Communicating Faith-Identity in Development

A case study of three Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) in the Mindanao Island of Southern Philippines

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Abstract

This research paper is a case study on the identity of three Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) located in the Mindanao Island of Southern Philippines. The empirical data was collected employing qualitative semi-structured interviews through virtual interactions. The research captures the journey of the three local FBOs as they continue to sustain their identity amidst the changes in the development world where they function. Identity is a complex issue, especially when FBOs have to experience the pressure to conform to how the world thinks who they are. So what does faith identity mean to these FBOs? How is this identity communicated in practice?

The aim of this research is to acquire a better understanding of these FBOs; their faith-identity and its values; and how faith provides direction for actions which shape and characterise these organisations. Moreover, considerations were taken that faith is manifested in different ways. In studying these FBOs, the researcher was provided with another perspective on why FBOs held on to their identity regardless of the constant pressure to conform to the changing world and the opportunities the changing world has to offer. Moreover, to acquire knowledge on the importance of their identity helps to bridge communication gaps among the many actors in development and to know what to expect in development partnership.

According to the modernists, religion will disappear. For the international development actors, religion will be less important as the communities modernise. However, faith is still significant to the FBOs in this research. Faith is not an add-on to the development work they do. Faith is the reason for their existence. For these FBOs, faith-identity means their development activities are inspired and guided by God to have compassion for the poor and marginalised people. For them, faith is communicated in practice by providing genuine care and by being inclusive in their development commitments.
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Introduction

Background

Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) are religious development organisations which have the same characteristics as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). (Knowledge Centre Religion and Development 2011, p. 20) They have historically been in the forefront of service delivery and social movements in development (James 2009, p. 3) and make up a significant sector of non-profit organisations who work in economic development and on other global issues. It has been estimated that FBOs provide between 30-60% of health care and educational services in many developing countries. Many FBOs are important places for outreach, resources, and service delivery. (UNFPA 2009, p. 1)

This research paper is a case study on the identity of three FBOs located in the Mindanao Island of Southern Philippines. The research captures the journey of these local FBOs as they continue to sustain their identity amidst the changes in the development world where they function. Identity is a complex issue, especially when FBOs have to experience the pressure to conform to how the world thinks who they are. So what does faith identity mean to these FBOs? How is this identity communicated in practice?

Traditionally, the important contributions of religion to development has been ignored by major international development players and by the academic disciplines in development studies. (Clarke 2006; Tomalin 2015) It was assumed that as societies modernise, they become less religious causing religion to become less priority in development. This neglect by the major development actors is also partly due to the assumption that religion is largely opposed to economic development. (Tomalin 2015, p. 1) Religion is perceived to hold back development and progress.

Moreover, as the climate in the development world continues to be secular, many FBOs in Europe downplayed their faith identity. (James 2009, p. 3) According to the analysis of International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) conducted in 2009, the majority of FBOs in Europe, especially the Christian FBOs, are reserved in discussing their faith.
However, over the past decade, there has been a noticeable shift within some areas of international development policy, practice and research to include religion as an important factor in development. (Tomalin 2015, p. 1) James (2009, p. 3) pointed out that many are realising that the past secular materialistic approaches are failing to deliver the hoped for change. The large contributions of FBOs can no longer be ignored when providing the basic needs for more than half of the world’s population is becoming increasingly difficult. (UNFPA 2009, p. 1)

In the Philippines, faith permeates most, if not, all aspects of life. According to the 2015 Global Attitudes survey of the United States-based Pew Research Centre, nearly 9 out of 10 Filipinos consider religion very important in their lives. Philippines is ranked 10th in religiosity among the 40 countries surveyed. Religion is very much entwined in Filipinos’ lives, from the Philippine television dramas to the government offices all through the preamble of the Philippine Constitution. (Bagaoisan, 2016) Faith is abundantly absorbed in the Philippine culture and tradition, and is a part of the identity of a Filipino. Being the only Christian nation in Asia, the Philippines remains to be the bastion of Christianity in Asia with 93 percent of its total population adhering to the teachings of Jesus Christ. (Guzman, 2011)

In relation to this, the FBOs in the Philippines tend to have a strong faith identity. Although faith is expressed in different ways, it is significant to highlight the importance of faith to these FBOs as faith inspires their actions, drives their behaviours, shapes their attitudes and influences their decision-making.

**Importance**

The aim of this research is to acquire a better understanding of FBOs, their faith-identity and its values, and how faith provides direction for actions which shapes and characterises these organisations. Moreover, the researcher takes into consideration that different FBOs express their faith in varying manners. Therefore, in studying these FBOs, the researcher was provided with new perspectives on their faith and the reasons they held on to their identity regardless of the constant pressure to conform to the changing world and the opportunities the changing world has to offer. The researcher did not try to generalise beyond the case under study. However, the analysis of this research can be utilised by other researchers if they perceive a suitability to their cases. Furthermore, the researcher intends that this research will
lead to open communication among different development actors and create a more realistic
expectation in development partnership. This open communication will help in bridging
communication gaps and to strengthen development cooperation right from the beginning.
Open communication limits possible misunderstanding and suspicion, creates healthier
collaboration and foster ongoing dialogue.

Due to the aim of an inductive and in-depth study of these FBOs, a case study research
methodology was employed. This research approach helps in bringing understanding to a
complex issue such as the topic of faith and identity by studying real life accounts. The
empirical data was collected employing qualitative interviews through virtual interactions.
Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions were utilised through email and were
followed up with further discussion through email and Facebook Messenger. This form of
virtual research enabled the researcher to use the immediacy of the internet to access
respondents.

For the analysis, thematic analysis was employed to assess whether or not saturation has
occurred in the data collecting process. Writing memos were made throughout the data
collection process and while reading through the available resources multiple times.
The written memos collected reflections, impressions, key words, key points, data which
needed elaboration and ideas for further explorations. While going through the written
memos, potential emergent themes were found. These emergent themes were developed into
key themes which helped explain the analysis more systematically.

**Limitations**

Distance, time difference, and the work and personal commitments of the research
respondents were some of the limiting factors of this research. Due to these circumstances,
email interviews and the utilisation of Facebook were employed. However, the virtual
research method was both economical and time-efficient. It enabled the researcher to use the
immediacy of the internet to access respondents and respondents were given the freedom to
choose when to respond and in a setting of their choice. It provided the respondents sufficient
time to reflect and to process their own responses, and to include the participation of others
within their organisations. In general, the data collected was rich in both descriptions and
narratives, and there was a prolonged and active engagement during the entire research process.

In addition, the researcher undertook all endeavour to involve more FBOs in the research, especially to include a local Muslim organisation. However, the effort of finding more participating organisations was not successful. The researcher contacted all possible local FBOs, however, this did not yield to significant positive results. Although one FBO who is largely working with the Muslim communities agreed to participate, this FBO did not communicate further to the researcher after the initial agreement even after several follow-up.

