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Religion and development in a Norwegian context

A qualitative study of the identity of faith-based organizations
and the relationship to their secular donor.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades increased attention has been paid to the role of religion in development and several academics have explored the nature of faith-based organizations (FBOs) involved in development. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) funds several FBOs which, through their partners, implement development projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Much of the literature on religion and development is focused on faith-based organizations and the role they play, or should play, in development. FBOs are often portrayed as unique and inherently different from secular NGOs. They have been praised for their motivation, efficiency, and holistic approaches to development. Despite of this there is also recognition of the heterogeneity in the category of FBOs. In this thesis I will explore five Norwegian FBOs and attempt to find out how they, in different ways, understand their faith-based identity. In conclusion I will propose a new typology of FBOs that might help us to better understand their characteristics.

The initial interest in religion as a development factor and the role of FBOs did not come from academic circles, but surfaced in international development agencies and multilateral organizations. Therefore, much of the literature focuses on the relationship between these international donor agencies and FBOs. I will bring the debate into a Norwegian context exploring the relationship between the Norwegian FBOs and their government donor. I will argue for a more nuanced donor approach towards FBOs.

Accordingly, the aim of this thesis is twofold: 1) To explore the identity of Norwegian FBOs and 2) to examine the relationship between these FBOs and their back-donor Norad.

The five FBOs are the Norwegian Church Aid, YMCA-YWCA Global, the Norwegian Mission Alliance, the Norwegian Mission Society and the Norwegian Lutheran Mission.

I will explore their identity and relationship to Norad by analysing 1) the FBOs' basic documents, 2) the FBOs' annual organizational reports to Norad, and 3) interviews with aid managers in the FBOs.

1.1 Research questions

- How does Norwegian FBOs interpret their faith-based identity?
- How do Norwegian FBOs understand their relationship to Norad?

I understand *identity* as the image that the FBO holds of itself and the context in which it places its development efforts. In this thesis I am not interested in the image of the FBOs held by individuals or the general public, but I want to explore how the FBOs' view themselves, how they understand their own identity. I want to see how the FBOs' present themselves in their basic documents and how they present themselves vis-à-vis Norad through reports. Through interviews I want to get the views of employees at the FBOs that can explain and elaborate on findings from the basic documents and the organizational reports. A central concept I give much attention to is *added value*. In what ways do the FBO's view themselves as unique or different from others?

With the FBO-Norad *relation*, or the *relationship* between the two, I mean the way the two interact. The organizations are faith-based, in different ways influenced by and connected to a specific religion. Norad, on the other hand, is a government donor and supposed to be neutral, not exclusively allied with or against any particular religion. I will explore this relationship from the perspective of the FBOs. How is the FBOs' faith-base communicated in this relationship? How do the FBOs experience the relationship?

With this thesis I will provide a new understanding of Norwegian faith-based organizations and the relationship they have with their secular donor. I will not look into specific projects or examine what role religion play on the ground in development context. My interest is how the Norwegian FBOs understand their faith-based identity and their relationship to Norad.

I must underline that my focus is on FBOs involved in international development aid. Some of the organizations I will study are mission organizations, meaning they do not only have a focus on development, but also on evangelization. I will first and foremost focus on their development efforts. However, in the discussion it will be necessary to see these development efforts within the mission context.

1.2 Definitions

Before moving on it is important to clarify some additional key concepts. *Development* and *religion* (or *faith*) are central concepts. These are big words, each with their own history, and difficult to define. A discussion of religion and development can easily turn abstract and superficial (Fretheim 2012). Even though it might not be possible to agree on a single definition, it is important to reflect upon the meaning of these concepts and clarify how they will be applied in this thesis.

1.2.1 Development and development aid

When I discuss *development* in this thesis I most often refer to the long-term political project of development with the goal of eradicating poverty. Development aid or ODA¹ is financial aid given by governments to support the, most often, economic development of developing countries. Contrary to humanitarian aid it focuses on alleviating poverty in the long term. The idea that development is a linear process is still a leading thought. We, in the North, are developed, and the countries of the South, which are underdeveloped, need to ‘climb the development ladder’ to get to where we are. Others would point to the unsustainable societies of the Western world and argue that we are in fact *overdeveloped*.

Development is a normative term in that it presupposes an idea of what the ‘good’ society is. However, our ideas about what a good society is and what specific changes are regarded as positive differs greatly. There are also different ideas about what poverty is. It is not longer seen in purely material terms, but has extended to a notion of well-being, incorporating also non-material factors. Amartya Sen’s contributions (Sen 1999) and the

¹ Official Development Assistance

theory of human development have been significant in this regard. However, economic development with its material focus is still the leading paradigm.

In this thesis I will often put development up against religion. This is because the political project of development from the beginning has been viewed as a secular project placed within theories of modernization highly influenced by the secularization theory. This is perhaps the most important reason why the role of religion for so many years has been disregarded. However, even though I will often point to development as the political project of development, it is important that the reader keeps in mind the ambiguous and highly contested nature of the term.

1.2.2 Religion and faith

Religion is perhaps an even more difficult concept to define. Scholars, scientists and others have, without succeeding, long attempted to capture the essence of religion into a single definition. Definitions are usually placed within one of two recognized categories: *substantive* and *functional* definitions. “Religion has been *substantively* defined, in terms of the meaning contents of the phenomenon. And it has been *functionally* defined, in terms of its place in the social and/or psychological system” (Berger 1974:2). Put in another way, substantive definitions are seeking to explain what religion *is*. Functional definitions try to say something about what religion *does*.

My understanding of the term in this thesis, and the general definition in the discourse on religion and development, falls within the functional category. Religion is viewed as something that influences people’s behaviour; influences how they interpret the world around them. I do not rely on a specific definition of what religion *is*. Rather, I accept that it exists and that it influences human behaviour in different ways. Still, there are three perspectives on religion that I believe are important to keep in mind:

First, the concept of religion is widely used in public discourse, usually without any definition or specification. It is important to understand the enormous variety one finds within the concept. Religion, like all other cultural and historical phenomena, is

intertwined with social and cultural life. One can never separate religion from the context in which it operates.

Second, though religion is in many ways a conservative cultural phenomenon, given its holy texts, rituals and old institutions, religious traditions are always changing, being constantly redefined and reinterpreted. Thus, we are challenged to overcome one-sided perspectives of religion. Strong religious convictions are often seen primarily as a negative force. R. Scott Appleby writes: "(...) religion is a source not only of intolerance, human rights violations, and extremist violence, but also of non-violent conflict transformation, the defence of human rights, integrity in government, and reconciliation and stability in divided societies" (Appleby 1996:821).

Third, one must be careful not to disregard religious beliefs as mere opinions or superstition in contrast to empirically based knowledge. Harpviken and Røislien argue that such a distinction "veils the fact that both positions appear as "true" and "factual" to the individual who holds them" (Harpviken and Røislien 2005:6).

In addition to religion, I will often use the term *faith*, perhaps as a consequence of the category of *faith*-based organizations. Faith can also be defined in different ways. It can be viewed as a wider term than religion, pointing to a belief in something metaphysical regardless of religious adherence. It can also point to the belief in a body of dogma of a religion, like the *Christian faith*. In this thesis, the emphasis will be on the latter. Also in this case, the perspective will be *functional*.

1.2.3 Faith-based organizations

An FBO is typically defined as "any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith" (Clarke & Jennings, 2008:6). I am in favor of this kind of definition because it is wide enough to encompass all the different types of FBOs. Other definitions are narrower.

Tvedt (2006) argues that because of the enormous variety of FBOs (or religious NGOs)

the term 'faith-based organizations' should be avoided. Tvedt base his critique on a definition of FBOs as "non-state actors that have a central religious or faith core to their philosophy, membership, or programmatic approach, although they are not simply missionaries. FBOs are distinguished from secular NGOs by their access to ready-made constituencies" (Dicklitch and Rice, 2004:662 in Tvedt 2006:360). Tvedt argues that these criteria are unclear and normative, and objects to the how the definition implies that only religious people have faith.

In my impression, Tvedt has identified *one* definition of faith-based organizations that matches his critiques. For example, little of the criticism applies to Clarke & Jennings's wider definition. I agree with Tvedt in that the extremely heterogeneous field of FBOs makes it somewhat impossible to talk in general terms about FBOs and their added values, but I do not think that the category should be disregarded easily.

Students and academics need to be aware of the diversity within the category and accept that 'faith-based organizations' is an umbrella term encompassing many different types of organizations. With that as a starting point, I believe that we can move forward with the term, adapting it to different contexts and identify suitable sub-categories that can help us make the term more applicable.

All the five organizations I explore in this thesis have a Christian faith-base. Thus, I could have chosen to call them 'Christian-based organizations' or 'Christian NGOs'. However, in most of the literature on religion and development the preferred term is 'faith-based organizations'. Therefore I choose to talk about 'Norwegian faith-based organizations'. Most of the Norwegian FBO's involved in development *are* in fact Christian. Still, I believe the methodology of this thesis can be replicated and applied also to non-Christian FBO's.

I have found concepts like *diakonia* and *mission* to be of great importance in the analysis of the FBOs. These concepts will be defined as we go along.

1.3 Method and material

This thesis explores the faith-based identity and donor relationship of five Norwegian organizations. I take use of three different kinds of material:

First, I will analyse the FBOs' *basic documents*, which gives me an insight into their identity as a faith-based organization, or perhaps more correctly, an insight into the FBOs' own *self-presentation* of their identity and added value.

Second, I analyse the FBOs' *annual reports*. These represent the *upward communication* in the aid system. Implementing partners report to the Norwegian FBOs, which in turn report to Norad, either directly or through Digni². In this section I explore how the FBOs' identity, as depicted in the basic documents, is visible in the communication with Norad. I also review whether the reports reflect the added values of the FBOs, and more generally, whether issues related to religion and development are discussed.

Third, and last, I analyse the data from the *interviews* conducted with aid managers in the different FBOs. I have interviewed five aid managers, one in each organization. The interview had two main topics, the faith-based identity of the FBO and the FBO-Norad relationship. The interviews were conducted after the analysis of the basic documents and the reports, as I wanted to get the informants' interpretation of the findings.

I approach this material with two methodologies. *Content analysis* is applied on the FBOs' self-presentation (basic documents) and the upward communication (reports), while *interview analysis* is applied to the data obtained in the semi-structured interviews conducted with the FBO staff. A more thorough review of the methods applied and the data-gathering process can be found in chapter 3.

² Digni, formerly named Bistandsnemda, is an umbrella organization for the long-term development work of 19 mission organizations and faith communities. Digni administers and quality-assures the Norad-support to the members organizations. Digni received 148,2 million kroner from Norad in 2011.

1.4 Perspective and context

Three different perspectives can help explain my interest in the topic and clarify why I believe it is important.

Personally: I have for many years been involved with faith-based organizations, mainly through part-time activities and summer camps within the Norwegian Church, the local Free Church, and through the YMCA-YWCA movement. At 19 I participated in an exchange program organized by the YMCA-YWCA and Norwegian Church Aid. This led me to study development studies at Oslo University College. I have continued my engagement within YMCA-YWCA Global and Changemaker, Norwegian Church Aid's youth organization. These experiences have led to a personal interest in the field of religion and development, especially the role of FBO's.

Politically: One of the contexts this thesis operates within is the political field of development. The Norwegian government funds a range of development efforts in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The reality in our quite secular corner of the world might have distorted our view of the importance of religion as a political and social factor in many of these societies. We have come to understand that religion can be a powerful force, both for good and bad, but only recently has one at the political level begun to underline the importance of involving, and understanding, religious institutions and organizations operating in the field of development. Both examining the religious identity and development agendas of government-funded FBOs and reviewing the communication between these and Norad is interesting from a political perspective.

Academically: The issue of religion and development, and FBOs particularly, have not historically been given much attention in academic circles. However, in the last few decades several contributions have been made (see chapter 2). Still, we have barely scratched the surface and much more research is needed if we are to better understand the role that religion and FBOs play in development. With this thesis I hope to provide a contribution that will take us one step closer towards that understanding.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is organized as follows. In chapter 2 I will explore the resurgence of religion in development and review some theoretical perspectives on FBOs, before moving on to the Norwegian context, giving a short overview of the discourse on religion and development and provide the reader with some perspectives on the Norwegian aid system. A literature review is included in this chapter.

Chapter 3 provides a quick overview over the methodology of the research; describing the sample selection, the gathering of data, and how I conducted the data analysis.

In chapter 4, 5 and 6 the focus is on the research findings. In chapter 4, I present the findings from the analysis of the basic documents (the self-presentation of the FBOs). In chapter 5, I turn to the FBO-Norad relation, offering some insight into the organizational reports and the upward communication from the FBOs to their donor. In chapter 6 I present the findings from the analysis of the interview data, offering the informants' view of their organization's faith-base and its added values, and their understanding of the reporting regime and the donor relationship.

In chapter 7 I analyse and discuss the findings from the previous three chapters, drawing on relevant literature. Finally, I present my conclusions and some final thoughts in chapter 8.

2. Theoretical perspectives

In this chapter I will provide a theoretical background, placing the thesis in the context of on-going debates about FBOs in development. Firstly, I will attempt to summarize how the view of religion has changed within the development discourse. Secondly, I will review some contributions to the literature on religion and development, focusing specifically on FBOs. Thirdly, I will turn to the Norwegian context, shortly reviewing the discourse on religion and development before offering some theoretical perspectives on the Norwegian aid system.

2.1 Religion in development theory

Debates about the role of religion have traditionally been absent from development theory. The early development academics, the modernization theorists, followed classical social theory and viewed development and secularization as going hand in hand. Classical social theorists as Marx, Weber and Durkheim all predicted that as societies modernized they would inevitably secularize and thus the role of religion would diminish. The belief that the modern world was to become a secular one has become a central underpinning of the modern social sciences (Noy 2009). In line with this, development was from the beginning framed as secular. Religion was either ignored as irrelevant or in some cases even viewed as an obstacle to economic growth.

Accompanying this perception of religion was a strong belief in the ability and capacity of governments and economic policies to deliver growth, prosperity and well-being. The neglect of religion, both in development academics and in policy, “thus reflected historical and cultural processes in the colonizing countries more than the reality in the newly independent countries” (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011:48).

The 1980 special issue of *World Development* entitled ‘Religion and Development’ represents one of the first references in the religion and development discourse. The editors called for a re-evaluation of the relationship between the religion and development, questioning the validity of secularism for development thinking and practice (Wilber and Jameson 1980). The plea of the editors, just like the topic of religion

itself, was however largely ignored. In the three most prominent development journals³, only a handful of references to the role of religion in development were found between 1982 and 1998 (Ver Beek 2002:37).

Though religion was not yet a part of the discussion, the 1970s saw a growing discontent with the view of development as measured in GDP⁴. It was becoming clear that the rapid growth of the 1950s and 1960s was not ‘trickling down’ to reduce poverty and alternative theories became influential. Although religion was never explicitly mentioned, the basic needs approach (ILO 1976) emphasized also non-material needs such as a ‘sense of purpose’ in life and work. Still, the debt crisis in the 1980s and the following structural adjustment policies ensured the continued dominance of economics in development studies and in the large international agencies.

In the last 15 years this picture has changed. The volume of published material on religion and development has noticeably increased (e.g. Clarke, 2007; Clarke et al, 2008; Deneulin with Bano, 2009; Haynes, 2007; Lunn, 2009; ter Haar & Ellis, 2006; Thomas, 2005; Tyndale, 2006). Research programs on the topic have been conducted, both in the UK and in the Netherlands. In addition, many national and multi-national development-funding agencies have formed partnerships with faith communities (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011:48). A number of developments have led to this ‘discovery’ of religion within development academics and international development policy. Four trends in particular have contributed to this new appreciation.

The first trend concerns the political level where we find numerous examples of the religious resurgence. Many would look to the Iranian revolution as turning point (Singh et.al 2007, Deneulin and Rakodi 2011, Fox and Sandler 2004, Deneulin and Bano 2009) or to the role of religion in identity politics and ethnic conflicts and movements around the world, such as *Hindutva* in India (Clarke 2006, Singh et. al 2007, Haynes 2007), the rise of political Islam (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011, Noy 2009, Singh et al 2007, Fox and

³ World Development, Journal of Development Studies and Journal of Developing Areas

⁴ Gross Domestic Product

Sandler 2004) or the increased power of the religious right in the US (Noy 2009). In the last decade the ‘War on Terror’ has made religion, and in particular Islam, an important aspect of foreign and security policy in many countries.

A second trend that has made religion an unavoidable topic in development studies is the continued importance of religion in people’s lives and identities. Modernization, at least on a global scale, has failed to bring about the marginalization of religion it was assumed to. Two-thirds of all world citizens declare themselves to be religious while only 6% claim to be convinced atheists (Gallup 2005.) Proportions vary of course, but a huge majority in the developing world considers themselves religious. Numbers from 2001 reveal that the major world religions are growing, both due to demographic growth and conversion, but more slowly than in the past (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011:47, Barrett et al, 2001).

The third trend that has consequences for the new interest in religion within development academics is the increased recognition of faith-based organizations. These are the main focus of this thesis and this trend will be elaborated on below.

The fourth trend is a change in development thinking itself where one has recognized the complex nature of poverty and development. Since this change of thinking has provided much of the theoretical space FBOs operate within, I find it necessary to devote some attention to it.

The failure of the structural adjustment programs and strict economic policies of the 80s gave way for alternative theories and agendas. There was an increased interest in concepts such as human development, social capital and different participatory approaches in what has come to constitute the increasingly plural field named, by some, *post-modern development* (Potter et al 2008:120-121).

The understanding of poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon and the importance of non-economic definitions of development was made clear through the World Bank study

Voices of the poor: Crying out for change (Narayan et al. 2000). Thousands of people living in poverty were interviewed about how they understood poverty. One of the findings was that religion and transcendent matters were frequently considered to be part of people's well-being. (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011, Alkire 2006). The survey also showed that faith groups had better networks among the poor than other organizations and that religious leaders were trusted more than others (Tyndale 2003:26).

Conceptions of development have changed in the last three decades with improved understandings of poverty and an increasing recognition of the shortcomings of economic measures of progress. There has been a reorientation from economic growth to more holistic concerns; a shift that has also meant increased space for focusing on the role of religion.

A multi-dimensional view of poverty and wellbeing is central in the human development approach. (Deneulin and Bano 2009:45). The approach has its roots in the works of Amartya Sen and his 'capability approach'. Sen argues that development should be viewed as a process where people's freedoms are extended and where people themselves are allowed to choose what they value (Deneulin and Bano 2009:45 Deneulin and Rakodi 2011:13, Sen 1999, 2009; Nussbaum 2000). He brings values back to the center stage, avoiding the normative questions of what a good society is or how people ought to act. The message advocated by Wilber and James (1980) in the *World Development* special issue twenty years earlier, that development needs to be in tune with the moral basis of society, now reappears.

This approach opened the door for religion. Since religion is an important force that influences the values of individuals it should, following the human development and capability approach, be considered a dimension of development. However, economic growth is still seen as the number-one priority and there is a long way to go before the capability or the human development approach and their insights fully permeate development policy and practice (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011).

2.2 Perspectives on FBOs

It is important to remember that religious communities and organizations have a long history of engagement in what we now term development. However, we have, in the last decades, witnessed a dramatic increase in the number and visibility of faith-based organizations and the attention given to them.

In the 1980s, the structural adjustment decade, emphasis was put on privatization and the ‘rolling back of the state’. Public initiatives and instruments were limited, something that gave space to FBOs and other civil society actors. The World Bank estimated that by the year 2000 FBOs stood for half of all services within health and education in Sub-Saharan Africa (Deneulin and Bano 2009:1). Related to this ‘discovery’ of religious actors as service providers, is also the recognition that ‘weak states’ do not have the ability to provide services to their populations. In the absence of governments, religious institutions have stepped in to provide basic health and education services.

As a result of this new recognition various secular development agencies have sought to engage with FBOs. The former World Bank president James Wolfensohn was instrumental in establishing the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD). In 2001 the WFDD published the pamphlet *Cultures, Spirituality and Development* emphasizing the importance of the cultural and spiritual aspects of development. It was argued that processes of development could only succeed if people’s cultural and spiritual needs were incorporated. The authors pointed out that the idea of progress being a purely material goal is alien to most people of the world, and thus development policies that only include material goals are destined to fail (WFDD 2001:16)⁵.

Kathrin Marshall, a researcher at the World Bank and a central figure in the establishment and development of WFDD, has published several analyses of the relationship between religion and development. In the article *Development and Religion:*

⁵ Despite the obvious importance of religion in development affairs, fundamental objections raised by Bank member states inhibited the development of the WFDD (Hayes 2007:51, Marshall 2005a).

A Different Lens on Development Debates from 2001 she points out that even though the Bank has had many specific and significant links with faith organizations⁶, it has been *ad hoc*. Knowledge of what has been done has not been collected in an organized fashion (Marshall 2001:7). Marshall identifies two major blind spots: what role religious institutions play in development, and what ideas and perspectives religious actors have on development.

Are faith-based organizations fundamentally different from secular NGOs? Do FBOs have an ‘added value’ compared to secular organizations? These questions represent a central discussion in the literature concerning FBOs in development. Wendy Tyndale who in 2003 wrote the article *Idealism and Practicality: the Role of Religion in Development* launched the debate. Tyndale looks at different religious groups working at the grassroots and demonstrates the effectiveness of faith as an “inspiration and guide for work to improve the life for the poor” (Tyndale 2003:22). She draws on different research studies that identify areas where faith-based organizations have an advantage vis-à-vis their secular colleagues. Tyndale also stresses the difference between local religious groups and faith-based NGOs where the latter, she argues, “tend to be influenced to a greater degree by the views of professional western/secular development practitioners”(Tyndale 2003:22).

In the article *Does Compassion Bring Results? A Critical perspective on Faith and Development* from 2005, Tamsin Bradley discusses Tyndale’s assertions. He agrees that religious faith as a motivating factor can contribute to a deeper commitment and longer presence in development contexts, but problematizes the Christian notion of ‘compassion’ as a motivating force. He argues that compassion “operates through symbolic projections of an objectified image of suffering” and that in order for it to be expressed it must be “directed towards an object of pity” (Bradley 2005:341).

⁶ Published in 2001 was the book *Faith in Development: Partnership between the World Bank and Churches in Africa* which explores the principles, practicalities and possibilities of partnerships between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa (Belshaw (red) 2001).

As the result of a long process of reflection together with faith-based partners, the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation in 2005 issued a publication called *The Role and Significance of Religion and Spirituality in Development Co-operation*. The starting point was an observation made by the agency that religion and spirituality as important socio-cultural factors were largely ignored in the development debate in Switzerland. The process concluded that there was a need of 1) clarifying their own point of view vis-à-vis partners, 2) being aware of the socio-cultural context (not only focus on material needs), 3) being aware of the effects of development programmes in the socio-cultural environment (conflict sensitivity, cooperate with religious institutions), and 4) dialogue with partner organizations (e.g. exchanging ideas about religion and spirituality).

In 2006, Gerard Clarke wrote the article *Faith Matters: Faith-based Organizations, Civil Society and International Development*. He argues that donors focus only on supporting ‘mainstream’ charitable and development FBOs. However, there is a range of different types of FBOs (including mission organizations) that play active roles in lives of the poor and the political contexts that affect them, but are not supported because donors fail to understand their faith tradition and are unwilling to engage with them. In Clarke’s opinion there is a need of improving conceptual and programmatic rationale for donor engagement to include also the latter types of FBOs. Clarke (2006) also involves himself in the discussion concerning the uniqueness or ‘added-value’ of FBOs. He argues that FBOs have a number of characteristics that distinguish them from their secular peers (e.g. mobilize through spiritual and moral values, highly networked, embedded in governance processes both in horizontal and vertical terms, less dependent on donor funding, expertise in key areas etc.) (Clarke 2006:845).

In his book *Religion and Development: Conflict or cooperation?* published in 2007, Jeffrey Haynes gives us a short overview of the field of religion and development. Hegertun (2012) points to Haynes (2007:48-51) in relation to the recognition FBO’s have received, especially in the work with *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (PRSP). However, Hegertun (2012) fails to mention the essence of Haynes point, which was not the recognition itself, but the challenges that arise when international development banks

and other official development agencies engage in dialogue with FBOs. Haynes argues that there are “marked differences in perceptions of poverty between faith groups on the one hand and government and international development agencies on the other” (2007:50).

