

Rethinking the Religious Turn in International Development and Global Governance: A Critical Review of Gerard Clarke

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Abstract:

Since the post-World War II era, international development has been dominated by a modernization paradigm grounded in secular rationality, positioning it as a technocratic, growth-oriented project that neglects the religious dimension. However, global dynamics indicate a revitalization of religion in the public sphere (deprivatization), which has triggered a post-secular turn and demands the integration of religious values into development. Religion, in the context of the Global South, has proven to be an important framework for understanding poverty and social practices, as well as a source of legitimacy and moral capital. This article critically examines Gerard Clarke's work **Religion and International Development** using a critical literature review approach that combines theories of secularization, post-secularism, and capability approaches. The findings indicate that religious integration reconfigures understandings of development actors and global governance through the strategic role of faith-based organizations. However, this engagement also carries the risk of exclusion and the politicization of identity. This article argues that the religious turn reflects an epistemological shift toward a post-secular development paradigm, where religion is understood as part of normative negotiations in global governance. Therefore, an inclusive, contextually grounded interdisciplinary approach is needed to manage the relationships among religion, the state, and the market in contemporary global development.

Keywords: global governance; international development; Post-Secularism; religious turn.

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, the direction of international development has been strengthened within a modernization framework based on secular rationality. This framework views development as a technocratic project, with a primary emphasis on economic growth, strengthening state institutions, and the flow of knowledge from the Global North to the Global South. From this perspective, development is represented as a gradual process moving towards modernity, as if there were a single historical path that

developing countries must follow, as Western countries have (Escobar, 2011). The consequences of this approach are seen in the tendency to sideline non-material dimensions, including cultural aspects, value systems, and religious beliefs, in the formulation of development policies that are considered more rational and universal.

The dominance of this paradigm is inseparable from the strong influence of classical secularization theory, which developed within the modern social science tradition. This theory views modernization as a process of rationalization that gradually shifts religion from the public sphere to the private sphere. In his initial view, Peter L. Berger argued that the development of modernity would lead to a reduction in the social significance of religion in people's lives (Davie et al., 1999). This idea then permeated international development practice, forming the assumption that religion tends to be an obstacle to progress or at least has no significant relevance in public policy analysis. As a result, religion is often placed on the margins of development discourse, either as a residual factor or as a systematically ignored variable (Haynes, 2007).

Over time, this assumption has begun to face serious challenges from contemporary global realities. Rather than declining, religion has demonstrated strong resilience, even experiencing revitalization in various dimensions of social and political life. This phenomenon is characterized by what José Casanova calls the deprivatization of religion, namely the return of religion to the public sphere as a social force with real influence (Casanova, 1994). In this context, religion is no longer limited to ritual practices or the realm of individual belief, but actively participates in public issues such as democracy, human rights, and social development. This shift demonstrates that the assumption of linear secularization is unable to fully explain the dynamics of the relationship between religion and modernity.

This development has given rise to a paradigm shift known as the post-secular turn. This shift reflects a new awareness that secularization does not eliminate the role of religion, but rather transforms its presence in the public sphere. From Jürgen Habermas' perspective, contemporary society needs to develop a post-secular consciousness that opens up a space for dialogue between secular rationality and religious values (Habermas, 2008). This approach no longer positions religion as an opponent of modernity, but rather as a source of normative legitimacy that can contribute to the formation of social governance. Thus, the relationship between religion and the state is no longer exclusive, but rather dialogical and complementary within the framework of public life.

In the context of international development, this transformation is reflected in the increasing attention to the role of religion and faith-based organizations. Empirical studies have shown that for many communities in the Global South, religion is a primary interpretive framework for understanding social realities, including experiences of poverty, inequality, and injustice (Narayan et al., 2000). This perspective emphasizes that development approaches that ignore the religious dimension have the potential to lose their contextual relevance. Religion is not merely an additional aspect but an integral part of how communities make sense of their social lives, thus having direct implications for the effectiveness of development policies.

This view aligns with Amartya Sen's thinking, which emphasizes that development should be understood as a process of expanding substantive human freedom. This freedom encompasses not only economic aspects but also the freedom to express cultural and religious identities (Sen, 1999). Within this framework, development cannot be reduced to mere economic growth but must consider broader humanitarian dimensions. Ignoring religious values has the potential to produce policies that are not only less effective but also insensitive to the social realities of the communities targeted by development.

In the Indonesian context, scholars have also widely criticized development approaches that overemphasize technocratic aspects. Bahtiar Effendy, for example, points out that the relationship between religion and the state in Indonesia reflects religion's role as a source of social legitimacy that remains significant in the development process (Effendy, 1998). This argument emphasizes that religion cannot be separated from the socio-political dynamics that shape the direction of national development. The presence of religion in the public sphere is not merely symbolic but also has a practical function in building social consensus and supporting societal stability.

Furthermore, Ahmad Najib Burhani highlighted the contribution of religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah in strengthening civil society and providing extensive social services (Burhani, 2016).

This role demonstrates that religious actors have significant capacity to support development agendas, particularly in education, health, and social welfare. The involvement of religious organizations not only expands the reach of services but also increases the legitimacy of development programs at the grassroots level. This demonstrates that religion can function as a strategic partner in development, not simply an entity outside the formal policy system.

Based on these developments, Gerard Clarke's work is highly relevant in understanding the shifting paradigm of international development. In his book, "Religion and International Development," Clarke not only presents an empirical description of the involvement of religion in development but also offers a conceptual reflection on the ongoing transformation (Clarke, 2006: 12). He shows that the integration of religion in development is not merely a pragmatic response to social conditions but also reflects an epistemological shift in how we understand the relationship between values, power, and global policy. This perspective opens up space for a more holistic approach to development studies.