Initially, a fourth local FBO was involved in the research. However, upon review, the researcher was not able to clearly link the work of this FBO to development. The researcher was not able to gather sufficient information regarding their development activities. As a result, the researcher took the decision to exclude this FBO from the research.
**Literature review and theory**

During the eighteen-century Age of Enlightenment, religion as the ultimate source of truth was challenged. The confidence that Enlightenment philosophers have in humanity’s intellectual powers to achieve systematic knowledge of nature and to serve as an authoritative guide in practical life opposes the role of established religion which influences thought and action. Enlightenment philosophers are suspicious and hostile towards established religion whose authority is seen to compete with the authority of one’s own reason and experience. Since the process of enlightenment is to become progressively self-directed in thought and action through the awakening of one’s intellectual powers, established religion is regarded to have no authority in directing one’s thought and action. This awakening of one’s intellectual powers is believed to lead humanity ultimately to a better, more fulfilled human existence. (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy 2017)

Emerging from the Age of Enlightenment, the mid-twentieth century Modernisation theory believes that people themselves could develop and change their society. Though religion was acknowledged to have the power to shape worldview; and religious movements to enable people to create new public identities, its potential to challenge marginalisation and to develop new forms of social organisations, modernists expected religion to disappear and be displaced by reason and knowledge derived from scientific explanations for human life, nature and society. It was anticipated that the obligations based on religious values will be replaced by a practical rationale for individual choices and actions. It was expected that religion would no longer be used to legitimate political power or legislation. Furthermore, religion would also have fewer social functions and less influence over economic, social and cultural life. Modernity and capitalist development were to be accompanied by the secularisation of the society. Secularisation was promoted as a precondition to achieve development and increased prosperity. (Rakodi 2015, p. 23 ref in Preston 1968; Corbridge 1993; Casanova 1994; Beckford 2003; Furseth and Repstad 2006; Kapoor 2008; Zavos 2010 Nederveen Pieterse 2010) Therefore, the traditional aspect of the society which includes its belief system was considered to be an obstacle to development. The traditional man who places high value on religion and the sacred must be replaced by the modern man who places high value on education and science. The more thorough the disintegration of traditional elements in a society, the more a society can integrate change and develop qualitative characteristics of
modern society such as rationality, efficiency and liberty. (Peet and Hartwick 2015, pp. 138-143) All this assumptions demonstrated how religion will become less significant and gradually diminish as society aims for advancement.

Based on the ideology that development follows a unilinear path towards a commonly accepted and desired future, Modernisation was the most influential development paradigm. (Rakodi 2015, p. 17; Le Moigne and Juul Petersen 2016, p. 6) Developing countries were expected to pursue the same path taken by the developed countries to ensure progress and economic development. Since development was thought to be the same for all, it was assumed that what had occurred in Europe and later in the US, must be reproduced elsewhere. (Rakodi 2015, p. 19 ref in Rist 2008) Based on two key principles, development was commonly understood as difference and similarity. The developing world is different, therefore, it is the duty of development policy to make the developing world more identical to the developed world. (Rakodi 2015, p. 19-20 ref in Mehmet 1999; Corbridge 2007)

Traditionally, the important contributions of religion to development has been ignored by major international development players and by the academic disciplines in development studies. (Clarke 2006; Tomalin 2015) It was assumed that as societies modernise, they become less religious causing religion to become less priority in development. This neglect by the major development actors is also partly due to the assumption that religion is largely opposed to economic development. (Tomalin 2015, p. 1) Religion is perceived to hold back development and progress. According to Lewis, when religion infuses in people certain negative perceptions of wealth accumulation and economic opportunities, religion becomes an obstacle to economic growth. (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 31 ref in Lewis 1955) Furthermore, religion and its relationship to economic development is an existing concern in the human sciences. This relationship consists of opposing views from Karl Marx and Max Weber. For Marx, economic growth goes with an obsession of commodities which is a religious character in itself. Marx called religion as the illusory happiness of the people which should be abolished to acquire real happiness. (O’Malley 1977) However, according to Weber, religion plays a key role in building the ethical practices of workers who brought about economic growth. (Rudnyckyi 2015, p. 406 and 415) Interestingly, Fountain (2015, p. 85) argued that contemporary Western development is a direct descendent of Christian proselytising impulses, dispositions, practices and organisational forms. According to Barnett,
a powerful missionary impulse gave rise to a burst of charitable activities and social reform. (Fountin 2015 ref in Barnett 2011 : 54) This gave the reference to development as a child of missionaries and missionaries as contemporary development actors. Even today, missionaries continue to play important roles in channelling development resources. (Fountin 2015, p. 87)

Nevertheless, as the climate in the development world continues to be secular, many FBOs in Europe downplayed their faith-identity. (James 2009, p. 3) According to the analysis of International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) conducted in 2009, the majority of FBOs in Europe, especially the Christian FBOs, are reserved in discussing their faith. One of the reasons for this is the need to adapt to the changing times. According to James (2009, p. 2), faith is a flammable subject which easily causes offence. There are many examples of how faith has been manipulative in the past, for example, in maintaining injustices through slavery, colonialism, apartheid, caste and gender inequalities. The effort of being more professional was also another reason to downplay the significance of faith in European FBOs. The attempt to separate the professional from the faith element had been important as they work with secular organisations and support partners in a variety of faith context. This also includes being able to employ staff from different faith. Although, the most significant reason for downplaying faith-identity is the need to acquire funding from secular sources. (James 2009, p. 10-11)

However, over the past decade, there has been a noticeable shift within some areas of international development policy, practice and research to include religion as an important factor in development. (Tomalin 2015, p. 1) James (2009, p. 3) pointed out that many are realising that the past secular materialistic approaches are failing to deliver the hoped for change. The large contributions of FBOs can no longer be ignored when providing the basic needs for more than half of the world’s population is becoming increasingly difficult. (UNFPA 2009, p. 1) There are also facts that development practitioners cannot avoid:

- Religion guides many lives of people. To consider religion as irrelevant or as an ideological indoctrination that needs to be counteracted is likely to jeopardise development efforts.
- Religion possesses a public nature. It cannot be controlled by following the model of Western liberal democracies.
• Religion has an inherent political nature in developing countries. Confining religion to private sphere is likely to lead to rejection of development models which do not recognise religion’s political essence.
• Development practitioners must understand how a religion works and how the religious believer sees the world and establishes development priorities and outcomes.
• Dialogue and openness are important for successful development interventions. As religion embodies a way of life for religious believers, disagreements have to be worked through. Selective engagement in development interventions is not an option.

(Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 26)

In addition, instead of the predicted decline in religion, religion is increasing in most parts of the developing world. The levels of religiosity remains high in many countries in the South. New religious movements have proliferated. Religion has continuously influence politics. (Rakodi 2015, p. 18) Partly prompted by the global rise of identity politics, public religion has become more visible. This gives rise to the increasing number of religious movements and groups, and religious actors involved in development and humanitarian work. (Le Moigne and Juul Petersen 2016, p. 7)

Therefore, the assumptions about the role of religion in development should not be solely based on the concepts as perceived by the major development players. (Tomalin 2015, p. 1) While the European FBOs downplayed their faith-identity, many of the FBOs in the Global South continue to see the importance of their faith-identity. For most FBOs, faith is not an add-on to the development work. Faith is an essential part and is often the primary reason for FBOs to engage in development. (Occipinta 2015, p. 331)

The role of faith in the Philippines
In the Philippines, faith permeates most, if not, all aspects of life. According to the 2015 Global Attitudes survey of the United States-based Pew Research Centre, nearly 9 out of 10 Filipinos consider religion very important in their lives. Philippines is ranked 10th in religiosity among the 40 countries surveyed. The high sense of faith in the Philippines has deep historical roots. It can be traced back to the three centuries of Spanish occupation in the Philippines. According to Sorita (2016), this part of the Philippine history has been described
by some as the 300 years in the convent. Sorita also added that, “Spaniards conquered the land with the sword but they conquered the Filipinos’ hearts with the cross.” Being the only Christian nation in Asia, the Philippines remains to be the stronghold of Christianity in Asia with 93 percent of its total population adhering to the teachings of Jesus Christ. (Guzman, 2011) The Islam minority consists of only 4 percent. They are mainly located on the southern islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan. (Miller, 2017)

As a result and still very evident as of today, religion is very much entwined in Filipinos’ lives, from the Philippine television dramas to the government offices all through the preamble of the Philippine Constitution. (Bagaoisan, 2016) Faith is abundantly absorbed in the Philippine culture and tradition, and is a part of the identity of a Filipino. According to Cornelio and Sapitula (2012):

- 91.9% of Filipinos believe in a personal God
- 93.5% profess always having believed in God, and
- 83.6% say that they know God really exists and have no doubts about it.

(Cornelio and Sapitula 2012 ref. in Smith 2012, p. 7)

As one of the respondents in this research implied, “The Philippines is one country where when you ask if there is a God, the answer is yes and if you ask who God is, people know who it is.”

**FBOs and Development**

FBOs are religious development organisations which have the same characteristics as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). For example, FBOs aim to aid the general good at national and/or international levels, initially by alleviating poverty. They have formal organisational structure, legal status and do not make profit. They work independently of the government and have staff of professionals or volunteers working in them. However, in addition, FBOs’ identity and objectives are based on religious or spiritual tradition. Clarke and Jennings define FBOs as follows:

“A faith-based organisation is any organisation 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 that faith.” (Knowledge Centre Religion and Development 2011, p. 20 ref in Clarke and Jennings)

FBOs have historically been in the forefront of service delivery and social movements in development. (James 2009, p. 3) They make up a significant sector of non-profit organisations who work in economic development and on other global issues. It has been estimated that FBOs provide between 30-60% of health care and educational services in many developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about half of the health and education services are provided by FBOs. (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 83-84) The Catholic Church (less than 2% of the population) in India is the second-largest health and education services provider after the government. (UNGASS, 2005) Many FBOs are important places for outreach, resources, and service delivery. (UNFPA 2009, p. 1) James (2009, p. 7-9) also pointed out the reasons for donors recognising the potential of FBOs:

- **FBOs provide efficient development services and have always been important** in providing development services in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They supply vital services to the poor particularly in health and education. FBOs’ services are not only more efficient than state-run services, they cost the state less as FBOs are subsidised by the faith community.

- **FBOs reach the poorest due to their grassroots presence.** They are in the most inaccessible areas where government services do not reach. Kumi Naidoo of CIVICUS stated that FBOs probably provide the best social and physical infrastructure in the poorest communities because churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship are the central points for the communities they serve. (James 2009, p. 8 ref in 2000: CAF Alliance, 5,1)

- **FBOs are valued by the poorest since poor communities are largely faith-based communities.** Religion is still central to the social, cultural and moral life of these communities. In most villages, there is a mosque, a temple, a church or a traditional healer. A World Bank study concluded that religious leaders and institutions were often the most trusted institutions in developing countries. Spirituality, faith in God and connecting to the sacred in nature are an integral part of the lives of the poor people in many parts of the world. (James 2009, p. 8 ref in Narayan 2000)
• FBOs provide an alternative to a secular theory of development. Religion expands the understanding of development beyond income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and economic development. It brings back the focus to human development and the questions of values and meaning which link into people’s sense of well-being. Successful development can only take place if attention is given to the different ways in which people give meaning to the world and their existence in it. (James 2009, p. 8 ref in Thomas 2004:223)

• FBOs ignite civil society advocacy. For example, the church was at the forefront of the civil rights movement in the US, in the democratisation process in Latin America through the influence of liberation theology, and in the Solidarity movement in Poland.

• FBOs motivate action. Religion is a powerful motivating force in development through the emphasis on concepts, such as, compassion and service; unity and interconnectedness; and justice and reconciliation. It is particularly effective when issues relate to matters of ethics, personal morality and justice. Most importantly, faith brings hope and courage to overcome fear and powerlessness. However, religion can also motivate extreme action in a violent manner, for example, the September 11 attacks. Faith is a powerful motivating force for good or evil.

Furthermore, Karam (2016, p. 62 - 63) identified the following features which are unchangeable facts regarding FBOs:

Karam’s description of FBOs (2016)

1. FBOs are the oldest social service providers known to humankind.

2. FBOs are the first recourse places in times of emergency; whether natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, or man made disasters such as armed conflicts and uprisings.

3. Religious institutions are capable of significant social mobilisation, in addition to a distinct moral standing. They have the convening capacities inherent in raising and utilising legions of volunteers. They have the longest standing and most enduring mechanisms of raising financial resources.

4. Religious institutions are often found in the remotest corners of a country as well as in major cities with access to international hubs. FBOs have presence in multiple sites and spaces.

5. Regardless of the largely western European claims of the separation of church and state, religion and religious actors are interlinked with political developments elsewhere in the wider world.
However, according to Occhipinta (2015, p. 331), the category of FBOs are without clarification or definition. There are many variations in organisations that could fall in the category of FBOs. This could include places of worship which carry welfare and development work, informal and local organisations which may be linked to places of worship or an organisation which was developed independently. There is a diverse range of FBOs that are influenced by the faith tradition from which they come from. Moreover, there are a number of typologies which have been developed to define FBOs. From Clarke’s (2006) perspective, Clarke placed FBOs into five types to capture a variety of organisational forms:

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**Clarke’s typology of FBOs (2006)**

1. Faith-based representative organisations 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 organisations which mobilise 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 organisations which interpret and deploy faith as a political construct, organising and mobilising social groups on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives or, alternatively, promote faith as a socio-cultural construct, as a means of uniting disparate social groups on the basis of faith-based cultural identities;

4. Faith-based missionary organisations which spread key faith messages beyond the faithful, by actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it, or by supporting and engaging with other faith communities on the basis of key faith principles;

5. Faith-based illegal or terrorist organisations which engage in illegal practices on the basis of faith beliefs or engage in armed struggle or violent acts justified on the grounds of faith.

