctrines of creation, fall and redemption. In this view God created the world and created people to live together in harmony, to be stewards of the earth

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5 The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies was particularly important in developing theological backing for integral mission. It ran a number of courses and trainings and in 1984 it created a publishing arm that produced the quarterly journal *Transformation* which focused on issues relating to integral mission (Tizon 2008: 78).

and to share its resources equitably. However the fall was brought about by the work of the devil and people's innate tendency to self-interest. It led to human existence becoming corrupted and bent away from God's intentions. From an integral mission viewpoint this includes social sin and corruption as well as individual sin and corruption. Economic systems, political systems, cultures, society, all became infused with evil and twisted away from the way that God intended. This, then, is viewed as the fundamental cause of poverty and injustice. God's intention, however, is understood to be redemption. In the theology of integral mission, redemption is not solely a personal, private affair, but it also social and worldly. Redemption is for all of creation. A central facet of redemption, in this understanding, is bringing about the Kingdom of God, in which there will be harmony, peace and justice.

There are deep theological arguments amongst evangelicals as to when and where the Kingdom will be, in particular whether it is a present spiritual reality or a future earthly reality. Followers of integral mission draw on the Kingdom theology developed in the 1950s by George Eldon Ladd, Professor of Biblical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. In his view, the Kingdom is not a special realm, but it is the reign of God. This reign has already been inaugurated, by Jesus Christ, but will only be completed on his return. Thus the Kingdom is "already/not yet" (Ladd 1959). Whilst acknowledging that full redemption, and hence the ultimate resolution of earthly problems, such as poverty and injustice, will only come about when Jesus returns, integral mission theology argues that it is still important to work towards them and thus 'draw in' the Kingdom to the present. This theology is prominent across the whole integral mission movement. It is outlined in the Wheaton statement, elaborated on in books and articles, and discussed in Micah meetings and in interviews with the researcher. And it also forms part of Tearfund's Statement of Faith.

Living with the tension between 'already/not yet' is thus a key part of the integral mission experience, knowing that salvation can only come later, but nonetheless striving to pull it in and to get a foretaste of the Kingdom now. The former head of the Micah Network in Australia described it this way in a Micah video:

> "We are looking to a new future, standing in that place of hope, and then living the reality of that hope, that promise that we have from our great God, and living that reality back into the present."

Kingdom theology re-orients beliefs about redemption from the individual to also include the social, and calls evangelicals to look at the world around them and to be involved in its betterment. It is a radically different view to the mainstream premillennial dispensationalist theology that is predominant in many conservative evangelical circles. And it has radically different implications regarding the value of social action in the world. From the viewpoint of premillennial dispensationalism, it is understood that the fallen world will only get more and more depraved until Jesus comes back to bring a spiritual redemption for the saved. For these Evangelicals, still the majority, redemption is thus a personal matter and the focus of action in the world should be only to save souls so that they too get to participate in the ultimate redemption. Trying to improve life in the world, from the dispensationalist perspective, is both pointless and futile. Integral mission thus offers a radically different perspective.

What does the Kingdom of God look like? Many integral mission theorists talk about the nature of the Kingdom of God as 'shalom', the biblical word for peace, which also has connotations of fullness and completeness. Tearfund puts it this way on its website:

> "Genesis 1 gives us a glimpse of what the Kingdom of God should look like. In Hebrew there is a word that sums this up, it is 'Shalom`. Humans flourishing as part of God's creation, in relationship with God, creation, others and themselves."[6]

Moving towards God's Kingdom requires bringing about transformation at all levels and in all matters, individual and social, spiritual and material. It requires transforming individuals, communities, societies and cultures. And it requires bringing about peace, sharing resources, having people participate in the decisions that affect them, and coming to know Christ (World Evangelical Fellowship 1983).This transformation is thus holistic, or integral.

Transforming communities is central. A key element of this is seen as 'restoring relationships'. Since local churches are seen as the basic unit of Christian society, and they are located within communities, it follows to integral mission thinkers that the local church that should be the agent of holistic community transformation.

> "Holistic mission is fundamentally about restoring relationships - with oneself, with others, with God, and with creation. Indeed, broken relationships are at the root of poverty, for poverty is the result of a social and structural legacy of broken relation-

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6 http://www.tearfund.org/en/about_you/go_overseas/the_journey/journey_resources/ pre-departure_training/what_is_poverty/?sc_lang=en.

ships with God, damaged understanding of self, unjust relationships between people and exploitative relationships with the environment. The local church is at the heart of transforming these relationships." (Raistrick 2010: 138)

In this worldview evangelism and social action, or in more traditional Evangelical language, 'proclamation and demonstration' should not simply be combined, but it should be realized that they are actually part and parcel of the same thing. The Micah Declaration on Integral Mission states it thus:

"Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ." (Micah Declaration 2001)

In this approach there are many other dualisms that should be similarly collapsed: individual/society, sacred/secular, being/doing, and so on. Some of its leading promoters explicitly frame it as a kind of recovery from modernity and the supposedly false dualisms that came into Western culture after the enlightenment (Myers 1999: 4–11). Integral mission seeks to collapse these dualisms and to 'heal' this separation. It thus is, or seeks to be, thoroughly non-modern. The International Director of the Micah Network explained it to me like this:

"We do good works because we love, that is the agenda, and in so loving the whole gospel is shared. Because not only do we meet their needs, but we tell them about the Good News that Jesus has come to continually bring them to life in all its fullness. So it's not one or the other, it's both working hand in hand. I don't sit there thinking 'I must first do the good works and then I can do the proclamation'. I must just live life. So integral mission is not a project, it is a choice of a lifestyle. I do good and I fight for justice because that's God's character."

Integral Mission for Development Agencies

Through the 1990s the ideas and concepts of integral mission became broadly accepted by many of the larger evangelical aid agencies. The question then became what it might actually look like to implement integral mission in practice. In the mid-1990s Tearfund established a team of theologians and development professionals to develop a clear theological understanding of what would make its work specifically Christian and distinctive. In 1996 this group launched Tearfund's 'Operating Principles', which set out its understanding of a distinctively Christian understanding of poverty and development, and in 1998, following the appointment of René

Padilla as Tearfund's International President, they decided to adopt the language of integral mission.

In what follows I will consider how a desire to embrace integral mission and to move beyond the separation of the spiritual and the material has radically changed the way that Tearfund tries to work with some of its partners in the South[7]. The goal of Christian development is to help individuals and communities transform towards a state of 'shalom' by healing broken relationships between people, God and the environment. Therefore part of Tearfund's re-focusing has been to emphasis the importance of relationships, and this is now stated in its Operating Principles:

> "A desire for good relationships is woven into all our activities. We are not isolated individuals, but persons in relationships, designed to live interdependently in communities and in the wider world. Therefore a constant question for us is, how does what we are doing affect relationships?" (Tearfund 1996: 6)

Tearfund spent many years discussing and debating how to implement this approach in the on-the-ground work of their partners. They finally decided that the best way to do this was to try toshift from funding church development wings and other Christian development agencies to implement projects, and instead to get them to facilitate local churches to be the main agent of transformation (Tearfund 2009; Raistrick 2010). In their vision the local church, a religious organisation embedded in the community, should be empowered to be the main agent of transformation. Tearfund's Operating Principles state it this way:

> "The New Testament gives little explicit teaching on either evangelistic or developmental methods. Instead it calls upon the church to be a caring, inclusive and distinctive community of reconciliation reaching out in love to the world. When we see the church in this way there is no opposition between evangelism and social action." (Tearfund 1996: 8)

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7 Tearfund has of course changed the way that it works with partners in the South many times in the last 50 years and I do not trace all of these changes here. For the most part these previous changes were in step with changes in mainstream development thinking, for example the shift from top-down development interventions to 'small is beautiful' community projects and then to a participatory approach. Tearfund has also embraced child sponsorship and then later rejected it, engaged in fair trade and then moved away from it, as well as numerous other operational changes. What is different about the change that I discuss in this paper is that it was brought about by an explicit desire to integrate religion into the development process.

In Tearfund's view, working with the local church would help to collapse the boundary between evangelism and social action, because when the local church, already an institution of evangelism, adds social action into its repertoire this results in a single institution doing both spiritual outreach and also material development. This, from the viewpoint of Tearfund, is an important step towards bringing these two elements closer together to result in transformation. A long time Tearfund staff member explained it to me in this way:

> "At Tearfund we always work through the church. There were people who imagined that the only reason that we worked through the church was for convenience or for reasons of financial probity, and those were relevant factors. (…) But, and I used to stress this in the leadership team meetings, the main reason we worked with the church is that we were working with people who can share their faith."

Tearfund has tried to flesh out what doing transformation with the local church means in practice. In the early 2000s they developed a process generally known as Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM), which is now widely used by Tearfund partners and also by other Christian organisations, such as the members of the Micah Network and other development and missionary organisations. CCM seeks to empower churches to be the agents of transformation in their communities. A Tearfund staff member described its aim in the following way:

> "The vision is of an army of ordinary people; grassroots members in their millions, equipped and empowered to bring local transformation to their streets and work-places. The world can be redeemed by small local action in every neighbourhood of the planet. The powerless, who sit at the back of our congregations by their millions, are our capacity for this dream to come true. If we can envision and empower the 99 % in our members who we have taught to be passive consumers of privatised religion, the church will become the most powerful agent for transformation the world has ever seen." (Izsatt 2003: 1)

CCM has five basic steps. The first step is to 'envision the church'. Envisioning is defined as a process of passing on a vision to others. In this case, the vision is of integral mission, and more specifically that the church should be involved in social action as well as Evangelism. Thus the first step of CCM is spreading the vision of integral mission to local churches in the South. According to a Tearfund Guide about CCM called *Partnering with the Local Church*:

"Most churches have yet to consider the need for integral mission, and those that understand it may lack the confidence to carry it out. In order for relationships with local churches to be worthwhile, Christian organisations may therefore need to envision them." (Blackman 2007: 64)

The envisioning process can include discussions with church leaders, training sessions and group bible study. It is then necessary to equip the church with some new skills and approaches, and this can include trainings on facilitation, teamwork, needs assessments and so on. Churches are encouraged to think about the community and its needs and how it might be transformed. In its ideal manifestation this is deeply religious work. The International Director of the Micah Network explained it to me like this:

[We would ask] "what is the theology? How does God think about this community? What's your perspective?' So it takes people on a journey in that world view, in that context. 'What does God say?' It teaches people to see that community through the lens of God's missionary heart for them. And then it says 'well, what are our gifts and skills?' I might be able to paint, you may be able to play the piano. We look for practical as well as spiritual gifts. Then we say 'right, what are the community's needs? (…) But we're not just saying 'what are their physical needs? We are also asking about their spiritual journey as well."

The second step involves the church seeking to envision the community. Here the vision is not so much one of integral mission as such, but it is rather about getting people to think that they can work together for the betterment of their own community. Church leaders are invited to meet with community leaders and to arrange a big community meeting. During this and subsequent meetings the church facilitator will lead community members through a process of identifying their needs, analyzing local issues and making lists of local resources. A variety of participatory methodologies are used to collect the relevant information and for the community to analyse the situation.

The third step involves imagining possible futures, defining goals and making plans. Community members are taken through more participatory processes to imagine what changes they could make, themselves, which would improve their lives. They are then invited to make a plan of action, allocate responsibilities, and collect resources.

In the fourth step they then carry out the chosen action, and in the fifth and final step they meet back together and evaluate how the process went and how satisfactory the outcome is. The idea is that they will then repeat this cycle again and again such that communal social action becomes an integral part of church and community life (Blackman 2007; Carter 2003;

Tearfund nd).[8] This is clearly a very different style of doing development from Tearfund's earlier model, and since the late 1990s Tearfund has massively changed the way that it works with its partners in the South. By 2015 Tearfund claims to have mobilized some 97,000 local churches across the world through its CCM process (Tearfund 2015: 3).

Church denominations in many of the countries where Tearfund works have started to go through trainings and workshops to reorient them towards an integral mission approach and train them in CCM. In Nigeria, for example, workshops on the new approach of integral mission have been held for the leaders of several of the development wings of Tearfund's partner denominations, including the Church of Christ in Nigeria, the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria and the Evangelical Church of West Africa. And a series of practical trainings on CCM were given to staff over a period of several years (Musa nd.). In Ethiopia Tearfund's largest partner, the Kale Heywet Church Development Program, has been through a large organizational change program in order to embed the integral mission approach into its way of working. A national change team was set up and a huge training program was implemented, starting with the senior leadership and then cascaded through the whole organization right down to local church level (Blackman 2007: 51; Izatt 2003: 3; Yakob 2001). Other African denominations trained in CCM include the Anglican Church of Tanzania, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Uganda and the Living Waters Church, Malawi, amongst many others. They have all started to change the way that they do development by moving away from large-scale projects and seeking more to facilitate local churches to carry out their own community development initiatives.

So what is the impact of this new approach? In many respects it is too early to say. In Nigeria a few churches have started income generating projects and cooperatives, others have set up community water projects and some have set up adult literacy classes (Musa nd: 3–4). In Ethiopia some local churches have started small community projects, such as fattening sheep and goats, and producing and selling cash crops like coffee, sugar, onions and mango (Izatt 2003: 5–8). In Kenya some churches have facilitated the community to build earth dams and to take up bee-keeping

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8 Despite this holistic view, where integral mission is seen as part of the natural life of the church, in practice aid agency involvement can still turn it into a project, and thus lead again to the separation between the church's spiritual work and its physical work. This risk is noted again and again by integral mission theorists and came up in several interviews.

(Hollow 2008: 125). In Tanzania and Uganda households involved in CCM projects have started to grow a wider variety of crops, including more food for the market, and tend to seek expert agricultural advice more often (Scott et al 2014; Tearfund 2014: 4). At first blush none of this seems particularly innovative. Similar community level income generating projects can be found in the work of many secular development NGOs, who have also moved to supporting small-scale entrepreneurial activity, cooperatives and micro-projects since the early 2000s.

According to Tearfund, however, one of the most striking impacts of this new approach has been in strengthening community relationships. By going through the process of CCM many villagers reportedly say that their sense of unity and of trust and togetherness has increased. An evaluation of Tearfund's CCM work in Zimbabwe found that an increase in social connectedness was the greatest impact (Tearfund 2016: 15), and an independent review of CCM in Tanzania found that communities felt empowered by the process and that people's "sense of belief in themselves and in others within the community" was enhanced (Scott et al. 2014: 19). There are also reports of growth in church membership and improvements in church attendance (Musa nd: 3; Scott et al. 2014: 17). Only detailed ethnographic research will show what exactly is happening in the communities and in the churches that are engaging in CCM. At the present it is impossible to say whether or not having the local church instigate and run these community projects makes a significant difference in how they play out in people's lives.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the way that Tearfund, a leading evangelical development NGO, has sought to integrate religion into its work and to develop a distinctively Christian approach to development. It has traced this process from the 1970s to the present day and has shown how Tearfund has grappled with this issue, expended considerable time and effort reflecting on it, and ultimately tried to massively change the way that it works in order to try to put Christianity at the heart of what it does, and to bring together material and spiritual development.

Following its embracing of the concept of integral mission, Tearfund started to move away from carrying out development projects through the development wings of large denominations and towards training these denominations to facilitate local churches, at village level, to plan and carry out their own community development initiatives. This represents a signifi-

cant change in the operational work of Tearfund and its partners. And it represents a major change in the experience of 'development' for many of their beneficiary villagers in the global South.

But while the impetus to shift to this new form of development intervention was a desire to develop a distinctively Christian approach to development, it is unclear how different this new approach is from that of various secular development NGOs. In the past years many secular development NGOs have also started to carry out small-scale, market-based, self-empowerment projects in local communities. Many secular NGOs work with poor people to set up various kinds of saving and lending groups, to stimulate small-scale entrepreneurial activity and to organise cooperatives. The main difference in the Tearfund approach is that it is the local church, in the village, that is organising these micro-scale projects. To ascertain the implications of this difference in the ways that the development initiatives play out in local communities and are experienced by Christian and non-Christian villagers will require detailed ethnographic research at the community level.

But what is clear is that the integration of religion and development in the work of religious development NGOs is far from straightforward. The distinctiveness of religious NGOs is most certainly not something that can be assumed. Not all religious NGOs have grappled with these issues to the extent that Tearfund has, and many continue to operate in much the same way as secular development NGOs. Their faith may provide the motivation for their work, but it does not shape its design or implementation. Other religious NGOs may have reflected on the issue of how to integrate religion and development in their work and come to other conclusions and changed their practice in different ways. Thus it is not useful to generalise about the special efficacy or otherwise of religious NGOs in general, but rather it is necessary to take a case by case approach and to examine in detail how and whether particular religious development NGOs seek to embed their faith in their development activities and how this influences the impact of their work.

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Andreas Heuser

Megachurches, Dominion Theology and Development

Introduction: De-essentializing Pentecostal Theology

Recently, Karen Lauterbach deplored the relative silence in African Studies on the role of Christianity in Africa's development (Lauterbach 2016: 605). It is a somewhat paradoxical statement as it appears in her review of Paul Gifford's "Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa" published in 2015. This volume may be seen as the scholarly résumé of Gifford's remarkable and long-standing exploration of transformative social dynamics in African religions. With a specific focus on Christianity Gifford set the tone for several influential studies on development in Africa since the 1980s (Gifford 1998, 2004, 2009, 2015). Moreover, from early on he put Pentecostalism at the centre stage in his cartography of contemporary African Christianity. In his 2004 volume on "Ghana's New Christianity", Gifford, a sociologist of religion, sought to profile the Pentecostal impact on society. "Undoubtedly", Gifford comments (2004: ix), "[…] they flourish mainly because they claim to have the answers to Ghanaian's existential problems and especially to their most pressing existential problem, economic survival." Gifford is pointing out the aspect of lived Pentecostalism, so to speak. Quite clearly Pentecostal impact on day-to-day life experiences goes hand-in-hand with the aspect of economic empowerment. On a similar note, social anthropologist Dena Freeman evaluates Pentecostal social ethics. Observing the social field in Ethiopian highlands, Freeman points out the long-lasting behavioural changes towards individual responsibility and motivational advantages of (rural) Pentecostalism within a multi-religious setting. She assumes that the Pentecostal impact on behavioural changes and transformative ethics is more profound than in secular projects of development aid (Freeman 2012). However, both Freeman as well as Gifford abstain from a discussion of Pentecostal theology. This is apparent in the call of interruption by church historian Ogbu Kalu in his response to Gifford's analysis of contemporary African Pentecostalism. Kalu misses an in-depth understanding of Pentecostal theological concepts, what he senses "the most important aspect" of Pentecostal self-presentations (Kalu 2008: 223). If one wished to orchestrate a dialogue, Gifford appears to answer Kalu in his most recent study on "Christianity,

Development and Modernity in Africa". Here, he examines Pentecostal worldviews and theological components comprehensively. As in his earlier writings, Gifford draws on Weberian notions of rational-bureaucratic processes of modernization as prerogative of development in Africa against enchanted worldviews. He attributes a manifest relevance for social change solely to rational forms of religion. Identifying such an enlightened variant of bureaucratic rationality with historic Christianity, African Pentecostalism, in his reading, results in the prolongation of enchanted worldviews with no structural effect on society. He concludes his analysis with an apodictic denial of a merger of these two religious categories. These two basic forms of religious imaginations of society, he contends, "are not just different, but alternative. Not just diverse, but incompatible" (Gifford 2015: 156).

Indeed, if one surveys significant studies on African Pentecostalism in recent years, the theological frames are interpreted with hermeneutics of suspicion. In his "African Gifts of the Spirit" (2006) African historian David Maxwell, for instance, states the high impact of the Pentecostal movement on African societies. Yet, he qualifies Pentecostal beliefs and theology as expressions of a "primitive impulse". His value judgement refers to a Pentecostal "powerfully *destructive* urge to smash all human traditions in order to return to a first-century world" (Maxwell 2006: 14, italics mine). Without any further discussion Maxwell's verdict on the primitive impulse discards any constructive Pentecostal social agency. The dilemma of Pentecostal approaches to social change repeats with Ruth Marshall's research on Nigerian Pentecostalism (Marshall 2009). From her political scientist perspective Marshall qualifies the Pentecostal concept of politics as "negative theology". On the one hand she observes Pentecostal techniques of subjectivity aiming at shaping "political spiritualities". On the other hand the intended "revolution" of all-day life is directed against the forces of evil in public spheres. Essentially, Pentecostal political conscientization bears a negative connotation, enforcing a deconstructive spiritual lifestyle rather than shaping productive contributions to society.

Taken together the discussion of Pentecostal theology remains sceptical about significant contributions of African Pentecostalism to development and social change. Engaging a dense texture of primitive impulse, negative theology, or enchanted vision of the world, interdisciplinary research predominantly portrays dysfunctional aspects of Pentecostal theologizing of society. Returning to Lauterbach's review of Gifford's concept of enchanted Christianity, she deplores his essentialising portrayal of African Pentecostalism: "Gifford essentializes the enchanted religious imagination" (Lauterbach 2016: 605). This demands critical distance from the strategies

of presentation mentioned that categorically deny any Pentecostal agency for social transformation. Rather than reinforcing the binaries of the secular/the religious and the enchanted/the disenchanted, Lauterbach (2016: 605) posits, "it would be useful to transgress these binaries in order to reach an understanding of how the religious becomes political and vice versa".

This chapter follows Lauterbach, but with a focus on Pentecostal theology. Current discourses on Pentecostal theologising in terms of societal relevance put an almost exclusive emphasis on the most controversial concept of Prosperity theology in Africa; Prosperity theology is commonly defined as an individualised expression of neo-capitalist economy (Heuser 2015; Heuser 2016). Widely unnoticed however is a theological theorem that crosscuts Pentecostal megachurch networks known as Dominion Theology. Dominion Theology unfolds a Pentecostal theory of society and social change. It is shared in megachurch networks as a master-narrative to exert hegemony over diverse "spheres" of society, including the economic sphere. What follows highlights the dominion theological concept of the economic sphere, with allusion made to the notion of "development". The material base is from Ghana, with a sample of two of the most prominent megachurches in West Africa, Action Chapel International led by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, and International Central Gospel Church, founded by Mensa Otabil. The case study presents local formats of Dominion Theology with significant international links and global network constructions. In order to bring out the dominion theological claims to transform society and the reality of such claims, I choose a 'thick description' of a first "Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit", organized by Duncan-Williams and showing a Dominion Theology texture. A clear Dominion Theology imprint is visible also in a subsequent case-study on Mensa Otabil's "Greater Works" conferences. His contradictory involvement in the insolvency of a private bank in Ghana triggers a public discourse on Dominion Theology aspirations. Both events—the Africa Summit and the bank collapse—took place at the same time period in mid-2017 (partly lasting to mid-2018); they demonstrate the simultaneity of Dominion Theology euphoria and its limited factuality to "conquer the economic sphere". The chapter finally demarcates some prospects on Dominion Theology as a Pentecostal social theory.

"Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit"

In September 2017 Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, leader of
Action Chapel International headquartered in Accra, launched the first
"Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit" (Heuser 2019). The
initiator of the conference, Nicholas Duncan-Williams, is widely acknowl-
edged as the pioneer of the recent emergence of megachurches in Ghana.
Action Chapel International was founded in 1979 and belongs to the his-
toric generation of megachurches in Africa. Meanwhile Duncan-Williams
claims to be the "Presiding Archbishop and General Overseer" of a church
with over 300 branches worldwide. Moreover he calls himself the "Apostle
of Strategic Prayer". Action Chapel is known for this specific ritual praxis.
For Duncan-Williams "strategic prayer" is aimed at public life; it is the
major constituent of the church's internal spiritual cohesion and a core fea-
ture of all outreach programs:

> "The most important lesson we can learn in life is how to pray. We must learn how
> to pray so that our prayers get God's attention. Prophetically, I know that God is
> raising a new breed of intercessors and prayer warriors that will enforce God's will
> for many generations. The destiny of cities, nations, and continents are birthed by
> the prayers of God's people."[1]

Strategic Prayer can be seen as political praxis; it covers categories of so-
called 'parliamentary prayers', or 'government prayers', directed towards
political actors respectively. These categories of prayers match with public
images of Duncan-Williams spread in church-owned media. On websites, in
church publications and even in sermons, he is portrayed by his closeness
to social and political elites, and as a pastoral advisor or "intercessor and
Minister for the numerous African Heads of State and government, civic
and business leaders" (Duncan-Williams 2015a, cover page).

The most public category refers to the annual *Prayer Summits* convened at
the church headquarters with international acclaimed speakers and
preachers. In line with this international annual prayer summit the concept
for a new public event was coined in 2017, a thematic summit focussing on
economy, development and leadership in Africa. The "Africa Business and
Kingdom Leadership Summit", that lasted over three days, had been
announced in national media weeks before. The official announcement of
this conference promised an extraordinary opportunity for "movers and

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1 https://archbishopnicholasduncanwilliams.podbean.com/e/prayer-moves-god/ (last
   accessed 19 November 2019).

shakers and aspirants alike" to exchange strategies to accelerate economic growth in Africa and to stage Africa's economic participation on global scale. Co-organizer of the summit is Rosa Whitaker, an African-American business woman. Whitaker is the first person to hold the position of Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa, and she is married to Duncan-Williams. Among the invited speakers of the conference one finds an illustrious gallery of personalities from Ghana and Ghanaian diaspora, representatives of (former heads of) African states, an elite of diplomats, financial tycoons, business people of diverse backgrounds and leaders of NGOs, all classified under a heuristic code as "foremost leaders of Africa's most influential spheres".[2]

The proceedings of this first Africa Summit comprised a two-and-a-half-day conference at the church's headquarters in Accra, accessible only for paying participants, and a final evening service free of charge, held on 3 September 2017 at Independence Square. Independence Square belongs to the privileged spaces of the country's postcolonial collective memory. It was here, in the immediate vicinity of this widest public convention place in the capital of Ghana, where the independence of the first sub-Saharan country was declared in 1957. The main speaker of this evening service, announced as the "Grand Finale" of the first Africa Summit, is another key-figure in the global arena of megachurches, African-American Bishop T.D. Jakes, from Potter's House in Texas. T.D. Jakes (b. 1957) has gained a reputation as "America's Best Preacher" in leading US media such as Time Magazine and CNN. The conference flyer praises him as "world renowned pastor, media mogul, and visionary".

