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# The discourse on development in the Latin American and Caribbean Interreligious Alliance for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: An Analysis from the Device

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the configuration of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), with a particular focus on the Latin American and Caribbean Interreligious Alliance (AILC), as a device for the administration of the development statement proposed by the 2030 Agenda. The hypothesis advanced in this study is that the AILC functions as a conduit for the implementation and administration of power relations and strategies associated with the discourse on sustainable development proposed by the 2030 Agenda. This discourse is understood as a transformative event, i.e. a shift in the relations of force that will catalyze and nurture capitalist development.*

**Keywords:** Faith Based Organizations, Device, Sustainable Development, Power, Religious Field.

## Introduction

The research underlying this article focused on the Latin American and Caribbean Interreligious Alliance (AILC), conceptualizing it as a pivotal nexus for interfaith leaders and communities. These actors are deemed to wield considerable influence over public and social spheres through their contributions to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Conducting an investigation into the Alliance has enabled a deeper understanding of the network of relationships that tend to develop from confessional stakes at the Latin American level. The device is understood as follows:

The aforementioned set comprises the discourses, institutions, architectural qualifications, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions. In essence, the elements of the device manifest between what is

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explicitly articulated and what is implicitly excluded. The device itself is the network that we lay between these elements. The term "device" in this context signifies a training apparatus that, at a given moment, primarily serves to address an emergency. In this capacity, the device fulfills a predominant strategic function [...]. The device's strategic nature entails a manipulation of power relations, whether to develop them in a particular direction, impede them, or stabilize them. Consequently, the device is inherently embedded within a dynamic power structure, yet it is also constrained by inherent limitations in knowledge, which not only give rise to it but also profoundly influence its functionality. In essence, the device functions as a system of strategies that support and are sustained by specific types of knowledge (Foucault 1994, 229).

Therefore, from a methodological standpoint, the construction of an archive was deemed the optimal approach for the purpose of comprehensively documenting the underlying statements, training programs, discursive practices, relational dynamics, and power strategies intrinsic to the Alliance's contribution to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations member states. The archive was meticulously curated, encompassing the documents of seven prominent organizations instrumental in the establishment of the Alliance: the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Central America Program, the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), Caritas International, the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), the Regional Ecumenical Center for Advice and Service (CREAS), World Vision Latin America and the Caribbean, and Religions for Peace Latin America and the Caribbean. The archive also contained documents from United Nations organizations, which were examined to analyze how these organizations define the role of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs). In addition, documents from several Latin American states were reviewed, as these states are where the actions of the FBOs under investigation take place. These documents referred to broader documents that facilitated not only a genealogical study of the relations of power in the present, but also an archaeological investigation. In this investigation, the way in which the apparatus has functioned as a mechanism to make people see and to make people speak in the religious field was traced in history. Accordingly, the research study under consideration indicates the presence of distinct characteristics, multiple layers within the various categories, the existence of divisions, and the occurrence of events that disrupt the uninterrupted flow of discourse within the contexts of faith-based organizations and the communities that provide them with their ideological underpinnings.

## Literature Review

### *How does the Latin American and Caribbean Interreligious Alliance operate for the administration of the development statement proposed by the 2030 Agenda?*

In the context of social sciences, there exists a prevailing assumption regarding the waning importance of religion in social processes, particularly those that occur within the public sphere. This assumption is accompanied by an investigative endeavor into contemporary religious phenomena, with a specific focus on the institutions that arise from these religions. To this end, the study explores the regimes of truth that have shaped the understanding of religions. Specifically, the study elaborates a tour of the paradigm of secularization, giving an account of the strategic game that occurs in the knowledge-power relationship in the field of intellectuality, which in turn have proposed regimes of truth about the role of religion and its public relevance.

Consequently, it is of interest to consolidate the discourse on FBOs as agents that serve and create conditions for development, as it has been proclaimed since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, the 2030 Agenda is conceptualized as a pivotal event, a pivotal axis around which novel practices and shifts in the balance of power within religious

communities are emerging. To this end, the research focused particularly on the analysis of those FBOs that are part of the AILC as devices that are organized based on the event. To this end, the research methodology entailed the description of discursive events, tracing the material and historical conditions that enabled the formation and evolution of the discourses of the FBOs within the Alliance. The analysis placed particular emphasis on the alterations in the rules and pivotal elements that constituted the transformation of knowledge.

