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**Article:**

Smith, JD [orcid.org/0000-0002-6244-6089](http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6244-6089) (2017) Positioning Missionaries in Development Studies, Policy, and Practice. *World Development*, 90. pp. 63-76. ISSN 0305-750X

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.08.016>

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Citation:

Smith, J. D. (2016). Positioning Missionaries in Development Studies, Policy and Practice. *World Development*.  
<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.08.016>

## **Positioning Missionaries in Development Studies, Policy and Practice**

**Jonathan D. Smith**

*Author Accepted Version*

This article diagnoses major causes of the uncomfortable relationship between missionaries and development scholars and practitioners, and it proposes new ways to clarify the relationship through shared reflection on sacred influences that shape global development. In the past fifteen years the turn to religion in development studies has altered how development scholars and practitioners perceive religious actors, opening up possibilities for renewed partnership. Yet the turn to religion in development has mostly disregarded missionaries. This oversight is partly due to the complicated historical relationship between Western Christian missionaries and development workers. Although missionaries have long participated in the work of development, present-day missionaries remain associated with coercive proselytization, or they are overlooked in literature on religion and development.

In order to understand the challenges of positioning missionaries in development, I review 48 sources which create, apply or critique typologies of faith-based organizations (FBOs). FBO typologies of the past fifteen years have broken new ground in exploring the links between beliefs and practices of religious actors doing development work. Yet these typologies struggle to position missionaries due to 1) simplistic categorization of FBOs, 2) unhelpful scales of religiosity, and 3) a basis in outdated assumptions of separate spheres of religious and secular actors, and separate worlds of religion and development. Based on shared critiques of FBO typologies, I propose a new framework for positioning missionaries. The framework provides a shared space to explore how all development actors, both religious and secular, are shaped by the interaction between sacred and material influences. The framework offers a way to move beyond circular arguments about comparative advantage of religious or secular approaches toward an appreciation of the complementarity of

different approaches to development. The article concludes with a shared critique of missionaries and development workers who impose their beliefs and values on others.

**Keywords:** religion; faith-based organizations; typologies; postsecular; missionaries; sociology of the sacred

**Word Count:** 9,175 words excluding abstract, figure, tables and references.

## 1. Introduction

In their review of religion and development in 2011, Deneulin and Rakodi track the increasing engagement with religion in development studies, policy and practice. They call for research that can “engage with religious doctrines and interpretation”, and they suggest discovering how the “transcendent and sacred dimensions can be reflected in development studies”(Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p. 52). The difficulty to reflect the sacred in development studies is exemplified by the struggle to position missionaries in the typologies of religious organizations working in development. Although the findings of this article could relate more broadly to missionaries of all faiths and beliefs, the focus is primarily on Christian missionaries due to their historical relationship with contemporary secular development actors. Missionaries and development workers operate in the same space and face similar challenges, a fact which can no longer be overlooked in the contemporary turn to religion in development (Tomalin, 2012). Based on a robust critique of typologies of faith-based organizations (FBOs), I propose a framework for positioning missionaries by analyzing how all development actors, both religious and secular, incorporate their beliefs and values into their practices of development.

The article is divided into five sections. Section 1 narrates the shift in development studies from viewing religion as malevolent and irrelevant to an ambivalent force in global development. Section 2 diagnoses why missionaries as a religious actor have largely remained in the malevolent and irrelevant categories, and argues that they should be placed firmly in the ambivalent category. Section 3 presents results of a review of typologies of faith-based organizations, questioning their usefulness

in locating religious actors and missionaries, and critiquing their underlying assumptions. Based on the learning from these critiques, Section 4 proposes an analytical framework that positions religious and secular actors including missionaries according to how they integrate beliefs and values into their practice of development. Section 5 summarizes major arguments, suggests avenues for further research and envisions a shared critique of proselytization by missionaries and development actors.

The past 15 years have seen a remarkable shift in the position of religion in development studies, policy and practice. Whether the cause is a resurgence of religion in individual identity and practice (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, pp. 46–47) or in the public sphere (P. Berger, 1999) or a turn to religion, the world has changed, scholarly perceptions have changed, or both. Although a majority of scholars have turned to religion, there are notable dissidents in religious studies (Wiebe, 2014) and development studies (N. J. Davis & Robinson, 2012; De Kadt, 2009; Flanigan, 2010). Others have described in detail the story of this shift (see Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011; Jones & Petersen, 2011 for thorough overviews), so rather than repeat the story I summarize its narrative as religious actors move from malevolent and irrelevant to ambivalent.

The concept of religion as malevolent arose largely from the Enlightenment, which constructed categories of rational, progressive, neutral and virtuous secularism set against irrational, traditional, partisan, and violent religion (Candland, 2000, pp. 129–130; Fountain, 2013, p. 20; King, 2013, p. 149; Rakodi, 2011a; Selinger, 2004, pp. 534–535). Depicting religion as irrelevant reached its height in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with the belief in modernism and secularism as the path toward economic development rendering religion largely irrelevant to development studies, policy and practice (Selinger, 2004, pp. 526–527). Beyer describes the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a time of 'ambiguity, plurality, struggle and uncertainty', in transition between the certainty of the past and the uncertainty of the future (Beyer, 2013, p. 666). The key to understanding the current phase is the word 'post', not the myriad terms that follow such as postsecular, postmodern and post-development. Secularism, modernity or development are not finished, but these concepts no longer explain the world, and they are not impervious to critique (Moxham, 2014).

Postsecular proponents assert that our societies are composed of the interaction between secular and religious concepts and actors, and they have rejected a false dichotomy between a secular

public square and a sacred private religious life (Habermas, 2006; Taylor, 2007). Postmodern and post-development scholars note the importance of local cultures and the problems that result when assumptions of superiority lead to suppression of the other (Asad, 2015; Escobar, 1992). Modernity and development are more than neutral technical process, they are infused with specific ideologies and assertions of power (Ager & Ager, 2011, pp. 8–9; Selinger, 2004). Religion itself is ambivalent, a powerful resource which can be mobilized for violence or for peace (Appleby, 2000; De Cordier, 2009b; Haynes, 2007; Hostenstein, 2005). The “beneficiaries” of development projects may view all development actors, religious and secular, as partisan actors allied (in reality or in perception) with specific political, economic and security agendas (De Cordier, 2009a). This contemporary age of ambivalence has created an amorphous yet common space for religious and secular actors to explore together what development is and what it should be.

## **2. Why development scholars and practitioners struggle to position Christian missionaries**

With the rapid change in the position of religion in development, we might expect to find missionaries in the same ambivalent category as other religious actors in development. Missionaries have a vast history of involvement in healthcare, education and other endeavors similar to development projects (M. Clarke, 2015; Jennings, 2013). Instead of depicting a complex relationship between missionaries and development actors, the current literature tends to locate religious missionaries as separate from mainstream development actors, stubbornly occupying the categories of malevolent and irrelevant actors. This section discusses five major reasons for this mystery.