Furthermore, the integration of religion into development also indicates a shift in how social sciences view the boundary between the secular and the religious. This boundary is no longer rigid, but increasingly fluid and open to dynamic interactions. This demands a more inclusive analytical approach, one that can accommodate the complexity of social reality without becoming trapped in narrow dichotomies. An interdisciplinary approach is becoming increasingly important for understanding how economic, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions intertwine in the development process.

Within this framework, the religious turn in international development can be understood as part of a broader transformation in the social sciences. This transformation not only shifts perspectives on religion but also influences the resulting policy practices. By recognizing the role of religion as an actor and source of values, development has the opportunity to be designed more contextually, aligned with the social experiences of communities, and sensitive to the structures of meaning within them. This approach opens up space for the emergence of development models that are not merely technically efficient but also inclusive and sustainable in a more substantive sense. In this landscape of thought, religion is no longer on the fringes of discourse but rather exists as an integral part of reflections on the direction and goals of development.

Starting from this perspective, the following discussion focuses on exploring a theoretical framework that explains how the relationship between religion and development has undergone significant change. This framework is composed of various perspectives that complement and enrich the analysis, ranging from secularization theory and its critiques to the emergence of post-secularism, the capability approach, and the role of religion in global governance. By examining these developments in a continuous manner, it is possible to understand that this paradigm shift did not occur suddenly, but rather through a long process involving epistemological shifts in the social sciences. Each perspective presents a different perspective, but collectively demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between modernity, religion, and development.

Classical secularization theory is based on the assumption that modernization, characterized by rationalization, institutional differentiation, and scientific advancement, will lead to a diminishing role of religion in social life. In this construct, religion is positioned as part of a traditional order that will gradually be replaced by secular institutions, which are considered more rational. Peter L. Berger, in his early work, asserted that modernity results in a decline in the social significance of religion as a consequence of modern rationality (Davie et al., 1999). This perspective has become an important foundation in various development analyses, where religion is often viewed as a residual variable that does not significantly contribute to progress.

However, global developments at the end of the 20th century revealed dynamics that were not entirely in line with this assumption. The rise of various religious movements around the world demonstrated that religion remains a powerful force in modern society. This phenomenon reflects not only the continuity of religion but also the transformation of its presence in the public sphere. In his revised reflection, Berger acknowledged that the modern world remains persistently religious, an acknowledgment that marked a significant shift in how the relationship between religion and modernity was understood. Thus, the previously dominant assumption of linear secularization began to be questioned and replaced by a more contextual approach.

The critique of secularization theory is further deepened through Talal Asad's analysis, which views secularism not as a neutral condition, but rather as a historical construct shaped by particular

power relations (Asad, 2003). From this perspective, the marginalization of religion cannot be separated from the ideological project of Western modernity, which has a particular interest in defining the boundaries between the secular and the religious. In the context of Indonesian thought, Kuntowijoyo argues that modernization need not be synonymous with secularization, as religion can still function as a source of social ethics and societal transformation (Kuntowijoyo, 2001). This view demonstrates that the relationship between religion and modernity is more complex and cannot be reduced to a single theoretical framework.

In response to these limitations, the idea of post-secularism emerged, emphasizing that religion has not disappeared in modernity, but rather has undergone changes in its presence in the public sphere. Jürgen Habermas stated that contemporary society needs to develop a post-secular consciousness, namely the ability to recognize the legitimacy of religious expression in public discourse without abandoning the principles of democratic rationality (Habermas, 2008). Within this framework, religion is no longer positioned as an entity to be eliminated, but rather as a dialogue partner in the process of forming inclusive public policy.

This idea aligns with Charles Taylor's thinking, who viewed secular conditions as situations that do not eliminate religion but instead create a plurality of belief options in modern society (Taylor, 2007). In this situation, the public sphere becomes an arena for encounters between various value systems, both those originating from secular and religious traditions. This interaction generates dynamics that are not always linear, but open up space for negotiations of richer meanings in social life. In development studies, this phenomenon is known as the religious turn, which refers to the increasing attention to the role of religion as an actor in international development.

In this context, religion is understood to have a unique capacity to shape social norms, mobilize communities, and provide moral legitimacy to development agendas (Marshall & Keough, 2004). In Indonesia, this phenomenon is reflected in the increasing role of religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama in providing social services and policy advocacy (Latief, 2013). This shift indicates that religion is no longer viewed merely as an object of analysis, but as a subject that plays an active role in the development process. Its presence brings a value dimension that enriches development practices and increases the social legitimacy of the programs implemented.

The capability approach developed by Amartya Sen makes a significant contribution to broadening the understanding of development. From this perspective, development is defined as the process of expanding substantive human freedom, namely the ability of individuals to live lives they deem valuable (Sen, 1999). This approach places humans at the center of analysis, emphasizing the importance of the dimensions of freedom, participation, and dignity in measuring well-being. Thus, development is no longer reduced to economic growth but encompasses broader and more complex dimensions.

Martha Nussbaum's further development highlights the importance of ethical and existential dimensions in human life, including the need to seek meaning and live a dignified life (Nussbaum & Capabilities, 2011). Within this framework, religion can be understood as a source of capabilities that provide a sense of meaning, strengthen social solidarity, and provide moral motivation for individuals and communities. This perspective suggests that the spiritual dimension plays a significant role in shaping human well-being as a whole.

In Islamic development literature, M. Umer Chapra asserts that human well-being encompasses both material and spiritual dimensions simultaneously (Chapra, 2016). This view reinforces the argument that development cannot be separated from the value dimension that shapes human life orientation. The integration of spiritual aspects into development is not merely a normative addition, but an integral part of efforts to understand well-being holistically. Thus, the capability approach provides a solid theoretical foundation for integrating the religious dimension into development analysis.

In the context of global governance, religion is increasingly recognized as a non-state actor with significant influence on international dynamics. Faith-based organizations play a crucial role as bridges between global structures and local communities, particularly in situations where trust in state institutions is challenged (Haynes, 2007). This role becomes even more relevant in the context of developing countries, where social legitimacy is often a key factor in the success of development programs.