***What are the statements, formations, regularities and discursive practices that underpin the participation of FBOs in the achievement of the sustainable development goals proposed by the 2030 Agenda?***

The development of a critical ontology of the present era was initiated through an examination of the manner in which the regime of truth that establishes the position of religions within the public sphere was established and discussed. Through the analysis of sociological discourses on secularization, it was revealed that the modern scientific discourse of the social sciences confined religions to the private sphere, prophesying their loss of relevance in public affairs (Durkheim 1993; Weber Max 2019; Marx 1970). This review established that the social sciences have studied religion from the perspective of a sociology of knowledge. Consequently, the way of learning the world proposed by religions was gradually replaced by a way of knowing that was now organized by the discourse on scientific knowledge.

However, the regimes of truth around secularization formulated by authors such as Marx (1955) ended up organizing it as a transference, preserving in its formulation some Christian principles such as the infinite value of individuals and equality. Consequently, secularization can be conceptualized as a symbol (Agamben 2018) that operates within the conceptual framework of modernity, drawing upon theological concepts to influence its function. In this sense, secularization, rather than leading to the dissolution of religion, has the effect of marking reality under an administrative logic that guarantees the salvific government of the world. In this way, secularization emerges as a strategic agent that, by repositioning forces from one domain to another, ultimately leaves them unaltered.

The rigid boundaries delineated by the discourse of secularization will permeate other domains of knowledge, leading to the invisibilization of religion as a relevant field to be taken into account in economic, political, or social studies, among others. This phenomenon was exemplified by post-World War II studies that centered on the development of (Willis 2005; Haustein and Tomalin 2017). These studies characterized this development as a form of generalized Westernization, examined from the perspective of the secular academy.

The prevailing paradigm of secularization is being interrogated and reinterpreted through studies slated for execution in North America and subsequently in Latin America (Berger 1999; Casanova 2000; Beltrán 2013; Panotto 2020; Burity 2005; De la Torre and Martín 2016; Semán 2019). This will entail the repudiation of the prevailing notion concerning the role of religion in the public sphere through alternative assertions. The discursive configuration in Latin America has been characterized by the expansion of religious diversity, which has modified the dynamics of the religious field and manifested itself in public space. This expression of secularization not only implies the need to analyze it in the context of cultural and social change, but also the study of the political, economic, and legal tensions that occur between the state, international organizations, and religious associations.

Academic discourse has witnessed the emergence of enunciative forms that, beginning in the

late twentieth century, have depicted religion not as a tendency toward dissolution, but rather as a continuous and integral element of human experience (Hervieu-Léger and Solana 2005). Consequently, they characterize religion as "a living fact" or as "a constitutive element of public life" that is acknowledged in social studies. The social sciences' interest in the study of religion in the public sphere and the debate on secularization have engendered historical conditions that have enabled religion to participate in various domains, including economics, politics, and, in this particular instance, development.

Although the discursive regime of modernity privileged the departure of religions from public affairs, in the discursive practices of the present religion is enunciated as necessary, thus a transformation is visible in the present moment, a change that shows lines of various kinds molar lines that insist on the separation and fragmentation between religion and politics and whose discourse takes place in the secular State. Molecular lines that question this model as a should be, integrating religions into the public sphere but preserving the exercise of power in international political organizations. Molecular lines that propose escapes from the order, and that from religions question capitalism itself and its organization.

The analysis of the discursive regime on secularization led to the conclusion that religion cannot be essentialized as something that has been maintained throughout history through returns or reconfigurations. Rather, at this specific moment, religion and its forms have their own features and functions. Consequently, within the purview of this particular study, secularization is observed to manifest through the delineation of secular domains, such as development, leveraging secular institutions like the United Nations agencies entrusted with the promotion of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

In this sense, the research that led to this article involved an exercise of fictionalization, understood as the organization of an empirical framework of possibilities that does not rely on imagination but is based on historically traceable data with precise connections that can be established in the articulations between statements, discourses, non-discursive practices, and power relations. Consequently, the relationships investigated do not constitute a sequence or progression. Instead, the focus was on the establishment and characterization of the interdependencies among various organizations, including governmental and non-governmental entities, as well as among different subjects.

The contemporary dynamics of religious organizations have given rise to the emergence of faith-based organizations. These contemporary conditions have enabled us to comprehend these organizations as instruments that articulate development from discourses and practices associated with one or more religions that are active within the religious field. FBOs are defined as non-profit organizations founded by individuals, congregations, institutions promoting ecumenical or interreligious dialogue, or networks linked to the religious sector (Berger 2003).

