



## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

### RELIGION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Analysing the relationship between faith groups and the UK government in regard to international development policies is a contribution of this book towards the study of religion in international affairs. Since the end of the Cold War, religion has re-emerged as an important phenomenon in international affairs. This has received a considerable amount of attention from the scholarly community of the international relations (IR) discipline. IR scholars started to analyse the role of religion in various areas such as new terrorism, conflicts and peacemaking (Juergensmeyer 1993; Thomas 2005). Before 1989, the issues pertaining to the Eastern and Western blocs had been so contentious that other challenges in the international community attracted little academic recognition. Religion was one aspect that was almost absent in IR as a discipline during the Cold War (Wald and Wilcox 2006). However, the lack of attention to religion in IR goes back to before the Cold War started. In the history of IR theory, religion was recognised as an important force in the period before the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia that brought an end to the Thirty Years' War. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), which devastated Europe with an enormous death toll and an approximate reduction in the German population from 60 per cent to 20 per cent (Cooper et al. 2013), had a strong religious element through which the Holy Roman Empire sought to expand its dominance via the Pope and the Catholic Church.

In the Westphalian Treaty, the monarchs of Western Europe agreed “to give the individual kings the authority to choose a version of Christianity and impose it upon their country; that the king (and not the church) was granted spiritual authority over the inhabitants of his kingdom, and no outside actor had the right to challenge this authority within his realm” (Knutsen 1997: 84). That agreement (referred to in the treaty as *cuius regio eius religio*) separated the church from the state (king). The king (representative of a sovereign territory) and not the church was in control of the state. Although there is no consensus in IR scholarship that the Treaty of Westphalia marked the beginning of modern IR theory (Buzan and Little 2000; Krasner 2001; Osiander 2001), the international state system that emerged after the Treaty has significantly influenced both the discipline and the role of religion in international affairs (Holsti et al. 1991; Bagge Laustsen and Wæver 2000). The Treaty, as Stephen Krasner observes, “validated the idea that international relations should be driven by balance-of-power considerations rather than the ideals of Christendom” (Krasner 2001: 21). Considering the situation before 1648, it was, arguably, appropriate for the Treaty to ensure the separation of church and state. Nevertheless, it was a mistake for IR scholars to ignore religion when the discipline became an established academic subject at the end of the First World War. The discipline’s tendency to overlook some of the crucial aspects within the international scene led to the marginalisation of religion. After the First World War, “the subject matter of International Relations”, writes Knutsen (1997: 211),

*Discussed in the first formative years was curiously out of touch with the political realities of the age; many of the courses taught were theoretically barren; many of the books written were ideologically myopic. Early students of world affairs confined themselves to the Wilsonian vision of world politics, and rarely ventured to explore the many non-liberal theories, which swept the streets outside their ivory towers...’*

With the same insight, Carr observed that “the passionate desire to prevent war determined the whole initial course and direction of the study” (Carr 1964: 8). In that respect, IR was preoccupied with security studies in attempts to avert another war. War and peace discourses turned out to be the centrepieces of IR. This was partly the argument for the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919 and, subsequently, the United Nations (UN) in 1945. However, the ideological differences

between the East and West led to the Cold War, which took over as the key issue-area in IR. The politics of the Cold War and the subsequent focus on bipolarity and state systems, as well as the Westphalia legacy of ignoring religion, prevented IR scholarship from recognising religious forces that were materialising in the international system.

In 1979, an Islamic revolution associated with Ayatollah Khomeini took place in Iran, and this revolution, Esposito argues, had a global impact (Esposito 1990). The revolution was one event where religion resurfaced with tremendous force, and yet it had little impact on scholarly understanding of religion in international affairs. The force of religion, in events such as the Iranian Revolution, had to wait until the end of the Cold War to receive any attention from the discipline. “What appeared to be an anomaly when the Islamic revolution in Iran challenged the supremacy of Western culture and its secular politics in 1979”, writes Juergensmeyer (1993: 1–2), “has become a major theme in international politics in the 1990s. The new world order that is replacing the bipolar powers of the old Cold War is characterised not only by the rise of new economic forces, a crumbling of old empires, and the discrediting of communism, but also by the resurgence of parochial identities based on ethnic and religious allegiances”. Hatzopoulos and Petito (2003) made similar observations.

The end of the Cold War released the discipline from its obsession with power-politics/state-centric analyses and prompted the discovery of ‘newer challenges’ in international affairs. During the Cold War, most security analysts were preoccupied with conventional military issues and saw the state, especially aggressive states such as the former Soviet Union, as the main centres or sources of threat. However, in the post-Cold War period, there has been a tendency to recognise ‘new enemies or new sources of threat’, which need to be located within the broader framework of the ‘New Security Agenda’. Thus, we see this debate between ‘traditionalists’ who focus on the state as the main source of threat and ‘wideners’ who have expanded the security agenda to deal with new threats and new enemies (Buzan et al. 1998). The so-called Copenhagen School has championed the New Security Agenda. The Copenhagen School presents the securitisation theory. From this theoretical perspective, securitisation is a “speech act through which an inter-subjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the

threat” (Buzan et al. 2003). Religion might be analysed in the context of securitisation theory (Buzan et al. 2003; Bagge Laustsen and Wæver 2000; Krahmman 2005; Betts 1998; Hoffman 1996). Issues of religious extremism and radicalisation have led to global security challenges. Religion has been used as a mobilisation and justification tool to recruit followers and supporters of terrorism. Subsequently, a number of scholars have gone on to study religion in IR. There has been a proliferation of workshops and working groups on religion and IR, such as the Religion and IR Section in the International Studies Association (ISA); the British International Studies Association (BISA) working groups on Religion, Security, and IR; and the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) standing group on Religion and IR. Furthermore, statesmen and diplomats are mentioning religion in their speeches, thus underlining the importance of religion in contemporary world affairs. Various university departments have established research centres for Religion and IR.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, many aspects of religion in IR are still treated at only a cursory level in the literature. The literature is focused mainly on the role of religion in international politics, with little focus on how governments are responding to that phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> It is important to analyse governments’ reaction towards the rise of religion in international affairs, especially since the line between international and domestic affairs has become blurred (Putnam 1988; Risse-Kappen 1991). It should be noted that international politics cannot be explained in isolation, without addressing some aspects of domestic politics. In the UK, for example, some of the government policies that were designed to deal with issues of religion could be categorised as both domestic and international. An example of this was the 2003 Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) ‘Engaging with the Islamic World’ policy. The policy aimed at countering the ideological and theological underpinnings of the terrorist narrative, in order to prevent radicalisation, particularly among the young, in the UK and overseas; and increasing the understanding of, and engagement with, Muslim countries and communities, and working with them to promote peaceful, political, economic and social reform (FCO 2004; Brighton 2007). This is just one example that shows the close link between international and domestic politics dealing with religion.