Religious organizations have advantages in terms of grassroots networks, moral legitimacy, and the ability to mobilize communities. In various contexts, religion also functions as a force in civil society, strengthening democracy and public participation (Casanova, 1994). Furthermore, religious actors are

involved in various global initiatives such as humanitarian diplomacy, social justice advocacy, and conflict resolution (Appleby, 2001). In the Indonesian context, the contributions of religious organizations are evident in various sectors such as education, health, and poverty alleviation.

Thus, religion functions not only as a belief system but also as an institutional actor with real capacity in global governance. Its presence enriches development practices with a value dimension that cannot be reduced to mere technical indicators. The integration of religion into the global governance framework demands a more inclusive policy approach that is sensitive to the diversity of values and identities that exist within society. In a constantly shifting global landscape, development that is sensitive to the religious dimension becomes increasingly relevant as an effort to more fully understand the complexity of human life.

METHOD

Research This research adopts a qualitative approach using a critical literature review method aimed at deeply examining the theoretical contributions of Gerard Clarke's thought in the field of religion and development studies. This approach was chosen based on the need to conduct conceptual exploration that is not merely superficial, but touches on the deeper layers of meaning of the analyzed text. Through this method, the text is not merely read as a collection of arguments, but as a space for intellectual dialogue that allows for critical reinterpretation within a broader epistemological framework. In the development of contemporary social sciences, literature review has undergone a transformation from a mere summarizing activity to an analytical practice that plays a role in the production of knowledge in a reflective and evaluative manner (Hart, 2018). Thus, this research positions the literature review as a primary instrument in constructing scientific arguments.

Methodologically, this research is based on an interpretive paradigm that views social reality as a construction of meaning formed through historical and contextual processes. Within this framework, the concepts of development and religion are not understood as objective and fixed entities, but rather as the result of social interactions that are constantly changing. Academic texts are positioned as discursive products that contain traces of the thoughts, interests, and social backgrounds of their authors (Creswell, 2014). This approach opens up the possibility of reading Clarke's work not only at the level of explicit argumentation but also at the epistemological assumptions implicit within it. Thus, the analysis conducted goes beyond what is said, but also explores how and in what context these statements are constructed.

The primary source in this research is the work of Gerard Clarke, analyzed through a hermeneutic approach. This approach refers to the tradition of interpretive philosophy, which emphasizes that understanding a text is a dialogical process between the interpreter and the historical context of the text. Hans-Georg Gadamer argued that the process of understanding always involves what is called a fusion of horizons, namely the meeting between the author's horizon of meaning and the interpreter's horizon of experience (Gadamer, 2004). In practice, researchers not only seek to understand the author's original intent but also reflect on their own interpretive position in reading the text. Reading Clarke's work becomes a dynamic process, where meaning is not static but continues to develop through the interaction between the text and the interpreter.

The hermeneutic approach in this study is enriched with a critical perspective that pays attention to the power dimension in development discourse. Michel Foucault demonstrated that knowledge never stands alone, but is always intertwined with power relations that shape ways of thinking and the boundaries of discourse (Foucault, 1980). In this context, the analysis of Clarke's work is directed not only at its argumentative content but also at its position within the global discourse on development. The text is understood as part of a discursive network that reflects the changing relationship between secularism and religion, while also revealing how development narratives are shaped and negotiated within a broader global context.

In addition to the hermeneutic approach, this study also utilizes comparative techniques by comparing Clarke's work with the mainstream literature on development and religion, both from Western and non-Western traditions. This approach is crucial to avoid the epistemological bias that often arises in development studies oriented toward Western experiences (Escobar, 2011). Through this comparison, the study seeks to situate Clarke's thought within a broader theoretical landscape, while simultaneously identifying his positions, contributions, and limitations in a more balanced manner. Comparative techniques allow for a more critical and open reading of the various perspectives emerging in development studies.

In its implementation, the critical literature review process is carried out through systematically structured stages. The initial stage includes identifying and selecting literature relevant to the research theme, both from reputable international journals and Indonesian-language academic works. The next stage involves classifying the literature based on key themes related to religion and development, such as secularization, post-secularism, the capability approach, and global governance. This is followed by a synthesis process that integrates the various findings from the reviewed literature and links them to Clarke's main argument. This process reflects an effort to build an intellectual conversation between sources, as suggested by (Booth et al., 2008), where the literature review serves as a space for productive dialogue.

The analytical technique used in this study is interpretative-critical, combining three main dimensions: description, interpretation, and evaluation. Description is used to present Clarke's arguments systematically and structuredly, providing readers with a clear understanding of the main points of his thinking. Interpretation is aimed at understanding the conceptual meaning contained within the arguments, including their assumptions and implications. Meanwhile, evaluation is conducted to assess the strengths and limitations of Clarke's thinking in the context of contemporary development theory. This approach aligns with the tradition of qualitative analysis, which emphasizes the importance of reflexivity in the process of knowledge production (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The analysis in this study focuses on three main interrelated aspects. First, the conceptual framework used by Clarke to explain the relationship between religion and development, including the epistemological assumptions underlying his argument. Second, the empirical relevance of this thinking in a global context, particularly in explaining the growing role of faith-based organizations. Third, the theoretical implications of Clarke's thinking for the development of faith-based development studies, particularly within a post-secular framework and a multidimensional approach to well-being. These three aspects form the basis for a comprehensive understanding of Clarke's contribution to contemporary development discourse.

To maintain the validity of the analysis, this study applies the principle of source triangulation by comparing various literatures from different disciplines, such as sociology, political science, and development studies. This approach aims to enrich the analytical perspective and reduce the possibility of partial or reductionist bias (Neuman, 2007). Furthermore, the researcher's reflexivity is maintained through awareness of epistemic positions in reading the text, so that the interpretation process remains open to criticism and does not become trapped in unconscious assumptions. This effort allows for a more balanced and in-depth analysis.