Specifically, the AILC enunciates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the path that will lead to salvation. In this regard, the present study undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the manner in which secular objectives concerning development are articulated within the Covenant. It is posited that these objectives, when pursued from a purely terrestrial perspective, serve as a conduit for the realization of transcendent goals, most notably salvation.

The contemporary manifestation of salvation, achieved through immanent means and secular declarations, functions not only as a means to proclaim religions as agents of development, but also as a catalyst for public engagement, thereby reshaping the relationship between religions

and states. This phenomenon is further evidenced by their involvement in humanitarian aid, as highlighted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2019).

The establishment of the regime of truth about salvation has not only been configured from immanence but has also led to the sacralization of development in itself. That is to say, it has been extracted from pure human law by setting it aside so that it is God's power and from his disposition to give it to human beings as a vocation. In this sense, the sacralization of development is not merely configured as a human construction, but is definitively linked to transcendence, thereby becoming separated from the human being and from his own will.

It is therefore concluded that the concept of development functions as a mechanism that responds to a pressing need, and the parameters of this need are defined by the historical conditions that have facilitated it. These conditions include the post-war period, the decolonization of Afro-Asian territories, the Cold War between the communist and capitalist blocs, the UN discourse on sexual and reproductive health, liberation theology, the Second Vatican Council, the diversification of the religious field, the emergence of civil society organizations such as NGOs, the Millennium Development Goals, and currently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In the critical evaluation of the contemporary moment, a triad is delineated, from which the discourses concerning development are aligned. The aforementioned triad comprises, firstly, faith-based organizations, particularly those affiliated with the Alliance. Secondly, multilateral organizations associated with the United Nations Organization. Thirdly, states that also recognize FBOs as allies to facilitate the realization of the international public policy outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

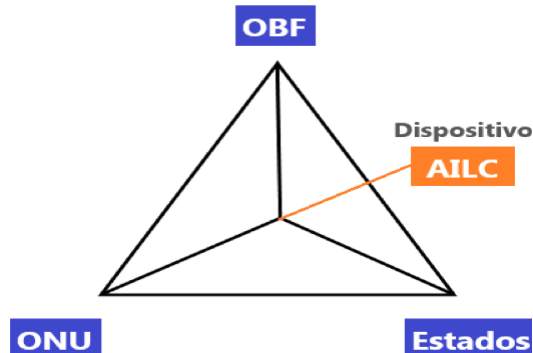


Figure 1. AILC Triad.

Source: own elaboration

In this configuration of legitimacy, the triad is constituted by the AILC, which serves as a mechanism through which the international public agenda promoted by multilateral organizations with the endorsement of states is realized. These organizations are regarded as civil society entities that demonstrate notable efficiency in the distribution and organization of resources from international cooperation.

UNDP recognizes the significant role that faith-based non-governmental organizations (FBOs) play in addressing development and humanitarian challenges. With a holistic approach based on the recognition of the dignity and intrinsic value of every human being, FBOs bring the ethical

and spiritual dimensions to the development table. They are actors who exert their constructive influence and leadership at multiple levels and spaces" (...) "Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and Faith-Based Organizations (ROs) play a fundamental role in sustainable development, because they have a significant presence and an important reach through their humanitarian and social service actions, especially in the midst of communities in both rural and urban areas (UNDP 2019, 4).

Multilateral organizations justify the participation of faith-based organizations by invoking the outstanding interest that religious communities have for the well-being of populations, thus, they enunciate this interest as something natural, as an essence present in all religions, as something that belongs to them inherently to their action without subjecting them, of course, to a verification condition. On the other hand, there are the same organizations of the religious sector that find in this situation the possibility of incorporating themselves into public life with greater dynamism, not only in the religious field, but also intervening and having effects in the configuration of a regime of truth that allows them to delve into fields such as the economic, or explicitly, in fields such as economics and social and humanitarian action.

The regime of truth that consolidated FBOs as agents that serve and provide conditions conducive to the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 sustainable development goals, shows religion as a subject in a strategic position and a protagonist in the public arena, being recognized as valid by multilateral organizations. especially by those who are part of the United Nations. Thus, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has been one of the most recurrent organizations in referring to FBOs, because when comparing them in their discourses with States, they are enunciated as inefficient and therefore will not be able to achieve what is proposed in the SDGs, therefore the need to locate civil society agents conducive to this work is attributed and among them it is defined that the religions are the most efficient in terms of being able to execute resources more quickly, with stronger structures, with a long-term presence among communities and with better reception by the populations.

