

Religion and Post-Secular SDGs

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Abstract. This article discusses theories of post-secularism, which is emerging in affinity with neoliberalism, and the participation of religions in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study used qualitative research methods with textual analysis approaches. The article argues that the current involvement of religion in achieving the SDGs is a result of religion's return as a recognised actor in the public sphere, as reflected in theories of post-secularism. Religion alone is not capable of achieving all the SDGs, but these SDGs will not be fully achieved without religion either. Indeed, religion is relevant to the SDGs (Schliesser 2023). While there are clear links between different theologies, such as Catholic (Cichos et al 2021) and Muslim (Khan and Haneef 2022), with the SDGs, there are also some points of contention.

Keywords: Post-Secularism, Neo-Liberalism, SDGs, Religious Actors.

Abstrak. Artikel ini membahas teori-teori post-sekularisme, yang muncul bersamaan dengan neoliberalisme, dan partisipasi agama-agama dalam mencapai Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDGs) PBB. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis tekstual. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa keterlibatan agama dalam pencapaian SDGs saat ini merupakan hasil dari kembalinya agama sebagai aktor yang diakui di ruang publik, seperti yang tercermin dalam teori-teori post-sekularisme. Agama saja tidak mampu mencapai semua SDGs, tetapi SDGs juga tidak akan sepenuhnya tercapai tanpa agama. Memang, agama relevan dengan SDGs (Schliesser 2023). Meskipun ada hubungan yang jelas antara teologi yang berbeda, seperti Katolik (Cichos et al. 2021) dan Muslim (Khan dan Haneef 2022), dengan SDG, ada juga beberapa poin yang diperdebatkan.

Kata Kunci: Post-Sekularisme, Neoliberalisme, SDGs, Aktor Agama.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the theories of post-secularism emerging in affinity with neo-liberalism and the participation of religions towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These consist of seventeen goals and 169 targets for achieving development. They were adopted in 2015 by all 193 members states of the UN and extend the previous framework of the eight Millenium Development Goals. The establishment of the SDGs involved a wider consultation process than previously that engaged with states, the private sector and civil society. These SDGs are addressing the challenges of today, not just about climate action, but also about ending poverty, and reaching peace and justice for all and these apply to the entire globe.

This research argues that the current inclusion of religion when it comes to meeting the SDGs are an outcome of religion being back as a recognised actor in the public sphere as has been reflected in the theories of post-secularism. This has happened in affinity with the advent of neo-liberalism which has seen an opportunity for religion to compensate for the deficiencies of the welfare state. The first section of this article deals with the situation at the end of the last century when religion, despite some groups being involved in development, was not seen as an active actor and legitimate in the field. It then moves to the full development of neoliberalism as a hegemony and the move of religion in the public sphere through the eyes of the theories of post-secularism. While religion is today a key player when it comes to development and meeting SDGs, this does not go without any issue. Even if the review of the literature for this research points out to a success story, it highlights however some points of contention when dealing, for examples, with issues of gender and reproductive health.

This article extends the findings that post-secularism, as a supposedly public space of equal dialogue between secular and religious groups, works up to a point, and in this applies to the implementation of SDGs as well. In this context, I will be referring to post-secular SDGs as a topic of public debates between secular development organisations and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs). This debate, I will argue,

is not just between religious groups and secular agencies, but between religious groups as well. As an outcome of this investigation, this article recommends for secular international institutions to develop a stronger religious literacy to be able to meet these SDGs more adequately.

2. METHOD

This study used qualitative research methods with textual analysis approaches. Textual analysis was used to examine theories of post-secularism and religious participation in the relevant literature. The main literature on the subject was analysed. There are many works that explore this issue, such as Schliesser's (2023) work on the importance of religion for the SDGs, as well as studies on Catholic theology (Cichos et al., 2021) and Islamic theology (Khan and Haneef, 2022) in the context of the SDGs. Data is collected from books, journal articles and reports to understand the role of religion in achieving the SDGs.