One reason is the resonant archetype of the missionary as a 19<sup>th</sup>-century white European male subjugating local people (Priest, 2001). In his description of the missionary Abner Hale in Hawaii, Michener embraces this archetype fully. The missionary is “skinny, bad complexion, eyes ruined through too much study, sanctimonious, dirty fingernails, about six years retarded in all social graces” (1959:139). The echoes of this archetype today position missionaries both as clueless cultural imperialists and as outdated relics of a colonial past, the very opposite of the aims and ethics of development. Examples abound of missionaries who have embodied this negative archetype (Chidester, 1996; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Tinker, 1993), but the question remains why this

historical depiction of a missionary retains its resonance.

In the way that the Enlightenment constructed religion as its irrational other, academics in the modern era constructed the category of missionaries as their malevolent counterpart. Van der Geest describes missionaries and anthropologists as ‘brothers under the skin’, noting key similarities between missionaries and anthropologists of the late nineteenth century: they were both guests in foreign cultures, they both relied on detailed knowledge of language and culture gained through first-person observation, and they both interpreted local cultures according to a specific (albeit distinct) methodology (van der Geest, 1990, p. 589). At the time of the creation of the modern academy, missionaries came to represent the opposite of the ideals of academics, with the binary of anthropologists and missionaries as ‘conservers vs. converters, doubters vs. knowers, and listeners v. preachers’ (van der Geest, 1990, p. 588).

This prevailing image of the ethnocentric 19th century Western Christian missionary is evidenced in historical studies. They are depicted as ignorant or dismissive of local customs (Meyer, 1999), allied with political powers of colonial exploitation and domination (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986), and intolerant and sometimes openly violent towards those with differing opinions (Clendinnen, 1982; Tinker, 1993). These images resonate with journalistic coverage of today’s missionaries as exploiting local people (Yeoman, 2002). These depictions are accurate in some cases, but they were not true of all missionaries in the 19th century, and may be less representative today. Other historical studies have demonstrated the complex relationship between Western Christian missionaries and colonialism. In some contexts, missionaries acted as agents of social change and transformation compatible with positive development outcomes (Dunch, 2002; Etherington, 1996; Sanneh, 2009; Toulouze, 2011; Woodberry, 2012). The change was often due to the unintended consequence of Bible translation and literacy (Sanneh, 2009; Woodberry, 2012), which as it became indigenized enabled anti-colonial movements and bottom-up development processes.

A second reason that Christian missionaries are viewed as malevolent is that missionary activity is conflated with coercive and insensitive proselytization. These practices are outlawed by many donor governments. In many developing countries, missionary activity is illegal and religious freedom is restricted. The conflation of religious mission and proselytization is part of good practice

documents, such as The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief (1994), which as of November 2015 has been signed by 587 religious and secular organizations (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2015). The Code states in point three that “aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint”, but accepts “the right of NGHAs [Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies] to espouse particular political or religious opinions”. What is left unclear is how an organization can espouse a belief without furthering it. An underlying problem is that (in contrast to the code which mentions political standpoints) the focus of proselytization is on religious activity, leading to the conclusion that proselytization is a problem only for religious groups rather than for all groups espousing political or religious beliefs (Fountain, 2015, p. 89).

Considering the negative associations accompanying missionaries, it is easier to consider missionaries as irrelevant to development studies and practice today, a ghost of development past. Benthall & Bellion-Jourdan (2009) argue that “Christian missionary activity and humanitarian aid have been progressively de-linked from each other since the founding of the Red Cross movement” (p. 156). Fountain (2015) depicts how development organizations picked up the baton from missionaries, sharing the same evangelical zeal but with different aims for re-making social and economic structures (p. 89). The family resemblance between colonial missionaries and post-colonial development workers is not lost on others. Manji & O’Coill (2002) depict NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa as missionary organizations who rebranded themselves as development actors in order to dissociate themselves from missionaries, yet the NGOs continued to play a paternalistic role by addressing symptoms of poverty without addressing global power structures that continue dependence (p.568). In a similar vein, Middle East Studies scholars have begun to call international development workers in the Palestinian Territories ‘missionaries of the new era’ of neoliberalism (Merz, 2012), and a review of the work of European classical music teachers in the West Bank dubs them ‘music teachers as missionaries’ (Willson, 2011) of Western cultural hegemony.

Attempts to relegate missionaries to the past also do not fit the current reality. The number of Christian missionaries is increasing and their makeup is increasingly global. The most comprehensive database puts the number of foreign missionaries (not working in their country of origin) in 2015 at

400,000 (compared to 62,000 in 1900 and 240,000 in 1950), and mission agencies in 2015 at 5,500 (up from 600 in 1900 and 2,200 in 1950). There are slightly more foreign Christian missionaries today relative to the world's population than there were in 1900, .016% in 2015 compared to .012% in 1900 (Johnson, Zurlo, Hickman, & Crossing, 2015, p. 29). These numbers do not include volunteers in the short-term mission movement, which in 2003 was estimated at 1 million Protestant Christians per year sent from the US alone (Priest, Dischinger, Rasmussen, & Brown, 2006, p. 432). The majority of countries sending missionaries are still Western, but in 2010 three of the top ten sending countries were from the global South: Brazil, South Korea and India (Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2013, p. 76). It is difficult to find solid data on the missionary activity of other religions, but one estimate of Islamic missionaries (*dāʿee*) in 2005 counted 141,630 (Johnson & Scoggins, 2005, p. 10).

Even though missionaries are not disappearing numerically, they may seem to be working in a parallel space to development workers, clearly distinguishable from development actors and even other faith-based organizations (FBOs). Some of the major typologies of FBOs that I will examine in the next section support the idea of distinguishability (J. Berger, 2003; G. Clarke, 2006). In reality, missionary organizations are heavily involved in education, relief and development projects. A review of the websites of some of the largest international evangelical Christian missionary organizations (Cru, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Operation Mobilization, Youth with a Mission, and Wycliffe) finds mentions of relief and development projects. The same can be said for Islamic *dāʿwah* organizations, notably in the Gulf (Benthall & Lacey, 2014; Kroessin & Mohamed, 2008).

Whether or not their quantifiable activities are significant in global development, Christian missionaries influence public perceptions of development workers. Instances of Western aid workers being expelled from or killed in Muslim-majority countries are fueled by accounts of missionary activity, for example in Morocco (The Economist, 2010) and Afghanistan (Nordland & Wafa, 2010; Nordland, 2010). Western missionaries are often perceived by the wider world as identical to Western aid and development workers. This is particularly true in countries where missionary activity is illegal, as some Christian missionaries present themselves as relief and development workers (Pelkmans, 2009; Thompson, 2012). De Cordier reports an interview with a development worker in



Tajikistan, who states, “I’m a US citizen and I work for an organization that focuses on education and orphanages. The problem is, so do many of these Christian missionaries. So we definitely feel increasing suspicion from communities as well as local authorities where we work” (De Cordier, 2009a, p. 620).

A further cause of perceived missionary irrelevance is an instrumental approach to religious actors in development. The turn to religion in development has been largely led by Western donor governments (Jones & Petersen, 2011) and institutions like the World Bank (McDuie-Ra & Rees, 2008), leading to a focus on faith-based organizations as partners for development (Department for International Development, 2012). This focus is functional, leading to the perception that it is possible to separate the ideology of religious groups from the practical outputs of publicly-funded development projects. This focus is also narrow, viewing religious communities through the lens of a set of organizations that appear like NGOs, which tend to be non-affiliated to local communities and with a limited mission to achieve development objectives (Jones & Petersen, 2011).