In 2007 Kathrin Marshall returned with another book, entitled *Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart and Soul Work Together*. The book explores and highlights promising partnerships between secular agencies and faith entities. The authors conclude that 1) through engagement with faith institutions secular development professional can improve and expand their overall effort, 2) knowledge gaps are still significant and the need for more analysis and research is clear and pressing, and 3) there is still a need for a basic level of mutual literacy and understanding, a challenge that applies both to faith and development communities (Marshall and Saanen 2007:306).

Addressing this knowledge gap concerning the role of FBO's in international development is the book *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations* by Clarke and Jennings (red) from 2007. The book examines the work of different Christian, Islamic and Hindu FBO's. Inge Hovland's analysis of the relationship between the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) and NORAD is interesting in a Norwegian context. He points to the fact that NORAD cannot fund 'religious activities', something that is problematic for an FBO like NMS where a straightforward and clean separation between what is 'religious activities' and 'development activities' is a difficult one to make.

In 2008, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) published the report *Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations*. The report offer a series of case studies from UNFPAs work with religious communities and faith-based organizations. Although aware of the fact that religion can have positive and negative impacts on programming, the report concluded, among other things, that partnerships with religious and faith-based communities help UNFPA reach “some of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities” (UNFPA 2008:12).

Severine Deneulin and Masooda Bano gave the debate about religion and development a new perspective in their book *Religion in Development: Rewriting the Secular Script* from 2009. The book argues that development theory needs to rewrite its dominant secular script. The authors criticize those who are segmenting elements of a religion that are good or bad for development. They also challenge the idea of religion as something static. (Deneulin and Bano 2009).

In 2009, continuing the debate about FBOs, Rick James, in his publication “*What is distinctive about FBOs?*” examines how European FBOs can define and operationalize their faith. James finds that faith is no longer the taboo subject it once was and that there is increased donor interest in understanding the role of faith in development. He argues that organizations are more effective if they “have a clear identity and their beliefs and values permeate throughout their organization” (James 2009:20). In addition, both donors and the FBOs “need to better understand the particular characteristics of FBOs in order to work effectively in partnership with them” (James 2009:20). The questions James asks in the end of the article are to some degree answered by this thesis. How do European FBOs experience the increased donor interest in faith and what do European FBOs see as the value added that comes from their faith?

In *Handle With Care: Engaging Faith-based Organizations in Development* from 2011, Rick James continues the discussion about the different dilemmas that donors face when engaging with FBOs. He concludes that greater donor engagement with FBOs would be positive for long-term development, but it needs to be done well. The donors must develop their understanding of faith and FBOs “without being afraid or dismissive of the spiritual dimension” (James 2011:7). Donors have to become ‘faith literate’. The FBOs, on their side, need to clarify what their faith identity means and how it is operationalized in their work. James warns that engaging with FBOs will “not be neat and tidy”, but “challenge secular desires for a clear division between faith and development work” (James 2011:7).

The research conducted in England and the Netherlands provides us with no clear

answers concerning FBO's added values (Hegertun 2012:126). Professor Gerrie Ter Haar from ISS⁷ claimed to have found some unique advantages, but limited to service delivery (in Hegertun 2012:126). In the study at Birmingham researchers found no clear advantages on the part of FBOs. Hegertun, in a footnote, points to both the problem of operationalizing the term 'FBO' and to other weaknesses of the research project. Whether the findings, or lack of findings, have to do with this or that advantages are not to be found is difficult to assess.

Kathrine Marshall is cautious in describing FBO's potential advantages. Instead of saying something is 'unique', she says there is something 'distinct' that differs from organization to organization. Taking an institutional approach, Marshall identifies two areas where FBOs have an advantage compared to secular NGO, namely 1) the possibility of working through religious communities and institutions, something that is also possible for secular NGOs, but not as common, and 2) that some FBOs have characteristics at home that can be taken advantage of, such as larger networks, volunteering and resources for advocacy (Marshall in Hegertun 2012:127).

DFID considers two aspects especially challenging when cooperating with FBOs. First, will funds be used to convert people? And second, will funds be used to help an exclusive group? What has become clear is that even though the FBOs respect DFID's principles of funding, their local partners might view those principles differently. One simply lacks the overview of the different FBOs and their attitudes to, for example, evangelization, abortion and use of condoms (Hegertun 2012:128). In June 2012 DFID introduced their new 'Faith Partnership Principles'⁸. The document was produced in consultation with a working group from FBOs and sets out the principles (transparency, mutual respect and understanding) to guide DFID's relationship with faith groups.

In 2011, ter Haar edited an anthology entitled *Religion and Development: Ways of Transforming the World*. In the book, ter Haar argues that the fast-growing amount of literature on religion and development contains a major gap – it fails to take religious

⁷ International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67352/faith-partnership-principles.pdf 24.05.13

ideas seriously. There is need for a holistic understanding of development that looks closer at religious ideas of development. In her view, the “most important reason for paying serious attention to the religious dimensions of people’s lives is the need to make maximum use of whatever resources exist for development purposes” (Ter Haar (red) 2011:8). In an article from 2006, *The role of Religion in Development. Towards a New Relationship between the European Union and Africa*, ter Haar makes similar assertions. Through interaction with the invisible world millions of people gain ‘spiritual power’, experienced as real and transformative power that helps them to change their lives. Development actors have to look at how this can contribute to development (tar Haar (red) 2011).

2.3 Main tendencies in the literature

There is a growing body of literature and research on religion and development, the majority from development scholars and practitioners. Although this review has been limited, it is possible, with the help of earlier reviews (Jones and Petersen 2011, Hegertun 2012), to identify some main tendencies in the literature and certain criticisms that have been put forward.

If we look chronologically at how the field has emerged it has been donors and international NGOs that have led the way, not universities or other research institutions. This can help to explain the first tendency I will mention; that research on religion and development takes an instrumental approach. Religion is important to understand because it can be used to do development ‘better’. Jones and Petersen are among those who underline this tendency. The interest of this research is to “explore whether or not religion makes a difference to the implementation of development activities” (Jones and Petersen 2011:9). Holenstein’s report commissioned by the Swiss Agency for Development (Holenstein 2007) is characteristic in this regard – instrumental and pragmatic in its approach.

A second tendency, related to the aforementioned, is the focus on formalized religious actors engaged in development work, especially faith-based organizations. This has been

at the expense of other forms religion might take. There is also often a lack of satisfying definitions. What we call FBOs is a highly complex, diverse and numerous group containing congregations, sects, revival movements, religious development organizations, religious political parties, local religious community groups etc. (Hegertun 2012).

The third tendency, argued for by Hegertun (2012), is the essentialistic understanding of both religion and development. He argues that religiously inspired development is viewed as something different than other forms of social action – something better, more authentic, more people-centered, and more legitimate. Material and secular development is distant from the ‘religious South’, while religion reflects their worldview (Hegertun 2012:114).

Similarly to the treatment of religion, thorough discussions on development are mostly absent from the literature. Development is simply understood as something that development agencies do. It is understood to be about progress and freedom, but those concepts are presented as relatively uncontested. Often development, when discussed in the ‘secular’ sense, is indirectly equated with economic growth, perhaps because this makes the distinction between the ‘secular’ development agenda and the moral and spiritual values of religious groups an easier one to make. Development becomes “something fixed that needs to incorporate or ‘make sense of’ religion if it is to move forward” (Jones and Petersen 2011:16). This view of development goes against the plurality of positions found within development studies.

A few additional tendencies deserve recognition. A basic assumption seems to be that religion influences society and politics, but not visa-versa. There are for example few contributions exploring how development or political and societal change influence religion. Jones and Petersen (2011) appeal for research of this kind although it may be less obviously useful or relevant to development agencies and NGOs. For example, “what changes in terms of practices, meanings or beliefs, come about when religious organizations work with donors?” (Jones and Petersen 2011:17).

Religion has gone from not even being considered in development discourses to being acknowledged for its importance. Some of the contributions might have taken this too far,

regarding religion as something truly exceptional, an inherent and essential characteristic that trumps all other. Although that might not be the fact, one still agrees that religion is an important factor that development actors need to better understand.

2.4 The typology of FBO's

Much of the attention on FBOs in the literature revolves around the difference between faith-based and secular organizations. There has also been a realization of the enormous variety between FBOs. Despite that we now have more knowledge about FBOs than what was the case when they first were 'discovered', much research is still needed if we are to better understand the role that FBOs are playing.

I hope to contribute to the literature by exploring the identity of five Norwegian FBOs. A first step would be to identify some possible ways of classifying or categorizing the FBOs. It must be remembered that any typology will oversimplify entities that are complex and dynamic. Still, reviewing some existing typologies can be a useful starting point.

Clarke (2008) offers two typologies. The first typology (first presented in Clarke's article *Faith matters* in 2006) focuses on the differences between FBOs in their organizational guises. This is a wide typology that attempts to cover all forms of religious organizations and actors, from Christian churches to Al-Qaida. Because of this width the typology is not very useful for my purpose. All the organizations I focus upon can be placed in one or two of Clarke's categories, namely faith-based charitable or development organizations and faith-based missionary organizations.

Clarke's organizational typology (2008:25)

1. **Faith-based representative organizations or apex bodies** which rule on doctrinal matters, govern the faithful and represent them through engagement with the state and other actors;
2. **Faith-based charitable or development organizations** which mobilize the faithful in support of the poor and other social groups, and which fund or manage programmes which tackle poverty and social exclusion;
3. **Faith-based socio-political organizations** which deploy and interpret faith as a political construct, mobilizing on basis of faith identities in pursuit of broader political objectives or promote faith as a socio-cultural construct.
4. **Faith-based missionary organizations** that spread key faith messages beyond the faithful, actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it.
5. **Faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organizations** which promote radical or militant form of faith identity, engaging in illegal practices or violent acts on the basis of faith.

Clarke's second typology, which is more referred to in the literature, looks at the different ways FBOs deploy religious teachings of their faith. Clarke argue that "the faith element of the FBO is not an add-on to its development activity, but an essential part of that activity, informing it completely" (2008:15). The typology focuses on motivation (how faith is deployed in mobilizing staff or supporters) and target groups (how faith is deployed in the way FBOs work with beneficiaries and partners). This typology is far more relevant for my thesis, seeing that it focuses on the different ways faith can influence an FBO. Clarke (2008:33) argues that this typology also highlights some of the dilemmas for donors that are looking to understand and support FBOs. FBOs found to belong in the first two categories (passive and active) represent little difficulty for donors because faith is seen to motivate action, but the organizations do not expect what Clarke calls a 'faith-based dividend' (for instance, converts).

Clark's Faith typology (2008)

Passive: Faith is subsidiary to broader humanitarian principles as a motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters and plays a secondary role in identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners.

Active: Faith provides an important and explicit motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters. It plays a direct role in identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners, although there is no discrimination against non-believers and the organization supports multi-faith cooperation.

Persuasive: Faith provides an important and explicit motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters. Plays a significant role in identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries and partners and provides the dominant basis for engagement. Aims to bring new converts to the faith or to advance the faith at the expense of others.

Exclusive: Faith provides the principal or overriding motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters. It provides the principal or sole consideration in identifying beneficiaries. Social and political engagement is rooted in the faith and is often militant or violent and directed against one or more rival faiths.

Organizations placed somewhere within the two other variables (persuasive and exclusive) are more problematic to donors and therefore support is often avoided. These organizations contain, to varying degrees, a commitment to proselytizing or supporting their own faith-base at the expense of other groups. By combining the two typologies,

Clarke finds that there is a ‘donor blind spot’. To the extent that Western donors support FBOs they focus mainly on *charitable and development organizations* regarded as *passive* or *active* in the way they deploy their faith.

Still, like Clarke admits, the typology has obvious weaknesses. First, the four variables are not always clear-cut. FBOs are often highly networked and multi-purpose. Constituent parts of the organization may have different approaches. “The policies and practices of an FBO may be *passive* or *active* on one issue yet *persuasive* and *exclusive* on another” (Clarke 2008:33). Second, FBOs may be decentralized with local offices abroad or they carry out development work through supporting local partner organizations. In these instances one is bound to find differences in the way faith is operationalized.

An earlier typology, developed by J. Sider with Heidi R. Unruh in 2004, provides a somewhat broader picture and offers distinct criteria for organizations and programs. Listed from most to least faith-based, it places organizations into six different categories. Eight criteria are applied, including staff selection, mission statement, external affiliation and funding. Sider’s typology (2004), if applied, can provide us with an understanding of how faith to varying degrees can influence an organization. The typology focuses deliberately on what is easily measured, looking into tangible structural characteristics and how the organization “looks” on paper. The researchers’ concern seems to have been on domestic FBOs in the US, and it is therefore not necessarily the best typology to apply to FBOs with a development focus.

Sider’s FBO typology (2004)

Faith-permeated: the connection is evident at all levels of mission, staffing, governance and support. The religious dimension essential to program effectiveness.

Faith-centered: founded for religious purpose, remain strongly connected but participants can readily opt out of religious elements.

Faith-affiliated: retain influence of founders, but do not require staff to affirm religious beliefs or practices (except for some board and leaders). They may incorporate little or no explicitly religious content, may affirm faith in a general way and make spiritual resources available to participants.

Faith-background: look and act like secular NGOs. They have a historical tie to faith tradition. Religious beliefs may motivate some staff, but this is not considered in selection.

Faith-secular partnership: whereby an FBO works together with secular agencies to create a temporary hybrid that resembles faith background.

I have in the previous sections attempted to show how the literature concerning religion and development (and especially about FBO's) has evolved and how different attempts to categorize FBO's have been made. In the following I will turn to some similar perspectives on religion and FBO's, including another typology, but this time in a Norwegian context.

2.5 Religion and development in Norway

The Norwegian government got involved in international development aid in the 1950s. From the beginning Norwegian development aid was a secular project. Although faith-based and mission organization was able to enjoy government funding for projects, this was on secular terms (Simensen 2003:114, 225). The development aid was to be *value-neutral*.

The Norwegian discourse on religion and development since then has been more or less non-existing until a few year ago. Øyhus (2012) went through white papers on development policy from the Norwegian parliament from the 1960s up until 2009 and the result was depressing. Not one white paper discussed faith or religion as a development factor. Neither in Norwegian academia has the relationship between religion and development been a topic.

Like others, Øyhus (2012) points to modernization theories and their secular worldviews as an explanation for the neglect of religion. In a Norwegian context he points to how the development aid was brought into the political arena by the political left. “The pioneers of aid were modern, rational, pro-American, positive of technology, and neutral (some also negative) towards religion” (Øyhus 2012:59 my translation). What the pioneers of Norwegian aid carried with them was the experience of the Marshall aid to Europe after WW2. This secular, neutral, techno-economic development process was now to be replicated, and there was no room for the spiritual dimension. That the aid was taking place under completely different ecological, cultural, economic and religious contexts was not problematized.

The state promoted a development policy that drew a strict separation between development aid and mission activities. Tønnessen (2012) argues that this was not problematic for the Norwegian Church Aid, but more challenging for the mission organizations. “They were forced to draw a separation between activities they traditionally understood as integrated and mutually dependant on each other” (Tønnessen 2012:100 my translation). The fact that the mission organizations adapted to this

arrangement, and that many secular development organizations made their entry along the way, contributed to preserving the secular model for many decades (Jøssang 2012:7).

Øyhus (2012) explains how the neutral or negative attitude towards religion lasted some time into the 2000s when there was a kind of awakening and people started asking questions about the role of religion in development. It has been up for debate from time to time whether the mission organizations should receive government support. This has been an issue both for critics of the mission organizations (e.g. Tvedt) and for the mission organizations themselves who have worried about the safeguarding of their original mandate of mission.

In 2010 leaders from 24 Christian organizations published an open letter where they stated; “religion is important for development”⁹. They criticised the tradition of separating development policy from religious influence and advocated for what they called a ‘holistic’ development paradigm. The authors argued that if religious faith is an important motivational factor, why is it so dangerous to let this be a part of the development work? Another point was that all development actors, whether religious or secular, spread their faith, values, politics and way of thinking. There is no such thing as value-neutral development.

Minister of Development at the time, Erik Solheim, responded with a positive comment where he argued for bringing religion *into* development. He answered the concrete challenge and initiated a research project on Religion and Development, conducted by the Oslo Center.

The end-report from the project was released in September 2012. It presented a number of articles from experts in the field, a literature review and findings from research projects in England and the Netherlands, and recommendations for follow-up (Oslo Center 2012) The report may not have been what the mission organizations were hoping for. Though the contributors underlined the importance of taking religion into account in

⁹ <http://www.bistandsaktuelt.no/debatt/kategorier/tråder?thread=177290> 14.04.13

foreign and development policies and praxis, the concrete recommendations did not signal a major shift in the thinking about religion and development. The recommendations focused mostly on internal matters in Norad and MFA, while the role of faith-based organizations was not mentioned.

2.5.1 Haugen's typology

There have not been many attempts to categorize the different FBOs working with development aid in Norway, but a few academics have discussed the matter. These contributions came in a string of articles in the journal *Forum for Development Studies* in 2006/2007. Tvedt (2006) launched the debate with an article about religious NGOs (Tvedt dismisses the term FBO). He argues that religious NGOs downplay their religiousness and adopt the 'development lingo' of the aid system to get access to its resources. "By rhetorically sacrificing particularism for universalism, all actors – including those with a particularistic agenda, can benefit from the universal power of universalism" (Tvedt 2006:353). This will be elaborated below.

Concerning the distinctiveness of FBOs, Tvedt argues that there is no stereotypical religious NGO, nor a clear-cut formal distinction between religious and secular organizations. However, he does focus on value dichotomy arguing that in the aid system one asks what leads/does not lead to development, while religious organization ask what is/is not God's will. Therefore it is necessary to be aware of how different groups "understand the relationship between serving God and doing development work" (Tvedt 2006:362). Apart from this, there is no attempt to further classify religious NGOs.

Haugen (2007), in his reply to Tvedt, argues that the rationale and purpose of religious organizations are far more complex than just identifying 'God's will'. He introduces the term diakonia, explaining how religion is not only occupied with the metaphysical. Haugen suggests a typology based on the criteria of value particularism and identifies five distinct categories. He then analyses the basic documents of three Norwegian religious NGOs and places them within separate categories: *Humanitarian-based religious*, *Mission-based*, and *Mission-based fundamentalist*.

He also discusses the visibility and understanding of a diaconal approach, for instance if an understanding of power or human rights is applied in the diaconal work. Haugen's typology is relevant in my context, first and foremost because it discusses the identity of Norwegian FBO's.

Tønnessen (2007) argues that one must look at the FBOs' partners and their cooperating structures to better understand the impact of religion. In her view, the relation between diakonia and mission is more complex than Haugen (2007) suggests.

Tønnessen draws on the history of Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)¹⁰. In some districts the church had to restrict their activity to health and education. But as Tønnessen argues, the "health care in itself functioned as a Gospel about the power of God. The medical work has a positive effect on people's perception of Christianity. (...) In many cases people converted after the experience of being cured of an illness" (Tønnessen 2007:330). Tønnessen underlines that even organizations that do not have any mandate for mission can still be part of structures that "advance church growth and as a result of this be understood as advancing mission activities" (Tønnessen 2007:340).

In a short reply Haugen (2007) agrees that the cooperating structures are a central part of one's identity formation. However, Haugen contends that identifying the same local churches as partners does not put NCA and the mission-organizations in the same category. Both in the way the organizations actually work and how they communicate their work, there are large differences.

2.5.2 Perspectives on the Aid System

In his book *Development Aid, Foreign Policy, and Power* (English title. First published in 2003, updated in 2009), Terje Tvedt presents us with some interesting characteristics of the Norwegian aid system.

One of Tvedt's (2009) main points is the discrepancy between how we would normally

¹⁰ EECMY is supported by NLM, NMS and NCA

describe civil society and how civil society actually functions in what he calls ‘the Norwegian model’. Civil society is viewed as “those groups, networks and relations not governed by the state” (Tvedt 2009:113 – my translation). Civil society has been regarded as a good, something positive and independent that must be strengthened.

Tvedt’s problem with this narrative is that those organizations that praise the civil society as a channel for aid and describe themselves as representatives of that civil society is by no means independent of the state, but controlled by it and its financial resources. He argues that organizations are contracted to implement the goals of the state and have to report on how their goals correspond to the goals of the state. According to Tvedt, there is a growing gap between rhetoric and reality. As organizations have become more dependent on the state, their rhetoric has focused on how they are different from the state.

This is a part of what Tvedt calls *national corporatism*. He uses the term to describe the development of a symbiosis between state, organizations and research institutes. It explains how the ‘Norwegian model’ under the leadership of the state has organized large parts of civil society as tools of the official development aid system.

Tvedt (2009) claims that a *weakened pluralism* among the civil society organizations is a consequence of these developments. Many of the organizations have become experts in fields that were of little importance to them before, e.g. climate. Tvedt argues that it is the possibility of funding that motivates these changing strategies. Since the organizations, in Tvedt’s view, can be characterized with lack of autonomy, a dependency on resources *from*, and accountability *to* the state, they cannot be seen to represent a pluralistic model or defend the pluralism of society.

Tvedt is not alone in pointing to northern NGOs’ dependency on official donors and the problems that come with it. Degenbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen (2003) address the increased role of NGOs in administering ODA, questioning the degree of dependency and integration into official aid systems. The authors ask whether the NGOs have lost some of their political independence and special character. What added value is left when NGOs increasingly resemble the official aid system in regards to organization, reporting,

evaluating and implementation? Though there are examples of NGOs maintaining their independence Degenbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen (2003) argue there is still reason to be concerned.

David Hulme and Michael Edwards (1997), who have studied the relationship between NGOs and state donors, share this concern. These scholars see a tendency that applies to an increasing number of NGOs, in both North and South. NGOs are caught in a process where they 1) enter into an agreement with official donors, then 2) reorganize their procedures for project design, implementation, monitoring and reporting (to resemble those of official donors) and last 3) changes their recruitment policy so that “English-speaking experts in logical framework analysis are given preference, all while the connections to the grassroots in developing countries become weaker (in Magnussen and Pedersen 2003:165).

Tvedt (2009) argues that the Norwegian development system has gained ideological power by presenting themselves as spokespersons of the universal. He criticises the notion of the Human Rights as universal. The problem arises when a political thinking that rejects that our values are ideological and cultural specific is combined with a praxis that insists that ‘the other’ follow our values because of their universality. This creates an authoritative structure. Tvedt (2009) claims that mission organizations deliberately adapt this universalist rhetoric to gain acceptance and support from the political system even though praxis may be different.

Tvedt views Digni as a gatekeeper between two different communicative and social systems: the development system and the mission system. He contends that these two systems are organized around totally different sets of values, arguing that development activities within mission organizations are tools for conversion. Digni has, according to Tvedt, managed to create a separation where they can adhere to the demands and rhetoric of the development system while sustaining the focus on conversion and salvation within the mission system. By this kind of cross-cultural praxis - special interests disguised in the rhetoric of universalism – one accomplishes two things; the organizations involved get support for their projects and the development system receives praise.

2.6 Concluding remarks

There have been many contributions to the field of religion and development in the recent decades. As I discuss the identity of Norwegian FBOs and their relation to their secular donor, I will draw on several aspects from the literature. We see that when discussing the added values of FBOs, two perspectives arise; the *institutional added values* of FBOs such as their long presence in development context, their extensive networks on the ground and how people tend to trust them. In addition, we find a focus on the values and norms of the FBOs - their *holistic approach* to development. This constitutes another added value in that it draws on religious resources, taking into account the spiritual dimension of people's lives. When it comes to the donor relationship, several academics underline the importance of faith literacy and an open donor engagement towards religion and faith-based actors.

When describing the main tendencies in the literature on the field, I mentioned some critiques that have been put forward. Some of those critiques could also be directed towards this thesis. Since I look at the FBOs' development efforts and the relation to their development donor, the instrumental approach is also visible in this thesis. The focus is on FBOs and not on other forms religion might take. In addition, the scope of this thesis does not allow for a thorough debate about development.

