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RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND ASIA

Jörg Haustein and Emma Tomalin

Since the turn of the century, the religious dimension has been heralded as something of a new discovery in development practice and development studies. Secular donors have channelled increasing amounts of their budgets through so-called faith-based organisations (FBOs), a term which has itself emerged only in the past couple of decades to designate religious organisations working in the field of development. Governmental development offices have sought dialogue with religious communities, such as the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), which recently laid down its 'Faith Partnership Principles' (DFID, 2012). DFID has also funded a large-scale research project on Religions and Development, which was conducted at the University of Birmingham between 2005 and 2010 and continues to provide major resources on this subject.¹ Moreover, there has been a flurry of publications on the subject of religions and development in the past couple of decades (Salemink et al., 2004; Bornstein, 2005; Tyndale, 2006; Haynes, 2007; Clarke & Jennings, 2008; Deneulin, 2009; ter Haar, 2011b; M. Clarke, 2013a; Tomalin, 2013, 2015b; Rakodi, 2014).

The question we would like to pose in this chapter is whether religion really is a new dimension in development practice. In doing so, we seek to highlight, by way of a long history of religion and development engagement, how colonial and post-colonial powers have mapped their ideas about religion on to the so-called developing world in the name of the betterment of those countries. This long history, we argue, is crucial in enabling development theorists and practitioners to offer a critical and constructive perspective on this latest 'turn to religion' in development. Most publications place the origins of the development project with US President Harry S. Truman's second inaugural address in 1949, and go on to assert, more or less explicitly, that at the outset, development and religion were 'regarded in the West as emphatically separate concerns' (Haynes, 2007:1; cf. M. Clarke, 2013b; Deneulin, 2009; Korff & Schrader, 2004). From this vantage point, development appears as a secular project, which now has to accommodate the contemporary 'return of religion' to the public sphere. The problem with this approach is that it neglects the quintessential contribution of colonialism to the history of development thought and practice, and how early notions of development in Africa and Asia were linked to Christian missions and certain perceptions of other religions. Only a few scholars have pointed to a longer history of development and religion (ter Haar, 2011a; Tomalin, 2013; Deacon & Tomalin, 2015), but the details remain to be spelled out. There are also some publications which quite helpfully uncover the ideological roots of development thinking in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries, but these do not sufficiently consider the colonial or religious dimensions (Cowne & Shenton, 1996; Preston, 1996).

In offering a long history of religion and development, we aim to better understand the ideological justification and practical limitations of various development regimes imposed on Africa and Asia from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. Colonialism and its legacy thereby serve as our comparative bracket for understanding the relationship between Africa and Asia, as similar ideas and concepts were imposed on both continents. For Africa, the rather concentrated imperial phase of European colonialism, and the fairly homogeneous views it engendered on religion and development, make it possible to address this continent as a whole, despite its wide-ranging diversity in culture, geography, and political history, which is hardly properly acknowledged in most of our sources. For Asia, we have chosen the Indian subcontinent or South Asia as our main point of comparison, since it was the most intensively colonised region of Asia over several centuries, making it an appropriate case study with which to explore continuities and disjunctions between religion and development at different periods in time.

We begin our account with the colonial 'civilising mission', which created a platform for combining Christian missionary efforts and economic interests in a common imperial project, despite their at times diverging interests. Other religions were displaced or marginalised by a narrative of modernity and 'civilising' religion, unless they managed to adapt their religious outlook to the modernising project, like some Islamic, Hindu and Sikh reform movements in South Asia managed to do. The transformation of the global economy after the Second World War marked the next important transition, which we analyse in our second section. Decolonisation and the rise of the USA as a major global player was marked by the emergence of an optimistic vision of progress for 'underdeveloped' countries, imbued by notions of a modernity governed by science and rational macro-economic principles. This vision was compatible with both the emerging nationalist governments in the former African and Asian colonies and containing a feared Soviet ideological hegemony in the Cold War era. However, as we will show, it was not as immediately and fully secular as some have suggested, especially as this new development project did not fundamentally displace religious interests and organisations in development practice. Rather, the Western tendency to relegate religion to the 'private sphere' disabled donors and development strategists in accounting for religious interests and dynamics in the various factors influencing their work. Finally, the re-emergence of religion in development reasoning was closely related to the end of the Cold War and the rise of the religious right in the USA, as we show in our third section. Tracing the emergence and the limits of the category of FBO, we argue that the 'rediscovery' of religion in 'development' follows its colonial and post-colonial predecessors insofar as it parochialises religion and is only interested in its subsidiary functions for a development project whose ethos and aims are defined elsewhere. This latest 'turn to religion', therefore, emerges to be part of a longer history of projecting Western visions of society, religion and progress on to Africa and Asia – a common history which is at the core of the Africa-Asian relationship in religion and development.

The colonial 'civilising mission'

Religion and development as agents of empire

The nineteenth century marked a decisive shift in European colonialism, as the system of charter companies and trading outposts changed into one of imperial expansion and European control over almost all of Africa and large parts of Asia. Christian missions and advocacy groups were instrumental parts of this change as they infused the emerging imperial colonialism with

religious sentiment from the start. How precisely was the relationship between Christian missions and colonial development efforts configured? What perceptions of development and religion did it produce and with what effects? And how did the colonised engage with these perceptions?