In fact, religious leadership has a key role to play in building peace where there is conflict, tension, and it is important that they continue to raise their voices to advocate so that governments and stakeholders can deliver on the promises they made to achieve sustainable development. (UNDP 2019, 5).

The establishment of partnerships between United Nations organizations and faith-based organizations (FBOs) is a phenomenon that dates to the 1970s. However, it is only in the second decade of the 21st century that these promotional efforts have become pervasive and intensified. Consequently, as of 2016, the year in which the initiation of the 2030 Agenda actions was delineated, a coalition of diverse government agencies has been established, comprising 70 FBOs worldwide, thereby establishing an international forum for the formation of alliances between religion and development. It is concluded that United Nations agencies employ FBOs to encroach upon matters of state jurisdiction, thereby exerting pressure on states to implement programs and projects deemed necessary to achieve the objectives established for the year 2030.

A review of the available documentation reveals a dual mandate imposed by the United Nations on the states in question. First, religions are positioned as valid agents of civil society, tasked with carrying out actions with a view to fulfilling the international discourse on development. Secondly, it imposes on States the expansion of the space granted to religions in the public sphere, assigning them the incorporation of FBOs and, in general, of actions arising from religion. Consequently, within the triad previously established among multilateral agencies,

religious organizations, and states, a discernible disposition emerges concerning the subjects involved. The UN and its agencies strategically position themselves as enablers of religious action, creating conditions that allow for the public expression of religion. This should not be interpreted as a process of secularization, but rather as a manifestation of secularization that adapts religious discourse to contemporary contexts.

The discursive processes through which the United Nations grants religions the conditions necessary for their operation within the public sphere effectively enunciate all faith-based organizations (FBOs) as a homogeneous entity. FBOs are characterized as possessing ethical and moral values, expressed through qualities such as generosity, integrity, compassion, and justice. Their actions are driven by a spirit of solidarity, ensuring the effective execution of the resources entrusted to them.

These organizations based on the "Abrahamic religions" or also called religions of the book, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, survive today with vitality. In fact, speaking of substantial or "root" changes, the Bible recognizes the human being as created from the "humus", the same earth that shelters us and of which we are a part, although also to reach "another side". To transcend (from trans, beyond, and "cando", to climb) means to move from one space to another, crossing the boundary that separates them. And clearly "religious transcendence", as reflected in this book, also implies crossing a limit, from a society where many live in realities that do not respect their dignity, to a more just and humane society that harmoniously includes the future of humanity and the planet. For this reason, their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals is twofold: from concrete actions to lead to the fulfillment of goals and objectives (as shown by many of these organizations) to the contribution of ethical values for a "transcendent" perspective of man" (UNDP 2019, 6).

In this process, the United Nations demands specific actions from faith-based organizations (FBOs) and religious communities. These actions include the identification of vulnerabilities in nearby populations and the development of strategies to combat them. By emphasizing their possession of social capital accumulated over an extended period, these religious entities establish a distinction in relation to secular NGOs.

The United Nations and its agencies leverage the credibility and influence of religious communities and their leaders within their respective populations to formulate plans and mobilize actions aimed at modifying the behaviors of these communities. This use has led to a biopolitical exercise through which organizations such as UNFPA, UNDP, UNAIDS, configure the bodies of the subjects, promoting, among others, campaigns for birth control. While multilateral organizations implement numerous actions from their position as agents of development, those related to the sexuality of populations in which they intervene are particularly salient. In this capacity, they establish a mechanism that, within the framework of the discourse on development and human rights, operates on religious subjects and, through them, implements actions aimed at transforming the practices of populations.

People are changing the way they think about family size and women's health and rethinking old practices like early marriage and female genital cutting, and they often come to us with their questions. These changes came with a UNFPA-assisted project in our Diocese. I believe that when the project is finished, these changes will stay with the clergy and the community and will bring about more positive changes both in the family and community levels." - A priest of the Church of Uganda. (UNFPA 2005, 7).