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In 2008, Clarke offered another typology that suggests four ways in which FBOs utilise their faith through social and political involvements or in linking to their development goals:

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**Clarke’s typology of FBOs through social and political involvements in linking to their development goals (2008)**

1. Passive — reliance non broad ethical principles rather than specific religious teachings;

2. Active — faith is used explicitly to motivate staff and supporters and to identify to work with beneficiaries, but in a context of religious tolerance;

3. Persuasive — as with active, but also aims at proselytising or promoting the religion;

4. Exclusive — faith is the chief consideration in service provision, identifying beneficiaries, and engaging in social and/or political action.
However, Clarke presented four problems to this typology:

- Categories are not always clear and exclusive
- The highly networked nature of FBOs may have different arms or branches. While these are separate structurally, they are closely coordinated and affiliated organisations are taking different approaches strategically.
- There is a subtle difference between active and persuasive and this may be culturally specified or contextualised.
- Persuasive and exclusive FBOs may serve a large number of poor people because of the high degree of confident that poor people have on them and partly because of shared religion.

(Occhipinta 2015, p. 337 ref. in Clark 2008)

Due to the overlap between many of these categories, Occhipinta developed another typology which is similar to Clarke. However, this typology takes the FBOs’ activities as categories:

**Occhipinta’s typology of FBOs through categories by activities (2015)**

1. Religious policy, networking and cooperation — this constitutes providing rulings on doctrine, governance of the faithful and representing the faith.
2. Charitable and development work — this includes a range of activities which provide services to the poor of other marginalised groups.
3. Political activism and lobbying — this involves the political mobilisation of social groups based on a shared faith-identity.
4. Proselytising and recruitment

There are a number of other typologies developed in attempt to define FBOs. However, the FBOs, namely FBO 1, FBO 2 and FBO 3, included in this research based their identity not merely on one typology but a combination of many. Although these typologies serve as a starting point to understand the meaning or to provide definition to FBOs, it is evident that there is a clear difficulty in defining FBOs. As mentioned, the FBOs in this research belong to the categories in varying combinations. For example, looking at Occhipinta’s typology by activities, FBO 2 claimed that they are an FBO because everything they do is anchored on their love for Jesus Christ and their compassion for people (category 1). However, FBO 2 is also motivated by the physical needs, such as physical poverty and inequality (category 2) and also by the spiritual needs, such as spiritual poverty and the need for salvation (category 4). It
is clearly a charitable and development FBO according to its activities but they also promote their faith. As FBO 2 stated, “It is always two-pronged — social justice and evangelism — at the same time.” (FBO 2, Email interview, 19 October 2017) It became evident that categorising the FBOs who are included in this research needs to involve greater inclusion and understanding of the faith-identity which shapes them. Moreover, as Deneulin and Bano (2009, p. 74) pointed out that the development work of the religious comes from their relationship with the transcendent and their worship activities. This is in the shape of missionary work for the Christians and the Da’wa groups for the Muslims. Development work is an expression of the attempt for religions to live out their fundamental beliefs.
Methodology

**This research is divided mainly into two parts:**

**Part 1. What does faith-identity mean**

**Part 2. How is faith communicated in practice**

Dividing the research into two parts provided a clear structure to the research design and helped focus its analysis. Due to the aim of an inductive, in-depth study of these FBOs, the researcher employed a case study research methodology. This research approach helps in bringing understanding to a complex issue such as the topic of faith and identity by studying real life accounts. (Blatter, 2008) Stake (1995) defined a case study as an intensive study of an individual unit of interest. It is an inquiry to explore and to provide an in-depth picture of the unit of study, which can be a person, group, organisation or social situation. (Stewart 2017, p. 2 ref in Stake 1995) By this definition, most qualitative studies are case studies, as qualitative research is usually used in cases where in-depth study of experiences is required, as opposed to quantitative research which gathered examples in a broad spectrum. (Stewart 2017, p. 2 ref in Yin 2003) In as much as the researcher can learn about FBOs in theory, the complexity of the issue of faith-identity does not always conform to a single definition or understanding. It is important to investigate into the actual experiences of FBOs. It is critical that an in-depth study is conducted and analysis is made to see what can be learned and what can be applied to a more general context or to a specific case.

As Yin (2003) argued, case studies in general are the most suitable for the purpose of answering the how and why questions of experiences in situations where the researcher has little or no control of the experiences. (Stewart 2017, p. 2 ref in Yin 2003) Answering the how and why questions in a case study allows for in-depth exploration and interaction with respondents, compared to other methods which are focused on measurement. Open questions were utilised in this research as according to Koro-Ljungberg and Hayes (2010), closed questions are of no use in qualitative research as they have no scope. (Mills and Birks 2017 p. 11 ref in Koro-Ljungberg and Hayes 2010) Therefore, the empirical data of this research was collected by employing qualitative interviews through virtual interactions. Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions were utilised through email and were followed up with further discussion through email and Facebook Messenger. An initial email interview
questionnaire was sent out to the participating FBOs which served as the starting point to discuss the topic of faith-identity and to initiate the research dialogue. The initial email interview contained more than one research question as Koro-Ljungberg and Hayes (2010) suggested. (Mills and Birks 2017 p. 11 ref in Koro-Ljungberg and Hayes 2010) However in agreement with Agee (2009), a single overarching research question is necessary to guide the study, with sub-questions. (Mills and Birks 2017 p. 11ref in Agee 2009) In the case of this research, two overarching questions were employed in the initial email interview with two different domains - Theory and Practice. The focus of the interview was directed to the research questions: What does faith-identity mean and how is faith communicated in practice. The first set of questions refers to the definition of faith in theory and the second set of questions refers to the communication of faith in practice.

Different follow-up questions were sent through email and posted privately on Facebook Messenger. The follow-up questions were based on the individual responses from the initial email interviews of the FBOs. Following up from the initial questions individually created a more personal and detailed discussion. Additionally, this form of virtual research enabled the researcher to use the immediacy of the internet to access respondents. The virtual method also allowed asynchronous communication which gave both the researcher and respondents the freedom to choose when to respond and in a setting of their choice. Asynchronicity provided the respondents sufficient time to reflect and process their own responses and to include the participation of others within their organisations.

The qualitative method is a major tool in gathering data. As in the case of this research, the method produced narratives which are close to the form of storytelling. The process of storytelling which is very natural and authentic in nature created a descriptive data of the experiences of these FBOs. Furthermore, the use of open ended questions allowed the respondents the freedom to elaborate on the aspects of the research which they found personally relevant. This provided the respondents opportunities for self-expression of their thought and experiences. There were no presumptions regarding the respondents’ answers because of the nature of open-ended questions. Respondents’ replies were unexpected which provided the researcher stimulating insights. Although the research interview is most often carried out as a one-way dialogue to serve the researcher's ends and interest, the open ended questions gave room for the respondents to be open, to be natural, and uninhibited in their
participation. This is partly attributed to the common language and culture of the respondents and the researcher. The researcher is also familiar with the working environment of these FBOs as the researcher has worked in Southern Philippines with the indigenous people groups, with the Muslim communities and with the marginalised poor who are the main stakeholders of these FBOs.

Due to the distance, time difference, and the work and personal commitments of the research respondents, email interviews and the utilisation of Facebook Messenger were proven to be both economical and time-efficient. However, the stages and the frequency of the participants’ responses were unpredictable. Technological failure or the digital divide factor was not a significant issue during the research. The respondents were within reach and were generous with their replies. The data collected was rich and there was a prolonged and active engagement during the entire research process. (Roulston, 2012; Egan, 2012; Brinkmann 2012; Ayres, 2012)

Although, the researcher has worked with local FBOs in the past, the research was not founded on any pre-existing assumptions. This is due to the different manifestations of faith among FBOs. The research outcome was also unpredictable as to how open the FBOs will be in sharing their experiences, knowing that the final result of a research study will be recorded in a write-up.

