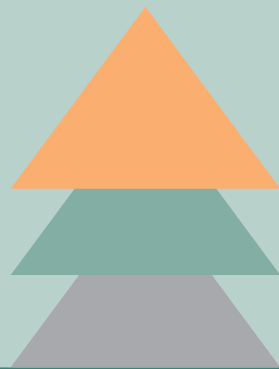


Religions and Development Research Programme

Inspirational, Inhibiting, Institutionalized: Exploring the Links between Religion and Development

Carole Rakodi

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Working Paper 66 - 2011



Religions and Development

Research Programme

The Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium is an international research partnership that is exploring the relationships between several major world religions, development in low-income countries and poverty reduction. The programme is comprised of a series of comparative research projects that are addressing the following questions:

- How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organisations?
- How do religious values and beliefs and religious organisations influence the relationships between states and societies?
- In what ways do faith communities interact with development actors and what are the outcomes with respect to the achievement of development goals?

The research aims to provide knowledge and tools to enable dialogue between development partners and contribute to the achievement of development goals. We believe that our role as researchers is not to make judgements about the truth or desirability of particular values or beliefs, nor is it to urge a greater or lesser role for religion in achieving development objectives. Instead, our aim is to produce systematic and reliable knowledge and better understanding of the social world.

The research focuses on four countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania), enabling the research team to study most of the major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and African traditional belief systems. The research projects will compare two or more of the focus countries, regions within the countries, different religious traditions and selected development activities and policies.

The consortium consists of six research partner organisations, each of which is working with other researchers in the four focus countries:

- University of Birmingham, UK: International Development Department, Department of Theology and Religion, Centre for West African Studies, Centre for the Study of Global Ethics.
- University of Bath, UK: Centre for Development Studies.
- Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi.
- Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan.
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan.

In addition to the research partners, links have been forged with non-academic and non-government bodies, including Islamic Relief.

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Key words: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Tanzania, gender, faith-based organization

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Preface

The UK Department for International Development commissioned the Religions and Development (RaD) Research Programme in 2005. DFID wanted to gain a better understanding of religion in the countries where it works, through comparative research that would generate policy implications relevant beyond a particular context, and to share the findings across other academic sectors and with non-academic audiences.

DFID also wanted to:

- build understanding of the social, cultural and political characteristics of individual countries and regions within the context of local religious beliefs
- examine whether religion does and should get involved in some areas of public life, policy and practice
- develop a better understanding of the scope and features of religious organizations engaged in development-related activities.

No suitable conceptual or analytical framework existed at the time within which to undertake the research; religion had generally been neglected in development policy and practice. It was recognized, however, that there is a religious dimension to many aspects of people's lives and that there is enormous variety between and within countries and faith traditions. In addition, bringing together scattered work across different disciplines, developing a new analytical framework, and undertaking new empirical research was a huge task. The research programme set out, therefore, to be exploratory and to focus on a few countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania) and a select number of faiths, traditions, sects and denominations.

The research intends to contribute to the achievement of development goals, by producing new knowledge and tools and enabling dialogue between development partners by:

- engaging in and informing dialogue between development actors within the four focus countries and more widely
- contributing to development policy and practice
- generating materials that can be used by a range of partners including international agencies, governments, civil society organizations, and education and training institutions.

The lead organization was the University of Birmingham's International Development Department, in association with the Department of Theology and Religion and the Centre for West African Studies. Eleven research projects in one or more of four focus countries (Nigeria, Tanzania, India and Pakistan) explored an aspect of one of the core questions.

The lead institute worked alongside four coordinating institutions in the focus countries:

- Indian Institute for Dalit Studies, New Delhi, India
- Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan
- Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan, Nigeria
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Coordinators from the five organizations worked with teams of researchers within and beyond their own organizations to provide the necessary geographical and disciplinary coverage. Links with policy makers and practitioners were maintained throughout and the policy implications identified in this paper reflect their feedback on the findings.

Details of all the publications based on the work of the RaD programme referred to in this report are given alongside the text, with a complete list of these and other references at the end. All the RaD working papers can be downloaded from <http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/index.php?section=47> and policy briefs from <http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org/index.php?section=54>

The contributions of all the colleagues, advisers and conference and seminar participants on whose work I have drawn in this paper are greatly appreciated; thanks also to Louise Daniel for editorial assistance.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

Religion is generally neglected or taken as a given. Where it is not, it tends to be regarded as either an obstacle or the solution. Conversely, religious traditions react in different ways to development debates and policies. Some remain aloof, some are closely connected to politics and government, whilst others are critical of the dominant paradigm or specific policies.

