Role of religion in international development:

The case for more holistic development

By

Ivana Amidzic

A Major Research Paper submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Arts in International Development Studies

December, 2017, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Approved: Dr. Anne Marie Dalton

Supervisor

Approved: Dr. Kate Ervine

Graduate Program Coordinator

Date: December 18, 2017

Abstract

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Abstract: Religion and development have complicated relationship since the beginning of what we know as modern day international development. Religion was often denied, ignored and at times instrumentally used in development. This continues in contemporary era of neo-liberalism and globalization. However, changes have been made and religion keeps reappearing in development, more often than not in a negative context. But this is too simplistic way to observe the role of one of the most significant factors in how people live and make decisions. The importance of religion in the developing world is on the rise and therefore it cannot be neglected and overlooked. Religion and religious beliefs and their place in people's lives coupled with increased engagement of Faith Based Organizations in international development do bring significant contribution in bettering developing outcomes as well as helping in a debate on more holistic development in the world.

December 18, 2017

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Introduction

The relationship between religion and development has been tense from the moment international development got its recognition as a new paradigm and later with theoretical and practical frameworks of it own. Religion was seen as opposed to modernization, development and progress. In addition, religion and development were seen not only as opposed but also as being totally separate categories of dealing with reality. This view started changing only recently and very gradually. Reasons for the recent change are many and range from disappointment in contemporary development methods, increasing influence of religious leaders in the world and especially in the developing world, so called crisis of secularization, globalization, and increased influence of international institutions versus individual states. As a consequence, academics as well as policy makers in development acquired a renewed interest in religion and its role in society. In this way, they hold open a space to change development as well.

Even though the majority of authors in the field of development agree that religion should be more present in development they do not all agree why that should be the case. For example, authors such as Jeffrey Haynes, Katherine Marshall, Gerrie ter Haar, Kurt Ver Beek, and Séverine Deneulin & Masooda Bano all argue that religion should be approached as an integral component of, rather than just an add-on to, international development. What this means is that religion is a value in itself and as such not separate from people's lives at all and therefore should not be separated from development processes. On the other side there is a group of authors who argue that if the involvement of religion is beneficial to development itself, only then religion should be included in development. This approach is called additive. This paper is concerned with authors who argue that religion should be included in

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development in an organic way as a value in itself. Rationale behind this is intended to explore possible positive contributions to more holistic development that will include as

Many categories and values that play a major role in people's lives, be they visible and obvious or not. Once religion is seen as an integral part of development itself then development becomes prone to change its theory, policy and practice and thus become more holistic. As classical forms of development are being critiqued by theorists of post-development there is an obvious opening to the inclusion of religion. Post-development's ideas of Buen Vivir and degrowth offer examples of contemplating and practising a more holistic approach to development. Not unimportant is the fact that the majority of post-development authors and academics actually come from developing areas themselves and have quite different and more organic approaches than many Western scholars and practitioners do. In today's world of globalization and interconnectedness there are events and phenomena that offer practical and real time platforms for post-development activists, academics, practitioners and students to come together and discuss and tackle modern day development issues. One of such platforms is World Social Forum (WSF) that has significant importance in general. As the biggest and most massive gathering, it facilitates the meeting of various players in development and does engage religious and faith based participation.

As representative of religious communities worldwide Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) are present on local, regional and international level and make up a significant percentage of organizations that are in various ways involved in international development. Again, these organizations are involved on local and global level. Their role is increasing in the international arena, which corresponds

with their presence and representation in United Nations (UN) itself. Most of the scholars on religion and development agree that FBOs do deserve to be recognized as significant players i international development and that they do have a complicated and complex role to play, as complicated as religion and development relationship itself is. This paper focuses on those scholars who encourage a positive outlook not only on religion itself but also on FBOs and their practices.

The paper also focuses on the potential for future involvement of religion in productive and collaborative ways with other secular organizations and institutions on the national and international level. Here FBOs have a role to play and can influence development in a number of different, direct and indirect ways. By incorporating "spirit, soul, mind and body" they contribute an important part of holistic development. This paper explores the ways FBOs as well as post-development expressions such is World Social Forum, fit the post-development momentum and their possible contribution to more holistic development in the future.

Religion is a complex term and there is no one definition that is universally accepted and sufficient to explain its complexity. When talking about religion in this paper I am referring to any system of belief in a non-materialist element in the universe (this includes what some refer to as spirituality too). That belief may be to an external god/gods/supernatural force or to an internal essence as in some forms of Buddhism. The next section will briefly review the historical ties between religion and modernization theory, as they are important for understanding the complicated relationship between international development and religion.

Modernization theory is early development theory that is primarily concerned with economic development as the main direction societies and countries needed to follow in order to accomplish progress and change for the better. Modernization became a

virtual synonym for development as development got its shape and its name after the Second World War. In development, modernization is seen as part of classical development theory. Although modernization theory has roots in writings such as those of Max Weber and his *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* that was first published in 1905, this paper focuses on its application in the middle of 20th century, just after the Second World War.

Weber was a social scientist that wrote extensively on the link between Protestantism and spontaneous development of capitalism. Modernization theory is based on the premise that traditional societies will develop and prosper after they adopt and implement modern ways of producing and organizing themselves. As Peter Berger observes, this notion was backed up by sociology and its secularization theory which claims that the leap to modernity leads to a decline of religion (2008, p. 2). In Naz's words modernization is crucial as it brings "total" transformation of everything old and traditional (2006, p. 65). What this means in terms of importance for this paper, is that psychocultural theories of modernization paid attention to behavioural, psychological and cultural dimensions of a society, while cultural was strongly related to religious. For example, technological progress and social change caused differences in personalities. This means that, according to mentioned theories, people that were not exposed to such changes and advancement were the ones who grew to be authoritarian and uncreative, all due to their own perceptions that their lives have been controlled by unforeseen forces which made them fear the world and fall into dullness. Thus, it is safe to suggest that modernization proponents took modernization as the main protagonist in a big leap of humanity towards commonly desired human evolution. There emerged a model of Western developed countries that must to be followed by the rest of the world in order for modernization to accomplish its

tendencies of leaving traditional behind and moving into a space of modern on a world level.

For the purpose of this paper, authors I am using to discuss modernization here are those who represent mostly a critique of it rather than contemplating it in an affirmative way, although there are many others who write about modernization in superlatives. Authors mentioned in this paper are Ha-Joon Chang, Deneulin & Bano and Haynes.

Chang observes that attempts to respond to the new demands for direction in the world after Second World War in Latin American, structuralists argued in favour of a strategy called Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). This strategy would serve as a shield for the countries on the periphery. It included plans for those countries to organize their economies to be less dependent on product importation from the West while remaining dependent on raw material exports to the West. ISI had a key determination that was not only economic, but also reflected the political and ideological orientation of some Southeast Asian governments. ISI as a policy imposed strict rules with the aim of developing their countries and staying as self-sufficient as possible. The poster child of this kind of development is South Korea where the government imposed strict, even brutal orientation on production for export based consumption (2003, p. 127). It resulted in South Korea's rapid growth while the country was able to bypass neoliberal austerity measures pushed on developing countries by International Financial Institutions (IFIs). Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson explain that this and similar systems belong to so called extractive political institutions. Small political elites tend to works for their own gain and exploit the rest of the people, mainly those they should be responsible to. They do however have some qualities of inclusive economic institutions but use them not to support social

and economic activity with long-term goals in mind, but rather with shortsighted aims in mind and without sustainability and care or the future of everyone. In this way they prove the point of dependency theorists that other ways of development are possible and necessary for different countries, since one model does not fit all (2013, p. 70), by using precisely the example of South Korea.

Deneulin & Bano point out that the beginning of the modernization period is marked at a different period of time by different authors. So, there are scholars who place the modernization and industrialization period of mid 1800s, while there are those, such as Wolfgang Sachs, strictly link it to aftermath of Second World War and the need for Western countries to be rebuilt and others to catch up with them. The main notion of modernization is that economic growth and prosperity is the main engine for rebuilding or igniting development. Anything that would hinder or threat that kind of outlook ought to be ostracized and disabled. For example, fear of religious promotion of asceticism was linked to fear of people consuming less instead of more, ignoring material existence and planning for a heavenly life. In fact, Deneulin & Bano draw on Arthur Lewis' *Theory of Economic Growth* from 1955 to explain this fear of low consumption that can make production meaningless and therefore stunt economic growth (2009, p. 31). Indeed, that kind of reasoning based in modernity gives value to the external and material, rather than to the inner and invisible in life. Unfortunately this was the major ideology used to secure people's dedication to production, consumerism and economic expansion. That kind of situation required ethics shaped in a way to promote productivity, rationalization, hard work and such. This was one of the ways in which Weber connected Protestantism with such growth arguing that Protestant Christianity moved hard work and systemic

organization into the area morality. In one expression of this hard work and a sense of industry was considered a mark of the "saved."