**Ethics**

Ethical issues were considered at all stages of the interview process. The respondents were aware of the purpose of the research and the result from participating as stated during the initial contact and on the approved research plan. Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were taken into account. Therefore, the respondent FBOs have been named FBO 1, FBO 2 and FBO 3. In making the FBOs anonymous, the researcher was putting the interest of the respondents first (Mills 2003). Furthermore, being born and raised in the Mindanao Island of Southern Philippines, the researcher is confident that respect was shown throughout the research. None of the participating FBOs are aware of the other FBOs involved in the research.
The Summary Profile of the FBOs under study

Below is a summary profile of the three local FBOs in this case study. These FBOs were selected due to their status as faith-based organisations, their location in the Mindanao Island of Southern Philippines, the varying stages of their existence and because of the physical distance, their virtual availability and accessibility was significant.

All the participating FBOs in this case study hope that the outcome of this research will help to advocate for the understanding of who they are and how their faith holds their identity together. Understanding these FBOs will help suspend possible suspicion regarding their identity and the motivations behind the work they do. This understanding will help to strengthen development partnerships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>FBO 1</th>
<th>FBO 2</th>
<th>FBO 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>FBO 1 is a non-profit, non-government organization helping underprivileged children and youth in rural and urban communities.</td>
<td>FBO 2 is a registered faith-based nonprofit development organisation that aims to serve, advance, love, and transform individuals and communities.</td>
<td>FBO 3 is registered at Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to bring peace, development and transformation among the indigenous communities in Mindanao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year started</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>The restoration of dignity and honor of indigenous people through education</td>
<td>Light for the lost, love for the least</td>
<td>Peace of Christ inspired lives and transformed ethnic communities in Mindanao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>To campaign for the welfare of underprivileged children and youth, particularly those belonging to the minority groups and urban poor through holistic development programs which would help to ensure the basic rights of children as stated and mandated by the Philippine and international laws.</td>
<td>To spread agape love and truth.</td>
<td>To build relationships, share God's peace and facilitate holistic services to address felt-needs of impoverished communities in Mindanao.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To engage and establish specific development programs and self-help projects such as in nutrition, health and the environment, livelihood, literacy, farm development, entrepreneurship among others.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To offer educational assistance, counseling, seminars and workshops and sports activities that would address specific issues and needs of out-of-school youth and underprivileged children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide and establish shelter, half-way homes and activity centers for out-of-school youth and under privilege children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see people follow Christ, to empower communities to grow and develop, to equip disciples who equip disciples (through word and deed), and to inspire and encourage the Body of Christ in Kingdom building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To partner with significant number of evangelical churches to impact impoverished indigenous communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see relationship mutually developed among the ethnic groups, their leaders and communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see localised trainings develop skills, enhance performance capabilities and foster empowerment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see holistic community-based projects, programs and initiatives inspire lives and transform communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see transformed communities become self-governed and self-sustained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Core values

| Arts, culture, environment and education |
| Faith, integrity, love, unity, commitment, teamwork, humility, partnership, sustainability and holistic ministry. |
| Incarnational presence, gospel-centered, prayer, partnership and community empowerment |
Map of the Philippines

South China Sea

Sulu Sea

Mindanao Location of FBOs under study

Philippine Sea

(Source: FBOs websites and official documents)
Analysis

The analysis of this research is divided mainly into two parts in relation to the research questions:

Part 1. What does faith-identity mean
Part 2. How is faith communicated in practice

To assess whether or not saturation has occurred in the data collecting process, thematic analysis has been employed. The themes were assessed by examining constructs that occur in the data, for example, repeated statements, phrases and words. This was done by writing memos throughout the data collection process and while reading through the resources multiple times. The resources included:

- Responses to interview questionnaire
- Responses to follow-up questions
- Facebook chats and messaging

The written memos collected reflections, impressions, key words, key points, data that needed elaboration and ideas for further explorations. Going through the written memos, potential emergent themes were found. These emergent themes were developed into key themes which helped to explain the analysis more systematically. A clear outline of how the findings will be presented has been developed from the beginning of the research which is the same outline as the initial email interview questionnaire.

Part 1. What does faith-identity mean

Faith-identity means development activities are inspired and guided by God to have compassion for the poor and marginalised people.

Clarke and Jennings define FBOs as any organisation 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 that faith. (Knowledge Centre Religion and
For FBO 1, their inspiration for engaging with development derived from their experience of being loved and cared by God. As FBO 1 stated,

“There is no way we be helping and caring for others without us experiencing the same love and care from God. We only give the overflow of what we have received.” (FBO 1, Email Interview, 14 October 2017)

The faith-identity of FBO 1 allows them to exercise their belief that the marginalised people are children of God and were made in God’s image. FBO 1 related this to the restoration of identity. Poverty mars the identity of the poor where the powerful, including development agencies and practitioners, do not expect the poor to have anything to offer. The poor are labeled as lazy, ignorant and superstitious. As the poor internalised this exclusion, their identity is profoundly and tragically damaged. The poor believe that they are less than other human beings and are abandoned by God. (FBO 1, Website, Accessed 5 November 2017)

Therefore, FBO 1 aims to help the marginalised people to recover their identity. They hope to restore the marred identity of the poor and marginalised by engaging in development work. To help restore this marred identity, FBO 1 advocates for the welfare of underprivileged children and youth, particularly those who belong to the minority groups and urban poor. Their holistic development programmes help to ensure the basic rights of children as stated and mandated by the Philippine and international laws. FBO 1 is working with many projects together with the communities which helped them establish a good rapport with the community leaders. This includes projects in education, environment, health and livelihood.

For education, FBO 1 provides education to elementary, high school and college students specifically to those coming from isolated mountain and coastal communities. They also run a community-based preparatory school for 6 to 9 years old children to prepare them for elementary school. In partnership with the students’ families, FBO 1 helps high school and university students with accommodation in dormitories, food and tuition. In these dormitories, the students also receive skills training. Most of the college graduates are now staff of FBO 1 and are reaching out to their own communities. FBO 1 also oversees a TESDA accredited trade school designed to provide technical training to out-of-school youth located in remote mountain communities. In 2017, they conducted three short-term technical courses which provided jobs to 40 tribal youth. FBO 1 added, “Many of the graduates in our
trade school are preferred by construction companies, upon knowing that we produce good workers that don’t drink, smoke or addicted to any vices.” (FBO 1, Email Interview, 14 October 2017) The students in the trade school do not only learn livelihood skills. In addition, they learn skills and disciplines to help them become effective change agents in their own communities. Aside from educational assistance, FBO 1 also offers counselling, seminars and workshops, and sports activities which address specific issues and needs of out-of-school youth and underprivileged children. They also provide shelter, half-way homes and activity centres for out-of-school youth and underprivileged children.