Religion tends to be regarded as either an obstacle or the solution to development problems.

Neglect is inappropriate when most people in developing countries claim to be religious, faith-based organizations are active in development and when religion motivates many supporters of development assistance and major NGOs in industrialized countries. It is particularly inappropriate if religion has problematic and positive aspects of significance for achieving development objectives. On the one hand, religion is implicated in conflict situations or associated with values and attitudes that are antithetical to desired social changes. On the other, religion is regarded as an important basis for ethics and morals and a source of humanitarian motivations; it is also associated with the best developed social organizations in many societies.

Religious ideas and teachings about how best to lead individual lives and run societies predate the emergence of 'development' and the 'development industry' in the last century. Millenarian groups within religious traditions, which look to the next world rather than this, do not engage with politics and governments and remain aloof from development debates. Yet many religious organizations are inextricably linked to politics and government even if they do not adopt the language of development: their ideas about the moral and social order nonetheless influence power relations within families and social groups and more broadly between governments and citizens. Religious concerns about the moral and social order have led some to challenge whole development paradigms (such as the pursuit of economic growth as the primary development goal) or specific policies that do not comply with religious teachings.

In 1980, *World Development* devoted a special issue to the role of religion in development (Wilber and Jameson, 2000; Deneulin and Rakodi, 2011). Yet this was not followed by any sustained interest in the issues raised. And in 2000, in a search of papers published in three leading development studies journals between 1982 and 1998, ver Beek found very few references to the role of spirituality or religion in development, which led him to refer to 'spirituality' as a 'development taboo' (ver Beek, 2002). Of course, religion was recognized in political, social and anthropological analyses of developing countries, but their influence on mainstream development studies was limited, not least because of the dominance of economics in this field (Rakodi, 2007; Deneulin and Rakodi, 2011).

Those concerned with interpreting religious teachings have always identified their implications for social and political relations, but in the last century some also put forward ideas specifically about development. Catholic liberation theologians stress social justice; the World Council of Churches promotes ideas about 'justice, peace and the integrity of creation'; Islamic economists explore alternative modes of economic organization in line with Qur'anic teachings. Yet many in the mainstream development sector feel that such ideas have little practical relevance and that some create obstacles to achieving development objectives. Further, the promotion of such ideas may be seen as unjustified and problematic encroachment by religion into the public secular sphere.

Yet, in practice 'development' and 'religion' are not separate spheres: many are engaged in both; indeed there have always been debates and practical relationships between development actors and religious individuals and organizations.

By the 1990s, the need for development theory to recognize social difference and diversity had been established. Guidelines for undertaking social and gender analysis in policy formulation, programme design, and impact evaluation

Deneulin, S. and Rakodi, C. (2011) Revisiting religion: development studies thirty years on. *World Development*, 39(1), pp. 45-54.

Rakodi, C. (2007) *Understanding the Roles of Religions in Development: The RaD Approach*, Birmingham: RaD WP 9.

contained rather uneasy references to culture, but rarely referred to religion. Northern multilateral and bilateral agencies, generally associated with countries with secular constitutions, mostly considered religion a private affair – failing to recognize the influence of religion (generally Christianity) on their own perceptions of the world and attitudes towards social issues.

1.2 The re-emergence of religion

In the late 1990s, more published material started to appear in the development studies literature. Development agencies also started to pay attention to the role of religion, including their own relationships with religious organizations – some of which they had been funding for years. Religion started to seem more relevant as they implemented other policy reforms. For example:

- Governments started to work alongside non-state providers of health and education services, amongst which faith-based organizations are often significant.
- Policies linked to women's empowerment or reproductive health in highly religious countries with conservative social attitudes required interaction with religious bodies and leaders.
- Religious tensions tended to increase following political liberalization.