The instrumental approach is useful in some instances, for example in engagement of the UN with religious organizations that are registered with the UN (UNFPA, 2008). Yet the narrow focus enables donors to fund development projects by actors with explicit missionary aims, as long as they agree not to engage in specific “missionary activities” such as religious education or handing out religious literature. A good example is DFID’s recent funding of Samaritan’s Purse, an evangelical Christian organization that explicitly states its missionary aims and activities (Samaritan’s Purse, 2015). The instrumental approach may also cause religious organizations to arbitrarily separate their religious identity from religious practice in a way that makes them appear schizophrenic (Hovland, 2008). Because of its narrow focus on development activities, the functional approach supports limited development objectives without engaging with the ideological dimension of either Christian missionaries or secular donors (often representing governments with partisan platforms – see Marsden, 2012).

Another cause is that both Christian missionaries and development workers are reluctant to engage directly with each other. Many missionaries do not want to be located, preferring to operate in a fuzzy zone between religion and development, a space Hearn calls “invisible NGOs” (Hearn, 2002).

For some missionaries, their activities mirror the education, relief and healthcare services provided by secular actors, but they are not recognized as development actors by national or international umbrella organizations for NGOs, or they have the public face of FBOs while maintaining missionary aims. In some contexts this invisibility is because missionary activity is illegal or restricted (notably in Muslim-majority countries and China), but their invisibility is also a recognition that the title of missionary is largely pejorative, bound up with a history of colonial exploitation (Scantlebury, 1996). Development scholars and practitioners may also hesitate to locate missionaries because of the problems they pose to neutrality. Yet missionaries have been part of the development world from the beginning, and attempts to impose ideologies of secularism and materialism on the developing world are themselves perceived as missionary endeavors (De Cordier, 2009a; Stirrat, 2008). Whether they like it or not, missionaries and development workers share the same space.

### **3. Why FBO typologies struggle to locate missionaries**

The turn to religion has accompanied a growing corpus of typologies which try to locate religious actors (primarily FBOs) in development studies, policy and practice. These typologies largely reflect the awkward relationship between Christian missionaries and development scholars and practitioners. In this section I examine these typologies by assessing their usefulness for helping us understand religious actors, and by examining the assumptions that may inhibit understanding.

To identify sources for examining FBO typologies, I ran an iterative search of academic sources on FBO typologies. I initially collected 95 sources by searching academic databases, Google Scholar, and bibliographies of typology articles to identify other key sources. I included typologies that were created for Global North and Global South contexts because typologies that have been applied to the developing world are often based on typologies developed for FBOs in the United States (J. Berger, 2003; T. H. Jeavons, 1997; Sider & Unruh, 2004). I then limited articles to the past fifteen years (2000-2015) representing the period of the turn to religion in development studies, with two exceptions. Jeavons (1997) proposes a typology that is instrumental in the development of post-2000 typologies, and a quantitative study (Kniss & Campbell, 1997) added to my analysis because quantitative studies are rare in the 2000-15 period.

Following Clarke & Ware's approach to literature review on FBOs (M. Clarke & Ware, 2015), I used a modified realist synthesis method (Pawson, 2006) to decide which sources to analyze. Rather than analyze every possible source, I limited the review to 48 sources that proposed a new typology (n=18), applied a typology to a specific context (n=22), or offered a unique critique of current typologies (n=15). Some sources fit into more than one category, as depicted in the summary of the typology review and sources in Table 1.

<b>Propose New Typology (n=18)*</b>	<b>Category by Idealized Type (n=10)</b>	<b>Continuum of Religiosity (n=8)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-affiliation of FBOs (M. Clarke, Charnley, &amp; Lumbers, 2011; M. Clarke &amp; Ware, 2015; Vidal, 2001)</li> <li>-formality and geography (Bradley, 2009; McDuie-Ra &amp; Rees, 2008)</li> <li>-Beliefs and ideologies (Audet, Paquette, &amp; Bergeron, 2014; J. Green &amp; Sherman, 2002; Monsma, 2004; Thaut, 2009)</li> <li>-Intuitive (Gerald Clarke, 2006)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-faith pervasiveness (J. Berger, 2003)</li> <li>-faith permeation (Sider &amp; Unruh, 2004)</li> <li>-faith-related (Smith &amp; Sosin, 2001)</li> <li>-integrating faith into practice (Goggin &amp; Orth, 2002)</li> <li>-self-professed religiousness (T. H. Jeavons, 1997)</li> <li>-secular-moderate to militant (Benedetti, 2006);</li> <li>-secular to religious (Bradley, 2009)</li> <li>-passive, active, persuasive, exclusive (G. Clarke, 2008)</li> </ul>	
<b>Apply Typology to a Specific Context (n=22)*</b>	<b>Institutional, Sectoral, Organizational (n=11)</b>	<b>Global North (n=5)</b>	<b>Global South (n=6)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Institutional: FBOs registered with the World Bank (McDuie-Ra &amp; Rees, 2008), the UN (Boehle, 2010; UNFPA, 2008), and governmental donors such as CIDA (Audet et al., 2014; Paras, 2012; Vander Zaag, 2013)</li> <li>-Sectoral: HIV/AIDS responses in Nigeria (C. Davis, Jegede, Leurs, Sunmola, &amp; Ukiwo, 2011; Leurs, 2012), health care services in Sub-Saharan Africa (Lipsky, 2011), and welfare programs in the US (Monsma, 2004)</li> <li>-Organizational (Aiken, 2010; Olson, 2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-USA (Ebaugh &amp; Chafetz, 2006; Kniss &amp; Campbell, 1997)</li> <li>-Canada (Audet et al., 2014; Vander Zaag, 2013)</li> <li>-UK (Gerald Clarke, 2006, 2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-India and Rwanda (Bradley, 2009)</li> <li>-Latin America and Caribbean countries (Hefferan, Adkins, &amp; Occhipinti, 2009)</li> <li>-Nigeria (Odumosu, Olaniyi, &amp; Alonge, 2009; Olarinmoye, 2012)</li> <li>-Tanzania (M. Green, Mercer, &amp; Mesaki, 2012)</li> <li>-South Africa (Van der Merwe, Swart, &amp; Hendriks, 2014)</li> </ul>
<b>Review/critique of Typologies (n=15)*</b>	(Fountain & Lau, 2013; Holenstein, 2005; James, 2009, 2011; T. Jeavons, 2004; Jones & Petersen, 2011; Leurs, 2012; Lewis & Opoku-Mensah, 2006; Lunn, 2009; Paras & Stein, 2012; Paras, 2012; Rakodi, 2011b, 2012b; Tomalin, 2012; Tvedt, 2006)		
<b>Total Sources (n=48)*</b>	<b>Irrelevant: Unmentioned (n=38)</b>	<b>Malevolent: Problematic (n=5)</b>	<b>Ambivalent (n=5)</b>
How many		(Audet et al., 2014;	(J. Berger, 2003;

sources mention missionary groups or activities?		Benedetti, 2006; Bradley, 2009; Gerald Clarke, 2006, 2008)	Fountain, 2013; James, 2009; Odumosu et al., 2009; Paras, 2012)
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Table 1. Summary of FBO typologies review

\*Note: Some sources both introduce a typology and apply it to a specific context. In these cases the sources are included in both rows.