Haynes explains that modernity was assumed as the end goal of all developing countries after the Second World War and some of them looked to the Western model while some looked to the Communist ideas and practices of the time. In both cases, there was a model that ought to be followed in order for societies to modernize and "grow up" in a sense (Haynes, 2007, p 6). What both models had in common was state planning and policies that outlined exact requirements for modernization to take place. For example, the Western model proposed that developed countries ought to grow its economy for 5% per annum in order to keep on track with the task. This was to be accomplished via development aid from the West.

Finally, there is a question of how modernization influences religion. Modernization theory was part of a secular stream of development (Ishaqzay, 2013, p. 10) that extends at least from the end of the Second World War to the present. It then ends with revival of modernization in the form of neo-liberalism and in the context of globalization as we have it today. Here comes explanation of scant historical overview placing the phases of modernization into the specific socio-political context of the Second World War aftermath with special emphasis on the role the United States of America had in shaping the direction of future development and later of globalization. The focus is on the production of knowledge and its effects. The production of knowledge dominates development theory in its different stages. For example, the terms 'traditional' and 'modern' in development theory and practice interact significantly with ideas of technological advancement and economic growth. In this context, it can be seen that religion is one of the components that was first marginalized and then objectified by development theory. As mentioned earlier the

spirit of total change and departure from the traditional was supported by various

studies. These studies of course rested on what constituted "modern" and "primitive"

within modernization theory. One of the studies described an imagined Pakistani

man, one traditional and one modern with clearly outlined differences between

traditional and modern. The Table below illustrates this.

TABLE 1. Traditional and Modern Man

Traditional	Modern
Not receptive to new ideas	Open to new experiences
Rooted in tradition	Changes orientation
Interested only in immediate things	Interested in the outside world
Denial of different opinions	Acknowledgment of different opinions
Uninterested in new information	Eager to seek out new information
Oriented towards the past	Punctual; oriented toward the present
Concerned with the short term	Values planning
Distrustful of people beyond the family	Calculability; trusts people to meet obligations
Suspicious of technology	Values technical skills
Places high value on religion and sacred	Places high value on education and science

Traditional client-patron relationships	Respects the dignity of others
Particularistic	Universalistic
Fatalistic	Optimistic

Sources: Inkeles & Smith (1974, pp. 19-34); Scott (1995, p. 29), as presented in Peet & Hartwick (2009, p. 126).

This table shows that a traditional person that places high value on religion at the same time does not place value on scientific knowledge and education and therefore stays primitive. Religion is a killjoy of science and education. Here the authors expose how arbitrary and paternalistically these criteria were set up so that they could serve a purpose of ridiculing traditional personality in a non-Western country (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, pp. 125-126). The bottom line is that development meant that the personality has to change in order to be able to 'receive' the goodness of education, scientific curiosity and sophistication of the Western "advanced" model. Obviously, the issue is that most of these assumptions and propositions are quite Eurocentric, ethnocentric and paternalistic in their nature, most probably with hegemonic intent as well.

Modernization theory was a synonym for progress and progress meant economic development and growth. It also thereby set the meaning for all those who did not fit their definition and program of progress. According to the psychological and sociological theories (referred to above) "[e]conomic development and growth originated in the growth of the modern personality'', while this clearly meant ''westernizing it and modernizing it'' (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, p. 126). The classical Western model of development relies on modernization as the primary force in putting policies and suitable forms of governance in place, which then in turn will

allow for the smooth functioning of the rational, economic and technological development of a given society. Joseph Schumpeter (Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, 1942) describes this process of transforming societies by what is now referred to as "Schumpeter's creative destruction. " (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013, p. 84; Naz, 2006, p. 68). Indeed, as a modernization economist Schumpeter suggested that in order for societies to develop and prosper there has to be a technological innovation that will arise out of destruction of the old and out-dated. So, in order for the new to arise the old has to be completely destroyed. Besides creating new consumers, modernization ought to "turn the poor into objects of knowledge and management". However, Verhelst & Tyndale contend that in past twenty years this kind of approach towards development only brought about destruction of "many societies and community structures". This is mostly evident how such development encouraged ruthless competition rather than cooperation when private property becomes the norm. This competition does not fit well with many people's outlook and established societal norms (p. 2). This kind of approach to knowledge is reductionist and acts, in the words of Goulet "as if man could live by bread alone, as if human destiny could be stripped to its material dimensions alone" (1980, p. 481).

Development and religion

Scholars place the historical beginning of international development, at different dates with some scholars placing it at the beginning of industrial revolution, and some even going further than that mentioning the Roman Empire and such. However, this paper focuses on international development as it was put in place after Second World War. It was then that the actual discipline of international development was officially named as such. President Harry S. Truman gave a famous speech in 1949 during his presidential inauguration. In the speech he officially declared some nations of the

world 'underdeveloped' (Sachs, 1992, pp. 2-3) and proclaimed that Western nations headed by United States of America ''must embark on a new bold program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas'' (Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, paragraph 43).

Underdeveloped areas were designated and the cure for them offered, in the shape of 'development'. Such a program included   the formation of international financial and development institutions and organizations aimed at developing countries that needed to be modernized. These institutions came into place immediately after the Second World War at a United Nations and Monetary Fund Conference, better known as Bretton Woods Conference (1944), held in the state of New Hampshire. International and financial institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization are supported by economic growth and technology that are at the forefront of the mainstream development theories, practices and policies coupled with a substantial infrastructure. The United States of America needed to recover from war and renew its economic power while Western Europe had to be renewed and reinvented after the terrible physical, financial and psychological destruction left as a legacy of the Second World War. Plans for this included a strong policy orientation with government institutions leading the way. New markets were needed to support Western revival. Decolonization could provide for that, by 'modernizing' colonies, dependent countries and societies.   This involved not only turning them into virtual   replicas of Western societies, but also consequently converting them into new fresh markets and consumer spots largely to benefit the West.

Immediate challenges to this kind of modernization approach and subsequently its relationship to religion in international development appeared as strong political and socio-economic waves took on several different directions simultaneously. Newly empowered leaders of the Third World took quite different and context specific positions in relation to these new Western plans and propositions. Some were in line with how the West saw the solution to the great problem, while some were not as obedient and servile as expected. Some of these countries in the not-so-obedient category included are African colonies such as Ghana and as well as Eastern European countries such as Russia, Yugoslavia and such. In many countries most of the policies and projects were implemented and carried out by official governmental agencies, many belonging to the United States of America.

With the zest for modernization and development, The United Nations marked the year 1960 as the beginning of a Development Decade with the emphasis on economic growth. This was additionally stressed by then president of United States of America, J.F. Kennedy when, as a part of his inaugural speech he declared, cited by United Nations "to those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves" (The United Nations Children's Fund).

According to modernization theory science and religion are fundamentally opposite and the presence of religion is seen as a sure hindrance to progress based on science. Another important point to be made is that in this stage of development theory any kind of progress was seen not only as primarily characterized by the presence of technology and capital and absence of religion and tradition, but also as following a linear trajectory that was essentially one dimensional. The five main stages as delineated by Peet and Hartwick are traditional society, pre-take-off stage,

take off, and drive to maturity and finally age of high mass consumption (2009, pp. 126-129). As a traditional society is the first and the most 'backward' stage of economic and social development, its components cannot, and must not, survive if that society is to climb the proverbial ladder of development.

On the policy side modernization and development were very much influenced by the atmosphere of the Cold War and ever-present fear of communism. Soon after The Development Decade began dependency theory appeared in 1970 as a leftist alternative and response to modernization theory. Dependency theory argued that, while modernization theory advocated for industrialization and technological development, at the same time it also implied the necessity for complete disappearance of indigenous cultures and their replacement with Western, European cultural values and practices. The main argument of dependency theory is that if societies take the path proposed by modernization theorists and practitioners it will only result in dependency and further deterioration of developing countries. Obviously deterioration was the opposite of what modernization had suggested. Moreover, as the West behaves as a 'centre' and developing countries as 'peripheries' the centre remains the main beneficiary. The so-called underdeveloped countries never achieve their own independence and power of agency.

In order to understand the present situation we need to examine briefly how concepts of development continued to exclude religion. Haynes explains that development was tied to modernization and secularization while religion was not included by either of them. By nature of that relationship religion was excluded from development as well (2007, p. 2). This was no accident, but "wilful blindness" on the part of development that did not find religion to fit modernization concepts (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 2016). Renewed interest in religion

came from the so called crisis of secularism and failed neo-liberal policies as well as the weakening of individual state roles and turning more to globalization and international institutional governance system (Haynes, 2014, pp. 29-30).