In Africa, this process had an important root in the British antislavery movement, which celebrated its first significant success in the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807. This fundamental political turn against the slave trade had been made possible, if not advantageous, by the larger geopolitical context of the time, most importantly the loss of the American colonies and the Napoleonic Wars. However, its passage would have been unlikely had it not been for the campaigns of the antislavery movement, a 'curious alliance of Enlightenment humanism and evangelical outrage'. (Reid, 2012:28; cf. Drescher, 2009:205–241). In 1833, the antislavery movement celebrated its second major victory when Britain abolished slave ownership altogether throughout the Empire.

However, despite these successes and the considerable British efforts in disrupting slavery transport through maritime raids and pressuring other countries to adopt similar policies, it had become clear by the late 1830s that slave raiding and trading in Africa had not diminished, but had actually increased. A new generation of antislavery advocates took on this cause. Amidst their brittle political alliances and theological differences, 'commerce and Christianity' emerged as a new guiding slogan, wrapped in a providentialist theology about the God-given British mission to the world (Stanley, 1983; Porter, 1985; Follett, 2008). The idea of 'commerce and Christianity' was to establish a 'legitimate trade' in Africa and Asia through a combination of entrepreneurial and missionary effort. If successful, this would end the detrimental practice of the slave trade and its related ailments and improve the respective countries by providing an economic alternative and incentive – a development thought to the core. Thomas Fowell Buxton (1768–1845), Quaker, abolitionist, member of parliament, and cofounder of the Anti-Slavery Society, provided the founding manifesto for this idea in his 1840 publication, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (Buxton, 1840). Contending that any effort to advance 'civilisation' and commerce in Africa must fail without the aid of Christianity, Buxton saw a necessary conflation of religion and development:

Let missionaries and schoolmasters, the plough and the spade, go together, and agriculture will flourish; the avenues to legitimate commerce will be opened; confidence between man and man will be inspired; whilst civilization will advance as the natural effect, and Christianity operate as the proximate cause of this happy change.

(Buxton, 1840:511)

Buxton's programmatic suggestions were put into action in the following years. The first attempt was spearheaded by Buxton himself, who founded a society to equip and organise the Niger Expedition of 1841. The society's aims read like a modern development programme: enable literacy (by introducing scripts for local languages), provide medical education to prevent diseases, improve agricultural methods, and end human trafficking (Buxton, 1840:7–10; cf. Táíwò, 2010:64). The Niger Expedition, a government-funded conglomerate of missionaries, linguists, explorers, military commanders, and craftsmen, failed spectacularly, mostly due to tropical diseases. However, the Expedition's most prominent African member, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, became the embodiment of Buxton's vision of development and Christianity. He went on to receive education in England, was ordained in the Anglican church, and finally became the first African to be crowned bishop when he was put in charge of the church in 'the countries of Western Africa beyond the limits of the Queen's dominions'. Arguably the most famous

proponent of Buxton's strategy was David Livingstone, who echoed his call of 'commerce and Christianity' in the 1850s and 1860s. His cause inspired the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, which initially failed to make significant inroads into the East African slavery economy (Anderson-Morshead, 1909). However, the lofty humanitarian rhetoric of the 'Scramble for Africa' in the late 1880s would have been impossible without references to moral figures like Livingstone and the missionary-colonial alliance they engendered. This was not only a British construction; Germany likewise relied on a missionary-colonial, antislavery platform to enable its conquest of East Africa, albeit in a much more calculated political move (Haustein, forthcoming; Bade, 1977).

With the post-'Scramble' establishment of colonial governance in the early 1890s, the common platform of 'commerce and Christianity' was gradually replaced by a complex field of diverging interests between colonial governments, settlers, and economic interest groups (Porter, 2002). Depending on local circumstances, this led to cooperation, competition, or conflict, and the ideological configuration of religious and developmental aims in the 'civilising mission' became more fluid. However, regardless of this new complexity, missionaries remained a central and complementary part of colonialism due to the many and increasing developmental services they delivered in the African colonies. Their enterprise was professionalised in the beginning of the twentieth century. Medical missionaries, already prefigured by Livingstone himself, now became an established profession, embodied perhaps most famously by Albert Schweitzer in Gabon or Thomas Lambie in Ethiopia. Mission stations regularly provided vocational training and employment opportunities, and they engaged with aspects of traditional culture and beliefs they saw as detrimental to societal progress. In remote regions they functioned as vital trade links and a primary source for cultural imports – and vice versa; missionaries were a major source of geographical, biological, and anthropological knowledge, even as the respective sciences professionalised and increasingly replaced missionary sources. Most importantly, missions had an unchallenged monopoly on education in most African colonies, as the colonial governments established only few schools, and the traditional education systems were not compatible with colonial and capitalistic employment needs. In British tropical Africa, 96 per cent of pupils were attending a mission school at the end of the Second World War (Hastings, 1994:542).