This methodology allows the research to provide in-depth and comprehensive insights into the role of post-secularism and religion in sustainable development, as well as identify opportunities and challenges.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Religion and Secular Sustained Development

At the end of the last century and at the beginning of this one, it was a held belief from various writers on, and activists in, sustained development that the Judeo-Christian writings about 'man's right to master the Earth' (Genesis 1:28) has been at the root of Western societies' attitude towards the earth. It has even been claimed by some environmental groups that these religious traditions are at the basis of the destruction of the natural environment through the promotion of a value system that proclaims man and woman's domination over nature (Mebratu 1998). Further, it might be expected of certain religious groups that if they believe, for example, in the coming of the Apocalypse that nothing should, or is worth doing, to protect the environment as the world is about to end through divine intervention. The origin

of the post-WWII development project thus assumed that religion was opposed to development, and as the world was assumed to become more secular at that time, religions were left out of this project (Freston 2019). However, while not diminishing these statements, the reality is more complex, and religion should not have been perceived at that time of only having an antagonistic approach to the environment and to sustained development.

We could expect nature religions such as indigenous religions, some New Age networks, neo-paganism and witchcraft which believe that it is important of living in harmony with nature to have been the only exception. Some neo-pagan groups were, and are still, heavily engaged in social, political and spiritual actions to save and/or protect the environment. Our planet is even referred by some of these groups as Gaia, a living entity who cannot be dominated by humankind. While these were more visible by ecological eyes, certain groups within the Judeo-Christian traditions, often those pointed out as the 'culprit of earth destruction', were nevertheless working towards the protection of nature and thus promote a sustained development approach to the world. During this time period in which there was limited connection between scriptural based religions and environmental movements, some of these mainstream religious groups were slowly working on an environmentally healthy society which were advancing the sustainability agenda (Gardner 2003). For example: protecting the environment as God's creation became an agenda for some Christian Democrats in the US (Rosin 2007) and for the Evangelical Environmental Network; a group of evangelical Christians who promote conservation and environmental stewardship (Gardner 2003). As Schliesser (2023: 1) argues, 'faith actors have been active in development work before the term "development" itself was even coined'. Christian missionaries would, for examples, heal the sick, alleviate poverty and would fulfil their Christian duty to educate.

As the Australian theologian, Norman Habel, Editor of The Earth Bible Project stated in a radio interview almost twenty years ago:

I have an expression that I use frequently called 'heavenism'. 'Heavenism' is for me, that belief that what's really important is

God in heaven, making, as it were, heaven our important home instead of Earth our home, viewing the Earth as disposable. In the end, the Earth is going to come to an end, that's what we've thought, this is just matter, and so it doesn't really matter what happens to it. I believe that we need a whole new orientation here, that has us recognise the Earth as a spiritual entity as much as it is a material entity. Something that is really a sacred site in this cosmos. (<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s74986.2htm> (23/02/2007))

This quote reflects the move within certain Christian groups from a view on 'heavenism' towards recognising the earth as much more than simply a material entity; that is as a spiritual entity as well. Following this change of approach towards the earth, a paradigm has emerged from these Judeo-Christian religious traditions which is called Ecotheology. In this paradigm, theologians reinterpret passages in classic texts to make sense of the current natural crisis as it is believed that we have forgotten about the wealth of ecological material found in these scriptures. The wealth of information is argued to have totally been missed by theologians in the past. These ecotheologians believe that if we allow our lives to be driven by religious virtues that take into account a respectful approach to nature, we may avoid moving deeper into a dystopia. As Norm Habel continues in his radio interview:

Let me give one example of the problem we face, which is with apocalyptic, and the idea the world is going to come to an end. Therefore, in the mind of many popular thinkers and preachers, the earth is disposable, it's waste. It can be thrown into the waste, bang, it can be eternity. When in fact that kind of understanding of earth and of creation, is simply not true to the Biblical text when you look at it very closely. If you look at the text at the end of Revelation, this grand and glorious picture of the new world, the new world is not a disposal of this world, it's a transformation, a renewal of this world. (<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s74986.2htm> (23/02/2007))

Despite these theological revisions, it is mainly with the full development of

neoliberalism and post-secularism at the beginning of the 21st century, that the involvement of religion within the field of development started to change. This return to religion, however, has not come with some challenges, as the following section explores.