In looking at this connection, mention can be made of the tide of Islamism that rose in the UK, which some policy experts and security officials saw as a response to the British involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as general Western foreign policy in the Middle East, Afghanistan

and Pakistan. To understand this, it is crucial to note the historical trend to frame British Muslim identity and reactions to global events. Ahmad and Sardar (2012) document how international events such as the OPEC Oil Crisis in the early 1970s, the Iranian Revolution, the Rushdie Affair and recently September 11, 2001 have all framed British Muslim identity and conceptions of Islamism. On the other side, this framing is also contributed to by reactive actions by some British Muslim (Ahmad and Sardar 2012). For example, some British-born radicalised Muslims reacted by performing terrorist attacks in the UK (Ahmed 2005). That was obvious from the speech made by Mohammed Saddique Khan, one of the London 7/7 bombers (McGrory and Theodoulou 2005), who apportioned the blame for his terrorist acts to the British government for intervening in Iraq. Many British-born Muslims feel strongly about their collective Islamic identity, i.e. the ummah, which refers to the worldwide Muslim community. The ummah is seen as one big Muslim family and thus if the West attacks innocent Muslims in the Middle East, radicalised and extremist British-born Muslims might react to this by bombing people or properties in the UK, because of their collective sense of Islamic identity (Choudhury 2007). This is problematic, as Sardar and Ahmed (2012: 3) argued “an identity that is specifically based on religion is, by definition, problematic. At the very least, it raises questions of loyalty: if Muslims owe their allegiance to a universal community- the ummah – what are they first: British or Muslim?” Islamist ideologues such as Maulana Mawdudi from Pakistan have argued that the worldwide Muslim community or the ummah is like a human body. Islamist ideologues such as Mawdudi and his writings would have a profound impact on British-born Muslims because he is from Pakistan and most British-born Muslims have a Pakistani background. According to the 2011 Census, Muslims compose of 4.8 per cent of the population of England and Wales. Out of the entire Muslim community in the UK, 47 per cent are British born and the rest are immigrants. The population of Muslims in the UK is larger than the combined non-Christian faith population in the country. 68 per cent of the Muslim community are of Asian origin. The public face of British Islam (religion) and British Islamism (political ideology)<sup>3</sup> is, thus, dominated by South Asian/Pakistani strands of Islam and Islamism (Lewis 1994), just as in France we see North African Islamic and Islamist religious traditions prevailing. It is partly out of these communities’ connections to their countries of origin that we see

how international events, which involve religious forces, might impact on domestic British politics.

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to focus only on British Muslims and Islamism as a public face of religion in British domestic politics and its direct link to international politics. The Christian community in Britain has a strong presence in politics and it influences both domestic and international politics. The Church of England, for example, is a strong institution within the British community providing various social services in particular education. The UK government recognises the role of these faith institutions. The government, for example, has formed partnerships with them such as the Department of Education Memoranda of Understanding with the Church of England (DFE 2016a) and the Catholic Church (DFE 2016b). Other religious and faith communities such as Hindus and Sikhs are recognised as part of society by the UK government. Their voices and concerns are taken into consideration in community-related aspects of government decision-making. The positive contribution of various faith communities in the UK has been recognised and documented by the government (MHCLG 2018).

In the light of the above discussion, the aim of this book is to contribute to the study of religion and politics by assessing how the resurgence of religion in international affairs and politics at large has been reflected in the way the UK government conducts business. Prior to unpacking this aim, it is important to define the meaning of the term 'religion' in this book. As will be shown in the next section, it has not been easy to define the term 'religion', or to agree on a single definition of it. That is arguably one reason that could explain the lack of detailed analysis of religion in IR. Theorising religion in IR has been made difficult by various factors, one of them being the difficulty to conceptualise religion in a way that it can be operationalised in the discipline. Nevertheless, Sandal and Fox (2013) have argued and demonstrated that there is room to analyse religion using existing IR theories. This is made possible by having a clear definition of religion through identifying the aspect of religion that is being studied. In this respect, this book focuses on the institutional/sociocultural aspect of religion instead of its spiritual/theological/theist aspect. The next section defines religion and categorises two different institutional structures relevant to understanding religion in IR.

## DEFINING RELIGION

Different disciplines within the social sciences such as law, sociology and anthropology have attempted to define religion more than IR and Political Science in general. This is partly because, as noted above, IR and Political Science avoided religion in their analyses. Nevertheless, there has not been an agreed definition in any of those disciplines that attempted to define religion. The lack of a clear definition of religion has led to an argument that favours leaving religion undefined. One of the key advocates of that approach is Nadel (1954: 7–8). He wrote:

*Whichever way we propose to circumscribe the province of things religious, we are bound to encounter a border zone, which defies precise a priori allocation on this or that side of the boundary. To be sure, this residue of inaccuracy is entailed in the broad view of religion, which we made our starting point. But no other starting point seems feasible. Bluntly stated, what we set out to do is to describe everything in a particular culture that has a bearing on religion. And since “religion” is precisely one of those words which belong to the more intuitive portions of our vocabulary, and hence cannot be given a sharp connotation, we have no choice but to feel our way towards the meaning it should have in given circumstances. We must not risk omitting anything that might be relevant; the risk we have to take is that including, besides “religion proper”, also that “border” zone composed of mere superstitions; of science misconstrued or all too crudely attempted; and of science aiming too high or incompletely severed from mystic thought.*

This kind of approach is not appealing to this book and generally to our understanding of religion in international politics. To understand and to be able to analyse the role of religion in politics, we need to operationalise religion for empirical and analytical purposes. Furthermore, religion needs to be specifically defined because it means different things to different people at different places at different times and is thus quite an ambiguous and vague term. Thus when scholars talk about ‘religion’ in the social sciences, they need to be more specific in their definition or pin down their explanations to which aspect of ‘religion’ they are actually referring. The border zones, which Nadel (1954) mentions, can be put into two categories: (a) theological definitions and (b) sociocultural definitions. The theological definitions, also known as ‘theistic’ definitions (Southwold 1978; Platvoet 1990), include those, which look at religion from the point of view of belief in an existing supernatural being or God.

Such definitions borrow their central idea from Tylor, who suggested “a minimum definition of religion to be the belief in a spiritual being” (Tylor 1871). This aspect of religion can be further summarised by Platvoet (1990: 195) observation that religion “may be defined as any behaviour which believers interpret as communication, direct or indirect, between themselves and beings whose existence and activity cannot be verified or falsified but whom the believers believe to exist and to be active in their lives and environment”.

The sociocultural definitions are those that look at religion from the perspective of its effect in the society or culture, such as the work of religious institutions within the society. Such definitions follow the perspective of Durkheim and Swain (1915), who defined religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden- beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them”. Since this book is informed by social science research, religion here is analysed from a sociocultural rather than theological aspect. It is religious institutions more than religious beliefs that are the main focus of this book. Thus, the book narrows religion to mean faith groups, which includes faith-based organisations (FBOs), and faith communities. These faith groups are discussed in the next few sections.

## FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

FBOs are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with religious identities. FBOs often refer to religious charities (which can be Islamic, Christian, Jewish or Hindu) that strive to bring about social justice and raise the material standards of the oppressed and marginalised in any society through humanitarian and developmental aid/efforts. It should be noted that conceptualisation of faith organisations in the literature has been mixed in the sense that they do not distinguish FBOs (i.e. NGOs with religious identity) from faith institutions (such as churches) that carry out development work as well. Marshall (2006), for example, in her assessment of the FBO, notes,

*The most fundamental and important thing that they [the religious organizations] bring is the depth of commitment to fighting poverty. Fighting poverty is at the core of most of the major religious traditions in the world [...] The Jewish faith, the Muslim faith, and Buddhism, for example, are*



*focused very much on the people who are excluded, the people who suffer and the people who are poor [...] Faith organizations have for millennia addressed some of the most complex ethical and moral issues that societies face. And the development business confronts many of those issues because it involves transformation.*<sup>4</sup>

That definition is problematic since it mixes faith communities with FBOs. To examine the policy and its relation to religion, specificity is required for precise analysis. It is in this light that this book separates FBOs with faith communities.