Still, my research introduces two perspectives that are rarely found in the literature on religion and development; First, I explore how FBOs themselves interpret their identity as faith-based, presenting a new way of understanding FBOs. Secondly, while most contributions in the literature looks at how religion influences society and politics, I will look into how FBOs are influenced by the relationship to their secular donor.

The different typologies I have presented provide me with several frameworks for my analysis, although, as mentioned above, not all typologies or variables are relevant. Clarke's (2006) typology on how faith is deployed in organizations is interesting, but the focus is mainly on motivation and identification of beneficiaries. Sider's typology (2004) has a wider perspective, but like Clarke, focuses on tangible, measurable aspects of the organization. Haugen's typology (2007) is applied on Norwegian FBO's involved in

development work, however his approach is somewhat different from the one in this thesis. This will be further discussed in chapter 7. Tvedt's theories of *national corporatism and weakened pluralism* and *universalism and mission* will also be discussed in light of my findings.

3. Method and material

In the following I will provide the readers with an insight into the procedures I have undertaken and explain the processes of data gathering and data analysis that led to the findings I present in this thesis.

3.1. The FBO sample

There is a multitude of faith-based organizations in Norway. I chose to focus on five. The first step I took was to *purposely sample* (Bryman 2012) the faith-based organizations that were to be a part of my study. The sampling was done with a *non-sequential* and a *priori* approach (Bryman 2012).

Identifying different types of FBOs was an important criterion for the selection, but at the same time I needed to limit the sample to the scope of a master's thesis. I decided that the focus was to be on FBOs with a Christian faith-base. These represent the majority of Norwegian FBOs involved in development and share faith-based concepts that can improve the basis for discussion and comparison.

I then turned to the criterion of diversity. Two sub-criteria were applied. First, I identified, with the information I then had, organizations that to different degrees emphasised their faith-based identity and appeared to have different interpretations of the Christian faith. Second, I wanted the sample to reflect different organizational relationships to Norad.

I chose three mission organizations – The Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM), the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS), and the Norwegian Mission Alliance (NMA) - and two so-called development FBOs - Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and YMCA-YWCA Global (Y Global) - that, compared to the mission organizations, seemed to emphasise their faith-base somewhat differently.

NMS, NLM and NMA are all independent mission organizations and Digni members. Most of the Norad-funding they receive is channeled through Digni and they report

through Digni on the use of these funds. NMS is the smallest of the three, in regards to funding channeled through Digni, and received approximately 13 million kroner in 2011. NLM received around 19,5 million, while NMA, the largest receiver of funds under the Digni umbrella, received approximately 33,5 million kroner in 2011¹¹.

NCA is given its mandate by the Norwegian churches and Christian faith communities. In 2011 NCA received approximately 216 million kroner in a block grant from Norad (NCA 2012). It reports directly to Norad on the activities of the organization at large.

Y Global is given its mandate by the Norwegian YMCA-YWCA and YWCA-YMCA Guides and Scouts of Norway. Y Global received approximately 2,5 million kroner from Norad in 2012. Y Global has three project agreements and reports directly to Norad on a project level.

3.2. Written material

After identifying the sample I collected the written material I was to analyse. At this point I had not planned to conduct interviews. Therefore, my initial contact with the organizations was only a request for access to written material. I sent emails to the FBOs presenting the research project and myself. The emails were forwarded to individuals within the organizations who worked with aid management. These were the ones who responded to my email and who provided me with the written material I needed. I had initial meetings with representatives of four organizations – NLM, NMA, Y Global and NCA. In the case of NMS, whose office is in Stavanger, I informed about the project through email correspondence.

The basic documents are documents in which the organizations present themselves and their work – to their members, supporters and donors. The organizations have different kinds of basic documents, both in terms of topics covered and in terms of volume. To be able to compare the different organizations basic documents I had to limit my sample and identify documents that 1) address the organization as a whole, such as principle

¹¹ http://www.digni.no/newsread/frame_empty.aspx?nodeid=5337 27.05.2013

documents and statutes, and 2) documents that address the organizations development work, such as strategies, program documents and/or diakonial documents.

Although these documents have been written at different times, they were all valid at the time of the analysis. Initially I viewed the difference in document types and volume as a barrier for comparison, but as I proceeded I understood that this variety also reflects the differences between the FBO's and therefore becomes a part of the analysis.

The basic documents are interesting because they are the formal documents in which the organizations describe who they are and what they do. I assume that these documents are the result of internal processes within the organizations and thus what is emphasized in the documents can help us understand how the organizations view themselves as an FBO. The focus of these documents in terms of target groups is often both internal and external, but there are variations between the organizations. Some basic documents are more accessible than others. Still, I regard the basic documents as first and foremost being written for the organizations themselves.

The annual reports from the FBO's were sent from the organizations in 2012 and they all report on the activities conducted in 2011. At the time, not all organizations had completed their 2012 reports. Therefore the focus is on the reports from the year before.

What can be seen to constitute a challenge is that the reporting is conducted in different formats. In terms of volume the reports range from a 10-page report from a mission organization to a 90-page report from the Norwegian Church Aid. In terms of the type of reports, the NLM, NMS and NMA send organizational reports to Digni, which in turn reports to Norad on the activities of their members. The NCA and Y Global report directly to Norad, but while NCA reports on the activities of the entire organization, Y Global reports only on their Norad-funded projects. Although this, in a research perspective, can be seen as a challenge, this variety in ways of reporting is a part of the FBO heterogeneity that I am exploring. Similarly to my perspective on the basic

documents, I viewed this not variety not as a methodological barrier, but as just another factor in the study of Norwegian FBOs and their relationship to Norad.

Why are the annual donor reports interesting to me? First of all, these reports represent one stage in the *upward communication* in the aid system. The reports are written *for* the donor. It is through these reports that the FBOs communicate the results of their organizations projects to their donors (either directly to Norad or through Digni). The reports, together with applications for funding, represent a majority of the formal communication between the FBO's and their donor(s). Thus, as I wanted to research the FBO-Norad relation, the reports were a natural source of material.

Some view an organization's written materials as "windows into social and organizational realities" (Bryman 2012:554). They reveal something about an underlying reality. Others would argue that the documents are a distinct level of reality in their own right. That they should be examined in terms of the context they were produced and their implied readership. "They are written to convey an impression" (Atkinson and Coffey 2011, in Bryman 2012). Both views are interesting. In the case of the reports to Norad it is obvious that the implied readership influences the documents and how the FBOs present themselves. I assume that in the basic documents, the identity of the FBOs is reflected differently. Still, either as windows to a reality or a distinct reality in their own right, the documents cannot say all there is about the organizations. But they can definitely provide us with interesting insight.

For the analysis of the written material I applied traditional qualitative content analysis where coding is a central process (Bryman 2012:557,568). From my research questions I already had two main codes: *Identity* and *relation*. In addition, related to identity, was the code *added value*. As I went along I found that the concepts of *mission* and *diakonia* were central to the FBO's understanding of their faith base. Therefor these codes were given much attention, especially in the analysis of the basic documents.

3.3. Interviews

A few months into the research process I decided to include interviews as a method in the research project. I was clear that the criteria for selecting informants were mainly to be the degree of involvement in the organization's development efforts and the reporting of this work. I wanted to interview aid managers that work directly with these issues on a daily basis. These individuals are interesting informants as they can both offer an insider-view of the organizations and an interpretation of the written material. What does the faith-base imply? What do they see as the FBO's added value? Why are the Norad reports the way they are? The informants can of course not give us the entire picture, but they can offer *one* interpretation, one source of information that can go along with, and compliment, the written material. Sampling informants came somewhat natural because I was already in contact with aid managers in the different FBOs. In four out of five cases the interviews were conducted with the individual I had initially been in contact with. In the last case I was referred to another individual within the organization.

I had in mind the two main themes, the FBOs' *identity* and the *Norad-relation*, when planning the interviews. To be able to compare data, I decided to ask all the informants the same questions. A questionnaire was not an option. I wanted rich, detailed answers that could provide insight into the informants' views of their organizations and the Norad-relationship. I ended up conducting semi-structured interviews (Bryman 2012:471). I had a list of questions and topics to be covered (an interview guide), but the informants had a great deal of leeway in how to reply. The interview guide consisted of two parts. In the first part I asked what it implied that the organization is *faith-based*, how this faith-base is expressed in the organizations' development efforts, and what the informants saw as the FBO's added values. In the second part I asked how the informants understood the organizations' relationship to Norad or Digni, and asked them to respond to the findings from my analysis of the Norad reports.

The interviews were conducted in Norwegian and they were recorded. When translating the interview quotes into English I risked altering the information provided by the informants. Therefore, and for reasons mentioned below, I sent the translated quotes to

the informants so that they could approve of the meaning. Even though the informants have approved the connotation of the quotes, I myself am responsible for the translation and wording.

The data from the interviews was analysed in a similar manner as the written material, using content analysis. After transcribing the recordings from the interviews, I used Microsoft Excel to categorize the different parts of the interviews, enabling comparisons to be made. Although some codes were set from the research questions, several additional codes came up as a result of the informants' responses in the interviews.

3.4. Research ethics and limitations

In the course of doing resource one must be aware of the ethical principals involved. In Bryman's opinion, the main concern lies with "the ethical issues that arise in relations between researchers and research participants in the course of an investigation" (Bryman 2012:133). In my research it was the relation to the informants that called for ethical precautions. There were especially two reasons for choosing to anonymize the informants. First, there is clearly an aspect of power involved, both in the FBO-Norad relationship (the FBOs depend on funds from Norad to implement their development projects) and within the organizations (between employee and superiors). I wanted the informants to speak as freely as possible. Second, though I was not focusing on personal beliefs, religion is considered a sensitive topic.

Still, there was a need to share which informant belonged to which FBO. The comparison between the different FBOs is crucial to this thesis. Although external anonymity was possible, a complete internal anonymity (within the organizations) was more difficult to ensure. In some of the FBOs only a handful of individuals work with development aid. In addition, the interviews most often took place in the FBOs' offices. To make sure that the informants would not experience any discomfort as to what quotes would be made available, I had the informants approve of the quotes I decided to include in the thesis.

I applied to the Data Protection Official for Research (NSD)¹² and have followed their requirements for handling sensitive information. All the informants gave an informed consent to the participation and to the use of a recorder. The recordings, and other electronic information that could reveal the identity of the informants, were deleted by the end of June 2013.

As the scope of this thesis is limited, there was also a need to limit the research. Although the sample of FBOs are diverse, it cannot capture the diversity found among all Norwegian FBOs involved in development. A similar limitation applies to the sample of informants. If I had the opportunity I would interview several individuals within each organization, something that would give a more informed basis for comparison. Still, (within the scope of this thesis), I believe I have enough material to come to some conclusions and present some interesting findings.

The interview in itself has some limitations. First of all, it is not a setting the informants usually find themselves in. Four of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in the FBOs' offices, while the fifth was conducted via Skype. The latter has additional limitations, as it can be somewhat more difficult to understand the informant. Still, I did not experience this interview as substantially different from the others. In addition, there might be issues the informant takes for granted or that are sensitive, leading to a situation where the informant might not share relevant information. My experience however was the informants were open and honest. Another limitation is the interviewer himself. I did experience that as I went along, I included additional notes to the interview guide. The informant in the first interview brought up issues that I was not aware of, but found interesting. Still, with minor exceptions, the informants were all asked the same questions.

¹² <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/index.html>

4. The self-presentation of the FBO's identity

The five FBOs that are the focus of my research were chosen partly based on an assumption that they interpret their faith-based identities in different ways. In this chapter I will analyse the FBOs' identities as they appear in the basic documents. I will review the conceptual context the FBOs operate within and what they view as their added values. In addition I found the FBOs had different emphasis of the Christian concept of *diakonia*. The focus on, or mention of, *diakonia* is shared by all the organizations.

Within the Norwegian Church *diakonia* is defined as their "service of caring. It is the gospel in action and is expressed through neighbourly love, including communities, protection of the creation and struggle for justice" (Plan for Diakoni i den Norske Kirke 2007 – my translation). Hans Morten Haugen defines the concept as

... Christian service for the sole purpose of serving, and not influencing the values or faiths of others. International diakonial work must be conducted non-discriminatorily and aim to empower individuals and communities within existing traditions and structures. (Haugen 2007: 155).

By emphasising their diakonial identity the FBO's can express their foundation in the Christian faith and, at the same time, draw a distinction between themselves and secular actors. Kjell Nordstokke (2009:71) argues that *diakonia* as a concept is used by organizations that want to display their church-based or faith-based identity. Haugen argues that *diakonia* is an appropriate term "to describe the actual activities undertaken by church-based NGOs" (Haugen 2007:162).

To what degree *diakonia* is a priority in itself or if it is a part of evangelizing, a means to achieve (literally) a 'higher aim', has from time to time been debated in Norway. Tvedt (2009) is without question the most ardent critic of what he calls state-supported evangelizing. Haugen argues that Tvedt's descriptions cannot be taken as "proof of what the core of *diakonia* is" (Haugen 2007:163). However, he agrees that *diakonia* is not neutral or without value. It has its inspiration from God and the good example set by Christ.

4.1 The FBO's conceptual context

According to its statutes, Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) is “an independent organization within the Norwegian Church and is a tool for realizing the mission mandate of the Church” (NMS 2011:1 – my translation). The purpose is to “witness God’s grace in words and actions, contribute to the growth of the worldwide church and the spreading of God’s kingdom among all people” (ibid.). It seems clear that the overall purpose of NMS as an organization is evangelization. However, both the *mission of the Church* and *God’s grace in action* would imply that diakonial care is central. NMS’ vision is concrete: “a living, acting, and missional church in all countries” (NMS 2004:1 – my translation). It would seem that “*living*” points to the presence and vitality of the church, while “*acting*” implies diaconal action. The basic document on mission (NMS 2004) includes both a focus on evangelization and on diakonia. The document on development (NMS 2011) takes use of the concept of diakonia and places it in a development setting.

The Norwegian Mission Alliance (NMA) defines itself as a diakonial mission-organization in its statutes (NMA 2007). The goal is to “bring the gospel to the people in line with the Great Commission of Jesus” and it is reached through “promulgating the gospel in words and diaconal service, recognizing that compassion with the whole human being is a consequence of the gospel” (NMA 2007:1 – my translation). Spreading the word of God is clearly central, but also here it is underlined that this is done both through words and diaconal service. The vision of the NMA is somewhat diffuse: “We give life a chance”. In the mission statement that follows it is stated that: “Poor and discriminated shall meet the love of Jesus in words and actions. Together we shall fight to free the resources and possibilities God has given us all” (NMA 2010:5 – my translation). These sentences imply a development focus and also indicate where NMA is working. Like in the statutes, words and actions (as in diaconal care) are given equal roles. However, reviewing the basic documents as a whole, it is clear that NMA focus first and foremost on diakonia. The principle document is built around the concept of diakonia and the concept is also very much present in NMA’s strategy.

The diakonial identity is also found with NCA. The NCA presents itself as an “independent diakonial organization” that “on the foundation of God’s words is committed to holistic concern and care for those who suffer physical and spiritual hardships” (NCA 2009:1 – my translation). Unlike the two aforementioned organizations, NCA does not focus on promulgating the gospel in words, though the phrase *spiritual hardships* could for some imply that one offers some sort of comfort, through preaching. In light of how NCA stresses their non-evangelizing policy this must rather be understood to imply that spiritual dimensions cannot be ignored. NCA’s vision could well be shared with their secular colleagues: “together for a just world” (NCA 2011:5). Perhaps the most interesting finding when reviewing NCA’s basic documents is the difference between the principle document and the global strategy. While the faith-base is very much present in the principle document, the global strategy (NCA 2011) has few references to faith. There are also few reflections around the concept of diakonia.

Similar to NMS and NMA, NLM have a focus on evangelization. NLM’s purpose is to “spread the kingdom of God” (NLM 2006:1 - my translation). Therefore NLM will “promulgate the gospel at home and abroad and awake the responsibility for mission (...)” (ibid). Here the focus is exclusively on evangelizing and there is no reference to diakonia. However, in their strategy it is underlined that the organization has a holistic approach to the mission with a focus on evangelization, diakonia and development cooperation. Their vision - “Where the name of Christ was before not known”(NLM 2009:1 – my translation) – again implies a focus on evangelizing. NLM is perhaps the organization with the strongest focus on evangelization, an impression that is reinforced by the lack of reflection on the concept of diakonia.

Like NMA and NCA, Y Global also mentions diakonia when describing themselves. Y Global presents itself as a “Christian, ecumenical organization for international diakonia”(Y Global 2012:1 – my translation). They cooperate with the international YMCA and YWCA movements to “achieve human rights for all” (ibid). Similar to NCA, there is no focus in their overall goal on promulgating the Gospel. The vision of Y Global, “Together we lift the world/ together we build global justice and peace” (Y Global

2012:1 – my translation), is more or less similar to NCA’s vision. Although Y Global is defined as a diakonial organization, there is no mention of the concept of diakonia in the principle document or in the strategy.

4.2. The FBO’s understanding of diakonia

All organizations underline, in a more or less clear way, that diakonia has an independent value that goes beyond evangelizing and that these services shall be provided without influencing the values or faiths of others.

In their basic document on mission, NMS emphasizes that “even though diaconal actions contain a dimension of God’s kingdom (...) we perform good deeds because they are important and because it is right to do so. All diaconal work, all aid projects and all tasks related to development are important in their own right” (NMS 2004:16). In their strategic plan it is underlined that diakonia and aid are to be given “regardless of race and religious beliefs” (NMS 2012:2 – my translation). In 1996 NMS developed their own document on diakonia (NMS 1996) where they present their understanding of the concept and how it is, in their eyes, an integrated part of mission. The paper appears somewhat out-dated, not only because of the layout, but because it is the LWF’s¹³ document on diakonia that is referred to in NMS’ development strategy. This document clearly underlines that diakonia “cannot be an instrument which serves the needs of the one helping, not can it become an instrument for evangelizing people” (LWF 2009:84). NMA states that their “diakonial work is a part of the holistic evangelizing mission, not a supplement to promulgation” or a ‘planned bridgehead’ for the Gospel (NMA:2007:7 – my translation). “Diakonia has an intrinsic value. It is right, good, and biblical to love your neighbour, do good, fight for justice, regardless of people come to faith or not” (ibid). At the same time NMA stress that they “wish” and “pray” that people will get to know Jesus and the Christian faith through their work (ibid.). “This is however not a conditionality for the value of the diakonial work” (ibid.).

¹³ Lutheran World Federation

Similar to the Norwegian Church's definition, NCA defines diakonia as "Christian faith turned into action, and is expressed through neighbourly love, including communities, protecting the creation, and the struggle for justice" (NCA 2011:7). It is made clear that "help is given without conditions and without intentions to influence people's religious affiliation" (ibid).

The same definition is applied by Y Global (Y Global 2011:3), but the meaning of the concept is not elaborated upon in the way NMS, NMA and to some extent NCA do. The focus on inter-religious cooperation (Y Global 2011:6,7,8) and the fact that evangelizing is not stated as a part of their mission would imply Y Global does not attempt to influence the religious affiliation of others through their diakonial work, although it is not specifically mentioned.

In the same way as Y Global, NLM does not offer a broad understanding of diakonia. NLM views the diakonial work as "an integrated part of the mission mandate" (NLM 2009:3 – my translation). "Diakonial work is neighbourly love in praxis" (NLM 2009:10 – my translation) described as; "the Christian congregations care for fellow human beings, both within and outside the congregation" (NLM 2006:1 – my translation). The phrase "outside the congregation" would seemingly point to people of other faiths. It is also underlined in the mission strategy that development work (seen as diakonia) is "directed towards all people, regardless of faith and ethnicity" (NLM 2009:10 – my translation). Although it is mentioned in the development strategy that development cooperation is a part of NLM's diakonial work (NLM 2007), the mission strategy separates the concepts by characterising it as "diakonia and development aid" (NLM 2009:10), as if they were two different working areas. This makes NLM's understanding of the concept somewhat unclear.

There are marked differences between the organizations in how they present themselves as faith-based actors. Findings suggest that this is a result of the different contexts that the organizations place their development work within. Three of the organizations; NMS, NMA and NLM present themselves as *mission organizations*. Diakonia is the term the

mission organizations mostly use when describing their development efforts. All the mission organizations seem to understand diakonia as a part of the larger concept of *mission*. Still, there are marked differences between these three, especially when it comes to the concept of *diakonia* and the degree of emphasis on evangelization.

NMA is the organization that seems to have the strongest focus on diakonia, defining themselves as a diakonial mission organization and giving a central role to the concept of diakonia in their basic documents. Both NMA and NMS have developed their own concept papers on diakonia although the NMS document is somewhat out-dated.

Findings suggest that NLM does not have the same focus on diakonia as NMA and NMS. The concept is mentioned, but not discussed. Even though it is stated that development aid is seen as a part of NLM's diakonial work, the concept of diakonia is not mentioned in the development strategy. The focus on evangelization is strong.

Although the mission organizations, to different degrees, have a focus on evangelization this does not imply that evangelization is the focus of their development projects. Still, I believe the degree of focus the organizations give to evangelization compared to the focus on diakonia can help us better understand the identity of the different FBO's and the context in which they place their development efforts.

When it comes to NCA and Y Global, both organizations present themselves as diakonial organizations, but the concept is not further discussed and does not seem to be used actively within the organizations. Still, in their basic documents NCA is more outspoken about their faith-base than Y Global. It seems that NCA wants to communicate both their faith-base and at the same time emphasise their role as a professional development actor. This leads to the impression that the faith-base serves as a foundation and a motivation for the development work, more than something that influences the work in a substantial way. This latter point is also valid for Y Global. These organizations are owned by organizations and institutions that are, by character, evangelizing. This might help us understand the lack of attention given to diakonia. I will elaborate on this in chapter 7.

4.3 The FBO's added value

Discussions about the FBOs added values are central in the literature on religion and development. As mentioned in chapter 2, two types of added values come across in the literature. The first deals with the institutional aspects, while the second focuses on values and the FBOs' holistic approach to development.

NMS does not point specifically to their added value in their basic documents or strategies, neither in terms of institutional aspects nor values. However, NMS stresses their focus on diakonia, with several references to this in terms of “promoting understanding and engagement in diakonia and diakonial attitudes”, strengthening the diakonial work of partners, and “planning and undertaking diakonial actions” (NMS 2011:1 – my translation). In their *Basic Document on Mission* there is some emphasis on the human being as holistic, however the focus on the human being's spiritual dimension is linked to evangelization and not discussed as a resource for development (NMS 2004:15). However, in the related LWF document on diakonia discussions are more visible, expressing a holistic understanding of human reality and the “ability to mobilize faith, spirituality and value system when engaged in activities in order to improve conditions of life” (LWF 2009:73). Here, the spiritual dimension is regarded as an asset in development. Concerning institutional added value NMS only mentions that they cooperate with local churches and organizations, not what the added value of this may be (NMS 2011:1).

In the statutes of NMA it is stated that “care for the whole human being is a consequence of the Gospel” (NMA 2007:1 – my translation). In the principle document this is elaborated as a focus on peoples spiritual, material and social needs” (NMA 2007:5 – my translation). NMA refers to the Salvation Army which expresses the relationship between preaching and social work: “The Salvation Army has since the beginning regarded preaching and social work as two sides of the same coin. Our work is inextricably tied to Christian faith and neighbourly love, which for us means to care of the whole human being. We look at the human being as a whole with physical, psychic, spiritual and social

needs” (Salvation Army in NMA 2007:7). The NMA also underlines the value of the churches they cooperate with – their important role as civil society actors, carriers of meaning and identity, and the fact that in many contexts the church is one of the few structures that people have a belonging to (NMA 2010:8).

Compared to the former, NCA comes across as a more specialized development actor. NCA presents themselves as a “diakonial organization for global justice” (NCA 2008:7) and, in their principle document, NCA is clear about how the faith-base is a foundation and a motivation for their work. However, the focus seems to be first and foremost on development, not on diakonia. It is acknowledged that religious belief can “be a source of power and life in achieving positive change (NCA 2011:27), but it can also be “used destructively to justify violence, harassment and inequality” (ibid). As a peculiarity in the strategy at large, concerning the work with children orphaned by or living with HIV/Aids it is stated that one will “provide spiritual support” (NCA 2011:57). It is unclear what this means in praxis.