In Asia the trajectories were similar, although in South Asia the devastating impact of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 played a decisive role in the emergence of the close relationship between 'commerce and Christianity' (Stanley, 1983). The Mutiny led to the demise of the British East India Company, which had existed since 1600, and to the establishment of the so-called British Raj in 1858, as well as a renewed role for Christian missionaries in the region (Stanley, 1983; Erickson, 2014). Resentment against the Company had been building amongst the *sepoy*s, the local soldiers recruited into the Company's army, and between May 1857 and June 1858, a rebellion was staged (Hibbert, 1978; Dalrymple, 2006). The reasons for the Mutiny were complex but had a particular link to the Company's orientation towards religion. Being a trading company, interested in making a profit rather than claiming souls, the East India Company had tried to remain neutral towards religion and had discouraged the presence of missionaries in India. Until the 1813 Charter Act, which renewed the Company's rule in India but at the same time granted sovereignty of its territory to the British Crown and ended its trade monopoly, Christian missionaries had been unable to officially spread their faith. However, with the passing of this Act they became more prominent in the subcontinent. Another important feature of the 1813 Charter Act was the introduction of Western education into India, and while this was to be provided by the East India Company, Christian missionaries played an increasingly important role as a means of imparting knowledge about Christianity as well as about Western values (Bellenoit, 2007;

Sengupta, 2011). This marks a shift from the earlier days of the Company when interference in local customs and traditions was avoided in case it got in the way of trade, to a situation where pressure from evangelicals and Anglicists gave rise to a new climate of engagement that sought to educate and civilise Indian nationals, heralding the growth of mission schools, hospitals, and clinics, many of which survive to this day (Fischer-Tiné & Mann, 2004).

By the time the 1857 rebellion took place there was a creeping suspicion that the Company was becoming more interested in religion and would eventually seek to convert its employees to Christianity. While from the Indian perspective there were concerns that Christianity was gaining too strong a foothold in the region, as Stanley tells us, the missionary lobby in Victorian England felt the opposite and ‘immediately hailed the Mutiny as divine retribution for the East India Company’s compromising religious policy’, whereby Britain had given India ‘too little’ Christianity (Stanley, 1983:85). The East India Company was perceived by evangelical Christians in England as not being explicitly supportive of their activities in India and as accommodating local religions in its activities, including Hinduism and Islam (Alavi, 1995). Between 1857 and 1858 there was a marked increase in donations to missionary societies and in the recruitment of missionaries where ‘it was perfectly clear that the road back to imperial prosperity followed the path of Christian duty, that a Christian government of India was “the only safe policy”’ (Stanley, 1983:87). However, of importance to our interest, Stanley also makes it clear that, ‘Christian government was not, however, the only constituent of the Indian insurance policy: economic development was equally indispensable’ (1983:87). Evangelicals in England supported the construction of India’s rail network at this time, with an aim to grow the cotton industry and thereby undercut the slavery-reliant US cotton farms, as well as to provide a means for the spreading of Christianity into remote and isolated areas. Thus, ‘many Christian observers . . . yoked together commerce and Christianity in their remedies for India’s malaise’ (Stanley, 1983:89).

While the appetite for the ‘alliance between commerce and Christianity gradually fell apart’ in the course of the 1860s (Stanley, 1983:91), Christian missionaries in India also had a wide-ranging impact upon indigenous religious actors who also became key players in the colonial modernising project and development narrative. As van der Veer states:

Although the legitimizing rituals and discourses of the colonial state were those of development, progress, and evolution and meant to be secular, they could easily be understood as essentially Christian. The response both the state and the missionary societies provoked was also decidedly religious. Hindu and Islamic forms of modernism led to the establishment of modern Hindu and Muslim schools, universities, and hospitals, superseding or marginalizing precolonial forms of education. Far from having a secularizing influence on Indian society, the modernizing project of the secular colonial state in fact gave modern religion a strong new impulse

(van der Veer, 2002:179)

Various forms of religious reform emerged in Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism, including a tendency to draw clearer boundaries between those traditions in order to match the categories favoured by the colonial state, as well as to define and justify their integrity in the face of Christianity’s influence (Oberoi, 1994; van der Veer, 2001). For instance, the failure of the 1857 Mutiny led to the suppression of many Muslim leaders by the colonial state and gave rise to a number of reform movements within Islam as both a response to British cultural and political hegemony and a reaction to Christian missionary criticism of Islam. The Deobandi was one of the most significant movements and emerged following the setting up of the Darul Uloom Deoband Madrasa in 1866. This madrasa became an important centre for both learning and

political organisation during the independence struggles, and under its administrative and ideological guidance a network of madrasas was forged across the subcontinent (Metcalf, 1978; Qasmi, 2001:17). These madrasas catered to the needs of the poor, who could not afford education, especially in rural areas, thus contrasting with the role of madrasas in Muslim India as elite, higher learning establishments producing civil servants and judicial officials (Nair, 2009). Other important Islamic movements of the period were the Firangi Mahal (Robinson, 2001) and Aligarh (Lelyveld, 1994).