For health, FBO 1 educates parents on child care which includes protecting their families from diseases. They also run fish farm projects to increase protein production. For livelihood programmes, FBO 1 helps in farm development by using the Natural Farming Technologies (NFT) which use indigenous materials as natural fertilisers and produce home-made chemical-free pesticides to use in farms. Their environment projects address environmental issue by adopting NFT, bio-intensive gardening method which provide fresh vegetables to families whole year round and Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) to prevent soil erosion by planting legume shrubs at the slope of hilly lands. The FBO 1’s role in the communities is widely recognised and the communities consult them with their problems. (FBO 1, Messenger Interview 8 September 2017; FBO 1, Email Interview, 14 October 2017; FBO 1, Messenger Interview, 15 November 2017) Their long-term presence in these communities, even before its establishment as an FBO, is perceived as a legitimate moral voice. This is similar to how Occhipinti describes the organisational strength of FBOs who have the knowledge of local circumstance and context, local networks and often a level of trust. (Occhipinti 2015, p. 332 ref. in Rivlin 2002: 157; Bradley 2005; Occhipinti 2013)

For FBO 2, many of their development activities are related to responding to emergency situations, such as distributing relief goods to fire victims. They mobilise people in faith community to respond to disasters by donating resources. One example of their relief work is the distribution of relief goods during the Typhoon Vinta. Typhoon Vinta was a deadly tropical cyclone that affected the Southern Philippines in December 2017. FBO 2 also distributed relief goods to the displaced people in Southern Philippines and provided medical services to 803 patients. These people were displaced by the five-month-long armed conflict in Marawi City, a city in Mindanao Island. Moreover, they also conduct regular medical and
dental services with the help of volunteer medical personnel. They are also involved in livelihood and enterprise programmes, such as sustainable natural farming and assets-based assessment. (FBO 2, Email Interview, 20 Sept 2017)

FBO 2’s identity as a development organisation is still being formed, being less than a year old. They claim that their drive for engaging in development is defined by their faith-identity. For them, faith-identity means the inspiration for development work comes from God. As FBO 2 stated, “It inspires us not to be just God’s heart but God’s hand and feet as well.” FBO 2 further explained that to be God’s heart is to have empathy and sympathy to the poor, to those who are suffering, to the hopeless and to the hungry. It also means speaking and advocating for them. While to be God's hands and feet is to help people by offering them means to relieve their plights and to inspire them to undertake ways to alter their difficult situation. (FBO 2, Email Interview, 19 October 2017; FBO 2 Messenger Interview, 9 November 2017)

With regard to FBO 3, their objective is to bring peace, development and transformation among the indigenous communities in Mindanao Island. FBO 3 aims to promote peace and to empower the poor as a response to the present political development in Mindanao where peace is greatly valued and there is a desire for development. This is inspired by the Peace of Christ and the recognition of the existence of God. The Peace of Christ and God’s existence guide their development activities. These development activities serve as a platform to show their compassion to the poor and marginalised people. (FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018)

FBO 3’s development activities mostly include educational support for the poor and marginalised students. This involves educational sponsorship of high school and college students in order for them to have the opportunity to complete their education. In the Philippines where education requires financial support, students from poor families have a lower chance of acquiring educational degrees. This low opportunity among the poor students instantly widens the economic gap between the poor and the non-poor. This economic gap does not merely impact the present, this economic gap also hinders the possibility of a better future for the poor students. With FBO 3’s sponsorship programme, poor students have the likelihood of acquiring better lives in the years to come. FBO 3 also
run a nursery school for children ages 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 years old. The nursery school does not only provide learning and play; it helps young children to prepare themselves to enter elementary school. Many young children, whose parents cannot afford to send them to nursery school, find it difficult to adjust to elementary school if they have not attended preschool. For the elementary students, FBO 3 provides tutorials to support students to achieve better in schools. This also helps them prepare to enter high school. Both the preschoolers and elementary students receive help in health and nutrition through FBO 3’s feeding programmes. To continue proper nutrition at home, FBO 3 also supports the families of the students to cultivate edible mushrooms. FBO 3 also has a medical/health programme which benefited 500 patients over the last years. This programme is supported by volunteer medical personnals. (FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018)

According to Deneulin and Bano (2009, p. 130-131), both the religious and the secular development are committed to human dignity, social justice, poverty, relief, concern for the earth, equality and freedom. However, for the religious development, the respect for human dignity comes from the belief that each human being has been created in the image of God. This transcendental nature of humanism and the religious justification for respecting human dignity creates unavoidable conflict with the secular development. Therefore, bridging the divide between the religious and the secular is important. This requires genuine engagement between the religious and the secular development. Skills in dialogue and the knowledge of both the religious and the secular are needed to participate in bridging the divide. Such dialogue will require openness, receptivity and respect. Despite the difficulties involved in the dialogue, this effort is very significant to development work. (Deneulin and Bano 2009, pp. 161, 162 and 164) It is important for both the religious and secular development actors to be able to understand their differences, yet, to take advantage of their similarities in order to accomplish their development commitments. It is significant for both the religious and secular development actors to see their point of convergence rather than being hindered by their dissimilarities.
Part 2. How is faith communicated in practice

Faith is providing genuine care

Caring for others in need is not a requirement from the development aid to these FBOs but it is part of how faith functions and how it communicates itself. According to Occhipinti, the charity, relief and social services of religious organisations existed long before the concept of development. (Occhipinti 2015, p. 332 ref in Lunn 2009: 043) However, funding agencies often view FBOs suspiciously due to the possibility of development activities being used as disguise for evangelism or as a mechanism for conversion. More importantly, funding agencies are concerned that those who are economically vulnerable are being pressured to be converted to religion. (Occhipinti 2015 ref. in Bradly 2005; de Kadt 2009; Lunn 2009) Nevertheless, FBO 1 has indicated that, “We take the challenge by providing sincere help regardless if people respond to God’s love or not. It's their choice.” (FBO 1, Email interview, 19 September 2017)

Although, they do not see themselves doing religious work but rather an intervention to help, there is always the fear of being branded as proselytising. (FBO 1, Email interview, 19 September 2017; FBO 2, Email interview, 3 October 2017; FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018)

FBO 1 further indicated,

“If someone wanted to be a Christian as a result of the good work we do, is a decision he or she has to make. Although many people would think that we proselytise, we do not help people in order to convert them to a Christian belief.” (FBO 1, Email interview, 1 November 2017)

FBO 2 also stated,

“On the onset, some felt that we were there to convert them, but as months passed by, they see that we are serious with what we do. They see the authenticity, and the dedication of our volunteers that even during rainy days, we would still visit them.” (FBO 2, Email interview, 3 October 2017)
FBO 2 further explained,

“We are serious in what we do. There is no hidden agenda behind our love and action. Our faith-identity gives us credibility in what we do. People see that we are authentic and that what they see is what they get. In our operations, we always profess our faith, not always with words but with deeds.” (FBO 2, Email Interview, 19 October 2017).