The added value of FBOs is first and foremost discussed in the section where the NCA describes their preferential choice for working with faith-based actors (NCA 2001:26/27). The emphasis is on their access to large constituencies in almost all areas (26), the trust that religious leaders hold (27), their rootedness, legitimacy and moral authority (27), in addition to the individual importance of religious belief mentioned above. It is explained that the “rootedness in faith implies that we may have a common language and shared references not only with church-based partners, but also with Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish or Hindu faith-based actors” (NCA 2011:27).

Similar to NCA, Y Global does not elaborate on the concept of diakonia, except for labelling their work as diakonia in their strategy and principle document (Y Global 2011:1, 2012:1). The most central ideology of the YMCA/YWCA movement is the focus on the *whole* human being with the triangle symbolizing the body, mind and spirit as equal dimensions in the lives of human beings. Y Global underlines this focus both in their document principles and in their strategy as a crosscutting issue (Y Global 2011:8).

However, it is not elaborated on how this holistic focus translates into practice. On added value, the focus is first and foremost on the extensive network of YMCAs and YWCAs around the world that Y Global works through (Y Global 2011: 4/5).

As for NLM, it is stated that they have a “holistic approach to the evangelizing mission that includes a focus on proclaiming the gospel, diakonia and development cooperation” (NLM 2006:1 – my translation). Diakonia and development aid are seen as working methods in their mission strategy. It is stated that: “It is often easier to get funding for development projects than to purely evangelizing work. Still, we must not let a healthy balance between evangelizing and development work be influenced by this” (NLM 2009:10 – my translation). On their website, as an introduction to the information about their development activities, it is stated that “care for the whole human being always have characterized the efforts of NLM”¹⁴. In the strategy for development cooperation there is no or little focus on the added value of the organization.

The FBO’s do not specifically underline what they regard as their added values in their basic documents, but the faith-base comes across as an important foundation and motivation for the development work of all organizations. When it comes to the institutional values of the FBO’s the organizations tend to refer, not to their own organizations, but to the benefits of cooperating with religious actors in the South. NCA is the most outspoken in this regard. Institutional aspects that are underlined are the role of religious actors and churches as civil society actors with extensive network, access to large constituencies in many different areas, and the fact that, in many places, churches and religious organizations are often one of few organized structures. In addition, churches are described as rooted in local communities, having legitimacy and moral authority, and religious leaders are seen as more trusted than e.g. government officials.

Most of the organizations also has an idea of a *holistic approach*, or underline the importance of the addressing the *whole human being* – which also includes a spiritual

¹⁴ <http://www.nlm.no/nlm/om-nlm/om-nlm/nlm-internasjonalt> - my translation. 23.02.13

dimension. This would suggest that the FBO's have a somewhat alternative approach to development, at least in the sense of what they identify as resources for development.

Interestingly, the idea of a *holistic approach* can have several meanings in addition to the one mentioned above: For the mission organizations, a holistic approach will just as often refer to the equal importance of evangelizing and diakonia. For NCA, a holistic or an integrated approach refers to their different working areas; emergency preparedness and response, long-term development projects and advocacy.

An overall impression of the basic documents suggest that NCA is the organization that focuses the most on the institutional added value, while the mission organizations, especially NMA and NMS, have a stronger emphasis on the *holistic approach* to development, including the spiritual dimension. With Y Global there are few references to an added value in being an FBO.

4.4. Concluding remarks

Although all five organizations can be categorized as faith-based, the review of the basic documents confirms that this is a broad category that includes a very diverse group of organizations. A caricatured categorization would place the mission organizations in one category of FBO's, tied together by the holistic understanding of mission that includes both evangelization and development work. Still, the different amount of attention given to evangelizing vis-à-vis diakonia in the organizations' basic documents suggests there are substantial differences also in the subcategory of mission organization.

Based on the analysis of their basic documents NCA and Y Global cannot be considered mission organizations. They define themselves as diakonial organizations, but the concept of diakonia do not seem to be applied in their development work. The organizations do describe their faith-base as a mandate and a motivation, but when describing their work and strategic focus the organizations resemble secular development actors.

The FBO's seem to have an idea of what distinguishes them from other secular development actors – their added value. In the basic documents we find descriptions of the institutional values of working through religious actors and churches in the South. Though somewhat more elusive, we also find several references to the ideology of the *whole human being* and the idea of a *holistic approach* towards development, taking spirituality into account. The findings from the analysis of the basic documents will be discussed further in chapter 7.

5. The FBO-Norad relation

Since Norwegian ODA is channelled through the FBO's they are obligated to report on the use of these funds. In this chapter I review the reporting from FBO's to Norad, either directly or through Digni.

I am interested in how the organizations portray themselves in the reporting and in what ways their identity, as faith-based organizations, is visible in this arena. Through this analysis I will be able to see how the organizations present themselves and their development efforts to Norad. I assume that the reports represent one of the primary channels of formal communication and feedback between the FBO's and Norad.

The purpose of the reporting is to review whether the program or project in question is going according to plan. What are the results? Reports can also serve other purposes, for example as internal evaluation of on-going projects or as an arena for sharing challenges and experiences. For Norad, it is important to communicate results in order to "keep up public interest and knowledge of development cooperation" (Norad 2008:9). For the FBO's the reporting is a requirement that needs to be met in order to be accountable to, and maintain funding from, Norad. What is reported upon is often linked to what goals were set in the project application.

As mentioned, the FBO's in question report in different ways. These differences between the organizations would also mean that the pure volume of the reporting is different. This is something I will have to take into account in the analysis.

Three questions guide my analysis of the reports: 1) to what degree is the organizations' faith-based identities visible in the reports? 2) Do the reports address the possible added values of the FBO's? and 3) are issues related to religion and development in general included in the reporting?

I will first give an overview of the different reports I will analyse, before moving on to addressing the aforementioned topics and my questions of interest.

5.1 The reports at hand

The three mission organizations report to Digni on an annual basis, both on projects and as organizations. I will focus on the organizational reports. The reporting format is the same for all three organizations. The reports are thematically structured and named “thematic status reports”. They contain both crosscutting issues (like ‘Gender equality and Women Empowerment’ and ‘Strengthening Civil Society’) and thematic areas (such as ‘Education’ or ‘Environment’). In the end, the organizations report on earlier recommendations from Digni (NMS, NLM, NMA 2012).

Digni’s organizational report to Norad (Digni 2012) logically follows a similar thematic structure. After an introduction and a report on the activities of the Digni secretariat, the report turns its focus to the thematic areas (p.18). Here one also finds example of selected projects within the different thematic areas. In chapter 4 (p.42) Digni presents some general achievements before presenting four project narratives (p.50). Attached is, among other information, a master thesis focusing on diapraxis¹⁵ as a method in preventing FGM.

NCA reports annually to Norad on an organizational level. NCA receives substantially more funds compared to the other organizations. Thus, the report (NCA 2012) is more comprehensive. The main part of the report deals with the results of long-term development assistance - NCA’s Global Programs (p.24) - and is structured thematically. Chapter 5 focuses on the results related to emergency response and preparedness, the advocacy work as well as mobilization of people and resources in Norway (p.70).

Y Global reports to Norad on the progress of their three Norad-funded projects. All reports follow a Norad template. The reports consist of the project progress in the last year focusing on output, the project’s accounts and a result report for the agreement period focusing on outcome.

¹⁵ A term describing inter-religious cooperation where common action and praxis is the essential.

5.2 The self-presentation of the FBO's in the reports

First, I will start by reviewing the reports from the mission organizations (NMS, NMA and NLM) to Digni. Although not sent directly to Norad these are still of importance. They represent the upward communication in the aid chain and they form, together with reports from the other members, the basis for the Digni-report to Norad. Second, I turn to the reports from NCA and Y Global, who are sent directly to Norad.

The reporting template the mission organizations receive from Digni provides a more or less specific guide on what topics to report on. Showing the “outcome, trends and tendencies” (e.g. NMS 2012:1) in the thematic areas and crosscutting issues is the main focus. Digni also emphasizes some issues of importance; underlining the preference for outcome level goals, presenting risk factors, presenting the added value of the organization, and the accumulated learning achieved (Digni 2012). For these two latter points it is underlined that this is with regards to the thematic areas, not for example to their role as a faith-based organization or their experience working with faith-based actors. Since Digni do not enquire about the organizations’ roles as faith-based actors or their experience working with religion and development it might not be surprising that these issues are rarely addressed in the reports.

In the NMA report there is one reference to a church: “In Ecuador, the role of the Church facing gender inequality has been an important focus during 2011” (NMA 2012:1). In the following it is reported on how a combination of discussions and theoretical work have made it easier to adapt new gender roles. There is, however, no discussion of the role of the church.

The report from NMS is similar. There are several references to the work in the synods (congregations), but no elaboration on the role of the synods in regards to the development work (NMS 2012:2,5). One interesting program where this is elaborated somewhat more is in NMS’ ”Environment Competence Building Program” where the main goal is to “establish the link between environmental engagement and our Christian faith” (NMS 2012:5). The assumption is that through this approach one will see “a more

sustainable engagement, due to stronger ownership” and that “more churches and Christian NGOs will commit themselves to the cause” (NMS 2012:5). Here NMS touches on one of the added values they have as an FBO and the possible synergies between religious faith and development efforts.

The report from NLM follows the same pattern. There are several references to local religious leaders, implying their importance in promoting development, especially regarding issues such as women empowerment and marginalization of some groups in society (NLM 2012:8). Many NLM supported projects have “continued to strengthen the church which is the implementing partner” (NLM 2012:4), however there are few reflections on the role of the churches. Regarding educational projects, some institutional added values are underlined. “The church partners have already existing structures, resources and church members on the ground that the projects use to reach the targeted communities” (NLM 2012: 6). In cases where partner is a church, principles “such as love, respect and solidarity, and to ‘serve your neighbour’ are reflected in the work” (NLM 2012: 6). This might point to the values and norms of religious faith that was discussed earlier as another form of added value of FBO’s. However, it is not described what this means in praxis and how religious values might influence the educational programs. In other places the good reputation of the church from earlier projects is underlined, implying an added value of presence over time.

The reporting on the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) in regards to the post-election violence in Kenya is interesting. Many have pointed to the positive role FBO’s and churches can play in processes of reconciliation. NLM describes some of the contributions that religious actors can make: The physical facilities for hosting trainings and meetings, the national network, the history of working with ethnic conflict within the church, and the focus on peace messages from clergy (as people with authority) (NLM 2012:8).

In the case of NLM and NMS several evaluations have been conducted and recommendations and follow-ups from these are included in the report. From what I can

see none of these have had a focus on the organizations' identities or added value as faith-based organizations.

The Digni report to Norad (2012) is, as mentioned, structured in a similar way. I will focus on the thematic areas and the results of the member organizations' development efforts. The reporting under the headings of environment (p.18) and human rights (p.20) contain no references to the added value of FBO's, churches or other religious actors. The NMS Environment program linking environment engagement with faith is presented later in the report.

Concerning gender (p.22), the report discusses the importance of involving religious leaders. One of the member organizations states that men in leadership positions, such as pastors and imams, function as 'door openers' for women's empowerment. Another organization points to how Christian teaching about gender equality serve as a foundation for changing attitudes and behaviour (Digni 2012:23). Several of the organizations also report on the importance of involving religious leaders in the work to fight FGM. The case from the NLM report, mentioned above, is brought forward as an example of this. In an example from an organization working in Kenya it is referred to the value of the network of churches that spreads throughout the country when aiming to put gender equality on the agenda.

On the efforts of the organizations in strengthening civil society (p.24), a fair share of the focus is on the strengthening of churches to become more active agents in the public sphere. It is underlined that in many countries, especially in Africa, "the church is an important arena where people voluntarily associate to advocate for common views and interests, not only on their own account, but also on the account of others in their communities" (Digni 2012:24).

In the sections reporting on Health and Hiv/Aids (p.25), Education (p.28) and Indigenous Groups (p.32) no references are made to the added value of FBO's or to issues relating to the organizations' or the implementers' role as faith-based and how this influences their

work. Especially in the light of the debate about the role of religious actors and HIV/Aids (e.g. on the issue of condoms) I find it somewhat strange that there is no mention of the role of religion or religious actors in this area.

On the issue of Peace and Reconciliation (p.35) a few references are made to the role of churches. In an example from a project in Burundi it is mentioned that trauma-healing workshops are held in cooperation with churches, without elaboration on what this implies. NLM's peace and reconciliation project among church leaders in Kenya is mentioned, but the positive role the church can play in reconciliation processes and the added value that can come with cooperating with churches are not mentioned, except for indirectly pointing to the extensive church network (Digni 2012:37).

In chapter 4 (Achievements) the emphasis is on the activities of Digni itself, and not the member organizations' development efforts (Digni 2012:42). The exception is the NMS-led environment program, mentioned above, that aims to establish a link between environmental engagement and the Christian faith. This is a three-year program that will involve six partner organizations from various countries and continents. It seems the Digni secretariat explores the intersections between religion and development through regional meetings, papers and projects. In addition, "Digni has continued its special focus on religion's role and importance in development and community building" (Digni 2012:45) following up on the religion and development project that was launched by the MFA and in 2012 ended up with the aforementioned report from the Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights.

Attached to the report from Digni to Norad is a master thesis focusing on an NLM project on FGM in Ethiopia entitled "Diapraxis as diakonial method in changing harmful traditional praxis" (Digni 2012:99 - my translation). The study concludes that diapraxis offers the possibility of entering the religious dimension and has great potential for changing traditions and beliefs that are wrongly grounded in religious beliefs.

Concerning the reporting from the mission organizations, it is interesting to see how Digni works on putting issues related religion and development on the agenda while, at the same time, this interest does not seem to be emphasised in the reporting from their member organizations. The overall impression is the role of religion or the organizations added value as FBOs are not given any real attention in the reports, be it the reports from each organizations or the overall report from Digni. In the instances where these aspects are touched upon the focus is on the *institutional* added values such as the church networks, their long presence, or the authority of the religious leaders. The side of the FBOs added value that emphasises the positive aspects of religious values and norms are barely touched upon. The holistic understanding of development, an understanding that involves people's spiritual dimensions (that the organizations presents in their self-presentation) is not mentioned.

However, there are some aspects of the report that reflects the identity of the organizations. The environment project lead by NLM that attempts to link environmental engagement with faith is emphasised both the NLM report and in the Digni report. Also, the regional meetings and workshops focus on the role religious actors can play and, as mentioned, Digni is working to put issues concerning religion and development on the agenda. The master thesis attached to the report provides Norad with valuable insight into the positive development outcomes that can come as a result of entering the religious dimension.

The mission organizations' reports to Digni appear, based on their format, to be internal documents. The Digni report appears more externally oriented. Similarly, the NCA report is also presented in a format that suggests an external audience in addition to Norad. NCA's Global Report on Results (2012), a comprehensive 90-pager, confirms the impression of NCA as the most 'professional' of the FBOs. With professional in this context I do not mean the results or impact of the actual development efforts, but rather the language and concepts applied in the report.

In section 1.3 NCA presents their “comparative advantages as a faith-based civil society organization” (NCA 2012:8). Understanding and applying the comparative advantage has been given increased focus by the NCA in 2011. The focus in this section is first and foremost on NCA as a civil society organization, less emphasis is given to their faith-base. However, the institutional added value in terms of access to church constituencies is mentioned indirectly, though in a Norwegian context. NCA developed rights-based positions on potentially sensitive issues like safe abortion and the conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and invited representatives from church constituencies. They organized a series of regional debate meetings with local congregations and mobilized 1250 local churches for the Lenten campaign. Internationally there is one reference to the ‘linking of faith actors’ in relation to COP17.

In the chapter providing a regional overview it is referred to NCA’s faith-based partners and their importance, but there is no elaboration on the role they play. Regarding South Sudan, it is underlined that “churches have a particular role to play in the national building processes, and (NCA) will give a strong emphasis to strengthening this part of civil society” (NCA 2012:13). In the chapter on Strengthening Civil Society the impression is similar. It is made clear that NCA works with faith-based partners and is doing much in strengthening the ties and cooperation between faith actors both nationally and internationally. Still, there are no references or discussion about how their or their partner’s role as faith-based influences their efforts.

In NCA’s efforts with Peace and Security (p.26) there is a global program on Faith Communities and Peace Building (p.32). Here, NCA works towards bringing religious actors together to participate more actively in peace building processes. In this section the focus on faith actors is more visible, and references are made to the work of faith-actors in several countries. It is referred to an external evaluation that concludes that NCA’s work is relevant and several examples of faith-based civil society structures contributing to peace building are found. However, there is no mention of the evaluations findings on *why* these initiatives are important. Challenges within this area are also presented. In some conflicts faith community actors are conflict drivers themselves and often

conservative and patriarchal structures in some faith communities challenge the involvement of women.

On the issue of Gender (p.36) much attention is given to the role of FBOs in working against GBV¹⁶ and discrimination against girls and women. NCA states there has been increased sharing of experiences between the six Country Programs working with FGM and early marriages. Regarding the work in Ethiopia, references are made to the importance of the church and its leaders in condemning FGM and the positive role theological and religious teaching can play in preventing GBV. The power aspect and resistance to change are underlined and the NCA thus work to create dialogue with faith-based institutions and religious leaders on GBV and theological interpretations that uphold harmful practices. When describing the lessons learned in this area it is stated that NCA for several years has “challenged FBOs on patriarchal attitudes, harmful practices and religious interpretations of scripture used to justify GBV and discrimination” (NCA 2012:39). Advocating for equal rights is not a ‘quick fix’, but NCA sees it as possible to combat these practices when religious prescriptions are changed. In this section the added value of NCA as an FBO is made very clear, as they have a shared faith, a common religion, they are “able to play the role of challenger and accompanier of FBOs with regard to GBV” (NCA 2012:39). It is also stated that linking FBOs with women networks have proved to be effective. NCA aims to alter religious beliefs and practices that contribute to stigma and discrimination of women and girls.

In the sections regarding Economic Justice (p.44) and Climate Justice (p.51) there are very few references to the NCA’s role as an FBO. The exception is the ‘We Have Faith’-campaign on climate justice and the rally at COP17 where one points to the strength of the NCA to mobilize religious leaders and faith communities.

Under the section of Social Mitigation of HIV/Aids (p.60) we find a mention of “spiritual, psychosocial and physical support to children” (NCA 2012:62). This is the only place in the report that refers to spiritual dimensions. Like in the strategy it is not explained what

¹⁶ Gender-based violence

this means in praxis. Faith communities seem to be central partners in the HIV/Aids program. In addition faith-based networks are used to carry out advocacy on a global level. Still, as opposed to the subchapter on Gender, this chapter lacks a focus on challenges faced and experiences gained. Regarding access to health care (p.64) and water (p.66) few or no references are made to NCA's added value or identity as an FBO.

On mobilization of people and resources in Norway (p.78) emphasis is given to the NCA's relationship to Norwegian churches and congregations. These are central to NCA mobilizing efforts domestically.

NCA might be the organization where the correspondence between their identity as an FBO and their reporting to Norad is most coherent. Especially on the topic of gender much attention is given to the role of NCA as an FBO, their added value, and challenges and experiences gained in working with churches and FBOs on the issue. Several references are also made to the importance of FBOs, faith communities and religious leaders on issues like peace and reconciliation, civil society and advocacy. It is also interesting that NCA touches upon the spiritual dimension in regards to support given to children within the program on HIV/Aids, though no elaboration is provided.

Still, much of the attention on the faith identity is superficial, not really going into the *why's* and *how's*. As mentioned, NCA has a preferential choice for faith-based partners and recognizes the importance of religious actors and the influence of religious beliefs on individuals. The latter receives no real attention. In the section where they present their advantages as a faith-based organization the main focus is not on the NCA as a faith-based organization but as a civil society organization. When NCA emphasises their role as an FBO in this section it has mostly to do with their efforts and network in Norway.

Y Global does not report to Norad on all the development efforts of the organization, but on the three projects that are supported financially by Norad. In addition it should be mentioned that at least in the two projects in Palestine Y Global's partners operate in multi-faith contexts. These realities might to some extent affect the way in which Y

Global reports on their role as an FBO. Still, it is somewhat surprising to see no references to Y Global as a faith-based organization in these reports. Only in the “Subject to Citizen”-program a few indirect references are made to churches and faith communities being involved. However, in none of the three reports there are any discussions on the role of religion or faith or the implementing partners identity as faith-based. How Y Global’s ideology of the *whole* human being, mentioned as a crosscutting issue in their strategy, affects their development work is not discussed.

Y Global is definitely the organizations with the least references to religion or to their identity as an FBO. This might not come as a surprise as the focus on faith in the basic documents is scarce, reporting is only on project level, and several of the partners operate in multi-faith environments (which might also be an argument *for* reporting on the role of religion). Still, the ideology of the *whole* human being with body, mind and soul is seen as a crosscutting issue, something which would imply a focus on this in the projects. However, discussion about the role of Y Global or its partners’ identity as FBOs is nowhere to be found.

5.3 Concluding remarks

In sum, the reports do not reflect the faith-based identity of the organizations as it is presented in their basic documents. The possible added values of FBOs are not often touched upon. When they are, the emphasis is on the institutional added values. The FBOs’ holistic approach towards development, including a focus on spiritual dimensions, is barely mentioned. Issues related to the topic of religion and development in general neither receives much focus in the reports. It seems that the reporting regime, at least on an organizational level, is not regarded as the place for the FBOs to share experiences and challenges in working in the intersection between religion and development.

In the continuation of this thesis I will attempt to explore why this is so. In the interviews conducted with aid managers at the FBOs I asked specifically about the nature of the reports and how the informants interpret this reality. The findings from the interviews are

the topic of the next chapter. In chapter 7 I will review the findings in light of the literature in the field.

6. Interpretation

In this chapter I will present the views of the informants I have interviewed. As mentioned, I have interviewed one development aid manager in each organization. The main variable will be the different organizations the informants belong to. I have chosen not to explore the variables of age and gender since the findings suggest these are not significant.

One must keep in mind that the opinions of these informants do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations themselves. However, the informants provide us with valuable insight into how they themselves understand the identity of the organization they belong to and its relationship to Norad.

6.1 Identity

In this subchapter I will present the informants' understanding of the organizations' identity as faith-based development actors and what they see as their organization's added value. First I will look at how the informants describe their organizations as FBOs and how concepts like mission and diakonia is understood. Secondly, I will explore how the informants understand the practical implications of being faith-based and what they regard as the added value of their organizations.

6.1.1 Mission

All the informants regard their organizations as faith-based, but most do not use the term themselves when describing their organization. There are, however, differences between the organizations. The informants from the mission organizations seem to distance themselves from the term somewhat more clearly than what is the case with NCA and Y Global. The mission organizations view *mission* as an umbrella-term.

NMS is faith-based, but we don't use the concept very much, as we are a mission organisation (Informant 5).

The informant points to the fact that the term *faith-based* is somewhat obvious. It is a term that the informants recognize and can identify with, but the informants understand it

as a collective term, not capturing the organization's identity. The mission organizations already have a set term (mission) that their self-identity is built around.

How do the informants understand the concept of mission? The NLM informant explains that: "mission is aid or development/social work *and* evangelizing. Those things together is mission the way we see it" (Informant 1). The informant from NMS has a similar understanding:

NMS is a holistic organisation. The three programs; Evangelism and church work, Diakonia and Development, and Management and Organisation – all together are *mission*. The three programs are all equal (Informant 5).

As mentioned in chapter 5, a *holistic approach* implies different things at different times. Here, the focus is on how the mission organizations view their efforts in a broader picture. The different aspects of their work form a holistic whole. The NMA informant also share this view:

It is always a discussion: what is the large term and what is the small. For me, mission is the large term. Which is the expression of the holistic calling that we have as an organization and as people – the mission. It includes both diakonia and evangelization. That's how I see it... Some have a more narrow understanding of mission. I think we have a broad understanding of mission (Informant 3).

These quotes help us understand how the mission organizations identify themselves and how they view mission not as only evangelizing, but also as a heading for their development work. Mission is the big concept – a concept that includes both the activities of the organization that deal with evangelizing, and the activities that have a development focus and which are, to a large extent, funded by Norad. The informants from the mission organizations are open about the fact that both evangelization and development is on their agenda and very much linked together. What calls them to evangelize seems to be the same source that calls them to be good development actors.