3.2 Neoliberalism and Faith Based Organisations

In its simplest form, neoliberalism is a rhetoric about small governments and the free market (Cahill, Edwards and Stilwell 2012). It requires a floating currency market, a reduction of trade barriers, the privatization of the public sector, and the deregulation of industries. It also calls for a 'New Public Management' by which the public sector is pushed to operate in the same fashion as the private sector. It is known as 'Thatcherism' in the UK, 'Reaganomics' in the US, 'economic rationalism' in Australia, and 'economic fundamentalism' in New Zealand. This 'market thinking' not only penetrates communities and families, it also affects the individual (Connell and Dados 2014). If the 1980s marked the start of the steady growth of this ideology, I have argued elsewhere that it is today a hegemony, including also the religious sphere (Possamai 2018).

As the responsibility for social welfare and social services has been shifted from the state to the individual, an opportunity has been created for FBOs to pursue and develop their charitable activities among marginalized groups in the public space as well. As such, the growth of these FBOs have been an unintended consequence of the rise of neoliberalism and the scaling down of state-provided welfare (e.g. Beaumont 2008; Hackworth 2012). These organizations have been created to fulfil specific functions such as providing food and/or shelters for the poor. Religions, as already stated above, while providing spiritual leadership, have had an interest in physical welfare for a very long time. However, the difference today is a refocused interest in them by so-called secular governments, and more specifically, in their organizations that are directed specifically to a non-religious public utility.

With regards to sustained development, the Washington Consensus, as a philosophy of economy that broadly supports free market

ideology developed at the start of neoliberalism. It was endorsed from the 1980s by prominent economists and international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank. Since then, because of these policies, the business sector and neoliberalism, rather than governments, have been driving development (Sandikci et al. 2016). International development is no longer state-led and has become more market-led. And this neoliberal turn has allowed the religious actors to come back on centre stage (Freston 2019). This shift would have been marked by the first major global initiatives that took place in 2000 through what was called the World Faiths Development Dialogue, an initiative established by the then World Bank president and the Archbishop of Canterbury (Tomalin 2021).

FBOs, although active for a long time, have thus only become recently in the centre stage of international development strategies and implementations only after the Washington Consensus (Clarke et al. 2011). If they are essentially structured like secular NGOs (non-government organizations), they have an affiliation to a religious organisation and/or faith. Since the early 2000s, Tomalin et al (2019) have also observed this marked increase in the interest of secular global development institutions in working with faith-based organisation and they make reference to this shift as the turn to religion. In this sense, in contrast to what was explained in the previous section, religion is now seen as a resource for development, rather than an obstacle. This statement however has more relevance in the Global North than in the Global South where secularism is not as widespread. We will come back to this point in the next section on post-secularism.

FBOs are not exclusive to one religion and neo-liberalism has had an impact to all of them. Indeed, Atia (2012) make reference to Muslim Faith-Based Development Organisations (FBDOS) which are mixing Islamism and neoliberalism. These adapt principles of charity based on the Islamic faith while promoting neoliberal practices such as "financial investment, entrepreneurship, self-help strategies and management science" (Atia 2012: 811). Atia uses the term 'pious neoliberalism' to describe these groups that promote material

success in the here-and-now and spiritual success in the afterlife. She states:

A neoliberal Islam entails the removal of two important characteristics of preceding Islamist movements: the tenets of income distribution and social justice that are strongly articulated in traditional Islamist circles and the anti-Western political motive and fury that characterizes many Islamist groups. The participants in FBDOs are inspired by Islam; however, unlike their more traditional counterparts, they endorse a Western model of economic development and its associated narrative of progress. Rather than provide handouts to the needy, they support projects that employ people and turn them into responsible and entrepreneurial subjects ... This narrative of Islam is not an alternative to neoliberalism but is an iterative and contingent form of neoliberalism that demonstrates the dialectic relationship between religion and neoliberalism and the way it attaches to other political projects (Atia 2012: 822).

The emergence of religious ideas in these major international financial institutions is thus an outcome of the impact of neoliberalism on development (Rees 2013). Neoliberalism opened the door at the international level for FBOs, and while they have proven to be well equipped in this free market ideology, their motivation to help people is not necessarily separated from proselytisation (Ware et al. 2013).