Trends in domestic politics reinforced this 're-entry' of religion. In the United States, for example, the religious right was becoming more prominent in the public sphere and religious groups began campaigning for debt cancellation and more equal relations between countries in developing and industrialized countries. The rise of political Islam and the global reverberations of Islamic terrorism have also fuelled concern about the religionization of the public sphere, posing dilemmas for many ostensibly secular development agencies. Should they maintain a secular approach? Is there scope for wary engagement with religious actors? Is full partnership appropriate? Tolerance and selective engagement might require selective accommodation with some religious values or imply the instrumental use of religion to achieve development objectives. External actors might seek to support 'progressive' religious discourses, for

Should development agencies maintain a secular approach, engage warily or enter into full partnerships with religious actors?

example, where religion plays an important role in people's lives or to harness religion in devising approaches to social reform that are culturally sensitive and 'authentic'. Close alliances imply that religious actors are treated as core providers of welfare services, mediators of social change and arbitrators in dispensing justice, and that religious frameworks are used as a basis for defining human rights (Tadroz, 2011, p 1).

1.3 Definitions: religion, faith and development

Religion, like gender, is central to every society and influential in many people's lives, whether they are enthusiastic adherents, agnostics or reject it outright. Religion, however, is not a single thing. Different faiths have different histories, geographical distribution, belief systems and organizational arrangements. There are huge variations between denominations and sects and the practices of individuals and communities.

There is no consensus on the definition of religion within or between the disciplinary traditions that have studied religion and society (Rakodi, 2007). Theology and related disciplines seek to provide reasoned discourses to understand, defend or promote a religion or to or critique certain interpretations. Their discussions are generally situated within the religion concerned, accept its basic truth claims, and are concerned with interpreting its teachings and beliefs and working out how to live in conformity with them. Most of the social sciences, in contrast, are not concerned with the truth claims of a particular religion but instead study the implications of religious belief and organization for the nature of society.

A broad distinction can be drawn between substantive and functional definitions of religion, although many understandings of religion contain elements of both. Substantive definitions concentrate on what religion *is* – the cross-cultural attributes of religion that differentiate it from other social phenomena – particularly belief in a transcendental reality and/or spiritual being(s), religiosity

Religion is influential in every society and many people's lives, whether they accept or reject it.

(signified by beliefs and practices), and affiliation with a religious organization. These aspects of religion distinguish the sacred from the secular.

Functional definitions are primarily concerned with what religion **does**: the roles it plays in the construction of people's worldviews and the maintenance of social cohesion, by attributing meaning, providing ideas about order, and transmitting these meanings and ideas through symbols and ritual. Through its interplay with other dimensions of social organization and difference, such as class, caste, gender and ethnicity, it influences values, beliefs, behaviour and social organization.

Religion and the English words used to talk about it, such as faith or belief, do not necessarily translate directly into other religious traditions and languages. The main meaning of the word 'faith' is similar to 'belief' or 'trust', although it implies a relationship with a transcendent reality, the existence and nature of which cannot be logically proven or objectively known. Faith thus implies belief in the truths of religion. A religion refers to the body of people who regard a particular source of knowledge or teaching about divine power as authoritative. Religious tradition is a broader concept, referring to a religious movement that to some extent shares a history, culture and common body of teachings, but may be comprised of more than one sect or denomination, each with more or less distinctive teachings, practices and organizational forms. The widespread use of the term faith in contemporary America, where it is linked with the rise and political influence of the 'religious Right', has given it new connotations in many developing countries.

In the major Indian languages, 'religion' might be translated as *dharm*. 'Faith' might be translated as *astha*, but this is close to 'belief' in English: conviction of the truth of a proposition. 'Faith communities' would be *sampradaya*, but this means 'sects' in English, a narrower concept. In Arabic (and by derivation, languages such as Urdu or Kiswahili), there are words for 'religion' meaning 'way of life' – the sum total of a believer's faith and practice (*deen* in Arabic, *dini* in

Definitions of religion are concerned with what it is, how it influences worldviews and values, and the roles it plays in society.

Kiswahili) and 'belief' (*aqeedah* meaning any religious belief system or creed and *eeman*, referring to personal faith or belief). Some of the research attempted to explore the meanings given by respondents to these and related concepts.

In its most generic sense, 'development' implies a vision of progressive change and measures to achieve that vision. In this sense it is a universal feature of states and societies. Many equate development with national and individual prosperity, achievable by economic transformation and growth and expressed in terms of monetary wealth and consumption, which are considered to indicate welfare. Religion is irrelevant to this view. When setbacks on the road to economic transformation and poverty reduction are encountered, however, various social attitudes and characteristics (often including religious beliefs and practices) are identified as obstacles to progress. This diagnosis, together with recognition that the behaviour of economic agents and economic variables are influenced by the socio-political setting, gives rise to an alternative view of development as social and cultural modernization, implying that people's values need to be changed. Both embody ideas about progress and how it can be achieved: not only is there a single destination (developed) but also there is a single path to that destination (economic growth and modernization) (Nkurunziza, 2007).