The NCA and Y Global do not consider themselves mission organizations and therefore seem to understand themselves somewhat differently. When asked about the term "faith-based" the informant from NCA explains:

It is a term we identify with, but when it comes to identity we say we are a Norwegian organization, a diaconal organization for global justice. And we see our identity in three concentric circles. First we are church-based, and then we will say we are faith-based, and in the third circle we see ourselves as a civil society organization (Informant 2)

In this quote the informant makes it clear that NCA belongs to several domains that all influence their identity. The informant from Y Global accepts “faith-based” as the correct category, but as we have seen from the basic documents, Y Global presents themselves as a “Christian, ecumenical organization for international diakonia” (Y Global 2012). The informant from Y Global elaborates:

The most important thing is that we are a part of the worldwide YMCA-YWCA alliance that is comprised of old faith-based organizations... Though it will vary a bit from country to country what that means today. Traditionally it is organizations with a Christian, but ecumenical point of origin. One is not affiliated with specific churches. That is a bit special in Norway, that one actually is, but around the world one does not have formal ties to churches (Informant 4).

The informant emphasizes that Y Global’s identity as a faith-based organization is mainly linked to its relationship to the international network of YMCAs and YWCAs. Y Global’s partners are all organizations within the YMCA/YWCA alliance. Y Global stands out as the only one of the five faith-based organizations that is not directly cooperating with churches.

The contexts in which the organizations place their development efforts vary. For the three mission organizations, *mission* is the large term that includes both evangelizing and the development projects. Despite the weighting of the two are different within each organization, the development projects of the organizations are still placed within a bigger picture where other type of work is also present. This feature distinguishes the mission organizations somewhat from the NCA and Y Global that focus only on development, and do not consider themselves mission organizations. Still, the development efforts of the latter two still operate in a context. The NCA informant clearly sees the organization as church-based and faith-based and, as I will elaborate later,

has several references to what this implies. For Y Global, the most important aspect of their faith-base is their connection to the YMCA-YWCA.

6.1.2 Diakonia

The impression from the review of the basic documents was that NMS and NMA are the organizations that have put the most effort into defining their view of diakonia and also the ones that use the concept actively when talking about their development efforts. This impression was confirmed in the interviews. Diakonia is a concept that is continuously discussed. The informant from NMA tells of the challenge of reaching a shared understanding of the concept:

I would say that diakonia is what holds together everything we do, but abroad I can meet other understandings: “diakonia is not the development activities, but the Christian activities”. And then here at home you can meet the opposite view – that diakonia is the secular things we do and then there is mission and evangelizing on the other side... We find both understandings (Informant 3).

The quote tells us there are different understandings of the concept of diakonia. Partners in the South might not have the same understanding as the organization in Norway. The NMS informant also underlined this.

From the basic documents we found that NCA and Y Global define themselves as diakonial organizations, but do not apply the concept in describing their development efforts. The informant from Y Global understands the term as a Christian or ecclesial concept; it is not a development concept and therefore it is not applied in the development strategy. The informant from NCA has a somewhat different view:

It’s a bit up and down. I think that maybe 5-10 years ago we were more conscious about our diakonial identity, perhaps working more with spirituality, perhaps in a more reflecting mode (...). We see that there are many resources in the concept of diakonia that we are maybe using. They are there unconsciously or subconsciously... as our added value (...). We are working with this now... trying to identify on our diakonial assets (Informant 2).

The informant explains how there has been less focus on the diakonial identity within NCA in the latter years, but that this is something they are now trying to change. From

the quote we can also see that the informant links the concept of diakonia to spirituality and reflection. Diakonia seems to be a concept that, when applied, can contribute to discussions about the identity of the faith-based organizations. It is challenging for the organizations to define what diakonia is or what it means to be diakonial – especially in praxis. But this challenge also serves as an opportunity. It seems that when forced to discuss and agree on what diakonia is, one is also forced to discuss the identity of the organization itself. In this way, the concept of diakonia can serve not only as a label, but also as a tool in the process of understanding one's own organization.

When it comes to the understanding and use of the concept of diakonia, there are great differences between the organizations. From the interviews I got the impression that it is NMA and NMS that have the strongest relationship to the concept. However, both informants emphasised the difficulty in finding a shared definition in cooperation with partners. Both the informants from NCA and NLM have an understanding of the concept, but it does not seem to be applied in the same way as in the two former organizations.

In light of the views from the Y Global informant it could be seen as somewhat strange that Y Global defines itself as a diakonial organization. Organizations with church partners might have a more natural relationship to the concept than Y Global who works with partners that are not affiliated with specific churches.

6.1.3 Being a faith-based development actor

How do the organizations' faith-based identity influence their development activities?

The most obvious implication is that it influences the choice of partners they cooperate with, the networks they are a part of, and sometimes also which countries they work in.

The Y Global informant explains:

For us, it is a criterion that we work with YMCA or YWCA organizations. In a way it is both an advantage and a limitation. We are part of a large network, but we can only by exception work with or support project implemented by organizations not a part of the YMCA-YWCA family. But the network is so big that, for a small Norwegian organization, there are enough actors to choose from anyway (Informant 4).

The fact that the Y Global partners are YMCA-YWCA organizations seems to be more important than them being faith-based per se. The informant from NLM explains how the fact that they are a mission organization influences where they work: “We wish to reach people that are among the least reached. In that sense, the faith dimension decides where in the world we are present and where we use our resources” (Informant 1).

While all organizations have an idea of how their faith-base influences their choice of partners and networks, this quote tells us that for NLM it also influences the choice of countries. With “least reached” the informant points to the people that have not yet been subject to evangelization or countries where there are few Christians.

The organizations do not work exclusively with churches or faith-based actors, but they clearly have a preference for it. The informant from NCA explains:

When it comes to choice of actors to cooperate with we say we have a concept of natural partnerships - or core partners. And we say that our core partners are faith-based. Not because we want to exclude others, but because we share something in common: a common language, a similar way of looking at our role in the society. But there is a complimentary approach. We are invited to countries through faith-based organization, but we also see the need for working with other actors that we call “resource organizations” (Informant 2).

In many ways this quote also covers the views of NLM, NMS and NMA in the sense that there is a preference for working with churches or faith-based actors. Sometimes, however, that is not possible because there are no churches to cooperate with (e.g. when mission organizations enters a ‘new’ country) or the preference for faith-based actors collides with other principles, such as target group involvement and control of the project. Working with secular partners can be a challenge for some FBOs. The informant from NMA explains:

In countries like China and Vietnam we work with the authorities as implementing partners (...). In those cases there can be a challenge working with the managers and the staff in terms of how they can be carriers of the Christian identity in the projects (...). I know from people that have visited some of the projects that the staff is not conscious about Christian values. Still, I think we have an opportunity to emphasise issues such as

human dignity... that all people are created in the image of God and have a unique value (Informant 3).

It is clear that NMA wants their Christian value-base to influence their projects. Which is why it can be challenging to work with secular partners. But, as mentioned, it is not only the lack of faith-based alternatives that influences the choice of partners. The NMA informant also describes how faith-based actors sometimes cannot be seen as a representative structure, and since it is an important principle that the target group should be 'drivers' of the project other, more representative structures, are selected as implementing partners.

The most obvious consequence of the organizations' faith-base is the choice of partners and/or the choice of countries to work in. All the FBOs in question share a preference for working with churches or faith-based organizations since these are viewed as natural partners. Still, most of the organizations do cooperate with other development actors, as well. When it comes to the choice of country as a consequence of the faith-based identity, this seems to be relevant only for the mission organizations that wish to reach people with the Gospel. This seems to be an area where the focus on evangelization comes before the focus on development.

6.1.4 The added value of FBO's

I asked the informants specifically about what they saw as their organization's added value when it comes to development. In their view, what is it that separates their organization from others? Perhaps surprisingly, this was a difficult question for many of the informants. The informant from NLM struggled with identifying what is unique about NLM:

There is probably not a very big difference from what Norad, Save the Children or other actors say about development.. What should I say?

We think that the material development is not everything, but I guess others will say that as well (...). In praxis there are maybe not that big differences.. We will often have a strong focus on empowerment; a focus on that people should not just get their own things, but the ability to do things themselves. Again, not a big difference from secular actors.

In other situations we'll say that it is positive for people to come to faith despite that they sometimes will meet prosecution or opposition from their family. In those contexts I guess the difference is the greatest from how secular actors would think.. What is good for a human being? (Informant 1).

As we see, the informant struggles with expressing the added value of NLM – what separates them from secular actors. It seems that NLM's view of development is similar to that of other actors in the field. We can sense that the difference in approach, in the opinion of the informant, has something to do with values, a view that development covers more than just economic or material development, but still the informant struggles with finding the words. The different opinions about the value of converting to the Christian faith are obvious, but these differences are not necessarily directly linked to the development activities of NLM.

Other informants also found this question somewhat difficult and although they mostly had an idea of what the added value was, there were few direct and quick answers. The informant from NMA emphasised their integrated approach:

As NMA I think that some of our characteristic, and the thing I will hold high, is that we insist on the integrated. That diakonia has an intrinsic value and is an important integrated part of the mission. That diakonia is not the means for something else.. it stands on its own feet. The diakonia as a spiritual mission.. that is biblical enough and Christian enough in itself (...). That is something that characterises us (...).

In relation to other secular actors I think that having a holistic approach with a worldview that is open enough and that takes people's spirituality seriously (...) is something that characterises us (Informant 3).

The informant underlines NMA's belief in the intrinsic value of diakonia. It seems that the informant answers two camps of critics; on one side those that have accused the development projects of mission organizations for being a bridgehead for evangelizing, and on the other side those that focus exclusively on mission and does not have the same appreciation for the development activities of mission organizations.

The informant openly describes the difficulty found in describing one's own organizations. In the last quote the informant identifies the holistic approach, with an

openness towards people's spirituality, as NMA's added value vis-à-vis secular development actors. This added value will be elaborated on below.

The informant from NCA focused on some diakonial concepts when attempting to describe the organization's added value:

It is difficult to put a name on it (...). We have a great resource on practicing diakonia in context that was developed by LWF (Lutheran World Federation red.). And I think there are three concepts within diakonia that makes faith-based organizations special:

- It is the ecclesial understanding of empowerment... That people are created in the image of God. And that means that all people have talents... so a secular analysis of the poor would often see them as a problem... people that needs to be educated to be something else. My diakonial understanding of empowerment is more that of liberating (setting free) the resources that are within people (...).
- The other word, or concept that is used, is transformation (...). Which is quite radical and suggests that unequal power relations or structures that uphold them are not something we must accept (...).
- The third is reconciliation. Perhaps a specifically faith-based concept. It's about forgiveness, healing relationships, which is something different than punishment (...).

But I think hope is a very central word: (...) that our mission is to confirm signs of hope... and fight destructive forces. It is a language that one perhaps wouldn't dare to use in a secular organization (Informant 2).

Instead of focusing on what is the added value of NCA in praxis, the informant highlights three concepts within diakonia. In that way, the response is somewhat similar to the NMA informant. When talking about the added value of being an FBO these informants talk about integrated approaches and of diakonial concepts – ideas that are on a somewhat higher level than the concrete activities and actions on the ground. It is difficult to see what practical implications these ideas have.

During another part of the interview when we were talking about the use of theological reflections in development, the NCA informant made a comment that perhaps can shed light on this difficulty:

I do think we can use these resources (theology, the scriptures red.) in a much more instrumental way, but as a faith-based organization that is not unproblematic. Because diakonia is a deep calling... and something feels wrong... with instrumentalizing it to be (...) tools in a development project. If you understand what I mean? What I experience...

we have to find a good balance... by putting names on it... use it more consciously. Because I think it is used very unconsciously (...) As a way of being (Informant 2).

The NCA informant expresses a wish to work more systematic with diakonia and believes there are many resources to be found. At the same time the informant see the need to be careful not to minimize the role of religion or faith to just another tool to achieve development goals.

The Y Global informant emphasised the potential within the YMCA-YWCA-network and how Y Global can be a catalyst for movement building across borders (Informant 4). In a similar way to how their faith-base is explained, the added value of Y Global is also seen by the informant to be found in the relation to the two worldwide organizations they belong to. This is a very clear added value; one is part of a vast network of organizations around the world and has the possibility, through these networks, to influence large groups of people. On the other side, this is not an added value that is unique to FBOs. The characteristic does not really have something to do with the organizations being faith-based. The Y Global informant was not alone in focusing on aspects not directly linked to faith. The informant from NMS emphasised their focus on working with marginalized people in rural areas and how they enjoyed trust and is seen as a serious partner (Informant 5). The informant from NMA, in addition to mentioning the faith-based characteristics, also emphasised their focus on being professional as an added value (Informant 3)

In general, it does not seem that the added value of being faith-based is something the organizations have clearly defined or worked specifically on. The informants struggled with finding an answer, more so here than with other questions. It did not seem as something the informants had 'at their fingertips'. Added values that are not directly linked to faith, that are in a way more institutional, appear to be easier to describe.

From the review of the basic documents we have seen that all the organizations emphasise an holistic approach and have an idea of 'the whole human being'. Through the interviews I wanted to understand what this means in praxis.

In their strategy, Y Global emphasises the ideology of ‘the whole human being’ as one of five crosscutting issues. The informant from Y Global found it difficult to explain what this means:

Well, it is a basic value... But just exactly what it means for choice of projects... If that is something different from a secular actor... I can’t identify that... What we have focused on for the last two years is to improve our rights based approach to our work. But as far as I can see there is nothing there that a secular organization wouldn’t do. Where I see it can makes a difference is that we have a special interest in contributing to religious dialogue in our projects (Informant 4).

Given its position as a crosscutting issue it is surprising that the informant struggles to explain what implications this ideology has for their projects and their way of work. Perhaps the inclusion of the ideology in the strategy is more a result of the connection to the YMCA-YWCA movement (where the ideology of the whole human being is central), than something that influences the actual work.

Though the other four informants were more vocal in describing their idea of a holistic approach, the answers differ greatly. It seems that the informants from the different organizations understand the question differently. NMA and NLM answered in a similar way. In one of their basic documents NMA underlines that people have spiritual, material and social needs. I asked the informant what this meant:

I think it means that we have an understanding of people’s worldviews and that their understanding of reality also includes a spiritual dimension. As a faith-based actor, regardless if you meet Christians or someone from another religious background, one relates to the fact that life and reality is not just secular, but that God, spirits, something larger, is drawn into explanations of cause and effect and that the meaning of life is connected to something more (...) (Informant 3).

The quote describes a reality and a context different from Norway where religion to a larger degree is a part of daily life. The informant points to the importance of understanding religion and people’s spirituality. The informant from NLM has a similar explanation to the same question:

I think that people have physical, social, and spiritual needs or a spiritual side. One can of course focus only on the physical need for water, food and so on, but I think that through the work one does one should also be aware of peoples spiritual needs (...).

We think it is an advantage that we recognize that human beings are whole and that they have a spiritual side. And we hope that also means that one sees what the other believe and respects that. That it's not just a focus on what *we* want to communicate (Informant 1).

As we see, both NLM and NMA view it as important to recognize the spiritual needs of human beings. The informant from NLM also mentions the importance of respecting the beliefs of others, not just focusing on the message that the organization wants to convey. This brings me to the answer from the NMS informant.

Unlike the informants from NLM and NMA, this informant had a slightly different response to the question. I referred to the literature and the two different sorts of added values that might characterize FBOs. I asked the informant from NMS whether the second, the holistic approach focusing on FBOs' values and norms, also affects NMS' view of development or their development work in praxis:

The church has an important role in improving the living conditions for people, regardless of their faith. We want to be respectful towards those that do not wish to be Christian, but still require our help, and at the same time we do believe that it is good for people to become Christians. (...). Poor people in the countryside can't be required to be Christians to take part in a development project... But still, we see clearly, for example in Madagascar, that when people become Christians and get rid of the old taboos... sometimes it may contribute to development...

The churches struggle with this. They want people to become Christians and at the same time, believing should not be a condition for participation in development activities (Informant 5).

For this informant it seems that 'spiritual needs' is closely connected with evangelization. It seems the organizations and its partners struggle with this. On one side they believe that becoming a Christian is positive, but on the other side they have to separate between Norad-funded development activities and their own concern with evangelization. The informant from NCA answers the questions in yet another way:

I see that in comparison with organizations like Save the Children, who are incredibly good at communicating their focal point – the rights of children, we are struggling with

communicating who we are and what we do in a simple way.. Because we have it in us that we work with whole human beings... with human beings in society... with transformation of societies... so you get a very holistic approach.

We say that we have an integrated approach. We cannot see the humanitarian work separated from the long-term work or from the advocacy work. And each one of them has a source of identity... 'Speaking truth to power' is something very deep in the church's identity. Compassion – being with people in need. The story of the Good Samaritan is very fundamental basis for the humanitarian work... So... I think it is very important for our way of thinking development... (...) We worked a lot with this in the last strategic period... where human dignity became a very central term (Informant 2).

The different responses to the question can also tell us something about how the organizations understand themselves. The informants from NLM and NMA focused on the importance of recognizing the role of faith and beliefs and how it influences people's understanding of the world. The informant from NMS seemed to link the idea of people's spiritual needs with evangelization and the positive aspects of becoming Christian. In these two latter quotes, the informant from NCA points to the difficulty in communicating this holistic approach. The informant also understands an integrated approach as an approach that links together different forms of development work – from humanitarian aid to advocacy work. The informant explains how each of these components also have faith-based foundations.

In the first quote the informant points to the difficulty in communicating the focus of NCA. The ideology of the whole human being is something that is *in us*, inside people and therefore hard to explain. The informant from NMA shared this view:

I think the most important is that the integrated approach is found in people. And therefore the employees and the project staff become an incredibly important resource in communicating the integrated. Because it is them as whole integrated people who are going to meet people that are also whole and integrated and have spiritual, social, economic, cultural needs and so on (Informant 3).

When asked to describe the added value of their organization, the informants struggled and the responses were varied. It is not possible to find a single characteristic that all informants referred to. The NMA informant emphasised the focus on diakonia as an integrated part of mission and, together with the NLM informant, pointed to the holistic approach that takes people's spirituality seriously. NCA pointed to three diakonial

concepts that in the informant's opinion make faith-based organizations special. The informants from Y Global and NMS chose to focus on aspects that do not seem directly linked to their faith-base.

The idea of a holistic approach – the ideology of the whole human being - is something that several informants mentioned and also something all organizations underline in their basic documents. However, the informants do not seem to share an understanding of the concept. While the informants from NMA and NLM explained the concept in similar ways - that people, in addition to physical and social needs, have spiritual needs and spiritual understandings of reality that one needs to understand – other informants viewed it more like a basic principle. The NCA informant pointed to how their different lines of work – humanitarian aid, long-term development and advocacy – each have an identity in faith-based concepts. The NMS informant interpreted 'spiritual needs' in the context of evangelization.

It seems that the faith-based identity is visible on different levels. Some informants understand this concept of the holistic as something that is *in* people, and that will have implications for how that person meets and treats other people. Other informants seem to view the faith-based as something that lies behind, as a foundation, as a source, or as a motivation.

6.1.5. The added value of faith-based partners

In the interviews the informants also gave their view of the added value of working with churches or faith-based organizations. In some way it seemed easier for the informants to talk about the institutional added values of their partners compared with the added value of their own organization. The informant from NLM points to some advantages:

In some of the large churches we cooperate with it is an advantage that they have congregations in many places – a grassroots network (...). Where the church is an established organization the development work enjoys the trust and credibility from bearing the name of the church (Informant 1).

The informant from NMS had a similar impression:

The churches are organizations with large networks. They have congregations everywhere. (...). They are often the best organized networks on the local level (...). They assemble a lot of people regularly, the leaders in the churches often have authority when talking to people... they are leaders in the local communities (Informant 5).

Both informants point to institutional values. They have a presence on a local level, they are better organized than others, they enjoy trust and credibility, they assemble people regularly and their leaders have authority. The Y Global informant is more careful in placing characteristics, saying it is hard to say something empirically and that a good reputation is not something all YMCA-YWCA organizations have. Still, the informant does have an impression of the partner organizations as a ‘safe place’ – a place parents trust to send their youth (Informant 4).

All the organizations view churches or faith-based organizations as important parts of the civil society. The NCA informant sees that churches and faith-based organizations have potential to act not only as good agents for change, but also as arenas for change (Informant 2). The informant from NMA explains:

I think that we work with our church partners in two different ways: First, we want to contribute so that the churches can be even more churches where they are – in words and action. The other approach is to work with churches as civil society actors. They are, in a community, one of several social actors (Informant 3).

I also asked the informants if they saw a value in sharing the same faith or vision of the world with their partners, something they confirmed. Above, the NCA informant talks about how they and their core partners “share something in common”. The NCA views this as an advantage:

... The (bible) texts have to be understood in a context and in a time. And to interpret the signs of the time together is perhaps something we can challenge the churches and the FBOs to do, perhaps in a different way than a secular organization would (Informant 2).

The informant underlines how religion is always contextual and that the Bible is something that needs to be interpreted into context. The informants from NCA and the

missions organizations all mention that they use the Bible in some development projects as it provides a common frame of reference, often more relevant than, for example, human rights. Being a faith-based organization that shares the same faith as the partner organization, NCA can enter into theological discussions, an advantage that secular organizations do not have. The informant from NMS also points to this aspect:

The churches are often more willing to have a profound dialogue with holistic partners, like NMS, who are involved in evangelism, leadership and organisational development, as well as diakonia and development work.

I think it is easier for us to talk about for example equality and gender. We talk a lot to our partners about this (...). Provocations may close the dialogue. We'll rather go a few extra rounds, using an additional one or two years, or five, or ten using long-term dialogue as a method... And we have accomplished that, for example with women's rights we see good results from long-term work (...). Issues that we put on the agenda have an affect... And it really helps... I think it is easier for us as a mission organization to bring up these issues than for the other development actors (Informant 5).

The informant points to the importance of long-term involvement and dialogue in the partnership with churches or faith-based actors. The informant sees NMS as having an advantage, not only compared to secular actors, but also in comparison with faith-based organizations like NCA and Y Global, the latter only engaging with partners on development projects.

The informant from NLM also points to long-term involvement as a strength in the partnership with churches. "One has a long-term relation and a commitment to the church partners. We can't go our separate ways just because we disagree about something... We're stuck" (Informant 1).

The informants from NCA, NMS and NLM give the impression of partnerships that are stronger than what might be the case with secular organizations. The informants suggest that a shared faith-base often result in a long-term obligation. Both long-lasting partnerships and the shared faith are seen as strengths in the dialogue about sensitive issues such as women empowerment and gender equality.

Describing the institutional advantages of their partners is clearly an easier task than describing the FBOs' own added values. The informants point to the large grassroots-networks of churches, the trust, credibility and authority the churches and its leaders enjoy and the important role they can play in civil society – both as agents and arenas for change. Several informants also underline the advantages that can be found in sharing the same faith and having a long-term relation to their partners.

6.2 Donor relationship

In this subchapter I will first look at the informants' views of the recognition religion and religious actors receive, before moving on to review the informants' understanding of their organization's relationship to its donors, be it Norad or Digni. In the last section I will look at the informants' impression of the reporting regime, seeking their interpretation of the findings in chapter 5.

6.2.1 The recognition of religion

In this section I will focus on the informants' views of the increased recognition of FBOs. In the next section, that focuses on the FBO-donor relationship, I will look at what practical implications this shift has had. All the informants recognize that religion and religious actors now receive more recognition within the development sector. The informant from NLM expresses that one has gained more accept for the need to understand religion:

... And partially more accept for the fact that everyone is communicating something... everyone is conveying values, a worldview, a view of humanity... But I think there is still a room for improvement. I think many are of the opinion that we Christians are subjective and the rest are neutral (...) (Informant 1).

The informant expresses that the situation has improved, pointing to how it is now generally recognized that all aid come with values and is not value-free or neutral. However, the informant still experiences that people have a negative impression of the role that mission organizations play. The NCA informant points to the view of religion as harmful:

Erik Solheim, in his time, established that commission... and it's been many other actors; The World Bank, UNFPA – many have understood that there is something here. But I suspect that the understanding is a bit on the level of... minimizing the damage... possibly (...). I often meet people that are quick to point out the harm that religion can do in the fight for justice and development... It is very quickly branded, for example in the work with HIV/Aids, as anti-condoms (Informant 2).