The religious identities of FBOs differentiate them from other NGOs that may have similar objectives. In this book, NGOs are taken to be non-profit-making entities (Mawlawi 1993: 292; Weiss 1996: 437; Martens 2002) that are interested in advancing international development. Unlike secular NGOs, which deal with similar international development agendas, FBOs have “a constituency which is broader than humanitarian concerns [...] that is a duty to respond to the needs of the poor and marginalised” (Ferris 2005). Berger (2003: 25) distinguishes FBOs from secular NGOs in that their “identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions”. Scholars such as Haynes (2009) and Marshall (2001) underscore the spiritual support, their perspective on conflicts and platform for resolution, commitment, history and mobilisation capacity (of their faith communities) as unique advantages of FBOs. Other scholars have attempted to posit general features of FBOs (Jeavons 2004; Unruh and Sider 2001; Smith and Sosin 2001), which include but are not limited to: (i) affiliation with a church or denomination; (ii) selection of board members/staff based on their religious beliefs; (iii) mission statement that has explicitly religious references; (iv) financial support from religious sources; (v) choice of name; (vi) reliance on religious values, beliefs, activities or experiences in information processing and decision-making.

Even with these features, FBOs can still be difficult to identify (Bouta et al. 2005). Thus, for the purpose of clarity, this book defines FBOs as those NGOs that declare a faith-based identity in their vision and/or mission statements. This definition excludes those NGOs that started out of religious motivation but ceased to carry their faith identity, and those that do not have a formal link with any religious body such as a church. To clarify this definition, it is necessary to compare and contrast the examples of Oxfam and Progressio. Oxfam was first started by a vicar, Canon

Milford, but currently is not inspired by faith, and thus does not qualify as an FBO in this research. On the other side, Progressio is identified as an FBO because its values and operations were<sup>5</sup> inspired by Catholic teachings and this was explicitly stated in its mission statement.

FBOs that are analysed in this book target not only beneficiaries who share their religious creed, but also those who do not. They do not discriminate on the basis of religion or race. This is in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) code of conduct, which they have to sign before carrying out humanitarian work. These articles state “Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone”; and “Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint” (ICRC 1994), respectively. Additionally, these FBOs are also members of Bond—a non-partisan networking organisation for UK NGOs that work in international development.<sup>6</sup> Bond brings these organisations together in order to collectively advocate policy recommendations to the UK government, European Union, and to other international/multilateral platforms. Signing the ICRC Code of Conduct and becoming a member of Bond does not prevent FBOs from working with other faith groups such as local churches or mosques as partners both at domestic and international levels. Thus, in this book, FBO is a collective term for religiously motivated NGOs working in the area of international development.

FBOs were established as a faith-motivated response to international situations such as increased levels of poverty, the emergence of newly independent states in the 1960s after decolonisation, and various humanitarian crises. Recent conflicts have also triggered the establishment of more FBOs. The Human Relief Foundation was established in response to the Gulf War of 1991, while Muslim Hands and Human Appeal International were established as a result of the Bosnian conflict (1992–1995). Thus, like many other NGOs, FBOs start as relief agencies with short-term goals, which evolve into long-lasting organisations (Havers 1991; Korten 1987). Interestingly, although the formation of these FBOs is inspired by religious values, none of them were established for proselytising. The primary aim was to provide humanitarian assistance. Critically, some FBO officials feel the term itself signifies the persistent secular thinking among scholars and policymakers. An interviewee (2011) for this book, who was also an official in a certain FBO said, “it would be clearer if organisations are given references to their own particular

faith, for example, Christian organisations rather than faith-based organisations”. However, because this book takes religion and faith in a wider context without special focus on a single faith or denomination, the term FBO is maintained to present such organisations as described above.

## FAITH COMMUNITIES

The difficulty in defining ‘community’<sup>7</sup> extends to its various classifications such as, in our case, faith communities. In spite of being among the most trusted of communities within civil society around the world,<sup>8</sup> there has not yet been a single definition of what a faith community is (Smith 2004). Therefore, this section does not attempt to suggest a clearer definition but to marshal various concepts regarding faith communities in order to arrive at an operational definition for the purposes of the analysis in this book. According to Lowndes and Chapman (2005), faith communities are made up of individual citizens and their families who have a religious identification or affiliation and may or may not take part in regular worship (whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu and so on). This definition is limited in scope because faith communities may bring together people geographically far apart who only share the same faith or religious affiliation. They do not have to be from the same families. The UK Department for Communities and Local Government defined faith communities in the UK “as communities of Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs amongst other traditions”.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, faith communities in the UK are regarded as ‘key communities’ for the following reasons: (i) their size and distribution across the UK; (ii) they have existing networks of people; resources; equipment and competencies; (iii) they have networks of employed staff and volunteers—many of them with specialists skills; (iv) they have networks used to deal with people in crisis; and (v) they have networks which will be there for the long term and have the religious motivation to aid recovery from crisis (VSCP 2014). To engage with government departments, faith communities have to channel their communication through faith leaders or designated organisations in the form of a council or forum. These forums can be in different forms such as councils, associations, alliances, or a church denomination.

In this light, this book analyses faith communities as those forums, councils, or organisations through which religiously identified communities engage with government departments. For instance, the Church of England qualifies as a faith community in this book since it represents

the Anglicans in the UK. Another example is the Evangelical Alliance, which represents evangelical Christians in the UK. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is another faith community discussed in this research. Communities differ from FBOs in that while FBOs have international development as their primary goal, faith communities are groups in society with various goals, most of which have a domestic focus. The UK government recognises faith communities as ‘key communities’ managed under the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government with the Minister for Faith who is responsible for and works with religious and community leaders to promote faith, religious tolerance and stronger communities within the UK.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, with the rising salience of religion in international affairs, there has been increasing mutual recognition and engagement between governments and faith communities in matters relating to international development. In fact, as noted above—some of the faith communities in the UK have had their identity framed and influenced by events at a global level. This is particularly the case with the Islamic community in the UK, e.g. events such as September 11, 2001 have influenced perceptions of them.

### EXPLAINING RELIGION AND BRITISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

This book explores and provides explanations for the relationship between the UK government and faith groups (FBOs and faith communities) in relation to an international development agenda. The main proposition is that the resurgence of religion in international affairs has led to an intensified relationship between the UK government and faith groups. In this light, the book is informed by the assumption that it is exogenous factors (the resurgence of religion in the international affairs) that are influencing the UK government’s relations with faith groups. This proposition can be countered by the argument that there may be other factors that can explain the relationship between the UK government and faith groups. As it will be made evident in Chapter 3, British international development policies have been influenced by various factors, two major ones being: (i) attitudes of politicians and political parties in power with regard to the third sector (i.e. private and voluntary sector), and (ii) the context (domestic and international) and the general political mood around the international development agenda. Thus, these factors may, in one way

or another, lead to a heightening or lessening of tensions in the relationship between the government and faith groups. To this end, the book explores: the idea that the relationship between the UK government and faith groups can be explained by the respective attitudes of political parties and politicians towards the third sector, which includes voluntary groups like faith groups as well as other groups; and the relationship between the UK government and faith groups can be explained by the increasing prominence of an international development agenda in British politics. In connection to this, it should be noted that these two propositions are endogenous, that is, they significantly depend on internal (domestic factors), while the main proposition depends on external/international factors, that is, the resurgence of religion in international affairs. Thus, this book explores three main propositions as outlined below:

- i. The resurgence of religion in international politics can explain the relationship between the UK government and faith groups
- ii. The attitudes of the political parties and politicians towards the third sector (voluntary and private sector) can explain the relationship between the UK government and faith groups
- iii. The increasing prominence of the international development agenda in British politics can explain the relationship between the government and faith groups.