Haynes argues that religion should be included in development discourse in an organic way because religion provides meaning and a level of serenity for people who adhere to it. Religion therefore directly influences and shapes and improves the quality of people's lives, especially of the poor. However, the exact impact and precise outcomes on involving religion in international development cannot be precisely measured (Haynes, 2007, p. 55). There have been attempts to measure certain aspects of religion, especially related to economic development. Generally these studies are inclusive. The Baha'i Faith continues efforts to measure various effects of religion on development (Baha'i International Community). In addition, Haynes does not deny that religion plays controversial and complicated roles throughout the world, but argues for a more balanced and positive view of religion pointing out what religion has to offer in search for solutions to current world problems, such as conflict resolution, economic development and environmental issues. For example, in the parts of the world where states are weak to facilitate development and provide relief, FBOs can have a significant role in this via providing social networks and the missing link to governance from these particular states. This is especially pronounced in African states that suffer from conflict (2014, p. 105). Another example would be so called European Islam and its democratic tendencies to mix religion and secular in the old continent (Haines, 2011, Guido Carli University, YouTube interview). European Muslims are quite embracing of the political democracy of countries where they live while still identifying as Muslims. This demonstrates the possibility of coexistence, instead of on-going conflict, of modern

institutions and religious guidelines of religious communities.

On the applied and practical side, Haynes makes a clear distinction between secular development organizations and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in terms of the means and end goal of development for which they strive. According to this author, secular organizations are almost always interested in economic growth and technological progress while FBOs are better rounded and concerned with holistic development, that is concerned with the human development dimension rather than economic growth only (2007, p. 1). On the policy side, there is an increasing presence of FBOs on the international scene in general and in international policy bodies, such as UN, in particular (2014, p. 29). This may be a consequence of state's weakening role and the strengthening of international institution governance roles due to globalization. Here Haynes primarily thinks of the UN and points out that Judeo-Christianity is the basis of the secular oriented UN, borrowing much of its language and values from that tradition (2014, p. 167). This in turn accounts for why so many FBOs have the UN as their focal point (2014, p. 168).

Another important proponent of including religion in development discourse is the Netherlands scholar, Gerrie Ter Haar. Ter Haar sees religion as a "distinctive quality of each community" and as something that cannot be seen as apart from community and development (2011, p. xvii). In addition to reasons given by Haines for the exclusion of religion from development, Ter Haar stresses the complete misunderstanding on the part of the development community about what religion actually is in the first place. What this means is that the development community misses the fact that for a lot of people religion is not something separate but rather very connected to the physical world they live in. The spirit world is active, for them, in the day-to-day lives they live. Thus this results in holistic practices of religion and

views of the world, unlike the one-dimensional views international development

generally has (ter Haar & Ellis, 2006, p. 354). As a consequence of this misconception

ter Haar finds that religious ideas were never actually taken seriously from a

development perspective; they were never accepted as a set of ideas that are

"meaningful in their own right" and "part of the distinctive quality of each

community" (ter Haar, 2011, pp. 16-17).

There is no "disappearance" of religion and its activities but there is instead its

increasing role in community life in Africa, in particular. This fact alone is a reason

for renewed interest in religion by international development scholars and

practitioners. The developing world "contains an enormous diversity of religious and

spiritual traditions, whose potential for development has hardly been considered" (ter

Haar & Ellis, 2006, pp. 351-354). Ter Harr argues a relationship that honours and

takes seriously the religious contexts can create new ways of building partnerships

between African nations and the European Union, (EU); while so far the EU has

formulated it policies based on primarily on classical development theories. This

author sees the commissioning of the report Our Common Interest by the Commission

for Africa in 2005, as a pivotal piece in increasing interest in religion in Europe. There

are also a proliferation of numerous European research centres and think tanks, such

as Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK and Knowledge

Forum on Religion and Development Policy in the Netherlands (ter Haar & Ellis,

2006, p. 352). This is significant in that some policy makers of today understand the

religious and spiritual beliefs of people as a significant part of their own resources for

development (ter Haar & Ellis, 2006, p. 353). Ter Haar warns that the Word Bank's

management, irrespective of how it sees the role of religion, instrumentally or

otherwise, stays hugely sceptical around actual policies that would engage religion on

a global level (2011, p. 47).

Ter Haar argues that the value of religion lies in its intrinsic position in each community and therefore cannot be something apart (from development) (2011, p. xvii), which explains this author's sustained integral approach to religion. Development, she claims, simply failed in understanding how to measure 'the good life' (p. 4). When talking about the importance of traditional beliefs, witchcraft, spirits and rituals in many communities, in an interview she explains that without understanding these phenomena and other things that happen on the ground, we cannot respond appropriately from a development perspective. Ideas about spirits and invisible world are crucial. For example, she gives an example of agriculture and the way land is intimately connected to spirits and spirituality in certain indigenous communities. If we do not understand this in dealing with land we fail in our development efforts (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, November 2009). Seeking help of religious leaders is important since they could help 'translate' between a community and development project. Many of these occurrences are prominent in contemporary Ghana. Witchcraft in many cases is "central part of how many people live and reason".

Marshall agrees with previously mentioned authors that most development programs were neglectful of religion and adds that this is also the case in international relations and academic literature (2011, p. 28). One of the general background themes of the relations between religion and development this author offers is mutual suspicion by each other's rhetoric and vocabulary (2001, p. 345; 2011, p. 28). Marshall explains that t development theorists and policy-makers describe their projects and goals in overly technical and dry jargon, while religious leaders often use

exclusive spiritual and sacred words to describe desired and possible changes in their societies. This causes distrust and misunderstanding.

Marshall relates an interesting parable to illustrate what often characterizes the relationship of development to religion. In 1992 on one of the trips to Mauritania she talked about the importance of various resources to one of the country's high representatives. Questions were asked about various resources including donkeys that were over abundant and useful for people doing the fieldwork. However, this high representative denied the very existence of donkeys in the country even when presented with blunt evidence of their presence everywhere they went. Donkeys were denied simply because they were not part of the envisioned policy that was conveyed from the top-down and was not about to change in the light of new of evidence. Marshall says this is parable about development and religion as well, where in the face of obvious evidence that religion is all around, that it is one of the most important resources and life contexts of poor people world wide, development agents stills refuse to see it as such since it does not fit their previously carefully crafted reality, what counts and what doesn't and how aspects of reality are compartmentalized. The way the problems are envisioned and what is counted as important is different according to whether one uses a comprehensive or selective approach. (Marshall, 2001, pp. 342-344).

Marshall agrees that religion is complicated and its role in development controversial but claims that are many benefits of first admitting the presence of religion worldwide and secondly recognizing its positive contributions. For example, education is one of the fields in which this could be seen in the most profound way. As an illustration, there is a development-religious dialogue stemming from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were succeeded by the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Since education is such a central question for both development and religion (similar to poverty), and "which might lead both to effective joint advocacy and to tangible progress in addressing issues that block progress" (Marshall, 2001, p. 365). Obviously, education can be a point of cooperation and overlap.

On the practical side and in positive affirmation of FBOs as important actors in development, Marshall points out that there are numerous latent strengths shared by religious communities and organizations that are broadly divided according to organizational and motivational features. From an organizational perspective "they are present in every level of a society" through various channels of distribution. In fact, they are "the largest distribution system in the world", which is especially important during emergencies, in troubled areas, rural environments and where official development institutions cannot penetrate well. On the motivational side they are all about serving communities and people and are perceived to be more sensitive to people's needs in times of "chaos, conflict and emergency" coupled with enjoying higher levels of trust than governmental agencies and institutions in many areas (March 2006).

Marshall observes that ''most contemporary academic literature on international relations has scant mention of religion. Diplomatic training programmes and practice have rarely treated religious dimensions in any systematic fashion. Diplomacy's neglect of religion over most of the twentieth century spilled over into international development work'' (Marshall, 2011, pp. 27-28). Similarly, Lunn argues that ''the systematic omission or devaluing of religion in scholarship is a form of cultural imperialism which could result in the reduced effectiveness of development research and potentially damaging interventions". An important point in favour of the

possibility of a more holistic development is the fact that ''a significant proportion of the academic literature on religion and development has emerged from non-Western scholars and practitioners, while this literature is also often the most radical and challenging'' (Lunn, 2009, pp. 940-941).