I mentioned earlier the ambivalence of religion, that it can be a source for good, but also a source for intolerance or discrimination. In the eyes of these informants, the focus is often on the negative aspects, and not the positive role religion and religious actors can play. The NMA informant agrees that the recognition of religion has had an upturn, but not only as a response to the fear of religion:

I think there is a lot of focus on limiting religious fanaticism, but at the same time there is something... I think people have a somewhat more natural relationship to the fact that the world is not that secular for many of the world's millions and billions (Informant 3).

All the informants recognized the increased recognition within the development sector that faith-based actors have received in the last few years, but had somewhat different explanations for this. The new openness towards religion is something the informants also have noticed in the relationship to their donors.

6.2.2 The FBO-donor relationship

As mentioned earlier, the organizations have different formal donor relationships. In the interviews I asked the informants to tell me about their relationship to Norad and/or Digni and the challenges they face in this relationship.

The NMS informant describes their relationship to Norad as very good. They receive an information grant and earmarked energy-funds directly from Norad. In addition they have three regional grants that today are channelled through Digni, but that were developed in cooperation with embassies. Because of this, NMS is the mission organizations that seems to have to closest contact with Norad. NLM and NMA have little, if no, direct contact with Norad. They relate to Digni and both informants express that the relationship is good. The informant from NLM elaborates:

We think that we have a strength as mission organizations and church communities in having an umbrella organization as our link to Norad. We get quality assurance and a place for competence building. Now, we don't know Norad, but the impression is that we're maybe getting a closer follow-up and quality assurance than others who relate directly to Norad (...). We see that Digni has a dual role. Even though it is the organizations that own them, they also advocate Norad's views vis-à-vis us. They have a middle position. They must talk both ways (Informant 1).

The informant explains the role of Digni, not only as an organization that channels funds, but also as a meeting place and a competence centre that ensures quality control of the organizations' development projects. Y Global and NCA are the FBOs that relate directly to Norad. Both informants are positive towards Norad and their support. The informant from NCA says:

We have a threefold relationship to Norad:

- First, they are a donor (...) – it's a very formal and contractual agreement where we receive funds on certain terms and we report on the use of those funds.
- Second, (...) they are like the auditor general of aid. They have a responsibility for the quality control of the totality of development aid, regardless of where the money comes from (...).
- The third is subtler and is related to the value of the framework agreement which provides long term and flexible funding. I would say they are in a way our allies in fighting for the importance of civil society (...). They give us a flexible grant for strengthening civil society without the political conditions which often accompany the more specific project funding you get from other donors (...) (Informant 2).

Of the relationships that the NCA informant describes, I want to focus on the first, or more precisely, on the implications of it. The organizations have a contractual agreement either directly with Norad or through Digni. They receive funds on certain terms and report on the usage of these. I asked the informants what implications these agreements have on the FBO's. The NLM informant stated that the relationship affects the way they organize themselves:

It decides what kind of work we seek Norad-support for and what work we support with our own funds. We know more or less what Norad demands... so we plan accordingly (...).

Mostly there is a high degree of compliance between how we think about development and how Norad thinks. Even though we will have other philosophies and see other aspects in addition to what they see (...). We have the same ideas about participating processes and local ownership (Informant 1).

The first quote can be seen to be representative of the mission organizations that often have evangelizing activities and projects with partner churches that are not eligible for Norad-support. As the organizations have gotten to know the criteria for support they can plan ahead and have an idea of which type of funding they must allocate to the different projects.

I asked the NMS informant specifically if there were projects that could have had a development effect, but that falls outside Norad's criteria for support due to their separation between development activities and religious activities.

Yes, there are some projects that could have had a good development effect (...). But we have pushed the boundaries, and Norad has supported us to work holistic in AIDS-projects, with women's rights, as well as organizational development within the church (...). It is important not to misuse the trust, but we believe that working holistic is a very good method for development (Informant 5).

The NMS informant confirms the views of Hovland (2008) mentioned in chapter 2, but also emphasizes how NMS have pushed the boundaries for what can receive support and gained recognition for their work. The informant from NCA does not see any substantial consequences of the support from Norad in terms of how they are organized, but the informant has witnessed the increased recognition of religion:

I have been in NCA for a long time and I think it has changed over time. I remember well meetings in the early 90s. In those days we delivered lists of projects and Norad was interested to check we were not supporting evangelization activities (...). And I remember having big discussions about (...) how we work with whole human beings and holistic development aid... in countries where faith is important (...). I remember sitting in a meeting and arguing for support to the Institute of Contextual Theology in South-Africa and ending up receiving Norad-support (...). They would have said: "oh this is a theological institute – it must be mission"... Then we explained the role of contextual theology in the fight against apartheid... So I think it has changed (Informant 2).

I see this quote in relation to the quote from the NMS informant. Both NMS and NCA informants express that they have fought to gain recognition of the role of religion and religious actors in development.

The NLM informant mentions a similar discussion between the organization and Digni. However, there are some differences. The quotes above described negotiations between the organizations and Norad about what should be counted as development projects and therefore funded. The following quote describes a similar relationship between NLM and Digni:

We do our judgements based on the holistic approach while they (Digni - red) look at our plans with only development effect in mind... And usually it's unproblematic because we also think that quality in the development work is important. If one does a bad job it is a bad witness (...).

But then we see sometimes that... since we have additional considerations we might end on a different conclusion in some choices (...). One issue we discuss a lot is how much Norwegian personnel one can have in the projects. For us it is important to have Christian people in the countries we work in. It is an important part of the strategy because we think that it is people that communicate the partnership with the established churches and convey the gospel. So for us, people are important. But Digni sees the disadvantage in having Norwegian people in a project and not locals (Informant 1).

According to this informant, NLM deals with Digni in a similar way as they perhaps would do with Norad. Digni focuses on development, while the mission organizations place the development activities within a larger context that also includes evangelization. It can therefore, at times, be negotiations of this sort where the organizations have different priorities and views than Digni.

The informant from Y Global emphasises Norad's focus on quantitative results as something they have worked on recently. When it comes to their role as FBOs neither the informant from Y Global nor the NMA informant have experienced the relationship as problematic in terms of what projects can receive support. The informant from Y Global does not express a concern about separating religious activities from development projects:

No, because we don't have that type of mission work anymore. So there is not any part of our work that we must be aware to not mix up with the development work.

The partners have traditions like the week of prayer and member activities that are religious (...). So that can be separated, but it is not a general challenge (...). It also varies according to the context one works in. If one is a Christian organization working in a Muslim country one is very careful with that... In those cases you won't notice it... in the outreach projects. If you are in an African context where most people are Christian it is maybe not that unusual to start a meeting with prayer or something like that (Informant 4).

The informant distinguishes Y Global from mission organizations in that the former is not involved in evangelizing and therefore does not face the same challenges in how to organize the different lines of work. Still, the informant touches upon the different contexts the organization works in and how this context influences how religious activities or rituals can be connected with development projects.

All informants described the relationship to their donors (Digni and/or Norad) as good. However, when it came to what implications the donor support has for the organization, the informants had different answers. Although none of the informants described any major issues or consequences, there were clearly some challenges.

The mission organizations are in a special position in this regard since some of their activities are eligible for Norad-funding, while others are not. This means that the organizations to some extent have to organize the work according to the possibilities of funding. The NMS informant explains that there are projects that could have had a good development effect that is not eligible for funding. Though these challenges are more problematic for the mission organizations than for Y Global and NCA, the NCA informant tells of how they in earlier years have had to convince Norad of the development effect of supporting religious actors.

Digni is described as having a middle role between Norad and the mission organizations, on one side lobbying Norad on behalf of the mission organizations and on the other side conveying the demands from Norad. The NLM informant emphasises that Digni's focus is on the mission organizations' development activities.

6.2.3. The reporting regime.

In this section I will look closer at the informants' understanding of the reporting regime. In the basic documents I found several differences in the way the FBO's present themselves. However, in the donor reports there was less diversity. In general, the FBO's identity as faith-based was not reflected. Why is not the added value of the faith-based organizations, or issues related to religion and development, reported upon? I asked the informants if they had an explanation for this. This was the response from the NLM informant:

Now, there has been a very long tradition where Norad has been allergic to religion so I don't think that everyone around the world can trust that they really are as open as they have been in the last years... (...) And it also has to do with what one traditionally includes in a project report. It is often those that work directly in the projects who report, while it is the ones that sit higher up in the organizations that think about the holistic (...).

There's a challenge in communicating to somewhat different audiences (...). When we have our yearly conferences we will probably have a broader focus on how the congregation-building work is doing in the area where the project is... But I think that type of information in a project report could be interpreted in a way that we use the development project as a means (Informant 1).

In this quote the NLM informant points to several possible explanations for the lack of focus on religion and development in the Norad reports. The first explanation has to do with the impression of Norad in the partner organizations. Project staff might not trust or are not accustomed to this new openness towards religion. This is linked to the fact that these issues have not traditionally been included in a project report. This view is also found in the last quote: If one was to include more information about interlinks between religion and development, or specifically about how the work in the congregation is linked with the development projects, one might risk being misinterpreted. On one side the organization wants to think about their work in a holistic matter, but when it comes to the reporting the organizations seem to be afraid of mixing together their different lines of work.

The second explanation is also interesting because it can be seen to stand in opposition to the view of other informants. In this quote the informant mentions that while it is the

people on ground that report, those that think about the holistic approach sit higher up in the organization. Therefore the holistic view is not included in the reports. The informant from NMA expresses the opposite: “A lot of the integrated doesn’t necessarily appear in activity plans and budget lines, because the integrated is *in* people and in the meetings with people” (Informant 3).

The Y Global informant points to the fact that Norad does not ask about these issues. In addition, similarly to the NLM informant, the informant mentions that the faith-based identity is found on a higher level:

None of Norad’s questions deals with this... And that probably has to do with the goals. I think if we do more on religious dialogue then we will write more about it in future reports. But as it is now it is not that relevant in relation to the questions that are asked in the reports because it is on a somewhat higher level. It has to do with identity and the organization and the reason why we do what we do more than the actual content of the work (Informant 4).

The correspondence between the identity presented in the basic documents and the identity that comes across in the reports is greatest in the case of NCA. However, there are large differences between the different working areas. The NCA informant attempts to explain the discrepancy:

It might be random... You can say there are different people that work with the different topics. There are different authors (...). And there is a difference from program to program (...).
It wouldn’t surprise me that the chapters on climate, clean energy, and water were almost chemically free of references to faith-based organizations (...). These are programs requiring technical expertise when it comes to service delivery. We need good resource partners, because this is not where churches have a major comparative advantage. Maybe in the future we have to choose program areas where there is a better match when it comes to our added value in being faith-based (...).
It could have been more systematic. I think there are two things; some coincidences and the programmatic differences (...) (Informant 2).

There seem to be many reasons why the faith-based identity of the organizations and issues related to religion and development are not included in the reports. In the NMS report the issue of environment stood out because it was emphasised how NMS was able to connect the Christian faith with an engagement for the environment. I asked the

informant why the faith-based identity was visible on this topic and not others: “Well, there wasn’t a concrete question there, so we just wrote what we wanted” (Informant 5).

The informant was quick to emphasise that it is not that easy. The engagement for the environment is something that is rooted deep within NMS. Still, the immediate comment might tell us something about the nature of the reporting regime. In addition, it can be challenging for partners to report on issues related to the role of the church:

It is a demanding task... because if you ask the partners what effect it has had for the church they will reply “yes, so and so many have become Christians” or excuse themselves and say “there were no new Christians from this institution” (Informant 5).

The quote tells us how difficult it can be to report on these issues, especially in a mission context. It is difficult for the partner to talk of the role of the church without pointing to evangelization. It is difficult to assess why this is so. However, there is clearly a room for improving the communication about issues related to religion and development. The NLM informant also experienced a similar challenge:

I am reading reports now... and I see that when we ask about what activities have been carried out, what results have been met... people can report on that. But the more reflective questions are difficult. Perhaps it’s difficult for people in a different country to see where we are going with those questions... And making those reflections is demanding... It doesn’t make it easier to include reflections about religion, the knowledge we have or what our added value is in the reports (Informant 1).

It seems that it is donors that mostly decide the content of the report templates. The informants from the mission organizations suggest that it is first and foremost Digni who selects the topics. The organizations are free to ask partners whatever they want, but since they need to report to Digni, and want the reporting not to be too comprehensive, they mostly pass on the same questions to their partners as they receive from Digni. The informant from NLM explains one implication of this:

This way of doing it leads to less focus on the holistic... the holistic work or on the project as a part of a larger work in the area. There was a question about what added value it has for the project that it is a church or a Christian organization that is implementing. We answered that last year, but it is not a part of the template this year...

Other than that, you don't really get that perspective... And that is a disadvantage... And it's a danger that it also becomes separated in peoples minds... that when one works with Norad-supported projects it is only the purely professional development perspective one looks at and not the holistic as we want it to be (Informant 1).

Again, the informant explains how the mission organizations, in this case NLM, struggle with keeping in mind the holistic approach when reporting on only one aspect of their work.

Despite some of these issues, the informants view the reporting as something positive; they want to show their results. NMS describes how the reports are used in the planning of coming projects. The informant from NMA mentions the importance in raising the quality of development:

I think the reporting has an important function in raising the quality. And awareness raising about important development principles. So I think that the fact that we have had Norad-support and have been pushed on this for many years has been a good (Informant 3).

In this quote the informant points to how Norad raises the quality of the FBOs' work through the reporting regime. It seems Norad has been successful in communicating principles for good development. However, one can ask whether they have been *too* successful, in the sense that the FBOs look to Norad for good development policies and to a less degree look inward, towards their faith-base and their own added values.

Despite the FBOs' different identities and the different ways describing their work, the organizations all seem to agree on the principles of good development. The informant from NLM explains:

Mostly there is a high degree of compliance between what we think about development and how Norad thinks. Even though we will have other philosophies as a foundation and look at some additional aspects... What we think about development matches the demands from Norad... Because one has similar ideas about including processes and local ownership... (Informant 1)

The informant from NMA agrees and elaborates on some possible explanations for this coherence:

I think that both Norad and Digni have played an important role in relation to the mission organizations (...) and emphasised some basic principles – local ownership, participation, sustainability (...) that one agrees are common sense. I think both Norad and Digni have played an important role in building awareness about this... It has been processes and learning projects tied to those topics... Which have made them a part of the knee jerk reaction.

All the informants experience that the different faith-based organizations, and secular for that matter, have similar views of development. This stands somewhat in opposition to the FBO's ideas of added values. If their view of development and their actual development projects are more or less similar to those of secular NGOs, what is then the added value of the FBOs?

I asked the informants if they would report differently if they were not bound by requirements from the donors. All the informants would, to some degree, have reported in an alternative way. However, the informants from NMA, NCA and Y Global seemed to have fewer problems with the current reporting regime. The NMS informant answered clearly that they would not report in the same way if they could choose:

Since we work integrated in several areas we would have written more about the integrated methodology and effect. More about (...) building local democracy than what comes across in this report (the organizational report to Digni) (Informant 5).

The informant from NLM would also do things differently:

I think we would have focused more on reflection. Looked at positive and negative sides, how we could change the course – what is working and what is not working that well... Recently a science report was published that shows that too much of the reporting is done for the donor and have little value for the ones actually doing the work. And I think that is a great weakness. It's hard to see how one can gather all considerations into one... Then one would at least have to build an assurance that the funds will not be cut off if not all is right... And I think that is difficult. The power-imbalance that partners experience is very much present (Informant 1).

In another quote the same informant referred to the ‘bragging-format’ of the donor-report; the focus is on the good results and reporting on things that didn’t work out as planned is more difficult. The informant suggests that the reporting is done in a way that meets the needs of the donor more than that of the implementers.

Is Norad interested in the FBOs knowledge and experience on religion and development? The informants suggest that when it comes to the reporting on their concrete development activities, they do not experience much interest or feedback from Norad. The NLM informant explains.

Norad doesn’t actively enquire... If you think about the different embassies... In some countries there is a good relationship and where one is asked to contribute with information – our contact network, knowledge of the country and the culture... It is more abroad (...). We haven’t heard anything from Norad. From Digni it is perhaps more of a demand and that it goes without saying that where we work we have that knowledge (Informant 1).

The NCA and Y Global informants mention that they do experience an interest from Norad, but in connection with country analyses and policy networks, not their development projects.

To sum up, the informants had several explanations for the lack of focus on the role of religion and faith-based actors in the reports:

First, it is obvious that there is not much tradition for reporting on the role of religion. The openness towards religion and religious actors is difficult to transfer to the reporting. One informant mentioned the challenge in communicating to different audiences, implying that the religious aspects is not something that one is used to sharing with Norad.

The second aspect has to do with the somewhat elusive nature of religion. The informants have different ideas about where one finds the FBOs’ holistic approach, where one finds the intersection between religion and development. One informant said that the staff

members higher up in the organization are the ones that think about the holistic and not those working in the projects and writing the reports. Another explained that the integrated approach is *in people, in meetings* between people, and therefore isn't visible in reports and budgets. Either way, the holistic approach, the way the FBOs approach development and individual human beings, which to several of the informants is an important added value of FBOs, does not seem to be captured by the reporting format. In addition, several informants explain how these sorts of reflections – about the role of religion or the implications of being faith-based – can be difficult for partners to report on.

Third, the reporting format is a challenge in itself. Some informants talk of the 'bragging'-format; it is not a place to discuss difficulties unless it is directly linked to a deviation from a goal. Others point to the time aspect and how one wants to make the reports as short and concise as possible.

Findings suggest that donors by and large decide the reporting template. The questions or thematic headings in the reports clearly govern what is reported. Since the role of religion is not specifically asked about, it is not prioritized. One informant points to programmatic differences and the fact that the report has different authors. In that case the differences in attention given to the role of religion is somewhat coincidental.

These are some of the explanations for why the donor reports do not reflect the FBOs' identity. Especially for the mission organizations this sort of reporting can be challenging. They view their development projects as one component of a greater whole in an area, while the reporting, and probably the Norad-relation in general, forces them to think in compartments. Seeing the development projects as one thing, and the other activities as something else. At the same time, it seems the FBOs have gotten used to this situation. They find it difficult to see how their view of development differs from that of Norad. All informants underline how one in the Norwegian aid system shares an idea of development.

All the informants emphasise the importance of reporting and showing results. Still, if they could choose they would report in a somewhat different way. The informants from the mission organizations were most vocal in this regard. If possible, they would report in a more integrated way, seeing their work as a whole, and focusing more on the need of the implementers.

It seems that Norad requirements and focus on the quality of development have paid off. Despite the differences between the FBO's, they all seem to very much agree with Norad, and each other, on the principles of good development. Not only that, several informants also suggest that their view of development is no different than from secular actors. This could be problematic as the separation between religion and development makes its way into the FBOs. The idea that the donor have the 'development answers', might lead to the FBOs focusing less on the resources that could be found in their faith-base.

When it comes to Norad's interest in the FBOs' knowledge it seems that this interest is present, but not in relation to on-going development projects and not as direct feedback on reports.

6.3. Concluding remarks

Several of the findings from the interviews provide us with additional insight into the identity of the Norwegian FBO's. The conceptual context that frames the FBO's development efforts is central to our understanding of them. Identifying how the organizations differ from each other in terms of how they define themselves, and how they understand and apply concepts like diakonia and mission might help us paint a sharper picture of the landscape of Norwegian FBO's. In the next chapter I will attempt to start painting this picture, exploring how my findings from the interview data and the analysis of basic documents might shed a light on the existing literature on FBO's.

The added value or the uniqueness of FBO's compared to secular counterparts is another topic that will be discussed in the next chapter. I found that several informants struggled with describing the added value of their organization. In the analysis of the basic

documents, two perspectives on added value became visible. The findings from the interviews suggest the same. On one side there is the institutional values or advantages where informants focus especially on the added value of working through faith-based partners. On the other side is the so-called *holistic approach* towards development, taking the spiritual dimension of people's lives into account. Some of the informants from the mission organizations take the concept of a holistic approach to mean the integrated way they work, where both development and evangelization are components. Although these two understandings of the concept are clearly different, they share an elusiveness that distinguishes them from the institutional perspective. In the following I will draw on findings from the previous two chapters along with literature on the added value of FBO's. Hopefully, further exploring the added value will contribute to a better understanding not only of the FBO's identities, but also of the donor relationship.

Concerning the relationship between the FBO's and Norad there are two approaches I will pursue in the discussion that follows. The first approach has its starting point in the FBO's reports and the informants' explanation of the nature of these. The reports do not seem to reflect the faith-based identity of the FBO's and I will attempt to explain why this is so. For the mission organizations it is challenging to balance their holistic approach with the fact that Norad's interest is limited to only some aspects of their work. The reports seem to be based in Norad's realm of interest and in the development jargon, not taking into account the context in which the development projects are implemented. This context is not the specific country or area, but the organizational and programmatic context where the development projects are implemented as one of several activities of a church or a faith-based FBO.

The second approach is concerned with the fact that, despite the differences between the FBO's and between FBO's and other secular actors in the field, there does not seem to be much disagreement about what constitutes 'good development'. Somewhat conflicting, the informants emphasise both their own added value, often in terms of a holistic approach, while at the same time admitting that how their view of development coincides

with the view of Norad and other secular actors. Both these aspects of the FBO-Norad relationship will be discussed in the next chapter.

7. Discussion

In this chapter I will present the main findings, discuss these in relation to the theories presented in chapter 2, and attempt to answer my research questions. There is not room to discuss all the findings, but I will focus on those issues that can best help us understand the identity of the FBOs and their relationship to their donor. I will structure the discussion in two main subchapters; The FBOs' identity and the FBO-Norad relationship.

7.1. The FBO's identity

There is clearly diversity within the field and the FBO's have different ways of describing their work, placing their development efforts in different contexts. *Mission* and *diakonia* are important concepts in this regard. I will discuss how these concepts are used by the FBO's, before moving on to exploring how we can categorize Norwegian FBO's, attempting to find a fitting typology that might provide a better understanding of these organizations.

7.1.1. Mission and diakonia

All the five FBO's I have studied take use of the term mission, the term diakonia, or both. The mission organizations (NLM, NMS and NMA) make use of both concepts, but give different degree of attention to them in their basic documents. I believe that if we can better understand the distinctions between the organizations we can better understand the identity of each organization. In the case of the mission organizations I suggest we imagine a continuum on which we can place the organizations according to which concept is given the most attention. In such a continuum NLM would be placed on the *mission-side* or *evangelization-side* of the continuum. The focus is first and foremost on mission as evangelization. Diakonia is used as a header side by side with development aid, but there is little or no discussion of what the concept means or what it implies for the organization. On the other side of the scale, we find NMA. The findings from the analysis of the basic documents clearly suggest that NMA is the organizations with the strongest focus on, and understanding of, diakonia. Although mission is regarded as the main concept, the focus of NMA is first and foremost on diakonia. Somewhere in the

middle we find NMS. NMS has more focus on evangelization than NMA, but a stronger emphasis on, and understanding of, diakonia than NLM.

The informants from the mission organizations understand mission as the large concept, which includes both evangelizing and diakonia. They share a similar view of *diakonia* as that held by Haugen (2007). Diakonia is seen as a Christian service to the needy, a service provided solely for the purpose of serving, not as a means for evangelization. All the mission organizations underline this. Still, NMS and NMA reflect more around the diakonia and its intrinsic value, while findings suggest NLM has somewhat less of a relationship to the concept.

Both NCA and Y Global define themselves, in their basic documents, as *diakonial organizations*. However, there is not much discussion or reflection about what this implies. The analysis of the basic documents suggest that these organizations have less of an understanding of the concept than NMA and NMS and are more in line with NLM, in the sense that the concept is used as a definition, but not given a content.

The findings from the interviews however suggest that there is a clearer distinction between NCA and Y Global in terms of diakonial identity. The informant from the latter organization is quite clear; the term is not a development term and therefore not applied in the continuation. The informant from NCA seems to have a good understanding of the concept and also draws on diakonial concepts when attempting to describe the added value of NCA. The findings suggest that there is a well-developed understanding of diakonia at least with some staff within NCA, but, as the informant states, this was something they were more conscious about some years ago. The informant underlines that this is something they are working to improve. Due to the weak emphasis on diakonia in their communication (both through their basic documents and through their annual report), it is difficult to assess what role the concept plays for their work in praxis. When asked about their added value in terms of a *holistic approach* or the importance of addressing the *whole human being*, the informant explains how each of the different working areas (humanitarian aid, long-term development and advocacy) have a church-

based source of identity. I got the impression that the concept of diakonia is viewed more as a foundation or a background than as a concept that is used specifically in daily work.