The one-hour sermon by T.D. Jakes climaxes the final stage of the Africa Summit. It is prepared by a short intervention of Duncan-Williams. Nicholas Duncan-Williams, who was also born in 1957 as a son of a diplomat (Duncan-Williams 2015c), offers a postcolonial reading of African history. Independence Square, the historic place, provides the backstage for a profane revision of contemporary African history, exactly sixty years after the pronouncement of independence. By the very beginning of the evening Grand Finale the master of ceremony had declared a new era for Africa's future. The stereotyping of Africa as the continent of poverty will be replaced, she announced, by prospects to transform Africa into a "place of oneness and hard work". In his short speech Duncan-Williams interprets this in the pan-Africanist frame of politics, coined by the first Ghanaian

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2 Cf. the four pages strong supplement of the Africa Summit in the national newspaper, Daily Graphic, 17 August 2017.

President, Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972). Nkrumah, a prime theoretician of Pan-Africanism and African socialism, occupies a fixed place in anticolonial liberation history. Duncan-Williams provides a selective reconstruction of Nkrumah's heritage. In an obvious turn to align postcolonial history with the economic frame of this first Africa Summit, Duncan-Williams seeks to redirect collective memory into just one dimension, namely the economic sphere. According to Duncan-Williams' interpretation, Nkrumah imagined the "prosperity" of Africa first and foremost. It goes by saying that he applies the guiding term of actual Pentecostal discourses, circling around the concept of Prosperity Theology. Prosperity Theology, in short, promises material wealth as sign of charismatic empowerment by the Holy Spirit (Heuser 2016). Duncan-Williams outlines his perspective on Africa's prosperity in terms of a neoliberal credo of economic liberalization, privatization, and deregulation, postulated also by Bretton Woods institutions (International Monetary Fund; World Bank) since the 1980s as the main path to development in Africa. The impact of structural adjustment programs is still felt in Ghanaian political life. In 2015 Ghana secured an IMF credit of over $918 million USD. The current administration of newly elected President Akuffo-Addo, who came into power in January 2017, follows a "Ghana Beyond Aid Agenda", i.e. a policy to quit any external financing by Bretton Woods Institutions by the end of 2018. In addition, it supports a policy of economic liberalisation that gives a primacy to private sectors.This made Ghana an African model country in international development politics. In World Bank reports, Ghana appears among the top nations with a robust economic growth rate (Bob-Millar & Paller 2018).Additionally President Akuffo-Addo delivered the opening speech for the Africa Summit (1 September 2017, cf. Kwawukume2017). Nkrumah's vision of independence, Duncan-Williams explains, can only come true in a political environment that guarantees free agency, be it on economic and political, but also on cultural and religious levels. His speech ends with an allusion to the "Black Star", the state emblem that overarches Independence Square. In the habitus of a political visionary, Duncan-Williams addressed a jubilant crowd of approximately 20,000 people: "Let the star rise!"

In his sermon that followed, T.D. Jakes took up this thread. He preached about the healing of the blind in Bethesda (Mk 8,22–26). Remarkably, he transgressed the usual Pentecostal narrative on spectacular divine intervention and individual response by strong acts of faith. Jakes' take on transformative faith is motivated by a theology of hope, as it were. The blind person trusts in God's guidance into unknown territories, transcending

known parameters of social life: "Desire the spectacular in all day life! Transgress the normal! We are all leaders because we do not shy away from the risks of the unknown", he encourages. "What I preach is a revolution! This is the revolution: stay together, form a single unit of power! God is at work to transform things—the economy, the nation!" The proclamation of a revolution ends the first Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit.

A Dominion Theological Script

The terminology used by the organizers to advertise the event points directly to categories and concepts of society employed by Dominion Theology. Dominion theological repertoires have gained enormous weight within megachurch global networks. Dominion Theology denotes an independent theory of social change; it is a specific genre of political Pentecostal theology. The most obvious dominion theological index used to publicise the Africa Summit refers to the analytical code of societal "spheres". Dominion Theology perceives society in constellations of spheres, sometimes also termed as "pillars" or "mountains". In theory, such spheres are operating according to their own reference systems but are not as strictly separated as the sub-systems in systemic functionalism. Although the versions of Dominion Theology may differ in the number of such spheres, standard readings distinguish seven spheres of impact. These core dimensions of society comprise religion, governance, education, family, the media, arts and entertainment, and economy. The vision of any dominion theology variant is to transform all these spheres by a transfer of power. The principal idea is to occupy each and every sphere of society by megachurch representatives, individual apostles and prophets. This rather stable format of strategic social intervention shines through the illustrious list of participants, a high-profile selection of international business people and African political leaders; it also glosses in the talks and sermons at the summit indicating the imminent revolutionary change of economy and society in Africa through alleged Kingdom Leadership.

Dominion Theology emerged in conservative milieus of American reformed theology, gaining prominence from the 1970s through its discourses on the authoritarian "reconstruction" of society. Conceptualized by R.J. Rushdoony (1916–2001), the agenda of Christian reconstruction was to organize contemporary society according to biblical "laws" of social order. The political design of Christian reconstruction was termed Dominion

Theology. In order to implement the so-called biblical laws, Dominion Theology projected society as compartmentalised into diverse "spheres". All of these spheres should be anchored in and dominated by profound theocratic principles of governance. However, by the 1990s its impact on Christian political theology almost completely waned. Any trace of Dominion Theology came under suspicion, disavowed by its guiding theocratic vision (Ingersoll 2015). Considering the deeply-felt legitimacy crisis surrounding Dominion Theology, surprisingly a renaissance of Dominion Theology took shape around 2005, this time in American Pentecostal and megachurch circles. The mastermind to revive the concept was C. Peter Wagner (1930–2016) who authored several publications on the theme, and "how to change the world by Kingdom action" (Wagner 2005). The revision of Dominion Theology avoided a conscious link to the previous theory design. Wagner attributed the term to autonomous visionary inspiration (Wagner 2008: 18), and to simultaneous directions given to him by Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth With a Mission (Wagner 2008: 143) respectively. Consequently, Wagner undertook any effort to locate the fresh take on Dominion Theology within genuine Pentecostal and American megachurch discourse. The Pentecostal variant uses terminologies such as spheres, applies similar rhetoric of societal transformation, and insists on taking action, but most importantly denies any theocratic imagination categorically. This has helped to popularise the ideas of social change connected to Dominion Theology. Currently, the concept is well promoted in the new media; one of the most visible Dominion Theology representatives, self-styled visionary Lance Wallnau, is known for his claim to have predicted the presidency of Donald Trump. Hence American Dominion Theology affirms close and established ties with conservative elites in business and politics. Moreover the global flow of dominion theological concepts, key terms, and personalities is secured by megachurch networks. One main channel to receive and debate Dominion Theology in Ghana is the link between African American megachurch heroes such as T.D. Jakes and Nicholas Duncan-Williams. The last and major publication by Duncan Williams, published in 2015, circles around the meaning of prayer yet its central chapter is preoccupied with an understanding of the "Dominion Mandate" (Duncan-Williams, 2015b: 17–33).

Duncan-Williams, the aforementioned "intercessor and Minister for the numerous African Heads of State and government, civic and business leaders" (Duncan-Williams 2015a, cover page), is a central African figure in the horizontal megachurch networks to diffuse Dominion Theology. These

megachurch networks have been investigated in more detail by Brad Christerson and Richard Flory (2017). Christerson and Flory focus on American networks shaped around C. Peter Wagner's so-called "New Apostolic Revolution". Spearheaded by an "apostolic and prophetic" avant-garde of megachurch leaders, these networks are sharing dominion theological constructions of society. Network structures comprise vertical, or hierarchical cooperation between subsidiary individual leaders, and horizontal, mutual collaboration between the most prominent personalities. Yet, they are all part of a densely networked and highly influential avant-garde termed by Christerson and Flory "Independent Network Charismatic Christianity" (or "INC Christianity"). Essential in all networking features is the reciprocal acceptance of extraordinary apostolic-prophetic authority, declaring them legitimate porters of dominion mandate, directed by unmediated divine intervention. The independent networks are relational (not institutional) in the first place. With a declared intention to transform society, these networks are less interested in defining church related issues, such as establishing parameters of being a church, or negotiating church growth strategies. What they are interested in the distribution of basic concepts of society and praxis models of social change in contours of Dominion Theology. A popular technique of the diffusion of Dominion Theology is to organize joint conferences such as the first Africa Summit.

The Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit surpasses the networks analysed by Christerson and Flory. While Christerson and Flory highlight the white, US-American scenery, the Africa Summit sheds light on a transnational network of African and African-American Pentecostal megastars.[3] The dynamics of globally active networks of independent megaministries is enormous. It shows for instance in the presence of Duncan-Williams at the inauguration of Donald J. Trump as 45th President of the United States. The election of Trump was heavily backed by the networks of megachurch leaders. Facilitated by his African-American wife, Rosa Whitaker, and mediated by his close affiliation with T.D. Jakes Duncan-Williams has entered the American circle of INC Christianity. In accordance with dominion theological visions the Ghanaian megachurch leader participated at the "Inauguration Day Prayer Service", 20 January 2017 in Washington, DC. More precisely, he followed his own classification for "strategic prayers" and offered a governmental prayer to newly elect Presi-

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3 Cf. the network analysis of Nigerian and African-American megachurches by David Daniels (2015). Cooperation is inspired mainly by educational projects on tertiary level.

dent Trump.[4] This event ranked high on the agenda of independent network Christianity and is taken as evidence of dominion theological aspirations to transform society. The dominion theological script, networks, and spiritual praxis pervade the concept of the Africa Summit as well as the choreography of the evening service, with T.D. Jakes' call for a revolution of politics and the economy as its grand finale.

"Greater Works"—and the Collapse of Capital Bank

Mensa Otabil (b. 1959) is the founder-leader and General Overseer of International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) with headquarters in Accra, too. ICGC was founded in 1984, thus belonging to the first generation of megachurches in Ghana (Larbi 2001; Gifford 2004). ICGC has a network of churches across Ghana, some other African countries and further beyond the continent in Europe, the USA and Australia. Its daily broadcast "Living Word" is received in Ghana, but also in radio and TV networks in Kenya and in South Africa. Otabil is respected in Ghanaian society as a motivational speaker. The formation of Central University College, the premier private university in the country in 1998 documents Otabil's interest in academic-style education. He has gained a reputation of a theological teacher respected in all religious communities, also outside Christianity.

   Similar to Duncan-Williams, Otabil organizes an annual conference known as Greater Works to address Ghanaian public spheres. The Greater Works conferences have one and the same mandate, namely, "Raising Leaders, Shaping Vision and Influencing Society through Christ". The Greater Works conferences form an integral part of Otabil's vision to develop what he calls model "New Testament churches". However, he is less interested in institutional ecclesiology instead preferring to prepare individual persons to impact society. Therefore ICGC assists with practical self-help programmes, support systems, and small-scale projects primarily in the educational field. Theologically Otabil builds on concepts of positive confession. Since 2005 he has designed annual motifs recited in all church branches and theorised upon in series of sermons throughout the year. Among these crucial terms one finds for instance "Perfection", "Taking New Territories", "Influence", "Leadership", "Breakthrough", or "Leadership". In addition, in 2014 the church launched a 20-year development plan designed to ignite a long-term financial savings culture among church members, including advice on how to accumulate material wealth, or to improve

4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gt35c_tS9tg (last accessed 10 November 2019).

social status. The template to personal achievements also includes aspects of wealth redistribution, interpreted as supporting church-run charities in the first place. The notion of development applied in this scheme may be restricted to individual progress and church-run projects, however, such conscious approach to development issues remains a novelty within Ghanaian Pentecostalism (Arthur 2017).

The Greater Works conference format comprises two daily sessions—a morning and an evening session—with international speakers. Advertisement for the conference was on a large scale, with oversized banners visible all over the metropolitan area, and a special supplement in the national newspaper, Daily Graphic (30 July 2018), over 16 pages. In 2018 the invited guest speakers were Nigerian Bishop Mike Okonkwo (Redeemed Evangelical Mission), Bishop Tudor Bismark of the Zimbabwe-based Jabula New Life Ministries International, and Senior Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo of Kingsway International Christian Centre, based in London. All three high-profile leaders were introduced in the program brochure by characteristic features of their ministries. Bishop Okonkwo was portrayed as a founder of several NGOs "committed to alleviating the plight of the less privileged in the society", while Matthew Ashimolowo's field of expertise would cover global media enterprises and book publications on subjects of "wealth creation". Bishop Bismark was recognised as "Africa's apostolic voice to the nations", heading the Council of African Apostles. In fact, all speakers were introduced as successful businessmen, primarily in media enterprises next to their outstanding profile as global leaders of the Pentecostal movement. Their host and conference speaker, Mensa Otabil, was lauded in similar diction as chairing numerous boards, and pioneering "a number of life-changing social interventions in the areas of health care, education, sports and the provision of social amenities and scholarships for hundreds of underprivileged children over years". Like any other of the previous conferences, the 2018 Greater Works conference, held from 30 July to 3 August, climaxed a longer period of fasting and prayer that ended with a final public service at Accra's Independence Square. Usually the fasting period would last over thirty days; in 2018 it was extended to forty days "through the direction of the General Overseer".[5]

The 2018 Greater works conference was held in an acute atmosphere of public controversies over Otabil's ministry. The exceptional fasting and prayer period dubbed "40 Days of Power" had a subtext never mentioned

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5 All quotations are from the supplement issue on the Greater Works conference in the Daily Graphic, 30 July 2018.

in any of the church's announcements and publication on the conference, namely Otabil's role in the scandalous liquidation of several Ghanaian banks the year before. Otabil had a special long-standing engagement with one of these bankrupt banks, Capital Bank. Serving as chairperson of the board of six directors he was the bank's highest representative in public life. Capital Bank had close connections with ICGC, therefore the insolvency of the bank was widely discussed and covered in the media in August 2017.[6]

In mid-August 2017, Otabil's social capital was severely reduced. The Greater Works conference aroused discontent about malpractices experienced that year. The Greater Works conference had earned harsh comments triggered by reports to monetarize religious practises. In 2017 Ashimolowo, who already acted as guest speaker, had introduced several categories of divine healing, classified along the financial budgets of believers. In evening healing services he offered miraculous healings according to what individuals would pay for in US-Dollars. The range of healings started from the "seed of perfection" at the cost of $70, to "Life Improvement" for a donation of $100, and several middle stages of the healing ladder until you reach the top ranking "Millionaire status" for $5,000. The outrage in social media was enormous.[7]

Otabil's nimbus as a teacher of the nation was dwindling, the church's reputation of raising responsible leaders was seriously endangered. Public discussions about his handling of the bank collapse were lingering in national media, on radio and TV, as well as in newspapers throughout the year. However, Otabil kept silent. Only one year later, in August 2018, was he prepared to comment on his involvement in the collapse of Capital Bank. In his statement to the press he affirmed that in his position as a "non-executive chairman" he "was not involved in day-to-day operations".[8] He supported his argument in a service that same week. Otabil preached in his ICGC headquarters over the nature of his involvement in the bank collapse. The press headline welcomed his sermon as a rather convincing state-of-the-art reaction to open criticism: "Dr Otabil arms congregation". Addressing his congregation Otabil insisted that the decisions made under his mandate of board chairperson were all done "with the best of intentions

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6 The bank affair around improper financial administration was published first in the Daily Graphic, 15 August 2017, and then followed up for the rest of the month.

7 Notably a popular former musician, Kwame A-Plus, raised doubts about the integrity of such practises, cf. https://yen.com.gh/96254-social-media-outraged-by-icgcs-special-offe rings.html#96254 (last accessed 20 November 2018).

8 Daily Graphic, 15 August 2018.

and the interest of various stakeholders in mind". He did not go into further detail. Rather, he mentioned that criticism from outside should not test any member's allegiance to him or ICGC. Being a member of ICGC would not mean to rely on him personally, but to "worship God". Reminding his congregation on his recent preaching invitation by his Zimbabwean friend, Tudor Bismark, he claimed that his role as a church leader was intact and should remain untouched. He should deserve due respect as a pastor who directed the focus of all spiritual life on God. The right response to any outside critique should simply consist of the three-pronged response that "God is good".[9]

This service aimed at equipping church members with counter-arguments against the likely loss of credibility and professional reputation. Again, in that same week, Otabil coupled this internal coping strategy with his public appearance at a non-religious conference. As if there was no sign of public erosion of his status, Otabil was catching the attention as "teacher of the nation". He figured as keynote speaker in a high-profile business conference. Seemingly untouched by any criticism he addressed business managers, directors and senior management representatives at the "Night with Great Minds", termed Ghana's flagship business conference. In his keynote Otabil pondered about "audacity" as a compass for achievements and success. "Longing for the extraordinary, and creating "our own success stories" were the catchphrases in his speech. With his unconventional proposition for Ghana's economy to strive for an annual 20 % growth rate, he made the headline story in the daily news. Empowering people to be their own success stories should be coupled with long-term thinking, i.e. not to jeopardize growth prospects for today's material gain. He closed by stating that "the mindset remains the continent's major development challenge. […] When are we going to have our own Apple?"[10]

In sum, we may say that Otabil applied a mixture of strategies to cope with the obvious fiasco of his involvement in the financial sphere. Otabil's strategy was threefold. He first tapped into the support system of horizontal, in this case, African megachurch networks. His weakening national prestige was reinforced again by his liaison with internationally acclaimed church leaders. The second aspect that needs mentioning was his obvious

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9 Daily Graphic, 22 August 2018, report by Donald Ato Dapatem.
10 Daily Graphic, 20 August 2018. The issue entails two main reports of Otabil`s appearance at the conference, coupled with an image while lecturing in the Business Report section. The conference "Festival of Ideas" took place at the expensive Marriott Hotel in Accra, at an admission rate of 2.500 Cedis (ca. 500 €).

strategy of avoidance. Being under public scrutiny for one year now, Otabil never disclosed his radical failure as a board chairperson in the business and banking sector. He centred on his spiritual guidance, and depoliticised his role as a pastor of his congregation. More generally, he had successfully avoided any further comment on his activities in the wider sphere of economy and 'development' he was praised for in previous years. Did he, by consequence, abandon the dominion theological ambition to control the sphere of economy altogether? No. His third strategy came into play which may be termed affirmation by visionary intensification. The method went in line with the annual "Greater Works" conferences: Otabil was disinterested in details of failure, instead he simply coined greater visions for the development of the country. But how convincing was this set of arguments, and what were public reactions to it?

Public Debates and Irritations

With the annual Greater Works conference and his following public and semi-public statements the memory of his involvement in the banking collapse was revived in mid-2018. His self-exculpation came under attack by diverse representatives of public life.

Professionals from the banking sector in Ghana were quite outspoken. The more moderate voices deplored the still weak social institutions in the country that could fall prey to maladministration and individual mismanagement. They referred specifically to the fragile state of economic and financial institutions in the country, missing reliable tools of crisis management. Other commentators offended Otabil directly. Otabil's claims of non-responsibility would affirm that he had "no practical expertise nor theoretical knowledge in banking, finance and economics". Otabil should confine his motivational message of self-reliance, and long-term planning strictly to the running of his church affairs. Yet, he would miss any professional requirements to chair a board to give policy directions.[11]

The most controversial dispute, however, was launched by spokespersons from the Pentecostal networks of megachurches in Ghana. They sided with Otabil who was undoubtedly their previous mentor in vertical networks. They positioned themselves as church leaders who were raised under Otabil to form their own prophetic stature. Anyone raising a voice in defence of Otabil could earn higher status in the network. Rev. Isaac Ofori, founder of Overcomers Bread International, stood in for Otabil as follows:

11 Daily Graphic, 16 August 2018.

"We have […] seen the symptoms of a perverse generation that have revealed a gross disrespect for the voice of a prophet".[12] Allusion was made to controversial comments expressing doubts on prophetic interventions as such, predicting everything yet failing to foresee the possible fold-ups of these banks. The defenders of Otabil from local Pentecostal networks realised that the bankruptcy case endangered the Dominion Theological concept to impact society. This lengthy intervention of a whole page was titled: "Is God concerned about our economy?" Rev. Ofori insisted on the need for an "Elisha", an "economic prophet" to redirect the minds of the people, exactly in times of crises. The economic challenge would help to redefine people's "relationship with God and correct many false beliefs". In accordance with Otabil's sermon, he referred to the God-centeredness of faith, instead of the belief in money. The source of the trouble would be, he claimed, the demonic "greed". His answer to this problem resonated dominion theology at its best. The "right people should be brought into positions of responsibility" to start a "germination process of the word of God (laws)". Finally, he urged the nation to "embrace the prophetic ministry".

It seems remarkable that this discourse, despite all critical comments on Otabil's involvement in the failure of the banking system, fully sustains the essential texture of Dominion Theology. Key notions of dominion theological provenance clearly stand out: by recalling codes such as biblically based "laws" direct allusion is made to the reconstructionist concept of society. In addition Rev. Ofori reiterated the elementary top-down strategy of political praxis. It is an elite project of leadership whose premise is that by occupying social spheres through the "right people" the systems would perform well. This effect does not come automatically, but in accordance with directions provided by "prophetic ministry". In other words the idea is to spread so-called Kingdom values of behaviour as guiding norms in social life.

However, some public announcements nuanced the conception of Dominion Theology in the following week. The news covered several reports about the installation of newly elected church leaders from diverse denominations. In one of these reports the Daily Graphic (27 August 2018) dealt in length with the newly inducted Chairman of the Church of Pentecost, Apostle Eric Nyamekye. The Church of Pentecost is a classic Pentecostal church of national importance, and a mother church to many founders of megachurches in Ghana. The report provided space for

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12 Daily Graphic, 20 August 2018. All following quotations in this paragraph are from there.

Apostle Nyamekye to explicate the motto he had selected for his five-year term: "Possessing the Nations". He would "concentrate on equipping the church to transform every sphere of society with the plannings (sic) of the principles of the kingdom of God". This seems congruent with the Dominion Theology script offered by Rev. Ofori's apologetics of, as it were, Otabil's "prophetic ministry". Yet, the affirmation is tied to a sceptical tone. Apostle Nyamekye affirms the critical agency of the churches in social change. "I believe that the destiny of our nation lies in the hand of the churches". The ecumenical vision, however, is limited. He addresses his own church as the avant-garde for "possessing the nation": "The size of our church and the resources we have been blessed with should become the means by which we take all nations and influence them through values and principles of the kingdom of God".

In conclusion, the focus is set no more on obedience to the "voice of a prophet". The charismatic genius of a single megachurch leader is replaced by the transformative agency of a distinct social body. By localising the authority over designs, priorities, and structural resources of social change in the church, this view inherently criticises the common Dominion Theology concept of power. By pointing to the church as the essential agency for the development of the nation, it reverses the personalising model of establishing hegemony by conquering the social spheres through individual leadership. The public debate applies codes that are drawn from Dominion Theology categories; however, it also reveals the limits of the prophetic megachurch ministry to implement the Dominion Theology visionary. Such reframing praxis leads us to the final section which is interested in the question of the practical relevance of Dominion Theology concepts of social change.

Whither Dominion Theology?

Dominion Theology has gained enormous interpretive as well as analytical weight in international circles of megachurches. In Pentecostal perspective Dominion Theology represents a kind of political theology directing Pentecostal engagement with the world, at least to a certain measure. It offers a reservoir of terms and strategies to expand Pentecostal impact on society. Dominion Theology terminology combines spiritual warfare visionary to "conquer" territories and nations for Christ with social scientific frameworks structuring society into seven compartmentalised spheres of influence, including the economic sphere. In view of our two case-studies from

Ghana, the first "Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit" exemplifies dominion theological policy to exert hegemony over the economic sphere. An essential Dominion Theology tool is the wide-ranging, international networking policy. It finds expression in alliances between megachurch, political, and business elites. The networking policy dovetails with the various ways of engaging public discourse, be it through a considerable presence in mass media, or be it through the staging of metropolitan events of different quality, purpose, and meaning. Conferences are defined as public markers of high impact in the business world. They are celebrated in a "grand finale", ritualized as mass services. These services, or crusades in spiritual warfare diction, are located in symbolic spaces of national significance, but spread globally in social media. In revolutionary rhetoric megachurch heroes are trying to reshape collective memory, and heralding the dawn of a new era in imagery of eschatological immediacy. Taken together, the "Africa Business and Kingdom Leadership Summit" orchestrates triumphant Dominion Theology. Such eschatological tremor, as it were, receives a heavy blow with the case-study on the banking fiasco, leaving serious questions on the responsibility, management quality and involvement of megachurch leaders in the business and financing systems. The public discourse emerging on megachurch leadership aspirations in the economic sphere does not conclude in a total dismissal of Dominion Theology axioms. However, it urges for self-reflexive reframing of its social script. The intervention does not defy dominion theological competency in the analysis of spheres but seeks to correct the megachurch personalisation of leadership. Dominion theological agency rests no longer in the charismatic individual who is taking social spheres in heroic action but rather in the body of the church. The transformation of spheres and of society at large is subject of collective visionary and praxis of the church. In contexts of open critique the public discourse therefore reinstates Dominion Theology by an ecclesiological reading.