In a similar fashion, Hindu groups became more politicised and clearly defined during this period, through the emergence of reform movements such as the Brahmo Samaj (established in 1828), Arya Samaj (1875), Ramakrishna Mission (1897), Satyashodhak Samaj (1873), and Indian National Social Conference (1887). For instance, in 1828 Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj and, in response to Christian criticism of Hinduism, outraged ‘orthodox Hindus by writing against idolatry, sati, child-marriage, and caste, and in favour of education for women’ (Knott, 1998:71). However, he not only wanted social reform within Hinduism, but also to mould the tradition into something that more closely resembled a ‘religion’ (i.e. following the Christian model). In particular, as Knott explains, he stressed that the Upanishads were the ‘authentic’ Hindu text and promoted a ‘reasoned, ethical monism’ rather than the perceived idolatrous polytheism typical of much popular Hindu practice (1998:72). These movements were not just confined to the religious realm, but importantly to forms of developmental progress and also nationalism in the bid to free India from British rule. In particular, the example of Christian missionaries’ activities in education, health, relief, and the welfare of poor and neglected sections of society was catalytic in spurring development-related activities by some of these Hindu groups. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi are also important to mention here. Vivekananda marketed a style of monotheistic neo-Vedanta philosophy in both India and the West and also founded the Ramakrishna Mission (named after his Bengali teacher), a socio-religious welfare organisation that is still active in development and humanitarian work in India today. He was not only interested in attracting Westerners to Hinduism but also in gaining their financial support for development work back home. Mahatma Gandhi was similarly concerned with social and religious reform, and while his activities were more clearly political than the other reformers discussed, it is apparent that they went hand in hand with his modernist approach to Hinduism and Christianity, which had emerged from his engagement with Orientalist and Theosophist discourse (Bergunder, 2014). Above all, Gandhi was concerned to rid India of British rule and also to improve conditions for marginalised groups, such as dalits and women. Equally important to mention here are Sikh reformist groups, such as the Ad Dharm movement (representing dalit Sikhs), which were largely confined to the Punjab (Oberoi, 1994; Mahajan & Jodhka, 2009; Jodhka & Kumar, 2010) and must also be seen against this Christian/colonial backdrop.

Two main points follow from the colonial period with regard to religions and development in Africa and South Asia. Firstly, religions were invoked as an ally or even central ideological justification for the colonial ‘civilising’ project. Christian missions and abolitionist activists were at the root of this configuration, and later conflicts and diverging interests notwithstanding, colonial missions did not question the perceived necessity of the European input for the betterment of African and Asian societies. Moreover, other religions were judged on their compatibility with this ‘civilising’ project, which sparked ‘modernising’ movements within some religions, asserting their reformist potential and compliance with European social and economic visions. Secondly, religious institutions became key providers of the welfare services which functioned as crucial indicators of the ‘civilising’ project, providing health care, education, vocational training, as well as local information and advocacy. Complementing the

failures and needs of the colonial economy in rapidly transitioning contexts, they in many ways occupied the same structural position that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have today (Manji & O'Coill, 2002). This was not only limited to Christian actors; local religious institutions occupied similar spaces in their engagement with colonial religion as the South Asia example shows.

Decolonisation and underdeveloped states

The marginalisation of religion in development

The emergence of a new bipolar world order after the Second World War brought about fundamental changes in the configuration of the global economy and its narratives about inequality, especially as the USA and its competition with Russia displaced the waning colonial powers. The erstwhile partition of the world into colonisers and colonised was relabelled to 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' countries and the Gross Domestic Product became the main measure of inequality among formally equal states (Rist, 2014:73–76).¹ Truman's Marshall Plan and his global development programme, announced in his second inaugural address of 1949, became the new hallmarks of economic and military interventionism in the name of human progress, framed in a modernist language of prosperity, which was based on scientific and economic rationality. Given that this new world order inherited the legacy of colonialism, were there any echoes of the Christian missionary idea of progress and development? And if this was the case, where did the secularism of the development project come from, and how was it linked to sociological theorisation of secularisation? Finally, how did this new secularism in development theory impact Africa and South Asia? Were religious actors and perspectives forced out of development programmes or did they more or less continue in their role?

Truman's programmatic invocation of a 'bold new program . . . for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas' in his second inaugural address certainly echoed the earlier colonial rhetoric and structures of the 'civilising' mission, a point which is often lost in the various introductions to development studies. After spelling out the necessary development efforts in a modernist language evoking scientific progress, Truman quickly turned to a more lofty and idealistic rhetoric to conclude his speech and justify its outlook. He now invoked the Biblical Sermon on the Mount ('Our allies are the millions who hunger and thirst after righteousness' (Truman, 1949, cf. Matthew 5:6)), which was also one of the two Biblical texts he had rested his hand on when taking the oath of office. Moreover, his closing remarks exhibited a considerable measure of providentialism:

Steadfast in our faith in the Almighty, we will advance toward a world where man's freedom is secure.

To that end we will devote our strength, our resources, and our firmness of resolve. With God's help, the future of mankind will be assured in a world of justice, harmony, and peace.

(Truman, 1949)

While these remarks have to be placed in the context of the American 'Civil Religion' (Bellah, 1970) rather than be read as a mere continuation of Victorian sentiment, it is still noteworthy that Truman's modernism is far removed from a fully secular development agenda, as the political mobilisation for his Point Four Programme did not rest in scientific progress alone but drew heavily on Christian views of social justice and eschatology.