Moving to the SDGs more specifically, some critics are also concerned that the conservative wings of some religious groups and their sectarianism can be clashing with gender equality (SDG 5) and the pursuit of peace and inclusion (SDG 10 and 16). In their research, Tomalin et al (2019) have indeed heard from some of their conservative faith actors that aspects of SDG 5 made them feel threatened as their understanding of sexual relationships should only happen within heterosexual marriages. We will come back to these points of contentions after exploring the notion of post-secularism and how it applies to the SDGs.

3.3 Post-Secular SDGs

Casanova (1994) identified four main catalysts that effectively shifted religion from

the private to the public sphere: the 1979 Iranian revolution; the rise of Solidarity in Poland; the political engagement of Catholicism in Latin America; and the growth of the Christian right in US politics. These developments demonstrated not only that religion could make a comeback in 'secularised' countries but, perhaps more importantly, that it was capable of taking over the government. It was not until the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Torpey 2010), with their devastating assault at the heart of Western culture and capitalism, that people, especially from the Global North, were no longer able to ignore the 'new' facts of the last quarter of the twentieth century. Religion was not only back, it had been reincarnated, and far from rejecting modernisation, it had adopted its creed of progress and emancipation in its many forms. Authors such as Habermas, who had previously been defenders of the secularisation thesis, could no longer ignore this new reality. In dealing with these new issues, Habermas (2002; 2006; Habermas and Ratzinger 2006) refers to the concept of post-secularism in association with the process of the deprivatization of religion and the current dialogue about the management of the presence of religious groups in the public sphere.

The notion of post-secularism is, as one would expect, closely linked to that of secularism which is at its base a western construct and which does not apply well to the Global South. As the western world was modernising in the late 19th century and early 20th century, it was believed that the advance of science, education, and urbanism would eradicate religion. In this context, the notion of secularism was closely linked to that of modernity. However, after decades of taking-for-granted knowledge, this has finally been questioned in recent years. For example, Grace Davie (2002) boldly claimed that Europe is the exceptional case with regards to secularism and no longer the model that the rest of the world would emulate. In her work, she questions whether modernisation and secularisation are necessarily connected. After considering case studies from around the world, with a particular focus on North America, Latin America, Africa, and Christian communities in the far East, she concludes her book with the sentence that 'secularisation is essentially a European phenomenon and is extrinsic rather

than intrinsic to the modernising process *per se*' (2000: 161). Davie followed up her 2002 book with *Religious America, Secular Europe: A Theme and Variations* (2008). Co-authored with Peter Berger and Effie Fokas it further addresses the notion of Eurosecularity as a particularity of that region of the globe, and not a universal norm.

Coming back to the notion of public sphere, it must be observed that it is not a multilingual space as only the non-religious language is used, something that nevertheless FBOs have accustomed themselves to deal with (Tomalin et al 2019). This is reflected in the wider approach to post-secularism that claims that secular language is the *lingua franca* of the public sphere due to its perceived neutrality. Taylor's (2007) *A Secular Age* makes reference to what he calls the 'immanent frame' to describe this social imaginary in which religion and secularism are included. It is a space today that is more open to religion but still secular. Rather than asking for religions to give up their own vocabulary and use instead the allegedly neutral language of reason in the public sphere, the Catholic philosopher proposes that religious groups should mobilize their religious language to provide a stronger voice.

In the fieldwork conducted by Haustein and Tomalin (2019), they discovered that their sample of faith actors felt that there was indeed no room for anything religious in the public-facing of the SDG processes. And indeed, when dealing with the SDGs, these groups are treated in the same capacity as the secular NGOs or Civil society. This did not involve any more work from FBOs to deal with the SDGs as they have not changed the way they work since the establishment of these goals (Haustein and Tomalin 2021). It has only changed the way they brand their activities and how they promote themselves in the public sphere. It has also provided them with a more extended network.

As such, these post-secular SDGs are not seen by all as a negative situation, as this secular language helps FBOs to maintain a neutral ground for their discussion at various levels and keep low potential sectarian conflicts. These actors were found to be able to move from one discourse to another when appropriate and adapt their language in the

right context. Tomalin (2021) lists for examples international FBOs such as Christian Aid, World Vision, or Islamic Relief that have learned to work with international NGOs and have secularised their narratives. They do not use religious language when they reference or contextualised the SDGs. While some FBOs are able to speak the secular language in the post-secular sphere of these SDGs, other groups such as Local Faith Actors (e.g. local churches and mosques) are not able to enter in this dialogue and knowledge of their involvement with SDGs is at this stage limited (Tomalin 2021). In this context, these international FBOs are seen as a type of brokers and/or intermediaries who are at the interface of these two types of dialogue. While these FBOs have been today at the forefront of fulfilling the SDGs, more work seems to be needed to bring the Local Faith Actors alongside. In their analysis of the Catholic social teaching around the SDGs, Cichos et al (2021) also find out that through their principle of subsidiarity, there should indeed be greater participation of local communities in decision-making processes.