One of the causes of a renewed interest by the international development community and institutions in religion was the so-called 'crises of development'. This crisis was manifested in a dramatic failure to lift the majority of developing countries out of poverty. Quite the opposite happened. The primarily technocratic approach failed to deliver the expected results. Most of these countries were worse off in 1990s than they were 20 years before that. Neo-liberal models of privatisation and liberalization did not work, as predicted and new solutions were needed. Neo-classical development theory saw revival of modernization in 1990s, this time through means of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). What is radically different about this latest version of modernization theory is that the predominant role is played by agents for totally free markets that are for global laissez-faire capitalism, to the virtual exclusion of government interventions. Structural adjustment programs (SAPs) involve very conservative loans given to developing countries that come with sets of requirements and conditionalities such as fiscal austerity and government's spending cuts, mainly on social spending. Austerity, privatization and fiscal conservatism are the main markers of this political economic approach. As Peet & Hartwick argue ''the sociological theory of modernization, especially the idea that progress means replicating the experience of the West, underlies most conventional development theories, including contemporary neoliberal economic policy'' (2009, p. 131). In addition, Latouche is more specific; ''the claim of economic growth to be the basic

objective of human society is therefore mainly based on the famous trickle-down effect, magnified by the euphoria of the myths of modernity'' (1997, p. 139). One of the significant responses to this new incarnation of classical international development theory was the report by World Commission on Culture and Development, entitled Our Creative Diversity. The World Commission was established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1996 in order to investigate and produce report about the role of culture in development. Critiques such as those of Perez de Cuellar (President of this commission and its report producer), as well as Tyndale, pointed to the exclusion of beneficiaries and their worldviews, short-sightedness on how "people understand the world, make decisions and take action'' (1996, p. 14; 2000. p. 9) and lack of recognition that spiritual and sacred are not always and everywhere strictly separated from secular. De Cuellar says, "cultural dimension of human life are possibly more essential than growth" (1996, p. 14). In making the case for how culture is crucial for people's lives and (same as religion) should not be taken instrumentally, this report states "a clearly defined reality, the notion of culture is so broad and polysemic, and the interactions between "culture" and "development" so difficult even to describe, let alone measure" (1996, p. 10). Furthermore, the report aims to create a set of international principles that will be able to provide a global forum "where international consensus on good practice concerning culture and development can be achieved and the task of rethinking current approaches carried a significant step further" (de Cuellar, 1996, p. 10). These sentiments were repeated by another crucial report published by the World Bank in 2000 titled Voices of the Poor: Can Someone Hear Us? In this report, emphasis is placed on the importance of people's cultural identities "through rituals, celebrations, and festivals" (Narayan, 2000, p. 43). The

report points to the obvious but neglected fact that poor people who are the main beneficiaries of development projects worldwide, have views that need to be listen to closely. "[F]or many poor people social solidarity is one of the most important assets available to them". The report concludes that the biggest challenge so far has been "to look at the world through the eyes and spirit of the poor, to start with poor people's realities and then trace upwards and outwards to identify, and then make, the changes needed to impact poor people's lives" (Narayan, 2000, p. 274).

Attention to religion per se increased but especially aimed at faith based organizations (FBOs). This attention was double sided, optimistic and suspicious, but nevertheless former World Bank's' then-president James Wolfensohn, urged by Anglican Church leaders, initiated dialogue with FBOs (Marshall, 2011, p. 37; Olowu, 2011, p. 57). This resulted in forming the body that would connect and engage in dialogue between international development institutions and world religious leaders – World Faiths and Development Dialogue. This new non-for-profit body marked a change in strategic priorities for international community and multilateral institutions. Not only that religion was recognized as a strategic interest but also parallels were drawn between issues faced by both religion and international development.

Indeed, as Marshall points out ''the core argument for active dialogue between institutions of faith and development is that there are enormous areas of overlap, convergence, shared concern and knowledge, and a core common purpose (2011, p. 52). It is important to notice that realization of this came after significant effort of 50 Years is enough campaign, organized by Christian churches as a strong reaction against the World Bank's neoliberal measures of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that were implemented across the Third World in 1990s. This campaign was so influential that the World Bank included its reform in relation of SAPs at the G7

meeting of 1995 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. In particular, a committee consisting of representatives of the World Bank and some faith-based NGOs formed by the World Bank with existing faith based NGOs working on the revision of structural adjustment programs was formed. The result of this pressure was that G7 leaders put a reform of World Bank on their agenda. As a result the Bank cancelled a few controversial projects, one of them being on a building a dam in India, and publically admitted that debt in many countries is a serious overall problem (Baum, 2000, pp. 72-73). This campaign by the churches eventually led to the Jubilee Year 2000 reduction or cancellation (in some cases) of debt for a number of developing countries.

Some authors point out that despite only recent recognition, the work of religious organizations (now called Faith Based Organizations, FBOs) came much before the concept of 'development' was invented. Lunn explains that in the field of education, health and humanitarian aid Christian missions were active all over the world for centuries. However, "their work was intimately intertwined with imperialism, and mission organisations often delivered services on behalf of the colonial state'' (2009, p. 943). As said earlier, conflict and overlap between secular and religious efforts are both present, but "critical challenges at the global level demand a common alliance and common efforts" (Marshall, 2011, p. 52). Hopefully, this alliance will change and move both fields in the more constructive and mutually complementary direction.

As an attempt to deal with failed policies and practices in eradicating and alleviating poverty during neo-liberal measures and with the crippling debt of the Third World rising, there were other measures put in place by the UN in order to tackle this problem. The first big phase was the formulation of Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs). In September 2000 the Millennium Summit was held as "the largest gathering of world leaders in history." The outcome of this summit was The UN Millennium Declaration (Millennium Project, 2006). However, MDGs mostly failed to deliver on their promises and did not meet the deadline that was set for 2015. The new phase was set in place, with 17 goals, called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or also known as Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The aim now was to eradicate poverty by 2030. Both these phases gathered head of states, prime ministers, and international financial institutions as well as a selection of non-governmental and civil society organizations. There was nothing new about the fact that the international community was trying to tackle the world's most enduring problems in repeated simplistic and technocratic ways The surprise came in admitting that the "MDGs were drawn up on the assumption that to attain desired development outcomes across the developing world it would be appropriate and welcome for both state and non-state actors – secular and faith based – to work together purposively" (Haynes, p. 4). The MDG phase had 8 goals and they were: eradicate extreme hunger and poverty, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve mental health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development. The Millennium Declaration reflected the intentions that globalization should be used in the best possible way and its advantages recognized and implemented on the road of fulfilling the named eight development goals. These 8 goals developed from the declaration that was adopted by world leaders in New York. There was a plan for additional summits to take place in every 5 years in order to check in with what was

accomplished so far when it comes to MDGs. In 2005, for example, there was The World Summit.

The goal that is of most interest for this paper (even though others are no less significant and related) is the eradication of poverty, since that is the main focal point of all development agencies and most faith based organizations and religious groups, locally and globally. That is also the biggest overlapping point for international (secular) agencies and faith based organizations. What resulted 6 years after the implementation of MDGs was bad news; there were an additional 25 million chronically undernourished people for the period of 1996 - 2006, which translated in 13% of the most vulnerable people globally. Referring to The World Forum for Food Sovereignty, Haynes observes that this report bluntly recognizes increased political will as a problem, not as a solution. In translation, the UN system and ideas do not work and bring only more of the old failed solution presented in neo-liberal policies These policies support measures such as "advances of trade liberation, industrial agriculture, genetic engineering and military dominance" that are the main cause of increase in hunger and poverty problem in the first place (2007, p. 103). One of the main entities to be blamed for these increasing problems is the presence and rights, which transnational corporations (TNCs) gained and that took a full advantage of globalization coupled with neoliberalism. Haynes suggests that FBOs have a lot to offer in solving these issues; for example they would advocate for human development to be first on the list of all policy priorities, especially on the international level (2007, p. 105).

While declaration that was adopted clearly states that issues of poverty and other related issues are indeed world problems and need to be solved and dealt with within this reality of a highly globalized world, at the same time it underlines that

among other basic human rights to be respected around the world there are religious and spiritual rights, which is an important insight just after world community basically admitted the failure of neoliberal policies (UN Millennium Declaration, 2000, articles 2 and 4). According to the United Nation, SDGs "are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity". They were created in 2012 at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil. The main reason for this was to "meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world" due to the apparent failure of the MDGs to fulfil its agenda before the deadline in 2015 (UN). SDGs strived towards: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice and strong institutions; partnerships for the goals (UN). Reference to religion was present since the beginning in formulating and putting in practice both MDGs and later SDGs. In 2013 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) administrator, Helen Clark, said that "faith-based organizations are playing a crucial role in efforts to build a more equitable and sustainable future" (UNDP, May 2013). Already in February 2015, the World Bank held a roundtable called Faith Based and Religious Leaders Roundtable that resulted in a document called Moral and Spiritual Imperative to End Global Poverty. It was signed by over 40 FBOs taking a part in this initiative (The Temple of Understanding). This document recognizes the dedication and determination of FBOs to work on eradicating world poverty and cooperating with secular organizations, specifically by "restoring right relationships among people,

affirming human dignity, and opening the door to the holistic development of all people" (The Temple of Understanding). Clearly the work of religion and specifically of FBOs to international development was more acknowledged on the world stage in the beginning of the 21st century than it was several decades earlier. This coincided not only with the overall failure of "business as usual" on the development front, but also with the emergence of post-development movement critique and movements. The aim of this section is to introduce the concept of post-development and the changes it introduces to development thinking and theory, as well as the challenges it poses to it. Discourses and worldviews, such as concepts of Degrowth and Buen Vivir, which promote a different understanding and hence means of development, will be discussed.