## THE BREXIT FACTOR

For the last three years, arguably nothing has preoccupied or redefined UK politics—both domestically and internationally—as much as Brexit. Leaving the EU has proven to be one of the most complicated tests the government of the UK has had in recent decades since the Cold War. In relation to this book's three propositions as mentioned above, Brexit is a key variable in all of the three propositions. In the first proposition, Brexit can be classified as an exogenous force in the sense that what would be the impact of the exit from the EU on the UK's international development agenda? With regard to the second proposition, the question would be how are the attitudes of political parties and politicians on international development as well as the on the role of faith groups in the UK changing as a result of Brexit? And the third proposition could also be further qualified with the question: Would Brexit enhance the prominence of the

international development agenda in British politics? To understand the implications on our understanding of the place of religion in policymaking, as well as the rationale behind these propositions, it is important to explain the choice of studying the UK government in this book.

## THE UNIQUENESS OF THE UK

This book broadly covers three main aspects, which are: the resurgence of religion in international affairs; the relationship between the government and the third sector; and the international development agenda. Looking at these three aspects, there is no better country than the UK to explore these propositions. There are various historical reasons for this but with ongoing Brexit politics, the rationale for the UK as a case study to explore the role of religion in international development policy becomes even stronger. The UK can generate observable implications to the propositions. Brexit is an emerging factor that can provide a further analytical framework through which we can explore these propositions to gauge their strength in explaining the role of religion in policymaking and implementation.

## THE RESURGENCE OF RELIGION IN UK POLITICS

As one of the key state actors in international politics, the UK has faced the impact of the resurgence of religion in international affairs. Literature (reviewed and discussed in more details in the next chapter) underscores ‘religiously justified’ terrorism as one of the manifestations of the resurgence of religion in international affairs. First, the UK has been the victim of these kinds of terrorist attacks. One of these was the 7/7 bombings (in 2005), which were carried out by extremist British nationals who were inspired by international extremists. It is thus, tellingly, evident that the resurgence of religion has not only been manifested in international affairs, but also in domestic politics. This is to be expected in increasing globalisation, where the line between domestic and international matters is continuously blurring. In the UK, matters of religion have become more and more pronounced in politics. The inclusion of a religious affiliation question in the 2001 census was one indication of the rising importance of religion in UK politics.<sup>11</sup> In the 2011 census, the question on religious affiliation was asked again, from which the results showed that 59.3 per cent of the population identified themselves as Christian and 4.8

per cent identified themselves as Muslims.<sup>12</sup> The link between the international resurgence of religion and this particular decision to include a question on religion in the census is traceable. In 1987, the UN suggested this in its ‘Recommendations for the 1990 Census of Population and Housing in the Economic Commission for Europe’.<sup>13</sup> For the UN to recommend this, it must have started to recognise the importance of religion in international matters.

Furthermore, religion in the UK has projected itself as a source of identity (Bruce and Voas 2004). There are groups in British society that have religion as their source of identity such as the Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Sikhs.<sup>14</sup> Religion as an identity is also one of the variables in the Northern Ireland conflict (Cairns and Darby 1998; Whyte 1991). The academic interest in analysing multiculturalism in Britain is another indicator of the significance of religious identity in the UK (Brighton 2007; Modood 1994). Although multiculturalism includes various elements such as ethnicity and race, the religious aspect has been increasingly becoming a weighty element, especially with the rise of political Islam and extremism.<sup>15</sup> The 7 July 2005 bombings in London triggered a heated discussion on the British model of multiculturalism as a model of integration, and the failures associated with this model, as well as to what extent this model paved a way towards the rise of Islamism in the UK. It has been argued that since Britain embraced multiculturalism, this paved the way for separatist Islamic and Islamist enclaves to come into existence in Britain, which interact selectively with mainstream British society. It is believed by some that these separatist enclaves have given rise to Islamist or extremist ideologies (Mukherjee 2011). There is evidence of continuous inspiration and recruitment to terrorism based on extremist religious ideologies. Daesh, a global terrorist group also famously known as Islamic State (IS), attracted approximately 900 UK nationals to travel to Syria as caliphs (HMG 2018a). Regarding this, the presence of religion in recent British politics is considerably felt to be as a result of the religiously motivated terrorism and its accompanying counter-terrorism discourse. This terrorism is more specifically linked to Islamic radicalisation of British-born Muslims and extremism, an example of which is the 7 July 2005 bombings in London and various other attacks including the five attacks in London and Manchester in 2017 only. The people who carried out these vicious acts like Mohammed Sadiq Khan were British citizens who held extreme views about their religion. Others have been recruited such as the 19-year-old Shamima Begum who left Britain to join the IS

in Syria. In November 2019, a British born 28 year old, Usman Khan, who was formerly convicted of a terrorist offence, used a knife to attack and stab people to death near London Bridge. These extremist British-born Muslims are influenced by Islamist propaganda mostly through the Internet. In connection with this, mention may be made of Roy (2004) theory of ‘neo fundamentalism’, which argues that present-day Islamist terrorist movements have now become de-territorialised (no longer confined to any particular territory) and supranational. In other words, these movements have spread worldwide as a result of globalisation, the use of email, social media and the Internet, therefore having a profound impact on British-born Muslims who carry out terrorist attacks on British soil and beyond. Roy (2004) argued that Islamist ideology has spread from the madrasas or Islamic seminaries in Pakistan and Afghanistan to Islamic bookshops in London and Paris. Paris and France in general have faced enormous challenges with regard to terrorism relative to other countries in Europe. For example, among the 49 terrorist attacks in continental Europe between 2015 and 2018, almost half of those targeted France (HMG 2018a). The two main schools of Islamist thought that influenced terrorists included Middle Eastern Wahabbism and South Asian Deobandism (Metcalf 2002, 2003; Cesari and McLoughlin 2005). Examples of such movements, which became supranational, include both South Asian and Middle Eastern movements such as the Jamat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamat (which affiliated institutes in Leicestershire and Yorkshire) and also Middle Eastern movements/groups such as the Hizb-ut-Tahrir (which had their British versions and offshoots like Al-Mahajaroun as well) (Mukherjee 2008, 2009). Through efforts to counter such extremism, British politicians and policymakers found themselves dealing with issues of religion at home as well as abroad.

The government’s counter-terrorism strategy, known as CONTEST (HMG 2006), which has recently been reviewed (HMG 2018a) focuses on four main aims—Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare. The Prevent strand’s objective has dealt with the religious ideology of Islamism in order to stop people from becoming extremists. The Prevent strand has had its own strategy and the government carried out reviews of it (HMG 2007, 2008, 2011; Home Office 2008). The Conservative-led coalition government under David Cameron also reviewed the 2007 Prevent Strategy and published another Prevent Strategy in June 2011. This strategy was reviewed again during Theresa May’s administration and was published in June 2018. All of these strategies, the previous reviews and



annual reports place emphasis on working with and in partnership with faith communities. One of the differences between the 2007 strategy and the 2011 strategy is that while the former puts more emphasis on working with Muslim communities<sup>16</sup> in order to integrate them, the latter strategy insists on collective efforts such as promotion of interfaith dialogue as well as working with other sectors such as Ofcom, Ofsted and charities (HMG 2011). The latest strategy (2018) and subsequent community integration action plan (HMG 2019) have a holistic approach to tackle hatred, erosion of women's rights, the spread of intolerance and isolation—using strategies such as economic integration, language learning, community work, integration of migrants and education. This holistic approach aims to prevent other emerging triggers of terrorism in particular 'the feeling of otherness' that may be promoted by the same efforts that concentrate on one community and also the emergency of the new extreme right groups. All strategies, as well the National Security Strategy (NSS) (HMG 2008), the reviewed 2015 NSS as well as the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and the 2018 National Security Capability Review (NSCR) (HMG 2018b), recognise the heightened threat of Islamist terrorism and radicalisation as one of the key security problems. The Prevent Strategy is designed to deal with extremism. Since Islamist triggered terrorism still poses a severe<sup>17</sup> risk to national security, the UK government takes this very seriously. This is largely why issues of religion are influencing domestic politics.