This shift in dominion theological agency still validates the primary theological dimension in development. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction the plausibility of the Pentecostal script of social transformation remains disputed. Paul Gifford consistently explicates "enchanted Christianity" as irrelevant to implementing social change, while Ruth Marshall qualifies the Pentecostal concept of society and politics as "negative theology". In both influential categorisations of Pentecostal social agency there is hardly any space left for identifying internal disputes on Pentecostal imaginings of transformation, or development. Not only are insights into internal processes of differentiation within the Pentecostal movement

missing, more importantly no mention is even made to the recent paradigmatic shift in the political repertoire of Pentecostal theology indicated by the rise of Dominion Theology.

Relating to the public debates on the Africa Summit as well as on Otabil's involvement in the banking sector, one may draw three final conclusions: First, Dominion Theology has evolved as a visionary Pentecostal script to analyse society. It offers an analysis of society organized into different spheres. According to Dominion Theology these spheres are operating autonomously, demanding practises adapted to their respective causalities. This script has already made it into the arena of development policies in Africa. Obviously, this Pentecostal genre of Dominion Theology does not exclude the possibility of multiple modernities, an option emphatically denied by Gifford. Second, the public discourse on Otabil's responsibility in the collapse of a bank reveals an internal Pentecostal debate on the future directions of Dominion Theology. Against Marshall's diction of a merely "negative theology" this debate is about constructive Pentecostal participation in social transformation. Third, scepticism about dominion theological ideas of development and social change still remains acute. To this point it is not possible to claim long-term Pentecostal participation in social dynamics. Dominion Theology offers a broad repertoire of rhetoric codes to express hegemony over the spheres of society. However, the Pentecostal call to revolutionise society and to conquer the economic and financial spheres still remains. The transition from Africa Summit visionary to structural implementation seems fragile. The attempts to reach structural permanency, as seen in the Capital Bank crisis, are endangered of collapsing. Dominion Theology paves the ground for continuous socio-political consciousness within Pentecostal networks, however, it has not surpassed an experimental state to offer sustainable social praxis.

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Katrin Langewiesche

Ahmadiyya and Development Aid in West Africa

Introduction

International agencies or governments are slowly shifting their focus on religious actors by integrating them into governmental or non-governmental development aid programmes. Recent development discourse has incorporated the social activities of religious NGOs into its agenda, therefore challenging the common assumption that religious institutions seem to be too closely linked to mission and proselytism. Major international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been intensifying their relations with civil society since the mid-1990s and discussing the role of faith-based organizations in development since the late 1990s. In 1999, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) initiated a programme called "Social Capital, Ethics and Development" which gathered together economists, religious leaders and former heads of state. The impact of religious actors as agents of development was also recognised by the UK Government's Commission for Africa in 2005. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has set up a forum on "Religion and Development Policy", thus recognising the strong links between religious and development networks (Marshall/Keough 2004; Ellis/Ter Haar 2006; Carbonnier 2013). NGOs, as well as international organisations and various European and African governments stress that the joint commitment of religious communities and development organisations is necessary to find solutions to current crises and global issues, especially in the areas of health, protection of the environment and food sovereignty. Among other things, their argumentation is grounded on the conviction of the greater cultural closeness of religious actors, their long-standing familiarity with the local population, and the efficiency and transparency of their actions.

Instead of assuming the anticipated effects of religiously motivated development aid in advance, this chapter investigates this aspect empirically using an example from Muslim charity and development aid. This example affords the discussion of the main topic of this book: does religion make a difference for development?

This chapter focusses on the humanitarian work of the Islamic NGO Humanity First in Burkina Faso setting it in the network structures that link this NGO to the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* all over the world. The first section considers the works of Humanity First and the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* in a comparative perspective of other transnational Muslim Minority Groups and their implications in welfare activities. The second section offers a description of the NGO Humanity First—its history, the religious or moral values and motivations of its members and its activities in Burkina Faso. The concluding remarks return to the initial question. In order to understand the implications of religion for development, we must recognise that religious values exist in relation to other norms produced by social, institutional, or ethnic hierarchies.

My interest in the activities of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* began in 2009 with a series of interviews with employees and the doctor of the Ahmadi hospital in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, who allowed me to participate in many medical outings in villages around the capital, distributions of medicines in the prison and cataract operations.[1] In 2014 and 2015, I conducted systematic research in France, Germany, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Benin, following the activities of various Ahmadi communities and participating in their events, in particular the *Jalsa Salana*, an annual meeting dedicated to praying organised in every country hosting an Ahmadi community. I visited many institutions of Ahmadiyya and Humanity First in all these countries and participated in a humanitarian trip to Benin together with the German Humanity First Group.[2] I visited many Ahmadi families and I stayed for a few weeks with some of them. On those occasions, I felt

extremely welcome.[3] Since 2016, I have repeatedly attended conferences, ceremonies and festivals of the Ahmadi communities in France and Burkina Faso, as well as followed the activities of Humanity First Germany. As it is often the case with transnational and multicultural ethnographies following the networks of people, field research must develop over a long period of time in order to maintain ties with the delocalised persons and communities.

The *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community*: a transnational Muslim group among others

The *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* is one branch of the Ahmadiyya founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, an Indian Muslim scholar (1835–1908). Within the group, there were theological differences and disagreement regarding the founder's successor which prompted the splitting of the movement into two groups as early as 1914: on the one hand, the Lahore Ahmadiyya (*Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i Isha'at-i Islami*—AAII), and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (*Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at*—AMJ) on the other hand.[4] The vast majority of Ahmadis in the world today are part of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community*, whose administrative headquarters have been in London since 1984 because the Ahmadis are persecuted in their home country, Pakistan. Since the 1974 Islamic Conference in Mecca, the Ahmadiyya has been excluded from the Islamic community by *fatwa* (legal opinion given by a recognised authority; Ahmed 2012).

My investigations were limited to the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* branch of the Ahmadiyya in West Africa. In West Africa, Ahmadi missionaries first arrived in British colonies in the 1915s, and then in French-speaking countries in the 1950s. In the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Gambia and

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3 I am grateful to many people, but particularly to the family of Sameena Nasreen in Ghana, the Härter and Zubair families in Germany and the families of Dr. Bhunoo, of Khalid Mahmood and Mahmood Nasir Saqib in Burkina. I also greatly appreciated the welcome of the family of Farooq Ahmad in Benin. In France, I am very grateful to Shafiqa Ishtiaq and her family, to the family of Naseer Ahmed and to Astou Dramé, Munirah Doboory, Ameenah Nabeebaccus and Rokiah for the time that they devoted to me and for their kindness in answering to all my questions. I thank Adjara Konkobo, Denise Hien, Antonia and Valentia Pock for the transcriptions of the recorded interviews. Finally, I am particularly indebted to Mahamadi Ouédraogo for his invaluable assistance and active interest in my field research in Burkina and Ghana.

4 For more details on these two branches and on the outsider situation of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community see Lathan 2008.

Sierra Leone, Ahmadiyya appeared around 1915 and was present in the public arena as early as the 1930s, particularly in the education system of the Cold Coast and later Ghana (Fisher 1963; Hanson 2017; Skinner 2013). From there, the movement was introduced in Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso, around 1950, but it only became really visible in the public arena during the 2000s (Cissé 2010). In Benin, the first Ahmadi missionaries arrived from Nigeria in 1960. However, it was not until the 1990s that the movement was well settled and expanded in Benin (Bregand 2006). In West Africa, the largest Ahmadi community is now established in Ghana.

Ahmadiyya's missionary activities in Europe began at about the same time as those in English-speaking African countries, mainly after the First World War. In Germany the first Pakistani missionary settled in 1924 in Berlin and ten years earlier in London (Jonker 2016; Hanson 2017). In France, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established late in the 1980s, after a first attempt in 1946 which was unsuccessful.[5] The largest Ahmadi communities in Europe today are settled in Great Britain and Germany. The spread of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* from British India and Pakistan to Europe, America and Africa has long been based on linguistic and geopolitical lines of communication and also on personal connections established in the wake of study and business travels. In that respect Hanson (2017: 123ff) stresses the importance of the Afro-Brazilian diaspora in expanding the Ahmadiyya connections from London to Lagos.

The international *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* offers a wide range of social services and charities to its members and to all people in need. However, since 1995, the Ahmadiyya religious movement has also set up a humanitarian organization: Humanity First, an NGO devoted exclusively to humanitarian aims and whose activities benefit the entire population of a country and are explicitly not associated with proselytising. Before describing the activities of Humanity First in more detail, I would like to compare the NGO of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* with the welfare activities of other Muslim Minority groups, the Tablighi Jama'at and the Gülen Movement. Not through evaluating their organisational structure or

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5   The French *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* purchased their first building in 1985 where the Amir office is currently located. At that time there were not more than around twenty Ahmadis in France. The group was made up of Mauritian immigrant workers, Ahmadi by birth, and was gradually supplemented by Pakistani Ahmadi refugees, and then by Muslims of other nationalities who accepted Ahmadi Islam. In 2008 the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* inaugurated their first mosque in France in St. Prix (Val de l' Oise) (Interview Amir, May 2014).

mobilization strategies, but by comparing the history and characteristics of the religious organisations to which they belong.[6]

Like the *Tablighi Jama'at* and the *Gülen* Movement, the *Ahmadiyya* is a new Muslim Missionary Movement. It can even be considered as a precursor in the growing concern for proselytism issues of the early 20th century. The Ahmadiyya is the first transnational Muslim movement founded in India, independent of any state support and attracting converts of all cultures and origins (Gaborieau 2001: 38). The evolution of the Ahmadiyya is closely linked to the birth of Pakistan. Even before the partition the Ahmadiyya was attack by the Ahrar party (*Majlis-e Ahrar-e Islam-e Hind*). Between 1940 and 1947 they had stood against the idea of the division of the colony of British India according to religious criteria and the creation of a separate state. However, when the division was enforced, opposition to the Ahmadiyya was a welcome issue for the Ahrar party in order to gain authority and attention in the public arena in the young Pakistani nation, whose existence they had fought. In this atmosphere some Islamic actors, not only the Ahrar, were successful in portraying the Ahmadiyya as enemies of Islam (Lathan 2010: 81). These accusations became a political issue around 1947 by the demand that the Ahmadis be declared non-Muslims and that their missionary activities be prohibited. Qasmi (2015) states that anti-Ahmadi disputations had unfolded during the colonial period and thoroughly examines how, in the context of the postcolonial state of Pakistan, a theological polemic was transformed into a political issue.

While the Ahmadiyya and the Tablighi Jama'at came up in a colonial context--the Ahmadiyya was founded in Punjab, India, in 1889, the Tablighi Jama'at emerged in the 1920s in Mewat, North India, the Gülen Movement appeared about forty years later in the 1960s in Izmir, Turkey. These three Missionary Movements have rapidly become some of the largest transnational Muslim Movements in the world today (Langewiesche, forthcoming). They are now present in nearly every continent but are still minority movements within the global "mainstream Islam".[7] This minority status creates commonalities that are worth comparing. Studies on the construction of ethnicity have shown that an identity is always formed in relation to others (Lentz 1998; Peel 2000). This also applies to religious identities: they form

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6 Essential elements of the comparison certainly also apply to the Ismaelites and the Agha Khan Foundation, but I will not go into in more detail.

7 Regarding the Tablighi Jama'at I refer to the works of Gaborieau 2000, Janson 2014, Reetz 2010, regarding the Ahmadiyya to Fisher 1963; Friedmann 1989; Gaborieau 2001 and regarding the Gülen Movement to Dohrn 2013; Tittensor 2014; Yavuz 2013.

and change in conjunction with or in opposition to other religious or confessional traditions. The members of a minority like the Ahmadiyya have different priorities from those of the religious majority. Moreover, in many states the Ahmadiyya Muslim community faces a twofold minority situation, as a minority within Islam and as a demographic minority among a religious majority. For a religious minority, participation in development cooperation can be a means to impose itself as a legitimate and valuable member of society so that potential converts may be appealed in a context of a pluralistic religious landscape.

The interesting common element between these three Muslim minority groups is that they grew and consolidated under the pressure of other competing religious or secular groups in their respective countries and have maintained strong links to their Indian, Pakistani or Turkish diaspora until today (Tittensor 2014: 41). The Tablighi formed as a response to aggressive conversion drives by Hindu radicals in the 1920s, the Ahmadiyya as a reaction to Protestant Missionaries during the colonial period in British India since the end of the 19th century, while the Gülen Movement can be seen as a counter-reaction to secular state authoritarianism in the late 1960s in Turkey, which thought to write religion out from the public sphere. In the context of Turkey's second military-led coup in 1971, Fetullah Gülen was charged with the crime of leading a secret religious community that threatened the integrity of the secular Turkish state (Hendrik 2013: 5). In addition to being a religious leader he had long been associated with allegations of conspiracy in Turkey. After the attempted military coup in 2016 the Erdogan government insisted Fethullah Gülen orchestrated the coup, and the movement was internationally suspected of being responsible for it.[8]

Rather than acting in a violent manner against their adversaries, all three movements adopted self-reflecting practices to help their followers to become "better" Muslims and to improve the society by individual agency. Individual responsibility, personal piety, playing down the importance of the material and shying away from formal politics remain important elements of all three movements (Tittensor 2014: 41). Even if the Ahmadiyya and the Gülen Movement were highly politicised movements especially in the beginnings of their histories in Pakistan and Turkey and have once again become politicised today in their home countries, both claim to strictly

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8 For more details on the relationship between the AKP and the Gülen movement during the different historic periods see Hendrik 2013; Yavuz 2013. For a current statement about the Gülen movement and the events of 15 July 2016: Hendrik: https://theconversa tion.com/fethullah-gulen-public-intellectual-or-public-enemy-62887.

avoid interfering in the political agendas of their host countries. In their transnational proselyte activity, the Ahmadiyya and the Gülen Movement have left their political agendas aside. The answer Hendrik (2013) finds to this question—which factors explain the shift of the Gülen Movement from an "openly political" to a "passively political" Muslim actor—can be partly transposed to the Ahmadiyya. Both movements combine aspirations of faith-based social change in a secular environment and their current apolitical attitude, at least in the diaspora, can be considered as a product of globalization and an attempt to spread their vision of Islam in a secular, neoliberal context.

All three movements promise an escape from the materialistic lifestyle of the West. The Gülen Movement and the Ahmadiyya take a more global stance than the Tablighis but they operate in a very similar way by focussing on personal piety that plays down the importance of wealth and worldly success. This aim involves constant control and improvement of one's behaviour which shapes individuals as subjects of a certain moral discourse. All three movements ensure strong connection to a community, are strongly hierarchised, finance their religious and social activities through strictly defined, centrally-managed taxes of all followers. In all these movements, we are "confronted with a different sensibility that is not improving their personal material wealth or that of others, but rather about behaving in a way that is directed towards the well-being of others through a particular spiritual outlook on life; one that is driven by a strong sense of community" (Tittensor 2014: 47).

The Ahmadiyya and Gülen movements combine the provision of education and health care with a spiritual approach of wellbeing. In opposition to the *Tablighi Jama'at* which emphasises a predominantly spiritual approach to improve the capacity of those worse-off. Indeed, the three movements differ in their emphases. For example with regard to conversion, the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* employs professional full-time missionaries, educated within a seven-year curriculum in special universities. They are the main actors inviting Muslims as well as non-Muslims to profess their faith in Ahmadi Islam. The *Tablighi Jama'at* operates with lay missionaries which leave their family for days, weeks or months to travel around the country in preaching caravans with the aim to strengthen Muslims in their faith. Although non-Muslims convert to the *Tablighi Jama'at*, especially in Europe, the movement's main effort is to strengthen the faith of Muslims (Reetz 2010: 45; Gaborieau 2001: 41). By contrast, the Gülen Movement does not name their followers "missionaries". Gülen members use the word 'hizmet' that means "service", particularly service for a religious cause to designate

the work of their full-time members, who are usually teachers in Gülen schools. The moral education of the students and not their conversion to Islam are in the foreground here (Dohrn 2013: 235, 245).

The Gülen Movement and the Ahmadiyya Community have a common approach towards education by translating the Islamic background of their educational engagement into a moral training that is framed in universal terms. Secular education and training are viewed as a precondition for individual and national development. By educating future lawyers, engineers, architects, investors and accountants both movements reframe spiritual requirements to follow God's path as a social requirement to realise economic success and the constitution of a social elite (Hendrick 2013: 8). Both the secular and religious education of all members is a main objective of these movements. The *Tablighi Jama'at* attaches less importance to the secular education of their followers, but promotes teaching the knowledge of Islam and the correct execution of the rites. These different attitudes concerning secular education is also reflected in the social welfare activities of these religious movements or their NGOs.

A final example of the differences in emphasis between the three movements is their attitude to participation in social issues. The Gülen and Ahmadiyya Movements combine modern development principles with a traditional donation culture. The Gülen movement and the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* and their related NGOs or Foundations[9] are looking for civil partnerships, for non-religious collaborators and donors in the international development community, and they argue that it is possible to separate humanitarian work from active faith spreading. The welfare activities of the Gülen Movement and its Foundations, and of the Ahmadiyya and its NGO Humanity First, whose work I will discuss in the next paragraph more thoroughly, can be described as philanthropic enterprises and an attempt to foster an Islamic alternative. Humanity First is one of the Muslim NGOs that illustrates in the Islamic field the tendency of "NGOization" that Paul Gifford identified for the Christian churches (Gifford 2016). Peterson has labelled this recent approach to development of Muslim faith-based organisation a, 'desacrilized' form of aid (Petersen 2015). Development aid and

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9 See for example the *Işık Medical and Educational Foundation* in Tanzania, consisting of Turkish and Tanzanian trustees with the aim of providing educational and medical services in Tanzania. The NGO (*Türkiye Işadamları Sanayiciler Konfederasoyonu Türkiye*, in short TUSKON) founded in 2005 as an NGO that now includes approximately 50,000 Gülen affiliated businessmen. TUSKON activities in Sub-Saharan Africa have been very successful for numerous business arrangements (Dohrn 2013: 236, 240).

social welfare activities are mobilised to achieve the respective goals of the Ahmadiyya and Gülen Movements, while the *Tablighi Jama'at* is, on a global level, more inclined to charity. Dietrich Reetz points out that this tendency is changing, especially in European countries where *Tablighi Jama'at* is active. In France and Great Britain, the *Tablighi Jama'at* is under great pressure to engage in cultural and social activities in order to avoid accusations of religious sectarianism and radicalism (Reetz 2010: 46). The minority situation of the *Tablighi Jama'at*, be it in Europe or Africa, means that leaders and scholars of these groups have to interpret the specific religious rights and duties in such a way that they can be brought into line with the legal and social principles of the host states (Rohe 2017). The Gülen Movement and the Ahmadiyya are also Muslim minorities who must adapt their activities and priorities to the diversity of the surrounding Muslim and Christian lifestyles in order to be accepted in the arriving society. The stakes for a minority group lie in the way in which each one positions oneself in relation to other religious groups and competes with each other in the public arena according to their specificities.

Now that the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* has been placed in a global context of transnational Muslim Groups, the next section retraces the work of Humanity First in Burkina Faso and then returns to the question of the social and cultural implications of Humanitarian work of a religious group using the example of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* in Burkina Faso's plural religious landscape.

Humanity First: history and current activities in Burkina Faso

According to the international website of Humanity First, the NGO "focuses to preserve and safeguard human life and dignity".[10] The international website of the NGO does not in any way refer to its ties with the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,* and the various national Humanity First websites do so in passing. The proximity to Islamic values can only be deduced by the visitors of these websites from the actions of the NGO. For example, in Germany and England, they published calls for *Qurbani* sacrifice.[11] In its web presentation and also in the interviews I conducted with the leaders, the organization does not define itself as an Islamic NGO. It sees itself as a humanitarian association and is keen on cooperating with

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10 Cf. http://humanityfirst.org/.

11 Humanity First donates funds to allow the slaughter of an animal in line with religious duties known as *quarbani*.

secular or Christian institutions and NGOs, as well as with the authorities in the countries where they work. On their German website, they mention secular and religious NGOs and international organizations such as the World Health Organization as privileged partners[12]. The Canadian Humanity First group states that the NGO has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Humanity First was founded in 1995 by the fourth khalifa of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* (Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad) rooted in the idea that a religious neutral organisation might give an opportunity to all "noble souls", regardless of their religious affinity, to devote themselves to a "noble task" without eventually being discouraged by the Muslim identity of the NGO (Interview Härter, 2014). In 1992, in his preliminary reflections on the establishment of Humanity First, Mirza Tahir Ahmad discusses the difficulties of the Ahmadiyya community to intervene in Somalia to address the famine in the 1990s because of the defiance of international agencies in Islamic organisations:

> "As far as I understand, charitable Christian Organisations are permitted to work in such a way [based on principles of justice without discrimination of creed or nationality] and they are formally registered by the United Nations. If my understanding is correct, then the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community should do its best to establish an international organisation to serve humanity." (28 August 1992, address of Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad to the Ahmadiyya Community)

Accordingly, to avoid this defiance, Humanity First was established as a humanitarian organization, and the proximity with the Ahmadiyya community and the religious motivation of the members continue to be little publicised on the websites.

Twenty years later, in 2015, in his address to Humanity First leaders the fifth Khalifa insisted that "Indeed, religion itself is the very motivation and inspiration underlying the objectives of Humanity First. And so, to say that Humanity First should be independent and free from religion is completely wrong." (Keynote address at the international Humanity First conferences 2015, UK). It seems that there is now a changing trend that points to the proximity to the Ahmadiyya. Contrary to what was asserted a few years ago, this proximity is no longer perceived as an obstacle to collaborating with secular international organizations or individuals. After 9/11, Islamic agencies were for some years suspected of financing terrorism via Muslim wel-

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12 Care International, Oxfam, Red Cross, UN, WHO, Samariter, Action medeor, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (AMJ), Welthungerhilfe, IAAAE, Diakonie etc. (cf. http://www.humanityfirst.de/uber-uns/zusammenarbeit).

fare (Bellion-Jourdan 2002; Seesemann 2005; see also Petersen in this volume). But, today transnational Islamic aid is becoming as institution-alised as that of Christian NGOs. This professionalisation necessitates that the missionary impacts of humanitarian work are minimised or accepted as inevitable side-effects. In attempt to avoid the defiance towards Muslim NGOs, the proximity to the Ahmadiyya was handled rather discreetly, while the international positive appraisal towards religious NGOs currently drives them to emphasise their religious motivation. However, this trend has not changed the fact that Humanity First's humanitarian operations are still strictly separated from *da'wa* (mission, i.e. invitations to join Islam). While the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* is a missionary group committed to active proselytism, their NGO Humanity First was and is still excluded from all missionary activities. In fact, I have never been able to observe that during or after medical work, religious literature was distributed or was preached. According to this understanding of separation of mission and development, conversions to Ahmadi Islam are viewed as a by-product of the members' exemplary peaceful life and their commitment to humankind.

Nearly all the members and managers of Humanity First are Ahmadis. For special actions, non-Ahmadis are included, for example non-Ahmadi doctors are invited to participate in surgery. The Humanity First groups in the global South are supported by Humanity First groups in Europe or America. For example the German Humanity First team works in close partnership with its Benin counterparts.[13] All their projects in Benin are financed and managed by the German group. Most of the donations come from members of the Ahmadiyya community, as *zakat* (compulsory charity) or *sadaqah* (voluntary charity) donations. Ahmadis can settle their annual *zakat* donation via Humanity First, thus contributing to the spread of Islam through their contribution to Humanity First. On the website of the German Humanity First group, the members can donate alms which have to be paid during *Eid-ul-Adha*.[14] Religious practices such as Islamic sacri-fices and alms are translated into a humanitarian narrative. In the modern context of an NGO, obligatory almsgiving has become the source of com-munal and collective improvement not only for Muslims in need but for all the needy. However, the policy of development cooperation is interpreted

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13 The American Humanity First group funds the Humanity First activities in Ghana, Humanity First UK finances their counterparts in Burkina and Mali. The French Humanity First group collaborates with those in Senegal.

14 Approximately 70 days after the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate the Eid-ul Adha to commemorate Abraham's obedience to God and his willingness to sacrifice his son.

as a religious practice and an example of worshiping. The spiritual blessing experienced by those who devote themselves to development aid[15] was also clearly emphasised by the khalifa in his speech of 2015:

> "The benefit of serving others is such that the Promised Messiah[as16] has aligned human compassion with spirituality by stating that loving others is a great means of worship and a way to attain Allah's blessing and rewards. Which Ahmadi Muslim could ever wish to deprive himself or herself from Allah's bounties and rewards? Keeping these points in view, I say to every member of Humanity First, no matter where in the world they are living or serving, that they must conduct their duties with sincerity and heartfelt love for others." (Keynote address 2015)

In order to assess the development work of Humanity First in Burkina Faso it seems necessary to outline how this organisation is positioned in relation to the government and other faith-based and secular NGOs. Humanity First offers a wide range of social and charitable services in over 43 countries across 6 continents. Like many Islamic NGOs it concentrates its actions on Muslim countries or those with a substantial Muslim minority population. In Burkina, Benin, and Ivory Coast, Humanity First funds hospitals, schools, orphanages, and other types of infrastructures for villagers. They organise medical camps and emergency aid in crisis situations. In the Anglophone part of West Africa, particularly in Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, Humanity First provides the same kind of social welfare but in a more institutionalised manner and in collaboration with the authorities. Formal partnerships are established between Humanity First schools and hospitals and the different Ministries. These differences can be accounted for by historical reasons. The collaboration with the English-speaking nations and its institutionalisation is due to the long-term presence of Ahmadiyya in these countries, unlike in Francophone countries where the Ahmadiyya established themselves relatively recently.

Nevertheless, since 2002 the Burkinabe ministry of health has worked in collaboration with the private and confessional health care centres and favoured the collaboration between the Islamic and Christian health facilities. One of the fundamental problems of cooperation between denominational health care institutions and government agencies is the lack of inter-

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15 One of the French Ahmadi remembers in a collective email on June 2016: "N'oubliez pas également que la liste des membres qui s'acquitteront de leur chanda Tehriké jadid avant la fin du ramadan sera présentée au Calife pour des prières spéciales. Incha'Allah."