There are probably several different explanations for why diakonia is not elaborated upon in Y Global and NCA's outward communication. Regarding NCA, both their domestic advocacy work and their fundraising efforts target the general public to a larger degree than the mission organizations. Y Global, however, focuses first and foremost on the national YMCA-YWCA movement when it comes to mobilization of supporters and funds.

Another explanation is linked to the mandate these organizations are given. Churches and Christian organizations in Norway provide NCA with their mandate, while Y Global works on behalf of the Norwegian YMCA-YWCA movement. It is possible to argue that both NCA and Y Global can be placed within the same framework as the mission organizations - the view of mission as both evangelizing and diakonia. The difference, however, is that it is their principles organs, the churches and Christians organizations (including the YMCA-YWCA-movement), that take care of the evangelizing and the domestic diakonial work, while the two organizations have received a mandate for specialising on international diakonia. This might be a reason why these organizations resemble secular development actors and focus less on communicating the concept of diakonia. As they do not see themselves as mission organizations, they might not see the need for making a distinction between mission and diakonia and discussing the latter concept.

7.1.2. Finding a typology

How does the faith-base influence the FBO's identity? Although I agree that the faith element is important, my findings cannot be seen to comply with Clarke's statement that the faith element informs the organizations completely (Clarke 2008). As I will show, the differences between the FBO's are substantial in this regard.

Clarke (2008) offers two typologies that can be applied. The first is a wide organizational typology that attempts to cover all forms of religious organizations and actors. Because of this width the typology is not very useful for my purpose. If we look solely at the FBOs' development efforts, they would all fit within the second category; *faith-based charitable or development organizations*. Still, looking at the overall goals and activities of the organizations, the mission organizations (NLM, NMS and NMA) could also be placed within the fourth category; *faith-based missionary organizations*. Also in the following this distinction is important because these latter organizations are in a way multi-purpose, focusing both on evangelization and on development.

The second typology, Clarke's faith typology (2008) can easier help us make distinctions between the FBO's. The typology looks at the way the FBOs in different ways deploy religious teachings of their faith, sorting the organizations in four different categories.

When it comes to the criterion of *motivation*, all five FBOs in my sample present their faith as their main source of motivation for their development efforts. Still, the findings suggest that NCA and Y Global place a stronger emphasis on humanitarian principles than the mission organizations do. With the latter development efforts are more strongly placed in a faith context.

Regarding staff, my research is limited. The NMA informant mentions how they, in the head office, might pray together when difficult decisions are to be made. The NLM informant underlines the importance of Christian staff in their projects abroad. For NCA and Y Global, individual faith is probably viewed as an important motivation for some, but it does not seem to be topic or a criterion when recruiting staff.

When it comes to the mobilization of supporters there are also marked differences. Although NCA cooperate with the Norwegian churches, their communication and fundraising efforts seem to be aimed at the general public, at least more so than what is the case for the other FBOs. For the mission organization, faith communities and 'religious arenas' (newspapers, summer camps etc.) seem to be the focus for fundraising and

mobilizing supporters. This is something the NMS informant also underlines. Similarly, the informant from Y Global also underlines the importance of the YMCA-YWCAs network in Norway as the most important arena for mobilizing funds and supporters.

With regards to identifying partners, the findings suggest that all organizations have a preference for working with churches or faith-based organizations. NLM and NMS are the organizations that seem to have the strongest preference for working with churches and congregations. NMA seems to have a somewhat more pragmatic development focus, often partnering with local secular NGOs despite their cooperation with churches in the same area. NCA prefers working with faith-based actors (be it churches or organizations), but are also open to partnerships with value-based organizations that, although not sharing the Christian faith, share NCA's basic values. Y Global identifies partners within the YMCA-YWCA movement.

When it comes to identifying beneficiaries, all five FBOs' informants and basic documents underline more or less clearly the importance of not discriminating on the basis of religion. Since NCA and Y Global see themselves as non-evangelizing, not much attention is given to this topic. The mission organization, perhaps because of the criticism they might face, give more attention to this. It is underlined that diakonia is to be given to everyone, regardless of faith. In addition, it is emphasised that diakonia has intrinsic value and cannot be used as a bridgehead for development. The NMS informant even underlines that it gives them an added value; the fact that they are missionary organizations make them more aware of the problem of discrimination and are therefore better at handling it. Still, the faith element is obviously important for the mission organizations when it comes to identifying beneficiaries on a country-by-country or region-by-region level. The mission organizations, at least NLM and NMS, are open about the fact that they prioritize those 'least reached' by Gospel.

Applying Clarke's typology, NCA and Y Global would seem to fit somewhere between the *passive* and *active* category. Faith seems subsidiary to broader humanitarian principles as motivation for action and in mobilizing staff. It does however play a

somewhat more important role in mobilizing supporters. When it comes to identifying partners the faith-base is clearly an important influence.

The mission organizations would probably be placed somewhere between the *active* and *persuasive* category. Faith is an important motivation for action and in mobilizing staff and supporters. All the organizations express the importance of non-discrimination, but there is an outspoken goal of bringing new converts to the faith.

Clarke's organizational typology (2008) is too broad in order to make sense of important distinctions. The Faith typology (2008) is more fitting, but looks only at motivation, mobilization of staff and supporters and the identification of partners and beneficiaries. As mentioned, some of the organizations are multi-purpose, and can be *persuasive* or *exclusive* on one issue (for example NLM prefers Christian staff in projects) yet *passive* or *active* in another (the Christian faith might not be on the agenda when working on education with government authorities). In addition, the criteria of the typology do not really match my material.

Another typology presented in chapter 2 is Sider's typology (2004). This typology could provide us with an understanding of how faith to varying degrees influences the organizations. Since it was domestic FBOs in the US that were the focus of Sider's typology, it might be difficult to apply it directly to the Norwegian FBOs and their development focus. However, the typology's criteria can be used as a starting point and can contribute to the distinction I attempt to make between the FBOs I have studied.

Sider's typology (2004) covers a range of different organizational aspects, few relevant to this particular analysis. In the "mission statement and other self-descriptive text" (Sider 2004:114) of the organizations we find religious references all around, however, to varying degrees. In this context religious references points to the use of religious language in defining the organization's identity and purpose, e.g. references to Christ. With NMS, NMA and NLM the references are more explicit, while in the case of NCA and Y Global the references are, although present, less explicit.

Another of Siders criterion is “religious content of program” (Sider 2004:114). Although I cannot say anything about the religious content of the program in itself, I can say something about religious content in the FBOs’ basic documents, in this case their strategies and principle documents. However, looking only at the general quantity and volume of religious references in the different FBOs documents, does not tell us much about the FBOs’ different identities. Still, one finding related to this is important.

In all the FBOs’ basic documents there was a discrepancy between principle documents and development strategies. When describing their organizations’ values and principles or the motivation for their work, findings suggest that the organizations’ faith-base is more present, more visible. However, when describing their actual work the references to faith are fewer. The cases where we find the clearest correspondence between the descriptions of the faith-based foundation of the FBO and its actual work is with NMA and NMS. These are the organizations that seem to have the deepest understanding of diakonia and take most use of the concept. There are clearly differences between the FBOs. Despite the fact Sider’s typology (2004) led me to this finding, few of the organizational aspects that Sider focuses upon are relevant in this context.

Haugen (2007) developed a typology for Norwegian development FBO’s, or as he calls it a *conceptual framework*. The categorization seems to be based first and foremost on the FBOs’ basic documents, but also different sorts of background information. Haugen uses several criteria to categorize the FBOs. He examines, among other things, how particularistic (or how universal) their value basis is, how well they understand the concept of diakonia, and whether the organizations have an understanding of power and human rights. Two of the organizations I analyse, NLM and NCA, were also used by Haugen as examples and therefore included in his framework. Haugen (2007) categorizes NCA as *humanitarian-based religious*, while NLM was seen as a *mission-based fundamentalist* organization. Between these is the category *mission-based* where he places Normisjon, an organization that is not part of my analysis. Let me first review

what led Haugen to place NCA and NLM in the categories mentioned above, before moving on to addressing how this typology can be relevant in the context of this thesis.

From the review of NCA basic documents Haugen concludes that “it seems evident that the organisation is explicit in being a church-based, God-inspired, humanitarian organization, with values based on a generally accepted interpretation of the nature of God” (Haugen 2007:165). The organization is rooted in Christian tradition, but “aiming for liberation from oppression in its many forms is the core of its activities, *not* the recruitment of new followers to Christianity” (Haugen 2007:165). The values NCA seek to promote are not regarded particularistic. NCA will enter a region or a country even if there are no churches to cooperate with. “This non-discrimination criterion is a central characteristics of diakonial work” (Haugen 2007:166). In addition NCA has more explicit development approaches to human rights and power. It seems Haugen regards NCA as the organization that has best understood the concept of diakonia.

Haugen (2007) describes NLM, compared to other Lutheran-based mission organizations, as an organization that has a value basis that is more particularistic and a vision that is more based on proclamation of the message of the Bible. The organization stresses the infallibility of the Bible as the word of God in its statutes and women are excluded from bodies addressing theological matters. Still, it is underlined that “there is no basis for claiming that (NLM) operates in a way where its own reading of the Bible implies that the cooperating partner *must* adhere to the same principles deviated from this reading” (Haugen 2007:171). Also, the operational activities of NLM do not deviate in large measures from development work in general. However, these findings, together with the one-dimensional analysis of poverty place NLM in the category *mission-based fundamentalist*.

Haugen’s typology is interesting and helps us to better understand the FBO’s. Still, due to differences in approach and criteria for categorization, the typology cannot be applied on the research of this thesis. While Haugen (2007) explores how the FBO’s fit within a certain understanding of diakonia, I explore to what degree the organizations take use of

the concept in their communication and descriptions of themselves. The same can be said about Clarks (2008) and Siders (2004) typology. While they look at the actual conducts of the FBO's, I look at the way they themselves describe their organizations and communicate their identity. My intent is not for example to review whether the organizations activities are *truly* diakonial, but whether diakonia as a concept is applied in the presentation of their faith-based identity.

I agree that the aforementioned criteria would point to a deep-rooted understanding of diakonia within NCA, but still the *concept* of diakonia is not thoroughly discussed or elaborated upon in the organization's basic documents. Through the interview with the NCA informant I did get the impression that diakonia is a concept that is well understood, but still, the informant also agrees that there has been less focus on NCA's diakonial identity in the last 5 to 10 years.

I would argue that other organizations, such as NMA and NMS, to a larger extent take use of the concept when describing their work and in their understanding of themselves as faith-based organizations. Still, following Haugen's (2007) criteria these would not be seen to have the same understanding of diakonia as NCA.

When it comes to NLM, I agree with the characteristics emphasised by Haugen (2007). The findings suggest that NLM does not have the same emphasis on diakonia as NMA and NMS, but focus more specifically on evangelization.

The mentioned typologies have been helpful in identifying different aspects of the FBOs' identities, but this thesis has a somewhat different approach. It does not focus on the nature of the FBOs per se, but on the FBOs' own descriptions of their organizations, how the FBOs communicate their faith-base. Thus, the findings call for a new typology. This will be presented in the conclusion of this chapter.

7.2. The added value of Norwegian FBO's.

As I described in chapter 2, a central discussion in literature on FBOs in development has been concerned with their presumed uniqueness vis-à-vis secular actors. Perhaps the most obvious finding is that it is often difficult for the organizations to put words on how they differ from other actors, their added values as *faith-based* actors.

In the organizations' basic documents the added value is seldom addressed directly, but we do find some references. In the literature several authors point to how religion can be a forceful source of inspiration or motivation (e.g. Horsfjord 2012, Ter Haar 2011, Tyndale 2003, Bradley 2003). All the FBOs in question are motivated by religion or faith, at least on an organizational level. When it comes to the motivation of staff and supporters, this picture changes. Without further evidence than my own impression, I would presume that in the mission organization one would find a higher percentage of individuals being motivated by faith than one would in NCA and Y Global, which seem to have a more diverse composition of staff.

In chapter 2 I made a distinction between the *institutional added values* of FBOs and the somewhat more elusive *holistic approach* to development (p 36). The impression from the basic documents is that NCA focuses more on the institutional aspects, while the mission organizations, especially NMA and NMA have a stronger emphasis on the added value of their holistic approach. This impression was however somewhat nuanced after conducting interviews with FBO informants.

The informants often found it difficult to describe what distinguishes them from other secular organizations. The added value of their own organization did not seem like information that the informants had at their fingertips. In those cases where informants were quick to answer, they pointed either to added values not connected to their faith-base or to somewhat elusive concepts that were hard to see the practical consequences of. It is not possible to find a single characteristic that all informants referred to.

The informants from NMA, NLM and NCA pointed to somewhat intangible concepts as their added values, like the emphasis on the intrinsic value of diakonia (NMA), the holistic approach that takes people's spirituality seriously (NLM) or how their view of development is founded in diakonial and ecclesial concepts (NCA). The informant from Y Global, taking an institutional approach, saw their added value in connection to the worldwide YMCA/YWCA alliance. The NMS informant pointed to their work among marginalized in rural areas and the trust and respect they enjoy around the world, added values not directly linked to their faith-base.

7.2.1. The institutional added values

References to institutional added values were found both in the organizations' basic documents and in the data from the interviews with the informants. Most often, when describing these sorts of added values the organizations refer to the advantages of working through churches and faith-based organizations. It seems easier to describe the institutional added values of partners than the added values of the Norwegian FBO itself.

In their strategy, NCA provides an account of several added values of FBOs and why they have a preference for working with faith-based actors. The strategy points to the access to large constituencies in remote areas, their rootedness, legitimacy and the trust that religious leaders enjoy and their natural point of entry with regard to sensitive moral issues. Several of the other informants also point to these institutional added values. This corresponds to the references to added values found in the literature; they are efficient, have a unique outreach on the grassroots, long term engagements, legitimacy and trust among the poor, an 'holistic' alternative approach to development, additional motivation etc. (Hegertun 2012:125).

Findings suggest that the FBOs share the view of the World Bank study (Narayan 2000) and the 2008 Gallup pole (James 2011) that found that religious leaders and religious organizations were often the most trusted institutions in developing countries. The Birmingham researchers found that advantages in terms of long term presence and trust were in fact not something unique to FBOs and that secular NGOs with a long presence

in a development context enjoyed the same amounts of trust. The informant from Y Global was the only one who touched on this, saying that while some YMCA/YWCA organizations were trusted, some were not. The informant believed it had more to do with the management of each organization, than their faith-base. The NMS informant emphasised the churches' extensive outreach on the grass roots and how they reach marginalized groups in rural areas. The 2008 UNFPA-report supports this view (2008:12).

Kathrin Marshall points to two areas where FBOs have an advantage compared to secular NGOs, namely 1) the possibility of working through religious communities and institutions, and 2) characteristics at home (such as larger networks, volunteering and resources for advocacy) that can be taken advantage of. Clarke (2006) also points to how FBOs often are highly networked nationally and internationally and how they have a "significant ability to mobilize adherents otherwise estranged by secular development discourse" (Clarke 2006:845).

Both the advantages Marshall mentions are referred to by FBOs in my study. In their strategy, NCA points to the advantage of their relationships to the Norwegian churches. The informant from Y Global points to the advantage of being part of a larger movement, both for mobilization of support, for advocacy, and for fundraising. At the same time, one finding also suggest that belonging to a network or having strong ties to faith communities can also be a disadvantage. The NMS informant mentioned that since the mission organization gets much of their private funding from Christian congregations and groups this is where they focus their information work, something that can lead to them distancing themselves from the general public. This might not be positive in the long run, since the general public's ideas and misconceptions about mission remain unanswered. Although the findings do not point directly to FBOs' added value of mobilizing those not reached by secular development discourse, I would assume, following from the FBOs' networks and information work in faith communities, that this is in fact an added value.

Several organizations stress their strong commitment to their partners and several informants imply that the shared faith improves the partnerships and the development

effect. I do not find evidence in my findings for Bradleys (2005) views concerning the problematic aspect of religious compassion. On the contrary, several informants stress the importance of showing results and they seem to be aware of the power aspect in the partnership.

Another interesting aspect that was mentioned by an informant, and that goes against Bradleys (2003) point, is the idea of a shared faith. The NMA informant emphasises that we in the North do not *own* the Christian faith and its values, something one might say about a human rights approach. The fact that Norwegian FBOs and their partners share the same faith is by several informants viewed as an added value. They underline that contrary to secular organizations, the FBOs have the opportunity to enter into dialogue also on theological issues. Although NCA emphasises this as an added value vis-à-vis secular donors, the mission organizations view this as an added value vis-à-vis NCA, pointing to the fact that NCA only involves themselves in their partners' development activities. The rootedness in faith provides the organizations and their partners with a common language, but as NCA underline in their strategy, this also gives them an advantage in interaction with other faith-based actors of other religions. However, there are also challenges. One informant from a mission organization explains how similar conservative views on both sides of the partnership can result in a situation where no one challenges the other, for example on issues like gender equality and women empowerment.

7.2.2. The holistic approach

As described in chapter 2, the renewed interest in religion in development, was partly fueled by the shift in development thinking from classical political economy to more diverse approaches, one being the understanding of poverty as multi-dimensional. I will argue that most of the FBOs in question operate within this theoretical space. James argue that “religion broadens our understanding of development, back to the focus on human development, not merely income, GDP and economic development. Religion brings in questions of values and meaning” (James 2011:3). Tyndale (2000) argues that

faith-based values, such as inclusion, stewardship, compassion and justice provide an important alternative approach to development.

We find several of these references in the literature; FBOs represent an alternative to secular development thinking, FBOs think differently about development, they have a less materialistic focus, taking also the spiritual aspects of life into consideration. Haynes (2007:50) argues that there are “marked differences in perceptions of poverty between faith groups on the one hand and government and international development agencies on the other”. Whether FBOs really have an *alternative* view of development than secular actors is difficult to say. The findings from my study are twofold.

On one side, the *alternative* view of development is present in both in the FBOs’ basic documents and in the informant’s descriptions of their organizations. However, these perspectives are elusive. I have described it as a *holistic approach*. This can imply several different aspects. The perhaps most common notion, the one we find in most of the organizations basic documents, is the idea or the ideology of the *whole human being*. This ideology emphasizes that people do not only have material, physical or economic needs, but also social and spiritual needs that have to be taken seriously. Several organizations underline the fact that they think holistically, that they see the whole human being and do not focus only on the material side of development. In addition, the informant from NCA underlined diakonial concepts, such as transformation, empowerment, and reconciliation - faith-based resources that FBOs can take advantage of. I believe all the organizations would agree with NCA that religion and religious belief are increasingly recognized as factors influencing people’s lives and that it can be a motivating force for groups and individuals. But it is difficult to understand how the organizations take advantage of these resources.

The idea of a holistic approach can also relate to the mission organizations’ idea of the concept of mission as containing both evangelization and diakonia. They view their work with their partners not as separated lines of projects where some deal with mission and others with development, but as a whole. Their development work is defined by, and put

into the context of, mission, but because of Norad's funding and the requirements that come with it, they have to make distinctions that are somewhat unnatural to them, or at least unnatural to their partners. This will be discussed below.

When it comes to the holistic approach towards development, it is difficult both for me, and it seems the informants, to really understand what this means in praxis. One can easily say that the spiritual dimensions of people's lives must be taken seriously, but what does that imply? The FBO's seem to struggle with the elusive nature of religion and the so-called holistic approach. Some informants point to the fact that this approach is found *in* and *between* people. It doesn't appear in budgets or in strategies. Other informants explain how the holistic approach is higher up in the organizations – 'we at the office – we think holistically'.

On the other side, however, when it comes to the actual development projects, the views of the organizations and the views of Norad seemed to correspond – they all seem to agree on what is good development. I will discuss this further below.

While most organizations, both through informants and basic documents, express the holistic approach towards people, it seems obvious that the institutional values of religious actors are the easiest to concretise.

Tvedt, in his 2006 article, introduced the idea of value dichotomy as a tool to understand the difference between FBOs (Tvedt focuses on mission organizations) and their secular counterparts. According to Tvedt, in the aid system one asks what leads/does not lead to development, while religious organization ask what is/is not God's will. Development projects within mission organizations are viewed as tools for accomplishing conversion and salvation. The main point in Haugen's (2007) reply to Tvedt (2006) somewhat corresponds with my findings; the rationale and purpose of the FBO's are more complex than just identifying God's will. The concept of diakonia can help us understand how religion is not only about the metaphysical.

For the informants this is very clear. Diakonia has an intrinsic value and cannot be used as a bridgehead for the gospel. At the same time informants from the mission organizations do not deny that they want people to become Christians. Some emphasize that conversion is positive also in a development context. Still, to remain trusted in local communities and to maintain good relationships to their beneficiaries, faith cannot be a condition for participation in a development project. However, the separation between development and religion, between diakonia and evangelization, appears easier to make in a secular Norwegian context, than on the grassroots' in the South.

7.3.The FBO-Norad relationship

In this subchapter I will look at the relationship between the FBO's and Norad, focusing especially on the communication about religion and the organizations faith-based identities. Some of the mission organizations do not have a direct relationship with Norad, but relate mainly to Digni who possesses an intermediate role between Norad and the mission organizations. The discussion draws on findings from the interviews with informants, the FBO's reports to Digni/Norad and relevant literature.

First of all, the increased recognition of religion and religious actors within the development sector in the last decades (as described in chapter 2) is a trend that all the informants recognize. They have in the last years experienced more openness towards religion by Norad, something they regard as positive. Some informants underline how this is not coincidental, but a result of pressure from the FBOs.

The findings from the interviews suggest that there is a higher degree of trust between Norad and the FBOs today, than what was the case some years ago. One informant tells the story of how Norad studied their list of projects to see if there was anything that could resemble mission. Two informants from the mission organizations use the word 'allergic' when describing Norad's earlier relationship to religion.

7.3.1. Communicating faith

The recognition that we lack insight into the relationship between religion and development processes was the basis for the Oslo Center project on Religion and Development. The report that came out of the project included several recommendations for follow-up. It emphasized the need for cooperation and dialogue. However, the recommendations were limited to possible changes that can be made internally in Norad and MFA. There is no mention of the FBOs. I would argue that FBOs possess knowledge and experience that could benefit Norad and MFA. The reporting regime could be a channel for sharing this.

In light of Norad's newfound openness towards religion, it is somewhat surprising to see that the organizational reports from the FBOs to Norad generally do not reflect the FBOs' faith-based identity. The possible added values of the FBOs are barely touched upon. When exceptions are found, it is the institutional values of partners that are referenced. The reports do not seem to be the arena for sharing experiences and challenges concerning religion and development. The findings from the interviews with FBO informants provide us with some explanations:

1. There is no tradition for reporting on the role of religion. One is not used to sharing reflections about faith and religion with Norad.
2. The elusive nature of religion does not fit the reporting format. The informants have different ideas about where the religious approach to development is found. For some, it is staff members higher up in the organizations that have this holistic view. For other informants, the holistic approach is *in* people and in *meetings* between staff and beneficiaries.
3. Reflecting is more difficult than counting. Trying to express what role religion plays is difficult for many partners. Answering questions about what was done and how many participated is much easier.
4. The reports need to be concise and focus on the positive. Some informants talk of a 'bragging'-format and that it is not a place to discuss difficulties or experiences if not directly linked to a project goal.

The holistic approach or alternative view of development that many of the FBOs regard as an added value is captured in the reporting format. It is the donors (Norad or Digni), to a large degree, that decide on the structure of the reporting, the template in which the FBOs report. The thematic headings or questions that come with the reports clearly influence what is reported upon. The general impression is that the FBOs answer what they need to answer, and since issues related to the role of religion or the FBOs' added value are not something that is asked specifically about, it is not prioritized.