The essence of the post-development critique is that economic growth and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as its main measurement of success, technocratic approaches, fiscal conservatism, neoliberal globalization and such are not enough nor are they sole parameters for the measurement of long term sustainable development. Post-development scholars argue in favour of holistic, alternative and plural views of development, including recognition of cultural contexts, local views and beliefs, and the care for nature, as necessarily components and parameters in designing and applying strategies for international development. Post-development theory emerged around the 1980s and posed sharp critiques to development as classically understood. Theorists challenged not only methods and techniques of modernization and neoliberalism, but also the very idea of development itself. They did so by suggesting that the whole notion of international development is ideologically Western, capitalist and modernist oriented. The critique raises the question of the validity of such a Western model or of any one model for all developing countries.

Moreover, post-development suggests that perhaps Western countries themselves could benefit from some other ideas than their own. One distinction for post-development was the attempt not to critique for the sake of critique only; it not only brought some new ideas to the table but also proposed solutions, ideas that lead to such movements as Degrowth and Buen Vivir. As post-development offered different interpretations of development and suggested alternative solutions, it offered further space for both the recognition of religious as a cultural context and the exploration of religious ideas and strategies for development. .

The value of post-development lies in its promise to move from extractive and instrumental approaches toward more inclusive and organic approaches. Escobar calls for a period of ''transition discourses'' (2015) in order to make these approaches more viable. Transitional discourses are a group of discourses "essential for politics of transformation" in the fields of culture and ecology. Their importance lies not only in radical transformation of theories of development but also in bridging the gaps between what we know as the global North and South, by establishing new kinds of dialogue. Escobar claims that the emergence of these new discourses is "one of the most anticipatory signs of our times" (2015). These discourses demand radical change of neoliberal globalization as a way of creating and defining social life. In turn, this would result in creating of a new knowledge.

Degrowth is one of the examples of alternative development, promoted in post-development. It is also a social movement, with strong socio-political ideas. While not all post-development is anti-capitalist, Degrowth is anti-capitalist. Degrowth is focused on restraining economic growth, rearranging activities and ways people spend their time, raising the quality of their life and reducing pollution and unsustainable economic practices. Therefore, the main goal of Degrowth is to change

the meaning of progress and development and to demystify economic expansion as it is now seen to be the only viable and possible path of progress. Degrowth does that by looking at the problem of overconsumption which is one of the main causes of environmental crises, for example. Proponents of Degrowth advocate for lowering consumption while striving for simplicity, which will then lower production as well, since demand will change drastically. People's lives will not lose on quality as a result. They will only become better since the system of values and priorities will change as well. Escobar explains that Degrowth belongs to transnational discourses that help shape ''ecological and civilizational transitions'' and by ''bridging proposals emerging from the North with those from the global South'' (Escobar, 2015). If so, this helps us understand the promise of Degrowth and post-development for the future of a more holistic development.

Buen Vivir means way of life well lived or good life in general. It puts special emphasis on community life. Literal translation of this term to English from Spanish and other indigenous languages is difficult. Buen Vivir is very non-traditional and predominantly indigenous concept that took political shape in Latin America where it serves as an example and inspiration for possibilities of pluralistic and more holistic development. Buen Vivir, as very diverse and holistic concept, includes non-human rights of animals and nature as well as human rights More precisely this framework envelops "equality, democracy, participation, protection of biodiversity and natural resources, and respect for ethnic-cultural" values (Walsh, 2010, p. 16). The plural approach of Buen Vivir is shown through its allowance of various interpretations including "expression of indigenous knowledge and traditions that were oppressed, minimized or subordinated over centuries''. It promotes social and ecological concepts of community and ''as a political platform for different visions of

alternatives to development opens paths to move beyond the modern Western culture'' (Gudynas, 2011, pp. 441-442). Buen Vivir places emphasis on harmony and well being of the whole community and ecosystem rather than promoting individual and separate striving for a 'good life' as it is often seen in the West. In its practice Buen Vivir sees natural resources as common and therefore they cannot be monetarily valued or traded, unlike in predominant neoliberal business and development practice. Hence the economy is shared, used and maintained by the whole community. Furthermore, water, rivers and other ecosystems cannot be monetarily valued, priced and sold. On a political level, the concept of Buen Vivir found its way into two constitutions, those of Peru and Bolivia where it serves as the main guidance for overall development and direction for which these diverse societies strive.

If in the Western model of development, in spite of significant overlap, there is still this conflict with religion, then what about plural and alternative models of development and their subjects? Can they produce more a holistic development outlook that allows for the inclusion of religion? Alternatives offered by post-development include a shift from outsiders' perspective to visions of change based on local people's cultural values and visions for their own future (Escobar, 2015). For example, indigenous beliefs and local spiritual and religious beliefs play a significant role in these kinds of settings. As an example, the Baha'i community reflects these values well when insisting on oneness of humanity, since humankind is "diverse, yet organic," and, hence, one family (Podger, 2009, p. 69). As Schumacher observes, development is not a problem of economics and economists for the most part, but ''least of all for economists whose expertise is founded on a crudely materialistic philosophy'' (1973, p. 160). Holistic development is needed in order for development to be less instrumentally discursive and instead to be more organic and designed by

the end users and beneficiaries of that development. This paper assumes that those

needs are not the same around the world and that they are not universal and uniform.

Instead, it assumes that the concept and practices of development will continue to

evolve and will promote the general well being of communities, which includes but it

is not limited to the participation of religious groups.

According to Olowu illustration, above mentioned circles are: 1. Pure consciousness,

2. Collective consciousness, 3. Cultural and personality factors, 4. Socio-structural

factors, 5. Political factors, 6. Economic factors, 7. Technological factors, 8. Scientific

factors.

For development to be holistic it is very important that due attention is paid to

all eight categories of 'concentric circles' of development that encompass much more

than just economic growth and technology, but also political, socio-structural,

psychological and cultural factors. As Olowu notices, aspects of psychology and

anthropology are rarely mentioned and seriously taken into account by development

institutions (2011, pp. 59-60), while paying attention to these circles would correct

this omission. From his point of view, development is a multidimensional process,

meaning, "changes in attitudes and behaviour must precede other changes" which is

the essence of holistic development. Development 'inside-out' is what is emphasized

here; individuals and communities change and reflect that change onto societies rather

than other way around. This approach is closer to religious than technocratic and

secular rationale.

United Nations and Faith Based Organizations

This section focuses on the evolution of participation of FBOs at the UN as well as the

background reasons for their increasing presence there. FBOs that are present at the

UN are often connected among themselves as well as with secular NGOs, where they

often try to create partnerships but disagreements are not rare either. In addition they do have their agendas and do try to maximize their influence on decision-making. However, FBOs as well as secular NGOs have only observer status at the UN and are not members of any decision making body. FBOs make up around 10% of organizations that have a constitutive role with UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (Haynes, 2014, p. 2). There are more than 300 of them, and between half to two thirds are based in the North and have Christian orientation. However, this is not representative of religious demographic realities, but is not surprising since north-based Christian organizations do have more resources to be represented on the international level. This should also not be surprising because most of the UN membership base is Western (Western European and USA) and comes from Christian background countries.

FBOs have no one universally accepted definition, and this thesis adheres to the one that Berger gives, as quoted by Haynes. FBOs are those organizations that are "characterized by missions rooted in religious and spiritual beliefs (Haynes, 2012, p. 8). This definition is chosen here due to the fact it is broad enough to describe organizations that are the focus of this thesis, yet does distinguish FBOs from secular organizations. In addition, there is not one universally accepted term for FBOs. Some other terms offered by various authors that could be used interchangeably are: religious NGOs (RNGOs), religious communities, faith based non-for profit organizations, faith inspired organizations, religious international nongovernmental organizations (RINGO), etc. (Haynes, 2012, pp. 7-8). The term FBO is used here in line with earlier given definitions this thesis follows and it is the most suitable term because it is the term UN uses. It is the term that implies a broader base than the term

'religious' would and it is in general the most widely used term in academic literature as well as in policy circles (Haynes, 2014, p. 13, 33).