16 The letters 'as' or '(as)' after the name of the prophet and all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning 'peace be upon him'. It is derived from 'Alaihis salatu wassalam' which are words that a Muslim utters out of respect whenever he or she comes across that name.

locutors on the side of religious movements (with the exception of Catholic institutions) (Langewiesche 2011a). The Ahmadiyya Muslim community overcomes this shortcoming by offering the government an easily accessible partner through its hierarchical organization. This gives it a head start over the other Islamic NGOs working in Burkina.

Today in Burkina Faso 800 NGOs are registered in all sectors. If we consider only the field of health care, at least 20 Islamic NGOs are operating along with 23 Christian ones, one "mixed" organisation and approximately 100 non-religious NGOs (Vitale 2016; Kaboré 2016, 2017; LeBlanc/ Gosselin 2016). Consequently, there can be a strong competition between different NGOs as they try to gain visibility and legitimacy within the state and international structures. All the more so as all Islamic NGOs have very similar projects: financing schools, orphanages, health care centres, sewing courses, constructing wells and funding cataract operations.

Being recognised by the state is a crucial stake for Humanity First in order to prevail against the Muslim majority and gain legitimacy in civil society. The Ahmadis consider themselves Muslims, but they are not recognised as such by the majority of Muslims in Burkina and elsewhere. This non-recognition has led to dramatic persecution of the Ahmadis in some countries. By building schools and respecting the public curriculum, as well as by integrating their healthcare centres into the national scheme, Humanity First is one of the transnational Islamic NGOs that align their activities with public policy. The recognition by the state of Humanity First and their services to the population is one of the tools that allow the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* to stand up for themselves in front of the Muslim community of Burkina. Since Humanity First's cooperation with other Islamic NGOs is difficult due to the outsider position of Ahmadiyya, Humanity First focusses on finding partners among secular and Christian NGOs to underline its willingness to cooperate within the civil society[17].

Religious affiliation can be identified as a key motivating factor for the employees and volunteers of Humanity First.[18] Thus, it is important to consider how a wide range of individual actors—from high-ranking officials to rank-and-file volunteers—reconcile religious faith, humanitarian commitment with collective projects and individual strategies. Volunteers themselves often link economic development, social and political activism, and

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17 In Burkina, they are currently working with "one dollar glasses", a secular association.
18 This is probably true for the most faith-based organisations whether actively proselytizing or not. For further examples see Leblanc et al. 2013; Duriez et al. 2007; Bompani/Frahm-Arp 2010.

religious norms in a very pragmatic way. They do not consider this gap between charity as a disinterested gift and the use of NGOs for personal or collective aims as problematic but as a modern way of living their religious affiliation. The contradiction of a commitment to community engagement with self-interested engagement in development activities is not a major issue. The two impulses are reconciled within the theological framework of Ahmadi Islam. Opportunities for self-transforming and self-improvement provided by Humanity First and the Ahmadiyya are understood to be beneficial not only to themselves, but to society as a whole. Personal transformation can be reached in the opinion of the Ahmadis by the obedience to the khalifa, individual prayers, material sacrifices, and by volunteering for Humanity First or other Ahmadi organisations. The khalifa encourages material sacrifices in his Friday sermons at the beginning or end of each year. He unveils the ranking of the countries according to the donations made, and he gives advice on how members can be talked into increasing their donations.

	In terms of positions, Pakistan is always first
1st	Germany
2nd	United Kingdom
3rd	USA
4th	Canada
5th	India
6th	Australia
7th	Middle-Eastern Country
8th	Indonesia
9th	Middle-Eastern Country
10th	Ghana
11th	Switzerland

	In terms of per person individual payment
1st	USA
2nd	Switzerland
3rd	UK
4th	Finland
5th	Singapore
6th	Germany
7th	Norway
8th	Japan
9th	Canada
	But before that there are five Jama'ats from Middle-East who have highest per person payment

Excerpt of Power Point summary of the Friday sermon delivered by Khalifatul Masih V from Bait-un-Noor Mosque, Calgary, Canada, November 11th 2016 "Essence of Financial Sacrifice, Tehrik e Jadid 83rd Year" (cf. https://www.alislam.org/archives/sermons/summary/FSD20161111-EN.pdf).

When the Ahmadi staff of Humanity First are questioned on their motivations to participate in the humanitarian actions, their primary reason is the religious obligation to do charity and to answer the call of the khalifa. Each Ahmadi is expected to serve the community at least three months a year, depending on the circumstances. Additionally, they mention personal concerns, such as, for example, a father who describes his three-month internship in Benin as a way to relieve himself from domestic duties, or a retired English engineer working for Humanity First and the Ahmadiyya community in African countries who describes his engagement as the fulfilment of his travel dreams, after a successful career. A Beninese Ahmadi explained that he considers his voluntary work as both a religious duty and a professional training, but also as a springboard to find a job (Interview in Cotonou, 2013). In Burkina Faso, where, even after the transition and the democratic elections in 2015, the expectations of social innovations were not (or were only partially and very slowly) fulfilled by the new government, civil society organizations such as Humanity First are seen as a substitute for the authorities' failure to bring about social changes. One of the Ahmadi students in Burkina expressed it like this:

> "On a marché! On a marché fatigué! Maintenant l'espoir est parti. En tout cas, tout seul tu ne peux rien faire. Il te faut un groupe fort qui te soutient, comme l'Ahmadiyya et qui est actif comme Humanity First. C'est comme ça que ça va bouger!"
> "We walked! We walked ourselves tired! Now hope has gone. In any case, alone you can do nothing. You need a strong group who supports you, like the Ahmadiyya and one that is active like Humanity First. That's how things are going to move on!"

To summarise the Ahmadis' logics to serve Humanity First and their ideas about the meaning of 'development', the focus is on 'human development' and not only 'economic development', and 'development' is more aligned to personal transformation, which will bring about material improvement, as a by-product. Development is situated for the Ahmadi Members of Humanity First, like for many volunteers of Christian or Muslim NGOs, on the continuum between private and public, between the individual and the community, and between the spiritual and the material.[19] The shift from being a religious activist to becoming a development volunteer emerges as

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19 Kroessin (2008) provides a short summary of concepts and different Islamic understandings of 'development'. For further examples of the visions about development of members from other Muslim NGOs see Sounaye 2011. Renders (2002) focusses on the instrumentalization of the discourse of 'Islamic development' in Senegal.

an ideal way of pursuing religious social activities in a neoliberal society which requires professionalism and economic performances.

After the presentation of the Islamic principles that support the development goal of Humanity First and the entanglements of individual career strategies, social or political aspirations, and religious duties of the Humanity First volunteers, it is worth asking what the outcomes of this humanitarian and development aid are for the local beneficiaries. While the scope of this paper does not allow for a detailed description, it is possible to note that number of case studies in Burkina Faso, Benin, and Ghana illustrate positive achievements while some others indicate the ambiguous nature of the development activities. The analyses of these cases show that, as with any development action, be it motivated by religious or secular values, the historical and political context is essential for the outcome of a development action. This context is as important for the understanding as to whether religion is an obstacle or a help for development just like the structure of the religious group, its vision of mission, its commitment to the local political agenda and its integration into international networks. Social innovations introduced by NGOs can benefit some groups of the local population but not others so that the "success" of a development project is an ambiguous value and depends on the point of view adopted (Olivier de Sardan 1995; Bierschenk 1988).

When Humanity First collaborates with the state's authorities, for example by building schools that integrate into the national public education system, or by offering health services integrated into the country's healthcare facilities mapping, the local population recognises the benefits of Humanity First's work.[20] On the other hand, Humanity First's interventions such as well drilling or the installation of "millennial villages" can become sources of conflicts locally. To emphasise the importance of the local historical and political context for the success of development action, the example of the 'model village' of Tinknebel in northern Burkina Faso pro-

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20 Hanson (2009) makes the same observation in Ghana, not for the NGO Humanity First, but for the welfare activities of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community*. "Effective collaboration between the local and the global [Ahmadi] communities along with government is a hallmark of Ahmadi development in Ghana" (Hanson 2009/10: 68). Yacoob (1986) emphasises the provision of physical and social needs of the urban poor and migrant women in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) by the strong networking of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community*.

vides useful reference.[21] The 'model village project' is a common project of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,* the Association of Ahmadi Engineers (IAAAE) and Humanity First.[22] The first model village was that in Burkina in Tinknebel. There are other "model villages" in Benin, Sierra Leone and Mali. A new model village was recently inaugurated in south-western Burkina, near Bobo-Dioulasso. These villages are also called "millennium villages" in reference to the Millennium Goals issued by the United Nations (Interview Ahmad, 2015).

The Ahmadis have taken up this idea by saying that these villages must meet all the needs of the population: access to water, electricity, agriculture, health and education. In these villages, the Jama'at and the Association of Ahmadi Engineers acquire all the equipment and make them available to the population. These villages are set up where there is a kernel of an Ahmadi community with the hope—not explicitly expressed—that the socio-economic infrastructure will attract people to Ahmadi Islam and strengthen a local community in a rural area to encourage young people to stay.

At Tinknebel, this approach had very ambiguous consequences. The first Ahmadis of this village founded a separate neighbourhood, next to the existing village, which they named Tinknebel (Baobab). This neighbourhood was equipped with many facilities by the *Jama'at* to support the small Ahmadi community who were stigmatised by the rest of the village. The inhabitants were mainly Bella, descendants of Touareg slaves. The new equipment contributed to the rivalry between the old village—who followed the customary Sunni way of Islam—and the new Tinknebel neighbourhood—who adopted the Ahmadi Islam. In this configuration, a mining company (Essakane) settled which attracted labour and equipped the older part of the village which had remained non-Ahmadi. Thus, there are today two very well-equipped neighbourhoods with houses built to last, fossil fuel powered electricity on the Sunni side and solar energy on the Ahmadi side, in the middle of the savannah. The infrastructures in Tinknebel were funded by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and those of

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21 I am particularly grateful to Koudi Kaboré for collecting data on this model village of the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community*. He kindly provided me with his photographs and transcriptions of his interviews and observations.
    The village of Gouloungoutou is situated in the province of Oudalan. It is located about fifty km from Dori, capital of the Sahel region. Tiknebel is a neighbourhood of 171 families, only three of whom do not consider themselves to be Ahmadi.

22 For an auto-presentation by IAAAE see: http://iaaae.org/projects/burkina-faso-model-village-project-2013/.

the older village by the mining company. But all the training institutions set up in Tinknebel: the sewing center, the carpentry, the market gardening, and even the school are being abandoned by the youth to go to work into the mine.

It is not an exaggeration to say that in this local context of gold mining, difficult climatic conditions, unemployment, and existing social conflicts between Bella, Touareg and Fulani[23], the Humanity First and Ahmadiyya's infrastructures have increased the social divisions and conflicts among the villagers, even if they have facilitated the access to water and electricity.

Conclusions

Development cooperation and welfare are essential elements for the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* as well as for other transnational Muslim minority groups in order to be recognised in their host countries and to position themselves within the global environment. We cannot understand contemporary faith-based NGOs without situating them in the context of access of religious institutions to resources and recognition. On a collective level, the challenge for *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* to assert itself in the public space in Burkina Faso, and perhaps one day to stand up for themselves before the international Muslim community, passes through humanitarian work. On an individual level, humanitarian aid is for Humanity First volunteers and Ahmadi members aligned with personal, intimate transformation, which as a by-product will bring about material improvement. The shift from being a religious activist to becoming a development volunteer emerges as an ideal way of pursuing both religious and social activities in a globalised society. Development cooperation is seen as a means to widen the spectrum of one's individual choices so that the volunteers engage in what they view as being in accordance with their religious values.

The history of Humanity First illustrates the changing trend starting with the reluctance to expose an NGO's Muslim background to the affirmation of one's religious convictions in the sphere of development. Working at the intersection of religious and development activities seems to be more

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23 The precolonial societies of Fulani and Touaregs were characterised by slavery. Despite its abolition by the colonial power, the practice persisted and certain forms of master-slave relations are still observable today. In the Fulani milieu, like in the Touareg milieu, the descendants of slaves were still stigmatised and marginalised until recently. Since 1996 and the decentralization measures, the Bella have managed to have a representative in parliament (Kaboré 2016: 124).

widely admitted in the international development field nowadays than in the 1990s/2000s. The case of Humanity First also illustrates that an Islamic missionary movement like the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,* whose emphasis is on mosque building and *da'wa,* can launch a humanitarian organization like Humanity First that strictly separates mission from aid and that will focus on poverty alleviation, even though both organisations are based on the same values and religious norms.

In all cases, the success of development activities is linked to local contexts and to wider geopolitical developments. The global statement of the added value of religion for development activities is much more of a discourse created by donors, religious activists and recipients than an observable fact. The empirical examples of this chapter have shown that in the framework of only one specific religious movement some development activities may benefit the poor whereas others have very ambiguous consequences. It is important to acknowledge that religious institutions, NGOs, religious beliefs and practices can negatively affect the lives of the local population just as they can induce effective, sustainable or swift help to people in need. Religion is one of many variables which influence development activities beside other general parameters such as kinship, changes in generation and gender relations, socio-political hierarchies, and environmental factors. It seems evident that religion matters for development but whether it makes a difference depends on so many elements that no global answer seems possible. In order to assess the ways in which the relationship between religion and development affects social life, it is therefore important not only to focus on the potential transformation of development by religion, but also to assess whether engagement in development itself situates religious movements within the wider historical and religious landscape. This chapter has provided such an exploration by examining the context in which Humanity First and the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Community* engage in development in Burkina Faso and by comparing the *Amadiyya Muslim Community* in a wider transnational perspective to two other Muslim groups engaged in development activities around the world.

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SECTION V:
RNGO ACTIVITIES IN SELECTED FIELDS OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Claudia Hoffmann

Gender and Education

Gender inequality hinders development

Gender inequality is one of the biggest obstacles to sustainable development. It hinders economic growth and the reduction of poverty. Currently, 70 % of the people living in extreme poverty are women. Girls and women often do not have the same access to health and education as boys and men due to unequal rights and social norms. Regarding their work, women often earn less than men and work under more difficult conditions in sectors which are less productive. Women not only have less influence on decisions in politics, society and economy, but also suffer more from gender-based violence, exclusion and discrimination (SDC 2016). Above all, it is the gender inequality in education which hinders development. Economic growth and sustainable development are very difficult to achieve in areas with educational gender inequality (Klasen 2002).

In the last few years, the situation has changed drastically. It was possible for many improvements to be made. The World Bank World Development Report (WDR) of the year 2012 made the following observation: "The lives of women around the world have improved dramatically, at a pace and scope difficult to imagine even 25 years ago. Women have made unprecedented gains in rights, education, health, and access to jobs and livelihoods." (World Bank 2012a: xiii)

The WDR showed that gender inequality in education has almost disappeared as of 2010. Women and men in most parts of the world have the same literacy ratio and the same secondary education attainment. Gender gaps in education have in some places even shifted towards the disadvantage of men and boys. The boys' disadvantage is emerging in some places—above all in secondary and tertiary education—the girls' disadvantage, where it still persists, tends to take place earlier in life and is deeper (World Bank 2012a: 9).

While new inequalities have appeared, old gender-based inequalities still persist. Gender gaps in human development are pervasive. Compared to men, women are more likely to die in countries with low or middle human development index rates compared to richer countries. Some girls are never born or die in early childhood, and many women die in their reproductive

years. The number of dying girls and women is growing in Sub-Saharan Africa and in countries hardest hit by HIV/AIDS epidemic (World Bank 2012b: 2). Health issues are therefore one of the important issues to attack in order to attain gender equality and an improved human development index. As far as the educational sector is concerned, there are still disparities in girls' schooling. This concerns disadvantaged populations in many Sub-Saharan countries and some parts of South Asia, where there is still a very large number of poor women in poor countries. Gender gaps remain significant in these areas. Take for instance, this illustrative example: Girls tend to drop out of school more than boys because they are expected to take over domestic duties such as water collecting. In areas with improved water access, girls therefore stay longer in school (World Bank 2012a: 111).

In many countries that the Human Development Index considers having low human development, gender gaps remain sizable in the area of education and health (UNDP 2015). But it is not only insufficient access to education and health that prevent women from enjoying the same opportunities, but also social customs and institutions, which limit women's access to economic opportunities. Culture is a very strong determinant of female labour-force participation (Bandiera and Natraj 2013: 13–14). Gender gaps remain large when poverty "combines with other forms of exclusion such as remoteness, ethnicity, and disability" (World Bank 2012b: 2). Gender disparities in education often co-occur with other processes of socioeconomic, cultural and/or spatial differentiation, which concern religious customs and disparities between urban and rural regions. Various mutually reinforcing socio-cultural factors influence the decision of whether a family supports a girl to attend school or not. One factor can be the fear of a male teacher who abuses his power and develops a sexual relationship with one of his female students. Another factor is the lack of sanitary facilities for girls, which are very important during menstruation. A third factor is the question of whether travelling between home and school is safe enough for a girl (Rao and Sweetman 2014: 3).

To summarise, gender inequality leads to a less educated workforce, thus reducing income and economic growth. Gender equality is therefore still a main goal for development cooperation, particularly in the poorest areas in the world. It is quite evident that gender equality brings economic growth due to a larger work force in the market. Conversely, the effects of economic growth on gender equality are weak; economic growth does not instigate gender equality (Kabeer and Natali 2013). This was recognised in 1970 by Ester Boserup, a Danish economist, who noted in her ground-breaking book, that the assumption of a causality between economic

growth and gender equality was not correct (Boserup 1970). Women did not always benefit when the income of the male household head increased. Additionally women were increasingly seen as traditionalist and backward-thinking. Elisabeth Prügl, a political scientist, takes this a step further and argues that the commitment to gender equality in the World Bank is simply "a tempered version of neoliberalism that carries a feminist face" (Prügl 2016: 3). Perhaps this is one of the biggest problems that feminism and NGOs which fight for gender equality have to struggle with today. Development within the World Bank is very much focussed on economic growth; a multi-faceted notion of development is not used. Within this unilinear framework of development, gender equality is "understood as part of a struggle over the terms of the incorporation of women and reproductive labour into contemporary commodity relations within the triple movement of marketization, social protection, and emancipation" (Prügl 2016: 3). Within a notion of development that deals with a holistic transformation of society, gender equality plays a different role. It not only promotes economic growth, but also intrinsically values the ability to live the life one chooses as a basic human right and should be equal for males and females.

How can gender equality be achieved?

Before examining strategies to achieve gender equality, it is prudent to consider the goal of such equality. It is not only an improved economic development but also a gender-sensitive development. Such a notion of development has four basic ingredients, so that women not only have the same size slices of the development pie, but they are also able to gain power in the decision-making process. Behind the word SAFE stands a recipe for a gender-sensitive development:

> "A SAFE approach to GAD [Gender and Development] provides a strategic approach to addressing the development needs of women. This is not simply a case of 'add women and stir': it means adapting the usual cooking utensils, changing the recipes to use local knowledge, and bringing men into the kitchen. An approach to development which considers the strategic needs of women in a flexible, agenda-setting empowerment framework does just this." (Mitchell 1996: 143)

The SAFE acronym is broken down as follows:

- S stands for strategic needs of women. To perform their defined roles as mothers, productive workers and community workers, women have distinct practical needs such as access to water, health care, nutrition and income. This is an approach seriously taking gender into account, not only caring about fulfilling practical needs of women, but combining these with strategic interests in order to further female autonomy and transformation in women's positions.
- A stands for Agenda, setting direction to mainstreaming. It is not sufficient for gender mainstreaming to only be added to development policies. Gender mainstreaming issues must have an influence on the agenda setting; a gender perspective should transform the development agenda.
- F stands for Flexibility. Adaptation and flexibility are a must in such processes because the living conditions of women differ very much depending on their national, regional and even local contexts.
- E stands for Empowerment philosophy. Empowerment approaches attempt to transform power and control within development processes, therefore gender and development is highly political (Mitchell 1996: 140).

Gender disparities remain in three areas: domestic violence, the disproportionate amount of time women spend on unpaid care, and male son bias (Kabeer 2014). Higher incomes are not the only measure to reduce gender gaps; focussed domestic policies can have a real impact. The WDR (World Bank 2012a) identifies four areas of priority for domestic policy actions:

- Reducing excess female mortality and closing education gaps where they remain
- Improving access to economic opportunities for women
- Increasing women's voices and agency in the household and in society
- Limiting the reproduction of gender inequality across generations

This chapter concentrates on one way for how gender equality and a gender-sensitive development can be achieved: education. Education appears to be an important instrument in obtaining gender equality or gender justice; it is seen as a basic foundation of equality. But the motivation for education has to be clear. Do we educate and train women only for the purpose of a larger labour force? Or is educating and training women aimed at achieving gender justice? Not only access to education, but also

the kind of education delivered is a fundamental issue for women's movements worldwide. One key concern in the field of education is the ways that gender identities and gender norms are represented in curricula and schoolbooks through which stereotypes can be perpetuated. Furthermore, everyone who is involved in education has to perceive gender equality as an ideal, otherwise it cannot be achieved. In addition, education has to be understood within the broader field of social empowerment. Not only is formal education important; informal spaces for girls and women to exchange their thoughts and experiences are also very crucial in order to achieve gender equality in the long term (Rao and Sweetman 2014: 7–8).

Domestic policy actions as listed above need international development partners to complete public action. Not only is funding needed to implement them, but also broad partnerships and networks, which include civil society and private sectors. Religious communities in many parts of the world are important actors of civil society. Therefore, faith-based organisations can play a significant role in completing public action targeting gender equality. Religious leaders have a great influence on societies in the Global South (James 2011: 11).

Case Study: Mission 21 and gender equality

There is a list of development issues that involve religion and gender; gender and religion intersect in various ways: "The teachings and practices of different religions can be a catalyst to improve women's lives or they can be a source of conflict and inhibit change" (Marshall 2010: 35–36). This chapter now takes a closer look at one specific FBO, Mission 21, and attempts to answer the question of how does this missionary organisation engage in reducing gender inequality?

Mission 21 is a network of churches and organisations from different countries and cultures, which arose in 2001 from the merger of five closely related missionary organisations. Today the Mission 21 board of trustees consists of the Basel Mission, the Evangelical Mission in the Kwango and the Moravian Church. The strongest member of the board of trustees within Mission 21 is Basel Mission, founded in 1815 in Basel. Since its inception over 200 years ago, Mission 21 has aimed to give hope in different areas of our world and has been fighting against injustices and for people at the margins. In their overview "portrait" section of Mission 21's website there is also a short video by Mission 21 showing concrete expressions of "hope" in their work (Mission 21 2016a). The partner churches

and organisations of Mission 21 overseas are actively involved in the forming and realizing of projects and relations. Its cornerstones are theological and cultural exchange, but Mission 21 also maintains approximately 100 projects in development cooperation within fields like the reduction of poverty, women and gender, education, health care and the advancement of peace. The work of Mission 21 is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is an ecumenical organisation linking different people from different churches and denominations together. Development is understood in a holistic manner: development not only means economic growth but a transformation towards a more just society.

In all activities of Mission 21 the establishment of gender equality is advocated for. The Women and Gender Desk obtains a special position on the website in the middle of the overview "portrait" of Mission 21 (Mission 21 2016b). This special desk not only offers financial support to strengthen women and women's networks in the partner churches overseas, but also organises lectures or disseminates information on feminist theology from a southern perspective. The special desk publishes the Women's Letter in English, German, French, Spanish and Indonesian which offers a platform for exchange for women globally. The Gender and Women's Desk also publishes a Blog for their Women and Gender Network. The blog is a tool to exchange and connect experiences of women within the network of Mission 21 and beyond. The blog offers different categories such as News, Portraits, Tools and Remembering and is available in the five languages mentioned above (Special Desk for Women and Gender Mission 21 2016a).

Mission 21's advocacy programme 2016 and beyond

At the End of June 2016, the new advocacy programme of Mission 21 was launched: human rights for women, faith-based. With this programme, Mission 21 intends to strengthen their engagement for women globally. It aims to educate and network with women and men from partner churches and partner organisations of Mission 21, resulting in their ability to advocate their rights on a local, national and international level. The programme starts at the grassroot level to improve the living conditions of women in the Global South. Human rights topics arise regularly as burning issues in women's networks within the partner organisations of Mission 21: human trafficking in Asia, violence against women and girls in Latin America and HIV/Aids problems in Africa. These issues shape the continental priorities

and strategies of Mission 21 to campaign for women's human rights (Mission 21 2016c).

In June 2016 twelve leading women from Cameroon, Tanzania, Indonesia, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Peru and Chile were invited to a training workshop in Basel, in addition to a workshop on women's human rights for faith-based organisations, which was organised by the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva. Based on these workshops, different strategies have been devised for each continent, and regional stakeholder meetings will take place. Mission 21 aims to become one of the leading FBOs in the field of women's human rights. Through Capacity Development and topical networking this goal should be achieved. Leaderships will be sensitised and educated locally for women's human rights, and human rights instruments will be disseminated. Theological fundaments on the topic of women's human rights will be acquired, and the local people will learn skills in fundraising. The topical network takes place on a local, national and international level. Alongside this, every three years there will also be an international campaign on women's humans rights (Special Desk for Women and Gender Mission 21 2016b).