Development theory did not immediately push aside religion. The Princeton economist and Nobel prize laureate, W. Arthur Lewis, who was influential in shaping development policy at the UN, in Ghana, and in the Caribbean, discussed religion in some detail in his *Theory of Economic Growth* (1955:101–107; cf. Deneulin, 2009:30–37). Discussing the stimulating and stymieing effects of religious beliefs on economic growth, Lewis importantly rejected the view that religious sentiments merely followed economic factors. Rather, religion appears as a fundamental factor in economic development:

After all, social change results mainly from what people do, and this in turn is mainly the result of what they believe. Religion permeates our beliefs because religious instruction (whether formal or informal) begins while we are still on our mother's knees. What we learn late in life for ourselves we can often unlearn by argument or demonstration, but what we have absorbed in childhood is much harder to cast out
(Lewis, 1955:106)

In the same way as the post-war development agenda did not immediately discount religion in political rhetoric and economic theory, religion also remained a significant practical factor in the continued presence of Christian missions in Africa and Asia. The charitable monopoly they had built in social care, education, and poverty alleviation made it exceedingly difficult to let go of their 'mission fields'. Rather, the foreseeable impact of national independence on defining working areas, retaining staff, and upholding fundraising causes led to various tactical responses for ascertaining a continued influence (Kalu, 2003). As the different post-colonial scenarios unfolded in Africa, key missionary industries, especially in education and health, were nationalised rapidly or gradually, but in all cases, missions managed to retain or regain a significant presence. The moratorium debate of the 1970s was a clear expression of this, when Africans voiced their unease with how the missionary presence and their financial aid mirrored a continued dependence of Africa on the West (Sundkler & Steed, 2000:1027–1029), and it was estimated that by 1995 there were still 30,000–40,000 Western missionaries working in the continent (Isichei, 1995:327). In South Asia, the legacy of partition shaped both religious and developmental dynamics during the post-independence period (Tomalin, 2015a). Partition resulted in the separation of West Pakistan and East Pakistan from India, renamed Pakistan and Bangladesh, in 1971, after the Bangladesh Liberation War. Both India and West and East Pakistan were initially established as secular states, but by 1956 Pakistan had become an Islamic state, with India retaining its officially 'secular' status to this day. In both settings Christian missionaries were allowed to continue operating openly for several decades after independence and remained engaged in maintaining the infrastructure of Christian institutions. However, the situation became increasingly tense from the 1980s onward when the rise of Hindu nationalism in India brought new laws and restrictions on missionary activity, and in Pakistan 'newly aggressive Islamic communal politics placed Christians in . . . danger, and placed new obstacles in the path of foreign missionaries' (Cox, 2008:245). Nonetheless the legacy of Christian social welfare activities continues in both settings, for instance, in Christian schools and hospitals, alongside numerous social welfare and developmental projects sustained by local indigenous religious actors.

Despite these clear indications of a continued participation of religious actors in development 'on the ground', religion did largely disappear from Western development theory in the following years. A clear and frequently cited example of this is Rostow's influential *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960). His high-modernist, universal theory of economic development marginalised the role of religion, most importantly by rejecting the Weberian sense of religion as a singular or primary influence on the development of economic

systems (cf. Deneulin, 2009:36). However, when Rostow explained why his model would be the only adequate one for human development as opposed to the historical determinism and ruthless utilitarianism of Marxism, he suddenly fell back on the Christian religion as a fundamental expression of democratic values and a sustainable social system (Rostow, 1960:165). Religion was also featured in his speculative outlook beyond the age of mass consumerism, when he mused whether humanity would be able to overcome the ensuing 'spiritual stagnation' or 'spiritual boredom' (Rostow, 1960:92). So even for Rostow, there seemed to have been a fundamental religious dimension to human societies and development, which informs the ethics of economic progress and simultaneously acts as an uncertain horizon for the age of mass consumption.

The point of these observations is not to argue that religion had an invariable presence in development thought throughout the twentieth century, but rather to draw out more precisely the continuities and changes to this relationship in Western thought about societal development and religion. Rostow's evolutionary system of development fundamentally rested on Talcott Parsons' modernisation theory (Gilman, 2007:163). Parsons, in turn, continued Weber's thinking of modernity as grounded in the Reformation, but provided a more optimistic view of modern capitalism than Weber had, a vision which was 'perfectly suited . . . for development crusaders trying to sell the American version of modernity to postcolonial regions' (Gilman, 2007:93). Moreover, Parsons' thought was also influential for the emerging secularisation theories of the twentieth century. While he ascribed religion with central integration and legitimisation functions, these were impeded by processes of differentiation and pluralisation that necessarily followed with modernisation. As a result, he saw religion retreating from the public sphere through privatisation, leaving behind a moral community built around value-generalisation (Parsons, 1966). This is the core of the neo-classical theory of secularisation, which was worked out in the following years by sociologists like Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, and Niklas Luhmann. Their theories of secularisation were mirrored by Christian theologies as well, most famously perhaps in Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* (Cox, 1965) or the Death of God theology of the 1960s and 70s.