In terms of policy and scholarly theory, very little attention is paid to the role of FBOs in the UN. Some of the factors that allowed FBOs to get a proverbial foot in the door of the UN included the end of the Cold War and of the Soviet Union, with growing globalization in 1990s,a somewhat weakened role of single states and a growing insistence on a greater role for civil society (Haynes, 2014, p. 5, 29). The UN hosted a few conferences between 1992 and 2000 that were focused on human rights and justice issues. These conferences provided a springboard for FBOs to leave the constraints of national and local boundaries and issues and to extend their activities to attempts to have an influence at the UN (Haynes, 2014, p. 17).

Table 2. Religious affiliations of FBOs at the UN

Religious affiliation	Number of organizations	Percentage of all FBOs
Christian	187	58.4
Muslim	52	16.3
Jewish	22	6.9
Buddhist	14	4.4
Hindu	3	0.9
Spiritual	25	7.8
Multireligious	11	3.4

Other religions	6	1.9
Total	**320**	**100**

Source: Peterson (2010, p. 5), as presented in Haynes (2014, p. 41)

Two overall strategies were used by the FBOs in their attempt to gain traction at the UN: alliance formation and specialization (Hopgood & Vinjamuri, 2012, p. 38). Alliance formation refers to FBOs often compete on ideological basis, some of them, for example, conservative ones will find it more practical to form strategic alliances with other conservative secular organizations even governments. The same goes for more liberally inclined FBOs. Specialization refers to grouping together of those organizations, FBOs and well as secular ones that offer same or similar products or services.

Even though FBOs have very low status in UN in terms of decision making, here is also an expanding network on international FBOs, as well as expanding areas of their concerns to be more oriented towards political and broader social issues. Trying to operate in a highly competitive environment like that of the UN to make one's voice heard on global policy issues is not easy, but it is also an opportunity for FBOs to be heard on a global level at some capacity (Haynes, 2014, pp. 53-55). As mentioned in the above there are controversial areas for some religions, such as human rights and especially women's sexual and reproductive rights. This is reflected on the international level in the UN where more conservative FBOs have been in conflict with prevalent secular UN based stands. A study of various efforts by FBOs by the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt found that there were ambiguous results. On the one hand, involvement of FBOs to promote justice often further polarized the

conflicting groups. On the other hand, over time the context and continued process involving the FBOs often changed and worked towards bringing peaceful solutions. (2014, p. 56).

In terms of international development and the engagement of FBOs there are two major projects connected to the UN that are worth examining. These are MDGs and SDGs. Failure to deal properly with the issues of alleviating world poverty by all major international institutions such as World Bank and UN brought a window of opportunity for FBOs to get their values and contributions recognized as possible major contributors to solving these issues in the future. What this means is that improvement of people's living standards and poverty reduction are possible using religious and faith based resources as well as faith leaders, since they do represent the majority of people in the world who are directly and most immediately struck by poverty (Haynes, 2014, p.112).

Since religion is now more recognized as one of the main factors in contributing to dealing with world's poverty issues it is no surprise that it is more involved in the SDG project (Haynes, 2014, p. 117). One of the arguments in favour of FBOs that Haynes points out is the fact that increasing number of so called failed states such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Liberia, and Democratic Republic of Congo relocated the power of the state onto social networks, in particular to non governmental organizations where FBOs play a prominent role (2014, p. 118). In addition, since 1990s and failure of SAPs to deliver on their promises, there was a need to move away from market led approaches and take on "more holistic conceptions of development" with an accent on the human dimension (Haynes, 2014,p. 124). Some of the FBOs had an important role in the formulation of MDGs and later of SDGs. Such FBOs included, among others, World Council of Churches

(WCC), CARITAS, United Methodist Church, Religions for Peace, Lutheran World Federation, Islamic Relief's United States chapter, World Vision International, Won Buddhist International, Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, Baha'i International Community (Haynes, 2014, p. 125).

In our time, one of the main and certainly the biggest, alter-globalization alternative spaces that subscribes to plurality is the World Social Forum. The World Social Forum is the biggest representative of different expressions of the alter-globalization movement. Some of the terms used to describe the WSF are as follows: ''on-going process'' (Potomäki & Teivainen, 2004, p. 145), ''world process'', ''plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context'' and ''an open meeting space'' (Charter of Principles, 2001, pp. 1-2), and ''another globalization'' (Teivainen, 2002, p. 628). The idea of a WSF was conceived in 1999 at a Seattle gathering protesting the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference. The Forum was finally born in 2001 in Porto Alegre in Brazil. The World Social Forum is organized and coordinated by its International Committee that is masterminded by its Charter of Principles that consists of 14 principles. The Forum itself is best described by the First principle from its Charter of Principles: "The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences, and the interlinking for effective action by groups and movements of civil society. These generally are groups opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capitalism and any form of imperialism. They are committed to building a planetary society directed toward fruitful relationships among humankind and between humans and the Earth" (Leite, 2005, pp. 9-10).

Why in Porto Alegre? Founders of the World Social Forum are Brazilian and therefore located in the South. The Brazilian Catholic Church and Catholic University offered free space for it to actually take place. As Teivainen points out, ''learning from Porto Alegre can, at the same time, help break the Eurocentric and neo-colonial structures of knowledge production that are dominant in our world'' (2002, p. 630). The Forum meets in various places, however. "In its broadest definition, the World Social Forum is the set of initiatives of transnational exchange among social movements and non-governmental organizations, articulating local, national, or global social struggles conducted (in accordance with the Porto Alegre Charter of Principles) against all the forms of oppression brought about or made possible by neoliberal globalization'' (Santos, 2005, p. 44). According to Hammond ''the World Social Forum is inherently pluralistic. It would be hard to imagine an event of comparable scope and reach achieving greater coordination'' (paragraph 31). This all makes the World Social Forum a very suitable platform for examining the contribution of religion to this new plural and alternative development that can call rightfully itself holistic.

Since its beginning in 2001 the Forum hosted more than 100,000 people per gathering and thousands of organizations, local groups, individuals and informal citizens groups. In answering why the World Social Forum, it is critical to point out the symbolism of Porto Alegre and The Social Forum for creating alternatives. What symbolically and literally made Porto Alegre a great candidate for hosting the first World Social Forum, as well as later ones, is a long history of participatory democracy? As Teivainen observes much before the World Social Forum existed, Porto Alegre ''was known for its system of participatory budget planning that many regarded as one of the most concrete real-world examples of participatory

democracy'' (2002, p. 629). Participatory budget planning includes citizens, around 15,000, who are included in yearly budget planning in Porto Alegre; most of these citizens are from among the poor.

Moreover, the World Social Forum ''holds no clearly defined ideology, either in defining what it rejects or what it asserts'' (Santos, 2003, p. 3). The first World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre, at the end of January 2001, paralleled its counterpart the World Economic Forum, held at the same time in Davos in Switzerland. The World Economic Forum gathers world neoliberal elite to discuss the future of the world. One of the main groups to help organize the World Social Forum is French Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC). The head of this association, Bernard Cassen, was one of the key people in formulating the idea for the conception of The World Social Forum, One of ATTAC's slogans, ''the world is not for sale'' clearly corresponds to the World Social Forum's main slogan and it also states its alter-globalization instead of anti-globalization support. The other two key people in coming up with the idea of the Forum are Francisco Whitaker and Oleg Grajew. ATTAC created the Organizing Committee for the first World Social Forum, along with Brazilian organizations, such as the Brazilian Justice and Peace Commission (CBJP), the Brazilian Business Association for Citizenship (CIVES), the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Studies (IBASE) and the Social Network for Justice and Human Rights (Karides & Ponniah, 2009, pp. 22-23). It is estimated that 12,000 people, mainly from the South (predominantly Latin America) attended the Forum in 2001. The next two gatherings of the World Social Forum were also held in the same place. However, in 2002, just a year after initial event took place, a number of officially registered participants rose to 60,000. It gathered 5 times more people than were present just twelve months earlier.

There were two highlights of the World Social Forum in 2003. The first one was the thematic orientation on debating and discussion of 'another world' and alternatives it can bring about. This tone of the Forum was very explicitly non-capitalist and non-communist. This placed it in the sphere of searching for other, alternative ways, outside of polarization of 'capitalism' and 'communism' alike, as the world issues are often simplified and exploited in mainstream politics. The second highlight of this Forum was the forming of Global Day of Action, organized by concerned voices against then President of United States of America, George Bush's decision to invade Iraq later that year.

The fourth World Social Forum was moved to Mumbai (2004), the capital of Maharashtra state in India, to allow better presence and participation of Asian voices. This Forum followed efforts from the previous year, focusing on anti-war campaigning. Hence, it gave birth to the General Assembly of the Global Anti-War Movement. The organization was specifically a product of one of the events at the World Social Forum, conferences on "US Occupation of Iraq, and the Problems of Palestine and Afghanistan" (Transnational Institute, 2005). On the other hand, the Forum touched on free information and free software sharing and Internet technologies in general. This shows broadness of topics and themes that are debated and discussed during Forum's numerous events as it evolved over the years.