Through this methodological approach, the research not only produces a description of Clarke's thinking but also seeks to make an analytical contribution to the broader academic debate on the relationship between religion and development. This approach allows for the identification of a paradigm shift in development studies, from one previously oriented toward secular and technocratic rationality to a more inclusive approach to cultural and spiritual dimensions. In this context, the method used serves not only as an analytical tool but also as a medium for reflection on changing perspectives in understanding the complexities of contemporary global development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Religious Turn in International Development

An analysis of Gerard Clarke's thinking reveals a fundamental shift in the international development landscape since the late 1990s, particularly in the recognition of religion's role. This shift did not emerge suddenly, but rather developed through institutional dynamics that gradually opened up space for the involvement of religious actors in development discourse. Global institutions such as the World Bank began initiating more systematic dialogues with religious leaders, a move that reflected a shift in orientation from a previously secular and technocratic approach to a framework more open to normative and spiritual dimensions (Marshall & Keough, 2004). The presence of religion in these forums was not merely symbolic, but also demonstrated a recognition of its capacity to shape society's social orientation.

This shift in orientation is closely related to the emergence of an epistemological crisis in the classical development paradigm that has dominated global development practice for decades. This paradigm, which relies on economic rationality and linear assumptions about progress, faces difficulties in explaining the growing social complexity in the Global South. Criticism of economic reductionism is growing, especially as various development programs fail to effectively address structural poverty and deep-rooted social inequality

(Escobar, 2011). In this situation, there is a need to seek alternative approaches that are more sensitive to local contexts, including cultural and religious dimensions that have previously received less attention.

In the context of this search, religion has re-emerged as a source of meaning with strong resonance in social life. Religion not only provides an interpretive framework for understanding social reality but also serves as a source of legitimacy that strengthens acceptance of development policies. Its presence in the public sphere reflects a more complex dynamic than the initial assumptions of secularization theory. This phenomenon confirms that religion remains relevant in shaping social structures and everyday life practices, particularly in societies whose historical and cultural experiences do not fully align with Western models of modernity.

This phenomenon in development studies is often referred to as part of the religious turn, a shift in orientation that positions religion no longer as a marginalized element but as a factor that plays a role in shaping social processes. This shift reflects a shift in perspective on the relationship between religion and development, where the two are no longer understood as separate entities. In line with José Casanova's thinking, religion is undergoing a process of deprivatization that brings it back into the public sphere as an active actor in shaping social discourse and practices (Casanova, 1994). In the context of development, this means that policies are influenced not only by technical considerations but also by the moral values viable in society.

Thus, development can no longer be reduced to a purely technical project focused on efficiency and economic growth. It has evolved into an arena where various rationalities converge and interact, including instrumental rationality based on technical calculations and normative rationality rooted in religious values. This interaction creates a complex dynamic, in which development policies must navigate diverse interests and value systems. In such situations, religion is not merely present as a complement, but as an integral part of the social negotiation process that shapes the direction of development.

Gerard Clarke's work makes a significant contribution to understanding these dynamics by demonstrating that the integration of religion into development is not merely a pragmatic move driven by practical needs. Rather, this integration reflects a shift in thinking about development itself, particularly regarding the relationship between values, power, and policy. Clarke positions religion as part of an epistemological structure that influences how development is understood and implemented, thus opening up space for a more reflective analysis of global development practices.

Clarke's approach also demonstrates that the involvement of religion in development is linked to broader changes in the social sciences, particularly in recognizing the plurality of sources of knowledge. This perspective aligns with Jürgen Habermas's notion of a post-secular society, where the interaction between secular rationality and religious values forms part of the dynamics of the public sphere (Habermas, 2008). Within this framework, religion is not positioned as an entity to be eliminated, but rather as a dialogue partner that contributes to the formation of public policy.

Furthermore, this shift also reflects an effort to overcome the limitations of development approaches that focus too heavily on the material dimension. By recognizing the role of religion, development can be understood as a process involving dimensions of meaning, identity, and value that cannot be reduced to purely economic indicators. This opens up the possibility for a more holistic approach to understanding human well-being, in which spiritual aspects become part of the overall social experience.

In practice, recognizing the role of religion also has implications for how development agencies design and implement their programs. The involvement of religious actors allows for a closer approach to communities and increases the social legitimacy of the resulting policies. This demonstrates that religion has the capacity to bridge the gap between global structures and local realities, an increasingly important function in the contemporary development context.

Thus, the religious turn in international development not only reflects changes in policy practice but also marks a shift in how we understand the relationship between religion and modernity. This shift demonstrates that the boundaries between the secular and the religious are becoming increasingly fluid, opening up space for a more dynamic interaction between different value systems. In this context,

development evolves as a process that is not merely technical but also normative, in which various perspectives contribute to shaping the direction of social change.

Ultimately, a reading of Clarke's work reveals that this transformation is part of a broader shift in the landscape of global thought. Religion is no longer placed outside the framework of development, but is recognized as part of the structures that shape it. In such a situation, understanding development demands a more reflective and inclusive approach, one that can accommodate the complex relationships between values, power, and social practices in a world undergoing constant change.

FBO as Moral and Social Infrastructure

One of the most striking findings in reading Gerard Clarke's thinking concerns the strategic position of faith-based organizations (FBOs) as both moral and social infrastructure in the development process. This finding reveals that the existence of FBOs does not merely complement the role of formal institutions but rather forms an integral part of the social networks that support community life. In various contexts, FBOs exist as entities capable of articulating community needs while connecting them to broader development programs. Their presence reflects a dimension often overlooked by technocratic approaches: the interconnectedness of values, beliefs, and social practices that shape how communities respond to change.