The strategies and projects within the advocacy programme of Mission 21 differ in each continent. In Asia, Mission 21 supports a centre for domestic migrant workers in Hong Kong, which is run by Christian Action, a local charitable organisation, which acts on three levels: a paralegal service, shelter and education. Through this kind of advocacy, the meaning of sisterhood, safe spaces and empowerment becomes clear. The women's self-esteem can improve through using this centre; their ability to act is elevated and they are taught how to stand up for their rights and how to perceive themselves as capable. To illustrate the work of this centre, Siti's story provides a rich example. She is an Indonesian woman in her early twenties, working for a couple with two children in Hong Kong:

> "The first indignity she suffered was not being given a bed, and being forced to sleep on the floor. Siti's life was complicated as her employers often gave her conflicting instructions, and having random objects thrown into her face by her angry employer became a weekly occurrence. Seeking help from her employment agent proved to be futile, and not knowing she had any recourse to justice left Siti feeling frightened and helpless. Siti's sister sent her to Christian Action, seeking help to open a case at the Labour Department. For the duration of her case, Siti was offered free shelter, counseling and paralegal services. While she waited for her case to be concluded, she participated in a number of activities and outings arranged by Christian Action." (Christian Action 2016)

This example shows us how a Christian organisation is working on women's rights in the very sensitive context of migrant workers. Their offer is at a low treshold, concrete and nurtured by the Bible, where Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25,40).

Violence against women and girls is a big concern for women's networks and activists in Latin America. Rape and femicide rates are very high in various countries on the whole continent. A number of women's networks are trying to encourage women who suffered from violence to break down prejudices and customs, claiming their right to exist. Violence is often supported or fuelled by religious fundamentalism, which is growing in Latin American countries. This is combined with political aims, attempts to deny women's rights and the possibility to make decisions for their own life in order to pursue a life of dignity. Therefore women's networks are concerned with replacing such fundamentalist theologies with other liberating theologies to support emerging alliances and new social networks. The cause for gender-based violence can also be seen "as a systemic reaction of men grappling with their own struggles with (dis)empowerment on shifting economic and political sands" (Parpart 2015: 21). High levels of unemployment, especially among young men, and the competition with better educated women is giving rise to social tensions that sometimes have violent outcomes.

The Moravian Church in Tanzania's Southern Province is involved in education and social activism by campaigning about HIV/Aids. Awareness-raising groups—church choirs and theatre groups—are campaigning at market places to encourage the population to undertake an HIV test. They provide a mobile clinic to give tests right on the spot. Other activities of the church include assisting HIV-positive children and their relatives or other carers with small amounts of money, educational material or nutrition.[1]

Although the campaigns and strategies in the advocacy programme of Mission 21 are diverse, they also have communalities. Firstly, the advocacy programme always collaborates with existing local partners, such as Christian Action in Hong Kong, the Moravian Church in Tanzania, and Women Networks in Latin America, with all of whom they have long-term relations. Secondly, the notion of education is more or less the same in every programme. It is understood as training women towards empowerment. The

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1 See the documentary of the support group Lusobilo (Hope) in Tanzania. Even though these people are infected with HIV they do not remain silent, give mutual support and encourage others: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgEPpir01kM.

intersections with religion are taken seriously. Education also targets religious norms. Religious values which exacerbate gender inequalities are questioned.

Furthermore two observations seem to be important. The advocacy programme of Mission 21 is in line with the goal number five—gender equality —of the 17 sustainable development goals adopted in September 2015 (United Nations 2016). Secondly, the advocacy programme shows a further development within Mission 21. This organisation, which in their beginnings was strongly rooted in Pietism, has become increasingly a rights-based organisation. This is a turn which lots of other NGOs have also taken in recent years (Ottacher and Vogel 2015).

Basel Mission and gender equality

Gender equality or the improvement of the situation of women has almost from the foundation of Basel Mission in 1815 been an important goal for their missionary work. From the beginning, education, training and networking were instruments to reach women in their different contexts. Since the second half of the 19th century, Basel Mission has been working intensively with women's networks. In 1842, the "Women's Association for Female Education in the Pagan Countries" was founded. Although this association was subordinate to the male committee of the Basel Mission where decisions were made, the female committee, set up for the coordination of the work of all the local women's aid-associations within Switzerland and Southern Germany, had a certain influence. The main goal of this association was the education and training of women by creating boarding schools for girls in the various fields of mission. From 1845, specially trained, unmarried female teachers were sent out to educate girls. The work of such female missionaries also changed the perception and standing of women in Europe. Although these female missionaries were not treated in the same way as their male colleagues, slowly these women began to gain more importance. After several years the Women's Association won a small achievement in ensuring that the women who were to be sent out also received a blessing in public. However, the blessings were given at the mission house, not in the large church where the male missionaries were blessed.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the Association was revived under a new name: Association for Women's Mission. This association was concerned with the education and training of unmarried women and wives of mission-

aries. In 1911, a specific sister house was opened in Basel which gave education and training to female missionaries, married or not, and gave the whole association a better standing within the still patriarchally-organised Basel Mission (Frank 2016). More and more women were sent out, and in the 1920s two female doctors were recruited, who were responsible for a mission hospital in India. From 1945 women and men missionaries were blessed together in the largest church in Basel. In the 1960s the sister house in Basel was closed, and the training became the same for women and men missionaries, later called ecumenical co-workers. A commission for women was also set up to support the women missionaries overseas. Since 2001, Mission 21 has run the previously mentioned special desk for Women and Gender.[2]

A boarding school situated in Mandomai, former South Borneo, which is currently the Indonesian Province Central Kalimantan provides an illustrative example of the work of Basel Mission in the field of training women. The boarding school was opened in March 1934 with a focus on housekeeping. 16 students attended the school for ten months. The focal point was the improvement of the situation of the Dayak women as mothers and housewives. The women were seen as an important starting point of the missionary work (Kühnle 1934). The first teacher sent from Basel to Mandomai to build up the school was Luise Junginger. Before the boarding school was opened, Junginger started to work as teacher for handiwork, such as embroidery and knitting, in the mission school. 35 girls from Christian, Muslim and local faith families attended the school. Mothers and girls warmly welcomed Junginger, and they were very excited about the new topics at school. The girls waited one or two hours outside the school to start at 4pm. Besides the work in the school, Junginger also supported the missionaries` wives with the sewing association of the Christian women in the village (Junginger 1931: 3). Education at that time was understood as schooling and targeting the improvement of women's lives by providing them with income generating tools.

The earliest development approaches after the fifties also focussed on women as mothers. The development work therefore pointed at fertility reduction and the improvement of mother and child health (Coles, Gray and Momsen 2015: 2). What was typical for the first steps in development cooperation towards gender equality started in the Basel Mission 20 years earlier.

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2 See exhibition in the Basel Mission headquarter.

Discussion

For 200 years, Mission 21 has been fighting for sustainable development and a fair society, where gender equality also played a crucial role. Through the description and analysis of the work of Mission 21 focusing on gender equality, two things become visible: adaptation and continuity.

Mission 21 has adapted their work on women to the changing world situations. While the boarding school in Mandomai had a focus on housekeeping and the improvement of the living conditions of women, the advocacy programme today focusses on calling governments into responsibility. To achieve this goal, Mission 21 works with secular instruments. Important sources and instruments for the advocacy work of Mission 21 were developed in the UN, where women's human rights have been debated for several decades. The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 is an important instrument to sensitise governments and other civil society networks for the aims of human rights for women (UN Women 2000–2009). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995 aims to advance the implementation of gender equality (UN Women 1995). The Resolution S/RES/1325 of the Security Council on Women and Peace and Security adopted in 2000 reaffirms the important role of women in conflict resolution (OSAGI 2016). The latter resolution was achieved thanks to the commitment of women's networks and organisations, female politicians and academics, as well as relief and faith-based organisations.

These UN conventions are also applicable to governments. States that signed the CEDAW (all UN member states except the USA) are responsible for implementing this convention in their countries and report on their progress every year. Through these reports it becomes clear how complex certain issues are, how divided nations can be and how much interpretations of human rights for women can differ. Women's organisations and networks can support these government reports with shadow reports.

A certain continuity within the work of Mission 21 is also visible. The work with and for women has always been very crucial within this organisation. And the justification of development work has always been the same. For Mission 21, theology and theological education is the centrepiece of their development work—all the rest follows. Without a Christian motivation this work would not be done, and without theological thinking, the kind of development which is targeted by Mission 21, would not be achieved. The theological background of Mission 21 is strongly formed by

a holistic understanding of mission. Mission is not only a means of attracting people to the Christian faith by evangelisation. It always also stands for fighting for justice. Mission is not only words but also deeds. Diaconia and Evangelisation are always linked.

Conclusion: How does religion make a difference?

Do religious organisations act the same as secular organisations to reduce gender inequalities in development? The engagement for women and gender equality within Mission 21 is strongly in line with the engagement of other NGOs and governments. For quite a long time now they have all been aiming towards the integration of women into economic develop-ment. This was mainly done by income-generating projects for women. The problems within such projects were the failure to see the diversity among women and the assumption that women have spare time to undertake new projects (Coles, Gray and Momsen 2015). Also the second wave of femi-nism which led to a shift from women towards gender and took part in the 1980s in the secular world, is clearly visible within the work of Mission 21. Therefore, we can conclude that in some aspects the religious feature of Mission 21 does not make a difference.

Not only are the aims, programmes and outcomes of religious NGOs sometimes difficult to differentiate from those of secular organisations, but religion is also often cited as an impediment to development as well as to gender equality or to women's access to education (Tomalin 2013: 183). Therefore, religious NGOs have a difficult position. Religion can be a source of conflict and hinder change regarding the improvement of women's lives, but it also can be a foundation for transformation which the case study of Mission 21 has illustrated.

Nevertheless, there have been catalysing moments of religious NGOs in the field of gender and education. First of all, they play significant roles in critical areas like health and education. Within these fields of development work they are often central players. Their reach is vast, and they often work in areas which are not accessible for the state. The poorest at the margins—mostly women—are in focus. Furthermore, FBOs show a continuity which many of the secular NGOs are lacking (Marshall 2010: 36).

Secondly, FBOs target the collaboration of civil society in a special way. They mostly work together with religious organisations and religious leaders. In many developing countries, religious leaders are the most trusted people. People think that identity-forming organisations such as churches

are more capable at solving development problems than the state. Church leaders are often key persons and therefore crucial for social transformation. Churches have good access to the people in their communities, and there are women's or youth networks which can be used for the purpose of development. Through the engagement of civil society, governments can be held responsible (James 2011: 11).

Last but not least, the theological dimension of an FBO plays an important role in their engagement. Obviously, this theological dimension can be very exclusive—this is something which is often talked about in the public sphere and in media. This chapter stresses the advantages of the theological dimension of an FBO. Working with religious organisations opens the possibility to talk about difficult moral values. It is exactly these values which have to be considered to improve gender equality and the educational situation of women. Religion is an important factor shaping norms and values in a community. The issues where religion and gender intersect can range from female genital cutting to domestic violence, missing girls, rape as tools of war, trafficking of women and girls, early marriage and AIDS (Marshall 2010). Such issues—and there are even more—and the intersection with religious norms and values have to be the focus of NGOs which aim to improve gender equality, development and the improvement of women's lives. Organisations which are faith-based have a natural advantage to target these issues and values. Education and training, which first of all means identifying and eliminating stereotypes, are the first steps towards gender justice.

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Philipp Öhlmann, Marie-Luise Frost, Wilhelm Gräb

"You need to change the whole person"
African Initiated Churches and Sustainable Development in South Africa

The chapter reflects on notions of development and sustainability from the perspective of African Initiated Churches themselves. It explores how this situated knowledge shapes the churches' development priorities and how they relate to dominant western notions of sustainable development as ecologically sustainable development. Moreover, it investigates the interrelation between spirituality and sustainable development, particularly with respect to the churches' holistic and spiritual world views. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the potential of African Initiated Churches as partners of international cooperation for sustainable development. It materializes that the specific potential of these churches lies in cultural sustainability, a contextual, cultural embeddedness that enables long-lasting change.[1]

Introduction

African Initiated Churches[2] in South Africa are increasingly active in development activities. They provide counselling and mediate intra-family conflicts, they offer savings groups and business trainings and they build schools and provide university scholarships (Öhlmann, Frost and Gräb 2016). However, unlike many Mission Churches they have not been recognized as relevant actors by international development cooperation. While it has been acknowledged in the literature that many of these churches provide coping mechanisms in adverse environments, support in social transformation and social capital, little attention has been paid to their potential as agents of development and most notably of sustainable development.

Sustainable development, as coined in the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and on Development, refers to "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987: 43). The quintessence of the report was that economic and social development needs to take into account the ecological framework they operate in and its limitations. Consequently, in current development discourses, sustainable development is often used to describe a mode of development that takes

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2 We use the term African *Initiated* Churches to denote all churches founded by Africans, in Africa (Turner 1967) and without direct links to "Missionary 'Godfathers'" (Pobee and Ositelu 1998:55). This includes those churches traditionally called independent churches, such as Zionist, Apostolic and Ethiopian Churches, as well as Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. Both of these groups, which are often separated in the literature, fall under the definition of African *initiated* as outlined above. We subsume them because, with very few exceptions, they are not yet partners of international development agencies unlike many Mission Churches. Another common and distinctive feature is the significance of the spiritual in their cosmology, be it the Holy Spirit, spiritual forces or healing (Anderson 2000). Moreover, the differentiation is not always clear. Some churches could be qualified as belonging to one category as well as belonging to the other. The South African Council of African Instituted Churches, for example, includes churches that show characteristics of Charismatics and those that show characteristics of Zionists/Apostolics/ Ethiopians. Lastly, even though Zionists/Apostolics/Ethiopians and Charismatics are usually differentiated in the literature, this separation is questionable. A small Zionist church with few basic structures, for example, might have more in common with a Charismatic church of similar size than with the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) which has several million of members. The ZCC, in turn, might have more in common in terms of its structure with other transnational churches like the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) than with a small Zionist church. Hence, notwithstanding the substantial heterogeneity, we subsume these churches under the umbrella of African Initiated Churches. For a comprehensive outline see Öhlmann, Gräb and Frost (2020).

into account ecological considerations and limitations of natural resources. This link between development and ecological sustainability is one of the pivotal points in the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2015) with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Jüttner 2016).

In more general terms, sustainability refers to "the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level" (Oxford Dictionary 2017). Sustainable development interventions, hence, are such development programs or projects that produce sustained i.e. lasting changes beyond any given project lifetime. Ecological sustainability is a special case of sustainability: lasting change can only be generated if long-term ecological limitations are respected. Both notions have in common that they require a transformation of mind sets, values and knowledge. Ecological sustainability depends on a culture of sustainable use of natural resources. Similarly, the broader notion of sustainability depends on changes in people's consciousness, which result in different actions.

A fundamental prerequisite for such transformation is the cultural and social embeddedness (Granovetter 1985) of any development activities. Development can only become sustainable if it is locally grounded, contextually relevant and makes reference to local cultural knowledge systems. This embeddedness in local cultural frameworks (essentially including all forms of religious knowledge), which produces continuously maintained processes of change, is cultural sustainability.[3]

This chapter aims to investigate the potential of African Initiated Churches as agents of sustainable development in relation to the semantic field of sustainability, outlined above, in its ecological, social, economic and cultural dimensions. It explores how their situated religious knowledge shapes the churches' development priorities and how they relate to notions of sustainability and development. It emerges that sustainable development has to be seen in the context of the churches' wider transformation agenda, a key feature of which is a strong interrelatedness of spirituality, situated religious knowledge and development. We sketch elements of this transformation agenda and subsequently outline its modus operandi at various levels: first, the transformation of individual lives through healing and within a contextually relevant cosmology; second, the values and modes of social interaction they promote; and third, how at an institutional level the churches themselves are agents of transformation in their communities in other words, actors of sustainable development. The chapter concludes

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3 For an overview of the different applications of the term in the literature, see Soini and Birkeland (2014).

with an exploration of the potential of African Initiated Churches as part-
ners of international development agencies for sustainable development.

We draw on interviews and focus group workshops with African Initi-
ated Churches' leaders conducted by the authors in northern South Africa.
Fourteen church leaders were interviewed individually and 6 focus work-
shops were conducted, attended by between 3 and 20 church leaders from
different areas. Although the sample of participating churches is not repre-
sentative in a statistical sense, it covers both urban and rural contexts of
two South African provinces, Gauteng and Limpopo. Furthermore, the
sample was chosen to be as heterogeneous as possible in terms of size and
categories of the churches (such as international Pentecostal-Charismatic,
local Pentecostal-Charismatic, Zionist, Apostolic, Ethiopian).

Notions of sustainability: from sustainable development to transformation of life

When investigating development priorities of African Initiated Churches, it
emerged that issues related to ecological sustainability play a marginal role.
Participating church leaders were presented with five program areas of
German development cooperation in South Africa and asked to select the
one they considered most important. Charts 1 and 2 show the church
leaders' valuation of the program areas in individual interviews and focus
group workshops, respectively. Climate change was consequently ranked
last not once being named most important in individual church leader inter-
views.[4]

Moreover, when asked about their opinion on what constituted the
major problems in people's lives, a long list of issues emerged, from unem-
ployment and teenage pregnancies to the need for theological education (cf.
chart 3). However, not a single item was mentioned relating to ecological
sustainability or broader environmental issues. Not even day to day issues,
such as rubbish in the streets, overgrazing of fields or lack of rainfall,
appear on the list.

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4 It was emphasized by the research team in the beginning of the interviews and discus-
   sions that the research is entirely unrelated to possible funding by development agencies.
   Nonetheless, already due to the theme of the research, it might still be the case that the
   respondents' valuation was influenced by a certain degree of latent expectation to partici-
   pate in future projects on the respective program area. In this case, participation in basic
   entrepreneurial skills training might seem more attractive than participation in climate
   change projects. However, it seems unlikely that this was a major determinant of the
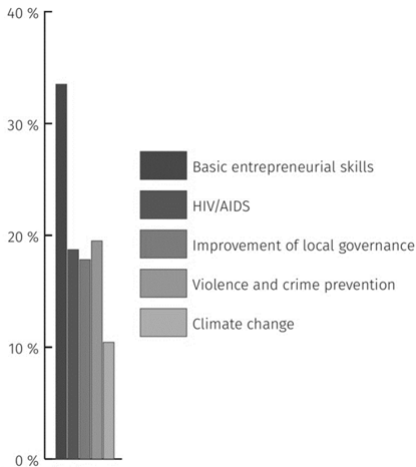   responses.

Chart 1: Percentage of church leaders considering the respective area most important (multiple selections possible; average across four focus group workshops). Source: Öhlmann et al. (2016)
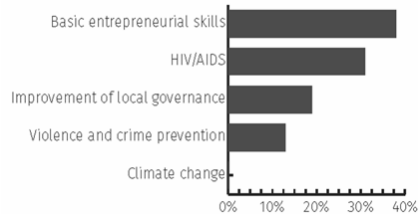
Chart 2: Percentage of individual church leaders who consider the respective area most important (multiple selections possible; data from 14 individual interviews). Source: Öhlmann et al. (2016)

In only one of the interviews did a church leader elaborate on environmental activities, the removal of waste in the surroundings of the church:

> "Yes, this one I am doing it and we call it 'environmental hygiene and personal hygiene' to help other people more especially to clean up at the places, because they will bring dirty things and start to burn them at the road there. I was calling my neighbors and I said I am going to make something like a board and put it here that says 'keep [the village] clean' and they were laughing at me." (Interview 2016/S/03)[5]

It seems that this kind of environmental initative was not considered very important by the rural community the church was located in. The responses of African Initiated Church leaders yield a similar result. Notions of ecological sustainability or even environmental issues do not seem to feature prominently on their agenda. Some voices are even skeptical:

> "And then, climate change I do not agree with. [...] The world is sinful my sister. God, when people repent, He will bring rain, so no government in the world can change the climate, no one; no government can change the climate, they can't. Even the energy, these things that they use, they come from God [...] God spoke from the book of Chronicles, if the people who are called by my name can just repent, I

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5 In the following, some interviewees are listed by (their preferred) name and some anonymously. This is done in accordance with the interviewees' preferences.

will give them rain. It is only God who can change [the] climate. […] With this one, climate change and energy, it belongs to God, it doesn't belong any other person. It belongs to God. There is no science or anything that can prove otherwise, this is from God, we leave it to God. Repent and it will rain on us." (Interview Sello Simon Rasemana, 2016)

While ecological sustainability seems to play a subordinate role for many African Initiated Churches in South Africa, it is worthwhile scrutinizing their potential for sustainability in its broader sense, related to lasting change. Pastor Elijah Daramola, Coordinator of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Southern Africa, highlighted that it is precisely this type of sustainability that is pivotal in the development work of his church: "You need to change the whole person" (Interview Elijah Daramola, 2016). He explained that it is not sufficient to provide a person with skills in the framework of development interventions, "because it will be a waste of time and money if you train people without their lives being changed" (Interview Elijah Daramola, 2016). He further elaborated on this point:

"Our goal must be made clear. Is it in just impacting people and leave them living anyhow? Or is it impacting people and mak[ing] live peaceful? If we have this agreement, we will flow together. But otherwise work will not be a blessing to others." (Interview Elijah Daramola, 2016)

If the acquisition of a technical skill was the only change a development activity produced in a person, one would not know what she/he used this skill for. Ideally the person would use it for the communal good or at least individual improvement, but the skill might also go unused or, in extreme cases, even be used for destructive purposes. Pastor Daramola illustrated this with the example of a person trained in engineering who used his/her skills for building weapons. The sustained transformation of people's lives is the recurring and central motif in the interview: "The best thing you can give is Christ. Wherever they go afterwards they can continue with Christ. […] That is why their lives will be transformed. Training alone is not enough."

Another church leader points to transformation of life as the major challenge:

> Interview question: "What are the major needs in people's life?"
> Response: "The major need… the people's life needs to be transformed. People's life needs to be salvaged; people's life needs to be educated. People are ignorant, some people are on the other side of life, they need to be brought to the light. It takes a lot of movement to activate and actualize that. People need to know about Christ more and I think that is the fundamental beginning of salvation." (Interview 2016/S/05)

This transformation of life is interwoven with the concepts of salvation and deliverance.

> Interview question: "What do people need in their lives today?"
> Response: "They need healing, they need deliverance. In this area people need deliverance a lot." (Interview 2016/S/04)

Transformation of life and notions of salvation seem to mutually superimpose each other. It is precisely this intersection of the spiritual and the material that breaks the ground for lasting change and cultural sustainability. By transforming people's lives in their material and immaterial, i.e. spiritual, dimensions African Initiated Churches provide the basis for sustainable development.

Elements of transformation

In many Sub-Saharan African countries, people face numerous adversities. Physical violence, poverty and death are personal realities in a person's everyday life. In this context, religious communities are important sources of psychosocial support. Due to their contextual world view and the large and growing number of their adherents, this is particularly true for African Initiated Churches. Through various strategies, they enable their members to deal with the manifold challenges experienced in their lives. By providing "spiritual endurance" (Cilliers and Wepener 2007) they increase individuals' and communities' resilience against adverse shocks.

Due to the rapid political, social and economic changes taking place in South Africa, social structures transform and identities are re-shaped. Insecurity and psychosocial crises emerge (Oosthuizen 1988). In his study on witchcraft in post-1994 South Africa, Ashforth (1998, 507) describes how these transformative processes lead to an increase in the belief in and fear of witchcraft in peri-urban township contexts and diagnoses a general "spiritual insecurity". It is in this framework of insecurity that African Initiated

Churches play an important role. They are moderators of social change in the sense that they enable people to deal with the fundamental transformations of their environment and with perceived negative forces (Masondo 2013).

Various studies have pointed out the affirmation of identity and self-worth to which African Initiated Churches contribute (inter alia Masondo 2013; 2014; Bompani 2010). Masondo (2014: 2) explains:

> "The African indigenous churches exemplify the African struggle for self-identification and self-realization. During the apartheid era, grown-up African men were treated as overgrown children by their white employers. It was only within the context of the church where they rose to the position of prominence and respectability."

More than 20 years after the end of Apartheid black people in South Africa continue to experience what Linda Thomas terms "systemic dehumanization" (Thomas 1997:23), a continuing marginalization because of the persistent adverse social and economic structures they find themselves in. Lack of economic opportunities, social exclusion, a deficient educational system, high prevalence of violence and crime and lack of basic services continue to be the surrounding environment of a large part of the South African population (Herbst and Mills 2015). Hence, Masondo's statement (ibid.) possesses validity even for the post-Apartheid era.

The comprehensive transformation of individual and communal lives fostered by African Initiated Churches does not exhaust itself in a problem-solving strategy. Once the person is liberated from their problems, they acquire the ability to shape their own life. Liberating in this context does not mean that all challenges, hardships and problems are solved and gone, but rather that they no longer define and control the possibilities and development of the individual. Through the stabilization, believers gain the ability and the motivation to transform their lives, a process that is fostered and promoted by African Initiated Churches. Schlemmer (2008: 80) calls this "spiritual capital": "What their faith does give them is confidence that they can succeed—in other words abundant spiritual capital". Russell Toohey, pastor of a Pentecostal-Charismatic Churchinterviewed by Meyer describes this as:

> "redemption and lift, which says that as people are redeemed there is a lift in their social standing [and] their lives stabilize. They are not into boozing so much, and so they got much more money with which to develop their homes, and to educate their children." (Meyer 2004: 284)

It is important to note that a separation between stabilization (dealing with one's challenges or eliminating the negative) and transformation (actively changing one's life or adding the positive) is only conceptual. In fact, they are one transformative process expressing itself in stabilization and improvement. Stabilization is already part of the long-term positive transformative process, which has different shapes and structures in different churches, communities and individuals. Moreover, the process is indefinite. In the view of the churches, one does not reach a point where the transformation is complete. As one member of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) and chairperson of this church's local business owner forum describes:

> "Where I am now, I never went to school, meaning I only passed matric, but in me there was that thing, saying you are an entrepreneur. You are an entrepreneur. You have something inside you which can lead the world, which can help the world. Try to take that thing out, so that people can see that. So the only way to get that thing, so that I can take it to the world, was through the spirit which was guiding me. […] So, with the church, the church which was guiding me. […] ZCC was the one which I chose, because of the leader, the one who is saying he always encourages us to follow your dreams. He is saying you must follow these dreams, I will guide you. I will teach you. […] It's a journey. That's why I am saying some went inside the church hoping to get things easy. When they see me like this, they say, 'tomorrow I am going to church, I wanna be like this guy.' No, no, no, something else. This is a journey." (Interview 2015/S/01)

Closely related with the transformation of life is the notion of entrepreneurship, mentioned by this interviewee, which is also one focal point of the literature on African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. The transformation of life has strong material components. Salvation, which is "here and now" (Anderson 2000: 48), includes the absence of poverty (Heuser 2013). As shown in charts 1 and 2, the area of basic entrepreneurial skills was consistently ranked as the highest priority both in individual interviews and focus group discussions. This is in line with the results of the large-scale research project on Pentecostalism in South Africa reported on by Schlemmer (2008), whose central conclusion was that the greatest potential of Pentecostalism is entrepreneurship. Our own results confirm that this does not only extend to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches, but to African Initiated Churches in general.