The World Social Forum in 2005 was back to Porto Alegre and gathered around 155,000 people, more than twice as many as in its third year of existence. Even though the World Social Forum does not take an official single-minded political stance nor allow anyone to do so in its name, 2005 gathered a group of people, mainly public intellectuals from the South, that had a manifesto issued in its name. This manifesto was a proposal for social change and it was divided into a few sections:

economic measures, peace and justice, and democracy. The section on peace and justice strongly supports, among other things, the political economic and cultural rights of indigenous people. It is suffice to say that among the most important cultural rights of indigenous people worldwide is freedom to exercise their religious and spiritual beliefs in the way they shape and develop their community. For the sake of the topic of this thesis it is important to stress that the first Forum on Theology and Liberation was held here as well.

The next World Social Forum in 2006 was a polycentric one; it took place in several different locations. They are Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, Bamako the capital of Mali, and Karachi, the capital of Sindh province of Pakistan. This was remarkable since the Forum was held on three different continents. The African continent was host to yet another World Social Forum in 2007 that was held in Kenya's capital city of Nairobi. This Forum saw ''the most representative'' World Social Forum so far, even though there was much controversy around too much representation of some non-governmental organizations, and not enough of local activists from Kenya, South African Republic and South Africa in general.
The World Social Forum was back in Brazil in 2009, in a new city of Belem and this also had a specifically indigenous focus. In 2010 the Forum repeated what it did in 2008 and simultaneously held 35 events around the world. What was significant is the regional forum held in United States of America in the city of Detroit in the state of Michigan that gathered over 18000 people. At the same time Porto Alegre hosted its regional forum in the form on an international seminar titled ''10 Years Later: Challenges and Proposals for Another Possible World".

The World Social Forum held in Dakar in Senegal in 2011 had prominent speakers and panellists such as Bolivian President Evo Morales as well as Canadian

activist and writer Naomi Klein. In 2012 the World Social Forum was back to Porto Alegre and ventured to post-revolutionary Tunisia in 2013 and 2015 (it was not organized in 2014). The Forum in 2015 led to creating the Internet Social Forum. The last Forum so far and the first full one to be held in the North took place in August of 2016 in Montreal, Quebec. The WSF 2018 is expected to take place in March in San Salvador.

In addition, there are many regional and local forums taking place all over the world, so that they can allow many more participants to take part without a need to travel far. World Social Forum's Charter of Principles is the guideline for most of them and all of them focus on various issues and countries. Some of them are American Social Forum, Asian Social Forum, European Social Forum, Mediterranean Social Forum, and Canadian Social Forum. On the national and local level there are Italian Social Forum, India Social Forum, Liverpool Social Forum, Boston Social Forum.

The last Forum was held in 2016 in Montreal and it answered a question that many posed since its inception in 2001. Confident in the possibility of another world this year Forum's slogan was "Another world is needed. Together, it is possible!'' As this paper has already demonstrated in the discussion of classical development theory and modernization, it is virtually unorthodox to work from a perspective that is both pluralistic and religious. An important foundation, however, for alternatives to emerge and old ideas the way to creating ''another world' 'to be defined most assuredly involves pluralism and critique of existing ideologies. In this spirit, religious beliefs as well as religious organizations and activists have much to offer and contribute. Among others, religious organizations can have an open space for sharing their own views and solutions as well as worries at the WSF. This is shown quite clearly in the

latest example of the last World Forum on Theology and Liberation, held in 2016 as part of the World Social Forum in Montreal, Canada. Theology and Liberation hosted workshops on ecological issues, indigenous perspectives and development, gender, food security and the presence of churches in solidarity (World Forum on Theology and Liberation, 2016, p. 3). The Forum allows religious views to be shared and expressed by practitioners, activists and all participants and admits the relevance of religious views to policy and theory, This is very important since, as explained previously, religion was mostly used and objectified by development and political science theory and studied as an artifact of the old world, while not considered a truly active contributor and participant in shaping theory and policy. As Demerath & Schmitt observe ''the study of religion has been, at best, a peripheral focus of the social sciences'' (1998. p. 381). The first Forum on Theology and Liberation was held in 2005 in Porto Alegre and the second one in Nairobi in Kenya in 2007 in conjunction with the World Social Forum. The second one gathered around 500 people and according to Gobbo ''the forum was not an 'intellectual speculation' of elite members of the 'theological intelligentsia' of the category of 'armchair theologians'. On the contrary, it was an 'encounter' of some humble 'theological doers' at all levels.'' and ''contributions at the   level of the grassroots were given a special place in the discussion'' (2007).

The World Social Forum is actually a part of a wide network comprising a Global Justice Movement. The Movement is a network of social movements that advocate against corporate globalization and are in favour of global solidarity and globalization of human movement and economic justice for all. It is an alter-globalization network, even though it often gets presented as a collection of anti-globalization movements. Religious organizations and initiatives are an important

pillar and foundation of the Global Justice Movement. Religious based movements, such as Jubilee 2000, were crucial in forming networks of Global Justice Movement. The Jubilee organized a campaign to reduce or eliminate the debt imposed on third world countries mostly as a result of SAPs (Leit, 2005, p. 51). In addition there is New Internationalist magazine, which is published by one of the leading independent worker's co-operatives. It publishes topics on global justice and environmental issues. One of its main donors is Christian Aid of Ireland and England.

Many if not all organizations that meet on and are part of the World Social Forum also exist and meet outside of it. Its main organizational entities are Ecumenical Network for Justice, Ecology and Peace. This particular ecumenical organization deals with world social and economic issues that most activists, social movements and theorists do. Some of the topics and areas of concern that arose at the Social Forum in Montreal were: indigenous struggles and spiritual and political issues around reconciliation and justice, the voice of women in society and in the religions, Earth, territory, dispossession and mobilization, spiritual and theological readings of the ecological crisis, the inter-religious encounter as a way of struggling against religious violence, spiritualties engaged in justice, international solidarity, decolonizing our practices, our memories, our beliefs, our theologies, the present and future of theologies in a liberation perspective across the continents, as well as migration, justice and peace and ways to end inclusion. As an active participant and organizer of panels, discussions and forums, religious organizations are finally finding their place in the global conversation about social justice, peace and development. Nonetheless, many social justice movements, organizations and activists, especially those on the Left (mostly Northern based) still take strong stances against religion and faith based organizations as desired and important subjects in international relations

and development. One of the examples would be the radical leftist and feminist group called Femen. One of its public moves was the violation of a Nativity Scene on St. Peter's square in Rome in 2015 (FrontPage Mag, January 2015).

Even though political parties are not invited and welcomed to take part in the World Social Forum and the Forum itself is highly non-sectarian as explained in its Charter of Principles, the Forum ability to meet in the first year was precisely due to the support of the Brazilian government, and Brazilian Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT) .The physical space for gathering and debating was provided by Catholic University of Brazil, at no cost. Moreover, some of the key people responsible for the idea, logistics and making the World Social Forum possible, and are now members of the International Committee have interesting background. Francisco (Chico) Whitaker Ferreira, was an important person in the Worker's Party until mid-1990s and is a devoted Catholic who maintains relations with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. The Forum's other supposed ideologist is ex-businessman and capitalist Oleg Grajew, that later turned activist for the cause of eliminating child labour. The presence of such founders and leaders at the WSF raises the question of can it maintain non-partisan and ecumenical foci.

The World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL) purports to provide ''an ecumenical space, dialogical and plural, to stimulate the creation of spirituality and contextual theologies with a liberating perspective about critical issues of our time''. In addition, its website describes the seventh World Forum on Theology and Liberation as the meeting of the ''performers, socio-political movements and spiritualties who invent another possible world'' (World Social Forum 2016). Having the World Forum on Theology and Liberation present in this kind of settings is not surprising at all, considering the fact that during the 1960s the idea behind it was born

''from the effort to integrate the discourse of faith with the discourse of society'.' Its precursors were organized already in the 1970s in places such as Chicago, Brazil and Mexico (Leonardo Boff). The point of organizing these forums is not to plainly discuss the future of faith and religion (namely Christianity), but to debate what that faith can offer to global human problems and issues. In addition, Christianity has to be involved in ''the search for alternative means of production and of living''. The participation of religion is very timely, as Manimala pointed out that religion and theology now more than ever have to be ''activist'', since there is ''urgent need for the unity of poor and oppressed. 'The World Social Forum affords a great opportunity for this to happen and ''decolonized theology'' has space to grow here (2011, March). As previously mentioned in this chapter, religion has a lot to offer in imagining another world, in the field of human rights and democracy. It is generally open to self-reflection and internal debates on improvement and dealing with its own contribution to the world problems. The World Forum on Theology and Liberation held during the World Social Forum highlights this contribution in action.