The inability of Western political theory, sociology, and theology to account for religion in the public sphere certainly impacted donors, development theory, and programmes, but it should not be confused with an absence of religion in development thought and processes in the global South. Latin American Liberation Theology (Gutiérrez, 1974) and its many adaptations in Korean Minjung Theology, Dalit Theology, Black Theology, and South African Liberation Theology became major amplifiers of the anti-modernist Dependency Theory of development (Preston, 1996:179–195) and provided religiously inspired visions of development and social organisation that ran counter to the narrative of the privatisation of religion. Alongside the already mentioned continued presence of missions and their development work, new religious organisations and networks arose and equally compensated for the failures of post-colonial states, for example, in the form of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Africa (cf. Freeman, 2012), as well as in the various reform movements in India stemming from Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism. Arguably, development played an even greater role in the different Islamic reform movements in Africa and Asia. Organisations like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and their sister organisations elsewhere have always conducted relief and development activities in close proximity to their religious and political aims. Saudi Arabia has had a considerable impact on Muslim education in Africa by bringing African students to Saudi Arabian universities and funding schools in various countries. This helped to strengthen the religious hegemony of Wahhābism over Muslim Reformist thought in Africa, in a process that already began in the 1920s (Lauzière, 2010). And even the socialist autocrats of African Muslim countries, like

Mu‘ammar Qaddafi in Libya, Ja‘far al-Numayrī in the Sudan, and Siad Barre in Somalia, regularly invoked Islamic principles for justifying not just political, but also developmental aims, such as greater gender equality or economic progress. In South Asia, madrasas constitute the largest part of the Muslim faith-based sector and play an important role in education of the poor. Although Muslim involvement in health care is virtually non-existent, many prominent madrasas also undertake philanthropic and humanitarian work through associated charities, trusts, or relief organisations (Iqbal & Siddiqui, 2008:28). Similarly, Hindu and Sikh organisations are also involved in education and health services across India, and play an important role in relief and humanitarian work.

Thus, in contrast to much of Western post-colonial development thought, religious organisations and articulations retained an important role in the provision of welfare services and the imagination of social progress in Africa and South Asia. Even post-war development as such did not begin with a pronounced confession of secularism, but rather continued the eschatological vision of progress articulated by the Christian 'civilising mission' of colonialism. The ideological roots of the secular development project are rather to be found in the sociological theories of secularisation of the 1960s, which sought to account for the gradual disappearance of religion from the public sphere in many Western European countries, and more or less relegated religion to the cultural roots of a society's value system. What emerged, then, was a disconnect between secular development theory and donor preference and the continued presence and role of religious actors in developing countries, rather than a universally secular development project.

Faith-based organisations (FBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

The 're-discovery' of religion in development thought

Arguably then, the recent re-emergence of religion in Western development thought had more to do with an intellectual reassessment and a changed political and sociological conversation, than with changes on the ground. An example of this is the emergence of the term faith-based organisations (FBOs) or faith-based initiatives, which spearheaded the emergence of the new literature on religion and development. While there is a tendency within this literature to view FBOs as a subset of a broader category NGO, we will argue that the situation is actually more complex and that this way of articulating faith-based development activity is rather narrow and fails to capture the diverse ways that religion and development are intertwined in contemporary settings in Africa and Asia. So how did this new category of FBO emerge and in what political circumstances? How adequate is this category and the related re-discovery of religion in development theory and practice? What effects has this theoretical reorientation had on the so-called developing world via donor preferences and research?

The so-called NGO-isation of development began in the 1980s with 'NGOs fill[ing] gaps left by the privatization of state services' (Desai & Potter, 2008:500) following the rolling back of the state that accompanied the neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) implemented by the World Bank and the IMF to reform governments in developing countries (Simon, 2008:87). Donors have increasingly directed their funds via NGOs rather than national governments and while most are secular, others are linked to religious traditions in different ways, and are today commonly referred to as faith-based organisations (FBOs) (although different terms have been used to describe them, including, religious NGOs or faith-based development organisations). Over the past decade or so, development donors have increasingly chosen to support the work of FBOs and have also played a role in defining the category and

spurring on their proliferation. While we are focusing here on the newfound interest in FBOs within development practice and studies since the turn of the century, it is important to also emphasise that FBOs have been funded by donors for decades. However, because of the explicit secularism of development donors, and their dislike of evangelism in particular, FBOs have tended to downplay their religious identities and motives (especially in Europe). It is also important to highlight that religious actors have been involved in various types of charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian, and development work far longer than since the turn of the century, either as formal NGO-like organisations since the 1980s or as far older traditional social welfare actors at the heart of most, if not all, religious traditions. However, part of the re-emergence of religion in Western development has been an explicit recognition of the faith-based dimension of the NGO sector, alongside a tendency to increasingly seek engagement with it. Yet, this is done in a way that is based on a series of assumptions about its presumed advantages, which are often asserted without substantial evidence as to their validity (Tomalin, 2012). This owes much to broader global shifts around the so-called resurgence of religion as well as specific attempts in the USA to regulate the rise of religion in the public sphere within a secular form of politics guided by the First Amendment to the US Constitution, which requires that religion is separate from the state (Tomalin, 2012).