Engaging transformation

Healing and world view: transforming the individual

The manifold processes associated with overcoming one's problems and dealing with insecurities are commonly described as a process of healing. Far from only referring to a medical sense, healing can be understood as a process to overcome adversities, be they spiritual, material or social—in short, all aspects that can affect the quality of life in a negative way (Schoffeleers 1991; Pretorius 2004). While the specific rituals and activities differ from one church to another (often substantially), healing plays an important role in most African Initiated Churches in South Africa. When asked to describe their churches and why people come to the church, 5 out of 14 church leaders explicitly referred to healing or transformation of people's lives as central feature of their church. Moreover there is a large consensus in the literature that the need for healing is one of the major reasons to join an African Initiated Church (Schoffeleers 1991; Cross, Oosthuizen, and Clark 1993; Thomas 1997; Pretorius 2004; Schlemmer 2008; Bompani 2010).

The churches' healing activities possess high contextual relevance, since they are embedded in an African spiritual cosmology (Ashforth 1998; Pretorius 2004). In this world view, material, social and spiritual spheres are not separated, but constitute layers of the same reality. They are mutually dependent and in constant interaction. Positive and negative spiritual forces, in many cases ancestors and, most importantly, the Holy Spirit are seen to influence social interaction and the physical world. Healing, belief in witchcraft and spirits and divine material blessings all have to be seen against this background.

Some scholars consider this world view to be problematic and as a hindrance to development in all its social, economic and ecological aspects (for example: Gifford 2015; Ndhlovu 2015). The spiritual world view proliferated by the churches, this literature argues, fosters fear and passivity. Because spiritual forces are supposedly seen as determining one's life, trying to improve it actively is futile. Moreover, the belief in negative spiritual forces might even lead to physical violence against those accused of spiritual evil acts, exemplified in the killing of "witches".

However, it should be emphasized that the spiritual world constitutes part of the reality of many people on the African continent, regardless of their religious affiliation. The belief in positive and negative spiritual forces

—easily dismissed as superstition from a western perspective—plays an important role in the lives of many Africans (Ashforth 1998). Therefore it needs to be taken seriously. It is explicitly because African Initiated Churches do not reject this set of beliefs—as opposed to Mission Churches —that they reach so many people, that their support is relevant to their members and that they are able to contribute to the transformation of people's lives. Bompani (2010: 309) points out:

> "[T]hese churches [...] take the negative forces within African cosmology seriously by responding to real problems as perceived […], namely witchcraft, sorcery, and evil spirits, understanding that it is acceptable to interpret socio-economic hardships and deprivation in contemporary society within the context of adverse cosmic forces. The idea that AICs are considered experts in granting people protection and fortification against the powers of evil accounts to a large degree for their popularity and growth."

Not all African Initiated Churches subscribe to every single element of spiritual cosmology, nor do they relate to it in the same way. They rather incorporate this general world view in their belief systems as a form of religious knowledge production. Far from producing passivity and fear, African Initiated Churches enable their members to deal with any negative spiritual forces (Oosthuizen 1988). In the framework of comprehensive healing, the churches empower believers to solve their spiritual, material and social problems through spiritual, material and social means.

Ethics and social capital: transforming the environment

The holistic transformation of life in African Initiated Churches regularly finds its expression, inter alia, in a specific moral code. This moral code implies, first, the prohibition of violence, crime and drug consume. Second, it includes the prohibition of behavior and aspects seen as detrimental to a good life, including tobacco and alcohol consume, gambling, parties as well as (in some churches) the consumption of pork. The third aspect refers to strict sexual morals (Pretorius 2004; Bompani 2010). However, this moral code is not only prohibitive. Pretorius' (2004) study shows that African Initiated Churches' ethics feature positive imperatives for social interaction as well. Love, compassion, mutual support, respect, adherence to certain biblical commandments regarding social interaction (inter alia Exodus 20,3–17; Romans 13,1–8; Galatians 5,22; Ephesians 4,17), honesty and peacefulness were named as most important values.

This has a substantial impact on social interaction in various realms. African Initiated Churches promote peacefulness and nonviolence in the communities (Heuser 2003). Bompani (2008) makes the point that they foster values of good citizenship. This is further illustrated by the 2016 Easter Sermon of influential ZCC Bishop B.E. Lekganyane, calling on people to participate in the upcoming municipal elections:

> "Masione [Zionists], later in the year, you will be expected to go to the polls for local government elections. […] Be in a state of readiness. Make sure you are registered to vote in your area. Prepare yourselves to go elect your local leaders who will represent your aspirations. Even those who will be asking your vote should remember that leadership is about service to the community." (Lekganyane, 27 March 2016)

The ethics of African Initiated Churches also have direct effects on interpersonal relationships. Schlemmer (2008) reports that many church members stating their personal relations had improved since they joined an African Initiated Church, not least because their own behavior had changed. They were more balanced, more patient and more tolerant than before. Even though their take on gender issues is generally conservative, it has to be noted that African Initiated Churches foster mutual respect in family and gender relations. This can lead to reduced intra-family conflicts and domestic violence (Pretorius 2004). Nearly all churches interviewed in the authors' study offer counselling for marriage and family problems. The following example from a ZCC member shows how African Initiated Churches can contribute to the solution of conflicts:

> "I was having anger. Why? Because my parents were not telling me about my father. That anger was there because my mother refused to disclose what was happening between her and my father. That anger was just on me. It was not easy for me. There are these social problems that cause depression and anger. So, to guide you, to say, you must leave this and do this, that's where the church has taken a stand and said, you cannot deal with anger by drinking this [alcohol]. […] In order to deal with that anger you must get your background. […] And that's where sometimes, spiritually, you need someone who can guide you, lead you to your culture. So that's where the church plays a role. […] Just after you get your answers, you must forget about your past. This is where I am now. I am staying with my mother and sisters and we are happy. […] It helps you not to have a grudge." (Interview 2015/S/01)

African Initiated Churches are an important source of social capital[6]. Several studies show that mutual support plays an important role (Cross, Oosthuizen, and Clark 1993; Masondo 2013; Schlemmer 2008). Nearly every congregation fosters a culture of visiting sick people and praying for them (Öhlmann et al. 2016). Many churches have so-called burial societies to save money for families who cannot afford a decent burial. Additionally, informal savings groups flourish in African Initiated Churches and prove the high level of mutual trust. These activities are usually intertwined with joint spiritual activities like worship or prayer. Moreover, members provide each other with practical help and useful information, for example about economic opportunities or basic issues such as housing (Cross, Oosthuizen, and Clark 1993; Schlemmer 2008).

Transformation in action

At the institutional level, African Initiated Churches prove to be surprisingly active in development-related activities (cf. the more comprehensive description in Öhlmann, Frost, and Gräb 2016). The church leaders interviewed by the authors were asked to name the major problems in people's lives. Chart 3 shows all items mentioned during the individual interviews and/or workshops. With unemployment and poverty manifesting themselves in the lack of basic goods such as food and clothes, the interviewees mainly pointed out material needs. But also social problems like alcohol and

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6 We refer to social capital as defined by Bourdieu (1986: 248) as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition or in other words to membership to a group."

drug abuse or teenage pregnancies are mentioned along with specifically spiritual problems such as stagnancy in life and the need for healing.

Chart 3: What are the major problems in people's lives? Responses from focus group workshops and individual interviews. Source: Öhlmann et al. (2016)
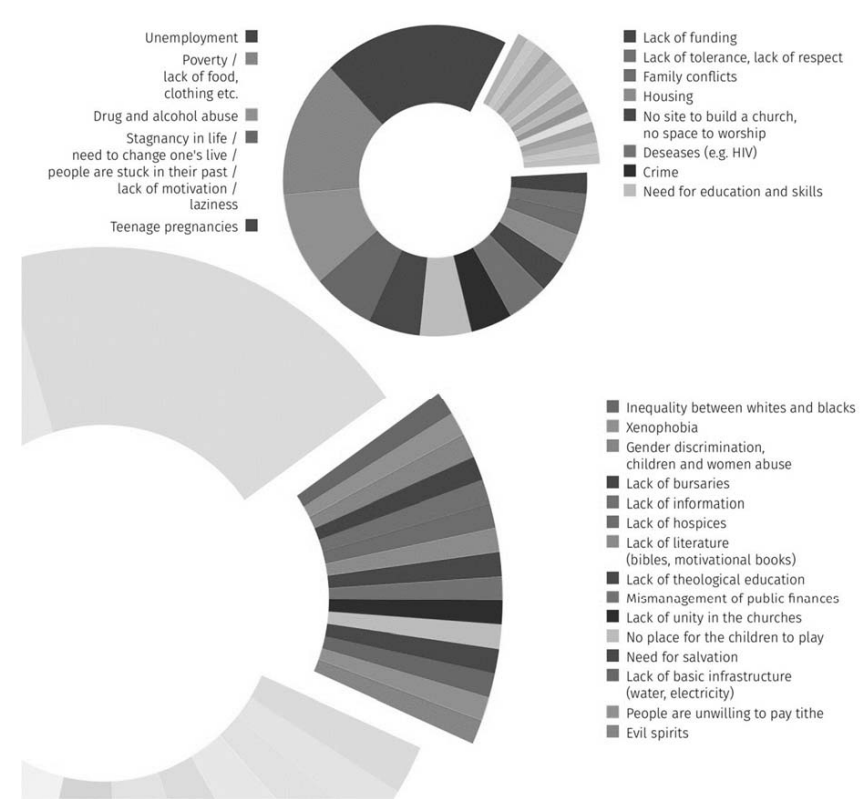
Consequently, the answers given to the question "How does your church support the community?" show that African Initiated Churches do not only see peoples' problems but are very active in different areas to improve the lives of their members and the wider community. Even though often on a small scale and in an informal way, nearly all surveyed churches run support and development activities. Even smaller and poorer churches collect food, clothing and/or money for school fees for people in need—often regardless of their membership in the congregation. Additionally, health-related activities such as raising awareness on HIV/AIDS and pastoral care for affected persons and their families rank high on African Initiated Churches'

agendas. Many of them offer scholarships for school children and students on a regular basis, the coverage ranging from providing support to individual members to large projects like the ZCC's scholarship program reaching some 300 students with a budget of over €200,000 per year. Larger African Initiated Churches often run their own crèches, schools or skills training centers. In general, there is a strong emphasis on education and training with a clear focus on entrepreneurial skills (as evident from charts 1 and 2). Five out of 14 church leaders underlined the need for education and two of them suggested adding education, especially for young children and teenagers, to the five areas presented. Their reasoning was that education, like skills training, is a prerequisite enabling people to improve their lives sustainably and out of their own power. Education and (entrepreneurial) skills enable people to become self-sustainable—to become agents of their own transformation. One interviewee emphasized this: "Don't give me a fish, teach me how to fish" (Workshop Minutes 2016/S/02). African Initiated Churches' engagement in this area also shows that they directly target the major problems identified: unemployment and poverty (cf. chart 3). In many ways, church leaders noted, their work is similar to that of non-religious NGOs: "We are all aiming at achieving the same thing, which is human development. The difference could be the platform from which we are standing; we are doing it as a church" (Interview Don Makumbani, 2016). Hence, on the one hand, the development-related activities are seen in close relation to those of NGOs. On the other hand, the churches' activities are considered as having an additional, distinctive dimension: the spiritual. It is precisely this dimension that provides added value to the activities otherwise similar to the programs of non-religious development actors. As Bishop Elias Mashabela, a church leader from South Africa, elaborated:

> "The NGOs are taking care of people but they do not take care of the spiritual part of the human being. So we are taking care of the people, […] but we go beyond. We also look at the spiritual well-being of the persons […]. We run similar programs, but we do more by adding the spiritual level." (Interview Elias Mashabela, 2016)

Many church leaders underlined the importance of providing both spiritual and material support. In fact spiritual activities like Sunday Schools, religious programs on local radio stations, prayer or giving services for free were named together with development activities as their support given to the community. Moreover, the two areas are also seen to be closely intertwined at an institutional level. As one church leader put it, "You cannot teach the Word to an empty stomach" (Interview 2016/S/06). Pastor Holymike, another South African church leader, referred to John 13:35

where Jesus tells the disciples that they will be recognized by others through the fact that they love each other and explained:

> "And of course love is not just love. Love has to be accompanied by actions. So, I think there is an interaction from what we preach to what we do. Because what we do is what we are preaching, yes: love, hope." (Interview Holymike, 2016)

Development-relevant activities (in a secular sense) and spiritual activities are mutually complementary and strongly interrelated. This interrelation is highly important to the church leaders. It stands in contrast to the understanding of many international development organizations, which operate on the basis of a secular distinction between spirituality and development that has been a key feature of international development policy for decades —even of most faith-based development actors.

Hence, this point was further discussed with church leaders in the interviews. One church leader summarized the African Initiated Churches' holistic approach towards development in his statement: "Spiritual development is part of development. A good life includes spirituality" (Interview Elijah Daramola, 2016). The main argument against such a separation was that people need both sides to lead a good life and for their transformation to be long lasting. However, on a practical level there seems to be room for manoeuvre. Seven out of the 14 interviewees considered such a separation possible. Some welcomed the idea, as it would permit them to reach more people with their development-related activities. However, several church leaders noted that, while the activities do not have to happen at the same time, it is still important to have both. One church leader said, it would be fine if a representative from a development organization came to the church and gave a workshop about a specific topic without performing any prayer, because the church leader could lead the prayer afterwards. The example also points to a practical challenge: many African Initiated Churches do not have facilities aside from the church building itself (if the congregation has one at all) to host their activities. A complete separation would thus be difficult because of spatial restrictions.

Conclusions

A comprehensive cultural, social and economic transformation is at the core of the actions and ideologies of many African Initiated Churches in South Africa. Their activities and beliefs are strongly geared towards the improvement of individual and communal lives in multiple dimensions. Against the background of a holistic vision of the material and spiritual

world as well as human society, their concrete intentions and activities of transformation start at the micro and meso levels of society. They focus on the doable: contributing to changing lives of individuals and (small) communities. They are relevant development actors in their communities, implementing various different activities of different scales. These activities and their development priorities are usually directed toward empowering the individual, for example through education or entrepreneurship and skills training. Coherent with their immediate concept of salvation ("here and now") they are less concerned with developing larger ideological and political concepts for the transformation of society in general. Based on their faith, their aim is to transform people's self-understandings, notion of life, attitude to life and life itself. They seek to liberate their members from life's immediate adversities and to fundamentally affirm their agency and resilience. Hence, it is little surprising that ecological sustainability plays a subordinate role in their development priorities and activities.

This deliverance from life's adversities is quite the contrary to passiveness and individual withdrawal from the world. It is a fundamental affirmation of this-worldliness, as it enables the person to become the agent in the transformation of his or her life. In this, two points are crucial: first, that African Initiated Churches operate within contextual belief systems of spiritual world views—a dominant form of religious knowledge in many African contexts—and second, that they see the person and the world in a comprehensive way, in their physical, social and spiritual dimensions. The manifold material, social and spiritual hardships experienced can be dealt with through material, social and spiritual means: healing, ethical codes, mutual support and development activities. In all these dimensions, African Initiated Churches operate within a highly contextual framework. Their beliefs, ethics and actions are deeply embedded in contextual social and cultural structures and cosmologies.

Spirituality and development go hand in hand; they are seen as complementary and intertwined. This is also reflected in their activities. Both (non-spiritual) development activities and spiritual activities are seen as contributing to the transformation of life. The African Initiated Churches' transformation agenda is wider than sustainable development as defined by the SDGs. Where the international development community recognizes that "religion is part of development", from the perspective of the African Initiated Churches one could respond with "development is part of religion"—i.e. for many of these churches development is only one aspect in a wider transformation agenda. Even though they focus on the micro and meso levels, they work on the transformation of the cultural basis of the

socioeconomic and political factors and thus contribute to the transformation of broader society.

In order to produce lasting changes it is vital that any development intervention affirms the agency of individuals and communities and takes into account their social and cultural embeddedness as a frame of reference (Gräb 2014). Because African Initiated Churches aim to change the whole person and make reference to a contextual spiritual cosmology, their development activities have the potential to be highly sustainable. By comprehensively transforming lives (instead of merely providing skills) they produce lasting impact. Their activities are locally grounded, contextually relevant and operate within accepted cultural and contextual frameworks. Hence, they bear high potential for sustainable development as outlined in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (UN 2015). What they offer to sustainable development is cultural sustainability.

As agents of culturally sustainable development, African Initiated Churches also bear great potential for ecological sustainability in the long run. Questions of ecological sustainability have a close proximity both to African Initiated Churches' world view and biblical scripture. African Initiated Christianity's spiritual worldview is often cross-fertilized with traditional African religious notions of the overlap of the spiritual and material world. Notions of the sacredness of places and nature resonate well with ecological sustainability. This is also the case for the biblical notion of integrity of creation. While our results indicate that ecological sustainability plays a subordinate role in the churches' concrete development priorities and activities at present, they are vital stakeholders that can contribute to "cultural acceptance […] to promote the successful implementation of development schemes to reach environmental goals or to improve the quality of life of local people" (Soini and Birkeland 2014) in the future. Due to their ability to culturally embed and promote new values, mind sets and concepts of life, they have the potential to create a consciousness for the limitations of natural resources as part of their comprehensive vision of transformation. Hence, ecological sustainability should be one point of conversation between African Initiated Churches, established religious development organizations and international development cooperation.

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Jens Koehrsen

Muslim NGOs and the Quest for Environmental Sustainability in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

Religious NGOs have become a bearer of hope in the field of development. However, it is not clear how these actors relate to the newly established Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new emphasis on environmental sustainability in the SDGs, combined with strong academic claims about the importance of religion for tackling environmental problems, raise the question of how religious NGOs relate to environmental sustainability and in what way they can engage in it. This contribution addresses the role of Muslim NGOs. Reviewing different contributions to the subject, it provides an overview of the potentials and challenges of these organisations in the struggle for environmental sustainability. It thereby addresses the question in what way Muslim NGOs can make a difference in transformation processes towards environmentally friendly societies. The article shows that studies about this subject frequently outline the environmental teachings of Islam and its grassroots reach as crucial resources. However, studies also indicate that the impact of Islamic environmental initiatives on broader Muslim populations remains unclear and that these initiatives may suffer from low acceptance at the grassroots level.

The remainder of this article is as follows: The second section addresses the debate about religion and ecology while the third section turns to the challenges of Muslim NGOs in the field of international development. The fourth section portrays different studies about Muslim environmental activism. Based on these insights, the following section recapitulates the main observations and compares the resources as well as limitations of Muslim organisations in promoting environmental sustainability. The article ends with a conclusion summarizing the results and sketching potential avenues for research.

Faith Based Development: Towards a "Green" Agenda?

In the last decades, the United Nations have established shared global development goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs). The SDGs have replaced the MDGs and shape international development work from 2015 until 2030. They consist of 17 major goals that cover different areas of development policy, ranging from poverty alleviation, economic inequality, health, education, peace building, infrastructures, to environmental sustainability. In comparison to the MDGs, the SDGs place a strong emphasis on the notion of "sustainability" and particularly on environmental sustainability. While development concepts have originally stressed human well-being (e.g. economic wealth, health, education), the novel focus on environmental sustainability creates a new context for international development activities in which global and local environmental problems assume a rising importance. However, it is, so far, unclear how religious NGOs from different faith backgrounds will relate to the SDGs. Will their development concepts and activities reflect the novel emphasis on environmental sustainability? What resources can these organisations employ to promote environmental sustainability and what limitations do they face when tackling environmental sustainability?

The academic debate about religion and ecology highlights the potentials of religion for promoting environmental sustainability (Clugston and Holt 2012; Gottlieb 2008; Kimmins 1993; Rasmussen 2011; Rolston III 2006; Tucker 2006; Tucker 2008). Some scholar suggest an ongoing "greening" process among the world's faith traditions that renders the teachings of these traditions and the lifestyles of their followers more environmentally friendly (Kanagy and Willits 1993; Shibley and Wiggins 1997; White 1966; Taylor 2010). Studies about religion and ecology name different resources that allow religious organisations to contribute to render societies more environmentally friendly. Gardner (2003), for instance, suggests five religious assets for promoting environmental sustainability: worldview development (e.g. pro-environmental religious teachings), moral authority, numbers of followers that can reached, material resources, and community building (e.g. social bonds and trust in religious communities) (Gardner 2003). Other studies posit that religious organisations could use their public visibility for campaigning and lobbying, draw upon their material and organisational infrastructures to undertake transitions activities (e.g. energy efficiency measures in church buildings), and employ their networks and

local reach to disseminate pro-environmental ethics (Koehrsen 2015; Koehrsen 2018). Contributions further show that religious organisations may use emotional campaigning for advocacy work and assume an mediation role in climate negotiations (Glaab 2017).

The aforementioned resources may enable religious organisations to contribute to societal transformations towards environmental sustainability. However, empirical research about religion and environmental change has particularly focused on Christian organisations, addressing their public involvement and their potential influence on environmental attitudes. This research has generated mixed results regarding the environmental impact of Christianity and rather tends to reject the hypothesis of a general "greening" process in Christianity (Taylor, van Wieren and Zaleha 2016). Against the backdrop of a Christian focus in research, we know, so far, little about how Muslim organisations seek to facilitate environmental sustainability and what difference they can make in the novel sustainable development agendas.

Muslim NGOs

In the last decades, an increasing number of Muslim NGOs have emerged (Petersen 2012a; Petersen 2012a: 133–34; Petersen 2012b; and Petersen in this volume). This growth is related to a general increase in the number of NGOs and the rising solidarity between Muslims worldwide in the context of wars and disasters (e.g. famines in Africa, Soviet war in Afghanistan, civil war in Bosnia), facilitating the creation of Islamic aid organisations. By 2010, Petersen (Petersen 2012a: 134) estimates the number of Muslim NGOs in the field of aid provision to be 400 out of 16,700 transnational NGOs, representing 2.4 % of all transnational NGOs. The majority of these organisations come from the USA and Europe (particularly the UK).

Similar to other religious NGOs, Muslim NGOs are sometimes accused of proselytization and fundamentalism (Ahmed 2009; Kaag 2007; Petersen 2012a; Salehin 2002). However, Muslim NGOs are diverse and show different orientations, varying in their tendencies for proselytization and fundamentalism (Petersen 2012b). Like other religious NGOs, Muslim NGOs are active in different fields such as humanitarian assistance in the context of natural disasters and famines, poverty alleviation, refugee support, education, health, finance, and business entrepreneurship (Ahmed 2009; Kaag 2007; Kirmani and Khan 2008; Petersen 2012b; Salehin 2002).

In the context of the international "war on terror", some of these organisations have been accused of links to terror organisations and banned from Western countries (Petersen 2012a: 135–136; Petersen 2012b: 771–774). At the same time, Western policy makers and agencies have sought to strengthen their collaboration with Muslim NGOs to counteract Islamic radicalization processes. From the perspective of these agencies, Muslim NGOs become instruments of reaching local Muslim populations that are otherwise difficult to access (see also Cordier 2009):

> "In this perspective, the religious identity of organisations is considered an instrument in the effective implementation of aid activities, primarily serving as a tool for communication with constituencies that may otherwise be unreachable." (Petersen 2012a: 137)

Religion becomes a tool for reaching the otherwise "unreachable". Nevertheless, in the context of a "rigidly secular aid regime" (Palmer 2011: 107), there is a preference for secular approaches and sometime distrust again Muslim NGOs among governments and mainstream development agencies. As such, on the one hand, the label "Islamic" can obstruct the development work, as secular governments and agencies will rather support Muslim NGOs that represent a "secular" Islam (Kirmani and Khan 2008). On the other hand, local constituencies in predominantly Muslim countries often demand for religion to be included in development activities (e.g. constructing a mosque in a refugee camp) (Palmer 2011). Withdrawing Islam from these activities may undermine the credibility of these organisations among Muslim leaders and local populations and imperil their ability to reach the otherwise "unreachable". Western-based, secular-oriented Muslim NGOs potentially face distrust at the grassroots level (Cordier 2009; Palmer 2011; Petersen 2012b: 775). As such, Muslim NGOs are caught in a complex situation in which they have to handle the dissimilar expectations of the "secular" mainstream development field and their local constituencies.

Against the backdrop of this situation, Muslim NGOs undertake different positionings (Petersen 2012a; Petersen 2012b: 773–774): some have turned towards mainstream development and collaborate with secular agencies while others have moved to the periphery of the mainstream development field or remain outside of this field. Regarding their religious identity, these organisations move in a spectrum between an all-encompassing Islam and an almost invisible Islam. Those organisations incorporating an almost invisible Islam are more adaptable with the mainstream development field.