Another good example of the inclusion of religion is from the Belem meeting. Its theme was Water, Land and Theology, which fit well in the general theme of the World Social Forum that had a predominantly indigenous accent. This theology Forum had around 400 diverse participants that were not made up not only of theologians, but also of many social scientists who gathered to develop a theology for the ''sustainability of life on earth'' with the general goal of ''theological reflection on the basis of liberating practices in view of the future of life on earth'' (Young, 2009, January). This is well captured in their mutual statement that they will ''build a Forum dedicated to the sustainability of life in the planet, through prophetic spirituality engaged with justice, dignity and freedom'' (Young, 2009, January). The

focus on social movements was continued at the Montreal meeting. Canadian scholar and activist Dominique Boisvert lead a workshop at the Montreal forum that focused on the place religion holds among social movements, in the quest to make another world possible. This workshop placed high value on ''common good and dignity of human beings'', in the spirit of determination of religious organizations and activists to contribute to an alternative and more holistic future of the world (Catholic Church of Montreal, 2016).

Since the renewed interest in religion in development circles, it has become easier to converse about this topic in less polarized ways and post-development contributed largely to a further opening up of this space. As mentioned previously, renewed interest in religion may come from the so-called crisis of secularism, but it did not end there. Such spiritual leaders such as Dalai Lama called for "collaboration between religion and science" in order to deal with complex issues we face on a global scale (His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, 2003 January). John Paul II expressed his view on "authentic development" and the critical role the church has to play in it since, in his words, the church is an "expert in humanity" (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 1987). What this means is that most of religious organizations and leaders ponder over the same questions and dilemmas of humanity, a central question being solving poverty and helping the poor. That is the root of all development but also religious social teaching. In addition, more and closer cooperation is needed among not only development actors but also the world's religions and faith organizations themselves in order for peace and cooperation to be possible (Al-Tayyeb, 2017, p. 90). Müller adds "the sharing of initiatives from different contexts enables people to realize the richness of religious diversity, fostering a culture of peace and struggling to overcome violence" (2005, January).

A lot has changed since the study of major development journals by Ver Beek for the period 1982 to 1998 when this scholar found that there were only sporadic mentions of religion and its role in international development. The World Faiths Development Dialogue is another witness to the evolution of a real presence for religion on the world stage of International development. As mentioned the World Bank already initiated the creating of a not-for-profit organization called World Faiths Development Dialogue in 2000 (The World Bank), which followed the report *Voices of The Poor* in the same year. This brought a breakthrough by underscoring findings that clearly state that the world's poorest people have a significantly higher degree of trust in religious based organizations than in official development agencies, various secular organizations and governments (The World Bank, 2000). The role of religion and religious organizations started to be taken seriously by large international organizations and a series of studies took place. There were forums and various bodies organized around this topic.

Similar to other scholars mentioned above, Marshall, who for a time was World Bank representation on World Faiths Development Dialogue, reminds us about significant reasons for the invisibility of religion in development organizations. She mentions factors such as "hard won traditions of separation and state and religion are deeply ingrained" while multilateral development organizations are able to properly interact with secular, but not so much with religious civil society, where Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) belong (2001, p. 343). Next, the crisis of secularism and increased critiques of modernization, new image and visibility of humanitarian faith based organizations all over the world and neo-liberal crises and failure of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) provoked strong reactions by many, and among them religious organizations (Juul Petersen, November 2010). United Nations and the

World Bank could not overlook all of that. With the establishment of the World Faiths Development Dialogue and other such prestigious organizations, there were forums and various bodies organized around this topic. Some of them, besides the already mentioned World Faiths Development Dialogue are the Pew Research Centre, Joshua Project, Religion and Development Research Program at the University of Birmingham in United Kingdom, Knowledge Centre on Religion and Development in Amsterdam (Dalton, 2013, p. 166; Wheeler, 2014, p. 31). Furthermore, decently Robert Calderisi bluntly stated that "Roman Catholic Church, I believe, has lifted more people out of poverty in the last 50 to 60 years than any other institution in history including my former employer, the World Bank" (Lanchester University, 2014).

Conclusion

''Global problems require global solutions, even though they must be implemented locally. And global solutions require global consciousness – and the willingness of all humanity to work together as one'' (Strand, 2014, p. 93). Neither international development nor religion got it all right and neither of them can act alone and independently of each other, if positive changes and qualitative developments are about to be made. Since both claim they want to do just that, both negative and positive consequences of both need to be understood in a wider context. According to ter Haar, ''what most needs to be studied and integrated into the process of development are the religious *ideas* on which religious organizations are based and the inspiration that people derive from these" (2011, p. 8). As Haynes adds ''Primarily concerned with the holistic human development dimension, visions of development from faith perspectives differ significantly from those expressed historically by secular development organizations, which often appear to be singularly

concerned with 'economic development' to the exclusion of other aspects of development'' (Haynes, 2007, p. 1). There is no doubt that religion has had a rocky relationship with international development in the past and has not always contributed positively. This is shown in various parts of the world such as Northern Ireland, ex-Yugoslavia, and Sudan.

When it comes to Northern Ireland, this conflict is mixture of religious and political or colonial issues, which have stretched out for centuries. While Protestant Christians prefer Northern Ireland to be part of United Kingdom, Catholic Christians prefer the country to be independent. Political parties are formed coincident with religious affiliation.

In the former Yugoslavia various religious groups were one of the main ingredients in an otherwise political conflict. Relentless fighting between paramilitary and military formations as well as targeting civilians was based generally on their belonging to certain ethnic and religious groups. Christians and Muslims fought against each other and among themselves, often sect-related.
Similarly, the Sudanese conflict pitted Arabs of predominantly Muslim faith from the North against the Christian and Animist south. In this conflict religion is also coupled with political agendas and economic agendas. As of 2011 South Sudan is an independent country.

All of examples mentioned, do bring a lot more questions than they answer. It is also obvious that religion does not exist in isolation from the complex social and political contexts, which as a consequence often does not allow enough space for deeper understanding and change. In spite of this, there are many instances in which religion is still functioning to improve the lives of many people, which can be seen through next few examples of Uganda, the former Yugoslavia and El Salvador.

Pax Christi, a Ugandan Christian NGO, was heavily involved in the facilitation and implementation of peace making in Uganda (Haynes, 2007, p. 92). Another example includes many faith based local leaders hiding and protecting those from another religious affiliation during the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Civilians often found refuge in local churches and mosques and managed to save their lives in this way. People offering shelter and protections were at times behaving on individual bases and because of their religious beliefs and at other times staff of certain religious objects came to a mutual decision to offer protection to fleeing civilians of all faiths, not only their own. Moreover, many civilian victims of torture claimed to have found strengths and mutual language to share and grieve with each other in spite of the fact they belonged to apparent enemy religious groups. In addition, El Salvador established a system of Christian schools in 1963 that still educate about 10% of the overall population in that country, a population that otherwise would not have a chance to get an education (Haynes, 2007, p. 194).

On the one hand, contemporary development remains primarily driven by economic values based on neo liberal policies that continue to push their agendas of economic growth and consumerism. On the other hand, examples of new and improved development are many especially in the field of post-development. These examples show that the international development field is changing in line with an attempt for more holistic development in the future. Buen Vivir represents such a move. It is an expression of concrete practices and philosophies that tackle present day international development issues and simultaneously allowing expression of indigenous knowledge and representing even a political platform for the future (Gudynas, 2011, pp. 441-442). Degrowth also represents this change. It focuses on consumption with care and on the change of people's values toward reducing

consumption rates and improving production. Degrowth offers more options for holistic development t since it refers to a deep seated change of values instead of targeting symptoms only (Escobar, 2015). Concept of Degrowth is more secular and originated to the North while Buen Vivir is highly spiritual and originated in the South. However, both are excellent examples of what post-development can do in ways broader than focusing almost exclusively in economics.

Of course, there are many organizations of various backgrounds, from faith based to academic think-thanks to community NGOs that act independently as well as with other faith and secular organizations, governments and businesses in order to bring religious practical experiences, values and know-how to the table. These are organizations such as World Faiths Development Dialogue, Council of World Churches, Knowledge Centre Religion & Development. Such organizations are bridging the gaps and advocating for ongoing dialogue between international development and religion.

I became interested in this topic while observing different and often contradictory events and occurrences as I grew up in Serbia. As local armed conflicts and civil war were going on and amid consequences that are on-going, many complexities and paradoxes surfaced. Religion that was allegedly one of the main reasons for bloodshed was also one of the most mentioned healing spaces for civilian victims. It was also FBOs that did tremendous work in relief and immediate humanitarian assistance. This is only a one case in many. It opened many more questions than we have yet addressed. Religion and development each will have to be redefined many times in the quest they share, to change the world for the better.

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