A study conducted by the World Bank through its *Voices of the Poor* report provides an empirical overview of the role of FBOs in community life, particularly among the poor. The report shows that FBOs are often the institutions most trusted by communities, particularly in rural areas where access to state services is relatively limited (Narayan et al., 2000). This trust stems not only from their ability to provide social services but also from cultural ties that enable FBOs to operate within a framework of values understood and internalized by the local community. In this context, the presence of FBOs is not only functional but also symbolic, as they represent a collectively recognized moral authority.

The cultural proximity of religious organizations strengthens their position as actors capable of bridging the gap between formal policies and social realities. In many cases, FBOs have a deeper understanding of local dynamics, including the norms, traditions, and relational structures that shape community life. This enables them to design and implement programs that are more responsive to real needs on the ground. The trust built through ongoing interactions makes FBOs an effective medium for conveying development messages and strengthening community participation in various social initiatives.

From a social theory perspective, this phenomenon can be understood through the concept of social capital proposed by Robert D. Putnam. This concept refers to the network of trust, norms, and social relations that enable coordination and cooperation to achieve common goals (Putnam, 2000). In this case, FBOs function as a platform for accumulating and distributing social capital, thereby strengthening community cohesion. Through their networks, religious organizations are able to facilitate productive social interactions and create space for solidarity that supports the success of development programs.

The existence of FBOs as reservoirs of social capital has significant implications for the effectiveness of development interventions. The social capital built through religious relationships not only facilitates communication between development actors and the community but also strengthens collective commitment to program implementation. In this context, development success is determined not only by the availability of material resources but also by the quality of the underlying social relationships. FBOs play a crucial role in maintaining the sustainability of these relationships, enabling development to proceed within a more participatory and inclusive framework.

Furthermore, John L. Esposito highlights the ability of religious organizations to reach marginalized groups often beyond the reach of state institutions (Esposito, 2003). This capacity is related to the flexibility of religious organizational structures, which allow them to operate more closely with communities, without being bound by complex bureaucracies. In many situations, FBOs are the only actors consistently present among marginalized communities, thus holding them in a strategic position to identify needs and provide appropriate responses.

This ability to reach marginalized groups also reflects the role of FBOs as agents of social inclusion. By prioritizing values of solidarity and caring, religious organizations are able to create space for groups that have

been underrepresented in development policies. This role is not only crucial in the context of service distribution but also in building a sense of justice and social recognition. In situations where social inequality remains a challenge, the presence of FBOs contributes to expanding access to resources and opportunities.

In the Indonesian context, the strategic role of FBOs can be seen through the activities of religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Both organizations have extensive networks and long experience in providing education, healthcare, and social assistance to the community (Latief, 2013). Their presence not only complements the role of the state but also strengthens the community's capacity to face various social challenges. Through the educational institutions and healthcare services they manage, religious organizations contribute to improving the community's quality of life in a sustainable manner.

The activities of religious organizations in Indonesia demonstrate that religion has a strong practical dimension in social life. The services provided are not only oriented towards meeting basic needs but also reflect ethical values that underlie actions. In this context, religion serves as a source of motivation that encourages active involvement in social activities, as well as a normative framework that provides direction for development practices. This demonstrates that the role of religion cannot be separated from the dynamics of development at the local level.

Thus, religion not only has a spiritual function related to the inner life of individuals, but also an instrumental function that plays a role in the development process. FBOs serve as a medium connecting these various dimensions, enabling the integration of values and practices into a unified whole. Their existence enriches the development approach by presenting a more humanistic perspective, where moral and social aspects receive equal attention alongside material ones.

The role of FBOs as bridges between global policies and local realities also demonstrates the importance of a contextual approach to development. In many cases, policies designed at the global level require adaptation to suit diverse local conditions. FBOs have the capacity to undertake this adaptation process because they understand the social and cultural context in which they are implemented. This makes them strategic partners in ensuring that development programs are accepted and implemented effectively by communities.

Furthermore, FBOs provide an ethical framework that strengthens the legitimacy of development programs. The values espoused by religious organizations provide a moral foundation for various social initiatives, thereby increasing public trust in the programs they implement. In this context, legitimacy is built not only through formal mechanisms but also through recognition of the moral authority of religious actors. This demonstrates that development success depends not only on technical aspects but also on the ability to build trust and social commitment.

The integration of religion into development through the role of FBOs demonstrates that approaches that ignore the religious dimension have the potential to lose relevance in the context of a religious society. The presence of FBOs demonstrates that religion can contribute constructively to development, as long as it is integrated within an inclusive and diversity-sensitive framework. This approach opens up space for broader collaboration between various actors, including the state, civil society, and religious organizations, in achieving sustainable development goals.

Thus, an analysis of the role of FBOs as moral and social infrastructure reveals that development cannot be understood solely through an economic or technocratic lens. It is a process that encompasses various dimensions of human life, including values, beliefs, and social relations that shape how communities interact with change. Within this framework, FBOs exist as actors that not only provide services but also build the social foundations that enable development to proceed in a more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable manner.

Ambivalence and Risk: Between Transformation and Exclusion

A critical reading of the integration of religion into development reveals an ambivalent dimension that cannot be ignored. On the one hand, religion presents a transformative potential that can enrich development practices through values, solidarity, and moral legitimacy. On the other hand, this presence

also opens up the possibility of risks related to social exclusion, identity conflicts, and political instrumentalism. Gerard Clarke highlights that faith-based organizations do not always operate in a constructive direction, as under certain conditions they can become actors that reinforce exclusionary social boundaries. This observation reminds us that religion is not a uniform entity, but rather a complex phenomenon encompassing diverse interests, orientations, and internal dynamics.