Environmental Islam

Studies about the environmental engagement of Muslim NGOs are rare. The following descriptions will outline some of the few existing studies about Islamic environmental engagement. Not all of the studies are focusing on Muslim NGOs, some of them address local ecological initiatives and attitudes towards environmental change. Nevertheless, the latter studies also provide insights into the potentials and problems of Muslim NGOs to promote sustainable Development.

Islamic Environmental Teachings

Studies about Islam and ecology tend to highlight the environmental teachings of Islam, drawing on the Qur'an (revelation of God) and the *sunna* (sayings and deeds of the prophet Muhammad) (Amri 2014: 79–80; DeHanas 2009: 143–144; Foltz 2000: 64–66; Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011: 288–289; Rice 2006: 379–380; Saniotis 2012: 156–158).

Islamic environmental teaching stresses that both humans and the environment are God's creation and that the universe exists in harmony and balance (*tawhid*). Forming part of God's creation, humans should respect nature. Moreover, as representatives of God in the world, humans assume active responsibility for caring for the environment: they are *khalifah* (stewards) that should act as caring protectors and maintain the balance of nature. Finally, humans will be held accountable for their actions towards the environment in the hereafter (*akhirah*).

These ideas outline the basis for an Islamic environmental ethic: scholars tend to stress that Islam has rich scriptural resources for addressing environmental problems (DeHanas 2009: 143), that it places an emphasis on nature (Saniotis 2012: 156–157), and that it "provides a comprehensive system for teaching the fundamental aspects of environmental care" (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012: 289). Yet, rather than echoing Islam as it is lived by local populations, the environmental ethics reflect the readings and teachings of environmentally concerned Islamic scholars, clerics, activists, and organisations. These actors stress the potentials of Islam for tackling environmental problems and seek to disseminate an environmentally friendly ("green") Islam. The following studies explore their activities, outlining the strengths and problems of Islam for promoting environmental sustainability.

Empirical Insights into Muslim Environmentalism

The strong environmental potentials of Islam that scholars outline do not necessarily become manifest among broader Muslim populations and Muslim NGOs. A quantitative study shows that 15 % of religious NGOs at the UN identify the environment of as one of their preferred fields of activity (Beinlich and Braungart 2019: 33–35). However, only 6 % of the religious NGOs that describe the environment of as one of their preferred fields of activity are Muslim, compared to 58 % Christian, 10 % Buddhist and 10 % Hindu, and 10 % multireligious NGOs. As such, Muslim RNGOs seem to place a less prominent focus on environmental topics than religious NGOs from other faith backgrounds. Also scholars that underpin the strong environmental basis of Islam often acknowledge a relatively low environmental concern among broader Muslim populations (Amri 2014; DeHanas 2009; Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011; Saniotis 2012). Saniotis (2012) argues that the this discrepancy is related to the social history of Muslim majority countries. While Islam has strong environmental ethics that were originally employed in Muslim majority countries, the arrival of Western culture and its focus on materialism overshadowed these: "European colonial powers brought with them materialistic-orientated ideologies that focused on economic development and exploiting nature. This contributed to the deterioration of Islamic environmental ethics" (Saniotis 2012: 168).

Muslim majority countries started to emphasize economic development that increasingly dwarfed Islamic environmental concern. Nevertheless, against the backdrop of environmental degradation and climate change, Saniotis (2012) stipulates that Muslims are rediscovering the environmental foundations and that Islamic environmentalism is gaining a new ground in these countries.

For instance, on the international level, the initiative "The Muslim 7 Year Action Plan on Climate Change" started in 2009. In 2010, the First International Conference on Muslim Action on Climate Change was held in Indonesia, setting out joint goals for the Muslim world. The goals include promoting a joint climate change policy in Muslim countries, the use of environmentally friendly technology, encouraging grassroots action, facilitating exchange of knowledge and best-practice across the Muslim world, and train religious leaders about climate change and disseminate environmental knowledge through Islamic boarding schools (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012: 295–296; Saniotis 2012: 162). However, it is not clear to what extent this global framework has influenced local action. The following case

studies barely refer to such international agreements and initiatives. Only one case-study from Indonesia mentions this initiative (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012). For understanding the potentials and limitations of Muslim NGOs in environmental sustainability, it is important to have a closer look at the grassroots level. In the following, I review case studies from different socio-geographical contexts. The review starts with six case studies from different Global South countries followed by three case studies from the United Kingdom.

Global South

The Global South case studies reveal various resources for promoting environmental concern and environmentally friendly behaviour. Rice (2006) undertakes a quantitative study among high-school teachers and university students in Cairo (Egypt). She finds that talking about environmental issues relates to religion. Environmental activism remains marginal among the respondents, but when assuming shape, it also positively relates with their religiosity. As such, Rice (2006: 387–388) suggests that the grassroots dissemination of Islamic environmental principles through imams would constitute a valuable channel to promote pro-environmental behaviour in Egypt. "Governmental or nongovernmental groups promoting pro-environmental behaviours should focus their efforts at the grassroots level and find ways to use faith-based messages" (Rice 2006: 388). When transmitted via Friday prayers, faith-based environmental messages would gain an extensive reach in the wider population, given the strong religiosity of Egypt's population. Consequently, this study indicates the following strengths of Islamic engagement: the ability of Islam to trigger environmental concern, the effectiveness of faith-based messages in strongly religious contexts, and the extensive social reach of religious leaders.

   A study from Sheikh (2006) about an environmental education project in Pakistan also highlights the social reach of Islamic leaders. The action-research project took place in Western Karakorum between 1996 and 2002. It aimed to improve knowledge about environmental conservation in this region with the support of local religious leaders. The high confidence that these leaders enjoy among the local population turned out to be a strong asset. It facilitates communication with local communities and the exchange of knowledge, maximizing local participation: the project gained access to local schools, mosques and rural communities while religious leaders themselves took active roles in spreading knowledge about humans' responsibili-

ties in protecting the environment according to Islam. Thereby, the study points towards the social capital of religious leaders: their reputation among the population and their social networks. From this perspective, religious leaders constitute gatekeepers that can provide access to the wider population and facilitate the dissemination of environmental ethics.

Similarly, two case studies from Indonesia underpin the grassroots reach of Islamic leaders and organisations. Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population. Deforestation is a crucial environmental problem in Indonesia while the general awareness about environmental problems is very low (Amri 2014; Mangunjaya and McKay 2012: 292). The government, local authorities and NGOs seek to reduce logging. The Indonesian government undertakes top-down processes by, for instance, using legislation to declare local conservation areas. However, local populations often perceive these steps as unjust and endangering their economic well-being, as their incomes may depend on logging. Therefore, a greater inclusion of the grassroots level is necessary. According to Mangunjaya and McKay (2012: 287–288), the involvement of local populations can be achieved by relying on Islamic teachings and Muslim networks. To illustrate their argument, they describe different activities that Muslim organisations and leaders have undertaken to spread pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour among local populations. One of these activities concerns the dissemination of information: Muslim scholars in Indonesia have engaged to create more awareness about ecological conservation within Islam by circulating their environmental teachings through books and workshops with Muslim teachers and clerics (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012: 288–292). Moreover, many *Pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) in Indonesia have undertaken environmental programs. These include education and reforestation projects (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012: 296). In some cases, projects involving religious teachers and local populations have even managed to create an Islamic *Hima* (environmental management zones) and *Harim* (inviolable sanctuaries) (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012: 298–302). Finally, regional councils of religious scholars have issued Fatwas (non-binding legal opinions), declaring environmentally harmful logging and mining as *haram*. Moreover, a religious outreach programme, sending out 5,000 preachers to localities to stop illegal logging, has been initiated. However, it is unclear to what extent these undertakings have been effective to stop logging, as empirical research is missing (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012: 302–303).

Amri (Amri 2014) studies the environmental activity of two particular Muslim organisations in Indonesia: *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdlatul Ulama*. These are the two oldest and biggest Islamic civil society organisations in

Indonesia (Amri 2014: 78–79): *Muhammadiyah* is a vast organisation that involves 6,118 mosques, 5,519 schools, 172 universities, and 457 hospitals. *Nahdlatul Ulama* places a focus on education and covers around 17,000 boarding schools (*Pesantrens*). Both organisations seek to raise environmental awareness among Indonesian population and politics (Amri 2014: 81). They have published public statements asking the government to act against environmental degradation and to stick to international climate goals. In order to reach local populations, they use teaching in mosques and Islamic teaching forums (Amri 2014: 82–84). Here, clerics refer to relevant Qur'anic verses to explain, for instance, why it is important to keep the environment clean or refrain from logging. However, clerics often miss practical knowledge about climate change, which limits the dissemination of environmentally friendly behaviour. The engagement remains limited to small groups and might be perceived as elitist. As mentioned above, an important environmental topic in the context of Indonesia is illegal logging. Both organisations urge their followers to refrain from this practice. They reach out to local populations not only via teachings in mosques but also through *Pesantrens*. For instance, these local schools and their teachers invite communities to reflect about the long term consequences of cutting trees and to engage in reforestation projects (Amri 2014: 85). Moreover, *Nahdlatul Ulama* seeks to provide alternative ways of generating income for the local populations by promoting stock farming and agricultural endeavours (Amri 2014: 86). *Muhammadiyah* has initiated programs within its organisation to more sustainably manage its resources: it urged its hospitals, schools and universities to use recycled paper and reduce their consumption of water and energy. However, not all of their sub-organisations have implemented these calls. The reason for these problems in implementing a more sustainable resource management may lie in the historically stronger focus on education and poverty of *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah* where environmental activities receive less importance (Amri 2014: 87). According to Amri (Amri 2014: 82), these two organisations enjoy broad grassroots support in contrast to other environmentally concerned NGOs. Aside from the important grassroots reach, this study points towards the institutional resources of Muslim organisations (e.g. facilities and vast organisational infrastructures) and their power to lobby environmental positions towards political leaders. Furthermore, the study indicates some challenges: environmental concern and engagement remain small and will not always reach the grassroots level, as environmental goals compete with other, more prominent goals (e.g. education, poverty eradication).

Another limitation is that religious worldviews, even when considering environmental problems, do not directly lead to environmental action and, in some cases, can even obstruct the way to environmental activity. An insightful case study from Mali illustrates how religious interpretations of climate change do not encourage environmental protection endeavours but spiritual remedies (Bell 2014). Bell (2014) has conducted ethnographic research in the rural town of Ouélessébougou in Mali. Here, the environmental situation has significantly deteriorated over the last decades, affecting the living conditions of local populations. In their interpretation of environmental degradation and climate change, God appears as the manager of the climate. Bell identifies three predominant narratives explaining why God changes the climate: (1) God undertakes natural shifts between different types of climate that people have to accept; (2) God's alteration of the local climate is a direct response to the immoral behaviour of local residents (e.g. stealing, lying); (3) with climate change, God is punishing humanity for its violent international conflicts and the selfish behaviour of global politicians. The three narratives regard God as managing the environmental conditions: local actors perceive climate change as God's will. For many local actors, it is God's reaction to people's immoral actions. Based on these interpretations, actors seek to deal with their environmental situation by appealing to God through rituals such as special prayer meetings asking God for rain. The study illustrates that their Islamic worldview shapes how these local actors understand and manage climate change. They do not attribute environmental degradation to the environmental attitudes and lifestyles of people, but to their social behaviour. Interestingly, this reading and dealing with climate change of rural Malian populations not only contradicts predominant scientific explanations, but also contrasts the approaches of leading Islamic environmental activities that try to improve environmental awareness and lifestyles of their Muslim peers. Though actors may regard climate change and environmental degradation through the lenses of their religious traditions, this does not imply that they undertake actions that are regarded by predominant scientific narratives as leading to an improved environmental situation. From the perspectives of these scientifically framed narratives about what climate change is, this study shows the limitations of religion to deal with environmental problems: if actors rely on ritual techniques to deal with climate change, they are unlikely to take up more environmentally friendly lifestyles in their daily routines.

While the aforementioned studies mostly highlight the cognitive dimensions of faith worldviews and ethics and the potentials of Muslim organisations and leaders to reach local populations via communication, there are also physical projects. Studying the recycling activities of different faith communities in Malaysia, Mohamad et al. (2012) report a recycling program in more than 100 mosques in the State of Negeri Sembilan. Conducting case-study research on the Islamic community of Surau al-Husna and communities from other faith backgrounds, they find that the recycling programs of religious communities create experimentation sites. These enable local actors for experimenting with innovative social practices – in this case: recycling – and disseminate these through their social networks to other communities. Contrasting other contributions which focus on RNGOs' ability to spread worldviews and attitudes, this study highlights the practical abilities of religious communities, to establish and disseminate new environmentally friendly practices: religious communities can become experimentation sites to develop new, environmentally friendly techniques and practices. The dissemination of new environmentally friendly lifestyles is not solely undertaken through cognitive processes, but by doing.

Global North

Studies from the Global South point in particular to the grassroots reach of Islamic engagement, highlighting the reputation of religious leaders, institutional resources of Muslim organisations, and their social networks. Still, the engagement appears to remain limited and it is, so far, not clear to what extent it affects the environmental attitudes of broader population segments. The Global North constitutes a different context where environmental awareness is usually believed to be higher. Therefore, one may assume broader activities among local Muslim communities. However, research from the UK contradicts this assumption.

Given the separation of environmental concern and lived Islam in the UK, Muslim environmental activists see the need to translate environmental concern into the language of Islam. A study of DeHanas (2009) illustrates this work of sacralising environmental concern and presenting it as Islamic. He studies the radio programme *Women's Hour*. The programme is a broadcast of the *Muslim Community Radio* in London's East End. During Ramadan 2007, the broadcaster placed an emphasis on environmental concerns. Analysing these broadcasts, DeHanas finds that they seek to place environmentalism into an Islamic narrative (DeHanas 2009:148–50): they sacralise

the environmental discourse by embedding it within Islam. The radio hosts try to make appear environmental concern as genuinely Islamic. A prominent topic was recycling, as London's East End experiences problems with rubbish.

> "The primary rhetorical strategy for motivating ecological actions was through tying them into habits of Islamic practice. In this way the Women's Hour broadcasting took many mainstream environmental activities, like recycling and water conservation, and imbued them with religious significance. It was a process of sacralizing environmentalism: extending the boundaries of the Islamic sacred and profane to subsume the categories of the environmental movement and grant them spiritual depth." (DeHanas 2009: 148–149)

By placing an emphasis on Islamic environmental concern and the particular ecological issues in the district, the radio program sought to improve the public image of Islam in the UK (DeHanas 2009: 150–151).

Gilliat-Ray and Bryant (2011) present a broader study about Islamic environmental activism in the UK. Exploring Islamic environmental engagement in the year 2010, they find a total of seven Islamic environmental groups, as well as a few cases of pioneering green mosques and Muslim urban gardening initiatives. Leaders of these initiatives usually diagnose a lack of environmental awareness among British Muslims. Therefore, they strive with their activities to improve knowledge about environmental problems and the importance of stewardship for God's Creation among British Muslims. The projects use social resources in the form of existing networks of Muslim communities. Moreover, they also use religious resources: paralleling the aforementioned radio broadcasts, they "sacralise" the environmental engagement. However, the activities do not reflect a general concern about environmental problems among British Muslims. The projects only involve small groups of environmentally concerned Muslim activists. Even within these very groups, Gilliat-Ray and Bryant find varying degrees of activity and dispersed membership. Islamic environmental groups have trouble to involve committed members and create durable activities. Thus, many of the groups studied have irregular meetings and show overall little activity.

> "Many of the activists associated with British Muslim environmental issues and organisations have noted the obstacles that apathy, ignorance, and socio-economic deprivation pose to raising awareness of conservation among Muslims. The informal, often fragile and dispersed membership structure of Islamic environmental groups in Britain reflects these challenges." (Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011: 299)

Despite these problems and the little general concern about environmental issues among British Muslims, Gilliat-Ray and Bryant optimistically see a rising engagement and potentials for lifestyle changes among British Muslims. They conclude: "These projects signal the potential for faith-based initiatives that go beyond merely informing or educating, and might lead to the possibility of real changes in behaviour" (Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011: 303). The authors suppose that the rising engagement reflects an increased institutionalization of Islam in the UK, as Muslims become more interested in engaging with the broader society.

This optimism is not shared by a later study that underpins the marginalization of environmental topics in faith communities in the UK: Nita (2014) analyses Muslim environmental activists that are associated with the *London Islamic Network for the Environment* (later called: *Wisdom in Nature*). This group organized online networks, discussions, open forums, food sharing and gardening projects and diffused information via its monthly online leaflet (Nita 2014: 230–232). However, the Muslim activists face a double marginalization: in their faith communities for being "green" and in their green communities for being religious (Nita 2014: 233–335). Peers in their home mosque tend to regard their green engagement critically. At the same time, climate groups tend to marginalize religion and exclude religious actors from their rows. This double exclusion creates barriers for Islamic environmental engagement. To deal with this situation and continue their engagement, Muslim environmental activists evolve identity-merging strategies: they merge their religious and green identities and demarcate themselves from other "green" activists by attaching religious significance to their climate activism (Nita 2014: 235–238). One particular mechanism for bringing their climate activism and religious identity together is the "green prayer". This ecological prayer combines the traditional form and rhythm with a new content: protest against climate change. According to Nita (2014), the prayer offers a unique opportunity for integrating this topic, given to its lament-celebration structure: it starts with lamentation and ends with celebrations. This structure allows for bringing in environmental concern and creating a fusion between the religious and environmental identity. This study illustrates the problems of Muslim environmental engagement. A climate movement dominated by actors that have critical perspectives on religion and scepticism against climate engagement among Muslim communities create a challenging context for Muslim climate activism. Against this backdrop, activists have to design creative strategies. Nevertheless, their religious tradition offers resources for solving this problem by filling the existing religious techniques (e.g. prayers, fasting) with new contents (e.g.

protest against climate change). The study indicates that religions offer "vessels" that activists can use to fill with environmental concerns.

From the lenses of these studies conducted in the UK, environmental concern appears as something alien to Muslim communities that activists must integrate by using creative techniques. Though there is, so far, no strong concern, they point to the flexibility of religion and the potentials to integrate environmental concern into the existing structures of Islam in the UK (e.g. rituals, organisational structures, institutional leadership functions).

Discussion

This section compares the aforementioned studies, identifying the potentials and challenges of Muslim organisations in promoting environmental sustainability. Table 1 provides an overview of the studies. Most of the activities mentioned in the studies are information-based: they seek to disseminate information (e.g. about Islamic environmental ethics) among Muslim communities. In some cases, the activities also involve practical projects such as recycling, planting trees, and improving the environmental standards in Muslim organisations. The studies indicate that environmental concern is, so far, low among Muslim communities and not well integrated into the current lived practice of Islam. Therefore, pioneering actors and initiatives seek to spread environmental concern within lived Islam. They subscribe to an environmentally concerned, "green" Islam and disseminate it through workshops, books, radio broadcasts, school teachings, sermons, prayers, or sometimes practices (e.g. recycling). Dominant environmental topics in these campaigns seem to depend on the local context: for instance, in Indonesia, initiatives centred on logging, as deforestation puts Indonesia's ecological equilibrium in peril.

Table 1: Potentials and Challenges of Islamic Environmental Engagement

Authors	Context	Case	Potentials	Challenges
Rix 2006	South	High school teachers and university students in Cairo (Egypt)	Islamic Environmental Ethics; Ability of Islam to promote environmental concern; Grassroots reach: broader population	No information
Sheikh 2006	South	Environmental education project involving religious leaders in Pakistan	Reputation of religious leaders; Grassroots reach: access to rural communities	No information
Mangunjaya and McKay 2012	South	Environmental activities of Muslim organisations and leaders in Indonesia	Grassroots reach: local communities; Practical project (e.g reforestation); Fatwas	Impact of programmes remains unclear
Amri 2014	South	Environmental activities of two biggest Muslim organisations in Indonesia	Islamic Environmental Ethics; Public impact; Grassroots reach; Organisational infrastructures	Elitism; Missing knowledge; Conflicting goals
Bell 2014	South	Religious explanations of climate change in rural town in Mali	Religion frames interpretations of climate change	Religious interpretations are not leading to "green" lifestyles
Mohamad et al. 2012	South	Recycling initiatives of faith communities in Malaysia	Experimentations sites for new environmental practices	No information
DeHanas 2009	North	Environmental focus of Islamic radio programme during Ramadan 2007 in Londons' East End	Islamic Environmental Ethics; Ability to integrate environmental concern in lived Islam	Existing separation between lived Islam and environmental concern
Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011	North	Islamic environmental activism in UK	Islamic Environmental Ethics; Grassroots reach: use of social networks; Potentially facilitate lifestyle change	Low commitment; Dispersed membership in initiatives
Nita 2014	North	Muslim environmental activists relating with faith communities and climate movement in UK	Ability to integrate environmental concern in Islam (e.g. prayers)	Critical reception in religious communities

The studies suggest various **potentials** of Islam for promoting environmental concern. Studies mostly highlight the **environmental ethics of Islam** and its **grassroots reach**. Stressing the environmental teachings of Islam, they underpin the possibility of integrating environmental concern and ethics within lived practice of Islam. As Islam structures the perceptions and actions of many Muslims, "rediscovering" the environmental ethics of Islam becomes a powerful source for establishing more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, economics, and politics in Muslim majority countries (Foltz 2000; Saniotis 2012). To this end, grassroots reach also constitutes a key asset, as it allows for accessing broader populations. In particular, in Global South countries, the communication of Muslim leaders and organisations is likely to have a broader and stronger grassroots reach than that of secular actors (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012; Rice 2006). The presence of religious actors on the grassroots levels converts them into valuable access points and multipliers for stretching out to local communities. In particular, the **credibility of religious leaders** (Sheikh 2006) facilitates the communication with local populations. In many occasions, local religious leaders even become gatekeepers that influence what information the given local population regards as credible. In addition, the **organisational structures** of Muslim organisations can facilitate the contact with local populations: This can be undertaken by using Muslim radio broadcasting such as the Muslim Community Radio in London's East End (DeHanas 2009). Another example are the Muslim organisations *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdlatul Ulama* in Indonesia that seek to encourage the teaching of environmental ethics in their local schools and mosques (Amri 2014). In addition, Muslim organisations can use their infrastructures and financial resources to undertake **practical environmental projects** (e.g. reforestation) (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012). In the context of such projects, local religious communities can learn new environmentally techniques (e.g. recycling) through **experimentation** (Mohamad et al. 2012). Finally, Islam may provide **interpretation frames** for understanding environmental degradation (Bell 2014).

However, religious interpretation frames do not necessarily lead to environmentally friendly behaviour and may even inhibit environmental action, as the study of Bell (2014) shows. Other **problems** of Islamic environmental engagement concern its supposed elitism and the low environmental interest among broader population segments. The studies indicate that environmental concern has mostly remained **alien** to current Muslim communities. Therefore, in the aforementioned initiatives, Islam and its organisational structures become vehicles for transporting environmental concern

to local populations. Yet, employing Islam as a vehicle might incite accusations of **instrumentalising** religion and create acceptance problems among religious leaders and followers (see also Petersen 2012a: 137). Some of the studies indicate problems in the dissemination of environmental concern. For instance, Amri (2014: 87) mentions difficulties in implementing environmental mandates within *Muhammadiyah*'s schools and universities, as environmental goals **compete with other goals** in this organisation: environmental sustainability does not assume the priority, given that organisations perceives other issues such as poverty alleviation, education, and health as more relevant in the context of the Global South. In addition, Amri (2014) signals that environmental engagement appears to remain **elitist**. Finally, the broader impact of these initiatives remains **unclear**: it is uncertain whether the targeted Muslim communities are becoming "greener" over time (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012). Moreover, the studies indicate that only a **minority** of Muslims actively engage in these efforts of "greening" Islam and Muslim communities (Amri 2014; Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011). Research from the UK suggests that Islamic environmental groups face difficulties to maintain their membership and activities over time (Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011) and Islamic environmental activists even suffer **low acceptance** in their faith communities (Nita 2014). In addition, Nita (2014: 233–235) observes that the climate change movement marginalizes religion and tries to exclude religious activists from its rows.

Conclusion

Against the backdrop of a novel emphasis on environmental sustainability in the international development agenda, this contribution has addressed the potential resources and problems of Muslim NGOs in promoting environmental sustainability. The religion and ecology debate highlights the capacities of religious organisations in addressing environmental problems and facilitating social transformations towards more environmentally friendly societies. While most studies have focused on Christian organisations, there are only few studies on Islamic environmental engagement. Therefore, this contribution has analysed and compared empirical studies on Islamic environmental initiatives to determine the potentials and problems of Muslim NGOs in environmental sustainability.

   Many studies stressed the environmental teachings of Islam and its grassroots reach as crucial resources: their credibility and presence in local places enables them to disseminate Islamic environmental ethics and thereby to

potentially alter the environmental attitudes of broad population segments in the Global South. Moreover, the organisational infrastructures and material resources of Muslim organisations enable them to undertake physical projects (e.g. reforestation), allowing followers to experimenting with new environmental practices.

However, the impact of Muslim environmental activism on broader populations remains, so far, unclear. In addition, to what extent the aforementioned features in fact become resources for promoting environmental sustainability cannot be generalized. This will depend, inter alia, on the profile of the given organisations and the socio-geographical context in which they engage. In many contexts, in the Global South, the grassroots reach depends on the perceived Islamic identity of the given organisation.

International development agencies and governments tend to regard religion only as helpful instrument, while, at the same time, seeking to minimize the "religious" features of religious development work. A minimized religious identity will affect the pursued grassroots reach, as "secular" Muslim NGOs frequently suffer from lower credibility among local populations (Cordier 2009; Palmer 2011; Petersen 2012b: 775). A strictly instrumental approach to religion might therefore turn out to be counterproductive.