My analysis suggests that out of the five FBOs at hand, it is with NCA that we find the greatest correspondence between the faith-based identity as presented in their basic documents, and the identity that is reflected in their report to Norad. In the case of the other four organizations there is less correspondence. The findings from the analysis can provide us with some clues as to why this is so:

1. NCA is the largest organization and receives the most funding from Norad compared to the other organizations. The share size of the NCA's *Global Report on Result* could be an explanation why also references to added value, and discussions around the role of religious actors are present.
2. It seems that NCA enjoys more flexibility than the other organizations when it comes to reporting. NCA receives a block grant, while Y Global receives support on a project-by-project level. In addition, NCA reports directly to Norad, while the more limited organizational reports of the mission organizations are included in Digni's annual report to Norad. It therefore has to fit a template designed by Digni.
3. NCA is not regarded as a mission organization. It might be that NCA feel they can be more explicit about their relationship to religious actors and their added value as an FBO, as they are not as prone to criticism concerning evangelization.

However, despite being "best in the class", the attention given to the role of NCA as an FBO (their added value and challenges and experiences gained in working with churches

and FBOs), is limited mostly to the thematic chapter on gender. The informant expected that it was the chapter on HIV/Aids that would have had the strongest focus on the role of religion; however, the focus is not present there at all. What characterizes most of the report, in terms of how religion is communicated, is a superficial attention to faith identity and the role of religion and religious actors, not really going into the *whys* and *hows*. The NCA informant explains that the different topics have different authors and thus different aspects are emphasized in the reports. In addition, topics like water, clean energy and climate might not have clear links to NCA's added value as an FBO.

7.3.2. National corporatism and weakened pluralism?

Tvedt (2006) provides us with another way of interpreting the lack of correspondence between the FBOs' faith-based identities and the reality of the Norad reports. His argument is that religious organizations actively apply the 'development lingo' and downplay their religiousness in order to get access to the aid system's material resources. Tvedt (2009) views Digni as an organization that acts as a gatekeeper between the different communicative systems – development and mission. Digni has, according to Tvedt (2009), created a separation that allows them to adhere to the demands and rhetoric of the development system, while sustaining the focus on conversion and salvation.

This is connected to Tvedt's idea of *national corporatism* in the Norwegian development sector (Tvedt 2009). He argues that, contrary to our ideas of the independence of civil society, the organizations have become contractors for the state, tools in the official development system that implement the goals of the state and report on these. A consequence of these developments, according to Tvedt (2009), is a *weakened pluralism* among the civil society organizations. He argues that it is the possibility of funding that motivates changing strategies and this can explain how many organizations seem to have become experts in fields that before had little importance to them. Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen (2003) share a similar view and are concerned about NGOs losing their political independence and special character. The authors ask what added value is left when NGOs increasingly resemble the official aid system in regards to organization,

reporting, evaluating and implementation. How do my findings relate to these perspectives?

First of all, it is a fact that in the FBOs' organizational reports the so-called religiousness is downplayed if we compare with how the faith-based identity is presented in the basic documents. This is especially true for the mission organizations where we find the largest discrepancy. However, I do not find that this is something the organizations actively do to deceive. My impression is that the religiousness is downplayed as a consequence of the development agenda set by the donors. It is not the FBOs that choose to not include their 'religiousness', but rather Norad that choose not to use the reporting regime as an arena to explore that 'religiousness' or the possible synergies between religion and development. Perhaps with the exception of the FBOs' institutional added values, there seem to be little interest from Norad in the FBOs' views of development.

When it comes to Digni, Tvedt is correct in the sense that Digni does act as 'middle-man' between Norad and the mission organizations, lobbying Norad on behalf of the mission organizations and communicating Norad's demands and wishes to the mission organizations. However, informants describe Digni as only focusing on the development aspects of their work, implying that Digni takes a similar role as Norad vis-à-vis the organizations.

Second, all the informants underlined, more or less, that their view of 'good development' is very much aligned with the view held by Norad. On one side the FBOs, through informants and basic documents, describe their ideas of a holistic approach, e.g. how spiritual dimensions must not be overlooked, how the integrated approach to mission is an added value or how individual faith can impact development. At the same time, the informants suggest that in reality, the actors in the Norwegian development sector have pretty much the same view of development.

One informant points to how Norad, through the reporting regime, challenges the organizations to raise the quality of their work. This is done by for example including

points about sustainability, gender or disabilities - forcing the FBOs to reflect on what role these issues plays in their work. In addition, the FBOs are taught how to report, focusing on the result-chain and a quantitative focus. The organizations seem to welcome the assistance and advice from Norad. Quality is of course seen as important.

Third, when it comes to the idea of a *weakened pluralism* among the civil society organizations some of the findings can also shed a light on this. Generally it seems that the FBOs increasingly resemble each other in terms of what principles are focused upon in projects and how one measures results. The process can remind somewhat of that presented by Hulme and Edwards (1997). An NGO enters into an agreement with donors, then changes the procedures for projects design, implementation, monitoring and reporting, and last changes its recruitment policy to hire logical framework experts, all while the connections to the grassroots in developing countries become weaker. I cannot argue that my findings confirm all the aspects of Hulme and Edwards' (1997) theory. Still, I do get the impression that FBOs, in their relationship with Norad, are motivated and pushed in direction of a more 'professional' managing of development aid. Norad holds the recipe for that management and exports it to the organizations they fund.

How can we assess Tvedt's theories (2006, 2009) as a whole? My findings support several of Tvedt's points. The organizations' faith-based identities *are* less visible in the reports to Norad compared to their description of themselves and it is possible to argue that we see a weakened pluralism, at least on the surface, as the FBOs adapt Norad's frameworks for monitoring and reporting on development projects. To what degree these frameworks influence the actual implementation of the development projects is more difficult for me to assess.

My main objection to Tvedt's theories is his somewhat conspiratorial understanding of the development system. It is not my impression from the findings that the mission organizations actively mislead Norad, hiding their true purpose of converting of others to the Christian faith. Tvedt has a one-dimensional view of mission and does not seem to have developed an understanding of the concept of diakonia.

Similarly, it is not my impression that Norad actively attempts to streamline the development efforts of the different organizations, secular or faith-based. My impression is that Norad wants to contribute to a situation where all development efforts live up to a certain standard. However, the findings do suggest that Norad in their relationship to the FBOs have a narrow focus on development, not considering the religious context in which the projects are implemented or the resources within religion that could be explored.

7.3.3. A faith-based approach vs. Norad's development focus

Several informants mentioned that even though they recognize and welcome the openness towards religion from donors, they suspect that this 'discovery of the religious' is more based on an experience of religion's possible negative influence than on the potential positive role religion can play. Concerns of fanaticism, religious terrorism and conservative agendas have contributed to a context where faith is often viewed with suspicion, unease and distrust.

Still, many of donors' concerns are certainly legitimate. I assume that on the issue of channelling aid through FBOs, Norad is in line with DFID. Hegertun (2012), in the Oslo Center Report, describes how two questions arise when DFID cooperates with FBO's: 1) will funds be used for missionary activities, to convert people (the principle of non-conditionality) and 2) will funds be used to help an exclusive group? (the principle of non-exclusivity). As a result of these concerns Norad makes a separation between what they view as *development activities* and what they views as *religious activities*.

The mission organizations all emphasise (both in basic documents and through informants) their holistic or integrated approach meaning that all activities, whether evangelizing, leadership training or development projects are seen as a part of a greater whole. When the mission organizations report to Norad, they report only on the development projects, not other aspects of their work or the context in which the development projects take place. This is perhaps the most important reason why some

informants emphasise that the donor reports do not give a representative picture of the organization. The relationship to Norad challenges the mission organizations' integrated approach as it focuses only on the organizations' development efforts. Not even that, it focuses on the development efforts that are Norad-funded.

A consequence of this separation between religion and development, one mentioned by Hovland (2007), is that some projects might not be eligible for funding although might lead to good development results. The NMS informant confirms that they have projects they believe have a good development effect, but that is not eligible for Norad-support. Still, the informant admits that they have pushed the boundaries for support, implying that they now receive support for projects that would not have been accepted some years ago.

It is difficult to know how Norad defines evangelization or where they draw the line between development and religion. That could be an interesting topic for another paper. However, is it really possible to draw a clear line between 'development' work and 'religious' work? One informant mentions how the development work of a partner church enjoys the trust and credibility from bearing the name of the church. I assume that, for the mission organizations, the development work probably help in earning trust and respect for the missionaries amongst the locals. The NLM informant explained how they preferred having Christian Norwegian personnel in their development projects. Tønnessen (2007) argued that supporting a church's work with health might be just as effective for their growth as supporting their work with evangelization, something that further blurs the lines.

The informants from NCA and the mission organizations all explain how they use the Bible in some development projects. The Bible provides references that are often more relevant in a religious context and that can be a gateway to talking about human rights. Still, the use of the Bible as a tool in development projects is not mentioned by any of these organizations in their reports to Norad. The organizations do take use of religious

resources in development projects and see synergies between religion and development. Still, this knowledge is not shared in the reports to Norad.

Findings suggest that the distinction between ‘development’ work and ‘religious’ work is easier to make in a secular Norwegian context than in contexts where religion informs and influences all aspects of life. As the NMS informant mentioned, one thing is making a distinction between direct evangelization and development projects, something that is possible to do, another is looking away from religion in itself, which is much more difficult.

Norad’s narrow focus on development seems to affect the mission organizations more than NCA and Y Global. The mission organizations follow a stricter reporting template, not as flexible as the NCA format. In addition, since the mission organizations are multi-purpose in the sense that they also have a focus on evangelization, it seems that they are more careful about communicating aspects of faith or religion than what is the case with NCA. Y Global does not give much attention to the role of religion and does not emphasise any added value of their faith-base. Therefore the separation between religion and development is viewed as unproblematic.

Despite the differences between the FBOs and the different implications the separation between religion and development has, all the organizations have an idea about a faith-based or holistic approach to development, cooperate mainly with faith-based actors, and work in contexts where religion is a central part of everyday life.

7.4. A new typology and a new approach

In this last section of the chapter I turn to the two main concepts of this thesis: the FBOs’ *identity* and the FBOs’ *relation* to their donor. First, I will propose a new typology, another way of understanding FBOs that focus especially on how the different organizations present and communicate their identity and their faith-base. This new typology can also shed a light on the Norad relation. Second, I will argue on behalf of a

more nuanced donor approach towards FBOs, in a greater way taking aspects of faith and religion into consideration in the FBO-donor relationship.

Although aforementioned typologies all have contributed to the discussion and helped me identify distinctions between the organizations, none clearly matches the findings of my study. All the typologies have shortcomings, not necessarily by their own standard and context, but in terms of applicability in this context.

My data consist of basic documents, donor reports and interviews with informants. This data cannot tell us much about the actual activities and content of the FBOs' programs and activities. However, the material can tell us much about how the organizations present themselves, how they describe their organization as faith-based, and in what contexts (and with which concepts) they choose to frame their development work. Because of the lack of correspondence between the organizations' basic documents and the donor reports the typology is first and foremost based on analysis of basic documents and analysis of data from interviews. It must be mentioned that the research is limited. Interviewing 10 or 20 informants in each organization would definitely improve the basis for the typology. However, taking the scope of the thesis as a reservation, I still argue that the typology is relevant.

I suggest the term *spheres* to point to the fact that the organizations seem to identify themselves and understand their development efforts within different landscapes or contexts. These spheres are not meant to explain the FBOs' actual development work, but help us understand how the different organizations talk about and describe their efforts, using different 'languages'. I suggest three different spheres for the Norwegian FBOs involved in development work; *the mission sphere*, *the diakonial sphere*, and *the development sphere*.

The first, the *mission sphere*, is where I place Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM). NLM's main focus seems to be on evangelization. Most of the content in their basic documents deal with this aspect of their work. Within their mission strategy most of the

focus is on evangelizing. Their diakonial or development efforts are given some attention in the mission strategy, but I get the impression that this is only one of several working areas under the mission heading. The development strategy does not include reflections around concepts such as diakonia or descriptions of how their faith-base influence their development efforts. A consequence of this is an impression that there is little integration between the development efforts and the other activities of the organization. In this sense NLM cannot really be considered an FBO with a clear development focus, but a mission organization that are is involved in development.

Secondly, we have the *diakonial sphere*, where I place the Norwegian Mission Alliance (NMA) and the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS). Though there are differences in the way they present themselves, both organizations give a central role to the concept of diakonia, especially in their strategies and principle documents. The clear emphasis these FBOs give to the concept of diakonia is confirmed through the interviews with NMA and NMS informants. While the development focus within NLM becomes an “add-on” to its principle activity of evangelization, NMS and NMA have been, to a larger degree, able to bridge the mission sphere and the development sphere with the use of diakonia as a faith-based development concept.

NMS also has a strong focus on evangelization, but gives more attention in their basic documents to the concept of *holistic mission*; one that also includes diakonia, often aligned with the development efforts. In NMS’ mission strategy the intrinsic value of diakonia is underlined, meaning that it can neither be seen as secondary to preaching or as a means for evangelizing. While the impression from NLM’s basic documents was that there was a separation between their main focus and their development focus, the impression from NMS’ basic documents is less so. The development efforts seem to be more integrated in their organization. The development or diakonial aspect of their work is more thoroughly discussed in their mission strategy and faith-based concepts such as diakonia are given importance in their development strategy. NMS is a mission organization with a clear focus on evangelization, but the development focus is a much more integrated part of their identity compared to NLM.

Of the mission organizations, NMA is the organization that is the most securely placed within the diakonial sphere. It is also that of the mission organizations that have the clearest development focus. The emphasis on evangelization is definitely present, but the organization specializes on the diakonial service of mission. The three overall goals presented in their strategy, “fighting poverty”, “promoting justice” and building the ‘kingdom of God”, are described in that order. The centrality given to diakonia and development is unparalleled compared with NLM and NMS. NMA’s focus is first and foremost on the diakonial aspect of mission. The development focus seems to be fully integrated into their understanding of themselves as a diakonial mission organization.

The third, the *development sphere*, is where we find the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Y Global. It is important to keep in mind that these organizations *are* faith-based and they *do* emphasise, more or less, their faith-based identity. Still, these organizations describe their development efforts as just that - development efforts. The faith-base seems first and foremost to be a foundation and a motivation for their work. Both use the term diakonia when defining their organizations, but the concept is hardly discussed in relation to their development work.

Of the two, Y Global is the organization that most clearly belongs in this sphere. There is some, but little reflection around the organization’s faith-base and basically no attention given to the concept of diakonia. The organization is different from all the other FBOs in the sense that it is their connection to the YMCA-YWCA movement that defines them as faith-based. The informant from Y Global confirmed the impression from the basic documents that the faith-base is seen as a background or the network one is working within, more than something that actively informs the organization’s development efforts. Even though the ideology of the *whole human being* is described as a crosscutting issue in the strategy, it is not further elaborated, neither was the informant able to explain the implications of this. This suggests that the inclusion of the ideology as a crosscutting issue has more to do with the connection to the YMCA-YWCA movement than it has do to with Y Global’s view of development per se.

When it comes to NCA the categorization is not crystal clear. Compared to Y Global, NCA seems much more aware and outspoken about the organization's faith-base and their added value as an FBO. However, the focus is mainly on the institutional added values of their partners, while the focus on the *holistic approach* to development, and the spiritual dimensions of people's lives is less visible. There is little reflection around the concept of diakonia in NCA's basic documents, but my impression from the interview with the informant was that the understanding of the concept is clearly present at some levels in the organizations. However, my impression is that the understanding of NCA's diakonial identity is more present on a leadership level. The informant also explained that there was a stronger focus on diakonial identity some years ago. NCA is close to being placed within a diakonial sphere, but the lack of reflection around the concept in the basic documents places NCA in the development sphere.

I find that the more space an FBO gives to discussing the concept of diakonia, the less discrepancy we find between the description of their faith-base and the description of their development efforts. In a way it is possible to view diakonia as a concept that can help FBOs bind together these two aspects. Exploring one's diakonial identity and possible diakonial resources might also lead to a better understanding of what is the added value of being a faith-based organization. Organizations that describe themselves as diakonial, but does not apply the concept and turn to mainstream development thinking, might risk losing touch with their faith-based identity and miss out on important concepts and resources that are found within diakonia.

The FBO-Norad relation is set in the *development sphere* and is governed by Norad's view of development. NCA and Y Global, organizations that are already placed within the same sphere, are less challenged by Norad's separation between 'development activities' and 'religious activities', while the mission organizations (placed in the *mission and diakonial sphere*) to a greater extent need to change their perspective when entering into the Norad-relation. As a consequence, the differences between the FBOs are less visible in the Norad reports.

Several scholars have argued that Western donors need to change their approach towards religion and FBOs. Clarke (2006) argues that one has to support and engage with other religious actors, not only mainstream development FBOs. James (2009) argues that donors need to better understand the particular characteristics of FBOs. Ter Haar argues that European development policy needs to be rethought and that one has to look at how religion can contribute to development.

Contrary to Clarke's (2006) argument, my findings suggest that Norad actually funds a variety of FBOs, not only so-called mainstream development FBOs like NCA and Y Global. However, there is not much evidence suggesting that Norad actively *engages* with these FBOs, or have an interest in systematically exploring the FBOs and their views of development. The role of religion receives little attention in the communication between the FBOs and Norad. Norad can be viewed as open towards the role of religion and religious actors in the sense that they support a number of FBOs' development efforts, but in their own engagement they seem to make a strict separation between religion and development. The findings suggest that Norad can improve their approach towards the FBOs and to a greater extent take advantage of their knowledge.

The FBOs have experienced an increased openness towards religion. Still, it does not seem like Norad has, in any substantial way, changed their approach towards the FBOs. Norad does not seem to be 'afraid' of religion and the informants emphasise the high degree of trust in the relationship. However, it seems Norad has made it easy for themselves in the sense that they bring the FBOs into the development sphere, but does not engage with the FBOs on their 'home ground'. Norad funds the development activities of FBOs, but do not seem interested in systematically exploring the interconnection between religion and development. 'Raising the quality of development' becomes a one-way process where Norad has the answers, while the potential that might lie within the religious realm remains unexplored.

The FBOs themselves do of course have the possibility to investigate possible added values and religious resources regardless of the lack of challenges or encouragement from

Norad. Still, this proves difficult when both funding and reporting demands a separation between religion and development. The relationship to Norad has clearly influenced the FBOs. Parts of this influence is positive, as the development work of the FBOs have gained quality and improved as a result of Norad requirements and their focus on quality assurance. On the other side, the FBOs seem to have, to some extent, adopted Norad's view in the sense that they too separate between religion and development.

We see the discrepancy in the FBOs' basic documents. When describing their organization the faith-base is underlined, while when one turns to their actual development efforts the faith-base seems to disappear. Also, the FBOs underline their added value, both institutional added values and their holistic approach to development. Still, it is unclear what the practical implications of these added values are. When it comes to the actual development projects, all the informants seem to agree that their view of development corresponds with that of Norad and other secular actors. The current relationship between the FBOs and Norad does not stimulate investigations into how the FBOs' added values could improve development or how one can exploit the synergies between faith and development.

I too (like Clarke, James, Marshall, ter Haar and others) advocate a more nuanced and exploratory donor approach towards FBOs, an approach where the donor engages with the FBOs and takes seriously not only the institutional values of religious actors, but also the FBOs' holistic approach to development. Norad should encourage, and take part in, an exploration of the possible resources found in religion and faith.

Several FBOs and informants underline that they seek to meet people's needs in a holistic way, spiritual as well as physical needs. What might be a challenge to donors is that the line where this becomes evangelizing is not always clear. Still, the importance of taking religion seriously is also an argument found within the human development theory and in the understanding of poverty as multi-dimensional. Though this view is appreciated in academic circles, it seems it has not quite found its way into donor offices.

Taking such an approach would probably send Norad out of their comfort zone. A clear

set of guidelines is probably not where one would end up. Just like the FBOs have developed *development literacy*, Norad needs to develop *faith literacy* (James 2011, Oslo Center 2012). It will require personal engagement, not a one-size-fits-all approach. Engaging with FBOs in a more open manner will surely be more complicated than what is the reality at present, but it might lead to a situation where Norad and the FBOs, *together*, can work on raising the quality of development, letting the different *spheres* inform each other. It will be a bumpy ride, but it would probably lead to greater understanding and cooperation.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has revolved around two main concepts; the FBOs' *identity* and the FBOs' *relation* or *relationship* to their donor, Norad. I have attempted to answer how Norwegian FBOs interpret their faith-based identity, what they identify as their added values, and how they understand their relationship to their donor Norad.

Concerning FBOs' identity, I found that the FBOs interpret their faith-base in different ways. *Mission* and especially *diakonia* became useful concepts in the analysis of the organizations' identity. As a method for better understanding the FBOs I developed a typology that could capture the different ways in which the FBOs communicate their identity and the different context in which they frame their development efforts. The previous developed typologies were found to be unsatisfactory because the focus was too broad or too narrow to make sense of the findings in this thesis. Still, the main obstacle was the my approach did not explore the FBOs' identity per se, but rather how the organizations themselves describe, interpret and understand their own identity. The new typology places the FBOs in different *spheres*: *The missions sphere, the diakonial sphere, and the mission sphere*.

An important part of exploring the FBOs' identity was reviewing what they identified as their added values. The different types of added values were visible in the literature; the institutional added values and the FBOs' holistic approach to development. Although both perspectives are present in the FBOs' basic documents, only the institutional added values are referenced in the reports to Norad. Findings suggest that it is easier for the FBOs and the informants to communicate the latter. The FBOs' holistic approach is somewhat elusive. It is difficult to communicate what the practical implications of this approach are. An added value that is difficult to categorize, but was emphasised by the informants, was the value of *shared faith*. Several informants underlined that sharing the same faith put the FBOs in a position where they could more easily talk about contentious issues, such as HIV/Aids or women's rights. The *faith literacy* also allows for the FBOs to enter into theological reflections with partners.

The FBO-Norad *relation* is set in the development domain, and, as a result, the faith-based identity of the FBOs is less visible. While this identity was more or less emphasised in basic documents and in interviews, the reports from the FBOs to Norad rarely touch upon the organizations' faith-based identities or the intersections between religion and development. The informants had several explanations for why this discrepancy exists:

1. There is no tradition for reporting on the role of religion.
2. The elusive nature of religion does not fit the reporting format.
3. Reflecting is more difficult than counting.
4. The reports need to be concise and focus on positive results.

Findings suggest that it is the donors (Norad or Digni) that set the agenda for the reporting and the focus is only on the concrete development efforts of the FBO's. This, together with the general separation between 'religious activities' and 'development activities' set by Norad, challenges the mission organizations as they have a holistic view of their different activities. The NCA and Y Global, FBOs that fall within the *development sphere*, are less challenged by this separation.

The fact that the FBO-Norad relation is placed within the development domain makes the critique from Tvedt (2006) more understandable. The organizations' faith-based identities *are* less visible in the reports to Norad compared with their description of themselves. In addition, it is possible to argue that we see a weakened pluralism, at least on the surface, as the FBOs adapt Norad's frameworks for monitoring and reporting on development projects. However, Tvedt is mistaken when he implies that the mission organizations deceive Norad. Not only does Tvedt lack an understanding of the concept of diakonia, he fails to emphasise that it is Norad, not the mission organizations, that has placed the relation in a development context, not taking into account the 'religiousness' of the FBOs.

All the informants recognize Norad's increased openness towards religion and religious actors. They also emphasise that between the actors in the Norwegian development sector, including Norad and the FBOs, there is a high degree of compliance in terms of what one

regards as ‘good development’. Still, Norad’s newfound openness is not combined with an interest in the views of development held by FBOs. The FBOs are invited into the *development sphere*, but Norad does not seem interested in entering into the FBOs’ *diakonial sphere*, exploring the religious resources that could be found there. The current relationship influences the FBOs in a somewhat problematic way. It leads to less focus on exploring the possible synergies between religion and development and the religious resources that could be identified. I believe that a more nuanced and exploratory approach towards the FBOs could further improve the quality of development aid.

The Oslo Center Report (2012) underlined the need for increased knowledge on the relationship between religion and development. The present FBO-Norad relationship does not seem to contribute to increased knowledge and understanding of religion’s role in development. Looking into how the FBO-Norad relationship in general could be developed to also take seriously the identity of the Norwegian FBOs and encourage investigations into the role of religion in development could be a first step towards a more engaging cooperation between the FBOs and Norad.

At present, the renewed interest in religion seems, in the case of Norad, more like a renewed acceptance.

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