Although not exhaustive, this list demonstrates the wide range of approaches to and applications of FBO typologies. Rather than describing the details of how typologies were applied, I have collected the reflections of these authors about the process of applying typologies. I combined their reflections with those of the studies (n=15) which review and critique the existing typologies. The majority of authors commented that they found typologies useful as a means to explore the ways in which religious beliefs are embodied in relief and development projects run by FBOs (good summaries can be found in Rakodi, 2012a; Tomalin, 2012). However, the typologies offer limited usefulness for understanding religious actors, and they are based on problematic assumptions about the irrelevance and malevolence of religion.

The studies (n=18) proposing typologies and/or frameworks for positioning FBOs have common features (see Table 1). Some (n=10) propose categories for idealized types of FBOs. For the category typologies, writers frequently note that classifying organizations by idealized type limits understanding of that organization, leading to an instrumental view of religious actors (Jones & Petersen, 2011; Lewis & Opoku-Mensah, 2006; Paras & Stein, 2012; Paras, 2012; Rakodi, 2011b; Tomalin, 2012; UNFPA, 2008). Organizations are difficult to fit neatly into categories. G. Clarke (2006) mentions World Vision as an example of a missionary type of organization, but in other ways it clearly fits into the category of charitable organization. Hezbollah in Lebanon is able to fit into all five of Clarke's categories simultaneously (for a useful case study of Hezbollah's development activities see Harb, 2008). Categories may help donors to find FBOs that seem to be the most natural partners structurally. In actuality they may be only seeing the part of an organization that they want to see, an example of the functional blindness (Ager & Ager, 2011) which plagues narrow concepts of development.

Other typologies (n=8) construct a continuum of religiosity, with secular or neutral on one end

of the spectrum and highly religious on the other end. Many authors point out that faith-pervasiveness and even the faith identity of an FBO vary by location and time (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2006; James, 2009, 2011; Kniss & Campbell, 1997; Lewis & Opoku-Mensah, 2006; Olson, 2008; Rakodi, 2011b; Thaut, 2009; Tvedt, 2006). In some situations, a religious actor might want to appear less religious to appeal to a wider funding base (James, 2011), while in other contexts it would portray itself as more religious to appeal to religious donors or to a context where religious credentials are an asset (Thaut, 2009; Tvedt, 2006). This variation in faith pervasiveness holds true even in Western contexts, as demonstrated by two extensive quantitative studies in the US (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2006; Kniss & Campbell, 1997).

The difficulty to determine the level of religiosity of an FBO signals a deeper problem. If a typology could accurately depict the religiosity of an FBO, would that information be useful? Thaut (2009) wrestles with this conundrum in the conclusion of her study of Christian FBOs. She notes that organizations in the Evangelical-Humanitarian category, the most religious type of organization in her typology could have different development outcomes, either better attuned to local needs or a could create local conflict due its religious nature (Thaut, 2009, p. 347). As we explored earlier, religion is an ambivalent force (Appleby, 2000; Haynes, 2007; Holenstein, 2005). A more religious FBO could either be a major risk or a major asset (a list can be found De Cordier, 2009b, p. 680).

The critiques of the usefulness of typologies lead on to other critiques about the problematic assumptions underlying FBO typologies. The majority of sources offer strong critiques of current FBO typologies as based on outdated and invalid assumptions about religion and development. The typologies reflect more the assumptions of development as neutral and religion as problematic, assumptions that do not fit with the environment that has enabled the turn to religion.

First, these typologies are based on an assumption that we can tell the difference between secular and religious NGOs (Fountain, 2013; M. Green et al., 2012; Leurs, 2012; Paras & Stein, 2012; Paras, 2012; Rakodi, 2011b, 2012b; Tomalin, 2012; Tvedt, 2006; Vander Zaag, 2013). In the developing world where there is little separation between religion and state, the distinction clearly blurs (M. Green et al., 2012; Tomalin, 2012; Tvedt, 2006). Even in Western contexts, the underlying problem is in the way that such a distinction creates a “secular fiction”, an “underlying set of

problematic assumptions about the separation between the sacred and the profane, between the goals of mission and development, and, more broadly, the separation between religion and politics” (Paras, 2012, p. 232). This distinction embeds the binary of secular as neutral and religious as partial and ideological, which leads to a problematizing of religion without a shared critique of the ideologies and values behind secularism (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011). The religious-secular distinction sustains the idea that religion and secularity have an inverse relationship – the more secular, the less religious, and vice versa. This subtraction theory runs counter to the recognition that religious and secular actors share values and share space in the public sphere (Taylor, 2007).

Second, these typologies assume a separation between two worlds -- the world of religion and the world of development (a term found in Marshall & Keough, 2005), as if the two are entirely separate domains (Fountain, 2013; Hostenstein, 2005; James, 2011; Jones & Petersen, 2011; Lunn, 2009; McDuire-Ra & Rees, 2008; Tomalin, 2012). This assumption leads to unhelpful generalizations: development is material and religion is non-material (Jones & Petersen, 2011), religious communities are somehow more “authentic” than other development actors (Jones & Petersen, 2011), and religious actors can choose to be involved in development, instead of development being a part of their core beliefs and teaching (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Another problematic result of this binary is that religion somehow enhances development or can be used to improve development, as if the categories of religion and development are not themselves constructed ideas (Paras, 2012). As Rakodi puts it, “‘Religion’ does not have a particular relationship with ‘development’ - rather ideas about development and ideas derived from religion about the nature of reality and right social ordering are mutually constitutive” (Rakodi, 2011b, p. 19).

Third, many typologies are designed to determine comparative advantage of FBOs compared to secular NGOs (Tomalin, 2012, p. 701). The comparative advantage question blurs the descriptive analysis of what FBOs do with a prescriptive assertion that FBOs are better (or worse) than NGOs. The question instrumentalizes religious actors: it asks what religious actors can do for development and ignores the fact that all organizations have wider aims than meeting narrow development objectives. Patronage, proselytism and lack of professionalism become the problems of religious groups alone, supporting the idea that partnering with them is inherently risky or dangerous (De Kadt,

2009).

The question of comparative advantage is an unanswerable question, because it both proposes that religious actors are fundamentally different than non-religious actors, but at the same time they can meet development objectives better than actors who specialize in development. Many argue that FBOs have more connections to local faith communities than NGOs, but this connection is exactly what makes them different to NGOs. This contradiction is reflected in the debate about how to define FBOs: some argue that the definition be limited to FBOs that look most like NGOs (T. Jeavons, 2004), while others think FBOs should they have the broadest possible definition as any “organization that draws inspiration from religious teaching” (Gerald Clarke & Jennings, 2008, p. 6), which demonstrates their fundamental difference to NGOs. Most of the typologies take characteristics of NGOs and try to apply them to FBOs (J. Berger, 2003; T. H. Jeavons, 1997; Sider & Unruh, 2004). Others reply that these characteristics do not apply to FBOs because they have a different makeup than NGOs (Clarke & Ware, 2015). Without the ability to find a shared frame of reference between religion and development and between religious and secular organizations, we are stuck with a question that engenders debate but it ultimately circular.