This ambivalence becomes even more pronounced when religious organizations engage in pluralistic social contexts prone to identity tensions. In such situations, religion can serve as a powerful source of internal solidarity, while simultaneously reinforcing dividing lines with other groups. Involvement in development that lacks sensitivity to diversity has the potential to result in non-inclusive practices. In some cases, faith-based organizations may prioritize certain groups perceived as aligned with their identity, creating inequities in the distribution of development benefits. This dynamic demonstrates that religious integration does not always operate within a framework of universal values, but is often bound by specific community boundaries.

From Talal Asad's perspective, this phenomenon can be understood through an approach that views religion as a historical construct that is never neutral (Asad, 2003). Religion is formed through social processes involving power relations, so that each religious expression reflects a particular position within that structure. When religion is used in public policy, the process of selecting and interpreting teachings becomes an integral part of the practice. The choice of which values are promoted and how those values are translated into policy has direct implications for the distribution of power within society. Thus, the integration of religion into development cannot be separated from the accompanying political dynamics.

The use of religion in policy contexts also involves legitimation processes that can strengthen the positions of certain groups while weakening others. In practice, interpretations of religious values are often influenced by actors with authority within the community, thus opening up the possibility of certain discourses dominating. This can result in the marginalization of groups with differing interpretations or those outside the dominant power structure. In a development context, this situation presents a challenge in ensuring that religious involvement does not deepen existing social inequalities but instead contributes to the creation of more inclusive spaces.

Furthermore, another risk often associated with the involvement of religious organizations is the practice of proselytism in development programs. This practice refers to efforts to spread religious beliefs while simultaneously providing social services. In certain contexts, proselytism can create tensions because it is perceived as mixing religious interests with a development agenda that should be universal. Without a clear regulatory framework, the involvement of religious actors in development has the potential to deepen social fragmentation, particularly in societies with high levels of religious plurality (Appleby, 2001). This risk highlights the importance of ethical boundaries in faith-based development practices.

The practice of proselytism also raises questions about the neutrality of aid and social services distribution. When aid is tied to a particular religious affiliation, beneficiaries may feel pressured to conform to the identity promoted by the service provider. This situation can undermine the principle of inclusivity that underpins development and create inequality in access to resources. More broadly, such practices can exacerbate social polarization, particularly in regions with a history of identity-based conflict.

Furthermore, the involvement of religion in development also has the potential to give rise to complex politicization of identity. In some cases, religion is used as a tool to build political legitimacy, both by state and non-state actors. When religion becomes part of a political strategy, the line between religious interests and those of power becomes increasingly blurred. This can influence the direction of development policies, shifting them from being solely oriented toward public welfare to becoming more focused on specific sectoral interests. This dynamic demonstrates that the integration of religion into development requires careful management of the relationship between values and power.

However, the existence of these ambivalences and risks does not lead to the conclusion that religion should be excluded from the development process. Social reality shows that religion remains a significant part of people's lives, so ignoring it has the potential to create a gap between policy and practice on the ground. The emerging ambivalence is better understood as an indication of complexity that requires a more

reflective and contextual approach. Within this framework, the primary challenge lies in how to manage religious involvement so that it remains aligned with the principles of inclusive development.

Managing these risks requires a governance framework that accommodates diversity while maintaining a balance between diverse interests. Effective governance is not only about formal regulations, but also about establishing norms and mechanisms that ensure accountability in development practices. In this context, the involvement of various actors is crucial to creating a system that is transparent and responsive to social dynamics. This approach allows religious integration to occur within a more structured and controlled framework.

A rights-based approach is a relevant framework for managing this ambivalence. This approach places human rights as the primary foundation of every development policy, ensuring that all individuals have equal access to the benefits of development. In the context of religious engagement, this approach provides clear normative boundaries regarding acceptable practices while preventing identity-based discrimination. By placing rights as a benchmark, development can be directed toward respecting diversity without compromising the principle of justice.

Furthermore, the principle of pluralism plays a crucial role in ensuring that religious integration in development does not lead to exclusion. Pluralism recognizes the existence of diverse value systems in society and encourages constructive dialogue between them. In development practice, this principle enables the creation of inclusive spaces where diverse groups can participate without losing their identities. This approach is relevant not only in policy contexts but also in program implementation at the local level, where interactions between groups occur directly.

In this complex landscape, the integration of religion into development requires sensitivity to diverse social dynamics. The success of integration is determined not only by the intent or goals sought, but also by the manner in which the process is carried out. A reflective and adaptive approach is key to addressing emerging challenges, ensuring that development can proceed within an inclusive and equitable framework. Thus, the inherent ambivalence of religion is not understood as an obstacle, but rather as a reality that needs to be wisely managed in contemporary development practices.

Implications for Global Governance

The integration of religion into development practices has broad implications for the configuration of global governance, which has been dominated by state actors and international donor agencies. This change not only affects operational aspects but also touches on the conceptual dimension of who has the right to participate in global decision-making processes. The presence of religious actors broadens the spectrum of participation, so that global governance can no longer be understood as an arena exclusively for formal institutions. Within this dynamic, religion emerges as an element that enriches the structure of global interactions, while simultaneously challenging long-held assumptions about the boundaries between the public and private spheres. The global governance landscape is also shifting toward a more open form, in which the diversity of actors is a prominent feature.

These changes require adjustments in how we understand power relations at the global level. While previously states and donor agencies held dominant positions in determining the direction of development, the emergence of faith-based organizations introduces a new dimension that cannot be fully controlled by formal structures. Interactions between state and non-state actors become more complex, involving differences in sources of legitimacy, value orientations, and social bases. In this context, global governance evolves as a space populated by diverse actors with diverse characteristics, so that decision-making processes are no longer linear but involve multi-layered negotiations.

Jeffrey Haynes argues that religious actors possess a capacity for cross-border mobilization that enables them to engage in a variety of global issues, including poverty, conflict, and social change (Haynes, 2007). This capacity is based not only on institutional networks but also on bonds of value that transcend geographical boundaries. In many cases, religious organizations are able to connect communities across countries through shared identities and beliefs, creating transnational networks of solidarity. The existence

of these networks contributes to expanding the reach of development interventions while strengthening the moral dimension in responses to global issues.