The prospect of development, therefore, becomes intertwined with the promise of imminent salvation, contingent upon biopolitical criteria such as birth control, shifts in sexual and familial perspectives, and the implementation of family planning measures. A general transformation in the concept of family and gender roles emerges, as multilateral organizations, religious communities, and states promote methods of sexuality that exert a discernible power dynamic through the utilization of religious language as a means of governance over bodies. These practices and actions, while secularized, concurrently engage processes of secularization.

This dynamic unfolds through two primary channels. Firstly, religious agents influence and condition international organizations to utilize religious language. Secondly, through this relationship, they also witness the modification and transformation of their own religious traditions and prior conceptions of the body. The employment of religious language and allusions is evident in the very title of the 2030 Agenda, "Leave no one behind," which religious communities interpret as an analogy to the biblical passage of Matthew (18:12-14). In this passage, the actions of a shepherd who cares for his flock, including those who stray, are depicted as exemplary. It is proposed that the statement of the 2030 Agenda is connected to deeply rooted convictions and practices of faith, in such a way that the relationship between the world of faith and that of development is shown to be natural.

A particular form of pastoral power is thus delineated, characterized by a collaborative dynamic between FBOs, religious leaders, and multilateral organizations. This power is structured by the dissemination of religious purposes concerning salvation within secular institutions, while secular institutions appropriate religious discourse for the purpose of attaining development. Consequently, the power strategies employed by international organizations are characterized by a managerial approach, encompassing the moralization of the fight against poverty and its imposition as an imperative, while development, politics, and the economy are interwoven with religious discourse.

The strategy aims to demonstrate a robust connection between the social commitment of churches and the objectives of sustainable development. A close examination of the documents of religious communities reveals an intentionality in enunciating development as "the duty of every Christian." This is due to the belief that, through development, salvation is brought to the populations in which they intervene, thereby fulfilling their evangelization mission.

This mechanism encompasses the discourse on the significance of States' integration of FBOs as civil society actors, a necessity for achieving the SDGs. The influence of multilateral agencies on the alignment of governments with the international development agenda is a key finding of this study. This mechanism imposes limitations on the autonomy of States by promoting the involvement of religions and their organizations in public decision-making processes.

The validation of FBOs as agents of development has enabled religious communities to articulate their unique perspectives on global issues, life, health, and poverty, among other domains. This knowledge, previously isolated and unshared, has found a platform for dialogue and learning within the spaces promoted by international agencies.

***What are the power relations and strategies that arise from the statements, formations, and discursive practices in faith-based organizations linked to AILC?***

The analysis conducted on the AILC is situated within the Latin American religious field, conceptualizing it as a space of contention where there are multifaceted relations between agents, in this case, between religious communities, States, and international organizations.



The Latin American experience in the context of religion and secularization is characterized by the coexistence of practices that are closely aligned with modernity and, in that sense, with secularization, as well as other practices that are linked to traditional religion, spiritualities, and the traditions of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. This scenario positions faith-based organizations in a religious field characterized by heterogeneity, where they endeavor to secure a strategic position. In this context, religious communities and their FBOs employ discursive practices to establish a presence in the domains of development and humanitarian action. Consequently, these discursive practices articulate development in alignment with the ordering of what the communities have designated as sacred.

The FBOs affiliated with the Alliance ground their belief systems and religious practices in Christianity, anchoring their theological and biblical foundation in the relational understanding of the Triune God. This relational understanding serves as a management and administrative apparatus for overseeing God's salvific plan. As an alliance, they articulate their work as a plan, as a vocation, as a prophetic call. In Christian interpretation, this implies several verbs, actions, in a discursive regularity: to announce, to denounce, to prevent, to provoke, and to summon. These verbs are translated into non-discursive practices that guide the behaviors of organizations, leading them to implement changes in their own operations. Consequently, the Alliance, grounded in the prophetic call, enforces a positive measurement by generating data concerning their efforts to combat extreme poverty, thereby becoming instrumental in the production of statistics and figures. The Alliance's actions as promoters of the implementation of the SDGs are thus legitimized, and when they are endorsed by international organizations, they submit to the regime of truth that is based on accountability. The articulation of these moments results in the configuration of the Alliance organizations as instruments to promote efficiency and the increase of collaboration based on statistical data.

The strategy for development to have a chance of existence within the religious field consists precisely in the fact that the religious communities studied included it within their systematized and rationalized set of norms. The strategy of power adopted by religions in this regard was of a discursive nature, directing actions towards the achievement of the goods of earthly salvation proposed in the models of development. Consequently, the discursive practices concerning development were formalized as a regime of acceptability applicable to the subjects. This regime stipulated that the propositions found in the analyzed discourses fulfilled dual objectives. Firstly, it addressed the subjects' transcendent aspirations, conceptualizing development as a valid route to salvation. Secondly, it ensured material conditions for subsistence.