Considering the difficulty in locating missionaries described in the section above, it is not surprising that FBO typologies struggle to position missionaries accurately. My review of the typologies finds that they place missionaries largely in the irrelevant and malevolent categories discussed earlier (see Table 1). For most studies, they are irrelevant: 38 of the 48 studies do not mention missionaries as a part of the current landscape of development studies. One of the most interesting examples of this irrelevance comes from Thaut (2009). Her theological taxonomy leads to the creation of a category called radical non-engagement, which she describes in a descriptive table as “church missions as a central goal; engages in religious social institutions for evangelism purposes” (p. 331). Here is a typology that includes missionary organizations involved in some type of relief or development (“social institutions”). Yet this category is completely omitted from the text of her paper, although she includes a lengthy discussion on the problems of proselytization for Christian organizations (pp. 325-326). Missionary activity is discussed, but missionaries themselves remain invisible in her typology as humanitarian actors.

For many typologies and critics, missionaries are in the malevolent space. Of the ten articles that mention missionaries, five discuss missionaries as a problem. Audet et al. (2014) creates a category of FBOs called proselytist, defined as “claims to realize any activity carried out with the intention of changing, altering, replacing, convincing or modifying one’s belief to another belief or religious norm” (p. 296). An organization is proselytist based on the extent to which their statements of belief are contained in their mission statements and public website. This stance assumes that the more visibly religious they are, the more problematic they will be. Benedetti (2006) uses the value-laden term “militant” to describe faith-pervasive and missionary FBOs, noting that these organizations have a low regard for “the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality” (p. 853). Bradley (2009) creates a special category for missionary organizations, defined as organizations that “see development primarily as religious conversion” (p. 101). She states the need for this category in order to identify organizations that “pursue problematic development practices” (p. 111). G. Clarke (2008) locates missionaries between the persuasive and exclusive types of faith, both of which are problematic. Persuasive actors “aim to bring new converts to the faith or to advance the faith at the expense of others” (p. 32), and exclusive actors are “often militant or violent and directed against one or more rival faiths” (p. 32). G Clarke (2006) creates a separate category for missionary organizations, who are defined as involved in “active proselytizing”, which “present a challenge for donors concerned to promote political stability” (p. 844).

The remaining five studies mention missionaries in a slightly more ambivalent manner. Berger (2003) presents a typology that provides a space for missionary organizations without prescriptive comment. Yet these organizations are limited to a service orientation called 'salvation', which is different from orientation of other organizations – education, relief, social services, and mobilization of opinion (p. 33). The example she gives of a salvation organization is Campus Crusade (which has now wisely shortened its name to Cru). According to its website, Cru is actually involved in all five of Berger’s orientations (Cru, 2016). Similarly, Odumosu et al. (2009) have difficulty locating missionaries using G. Clarke's (2006) typology. They identify a number of Christian and Muslim missionary organizations in Nigeria, but when they inventory their activities, the missionary organizations are involved in all the same activities as the organizations classified as development



organizations (p. 77).

Three authors, in their critiques of FBO typologies, envision a common plane for missionaries, religious and secular actors in a shared landscape. For James (2009), proselytism should be judged in the manner it is carried out, and notes the difficulty religious organizations face trying to separate talking about their faith from development projects (p. 15). Fountain (2013) sees proselytism as a shared concept between religious and secular organizations, and he recommends research that explores how “distinctions between sacred and secular are actually imagined and practiced” (p. 27). Paras (2012) agrees, proposing that “secular assumptions that underline development policy...[are] assumptions that stem from the re-articulation of Christian missionization into development” (p. 233).

#### **4. Proposing a shared framework for development actors and missionaries**

This review of FBO typologies demonstrates the challenges of locating missionaries and religious actors in development. Part of the problem is due to the mechanism of typologies. Categorizing development actors by type arbitrarily positions them, limiting understanding of their complexity and fluidity in different contexts. Locating FBOs on a scale of religiosity misses the crucial issue of how beliefs are incorporated into development programs, and how these programs are shaped by a local context with differing manifestations of religious practice. Missionaries (when they are included) do not fit in the typologies reviewed because they cannot be clearly distinguished from other FBOs or NGOs. Christian missionary organizations are subsumed under visible development FBOs such as World Vision, and a subset of organizations are categorized as missionary based on their theology or the religious content of their mission statement or development projects.

A deeper problem with current FBO typologies are their basis on three outdated assumptions about religion and development so clearly refuted by the past 15 years of research (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011; Jones & Petersen, 2011; Tomalin, 2012). Religious actors can be best understood through their interaction with secular actors in a shared landscape, so typologies that consider FBOs in isolation suffer from making their challenges or successes unique to FBOs. Religion and development are not separate worlds: many development actors have religious motivations or programs, and many religious groups consider development as a core part of their mission. By

accepting these two flawed assumptions, typologies have been designed to answer an unanswerable and unhelpful question about comparative advantage: do religious groups achieve better development outcomes than secular development professionals? Incorporating learning from research on religion and development leads to a more productive and revealing question: how do development actors, religious and secular, apply their beliefs and values to development programs, and how does the local context influence the application of these beliefs and values?

Considering the significant problems with FBO typologies I have detailed, it is worth considering whether typologies should be abolished. However, many scholars have noted that typologies provide a useful starting point for making sense of the vast numbers of FBOs and religious organizations involved in development (Rakodi, 2012b; Tomalin, 2012). The fact that so many typologies have been created in the past two decades signifies that scholars and practitioners are endeavoring to meet an important need to better understand the changing context of religion and development. Development projects and actors are regularly assessed for their effectiveness and efficiency, and funders make decisions daily about comparative advantage of one project or actor to another.

Although development research and evaluation is a rapidly changing field, with greater attention being paid to outcomes and context (Arkesteijn, Van Mierlo, & Leeuwis, 2015; Bamberger, Tarsilla, & Hesse-Biber, 2016; Mog, 2004), standard evaluation methods such as the logical framework (Crawford & Bryce, 2003; UNDP, 2009) and theory of change (UNDP, 2009; Van Ongevalle, Huyse, & Van Petegem, 2014) give scant attention to the intangible and sacred aspects of development, giving more attention to measurable activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. The logical framework does include assumptions, for example why an organization believes that a particular output will produce a particular outcome. The theory of change also tries to ascertain a sliver of the philosophy of development of an organization, but this analysis is limited toward the achieving of development outcomes, positing that better development outcomes will result from a program due to particular reasoning. In order to better understand and evaluate development actors with a postsecular and post-development lens, it is crucial to understand and evaluate the philosophies and theologies that influence their work, whether those are explicitly stated or implicitly assumed.