In the USA in particular, the rise of the so-called religious right since the 1980s and reactions after 9/11 have both contributed to a greater focus on the role of faith in society, including increased funding for FBOs. The 1996 charitable choice provision of the new Welfare Act enabled faith-based organisations in the USA to apply for federal funding to support welfare projects, and in 2002, George W. Bush established the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at USAID in order 'to create a level playing field for faith and community based organisations to compete for USAID programs' (USAID, n.d.; Stambach, 2015; Adkins et al., 2010; Cooper, 2014). During his presidency, Bush almost doubled funding to faith-based groups, from 10.5 per cent of aid in 2001 to 19.9 per cent in 2005 (James, 2009:5) with 'much of this increase going to evangelical Christian organizations' (Occhipinti, 2015:332; Hackworth, 2012). However, this turn towards religion was not only confined to the USA; governments in the UK, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden, as well as the World Bank, also channelled attention and funding to FBOs for both domestic and international projects (Marshall, 2001; Jones & Petersen, 2011:1294–5; G. Clarke, 2013; Haynes, 2013; Deacon & Tomalin, 2015).

A sizeable amount literature has now emerged which seeks to define what an FBO is, or attempts to develop typologies for classifying them. Much of this has developed in the USA with regard to domestic policy about FBOs and how to accommodate them whilst maintaining the First Amendment (Dionne & Chen, 2001; Solomon, 2003). Thus, in North America some argue that definitions of the term FBO should not include places of worship or congregations but instead the term FBO should only be used to refer to separately incorporated organisations which are used for development, charity, or service provision. This is because the First Amendment requires the separation of church and state (Tomalin, 2012:693; Jeavons, 2004:144). However, over the past decade or so a literature has emerged that examines FBOs in developing settings, drawing upon and reworking the USA literature, while at the same time seeking to complicate and challenge it (Clarke, 2008; Tomalin, 2012; Berger, 2003).

Defining what an FBO is has proved challenging in a number of ways, and one issue to consider is what to include and what to leave out. While Jeavons, for instance, argues that the US domestic definition should be exclusive, leaving out places of worship/congregations and only including formal organisations (Jeavons, 2004), other definitions have been more inclusive, bringing in places of worship and congregations, as well as numerous organisations that are not affiliated with a larger faith community or formally registered like NGOs (Clarke &

Jennings, 2008; Occhipinti, 2015; Tomalin, 2013). While widening the definition allows us to bring in a broader range of faith actors with which donors and other NGOs can engage, it is not always clear that these faith actors use the term FBO in self-reference. For example, Kirmani & Zaidi (2010) found that Islamic charities in Karachi did not identify themselves as FBOs for complex reasons that reflected the lack of relevance in that setting of distinguishing between 'faith-based' and 'non-faith-based' organisations, since religion was relevant across social domains, as well as the desire to avoid the political sensitivity of issues of faith and religion (Occhipinti, 2015:334). This suggests that the apparent need to isolate a specific set of faith-based as opposed to secular organisations makes more sense from a Western perspective. Another approach to thinking about FBOs in developing settings has involved a typological approach that places organisations along a spectrum representing the extent to which faith is manifest in different aspects of their work, from faith permeated, or saturated, to secular (Berger, 2003; Sider & Unruh, 2004; Hefferan et al., 2009). Sider and Unruh (writing about the US setting) for instance argue that 'whether an organization is faith-based cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. The faith nature of organizations is multidimensional, requiring a range of types' (Sider & Unruh, 2004:116).

Thus, there are doubts about whether the term FBO is wholly useful in developing contexts in terms of its ability to capture the broad range of organisational contributions from religious traditions to service delivery, advocacy, welfare, or disaster relief. However, it is now widely used by development donors and other development actors, in both the Global North and the Global South, and despite its particular origin within the USA, is increasingly adopted by religious actors across the globe in order to tap into funding streams and beneficial partnerships specifically aimed to include the faith sector. It is also important to remember the colonial dynamics that laid the foundations for the emergence of the contemporary FBOs and NGOs. The emergence of voluntary organisations involved in social welfare and development activities can again be traced back to the colonial periods in Africa and Asia. During the period of British rule in India, 'voluntary organizations were institutionalized and laws regarding the registration and regulation of philanthropic and voluntary organizations passed in order to formalize, legalize and control their activities' (Tomalin, 2015a:185). For instance, the Societies Registration Act was passed in 1860, primarily to regulate the associations blamed for the Mutiny. Thus, during the British Raj, there was a proliferation of both religious and secular non-profit organisations, a good number of which aimed to protect the interests of different religious and cultural groups in the face of colonialism, and many of which are still active today. In Africa, numerous development organisations originated from the colonial missionary projects mentioned earlier in the chapter, which were handed over (voluntarily or involuntarily) either to national governments or to newly independent churches in the aftermath of decolonisation. Another type of religious organisation important for development in Africa, especially with regard to education and economic sustenance, was the various Sufi orders in Islam. Though many have a longer history in Africa, they became very important during the imperial colonial and post-colonial phase, offering alternative political and economic networks. For example, the Qādirīyya arrived in mainland Tanzania in about 1905 and was connected to new forms of social and economic mobility from the start, going on to form an alliance with Julius Nyerere in post-colonial Tanzania as an important local ally in his political and developmental aims (Nimtz, 1980).