As Caritas Social Pastoral: We want a continent of solidarity, justice, democracy and pluralism, where public authorities are representative, transparent, and participatory so that every man and woman live according to their dignity, has their basic needs met and sustainably uses the resources of creation for the common good. And therefore we want a Church that is a witness of Jesus in the world, poor, prophetic, and paschal, in continuous conversion, where the laity are protagonists and that influences the historical processes of transformation to make the Kingdom of God present (Caritas Latin America and the Caribbean 2014a).

The discourse on development is posited in the archive as a discourse on salvation, thereby establishing a regime of acceptability in which compliance with specific norms is possible. These norms include regulatory compliance with the SDGs, which, as previously discussed, are promulgated by international and local governmental entities as a means of alleviating current conditions of poverty. This salvation is proposed as a means of escaping the prevailing

conditions of condemnation.

The FBOs that were analyzed are then constituted as a device for salvation, a device that administers the existence and disposition of resources, both economic and natural. It is a system that organizes through discursive practices concerning justice, dignity, charity, the human condition, planet earth (common home), and the life of the populations, particularly those associated with the organizations of the Alliance. This social construct offers the prospect of an enhanced quality of life, both on Earth and in the afterlife, by means of a system that enables the exercise of authority through obedience. It organizes the community and the economy based on merit.

An analysis of the statements, formations, regularities, and discursive practices in the FBOs linked to the Alliance reveals that when they are organized as a federation, there is a stratification of the churches associated with it. This is because by being enunciated in this way, the participating churches choose to consolidate a union that will be managed from the official acceptance of a doctrinal base based on ecumenism. That is, in the proposal of the unity of Christians, of those who inhabit the earth and who make up the community that invokes the Triune God.

The fact that we, in this new beginning, find ourselves sincerely connected with the other churches of the ecumenical community makes us feel great joy. We hope in God that through the common service of the churches, the spirit of violence and revenge, which again wants to become powerful, will be extirpated from the whole world, and that the spirit of peace and love will come to predominate, in which tortured humanity can find healing (Council of the Protestant Church of Germany 1945, 1).

The enunciation is only complete when the federation includes the discursive practices of ecumenism, thereby allowing the permanence of a molar line of hard segmentations that maintain distance from other religions.

However, the configuration of ecumenism is also demonstrated as a molecular line that facilitates the transition from a rigid stance characterized by the separation of religion and the State toward the collective engagement of religion in the daily lives of specific population sectors, often in areas where the State's reach is limited.

The archival evidence suggests that ecumenism facilitates actions and positions. In essence, as a stratagem of power, it enables the federation to strategically position itself within the Latin American religious domain, which is characterized by a multifaceted landscape of contention. This position, facilitated by ecumenism, is identified as a strategic approach for the administration of social programs that impact communities.

The present study puts forth a relational paradigm, positing that participation in the Covenant entails the explicit objective of fostering Christian unity and disseminating the message within the designated geographical area ("global imperative to preach the word") (Lutheran World Federation 2018). Conversely, the Christian community, given its global presence in various territories, serves as an ally of the UN in achieving the 17 SDGs. This multifaceted endeavor necessitates the implementation of a distinct subject: This entity is defined by its Christian affiliation, its membership in a federation, and its commitment to ecumenical principles.

The discourse on development has been characterized by the establishment of definitive positions by the Catholic Church, as articulated in encyclical letters. Enunciation has undergone

a process of evolution, while concurrently maintaining its fundamental characteristics. This enunciation can be understood through the lens of three key movements. Firstly, it has a line of resistance that, in the context of the processes of decolonization of Afro-Asian territories, led to the formulation of a utopia of development as progress, as linearity, as a utopia with a single point of arrival (Paul VI 1967). This initial proposal, conceived as an escape, is subsequently structured in the second movement through papal governmentality, articulated in the Encyclical Letters. This governmentality has persisted in the contemporary era, manifesting in the enunciation of development in terms of safeguarding the common home, thereby extending the salvific offer of development to nature and other living beings. This sustainable paradigm, though anthropocentric in nature, maintains the hierarchical structure of human beings. Papal governmentality is configured as a device from which development has been sacralized and transferred to a divine power that in turn delegates it to humans as a call, as a vocation. Consequently, the discourse on development is posited as a moral proposition, conceptualized as a duty incumbent upon the Catholic Christian subject and as a salvific trajectory that culminates in transcendence.