Rather than creating another typology, what would aid understanding is an analytical framework that explores links between the beliefs and practices of development actors, religious, secular and missionary. A useful framework must be able to explore the ideological and material dimensions of development in a way that includes religious and secular actors, in order to meet the challenge set by Deneulin and Rakodi (2011) to find the sacred dimensions in development studies (p. 52). Barnett & Stein begin to meet that challenge in their 2012 book *Sacred Aid: Faith and Humanitarianism*. Although it is more narrowly focused on humanitarian aid, the organizing idea of their book applies more broadly to development. They see the secular and the sacred "as multilayered, multidimensional, and nonlinear forces" that shape the context of each development organization (Barnett & Stein, 2012, p. 9). The humanitarian impulse to help victims of war or natural disaster has a sacred dimension, and it is intimately related to the technical operation of humanitarian assistance.

Barnett & Stein's conception of the sacred draws upon renewed interest in a sociology of the sacred, based on the concept of the sacred as an operative force in society, a force that is related to but distinct from religious practice and religiosity. The sacred is not essential or absolute, rather it is shaped by culture and history as societies draw boundaries between behavior that is acceptable and unacceptable, what is sacred and what is profane (Lynch, 2012). The sacred is also in relationship with the mundane, as forces of secularization and sacralization shape ideas of what is technical and worldly and what is set apart and other-worldly (Mellor & Shilling, 2014). Barnett & Stein label this concept of the mundane as "secular", by which they mean the technical and bureaucratic processes that increasingly govern the practice of development. Because the word "secular" is highly contested and used in multiple ways, I think it is clearer to use the term "material" to describe this technical force. As discussed earlier, the post-development critique is that technical elements of development are emphasized to the exclusion of ideological elements, and this is reflected in how development projects are designed and assessed.

What I propose is a framework for development scholars and practitioners to reflect on the relationship between sacred and material influences on development actors, and how these interact in the actual work of development projects. This framework does not assume that the sacred and the material are separate forces that do not touch; it assumes a symbiotic relationship between them.

Beliefs about development affect the aims and activities of development organizations, and the aims and activities of development projects inform and shape beliefs. The aim of the framework is to enable intentional reflection on this interaction. By reflecting on the sacred and material aspects of a development actor separately, analysis of the interaction of these forces will be sharpened.

Adjustments to terminology and scope of typologies can improve study of development actors. Rather than FBOs, which is a debated term, a better term would be "actors" because it incorporates FBOs, NGOs, CBOs, as well as religious congregations. Following Rakodi (2012a) and Aiken (2010), rather than starting with a type of organization a useful approach is to start with a specific context, be it geographical context (i.e., a country, region or city) and/or sector (e.g., education, health, disaster relief), and then survey a range of relief and development actors which operate in that space. It is rarely possible to include every possible actor in a study, but it seems prudent to include a range of actors – secular and religious, local and international, formal and informal.

Another important revision from FBO typologies is to streamline the descriptors to make framework analysis manageable by scholars and practitioners. In the typologies I have reviewed, a massive number of descriptors are used as determinants for the makeup of an organization. Sider & Unruh (2004) and Berger (2003) provide the most exhaustive lists, with Berger's typology including four dimensions and eleven variables, each with sub-elements. In my review of the typologies I collected all of these terms and organized them into a complete list of 15 descriptors: self-identification, affiliation, activities, aims, outcomes, motivation, staff capabilities, bureaucratic processes, approaches, values, local partners, reputation, power relations, donors and funding, organizational culture, ideology, and the link between characteristics. Rather than create a large inventory of terms, I propose a limited number of descriptors using eight terms that are broadly familiar to development scholars and practitioners (see **Figure 1** and **Table 2**).

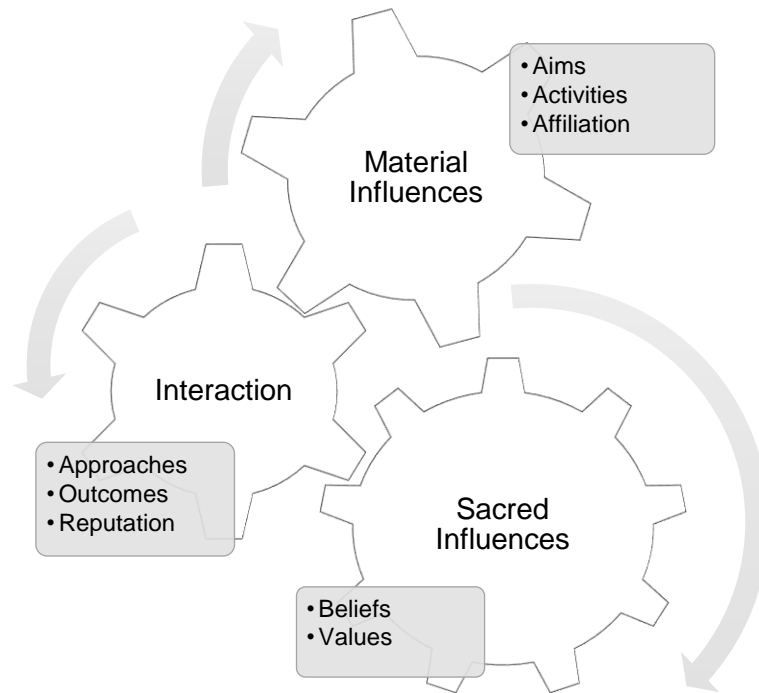


Figure 1. Interaction between material and sacred influences on development

In order to demonstrate how this framework can improve understanding of religion and development, I will illustrate each aspect with an extensive case study. As part of a DFID-funded program on religion and development, Davis et al. conducted research on Christian and Islamic FBOs and secular NGOs working on prevention and care for HIV/AIDS in two regions of Nigeria (C. Davis et al., 2011). The data and findings of this thorough study, when organized according to the framework, provide a useful (if somewhat incomplete) illustration. I have chosen a two organizations in Lagos State that make a good comparison, a Christian FBO with missionary aims and activities and a secular national NGO. Christianity was brought to Nigeria by Methodist missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century (C. Davis et al., 2011, p. 113) along with hospitals and schools, so it seems fitting for the FBO to be the Methodist Church of Nigeria. The Humanity Family Foundation for Peace and Development (HUFFPED) is a registered NGO not affiliated with a religious institution, founded in 2003 to provide educational and health services to young people in the urban community (C. Davis et al., 2011, p. 119).

### **Material influences on development actors**

Collecting data on material influences on development covers visible, tangible, and pragmatic elements of development actors and projects. It explores the technical processes that drive

development projects, and the practical constraints that shape the aims and activities of development actors. This level of analysis reveals striking similarities and differences between MCN and HUFFPED. While the basic development aims and content of HIV/AIDS prevention workshops are the same for both actors, vast differences in funding, networks, and wider aims make MCN a powerhouse of service delivery and HUFFPED a more limited intervention dependent on priorities of donors.

Affiliation examines the complex linkages between development actors and others, accompanied by analysis of the power relations that result from this network of relationships (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006; Gaventa, 2006). MCN is part of a 2 million member nationwide denomination with an over 100-year history in the district around Lagos. This membership base provides a large funding base for its HIV/AIDS projects as well as wider networks of staff and access to health and educational facilities and professionals (C. Davis et al., 2011, p. 117). In contrast HUFFPED was setup in 2003 as a Nigerian NGO, and it works primarily with marginalized young people in urban areas of Lagos State, although it has projects in rural areas as well (p.118). HUFFPED is considered a national, non-Western organization while MCN has affiliations with Western churches. MCN funding is drawn primarily from its members through donations, while HUFFPED is funded by grants, and its major funder for the HIV project is from the US government through USAID (p.127). Due to its extensive networks and ability to raise its own funds, MCN has more autonomy in program design and delivery than HUFFPED (p.127).