Critics point out the Eurocentric bias of the goal and the means in colonial and postcolonial contexts – the undesirability of an externally imposed notion of development and the obstacles to achieving it given the economic and political power structures within world capitalism. Alternative visions of development have been formulated, based on empowering developing countries and their people to devise their own goals and take control over the means by which those goals will be realized: meeting basic needs, addressing inequality and exclusion, and empowering disadvantaged countries and social groups. More radical critics question the desirability and feasibility of development (as increased material consumption and integration into the world economy) and the compatibility of prevalent development goals and strategies with religious values and beliefs.

Nkurunziza, E. (2007)
*An Overview of
Development
Studies: Background
Paper*. Birmingham:
RaD WP 2.

Contemporary conceptualizations of development focus on increasing wealth and prosperity through economic growth and transformation, but integrate other aspects of wellbeing into the vision and the means of achieving it. The RaD programme used the concept of ‘human development’ as a working definition, as adopted by UNDP in 1990 in its first Human Development Report: *Human development is a process of enlarging people’s choices. The most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect* (UNDP, 2010, p 12).

This implies that, while economic growth may be necessary to achieve human development, it is not sufficient to reduce poverty and improve wellbeing; deprivation, inequality and powerlessness must also be tackled. Nevertheless, ideas about the priorities for and means of achieving ‘development’ continue to evolve and are often contested.

1.4 Three core questions

The RaD programme concentrated on the social and political aspects of the relationships between religion, society and development practice, focusing on three core questions:

1. How are religious values and beliefs reflected in adherents’ perceptions of concepts and issues relevant to the setting and achievement of development policy objectives?
2. How does religion interact with politics and governance, with what implications for good governance, pro-poor policy making, achieving progressive legislative change and tackling violent religious civil conflict?
3. What are the characteristics of ‘faith-based organizations’, do they play significant and distinctive roles in development and service provision, and what are the implications for other development actors and achieving development objectives?

The RaD programme concentrated on the social and political aspects of the relationships between religion, society and development practice.

The core questions were broken down into more specific questions, which were addressed in eleven research projects. At the start, published research and systematic data on these topics were limited and scattered across the literature of several disciplines. To explore ‘lived religion’ and produce valid insights and useful knowledge, it was agreed that in-depth interpretive approaches are necessary. We therefore used carefully chosen case studies, employing qualitative methods for data collection and analysis complemented by comparative historical analysis and surveys in some of the projects.

The choice of case studies was influenced by the limited availability of relevant contextual material and the sensitivity of the topic. Tensions between and within religious groups are associated with political and ethnic rivalry in many countries and have given rise to conflict and violence at local, national and international levels. Indeed violent clashes between Muslim sectarian groups in Pakistan and Muslims and Christians in parts of Nigeria occurred during the programme, affecting the research. In addition, the willingness of some researchers, organizations and respondents to participate was affected by suspicion of the UK government’s motives in funding the research.

Inevitably, exploratory research generates provisional findings that need to be tested through further case studies and larger data sets or by asking new research questions. The focus on a small number of illustrative case studies means great care must be taken in making generalizations from the research.

The findings were shared with a variety of potential users in the four focus countries and further afield. The implications identified below reflect the outcomes of those discussions.

1.5 Focus countries

The RaD programme thus chose to investigate social and political aspects of the relationships between religion, society and development in Africa and South Asia. The research focused on four countries where major world religions are present

The research explored lived religion through qualitative case studies and interpretive approaches.

and where inter-religious conflict has already occurred or may threaten the achievement of development objectives. In South Asia, these were multi-religious India and largely Muslim Pakistan. In Africa, they were Nigeria and Tanzania, in West and East Africa respectively. In addition, to build on earlier research by some of the researchers involved, two of the research projects included Bangladesh.

There are some similarities but also many differences between the focus countries, which affected the questions investigated, findings from the research and comparisons between them. Before discussing the findings, therefore, some background information on the level of development and religious composition of the four countries is presented.