To improve our knowledge about the resources, limitations, and their regional embeddedness, there is need for further research about Islamic environmental activism and its impacts in different socio-geographical contexts. In particular, comparative research might help to identify what resources and limitations are relevant in which contexts. Apart from qualitative case study research, quantitative research could study how Muslim NGOs relate to the SDGs, exploring the development profiles of these organisations. This research could analyse what development goals religious NGOs prioritize and what role environmental sustainability assumes among these actors. By providing in-depth knowledge about the SDGs' priorities and ecological involvement of religious NGOs, research could help to solve the question of to what extent and in what way environmental sustainability plays a role in 21st century religious development work.

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Christine Schliesser

On the Roles of Religious NGOs in the Context of Development and Peacebuilding:
Christian Churches and Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda

1. Introduction

World-wide, the number of people dying of hunger is decreasing (cf. United Nations, We Can End Poverty). While this is certainly good news, the bad news is that violent conflicts have become the biggest driving forces of hunger, as the Global Hunger Index of 2015 reports. Alex de Waal points out in this report, "war and famine, two fearsome horsemen, have long ridden side by side (…). The impact of *all* … forms of violence on development is major and severe; the victims are poorer, more vulnerable and hungrier than others" (de Waal 2015: 23). This draws our attention to the connection between violent conflict and hunger or between conflict resolution and development, respectively. While the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 entirely missed the importance of peace as the foundation of development, their successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015 now rightly promote "peace, justice and strong institutions" (SDG 16).

One factor in particular has been perceived as one of the biggest threats to peace and social harmony: religion. Even before ISIS, examples ranging from the crusades and the Thirty-Years-War up to the Northern Ireland Conflict and Boko Haram quickly come to mind, all shaping our view of "religious violence". After years dominated by a one-sided perception of religion as promoting violence and conflict, however, religion's capacity for conflict resolution and peacebuilding is now increasingly becoming recognized as well. As Josephine Sundqvist points out, "There exists a growing awareness among peace workers that religion is a central factor to consider in order for a reconciliation process to lead to sustainable peace" (Sundqvist 2011: 158).

This contribution examines the roles of religion and religious NGOs within the context of development and peacebuilding. While both development and peacebuilding are connected, the focus here is on peacebuilding.

Does religion make a difference in peacebuilding? Are there any specific capacities and competences that religious actors can resort to in this field? If so, what are these? Two parts will serve to delineate possible answers to these questions. The first part briefly addresses some of the problems that arise with the terms religion and "religious" violence, respectively. The second and main part explores the productivity of religion itself for conflict resolution by utilizing the case study of Christian churches and their efforts aimed at peacebuilding and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda.[1]

2. Some Problems with the Term "Religious" Violence

Jeffrey Haynes points out that "Increasingly, it appears, conflicts between people, ethnic groups, classes, and nations are framed in religious terms" (Haynes 2007: 57). Religion often plays a role, for instance, in the conflict with the so-called Islamic State, in the conflict between Israel and Palestine or in the conflict in Northern Ireland. It is less clear, however, what exactly this role consists of. Oftentimes, religion is portrayed as a conflict promoting, if not conflict initiating, power that can drive people to fight and even kill each other. As Charles Kimball puts it, "It is somewhat trite, but nevertheless sadly true, to say that more wars have been waged, more people killed, and these days more evil perpetrated in the name of religion than by any other institutional force in human history" (Kimball 2002: 1).

Kimball's approach reveals a major, yet somewhat typical problem in discussions on "religious" violence. While he refers to the evil perpetrated in the name of religion, he does not adequately describe what he understands by "religion". This does not come as a surprise, however. As Brian Wilson states with respect to religious studies, the inability to find a definition for "religion" has become "almost an article of methodological dogma" (Wilson 1998: 141). As "no universally accepted definition of religion or faith exists" (Ware *et al.* 2016: 324), it remains equally unclear what counts as religious and what does not. In my native Germany, for instance, many of the characteristics we might attribute to religion—ecstatic experiences, regular gatherings, devotion, group singing, ascription of absolute value, sense of identity and belonging—can also be ascribed to soccer.

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1 The following deliberations draw upon the analysis of academic literature as well as on an empirical investigation based on material available online and semi-structured qualitative interviews I conducted in Rwanda between 2016 and 2018.

William Cavanaugh points us to another possible characteristic of religion, absolutism. Absolutism refers to a transcendent reality that lays claim to absolute validity beyond dispute, thereby accounting for the alleged danger of religion. Cavanaugh then proposes a "test" for what counts as "absolute": absolute is that for which one is willing to kill. Referring to his own native USA, he asks rhetorically: "What percentage of Americans who identify themselves as Christians would be willing to kill for their Christian faith? What percentage would be willing to kill for their country?" (Cavanaugh 2004: 44). Cavanaugh thus points to the functional similarity between the two categories "religion" and "nationalism".

Hence, if it is not clear what constitutes religion, it is also not clear what constitutes "religious" violence, either. According to Cavanaugh, "religion and violence" arguments rather serve a specific need of Western societies. In these arguments, we encounter a broader post-Enlightenment paradigm that constructs a clear dichotomy between the private—religious sphere on the one hand and the public—secular sphere on the other. The religious then becomes easily associated with irrational, possibly dangerous, impulses that must give way to reasonable arguments in the public sphere. "The danger is that, in establishing an Other which is essentially irrational, fanatical, and violent, we legitimate coercive measures against that Other" (Cavanaugh 2004: 35). This results in a selective legitimization of violence: s*ecular* violence is rational, peace promoting, tightly controlled and sometimes unfortunately necessary in order to end *religious* violence that is irrational, fanatical and totalitarian. Cavanaugh thus calls into question the usefulness of speaking of "religious" violence in contrast to "secular" violence.

With the conceptualizing of violence resisting a clear-cut division into religious vs. secular, some argue that the concept of religion ought to be kept out of this complex entirely. Jonathan Z. Smith claims that "religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study [and] has not independent existence apart from the academy" (Smith 1982: xi).[2] The plausibility of this line of thinking, however, is seriously hampered by the fact that it ignores the life-world reality of a vast number of people worldwide. Rather than trying to avoid religion altogether, this contribution is based on Jacques Waardenburg's premise to understand and treat as "religion" whatever is understood and described as "religion" by the respective communities and interlocutors (Waardenburg 1986; cf. Frazer and Friedli 2015). It is in the

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2 Timothy Fitzgerald emphasizes that the term religion presents in itself a form of mystification and should therefore be avoided (Fitzgerald 2000).

same vein that the phenomenon of "religious" peacemaking is understood and critically examined here.

3. Religion and Peacebuilding: Resources and Productivity

In both public and academic debate, "religious" conflicts receive much attention; religious peacemaking, however, gets considerably less publicity. The following case study of religious peacebuilders, namely Christian churches in post-genocide Rwanda, will serve to unfold the long neglected relationship between religion and peacebuilding.

3.1 *Religious Peacebuilding in Post-Genocide Rwanda*

Roughly half the size of Switzerland, Rwanda is one of the smallest African countries. It leapt to the world's consciousness in 1994, when after three years of civil war, the shortest genocide in recent history took place in Rwanda. Between April and July 1994, up to 1,000,000 men, women and children were brought to death. Most of the victims belonged to the Tutsi minority (about 15 %), but large numbers of the Hutu majority, who refused to participate or tried to protect Tutsi, were killed as well. Hutu and Tutsi (and Twa, a minority of about 1 %) are not conventional ethnic descriptions, rather, they refer to groups of people sharing the same language and culture. These terms used to designate a profession. Whoever had more than ten cattle was considered a cattle-breeder and a Tutsi. If some of the animals died, the owner became a farmer and a Hutu. It was the colonial powers, first Germany and after World War I, Belgium, who enforced these differences by their strategies of divide-et-impera. Richard Friedli thus rightly reminds us of the "historical responsibility of Europe" (Friedli 2000: 138f.) with regard to Africa's ethno-political conflicts.

Since Rwanda's independence in 1962, repeated massacres with hundreds of thousand people killed on both sides bore witness to the deep-seated violence and conflicts that pervaded the entire region. The genocide beginning in April 1994, however, distinguished itself by a number of characteristics. Beside its preventability and its systematic preparation, it stood out due to its brevity, its intensity and also its cruelty. Many victims were burned alive, buried alive or hacked to pieces and thrown into latrines to die. It is due to the violent sexual excesses in the Rwanda genocide that sexual violence and sexual mutilation has since become considered and punishable as a genocidal crime (cf. the so-called "Akayesu ruling" of 1998). Another dis-

tinction of this genocide is that victims and perpetrators oftentimes knew each other. They were neighbors, friends, even family.

While being one of the smallest countries, Rwanda is at the same time the most densely populated country in Africa. It thus does not afford the space for survivors and perpetrators to avoid each other permanently. Nowadays, even long-term prison sentences are drawing to an end and perpetrators are being released. Usually, they go back to their home villages that at the same time are often the place of their crimes and the place where the survivors live. Rwanda's government with current President Paul Kagame is aware of the challenges present in a country divided by fear, hatred and feelings of revenge. The Rwandan government has therefore turned reconciliation into a political tool in its quest for stability, development and economic growth. While Rwanda has made significant economic progress, its record concerning political freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of press continues to give rise to concerns.[3] The ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) acknowledges "its control of the political sphere, citing state security and economic growth as taking priority over political freedoms" (Thomson 2015: 325).

By implementing a "National Politics of Reconciliation," the government pushes reconciliation on several different levels. On a national level, Rwanda's "National Unity and Reconciliation Commission" (NURC) was founded, which offers a number of unity and reconciliation projects throughout the country. The ethnic descriptions "Tutsi," "Hutu," and "Twa" were banned by law. Rather, Rwandan unity is now proclaimed by the official motto "We are all Rwandan." On the judicial level, Rwanda revived its traditional judicial courts, known as gacaca, to face the challenge of over-crowded prisons.[4] From 2001 until their official termination in 2012, about 11,000 gacaca courts throughout the country delivered judgments, with respected people serving as lay-judges. Different projects on the local and individual level were initiated, such as education and sensitization projects and organized encounters between perpetrators and victims.

Here, some remarks concerning the term reconciliation are called for. This term has long since emancipated itself from its former religious context and is now also at home in political and historical discourses. Con-

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3 Reporters Without Borders' 2016 World Press Freedom Index lists Rwanda 161th of 180 surveyed nations (Reporters Without Borders).

4 [gaˈʧaʧa]. The Kinyarwanda term means "grass" and refers to the place in the village where the traditional gacaca courts take place. For a detailed treatment of the gacaca courts (Friese 2010: 59–72).

veying the hope of a "new beginning" after violent conflict, reconciliation is often employed by states in transition in their quest for stability, order and economic progress, the South African "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" being the most well-known example. According to Stephanie van de Loo, reconciliation is a "reciprocal *process* between at least two parties, who in immediate or mediated contact with each other reflect on their mutual relationship, and who aim to design this relationship in a positive and new way by mutual acceptance, as well as the *result* of this process" (Van de Loo 2009: 16).[5] Fernando Enns points out that the process of reconciliation includes "different elements such as the confession of guilt, atonement, asking and granting of forgiveness … up to a newly ordered relationship" (Enns 2013: 24).

And this is where the Christian churches come into play. With over 90 % of the Rwandan population being Christian, religious actors such as the Christian churches take a paramount position within the country's civil society (National Institute of Statistics 2012). This also accords them high significance within the nation's reconciliation process. Since the genocide, the religio-scape in Rwanda has been changing. While in pre-genocide Rwanda, the Catholic Church was the strongest religious player with about 65 % of the population and Protestant denominations making up about 18 % of the Rwandan population, tables are turning. After the genocide, the Catholic Church lost about one third of its members, while the Protestants have doubled in size and continue to grow (National Institute of Statistics 2012).

In the following discussion, the focus is on one Protestant church in particular, the Église Presbytérienne au Rwanda, in short EPR. Compared to other denominations, such as the Rwandan Anglican Church and the Pentecostal Church (ADEPR) with one and two million members, respectively, the EPR is a rather small church with about 300,000 members. Its limited size and its ties to the German-based FBO United Evangelical Mission

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5 Emphasis and translation from German, CS.

(UEM)[6] account for its accessibility as a case study. At the same time, the EPR's engagement for reconciliation and peacebuilding are being echoed in similar ways in other denominations as well.

In general, one sees the Christian churches in Rwanda taking up the government's call for reconciliation. One could also argue that it is the other way around and the government is joining the churches in their reconciliation efforts. It was representatives of different church denominations, who already in 1996 issued a confession of guilt for deeds done and left undone during the genocide, the so-called Detmold Confession, and asked publicly for forgiveness (Detmold Confession; cf. Peetz 2015). Though contested both within and outside the churches, this confession of guilt paved the way for the churches', including the EPR's, further engagements in reconciliation. Reconciliation still remains on the forefront of the EPR's activities. Asked for his priorities during his presidency, Pascal Bataringaya, current president of the EPR, states: "First, evangelization and church growth, second, reconciliation. But both go together." In fact, for Bataringaya, reconciliation seems to be the basis of most other endeavors, including development. "Development and reconciliation go together. We care for reconciliation. And when reconciliation is an option, people can develop."[7]

Yet how does the EPR engage in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts? How are these linked to developmental endeavors? And what role does the Christian faith play in their activities? Three domains of peacebuilding and reconciliation emerge:

(1) Institutions: reconciliation training of their pastors and church staff;
(2) Parishes: activities linked to reconciliation and development in individual parishes and
(3) Remembrance: activities linked to the connection between reconciliation and remembrance.

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6 The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) is rooted in three different mission organizations: the Rhenish Mission (since 1828), the Bethel Mission (since 1886), and the Zaire Mission. In 1996, it became an international communion of churches, with all its partner churches enjoying equal status. While UEM headquarters are in Wuppertal, Germany, there are regional offices in Africa (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) and Asia (Medan, Indonesia) UEM employs about 120 co-workers. UEM places particular significance on diaconia, HIV and AIDS, the rights of women and children, scholarships, development cooperation, intercultural meetings, and project support (see http://www.vemission.org/en/about-uem/who-we-are.html).

7 All quotes: Interview with Pascal Bataringaya. President of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda. Kigali, 21 February 2016.

These will now be discussed in turn.

(1) Institutional level: reconciliation training of pastors and church staff. Shortly after the genocide in 1996, the EPR saw the necessity for a "Centre de formation et de documentation"/"Center for Training and Documentation" (CFD). This centre, according to its self-description, is meant "on one hand, to contribute to the reconstruction of the vitality of religious denominations after the 1994 Genocide tragedy, and, on the other hand, to serve as a cornerstone to the unity and reconciliation process for the people of Rwanda" (cf. EPR Historical Background). Three strategies serve these aims. First, a theological training program directed at pastors, evangelists and lay preachers without formal bible training. Here, biblical teachings on forgiveness, healing and peacebuilding are being relayed and discussed. Second, an interfaith program for Christian—Muslim relations, exploring common resources aimed at "promoting peaceful coexistence and bringing about the holistic development of Rwandan people" (EPR Historical Background). And third, a research and documentation program to assist research on theological and pastoral issues.[8] The work of the CFD is now being supported by the newly established "Dietrich Bonhoeffer Center for Public Theology", founded in February 2016, that focuses particularly on peacebuilding and reconciliation in Rwanda and beyond.

(2) Parish level: activities linked to reconciliation and development. Exemplary of the different activities on the parish level linked to reconciliation and development is the parish of Remera. Here, Remera's EPR pastor, atrained mediator, leads a peacemaking group called the "lights" in reflection of Matthew 5, "You are the light of the world (…) let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven". Members of the "lights" seek to form relationships with victims as well as with perpetrators. Once these relationships have been established, the goal is to bring victims and perpetrators directly together, in guided and regular encounters. Throughout the process, Christian values such as forgiveness, healing, transformation and love are emphasized. This group furthermore conducts seminars on conflict awareness as well as on handling traumatic situations, especially prior to the genocide memorial week in April. In addition to offering weekly meetings with the "lights" and seminars on trauma and healing, the EPR supports the reconciliation process between survivors and perpetrators through developmental projects. The EPR supplies, for

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8 Research and documentation is facilitated through, for instance, access to a theological library, to computers and the internet.

instance, micro-loans in order for survivors and perpetrators to engage in small communal corporations such as the growing and selling of tree saplings. This not only enhances the sustainability of the reconciliation process but at the same time provides much needed income opportunities in particular for the survivors, often widows with few social and financial means. As previously discussed, EPR views reconciliation and development to be inseparably related.

(3) Institutional and parish level: activities linked to reconciliation and remembrance. Any thought of reconciliation is preceded by the thought of the injustice suffered. Reconciliation connects looking back into a painful past with looking forward into a hopeful future. The crucial link between reconciliation and remembrance is recognized in Rwanda by both the government and the churches. Both work closely together, for instance, in the joint preparation of the annual genocide commemoration week each April. In addition, the EPR has its own commemoration projects in different parishes that include memorials with the inscribed names of their pastors and members that were killed[9] as well as ritualized commemoration ceremonies including prayer, sermons and worship. Through the vehicles of prayer or worship, traumatized people may find ways of expressing their emotions of pain, anger or fear in a societal context where the public expression of negative feelings is usually restricted. Knowing that their own sufferings as well as that of their loved ones are not forgotten, neither by God nor by their fellow humans, helps survivors live in the present. By their official recognition, their suffering is acknowledged and accorded a legitimate place in the church and in society at large.

While the Rwandan churches—as exemplified by the EPR—engage in multifaceted and extensive efforts in reconciliation and peacebuilding, certain problematic areas can be identified as well. One of them relates to the connection between reconciliation and justice. In this regard, John Paul Lederach's concept of reconciliation is helpful. Lederach understands reconciliation as four-dimensional, namely as the combination of peace, justice, mercy and truth (Lederach 1999). Genuine reconciliation must pay attention to all four elements. As for the Rwandan churches, one notices a major emphasis on peace and mercy, yet less attention is being given to justice and truth. This observation is shared by Josephine Sundqvist who remarks in her study of the Pentecostal Movement and its implications on the reconciliation process "that the Pentecostal movement has barely been

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9 The Presbyterian Church lost 41 (i.e. more than half) of its pastors, elders and deacons and a large number of its members in the genocide.

emphasizing justice in their reconciliation strategy or their interpretation of the concept" (Sundqvist 2011: 169). However, concerns of justice seem of particular importance in a context marked by the domination of "all levels of socio-political life" (Thomson 2015: 324) by the government and its ruling party.

To sum up, reconciliation and peacebuilding have emerged as central to the self-understanding of the EPR as they are closely linked to the EPR's vision of evangelization and development.[10] The EPR engages in a variety of peacebuilding initiatives, of which three were discussed: theological training, activities linking reconciliation and development, and activities linking reconciliation and remembrance. Within all these activities, the Christian faith is clearly visible. Christian values such as forgiveness, peace and healing serve as both motivation and orientation. On the other hand, concerns of justice and truth appear rather neglected by the churches.

3.2 Religious and Non-Religious Peacebuilding

Based on the case study of the EPR and its reconciliation and peacebuilding activities, the focus of this paper now shifts to the following questions: are there any differences between faith-based and non-faith-based peacemakers? Are there any specific competences that can be attributed to the former? Any specific resources that cannot be tapped by the latter? I will first discuss a number of formal characteristics of religious peacemakers, followed by content-based characteristics.[11]

Formal characteristics: Comparing religious and non-religious peacebuilding, R. Scott Appleby points first and foremost to the relationship component that makes religious leaders particularly well equipped for engaging in peacemaking endeavors by building constructive relationships to and between different ethnic and religious groups (Appleby 2006). Their com-

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10 The EPR describes its vision under the perspective of evangelization and development, "firstly to evangelize by proclaiming the love and salvation offered by God through his son Jesus Christ … and secondly to manifest the love of God through the concrete actions of human and social development". Église presbytérienne au Rwanda (EPR). Vision and Mission (http://www.epr.rw/index.php/en/about-us/vision-and-mission, last accessed, 1 February 2018).

11 Formal characteristics such as neutrality or competences in relationship building are markers that are not dependent on a specific religion. Content-based characteristics, on the other hand, refer to features of a certain religion, for instance, the concepts of forgiveness or reconciliation in the Christian tradition. At times, however, the borderline between formal and content-based characteristics can be fluid.

petence in relationship building is enhanced by the fact that religious actors tend to enjoy moral authority and credibility. They are perceived as "neutral", i.e. as not pursuing their own personal gain or that of a certain group but being committed only to peace. These characteristics of religious peacemakers correlate to the four areas of how religious actors can positively contribute to conflict resolution that Bouta, Kadayifci-Orellana and Abu-Nimer identify: (1) "Emotional and spiritual support to war-affected communities;" (2) effective mobilization for "their communities and others for peace;" (3) mediation "between conflicting parties" and (4) encouraging "reconciliation, dialogue, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration" (Bouta *et al.* 2005; Haynes 2007: 69).

Content-based characteristics: The Christian religion, for instance, with its emphasis on love, forgiveness and reconciliation offers powerful and constructive resources for the transformation even of deep conflicts. Through different tools such as sermons, worship or prayer, religious actors, both as individuals and communities, engage in a holistic effort aimed at transforming the entire person, including habits and relationships. Bataringaya points out: "It [i.e. reconciliation] is not easier when you are a Christian. But: Christians have the word of God. This is a big help. The pastor and the church can play a great role in healing. It is better if you have the word of God. This is hope."[12] While churches such as the EPR also include tools and methods of secular conflict transformation work, for instance,psychosocial therapy or trauma counselling, Bataringaya describes the abiding difference between religious and secular peacebuilding: "The power by the word of God that the church possesses. The churches have something special. They walk with the people, with the perpetrators, with the victims. People feel that they are not alone. ."[13] Religious actors can therefore reach a deep and existential level that is seldom attained in secular conflict resolution programs.

Due to its focus on holistic transformation, religion furthermore bestows a sense of empowerment. The religious actor sees his or her own individual peacebuilding action as part of a larger purpose. In complex conflict situations where progress is not readily visible oftentimes, this framework provides much needed encouragement. Marc Gopin calls these indi-

12   Interview with Pascal Bataringaya, 21 February 2016.
13   Interview with Pascal Bataringaya, 21 February 2016.

vidual steps "positive increments of change" (PICs),[14] i.e. first-order goals that are significant for peacebuilding in and of themselves. They may eventually lead up to higher-order goals such as paradigm shifts for sustainable peace or they may not. In either case, these increments should be looked upon as success. They gain even more meaning when viewed from a spiritual perspective. "The sacralization of the PIC can be emotionally transformative and more sustainable" (Gopin 2009: 76).

4. Conclusion

Does religion make a difference in peacebuilding? Are there any specific capacities and competences that religious actors can resort to in this field? If so, what are these? This contribution investigated possible answers to these questions in two parts. First, the term "religious" violence was revealed as problematic due to a continuing lack of definition of the term "religion". Furthermore, religion's inherent ambivalence was pointed out.[15] While religion certainly does possess conflict enhancing traits, as much of current opinions emphasize, it also incorporates significant and underestimated resources for conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

The second and main part was concerned with the resources and productivity that religion itself can bring to peacebuilding. Utilizing a case study of religious peacebuilding in post-genocide Rwanda, this part traced reconciliation activities of the local Presbyterian church. Compared to non-religious peacebuilding actors such as the Rwandan government, the following aspects emerged.

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14 "The key criterion of evaluation is that the effect of the increment is transformative, meaning that it profoundly changes the attitude and approach *of at least some people* toward peace and away from destructive forms of conflict. That is all it need do to qualify as a PIC. At the end of the day, it does not matter *how many* people have been transformed but that this increment is inherently transformative" (Gopin 2009: 68).

15 This ambiguity in terms of FBOs is pointed out by Ware *et al.*: "FBOs have mixed roles in relation to conflict and peacebuilding. Some authors propose that while religious difference is often at the centre of conflicts, with religious organisations often involved, the same organisations are also vital to peacebuilding. (…) In other words, they can draw on behavioural expectations like peace-oriented teachings, or repentance for furthering reconciliation, and use negotiation between denominational or inter-faith organisations to bring people together for dialogue in ways secular NGOs may not be able" (Ware *et al.* 2016: 328). On religious communities as peacemakers, cf. Kelleher and Johnson 2008: 160.

First, the Christian message of forgiveness, grace, transformation and healing is utilized in the training of pastors and church staff. It provides helpful resources as the pastors deliver the message and their normative implications in their parishes. In weekly sermons, regular group activities such as youth groups, bible study groups or women's groups as well as through worship the message of peace and forgiveness is spread.

Connected to the first is a *second* aspect that is related to cultural norms. In Rwandan society, public expressions of pain such as crying is not a socially acceptable behaviour. The sphere of religion, however, constitutes an exception to this rule. During church services, through the channels of song and dance, traumatized survivors can express their emotions, a first step towards inner healing.

Third, churches like the EPR utilize a mixed approach to reconciliation. While they bring to bear their own specific Christian resources, they also include helpful secular strategies from mediation, conflict resolution or trauma therapy. By offering seminars in the familiar context of the church setting in the home village, possible psychological barriers are lowered to participate.

Fourth, by "walking with the people" (Bataringaya) the church offers an approach that is built on long-term relationships, trust and community. Survivors in particular, often socially, spiritually and materially weakened, profit from the relational and existential emphasis.

Fifth, the EPR displays a "holistic" approach to reconciliation. Reconciliation is not only preached from the pulpit, but practical and material help is provided as well. Linking reconciliation projects and development projects such as through shared corporations seem to enhance the sustainability of both.

While the link between violence and terrorism on the one side and religion on the other is easily made these days, it was the aim of this contribution to shed some light on the less noticed connection between religion and peacebuilding. As Heist and Cnaan (2016:13) conclude, "There are many ways by which people can actualize their faith. Hatred and terrorism is one way; serving people in need is another way. In the context of international social and economic development, the faith-based organizations are countering the impact of extremist groups".

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