The resurgence of religion in UK politics is therefore reflected in the context of security and prevention of terrorism more than anything else. Although there are other ways in which the government interacts with faith communities, faith schools, and faith groups at large,<sup>18</sup> terrorism has been the largest catalyst for discussion of religion and politics in the UK. The Prevent strand of CONTEST is also applied in prison services, whereby the government has designed special jails with the aim of stopping radicalisation. Although these jails focus on all types of radicalisation—such as Islamism and the extreme right-wing—there has been criticism and concern that only Muslims have so far been placed in those jails (Grierson 2019). Thus, just as terrorism dominates the discussion of the resurgence of religion in international politics,<sup>19</sup> so it dominates the discussion of the re-emergence of religion in domestic politics too.

## THE INCREASING SALIENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN UK POLITICS

The UK is one of the major international development/aid donors. International development defines the country's external relations with many states in the Global South as well as in its relations with multilateral organisations such as the UN and its agencies. Over a period of time, notably since 1997 when the Department for International Development (DFID) was established, the UK has been recognised as one of the principal donor countries championing the course of international development on the global platform (Gulrajani 2014; OECD 2008). Although there are other countries, particularly the Scandinavian nations, that provide more aid (in proportion to their national income<sup>20</sup>) to the developing countries, the political weight and the international advocacy that the UK government provides for international development has been, arguably, unparalleled. This can be traced back to the 1970s. In their analysis of the G8 and G20 meetings and the development agenda, Larionova and Rakhmangulov (2010: 69) observed that “the highest share of development commitments in the G7/G8 were registered during the presidencies of the UK (1977, 1984, 1998), Germany (1985, 1999), and Canada (1981, 1995)”. There may be counter-arguments suggesting other factors to explain the G8's agenda of the time (e.g. the severe famine and hunger situations in the early 1980s), but the consistency of the UK in promoting international aid in the G8 undermines such counter-arguments. Moreover, in 1977 the UK's advocacy of international aid in the G8 matched the Government's 1975 white paper on international aid titled ‘The Changing Emphasis of British Aid Policies: More Help for the Poor’. Furthermore, the 2005 G8 meeting, that the UK presided over, again had its main focus on international development, further highlighting the UK as a leading advocate for international aid. Britain does not only place international development on the G8 agenda when it is presiding: in the 2011 G8 meeting, for example, David Cameron passionately defended international development and the need to give more aid even in times of economic recession (Cameron 2011). During his presidency of the G8 Summit in 2013, David Cameron put emphasis on international tax systems and also on the fight against terrorism (Cameron 2013). The UK government clearly places great importance on international development. This is not only a matter of rhetoric. The continued push to place issues related to international development in G7/G8 summits by the UK

is evidence of its commitment to see international development high up on the agenda. Among the G7 countries, it is only the UK and Germany that have reached the 0.7 per cent of GNI target. The UK became the first donor country to enshrine this commitment into Law since 2015 (Anderson 2015). By 2017, other G8 members countries were below 0.7 per cent with Canada at 0.26 per cent; France at 0.43 per cent; Germany at 0.66 per cent; Italy at 0.26 per cent; Japan at 0.23 per cent; USA at 0.18 per cent; and Russia at 0.08 per cent (OECD 2017; Tew 2019).

As a result of Brexit, the UK government's focus on 'Global Britain' will further promote international development and aid to enhance its relations with the Global South. As we will see in Chapter 6, the UK has not backslide on its commitment to be a leader of the international development agenda in the world. At the 2019 UN General Assembly (UNGA) meetings in New York, the UK reiterated its commitment to international development and announced new funding pledges for climate/environmental protection and family planning. Observing rhetoric as well as analysis of key documents such as the annual reviews (from 2016 to 2018) of the NSS, the SDSR and the NSCR, there is evidence that international development is taken as a strategic means to project British influence in the global sphere and to strengthen relations around the world. This will have implications on faith groups given the strong presence and role of faith groups in lives and politics in the Global South.<sup>21</sup> Although various talks and discussions on Brexit and International Development have focused on gearing aid towards the establishment of more trade relations with the Global South,<sup>22</sup> especially since some of these countries (apart from the BRICS) are emerging economies (Bremmer 2015), the possibility for further consideration of religion as a variable in international development post-Brexit is, arguably, still high. This book is interested in examining this. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 focus on these issues.

Furthermore, since its establishment, DFID has focussed on international development policy coherence and forging partnerships within the recipient community. Clare Short, the first Secretary of State for International Development, explained the significance of DFID, saying: "The establishment of the new Department for International Development presented an enormous challenge and opportunity to shift the balance of UK foreign policy [...] Britain became a leading player in development because we created a department with authority over developmental aspects of all UK policy" (Short 2004). That way, DFID "became extremely influential throughout the development community after 1997" (Barder 2005). Morrissey (2002: 2) explains that "whereas

the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), which was the DFID predecessor, appeared to largely accept the lead of the World Bank on development policy; DFID has been more inclined to have its own people study the policy issue". Furthermore, Morrissey (2002) gives an example of how influential DFID was among members of donor communities, explaining that "DFID was among the leaders in getting economists and social development advisors to consider the effects of macroeconomic stabilisation on the poor, and DFID staff were seconded to the IMF to advise on this issue" (Morrissey 2002). In the light of this, it could be argued that DFID has independence in policy decision-making and is a strong aid department that has the confidence to execute policies that are respected in the donor community. The British government spends money on research in the area of development studies. DFID, for example, runs 'Research for Development', which is a free access online database containing information about research programmes supported by DFID. Research for Development provides interested British audiences with the latest information about research funded by DFID including news, case studies and details of current and past research in over 30,000 project and document records.<sup>23</sup> By October 2019, DFID's Research for Development had about 33,648 outputs.<sup>24</sup> In connection to the point above, it should be mentioned that DFID funded a research programme at the University of Birmingham on 'religion and its connections with development'. The aim of this research was to develop the shared concepts and analytical tools that are currently lacking, in order to improve the understanding of relationships between faith and development based in comparative analysis of world faiths (especially Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, but also Buddhism, Sikhism and traditional belief systems) across Africa and Asia, with a focus on Nigeria, Tanzania, India and Pakistan (Rakodi 2007; Nolte et al. 2009; White et al. 2010). The research further complemented this book's interest. Religions and Development (RaD) research underscores the importance of the argument presented in this book, as it shows that DFID recognises the role of 'faith and development'. The main difference between the RaD research programme and this book is that, while RaD focused on religions and faith in the developing countries (i.e. recipient countries), this book focuses on the relationship between DFID and UK-based faith groups. For the reasons mentioned above, the UK's international development policy provides the best case study to investigate how the UK government engages faith groups in formulating and implementing policies.

## NEOLIBERALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON GOVERNANCE

From the 1980s and more so in the post-Cold War era, Western governments have been changing their ways of operation to embrace neoliberal ideas (Geddes 2006; Denters and Rose 2005). UK politics has also embraced neoliberal ideals, which in effect brings the third sector into government processes. Neoliberal ideas have been appealing to governments due to the changing environment both at domestic and international levels (Jessop 2002). The term ‘neo-liberalism’, writes Geddes, can be used in two linked senses: in the wider sense of a ‘new capitalism’, the historical outcome of the restoration of capitalist power in the context of advanced managerial capitalism; and in the narrower sense—a set of policies implemented since the 1980s to restore and maintain capitalist power as the basis for a new phase of development (Geddes 2006; Duménil and Lévy 2001). Although neoliberal ideals, most of the time, have been perceived as leaning more towards the right, left-wing parties and their administrations embraced these ideals too. In the USA, for example, the Clinton administration promoted these ideals, which led to the term ‘new’ democrats. Similarly, in our case, the UK has also been marked by such changes. Margaret Thatcher embraced such ideas, as did the New Labour government of 1997 (Finlayson 2003; Gilbert 2004). The New Labour government, for instance, embraced a policy ideology known as the ‘third way’, which is basically a system where the government partners with the third sector in providing public services. This ‘third way’ led to some policies that were similar to Thatcher’s policies. The coalition government under David Cameron adopted the ‘big society’ plan, which had more or less similar language, with ‘third way’-style ideas such as partnering with communities, private and voluntary sectors in providing services to the public. Likewise, Theresa May introduced the ‘shared society’, which further promotes community and strong institutions within the society to facilitate citizens’ obligations and responsibilities to one another (May 2017). These various terms like ‘third way’ ‘big society’ and/or ‘shared society’ are more a matter of political, rather than ideological, difference. Within the same political frameworks, this book also explores the attitudes of political parties and politicians in the UK towards the third sector and tries to explain the relationship between the government and faith groups.