Internationally comparable data on some indicators of development status are given in Table 1. Of the focus countries, Nigeria is the richest in terms of per capita GDP and Tanzania the poorest, but extreme inequality means that the incidence of poverty in Nigeria far exceeds that in both India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan's relative prosperity is reflected as expected in their Human Development Index ranking, although adult literacy in Pakistan is well below that expected. The poorest country, Tanzania, has the highest incidence of poverty and lowest HDI, but a remarkably high adult literacy rate, reflecting the high priority given to basic education.

In contrast to the wide availability of development indicators, ascertaining the religious composition of countries can be difficult. Not all censuses include questions about religious affiliation; and even if they do, claiming adherence to a faith means different things in different contexts. In some countries, nationwide sample surveys may provide additional information, although their coverage and results may differ.

Indicators of countries' development status are widely available, but ascertaining their religious composition can be difficult.

Table 1: Development indicators for the focus countries

	India	Pakistan	Nigeria	Tanzania
Per capita Gross Domestic Product 2008	\$1,017	\$991	\$1,370	\$496
Incidence of poverty (purchasing power parity of less than \$1.25/day) (per cent)	41.6	22.6	64.4	88.5
Human Development Index (a)	0.519	0.490	0.423	0.398
Human Development Index rank (out of 169)	119	125	142	148
Adult literacy rate (per cent of people aged 15+)	63	54	60	73
Population (million)	1,028.6	153.8	126	34.5

Sources: UNDP (2010): Human Development Index p145-6; incidence of poverty p161 (most recent year 2000-2008); adult literacy p194-5 (most recent year 2005-2008); GDP p. 208-9 (World Bank figures). Population: India 2001 census, Pakistan 1998 census, Nigeria 2003 estimate (1991 census 88.9 million), Tanzania 2002 census.

Levels of religiosity are high in all four focus countries. According to the World Values Survey (2007), around 80 per cent of Indians and 97 per cent of Nigerians consider themselves religious, with over 50 and 95 per cent respectively attending religious services other than weddings, funerals or christenings once a month or more. A 2009 survey of African countries by the Pew Forum (2010) reveals that 87 per cent of Nigerians and 93 per cent of Tanzanians consider religion to be important in their lives; similar proportions of Christians and Muslims claim to attend religious services at least weekly.¹ Practically none of the respondents in these surveys claimed to be non-religious or atheist.

Table 2: Religious composition of the focus countries

Nigeria	Pew Forum 2009 %	Afrobarometer 2008 %
Christian	46	56
Muslim	52	43
Traditional, other or none	1	1
Total	99	100
Tanzania		
Christian	60	63
Muslim	36	29
Traditional religions	2	8
Unaffiliated	1	0
Total	99	100

India 2001 census	
Hindu	80.5
Muslim	13.4
Christian	2.3
Sikhs	1.9
Buddhists	0.8
Jain	0.4
Other	0.7
Total	100.0

Pakistan 1998 census	
Muslim	96.0
Christian	1.7
Hindu	2.0
Other	0.3
Total	100.0

Sources: Afrobarometer, 2008; Pew Forum, 2010; Sharma and Haub, 2009; World Values Survey, 2007

The basic religious composition of the focus countries is available from census figures (India and Pakistan) or nationwide sample surveys (Nigeria and Tanzania), figures from two of which are given in Table 2.

Over 80 per cent of Indians consider themselves Hindu, with Islam being the largest minority religion. Although no other faith accounts for more than about two per cent of the population, in India, this covers millions of people.

The population of Pakistan is overwhelmingly Muslim (96 per cent), with small minority groups (mostly Hindus and Christians); approximately 90 per cent of Muslims associate themselves with Sunni Islam and 10 per cent with Shia Islam (US Department of State, 2005).

There are no reliable census figures for Nigeria – the only conclusion that it is possible to draw from the sample survey figures is that approximately half the population is Christian and half Muslim. 38 per cent of Muslims in the Pew Forum sample regard themselves as Sunni, 12 per cent as Shia and 3 per cent as Ahmadiyya (a sect not seen as Muslim by many Muslims). However, the relative unimportance of these sectarian differences in Nigeria compared to Pakistan is demonstrated by the 44 per cent who consider themselves to be ‘just a Muslim’. The same survey showed that 60 per cent of Christians are Protestant and 37 per cent Catholic (Pew Forum, 2010).²

Similarly, in Tanzania recent censuses have not included a question on religious affiliation. The Pew Forum and Afrobarometer surveys reveal that about 60 per cent of Tanzanians are Christian but as with Nigeria, they give different results. According to the Pew Forum survey, 41 per cent of Muslims are Sunni, 21 per cent are Shia, 14 per cent are Ahmadiyya and 21 per cent ‘just Muslim’; 44 per cent of Christians are Protestant and 51 per cent are Catholic.