That said, it does not stop certain critics of the involvement of religion in development to continue claiming that secular avenues are the best option for universal human rights, especially taking into account their perceived weakness of religion dealing with SDG 5, 10, and 16 as explore above (Tomalin et al 2019). These FBOs are often perceived as an hindrance to development (Haustein and Tomalin 2021), are seen as having a propensity to proselytise and thus as an extension of the missionary spirit. They can be seen at times as having problematic views on gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and religious tolerance (Freston 2019).

From the other side of the spectrum, this turn to religion is not always seen positively by faith actors either as they claim that this has not gone far enough (Tomalin et al 2019; Tomalin 2021). Their claim is that their expertise on the ground has been instrumentalised by secular agencies to take advantage of them and do not want to include in their approach the human relationship with the divine. Further, these secular global development institutions are perceived by some religious actors for picking and choosing FBOs that are more liberal to

work with instead of those that obviously combine development with proselytism.

However, the true picture seems to be in between as not all SDGs are treated equally. Haustein and Tomalin (2019) produced a report based on the various workshops they organised with faith actors involved in meeting the SDGs. The main focus of these participants was on 'no poverty' (SDG1), 'Good Health and Well-Being' (SDG3) and 'Quality Education' (SDG 4), as well as being strong advocate for 'Gender Equality' (SDG 5) and 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions' (SDG 16). Despite being among their top priorities, gender equality (SDG5) was also raised as conflictual. While these faith actors embraced this goal, they admitted the values articulated in SDG 5 could be a mismatch with the traditional values of some of the religious groups their work with. Ecological themes (i.e. 'Life Below Water' (SDG 15), 'Life on Land' (SDG 15), 'Affordable and Clean Energy' (SDG 7) and 'Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure' (SDG 9) was however ranked the lowest. These faith actors were equipped to speak the secular language in this post-secular sphere and were expected to be treated like any other non-governmental development organisation. They are explicit in not wanting to be relegated to the 'religion corner'. They view themselves however as translators of global secular frameworks into the religio-cultural languages of the communities they work with.

In this new public sphere open to discussion about religion, it is not only FBOs that are engaged with the sustainability of the SDGs, religious groups are as well. Freston (2019), for example, makes references to the 2015 Hindu and Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change. There are conflicts with Evangelical Christians however, as some US Christian Nationalists ignore climate changes.

Of interest is Pope Francis (2013; 2015) who recently talked to the issue of neoliberalism and of the natural environment. Pope Francis (2013) pointed in his *Evangelii Gaudium* (that is the Joy of the Gospel) that a globalization of indifference has developed with the growth of neoliberalism and that we are losing our ability to feel compassionate; that we tend to follow our major need, which is for consumption (2013: 33). He proposes an ethic in which money must serve and not rule. He

admits, however, that "in a culture where each person wants to be bearer of his or her own subjective truth, it becomes difficult for citizens to devise a common plan which transcends individual gain and personal ambitions" (2013: 36). Francis finds that welfare projects are temporary responses and what needs to be done instead is to solve the problem at the root of our social ills, inequality. He supports processes that will create a fairer distribution of income and create employment for the poor. He then begs the Lord to give us more capable politicians and to inspire them. He asks for an openness to the transcendent which "would help to break down the wall of separation between the economy and the common good of society" (2013: 103). Around the time that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Sustainable Development Goals was adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution in New York, Pope Francis (2015, 26) follows on from his previous work with his *Laudato Si* (that is Praised Be) and argues that the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together. Some readers of *Laudato Si* (Hickel 2015 as described by Freston 2019) have compared it to the SDGs and in this contrast they see the SDGs too timid, stuck in a business-as-usual mentality, and connected to a consumption-driven economic growth that is dominated by transnational corporations and the over-powerful financial sector. In this perspective, the environment is defenceless before a 'deified market'. As a solution, the Pope proposes an approach that is beyond the secular language, beyond what is deemed appropriate in a post-secular sphere, that there is a need to change humanity, that people must be personally transformed, but this can only be sustained with a spirituality. While this proposal wants to bring religion back to save the earth, it nevertheless does not address gender equality issues supported by SDG 5 (Freston 2019).