Within this framework, development can no longer be understood as a process driven by a single actor. It has evolved into a multi-actor process involving various interacting interests and value systems. The presence of religious actors adds complexity to this process, as they bring perspectives different from those of state actors or donor agencies. The interaction between these various actors creates a dynamic space for negotiation, where development policies are shaped through a dialogue involving diverse perspectives. This dynamic reflects a fundamental shift in how development is understood and implemented globally.

This perspective is related to Rhodes' concept of network governance, in which public policy is no longer generated through rigid hierarchical mechanisms, but rather through interactions between various actors with varying capacities and legitimacy (Rhodes, 1997). Within this framework, relationships between actors are not one-way, but rather influence each other in a continuous process. Global governance becomes a network consisting of various nodes, where each actor plays a role in shaping policy direction. This concept provides a more flexible understanding of how power and influence are distributed within the global system.

In the context of network governance, faith-based organizations serve as intermediary actors, connecting the global level with local realities. This role is related to their ability to understand the social context while interacting with global structures. FBOs are able to translate policies designed at the international level into practices relevant to local conditions, thereby narrowing the gap between planning and implementation. Furthermore, they can convey community aspirations to global actors, creating a more two-way flow of communication in the development process.

The existence of FBOs as intermediaries between these various levels demonstrates their crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of development programs. By understanding local dynamics, FBOs can adapt their approaches to better suit community needs. At the same time, they also contribute to strengthening the legitimacy of global policies through direct engagement with communities. This role demonstrates that development success is determined not only by policy design but also by the ability to bridge diverse contexts.

However, the integration of religion into global governance also requires a shift in the policy approaches currently used by international donor agencies. Engaging with religious actors requires a deeper understanding of the religious dimension of community life. Without such understanding, interactions can be superficial and ineffective. In this context, the concept of religious literacy becomes relevant as an effort to increase the capacity of development actors to understand the values, practices, and dynamics associated with religion (Marshall & Keough, 2004).

Developing religious literacy is not only about knowledge of religious teachings, but also encompasses an understanding of the social and political role of religion in society. This encompasses awareness of the diversity of interpretations, organizational structures, and internal dynamics that influence how religion operates in a social context. With adequate literacy, development actors can build more effective partnerships with religious organizations and avoid misunderstandings that can hinder collaboration.

Furthermore, a change in approach is also needed in terms of partnership mechanisms developed between donor agencies and faith-based organizations. Effective partnerships require sensitivity to local contexts, including the norms, values, and social structures that shape community life. An overly uniform approach can potentially overlook existing differences, thereby reducing the effectiveness of development interventions. In this situation, flexibility is crucial in designing programs that can adapt to diverse conditions.

Without adequate adaptation, engagement with religious actors risks becoming symbolic, with their presence used merely for legitimacy without providing any substantive contribution. In some cases, interactions not based on deep understanding can result in policies that are not aligned with community

needs. This demonstrates that the integration of religion into global governance requires a commitment to building relationships based on dialogue and mutual understanding, not mere formality.

Another risk to consider is the potential for counterproductive dynamics to emerge when partnerships are not managed effectively. Differences in value orientations and interests can create tensions that impact the effectiveness of development programs. In this context, it is crucial to develop mechanisms that enable constructive conflict management, so that existing differences can become sources of learning, not obstacles. An inclusive and dialogical approach is key to addressing these challenges.

Thus, the integration of religion into global governance carries complex and multidimensional implications. The changes occurring relate not only to the addition of actors but also to a transformation in how the development process itself is understood. Global governance is evolving as a space of interaction involving multiple perspectives, where diversity is both a source of strength and a challenge. In this context, the ability to manage complexity is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals.

Ultimately, the implications of integrating religion into global governance demonstrate that development cannot be separated from the dynamics of values and identities that shape community life. The presence of religious actors enriches the development process with a broader dimension, while also demanding a more reflective and contextual approach. In a constantly changing global landscape, the ability to build inclusive and diversity-sensitive partnerships is crucial for understanding and sustainably managing social change.

Towards a Post-Secular Development Paradigm

Based on the series of analyses outlined above, the discussion leads to the understanding that the so-called religious turn in development cannot be treated merely as a temporary empirical phenomenon. It reflects a deeper epistemological shift in the social sciences, particularly in how we understand the relationship between rationality, values, and social practices. This shift demonstrates that the framework of modernity, which rests on secular rationality, is no longer adequate to explain the complexity of human life, particularly in societies with strong religious ties. In this context, development can no longer be understood merely as a technical project, but rather as a process involving multiple layers of meaning.

This epistemological shift paved the way for the emergence of a development paradigm often referred to as post-secular. This paradigm does not deny the role of modern rationality, but rather places it in a more dialogical relationship with other sources of knowledge, including religious traditions. Within this framework, religion is no longer positioned as an entity external to modernity, but rather as part of the social dynamics that shape it. The presence of religion in the public sphere is not understood as an anomaly, but as an expression of the plurality that characterizes contemporary society. Thus, post-secular development presents a more open approach to various forms of rationality.

However, recognizing the role of religion in development cannot be separated from the need to maintain a critical distance from the various potential consequences. Religious integration is often understood normatively as inherently positive, yet reality reveals more complex dynamics. Experience in various contexts demonstrates that religion can serve as both a source of inspiration and a tool of legitimacy for practices that are not always inclusive. In situations like this, a reflective approach is crucial to ensure that religious involvement does not undermine the fundamental principles of equitable development.