In the neoliberal context, the government partners with private and voluntary sectors in implementing policies. Partnerships are thus a major

way for governments to function in a globalised world. Although most of the literature that discusses neoliberalism in the UK is based on local governance, especially focusing on initiatives such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) (Geddes 2006), there has been an argument that neoliberalism has played a role in implementation of international (foreign) policies (Kendall and Anheier 1999), including international development policies. This will be made clear in Chapters 4 and 5 in the analysis of the relationship between the government and faith groups.

The above three sections explain the elements in UK politics that justify the rationale for choosing the UK as the subject of this study of the relationship between the government and faith groups in the implementing of international development policies. The UK government is dealing with the resurgence of religion at home, which also has international connections because of the globalised era in which we live; from this standpoint, it is safe to assume that the resurgence of religion in international affairs has had an effect on politics and hence governmental decisions. The issues of political Islam (Islamism) and extremism have directly affected UK society. There are radicalised people in the UK and so the government is not only responsible for thwarting such processes abroad but also at home.

Partly as a result of this interconnectedness between the global and the regional/local, and the neoliberal ideals of private/public partnerships, the UK government has embraced the idea of working with the third sector to implement some of its policies. For example, in implementing the counter-terrorism strategy, the government has been working in partnership with faith communities and charities in order to prevent extremism in communities. Similarly, to deal with terrorism abroad (which has a large impact on the British domestic situation) among other factors, the UK government has been promoting an international development agenda both internationally and at home. In connection to this, the argument on the link between terrorism and poverty should be discussed. Whereas policymakers have tended to attribute poverty as one of the possible factors for terrorism (Rice 2005; Bush 2002; Easterly 2016; Stern 2000; Berrebi 2007), literature and scholarly evidence has shown that terrorism is positively associated with high income and education (Krueger and Maleckova 2002; Berrebi 2007). In this light, it is difficult to argue that poverty explains terrorism. Evidence from analyses of terrorists and suicide bombers (Hassan 2001; Berrebi 2007; Krueger and Maleckova 2002) has underscored terrorists' adequate education and income status.

Nevertheless, the rationale for international development and for assisting countries through foreign aid as a means to fight terrorism still stands. Terrorism has to be fought in multiple fronts including military, police, sociopolitical and other innovative means in consideration of the complex nature of terrorism as a security threat. Terrorism, which by and large falls under ‘new security threats’, cannot be fought using conventional military attack only. International development plays a role in the fight against terrorism. This is because international development covers and addresses a number of issues that can directly or indirectly facilitate incidences of terrorism. These include injustices, authoritarianism, failing and failed states, and inadequate public services including education and health. Literature has shown that terrorist organisations make use of failed states as havens (Lennon 2003; Von Hippel 2002). Most of these groups are hosted in failing or weak states. As it will be shown later in the book that terrorist groups are increasingly recruiting from Western countries (which indicates they are people with income and better life standards) but their operating camps are hosted in weak states. Terrorists also capitalise on grievances nurtured by poverty. Some of the terrorist groups get legitimacy among people and citizens of the poor countries through provisions of public services. The Taliban, for example, provided public services to people in Afghanistan (Cameron 2019; Berman 2003), so did the Hezbollah in Lebanon and also Hamas in Palestine (Berman 2003). So instead of depending on only military activities in areas such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria to ‘win the hearts and minds’ of poor people, it would be more advisable to provide the countries with food and healthcare provisions, thereby raising the material standards of the local people as well as building up their state and justice systems (Lennon 2003). This, as we will see in later chapters, explains the British international development policy decision to focus on fragile states. Thus, Britain’s international development policies and humanitarian aid policies tie in very closely with the theory that poverty may, directly or indirectly, cause much of today’s new terrorism. Britain takes this poverty-terrorism argument very seriously and thus provides other fragile states with aid and development assistance. As we will see in later chapters, the government policy on international development has also been changing over a period of time, signalling its increasing salience in British politics.

Brexit provides another angle for exploring these propositions even further. Leaving the EU and the apparent need to expand the UK’s sphere of influence in global politics, has led to increasing discussion of linking aid

to trade. As noted above, Brexit will, arguably, lead to more attention to the Global South hence more strategic use of international development to enhance closer relations with the global south. In the annual review of the security strategy following Brexit, the UK government emphasised that it will “strengthen its overseas network, reinvest its relationships around the world, champion rule-based systems including free trade and use of soft power to project its values and advance UK interests” (HMG 2018b). The question is how will the focus on trade impact the government’s partnerships with the third sector and in our case—faith groups? Attempts to answer this question are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

## OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This book draws on qualitative methods as it seeks to explore, interpret and explain the government’s relationship with faith groups. Through the case study analysis method (Yin 2003; Gerring 2004), international development policy was taken as a case to understand how the government works with religion at policy level. A possible critique of this approach could be that qualitative studies select on dependable variable and therefore fail to study samples with the full range of variation of this variable (Mahoney 2007), however since the aim of this book is to explore and explain, a case study is a more appropriate method. To understand these relationships, the research did not need to subject the case to the same kinds of selection issues that arise in quantitative approaches (Collier et al. 2004). Different research strategies are organised to answer different research questions. The usefulness and strength of a research method depend on the question that a particular researcher seeks to answer. Yin (2003) explains that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. As noted above, one of the propositions this book aims to explore is whether the resurgence of religion in international politics has influenced the UK government’s relations with faith group. At the same time, it can be argued that the relationship between the government and faith groups is a reflection of the salience of religion in international politics. Thus, a case study strategy is useful to understand these issues, as it is capable of investigating and exploring such propositions, which cannot easily be separated from the context. The context, both domestic and international, is a crucial factor in this research. The other two propositions focus on the



domestic context, in particular in British politics—the research seeks to investigate the role of political parties and politicians in the formation of the international development agenda, which in turn can have an impact on the government’s engagement with faith groups in that matter. Similarly, the context of Brexit cannot be removed from this analysis—since it is affecting decision-making in policy circles.