As FBO 3 confirmed, “Our community-based holistic initiatives are genuine endeavours of love and are not used as religious baits to attract people.” (FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018) FBO 3 expressed that it is a challenge to be seen as suspicious by the communities. However, by establishing honest and sincere relationships, they were successful in dealing with this challenge. FBO 3 further stated, “Suspicion of our presence is inevitable but love covers it all through an honest and transparent relationship.” (FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018)

Development has a problem with proselytisation. Fountain (2015, p. 80-81) discussed the delinking of proselytising and development based on the belief that intermixing proselytising and development is illegitimate, coercive and dangerous. This problem offers an invaluable starting point for a critical examination of development. Most major donor governments around the world are concern to legally separate proselytising and development. According to Benthall, the attempts to maintain these boundaries are acts of purification where proselytising is seen as a pollutant to the purity of the secular development aid. (Fountain 2015, p. 84 ref. in Benthall, forthcoming) According to Fountain, this boundary is necessary as development is largely indebted to a particular religious history which includes a missionary heritage. Interestingly, Kroessin and Mohammed raised the question of how to define a missionary. Although not in a religious sense, Kroessin and Mohammed argued that development actors ought to be regarded as missionaries. (Fountain 2015, pp. 89 ref. in Kroessin and Mohammed 2008: 187-8) Proselytising development should expand beyond religion to all practices that seek social transformation. This includes the proselytising work of mainstream development actors who aim to expand secular formations, logics and practices. Therefore, according to Fountain, all development is proselytising. (Fountain 2015, pp. 89-90)
Another evidence of providing genuine care for FBO 1 is reaching out to the poorest of the poor where basic government services are absent or lacking. As James (2009, p. 8) mentioned, FBOs reach the poorest due to their grassroots presence. They are in the most inaccessible areas where government services do not reach. FBO 1’s goal is to provide aid to children and youth belonging to the indigenous communities who are often neglected due to their location in the far-flung mountainous areas. In these remote mountain villages, poverty and deprivation are widely seen. They lack government assistance due to the difficulty to access these villages. (FBO 1, Messenger Interview 8 September 2017)

Although FBO 2 finds it challenging, volunteerism is an indication of their commitment to development. All the 16 staff of FBO 2 has day jobs while others are students. (FBO 2, Email interview, 19 October 2017) This includes an orchard farmer, an engineer, a builder, a caterer, a missionary nurse, a caregiver, an emergency room nurse, two cross-cultural missionaries, two call-centre agents, an office assistant, a barista, an online journalist, a home-school teacher, and a youth group leader. (FBO 2, Email Interview, 20 Sept 2017) They organised themselves in order to respond to the destitution happening around them. Although, FBO 2 admitted that sometimes they lack manpower and others have felt overworked, they are fully committed to their endeavour to help others. (FBO 2, Email interview, 19 October 2017) This links back to their faith-identity which inspires their actions, drives their behaviours, shapes their attitudes and influences their decision-making. This is also accurate for FBO 3 whose 21 staff are mostly volunteers. (FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018)

**Faith is inclusive**

Many FBOs have been accused of limiting their services to those who belong to the same faith. Those FBOs who focus their programmes to those who adhere to the same faith makes funding agencies uncomfortable. However, according to FBO 1, to show prejudice will be against the basic tenet of Christianity. (FBO 1, Email interview, 14 October 2017) The FBOs in this case study claimed that they are inclusive and do not discriminate people with their aid. They provide help to Christians and non-Christians as well. They partner with Christians of all denominations, with tribal people who practice animism and with the Muslim communities who are dominant in Southern Philippines. Moreover, inclusiveness is not only
limited to those they serve. These FBOs mobilise the faith community to be involved by responding to the needs of the poor and the marginalised people.

As Karam (2016, p. 62) pointed out, FBOs have the capacity in raising and utilising volunteers. FBO 1 has a volunteer programme which aims to recruit professional volunteers, such as doctors, nurses, engineers, environmentalists and other experts for short-term community work that would address issues in environment, education, health and livelihood. This programme has been running successfully over the years. (FBO 1, Messenger Interview 8 September 2017) For FBO 2, volunteerism starts from their staff. The staff of FBO 2 are all volunteers. (FBO 2, Email interview, 19 October 2017) They also recruit volunteer medical personnel to help provide medical and dental services to the communities they serve. (FBO 2, Email Interview, 20 Sept 2017) This is also accurate for FBO 3 whose staff are mostly volunteers. They also recruit volunteer medical personnel to help with their medical services. (FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018)

FBO 1, FBO 2 and FBO 3 obtain funds from supporters who adhere to the same faith through voluntary giving. (FBO 1, Email interview, 14 October 2017; FBO 2, Email interview, 19 October 2017; FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018) As Karam (2016, p. 62) stated, FBOs have the longest standing and most enduring mechanisms of raising financial resources. Moreover, as James (2009, p. 7) stated, FBOs’ services are not only more efficient than state-run services, they cost the state less as FBOs are subsidised by the faith community. This is in agreement with Clarke’s number 2 typology of faith-based charitable or development organisations which mobilise the faithful in support of the poor and other social groups, and which fund or manage programmes which tackle poverty and social exclusion. (Clarke’s typology of FBOs, 2006) Being able to tap into the faith community for financial resources allows FBOs to be less donor dependent than other NGOs. (Occhipinti 2015, p. 332 ref in Pereira et al. 2009; Leurs 2012) Moreover, FBO 1, FBO 2 and FBO 3 are not facing any restrictions from their financial supporters. However, they take all measures to be financially accountable to their financial supporters. All the FBOs in this research have the financial systems to ensure that funds are used correctly and every spending is accounted for. Furthermore, their development activities are reported to the financial supporters through newsletters and through social media updates. They also have boards who they report to.
For the FBOs in this research who secure funds from the faith community, it is important to appeal to the faith community in a manner that inspires the faith community to take action. The shared faith between these FBOs and the faith community motivates the faith community to respond and to engage in development. Furthermore, the shared values of the common faith drives the faith community to action due to its belief that each human being has been created in the image of God. As James stated (2009, p. 9), religion is a powerful motivating force in development through the emphasis on concepts, such as, compassion and service; unity and interconnectedness; and justice and reconciliation. It is particularly effective when issues relate to matters of ethics, personal morality and justice.

For the faith community in Mindanao, compassion and service to others are significant drive for action in development. Peace and unity are also strong stimulus in a divided Mindanao where Muslim communities are dominant in comparison to the other parts of the Philippines. For many decades, the Mindanao Island has experienced armed conflict which affected both the Christian and Muslim population. Although this conflict is only partly shaped by religious differences, the faith community of both Christians and Muslims aim to display peace, unity and brotherhood among the Filipino Christians and Filipino Muslims. FBO 3 stated that peace should not only be made evident in the organisation’s life, peace should also be promoted and fostered among those they partner and serve with. (FBO 3, Email Interview, 19 February 2018)

According to Deneulin and Bano, the development activities of the faith community, such as the delivery of social services, are not add-ons which took shape during the development era. These development activities are part of how faith community understand itself. There are deep-seated links between worship and development activities. Development is inherent to the faith community. (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 73) Therefore, development activities are not limited to FBOs. Development activities also involve the faith community who respond to their relationship with the transcendent and their worship activities. Development work is an expression of the attempt for religions to live out their fundamental beliefs. This is true to both Christians and Muslims. (Deneulin and Bano (2009, p. 74)
Conclusion

This research verified that religion is still dominant and active in the lives of the FBOs under study. This is contrary to the expectation of the modernists that religion will disappear, and the assumption by the major international development players that as societies modernise, they become less religious, relying less on the sacred to interpret events around them or to seek solutions. (Clarke 2006; Tomalin 2015; Deneulin and Bano 2009) As many FBOs in Europe downplayed their faith identity because of the secular climate (James 2009, p. 3), the FBOs in this research held on to their faith-identity amidst the changing times. For these FBOs, faith is not an add-on to the development work they do. For them, faith is an essential part and is the main reason why they are involved in development.