Aims are what the development actor intends to accomplish. Many studies focus on motivations of aid workers as key factors to explore, and a growing body of literature explores this subject (Lewis & Mosse, 2006; Mosse, 2013). For this framework it is more useful to focus on aims rather than motivations. Motivations are mixed, and it is difficult to align motivations to actions. Aims can be clearly and collectively stated and an organization can be assessed on how well it implements its stated aims. From a narrow development perspective, both MCN and HUFFPED have human development aims to educate and empower young people, and to change attitudes and behavior of beneficiaries in terms of sexual behavior. MCN has additional aims to “consistently win more souls for Christ” and “develop spiritually fulfilled members” (C. Davis et al., 2011, p. 121).

Development activities can be easily captured from donor or annual reports, but it is also crucial to include activities that are not directly related to development. This is especially the case for actors who have a broader remit than just development work (i.e., any organization that is not a development NGO), but NGOs often engage in activities that go beyond the scope of their development projects. Both MCN and HUFFPED spread prevention messages that “conform to the international standard” for preventing the transmission of HIV (p.141). MCN does not recommend or educate on the use of condoms, while HUFFPED provides demonstrations about proper condom use (p.143). Beyond the workshops on prevention, MCN provides a number of services that HUFFPED does not provide: counseling services, visiting hospitals and orphanages to offer financial and spiritual support; health programs such as screening for blood pressure, and vocational and leadership training (p.130-131).

***Material influences on development: What are the actor's affiliations, aims, and activities?***

*Affiliation: How is the actor linked to funders, other organizations, and local partners?*

- Funding: Where does funding come from? Are the majority of funds restricted or unrestricted? Are the funds restricted to particular activities or approaches?
- Organizational links: What are its affiliations, both formal and informal? What relationship does it have with state actors and with corporations?
- Local partners: What organizations and community groups does it partner with to implement project activities? What criteria does the actor use to determine its local partners? Are there local groups it will not partner with? What is its relationship with local and national governments and corporations?
- Power relations: Where does the actor fit in power relations with other actors (Gaventa, 2006)?

*Aims: What are the actor's development aims and wider aims?*

- What are the publicly stated aims of the actor? What is its mission statement? What are its objectives? What are the objectives of its development projects?
- What does the actor aim to change? Behavior, cultural practices, beliefs, public opinion, laws, and identity/identification.

*Activities: What does the actor do (including all activities, not just development)? What processes are in place to ensure that activities are conducted well?*

- What does the actor do? List all development activities and all activities not directly related to development.
- How much time is spent on different activities?
- What processes does the actor have in place to ensure that activities are conducted well? What systems of accountability does it have to beneficiaries and to donors? How are finances and administration managed? To what extent have activities changed over time?

***Sacred influences on development: What does the actor believe and value?***

*Beliefs: What does the actor believe (assume to be true) about development, individual and social relationships, and the role of culture and religion?*

- Development: What is the purpose of development? What does an ideal developed country look like? To what extent is development technical or ideological?
- Individual and community: What does the actor believe about the rights and responsibilities of individuals? How are those balanced with the rights and responsibilities of communities, institutions and governments? To what extent should beneficiaries have agency compared to the actor?
- Culture and religion: What is the actor's view of its culture and local culture, its beliefs and local beliefs? To what extent are cultures monolithic forces or malleable resources? How should the actor incorporate local cultural and religious values into its work?

*Values: What values inspire and influence the actor? How does the actor prioritize and balance conflicting values?*

- What are the stated values of the actor?
- How are competing values prioritized? How do the stated values of the actor align with the values of donors, partners and beneficiaries?

***Interaction between sacred and material influences: How do beliefs and values influence practice? How do practice and context inform and shape beliefs and values?***

*Approaches: How does the actor incorporate beliefs and values into development projects?*

- How does the actor carry out activities and achieve aims? How does the actor engage with individuals and communities in work?
- To what extent does the actor incorporate the values, beliefs and culture of beneficiaries in its projects? To what extent do beneficiaries have agency compared to the actor?
- To what extent is the actor an agent of change and to what extent does it adapt to its local context?
- How do aims reflect the actor's beliefs about the purpose of development?

*Outcomes: What happens as a result of development work? How does the context influence development work?*

- What are the intended and unintended outcomes of development work?
- How do outcomes link to aims and activities?
- To what extent are outcomes within the control of the development actor?

*Reputation: How is the actor perceived by donors, partners, local communities and wider stakeholders?*

- How do the actor's affiliations and activities influence its reputation?
- To what extent do local people trust the actor and welcome its work? What causes them to trust or distrust the actor?

***Table 2. Questions for shared framework***



## **Sacred influences on development actors**

Analyzing sacred influences on development actors aid reflection on the intangible influences on development actors and projects. As discussed earlier, the sacred cannot be clearly separated from the material aspects of development, but the sacred influences how development work is done. The ideological underpinnings and core values of development operate whether the actor is religious or secular (Barnett & Stein, 2012). The sacred aspect influences development actors whether it is acknowledged or not, and it arguably has a stronger influence when it is not acknowledged or understood (Fountain, 2015; Li, 2007). MCN and HUFFPED have mostly similar values, but they have markedly differing beliefs about development that are bound to influence project delivery and approaches significantly.

Enquiring about beliefs is complicated, but necessary to understand the ideological aspects of development. FBOs are often explicit about their beliefs about development and how it relates to their theology. MCN believes that development should be both physical and spiritual, so development projects must be accompanied by “sharing faith to non-members of the church who access services”, and it traces this back to its missionary roots of churches, schools and hospitals (p.129). HUFFPED’s core beliefs are from a human development philosophy focused on material and physical wellbeing (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 2001), fostering empowerment through education and provision of knowledge rather than moral teaching (C. Davis et al., 2011, p. 142). HUFFPED believes strongly in the agency and autonomy of young people to make choices about sexual activity, while the service orientation of MCN puts more emphasis on aligning behavior with church teaching against promiscuity. Both MCN and HUFFPED belief that development interventions should be culturally appropriate to Nigerians, which is aided by the fact that all staff members are from the same cultural background.

Many organizations religious and secular have public values statements, and values of staff members have proven to be important in how development projects are implemented (James, 2009, p. 15). Values are often in tension with each other, such as the value of impartiality and the value of cultural accommodation, or the value of participation and the value of professionalism, or the value of justice and the value of peace. It is important to know how an actor balances competing values, and how values of staff members are balanced with the values of an organization, and the values of

donors, partners and beneficiaries. The values of HUFFPED and MCN both include compassion, love and care for others. While HUFFPED includes the value to “avoid stigmatizing HIV positive people”, MCN includes the value “to imbibe family life values in marriage relationships” (p.122).