The third movement underscores that this conceptualization of development as a subject's duty, aimed at transcendent salvation, is now promoted in practices marked by personalism, which foster welfarism and dependence. The analysis reveals hierarchical, vertical subject positions that utilize development to establish a privileged status within the field. This third movement is predicated on the immanent understanding of a transcendent signature: the kingdom of God. This paradigm shift entails a directive for the laity, entrusting them with the responsibility of contributing to the edification of the kingdom. The laity, imbued with a religious disposition, partakes in the transformation of the public sphere. Consequently, the Catholic Church employs the laity to propose political transformations that influence the public sphere, while advocating for a political utilization that expands the base of believers through continuous processes of conversion (Francisco 2017).

In Protestant churches, the concept of the kingdom of God is reflected in the Protestant theology of liberation, which associates the message of God with concepts of justice and freedom. The operationalization of these concepts transpires along molar and molecular lines, molecular insofar as they confront the conditions of injustice and inequality engendered by prevailing development models. Furthermore, these concepts are molecular in the sense that they propose specific strategies of action for believers, thereby shaping a believing and transformative subject that eschews armed conflict and participation in guerrilla groups, a position divergent from that advocated by a sector of Catholic liberation theology. Concurrently, they act as molar lines of movement by asserting that the resolution of injustice lies in development, presently conceptualized and rendered manifest as a development grounded in capabilities, ultimately embracing it as the aspiration.

The Third Latin American Evangelical Conference in Buenos Aires (1969) insisted on a new vision of social reality. A "new awareness" was taken in the evangelizing role of the churches, which includes taking the side of freedom and justice. The situation of underdevelopment requires structural changes to transform the dominant economic and political systems and to seek "structures of humanization". (CLAI 2010).

In this sense, it can be concluded that the mechanism that operates within the Alliance manages the molarity of the SDGs and the capabilities approach, thereby rendering other molecular forms of management of human action typical of some Latin American communities, such as the

discourse of "good living," invisible.

As the lines of visibility were continuously delineated in the documents of the Alliance organizations, other elements emerged that became part of the apparatus. Consequently, alongside scientific propositions, such as the capabilities approach, ethical propositions concerning poverty and the subjectivity of its experience emerged.

**Ending Extreme Poverty: A Moral and Spiritual Imperative (...)** We know very well that extreme poverty frustrates every human purpose, stifles people's potential and constitutes an affront to human dignity. A sustainable holistic approach is required that transforms cultures and institutions, as well as hearts and minds. (World Council of Churches 2015).

This connection enabled the conclusion that poverty can be conceptualized as an object, that is, as a successive and simultaneous accumulation of practices, statements, and discourses that exhibit a certain degree of coherence. This articulation incorporated additional concepts, including gender, property, extractivist practices, and violence, into the concept of territory.

Through the experience gained in 16 years of work in capacity building and social and community development projects in Argentina and other Latin American and Caribbean countries, CREAS contributes to the contribution that FBOs, from a human rights and advocacy perspective, have been making to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. (CREAS 2020).

In the context of addressing poverty as a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by a series of interwoven practices, discourses, and statements, this initiative aims to operationalize intervention projects guided by the objectives and goals articulated within the global discourse of the 2030 Agenda. The objective of these programs is to identify Christians who are actively engaged in politics and who, through their actions, enable the visibility of their church's activities. The subject is positioned to interrogate extractive projects and, more broadly, practices that are inextricably linked to capitalist development and modernity, which have the potential to alter the environment and social relations. This subject also contemplates the inequitable relations engendered by the heteropatriarchal system. However, alternative economic models are not readily apparent, and the existing ones only address specific issues without posing a fundamental challenge to the prevailing economic order.

The formation of the Alliance as an organizational apparatus has been identified as a catalyst for the emergence of discourses that have manifested in the aftermath of the world wars. A review of the archive reveals that the tension between the capitalist and communist blocs fostered the emergence of fundamentalist discourses within evangelical Christianity. These discourses positioned the subject as a religious militant tasked with evangelizing the global population and preventing the spread of communism through the Christian message. This evolution entailed the implementation of evangelization programs that provided aid to war victims, thereby altering the discourse of evangelization. These programs delineated a molecular line, defining evangelization as a transmitter of a transcendent message and, concomitantly, as a bearer of the salvific message of development. In this paradigm shift, the power of evangelical Christianity evolves from its fundamentalist origins, embracing a media-based evangelism that allows for the articulation of moral propositions in support of the protection of specific populations, such as children.