Levy (2002) presents two types of case studies. These are (1) atheoretical or configurative-idiographic case studies, and (2) Interpretive or disciplined-configurative case studies. Atheoretical case studies are traditional single-case analyses often associated with area studies. They are highly descriptive and aim to understand and interpret a single case as an end in itself. Interpretive case studies aim to explain/interpret a single case but that interpretation is explicitly structured by a theory or well-developed theoretical framework. The analysis in this book is informed by a research design that is a combination of both types of case study. It is a ‘within-case’ analysis that describes British international development policies and uses a causal theory (historical institutionalism—explained in Chapter 2) to map the relationship between faith groups and the UK government in implementing international development policies from 1992 to 2019. The 1992 Bosnian War marks the starting point, an event that reminded the world of the force of religion in international matters in the post-Cold War era. This book covers four government regimes—the Conservative (1992–1997); New Labour (1997–2010); the Conservative-led coalition (2010–2015); and the Conservative (2015–2019). Covering the four regimes has allowed the assessment of the role of political party ideology in policymaking, in particular the international development agenda, as well as the relationship between political parties in power and the third sector (in our case faith groups). For coherent analysis and comparative purposes, this period is divided into four periods, according to the government in power. Thus, the periods are: 1992–1997; 1997–2010; 2010–2015; and 2015–2019. This structure makes it a longitudinal/cross-sectional analysis, which refers to the examination of data collected at different points in time (Menard and Elliott 1990). This structure has also ensured internal validity during the analysis. In explanatory case studies, internal validity is achieved when the researcher considers different explanations or causes, including rival explanations, to the outcome. Thus, analysis at different points in time exposes the research to possible rival explanations. For instance, a resurgence of religion might have led to a heightened relationship between the government and faith groups at one

point in time but not at another point. From such a finding, the researcher may further probe/analyse the data in order to find other factors that may explain the heightened relationship. Since this book focuses on one unit of analysis—successive UK international development policies—process-tracing was selected to uncover the causal paths behind the relationship between the government and faith groups. Process-tracing is an appropriate method for discerning various possible causal mechanisms that may lead to an intensified or less intensified relationship. Using this tactic, the researcher can discern which of the propositions has more explanatory power and at what period in time. George et al. (2005: 207) argue that process-tracing is an indispensable tool for theory testing and theory development, not only because it generates numerous observations within a case, but because these observations must be linked in particular ways to constitute an explanation of the case. It is the very lack of independence among these observations that makes them a powerful tool for inference. Thus, the purpose of process-tracing is to connect the phases of the policy process and enable the investigator to identify the reasons for the emergence of a particular decision through the dynamic of events (George and McKeown 1985; Tarrow 1995). Furthermore, King et al. (1994: 227) explain that process-tracing involves “searching for evidence - evidence consistent with the overall causal theory about the decisional process by which the outcome was produced”. On this point, Collier et al. (2004) discuss ‘within-case’ analysis in their ‘causal-process observation’, which is defined as an insight or piece of data that provides information about the context or mechanism. Documentary research and analysis is a crucial part of the data collection process. Documentary analysis is a well-established method in the social sciences (Bryman 2004; Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007). Documentary analysis is advantageous in that documents can provide an important historical perspective on any area being studied and is extremely cost-effective and productive (Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007). Documentary analysis also forms an excellent means of triangulation, helping to increase the trustworthiness, reliability, and validity of research, especially as most documents are publicly accessible (Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007). To a large extent, the documents needed to map the trend in the relationship between the government and faith groups are from the DFID: the ODA from 1992 to 1996; and DFID white papers, reports, policy and strategy papers published between 1997 and 2019. Equally important are the documents from faith groups, including their annual reports, lobbying materials, policy statements, vision and mission

statements, publications, and financial and annual reports. In addition, the election manifestos (for all elections between 1992 and 2019) of the two major political parties—Labour and Conservatives, as well as the 2010 election manifesto of the Liberal Democrats and the Coalition Agreement have been analysed. Various parliamentary discussions on international development between 1992 and 2019 (obtained from Hansard Written Answers) have also been taken into account. Heated discussions on Brexit in Parliament and its impact on British international development are also crucial to gain insight on various attitudes and possible policy direction. Such debates may be helpful in a number of ways: they can hint at the position of political parties and specific politicians on certain policies, and they may also highlight support and reasons for certain policies.

Official speeches made by relevant officials in regard to international development have also been useful. Speeches, as explained by Mumford and Selck (2010: 302), “are tools to present what the speaker and his or her party are offering, but also a means of laying down the range of possibilities”. In this book, speeches, along with other documents (as mentioned above) are assessed to grasp the extent to which faith groups are engaged in the UK’s international development agenda. A number of factors were considered during the analysis of the documents. These include the documents’ context, authorship, intended audience, intentions and purposes, vested interests, style and tone, and presentation (Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007). To complement the information from these official documents, in particular to gain an understanding of the political climate of the time, other sources (primary and secondary), published scholarly (journal) articles, Overseas Development Institute (ODI) research papers, CREDIT Research papers (published by the University of Nottingham’s Economics department) following the establishment of DFID, Reality of Aid reports, Independent Commission on British Aid reports, Bond reports and press releases, DEVEX news and other sources have been consulted. For the purpose of understanding the climate in the ‘international development world’ and its perspective on faith groups, documents from the World Bank, the UN and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have also been analysed.

In addition to documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews of faith groups’ officials and former officials in DFID were conducted. Although these were conducted between 2010 and 2011, the insight gained at that time was still relevant and has been updated by the close follow-up of press release and other news/public information released

by the faith groups and officials. Close follow-up and observation of social media accounts and in particular Twitter posts by faith groups and DFID officials have been useful to not only gain insight but also understand the attitudes, feelings and moods at different times and on different issues with regard to international development policy. Semi-structured interviews allow a certain degree of flexibility and for the pursuit of unexpected lines of enquiry during the interview (Grix 2004). In a case study, interviews appear to be guided conversations rather than structured queries and although the researcher pursues a consistent line of inquiry, the actual stream of questions is fluid rather than rigid (Yin 2003; Rubin and Rubin 1995). In general, interviews are said to reach the parts other methods cannot reach (Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007). Studying documents can allow a researcher to see the way the organisation portrays itself in print, but interviewing allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things that cannot be observed (Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007). During 2009, the researcher visited several UK FBOs from the two principle religions in the UK—Islam and Christianity—and interviewed officials who deal especially with advocacy and policy development. There were two main reasons for interviewing these NGOs: the first reason was that a list of FBOs was selected for potential interviews on the basis of their operations and their ‘perceived’ relationship with the government during the time of interviews (2010 and 2011). Three, out of five interviewed FBOs, had an official partnership arrangement with DFID. On the other hand, two did not have any official partnership with the government but received funding from the government through various funding schemes, as it will be discussed in Chapter 4. The second reason is that those were the FBOs that accepted the researcher’s interview request at that time. Interviews with FBOs generated information about their engagement with the government, such as lobbying for certain policies (advocacy), funding applications, and general engagement with the government in matters relating to international development. The interviews sought and provided an insight into organisations’ faith identities and how these identities impact on their relations with the government. The researcher also carried out semi-structured interviews with an umbrella organisation for Muslim Charities. This particular interview helped the researcher to gain an understanding of the difficulties faced by small Islamic agencies and why they fail to engage with the government. The interview was also useful as MCF brings together more than one agency. Finally, the researcher

carried out an unstructured interview with an official from the World Bank's department for Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics (DDVE) in Washington, DC. DDVE served as the World Bank's focal point on the intersection of faith and development. The unit maintained partnerships with FBOs as well as broader dialogues on development issues.<sup>25</sup> In early 2011, interviews were carried out with two former officials of the DFID. These officials held key positions in the department and were responsible for key policy decisions that were made during their time in office. Some interviewees requested anonymity. Any wishes the interviewees expressed in the interview were granted. To ensure consistency in referencing, all interviewees are anonymous in this book.