Amartya Sen emphasized the importance of maintaining a development orientation toward freedom and justice, emphasizing that development must be understood as a process of expanding substantive human freedom (Sen, 1999). This perspective provides a relevant normative framework for assessing the involvement of religion in development. The freedoms in question encompass not only economic aspects but also the ability of individuals to live lives they deem meaningful. In this context, religious integration should be seen as part of an effort to expand choices, not to restrict individual freedom through the dominance of certain values.

Based on this framework, the integration of religion into development requires ethical and regulatory tools capable of maintaining a balance between diverse interests. This framework serves to ensure that development practices respect the principles of inclusivity and non-discrimination. In a pluralistic society,

diverse values are an unavoidable reality, making a sensitive approach to differences crucial. Clear regulations help prevent the misuse of religion in the context of public policy while ensuring that the involvement of religious actors remains within the bounds of human rights principles.

From a post-secular development perspective, value diversity is not seen as an obstacle, but rather as a source of richness that can enrich the development process. Pluralism is a key pillar that enables various value systems to coexist in the public sphere. Within this framework, religion is present as one of the many sources of values that contribute to policy formation. The existence of pluralism opens up space for constructive dialogue, where differences are not eliminated but managed through mutually respectful interactions.

Besides pluralism, social justice is also a crucial pillar of post-secular development. Justice in this context relates not only to the distribution of resources but also to the recognition of the dignity of each individual. Religion can contribute to strengthening the ethical dimension of justice, through values that emphasize solidarity and concern for others. However, this contribution needs to be placed within a framework that ensures that no group is marginalized due to the dominance of certain values. Thus, social justice becomes a foundation that guides development practices toward more inclusive goals.

Dialogue between values is another equally important pillar of this paradigm. In a society characterized by diversity, dialogue serves as a mechanism for fostering shared understanding without eliminating differences. The dialogue process involves not only the exchange of arguments but also creates space for reflection on each actor's position. In the context of development, dialogue between values enables the integration of technocratic rationality and moral considerations, resulting in policies that are more responsive to societal needs.

Within this framework, religion has the potential to make significant contributions, particularly in providing an ethical perspective that enriches the development process. However, this contribution depends on how religion is positioned within the broader ecosystem. Religion cannot be positioned as the sole authority determining the direction of development, but rather as one of the actors interacting with other actors in a dialogical process. This approach allows for a balance between the various sources of legitimacy existing within society.

Placing religion as an actor in the development ecosystem is also related to efforts to maintain openness to diverse perspectives. In an increasingly connected global context, interactions between various value systems are becoming increasingly intense. Post-secular development offers a framework that allows for these interactions to take place constructively, without ignoring existing differences. Thus, development becomes not only a space for policy implementation but also a learning space involving various actors with diverse backgrounds.

The future of international development within this framework depends on the ability to critically and reflectively integrate various forms of rationality. Technocratic rationality still plays a crucial role in policy design and implementation, but it needs to be complemented by moral considerations derived from various sources, including religion. This integration is not simple, as it involves a complex negotiation process between diverse interests and values. However, within this complexity lies the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive approach to understanding development.

In practice, the integration of technocratic rationality and moral values requires adequate institutional capacity. Development institutions need to develop mechanisms that enable effective dialogue between various actors. This includes the ability to listen, understand, and respond to differing perspectives. In this context, post-secular development is not only about paradigm shifts, but also about changes in the institutional practices that support their implementation.

Thus, the post-secular development paradigm offers a broader perspective in understanding the relationship between religion and development. It does not eliminate the role of modern rationality, but rather places it in a more open relationship with other sources of value. This approach enables the creation of more inclusive development, where various dimensions of human life are recognized and valued. In a constantly changing global landscape, the ability to manage diverse values is key to achieving sustainable and equitable development.

CONCLUSION

A reading of Gerard Clarke's thinking confirms that the repositioning of religion in international development is part of a broader paradigm shift in the social sciences. Religion is no longer positioned as a peripheral element, but rather as a component that plays a role in shaping the direction, meaning, and legitimacy of development. This shift opens up space for a more contextual approach, while also presenting challenges that require careful management. Within this framework, development is understood as a process that is not merely technical, but also fraught with dimensions of values and power relations. Research findings indicate that the religious turn reflects an epistemological shift toward a post-secular paradigm that recognizes religion as a source of normative legitimacy in the public sphere, as emphasized by Jürgen Habermas. Furthermore, the involvement of faith-based organizations expands the structure of global governance to become more multi-actor, while strengthening the basis of social legitimacy in development practices.

On the other hand, religion also exhibits an ambivalent character that cannot be ignored in development analysis. Its potential as a force for social transformation goes hand in hand with the possibility of becoming a source of exclusion, identity conflict, and unequal distribution of benefits. This dynamic demands a regulatory framework capable of maintaining a balance between recognizing the role of religion and protecting the principle of inclusivity. In this context, the need for a post-secular development paradigm becomes increasingly relevant, particularly in efforts to reflectively integrate moral dimensions without neglecting the principles of justice and human rights. This perspective directs development towards a focus not only on material gains but also on strengthening values that support social sustainability.

In line with these findings, the direction of international development policy requires strategic steps capable of bridging the complex relationship between religion and development. Donor agencies are required to develop a more systematic policy framework that integrates the religious dimension, accompanied by an increased understanding of the religious context to make interventions more relevant. Faith-based organizations need to expand their role to become advocacy agents that contribute to structural change, in line with Amartya Sen's idea of expanding substantive freedoms. Strengthening regulations based on pluralism and human rights is crucial to prevent discriminatory practices. In the context of global governance, interactions between states, markets, and religious actors require inclusive and dialogical partnerships, as emphasized by Jeffrey Haynes. Developing countries, including Indonesia, have the opportunity to strengthen the institutional capacity of religious organizations, while developing interdisciplinary research in the Global South is a crucial step in enriching empirical understanding. Overall, the integration of religion in development is a strategic necessity that demands critical, inclusive, and equitable governance.

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