Thus, the 'turn to religion' in development policy, practice, and studies and its increased interest in FBOs in some ways only sanctions already established practice in Africa and Asia. Even before the emergence of the FBO terminology, religious actors had functioned as gatekeepers to local communities to facilitate the entrance of NGOs, helping to establish contacts and legitimise

given NGO objectives. In other instances they have made important modifications to gain NGO funding, by founding development wings or adjusting their project plans and funding applications to the required language. The borderline between NGOs and FBOs is accordingly fluid in many contexts. A recent testing of the FBO/NGO distinction in Nigeria provides some instructive details about this problem (Davis et al., 2011; cf. also Leurs, 2012). The study compared three organisations classified as NGOs and five classified as FBOs in three districts of Nigeria (two in Kano state, one in Lagos state), all of which were engaged in HIV/AIDS related work. While respondents and the organisations themselves were typically able to identify whether an organisation had a religious or secular background, the overlap between both was substantial, given the strongly religious background they operate in. They pursued the same development aims, and though FBOs would tend to frame this in more religious language, the intensity and relevance of religion for defining these aims varied strongly. Like FBOs, many NGOs were led by highly religious individuals, who justified their motivations and plans in religious language. Both types served various religious constituencies, with FBOs being generally closer to the members of their faith communities, whereas NGOs would also serve those considered to be living against the rule of a given religion (e.g. prostitutes). All organisations, whether Christian, Muslim, or secular, were engaged in similar activities, which in turn were defined by local expectations and customs. Differences emerged only with regard to some beliefs, for instance with regard to acceptable preventative methods. Both were held in high praise by their local constituents and were similarly poor in systematically measuring their outcomes and impact. FBOs were generally more financially independent, and more discriminatory in their hiring practices, but the latter was not consistent even within a given organisation. The study therefore presented a rather fluid and inconclusive result, and one of the project coordinators argued as a result that 'a standardised donor preference for FBOs is inappropriate', since the distinction between religious and secular organisations is difficult to uphold, outcomes are insufficiently measured in all cases, and the organisations' 'effectiveness is influenced not only by their characteristics and strategies but also by the context in which they operate' (Leurs, 2012:704).

All of this would indicate that the distinction of FBOs and NGOs, or more generally the question of the presence of religion in a given development organisation or collaboration, is much too blunt an instrument for an adequate assessment. Rather, like any contextual variable, donors and practitioners would have to assess how specific beliefs, religious organisation, and moral communities impact a given project in terms of organisation, legitimacy, constituents, accepted practices, and achievable outcomes. This requires a good amount of religious literacy and signals the end of rather blunt and unspecific approaches to religions and development.

Conclusion

Deconstructing religions and development

As we have argued, religions and development may be a recent discovery in development studies, but they are actually part of a longer history of the European and North American engagement with the rest of the world, simultaneously seeking to define progress and the role of religious beliefs, organisations, and practices therein. The imperial phase of colonialism was marked by the joint impetus of 'commerce and Christianity', and despite the at times diverging interests between missionaries and other colonial advocates, Christianity retained an important place in the justification and implementation of the colonial project in Africa and Asia, as other religions were forced to answer and adjust to the colonial narrative of modernity. The emergence of the development/underdevelopment rhetoric after the Second World War can initially be seen as a

continuation of this colonial vision of the world, especially as the established colonial structures in Africa and Asia, like the role of missions or financial dependence, proved fairly resilient to the dawn of formal independence. In focusing on economic indicators only, in answering the Soviet ideological challenge, and in adapting to the emerging neo-classical sociology of secularisation, development thought increasingly ignored or criticised religion as irrelevant or obstructive to the envisioned progress. However, this hardly matched the continuing role of religions in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere in the developing world, and religions (now including the increasingly indigenised Christianity) were again found to be incompatible with what modernity required. The recent turn to religions in parts of development studies seems to be aimed at correcting some of these misrecognition, but the categories employed as well as the genesis of this field of study rather point to changing perceptions and political ideas about religions in the West. Their adequacy for describing, understanding, and incorporating religions in Africa and Asia in sustainable development processes has yet to be proved. Given the long-standing ideological relations between narratives about religion and those about development that we have highlighted in this chapter, we would like to suggest that the generalised debate about the benefits or dangers of religions in development or about the suitability of FBOs to development does little more than continue an essentially Western debate about the role of religion in society.

In the study of religions, it is an established insight that the application of the originally Western category of religion to Africa and Asia cannot be understood properly apart from the colonial and post-colonial history of the past two centuries (Chidester, 1996, 2014; King, 1999; Fitzgerald, 2000; Masuzawa, 2005). As we have shown, narratives about development are an important part of this history, and their relationship with ideas about religion needs to be deconstructed in this larger context. This should help to offer critical reflection on the current rediscovery of religion in development studies, laying bare some of the ideological configurations behind this issue and rendering moot some of the more general discussions about the benefits or dangers of religion in fostering development. What we would advocate instead is a contextually sensitive approach to development and religion that highlights local histories and conceptual frameworks in assessing societal progress and the role of religions therein. While this would mean a more fragmented approach to the issue, as Africans and Asians need to explore these in dialogue their widely varying local cosmologies and ritual practices, they have a common interest in such a post-colonial deconstruction of the dominating ideas and generalisations about religion and development. Constructing alternatives to the offered dichotomies, concepts, and visions about the role of religion in development may thus be an important part of an emancipatory endeavour. After all, the most difficult and contested category of development is that of ownership.

Note

- 1 <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/departments/international-development/rad/index.aspx>

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