The collection of the empirical data, by employing qualitative, semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions through virtual interactions, enabled the researcher to use the immediacy of the internet to access respondents. The asynchronicity involved in this method provided the respondents freedom to choose when to respond and in a setting of their choice. Sufficient time was also made available for respondents to reflect and process their own responses, and to include the participation of others within their organisations. Additionally, email and the utilisation of Facebook Messenger were both economical and time-efficient. The data collected was rich and there was a prolonged and active engagement during the entire research process due to easy access to the respondents and the respondents’ generosity with their replies. For the analysis, thematic analysis was employed. Potential emergent themes were found in the written memos which were developed into key themes.

To answer the first research question, faith-identity for these FBOs means development activities are inspired and guided by God to have compassion for the poor and marginalised people. For FBO 1, their inspiration for engaging with development derived from their experience of being loved and cared by God. The faith-identity of FBO 1 allows them to exercise their belief that the marginalised people are children of God and were made in God’s image. FBO 2 claims that their drive for engaging in development is defined by their faith-identity. For them, faith-identity means the inspiration for development work comes from God. This faith-identity inspires FBO 2 to sympathise with the poor, to advocate for
them, to offer help and to empower them. For FBO 3, the Peace of Christ and God’s existence guide their development activities. These development activities is a platform to show their compassion for the poor and marginalised people.

To answer the second research question, faith is communicated in practice by providing genuine care and by being inclusive in their development engagement. Although, these FBOs do not see themselves doing religious work but rather an intervention to help, there is always the fear of being branded as proselytising. Despite the fact that the suspicion of proselytising is a constant challenge for these FBOs, they commit to their development activities by providing genuine care. They claim that their development effort is not a disguise for evangelism or as a mechanism to convert to faith. Faith for these FBOs also means being inclusive. They claim to not discriminate people with their aid. They provide help to Christians and non-Christians as well. They partner with Christians of all denominations, with tribal people who practice animism and with the Muslim communities who are dominant in Southern Philippines. Moreover, inclusiveness is not only limited to those they serve. These FBOs mobilise the faith community to be involved by responding to the needs of the poor and the marginalised people. This is done through financial support, through volunteerism and through other means.

It is noted throughout the research how the FBOs under study are able to openly express their faith-identity. However, this leads to the question of how different would it be if the faith-identity of an FBO is not the dominant religion of the country where it operates. How openly would an FBO express its faith-identity if its identity does not belong to the majority? What if the faith of the FBO has a history of oppressiveness or a reputation of being manipulative? Additionally, how would an FBO communicate its faith-identity if it is prohibited by the government of the country where it works to express its faith? This is a reality in many countries where FBOs are operating. Furthermore, the expression of faith-identity is likely to place an FBO at risk of harassment or the termination of its operation if this prohibition is violated. How is faith-identity communicated in these circumstances? The researcher would like to further research the different realities pertaining to other religions and their relationship with dominant religions in other countries.
Although the research has pointed out the shift from non-engagement to the willingness for major development actors to engage with religious actors, it is important to understand the point of convergence. Although, the funding community is gradually acknowledging the positions of FBOs in development, international funders are still selective in terms of its engagement with religious actors as development partners. Regardless of the growing trend of active partnership between international funders and FBOs, not all FBOs have received equal treatment. The development community is often in favour of religious traditions which share common points to secular worldview. The secular principles of the development community has engaged with the religious practice by focusing on areas where the secular and religious meet. (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 25 and 156) The researcher finds this interesting for further research. The researcher would like to research on the linkages between the secular and the religious development. Where does the secular and the religious development meet in order for partnership to foster?

Another interesting point of research is to thoroughly examine the meaning of proselytising in both religious and secular terms. How does proselytising affect development practices? This will be in line with Fountain’s arguments that all development is proselytising as secular development actors also seek to influence change by expanding secular formations, logics and practices. (Fountain 2015, p. 90)

In conclusion, the researcher also aspires to conduct further research on the separation between faith and development. Within the context of FBOs, does faith and development exist as distinct entities? Or can they be treated as a whole? As for the FBOs in this research, to remove faith from the FBOs or to place a separation between faith and development will cripple their identity. This is due to the absence of the reason for their existence which is faith, and the lack of the platform in which they express their faith which is the development work they do. As one respondent pointed out, “Without our faith-identity, we lose our destiny.”

In relation to the field of Communication for Development & Social Change, according to Lennie and Tacchi (2011, p. 14), Communication for Development (C4D) in general is understood to be about the use of communication in participatory processes for social
change. C4D is about people rather than technologies. It defines communication as a two-way system which promotes the importance of enabling dialogue and discussion and the sharing of the knowledge and skills, rather than information or message delivery. In UNICEF, C4D largely means behaviour and social change and a focus on human rights. (Lennie and Tacchi 2013, p. 27) It is about understanding people, their beliefs and values, the social and cultural norms that shape their lives. Therefore, faith-identity is part of C4D and social change. Faith-identity is related to beliefs and the outcomes which result from these beliefs. To understand why it is important for FBOs to define their faith-identity helps to bridge communication gaps among the many actors in development. To be able to freely communicate who they are, is allowing them to be true to themselves and to be open to others.
References


UNFPA (2009). Guidelines for engaging faith based Organisations (FBOs) as agents of Change. UNFPA.

Appendices

Initial Interview Questionnaire
Communicating Faith Identity in Development
Degree Project - Malmö University, Sweden

Below are the initial interview questions. In-depth follow-up questions will be provided at a later time. Please include as many staff in your organisation as possible in answering the questions. Thanks in advance!

**Organisation:**

**Number of participants:**

**Date:**

**Definition (in theory)**

*As a faith-based organisation:*

What is your faith identity?

What does faith identity means in your organisation?

How important is it to be faith-based in contrast to being a non faith-based? Why?

What do you see is the added value of being a faith-based organisation?
Communication (in practice)

As a faith-based organisation:

In what ways does your faith identity manifested in your organisation?

How does your faith identity affects or impacts your work? How is your faith identity communicated?

What challenges have you faced as an FBO? How have you sought to overcome these challenges?

Do you work with others of different faith? What do you see are the expectations, advantages and risk involved in these partnerships?

Describe your relationship with the communities you work with? Does your faith identity makes you more influential or less influential? Why?

Describe your relationship with your funders? Have you experience any restrictions from your funders due to your faith identity? If so, what are they?