### **Interaction between sacred and material influences on development**

The most important element of the proposed framework is the interaction between the sacred and the material. These forces are mutually constitutive (Rakodi, 2011, p 19), and they constantly influence and constrain each other (Barnet & Stein, 2012, p. 9). This level of inquiry can help organizations to understand their beliefs and practices better, and may be a good starting point particularly for actors that are reluctant to discuss beliefs and values in isolation. Many of the typologies for FBOs recommend exploring this dimension (Aiken, 2010; G. Clarke, 2008; Monsma, 2004; Thaut, 2009), and it is equally important for non-religious organizations. By comparing the approaches, outcomes and reputations of MCN and HUFFPED, a picture emerges of two different approaches that are complementary rather than competitive. MCNs approach of moral teaching and spiritual development is more suited to Christian beneficiaries and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, while HUFFPED’s more open approach is more suited to prevention education for at-risk youth.

Approaches are where the sacred aspects of beliefs and values meet the material elements of aims and activities. Approaches apply values such as participation and transparency to the actual activities of development. They are the element that is most clearly perceived by beneficiaries and partners, and the difference in approaches can explain why some organizations are able to achieve projects in highly challenging contexts when others falter. The emphasis on spiritual development and evangelism of MCN, combined with its network of services, explains why it takes a deeper and more relational approach to its development projects (p.136) than HUFFPED. Another factor in the more limited scope of HUFFPED programs are that activities are governed by donor agencies, which may make the approach programmatic and less attentive to local needs (p. 137). The importance of “family life values” and beliefs about spiritual development make MCN approach to HIV prevention include moral messages about total abstinence instead of condom use. The human development philosophy and non-judgmental values of HUFFPED lead to an approach that supports both abstinence and

condom use, based on “scientific evidence about modes of prevention” (p.135). They noted that the NGO is not concerned about what is “right or wrong” in the same way as the FBO, which some beneficiaries see as a more acceptable to young people (p. 135)

Outcomes are the complex interaction between the sacred and material influences on development projects and the wider context in which development takes place. Outcomes are difficult to assess, and even more difficult to link directly to the activities of one actor. Yet it is important to explore the intended outcomes of development projects, what outcomes have been achieved and especially what unintended outcomes have occurred (Bamberger et al., 2016; Jabeen, 2016). In the Lagos study, independent data on outcomes was not available. Davis et al. did discover through focus groups with staff and beneficiaries that MCN staff based their evaluation of performance on the alignment of services with religious beliefs, while for NGOs like HUFFPED the primary criterion was meeting the objectives of the project plan. Beneficiaries were primarily concerned about consistency, effectiveness and breadth of services (p.137-138). From this perspective, MCN provided a more effective overall service due to its breadth and relational approach, but for some beneficiaries the prevention approach of HUFFPED was seen as more effective, particularly for young people more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior (p 153). Davis et al. conclude that NGOs may be “more effective in prevention campaigns, while FBOs are considered to be more effective in the provision of care and support to people living with HIV/AIDS (C. Davis et al., 2011, p. 148).

Reputation is how an actor is perceived, based on the interaction between beliefs and values of the actor with its affiliations and activities. Reputation is difficult to assess accurately and can change rapidly, but it is crucially important to the success of a development actor and its projects. Reputation is best understood by triangulating how donors, partners, beneficiaries and local communities perceive the development actor. From beneficiary and community interviews, Davis et al. found that both MCN and HUFFPED were trusted due to their track records of providing good services. Some thought that MCN offered a better service than HUFFPED because it was limited by its reliance on external donor requirements (p.138). FBOs like MCN were perceived to reach more people due to their ability to serve their own members (p.139), but others thought that NGOs like HUFFPED make service easier to access for non-Christians (p.138).

## 5. Conclusion

In this article I have argued that the turn to religion in development has disregarded missionaries. This oversight is partly due to the uncomfortable historical relationship between Western Christian missionaries and secular development actors, but also due to the difficulty to incorporate shared reflection on the ideological aspects influencing all development actors religious and secular. FBO typologies of the past fifteen years have broken new ground in exploring the links between beliefs and practices of religious actors doing development work. The analytical framework introduced attempts to expand that analysis to include all development actors in a shared postsecular landscape, a common plane to explore the interaction between the sacred and material influences on the work of global development. In this way it is possible to move beyond circular arguments about comparative advantage of religious actors in development toward a greater understanding of the complementarity of different approaches.

Whether or not this framework proves useful will depend on how it can be applied to real development contexts. Empirical studies which consider religious and secular actors as part of a shared landscape would test the extent to which beliefs and values are shared. Research projects that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods could provide a fuller picture. Quantitative studies conducted on the material aspects of the development landscape in one geographical location and/or sector could detail funding, map actors and affiliation, and categorize activities and processes of actors. Qualitative studies could explore the connections between sacred and material dimensions of development in a range of religious and secular organizations. In-depth organizational case studies would add a richness to the complex interaction between material and sacred dimensions, and longitudinal studies would add a richness to exploring how organizations adapt their beliefs and practices over time. Case studies of organizations or projects that were abject failures could also reveal links between the material, the sacred and poor development outcomes.

For development practitioners, I recommend increased attention to the sacred influences of development, for expanding reflective space about the interaction between beliefs and practices. Reflection on this interaction should take a stronger place in monitoring and evaluation of projects, which is a major indicator of donors' values. By paying more attention to beliefs, values, approaches

and reputation of development actors, a deeper reflective level could be added to project evaluation that focuses on technical proficiency (which is important, but not sufficient). If these discussions are also shared in development forums between actors, we might be able to think about what best practice looks like in integrating values and practices in development work.

From the perspective of a shared framework, it is possible to share a critique of proselytization that incorporates all actors who intentionally or inadvertently impose their beliefs and values on others. I offer an example of secular imposition and Christian missionary service, recognizing that many examples of the opposite exist. Li's (2007) longitudinal study of secular development actors in Central Sulawesi demonstrates how a narrow, technical model of development, the lack of understanding of local people's needs, and their limited participation in decision-making (even when using "participatory methods"), contributed to resource conflicts and poor development outcomes. In this case the problem was not intentional imposition, but a lack of understanding of the sacred dimension of development. M Clarke & Donnelly (2014) tell the story of the work of Franciscan friars in Papua New Guinea in the 1950s. These European missionaries adopted participatory approaches and models of development at a time when the imposition of material development on local people was at its zenith. The partnership approach arose largely from the missionaries' reflection on their theology of mission and what good development should look like. The Franciscans created a Ten Commandments of Development, including 'Thou shalt not be ethnocentric' and 'Thou shalt consult the people in all projects' (M. Clarke & Donnelly, 2014, p. 175).

These cases demonstrate the need to learn from and with religious actors in reflecting on the sacred and material influences in development. Religious communities do not have inherently better values than development actors, but they do share a history of reflecting on how their values and beliefs are embodied in actions, and a community that tries to embody ethical standards (Paras & Stein, 2012, p. 211). Missionaries in particular, because of the primacy of beliefs in their practice, have long reflected on issues of cultural sensitivity and how individual and social transformation are embodied. In the process of positioning today's missionaries, development scholars and practitioners can learn more about imposition and service in the beliefs and practices of development.

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