To avoid potential bias in the interviews, the author sought a triangulation method to check data from different sources. This is especially since the interviews were carried out eight years prior to the finalisation of the manuscript. The findings from the interviews were crosschecked with findings from documents, interviews from other sources, and published materials. Jick (1979: 604) maintains that, "the effectiveness of triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counter-balancing strengths of another". Following Yin's suggestions, the author made efforts to grasp all issues that were being studied. The author was interpreting the information as it was being collected (Yin 2003). In addition, counter-arguments were devised throughout the data collection, which was also part of the data analysis. Another crucial stage in this research was data analysis. Data analysis in qualitative research can be messy and complicated (Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007). However, organisation and a clear focus to link the data to the main propositions helped the author to efficiently analyse qualitative data. In the light of this, the author reread most of the data collected (e.g. white papers, policy papers, reports, reviews and speeches) while highlighting and annotating key and relevant phrases, and words that can be linked to the proposition in one way or another. Different colours were used to highlight data related to FBOs and faith communities and for each proposition. Data was also broken down into different parts in accordance with the time framework. This helped to manage the data and also to analyse each set of data in its own context. This was followed by the search for common themes and patterns. In addition, the author read beyond the documents by putting them into context and historical perspective. This is where the secondary sources and literature review proved to be useful. For example, in analysing the policies of the

period from 1997 to 2010, it was important to consider the New Labour ‘third way’ policies, the Ethical foreign policies, and the international context (such as the UN Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goal). It was also important to analyse the rhetoric around post-Brexit vote and politics. The causal theory and the framework informed by historical institutionalism, which is briefly explained below and there is more detail in Chapter 2, were applied to describe the explanatory power of each of the propositions.

## HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM

Historical institutionalism is one of the major types of new institutionalism. Other major types of the institutional theory include rationale choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. Institutional theory, as observed by Bulmer and Burch (1998: 603), “is [a] theory of the middle range. It provides a link between deeper, structural factors such as those located in the economy, society and wider polity on the one hand, and human agency on the other”. Academic works on institutionalism, and in particular historical institutionalism (Streeck and Thelen 2005; Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Steinmo 2008), have argued that gradual changes take place within institutions. Historical institutionalism takes into account the effects of institutions on political processes and outcomes. One of the core claims of historical institutionalism is that institutions do not only channel policy and structure political conflict but also define interests and objectives (Thelen 1999). In that way, policy interests may be perceived in accordance with the institutions in place, for example, the UK government may define their interests in working with faith groups in accordance with their norms, rules, regulations or even the organisation. One of the key assumptions of historical institutionalism is that institutions are persistent and resistant to changes. Thus, it lies in explaining the persistence of institutions and their policies, rather than evaluating the nature of those policies and institutions (Peters 1999: 73).

In general, historical institutionalism seeks to explain rather than predict (Steinmo 2008; Della Porta and Keating 2008). Nevertheless, historical institutionalists pursue an understanding of how history shapes outcomes by examining patterns over time (Steinmo 2008). New institutionalism, and in particular historical institutionalism, is thus relevant in achieving this book’s main objectives: (i) to investigate successive UK government’s international development policies and explore policy

change over time; and (ii) to examine the causes of policy changes and their impact on the role of faith groups in policy process. To do that, this book investigates whether the policy changes are a result of: exogenous factors—in our case the resurgence of religion in international affairs and Brexit; or indigenous factors—which in our case include the attitudes of political parties and politicians towards the third sector and the international development agenda.

The analytical framework that is informed by historical institutionalism is explained in Chapter 2 in more detail and used to understand the rest of the chapters.

## BOOK STRUCTURE

This book is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on introduction, theoretical approaches, literature review and historical background of the UK's international development agenda. The second part of the book focuses on the empirical analysis.

Chapter 2 sets out the theoretical framework of the book. The chapter is divided into two major sections. Section one is a review of literature on the re-emergence of religion in international politics and the nascent agenda of 'faith and development' in which the role of faith groups in international development is discussed. Section two introduces the theory of new institutionalism, with a particular focus on historical institutionalism, and explains the rationale behind adopting this theoretical perspective. Following that is the presentation of the analytical mechanisms that will be used for our analysis in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6. The third chapter is a historical review of the UK's international development agenda. The chapter maps out the general trends and changes in the UK's international development policies, with a particular focus on the period between 1992 and 2019. This chapter aims to disentangle the various themes in international development that prevailed during different periods of time. It cements the analytical structure—showing how policies changed and continued in each period of time from 1992 to 1997; 1997 to 2010; 2010 to 2015; and 2015 to 2019. The chapter will identify variations and points of change in order to guide the analysis of causal factors in the following chapters. Chapters 4 and 5 are empirical chapters, which explore the relationship between faith groups and international development policies. These chapters trace the narrative of FBOs and faith communities' relationships with international development policies, respectively. The book

introduces the faith groups in accordance with the definitions presented in this chapter. Each chapter follows the analytical structure in chronological order—that is the period from 1992 to 1997; 1997 to 2010; 2010 to 2015; and 2015 to 2019. Next, the chapters move on to discuss the findings on the relationship between faith groups and international development policies. In Chapter 4, which analyses the relationship between the UK government and FBOs, it is found that the UK government interacts with FBOs in the same way as it does with other NGOs that deal with international development. To access government funding, for example, FBOs have to undergo the same procedure that any other NGO would. In Chapter 5, which analyses the relationship between the UK government and faith communities, it is found that most faith communities do not have international development as their primary goal but the government engaged with them, especially in the period from 1997 to 2010. Their relationship was basically in the area of awareness raising and campaigning. However, in the period since May 2010, the government has moved ‘awareness-raising’ down the priority list and changed its strategy, which has led to a weaker relationship between the government and faith communities. The book will examine whether in the period between 2015 and 2019, with consideration of Brexit, the government has or is reviewing its relations with faith groups. Each of these chapters is concluded by an analysis, which follows an historical institutionalism approach. Chapter 6 analyses the rising salience of the international development agenda within British politics. The findings in this chapter suggest that the ‘promotion of international development’ moved beyond party politics to become a British/national agenda. In the 2010 election manifestos of all three major political parties (Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat) agreed with and promised to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for international aid. The chapter also examines the election manifestos of 2015 and 2017 for all major political parties, the post-Brexit referendum rhetoric and actions in relation to the international development agenda. The chapter aims at examining the implications of Brexit on the international development agenda and predicts the future of that agenda. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusion of this book. The chapter starts with a summary of the whole book. This is followed by a discussion of the key findings and an explanation of this book’s contribution to IR, International Development and Policy Studies. In addition, policy lessons are presented.



## CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an introduction to the book with a brief presentation of the main arguments of the book, the rationale for the book and the justification for focusing on the UK for a wider understanding. It has also briefly indicated the possible implications of Brexit on the UK's international development policy. The chapter has defined and conceptualised religion from an institutional perspective rather than as a belief-system. In order to facilitate systematic examination of policy patterns over a period of time, religion, in this book, is narrowed down to faith groups. The conceptualisation of faith groups divides them into two categories: FBOs and faith communities. The chapter defines each of these categories. Distinguishing the types of faith groups is key in the analysis since, as it will be made clear in Chapters 4 and 5, the government interacts with each of them in a different manner due to their organisational frameworks. This categorisation, thus, enables specific and systematic analysis of the relationship between the government and different types of faith group. The chapter then explains the methodology deployed and the propositions that are explored in this book. In the same light, the chapter briefly introduces historical institutionalism, which is the theoretical framework for this book. This theory and its analytical approach are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The chapter ends by presenting the structure of the book, the summary for each chapter and the links between them, which form a coherent narrative as shown in the following book chapters.

## NOTES

1. Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics, University of St. Andrews; The Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs (Georgetown University); the Institute for Culture, Religion and World Affairs (University of Boston); the Faith and Globalisation Programme at Durham University, and Politics, Religion and Philosophy at Lancaster University, UK.
2. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 2, where the literature of religion in international affairs is reviewed.
3. Also compared with the other 'isms' of the previous century, like fascism, Marxist Leninism and Nazism. See also Mukherjee, K. (2011). British Universities and Islamism. *Comparative Strategy*, 30(1), 60–78.
4. This quotation has been shortened.