Very few people in Nigeria and Tanzania claim to practise traditional African religion alone, a marked decline since the mid-twentieth century.³ In part this reflects people's perception that traditional practices, even those with a spiritual dimension, are not 'religion'. However, 62 per cent of respondents in Tanzania and 8 per cent in Nigeria have 'a high level of belief and practice in traditional African religious beliefs and practices', in that they gave positive responses to six or more of eleven questions about specific traditional beliefs and practices (Pew Forum, 2010). Clearly, in Tanzania, this must include most Muslims and Christians. The different responses in Nigeria and Tanzania may, of course, reflect the perceived social acceptability of admitting to traditional beliefs and practices rather than their actual prevalence.

In Nigeria, and especially in Tanzania, traditional beliefs and practices with a spiritual dimension are still widely adhered to, although they are not regarded as 'religion'.

The many differences between the focus countries mean that it was difficult to identify identical research questions in all of them and a rigorous comparative approach was difficult to achieve in practice. Nevertheless, it was possible to identify a number of important questions that could be posed in one or more of the countries. This paper is a first attempt to synthesize the findings from the research overall and to identify possible implications for policy and practice.

1.6 Outline of the paper

The rest of the paper is divided into three main sections focusing on the core research questions listed above.

- Section 2 explores how people's religious values and beliefs reflect their perceptions of some concepts and issues relevant to development policy and practice.
- Section 3 explores how religion interacts with politics and governance and identifies some implications for good governance, pro-poor policymaking, achieving progressive legislative change and tackling religious civil conflict.
- Section 4 examines the characteristics of 'faith-based organizations', the role they play in welfare and service provision and how this affects other development actors working to achieve development objectives.
- Section 5 draws out some overall conclusions and policy implications.

2 Religious beliefs: how relevant are they to development?

This research set out to develop an understanding of what ‘religion’ and ‘development’ mean to different people across a variety of faiths. It explored a number of questions.

- What is the nature of people’s values, beliefs, practices and identity?
- How are these influenced by and expressed through religion?
- How do people conceive of ‘development’ and its associated ideas and practices, and how is this influenced by religion?
- How relevant are people’s individual spirituality and collective religious identity to attempts to improve wellbeing and prosperity at individual, group and national levels?
- To what extent and how can individual and collective values, beliefs, ideas and practices be taken into account in policies and interventions to reduce poverty and increase wellbeing?
- What does this mean for development actors?

These are complex questions, however, and accurately reflecting religious, cultural and personal differences was a huge challenge. Nevertheless, the research reveals how different ways of looking at the world, values and behaviour are shaped by religion and in turn how these shape people’s views concerning successful development practice.

‘Development’ is pursued by governments, international agencies and development organizations, and their views about its goals and strategies are important. Ordinary people are exposed to their ideas, in whole or in part, and may judge the outcomes of what such actors do in terms of the development objectives they promote. However, they also give their own interpretations to what they hear and experience, and do not necessarily apply the term ‘development’ to their own lives.

Discussion of the links between development (or wellbeing) and religion tends to see the latter in two ways:

Different ways of looking at the world, values and behaviour are shaped by religion and also shape people’s views concerning development practice.

- Studies of wellbeing and the quality of life tend to frame religion in terms of spirituality, taking care to distinguish it from institutional religion, which can have negative connotations.
- In development studies religion is generally considered as a marker of identity, a source of values or as organizational belonging that might be harnessed for development delivery.

This research aimed to capture both dimensions and to explore the links between them. Religion provides a cosmological lens that people use to understand the world and their place in it. Like culture (Appadurai, 2004), it can be a source of oppression or it can provide people with the ‘capacity to aspire’ – it can motivate them and help them to shape positive visions of the future. In addition, religion creates meaning by helping people make sense of their lives; it has much to say about how societies should be organized and about relationships between individuals and social groups.