Following *Laudato Si*, Cichos et al (2021) embarked on the task to uncover more systematically the common points and differences between the 2030 Agenda and Catholic social teaching, especially with regards to putting in practice theological statements. They find that for all 17 SDGs, both the Christian view and international organisations can complement each other's. They however

find some points of tension, especially with regards to SDG1 on reducing poverty, as the Catholic teaching makes a statement against birth control and understands that assistance to the poor must respect human dignity. This is reflected as well in SDG3 devoted to health care in which there is tension when it comes to reproductive rights and the Church stance against abortion. Although this is underspecified in SDG1, this point of disagreement became very clear at the International Conference on Population and Development in Nairobi in 2019 (Cichos et al. 2021: 277). The authors are also defending the disjuncture between the Catholic Church and SDG5 on gender by claiming that the Church should not be perceived as a patriarchal institution and is in fact a proponent of antidiscrimination measures. They claim that their approach, contrary to the secular approaches, does not imply the masculinisation of women as they understand gender equality as an imitation of men by women. They highlight the Pope asking women to work on a 'new feminism' instead which shows the 'feminine genius' in its entirety. The book is however silent when dealing with LGBT issues. They then bring Pope Francis's warning on the current pattern of consumption which threatens societies and the environment, something that the 2030 Agenda hardly recognise as a problem.

4. CONCLUSION

Religion alone is not able to fulfil all the SDGs, but these SDGs are not going to be fully achieved without religion either. Religion indeed matter for the SDGs (Schliesser 2023). While there are clear links between various theologies such as the Catholic one (Cichos et al 2021) and the Muslim one (Khan and Haneef 2022) with SDGs, there are also some points of contention, especially with it comes to reproductive health and gender equality. These are part of the limitation of post-secularism that I have already explored (Possamai 2018). In these instances, the public debates on 'heated' and controversial topics such as the same sex marriage debate and the implementation of Shari'a in Western societies did not lead to a rational and conducive debate in the Habermasian style. With regards to the SDGs, these points of contention seem to be kept in

Soto Voce because of the work of FBOs who are the intermediaries between secular international institutions and Local Faith Organisations. However, it does not mean that they do not exist.

Rather than ignoring these issues, I agree with the United Nations Population Fund's (2016: 23) report and Schliesser (2023) that a challenge is for these secular institutions to become more religious literate and understand better these issues. The translation should not be simply from the secular to the religious but should also be from the religious to the secular. In this instance, for the SDGs to have a better chance to succeed, the translation of the FBOs should happen both ways. This will help to build a common language in which both the development rhetoric and the religious language can speak together. This also involve developing a modicum of common religious human rights' literacy among local faith leaders working on SDGs (United Nations Population Fund 2016:41; Schliesser 2023: xv). As this report has highlighted, one of the most difficult dialogues between religion and gender is around the LGBT issues, and this should be a more reflexive and respectful approach that has been used by certain religious groups during the same-sex marriage debate (e.g. Possamai-Inesedy and Turner 2016). This is part of a larger issue when it comes to the ideal working of post-secularism in which a real dialogue should be able to take place even for contentious issues. As Davie (2017: 94) argues in general, policy makers should be more religiously literate to be able to take on board the sensibilities of religious people, and likewise, those with a religious interest should be 'policy' literate to be able to be heard and understood. These could be achieved through the provision of training in the 'fields of education, media, government, humanitarian action, journalism, and activism' (Schliesser 2023: 16).

The development of this religious literacy also includes an ability to embrace, not a reified homogenous religious view, but a diversity of religious views that can have different approaches to progress, development, and sustainability. Indeed, religious collaboration with FBOs often refers to the Abrahamic religions mainly and should also include other

traditions. And as part of a true post-secular projects, the dialogue should not be restricted between faith and secular groups, but between faith groups as well.

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