During the Cold War, the FBOs examined were also positioned as agents whose strength was directed toward organizing themselves in their discourse as subjects willing to mediate, dialogue,

and provide social assistance in the conflict. In this regard, certain FBOs adopted a molecular logic, seeking to disengage from the perceived linkage between religion and war that had been regarded as inevitable. This type of movement manifested predominantly among FBOs of an interreligious nature, operating on the premise of a coalition between disparate faiths, not exclusively the Christian one.

Eradicating extreme poverty will require a comprehensive approach to address the underlying causes of the phenomenon, including preventable diseases, lack of access to quality education, unemployment, corruption, violent conflict, and discrimination against women, ethnic minorities and other groups (CREAS 2019)

It is concluded that, during these historical periods, the FBOs examined organized their discursive practices independently of state governance. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that states, in declaring themselves secular, did not assume responsibility for regulating religions that had been discursively proscribed to private experience. This strategic ambiguity enabled them to maneuver nimbly around the state political structure, preserving their autonomy while forging alliances with supra-state actors and employing diverse control strategies to ensure a favorable position within the field.

A significant proportion of the FBOs examined in this article do not originate from a singular religious framework, nor do they emanate from a particular ecclesiastical institution. Instead, they coalesce around the tenets outlined by the global public policy framework enshrined within the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Latin American and Caribbean Interreligious Alliance for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a notable example of community association, which, despite its heterogeneity, embodies forms of organization with a foundation in religious beliefs and values, thereby circumventing state oversight. This is a fundamental element in the discussion of theories such as those proposed by Hervieu-Leger (1991), who asserts that contemporary religion diminishes the social implications of the religious bond, thereby reaffirming the notion that religion is subject to leakage and is institutionalized in various ways within the framework of the conditions of each present.

The lines and their movements allow for the contrast of the argument supported by the sociological theories of secularization. In these theories, the loss of community feelings was assumed as a given, and it was established as a negative consequence of modernity. A study of the FBOs registered in the Alliance reveals that these organizations facilitate novel community-building initiatives of various types. Some of these initiatives focus on strengthening the bonds established by a specific church, while others promote pluralistic practices. These practices are characterized by a commitment to recognize and respect diversity, leading to the formation of associations with a shared objective, such as the global elimination of extreme poverty. It is noteworthy that these associations are embedded in the dynamics of power, with some challenging their very existence and others leveraging their societal position to gain advantages, such as the resources of international cooperation, with the aim of promoting the development of populations. In essence, power becomes manifest as an action that superimposes other actions.

In this regard, faith-based organizations do not operate in isolation, but rather in conjunction with the agents that have historically wielded power. These organizations engage in multilateral initiatives, collaborating with governments and international entities to define programs and projects that are linked to public policies. This integration of religion into public life, manifesting in the impact of religious voices on issues beyond the local and national scales, underscores the pervasive influence of faith-based organizations in contemporary society.

Religious communities that are committed to participating in scenarios for the promotion of development assume two apparently opposing positions but simultaneously support their particularity. On the one hand, FBOs are involved in a variety of initiatives, where their voice is not the sole authority. Therefore, they must be linked to these initiatives in a spirit of respect and recognition of other perspectives. Conversely, FBOs' active engagement in these discursive arenas affords them a distinct identity that demands acknowledgement and validation.

The analysis of the available archival material suggests that FBOs affiliated with the Alliance have been configured as a mechanism for the effective administration of the notion of development proposed by the 2030 Agenda to achieve at the global level through the 17 sustainable development goals. In this sense, the FBOs can be regarded as an oikonomic device for the administration of the household, which operates as a management enabling way of thinking, saying, doing, and even believing, based on movements between immanence and transcendence. The device's conditions of possibility are configured in the processes of diversification of the religious field, which in turn are indicative of the vitality of religion in the public sphere. The FBOs serve to expand the religious field, delineate its boundaries, and broaden its scope. Consequently, thresholds emerge, at which points the religious, political, economic, public, and humanitarian social action converge as fields.

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