It is also an important source of values – the moral principles that inform a sense of right social ordering and personal attitudes and behaviour. These values may be seen as negative (submission, fatalism, patriarchy) or positive (charity, compassion, integrity). The international community has recently embraced the assumption that religion is a key source of values and seeks to tap into positive values while mitigating against negative values. However, as will be demonstrated below, there is no straightforward relationship between belonging to a religion, values and a person’s decisions and actions.

Analyses of the links between development and religion often take the two concepts for granted. However, arguably the starting point should be to consider how each is understood and how they are thought to be linked, followed by investigation of whether these assumptions are valid in particular contexts. Findings from research in Tanzania that considered these issues are summarized in Section 2.1 below.

There is no straightforward relationship between belonging to a religion, values and a person’s decisions and actions.

Second, insights are provided on how religion influences people's values and ideas about wellbeing in India and Bangladesh. The paper then goes on to explore how Hinduism and Buddhism are lived and talked about by poor and middle class adherents in India, with particular reference to poverty, service and social justice. Finally, it examines how religious values and beliefs shape attitudes towards gender (female access to education as a means of achieving gender equality, in particular) and corruption.

2.1 Religion and development

One of the most important reasons for exploring the relationships between religion and development is to gain a better understanding of the contexts in which development actors operate and how this might improve development policy and practice. Often, the concepts of 'development' and 'religion' are taken for granted in such discussions, but it is important to understand how ideas about each and the relationships between them are articulated, and how the assumed relationship between them is, in practice, constituted.

Research in Magu District in Tanzania (which is mainly Christian) looked at how ideas about development are incorporated into various religious ontologies and how ideas derived from religion inform mainstream development ideas and strategies. Ethnographic research methods included semi-structured interviews with employees and volunteers in local faith-based and secular civil society organizations and local government officials.

Demarcations between secular and religious, reason and faith, public and private are particularly Euro-American. Development is aligned with the secular, rational, liberal and technical; it assumes that individuals are rational agents responsible for their own wellbeing and livelihoods and that the world can be changed through technical, rational means. Such assumptions, however, are associated with a particular project of modernity; they are themselves a vision or statement of faith about what can be achieved. In practice, the changes that are expected to result

'Religion' does not have a particular relationship with 'development'; rather ideas about development and the nature of reality influence each other.

from development interventions do not necessarily occur as anticipated, not least because in practice there is no clear demarcation between the mainstream development model and other visions – which may or may not share the mainstream model's assumptions about moral and social ordering.

The study suggests that development and religion are not separate domains: development strategies play on imaginaries of transformation and ideas of salvation derived from religion (particularly Christianity); organizations working on development issues have much in common, whether religious or non-religious (Green, 2010). It shows that:

- 'Religious' and 'socio-political' spheres are complex and overlap: individuals are part of many religious, social and political orders.
- Ontological ideas promoted by formal religious institutions (in Magu, different Christian, denominations) vary significantly, giving rise to different ideas about agency and moral action. Different varieties of Christianity share the notion of development as transformation, although they may advocate a different balance between the social, individual, material and spiritual.
- Church membership implies that people choose to subject themselves to the anticipated agency of the divine. However, people also have an understanding of a universe of spirits which coexists with the spiritual domain of the churches. The term 'African traditional religion', which includes traditional healing, divination and witchcraft, does not adequately describe this universe, which is characterized by innovation and change.
- Every religious organization uses ideas about development and progress to define itself and its projects. To such organizations, 'development' can refer to modern cultural practices, imported technologies and styles of governance, the formal 'development sector' or the national development vision, as well as individuals' own strategies to improve their everyday lives.

The study concludes that 'religion' does not have a particular relationship with 'development'; rather ideas about development and the nature of reality (Christian and indigenous practices in this instance) are mutually constitutive.

Green, M. (2010) Religion and development: exploring relationships in development paradigms and in Tanzania, Unpublished paper presented to the RaD conference, 21-23 July, University of Birmingham.

2.2 Religion, development and wellbeing

Increasing attention is being paid to the potential contribution of religion to enhancing wellbeing. In development studies and policy, it is commonly assumed that religion is

- a form of social identity
- a provider of community and social welfare
- a source of values and authority.

The validity of these expectations was examined through research into the relationships between religion, wellbeing and development in the everyday lives of people in India and Bangladesh. The findings indicate that care must be taken with each assumption.

The research in mainly Muslim Bangladesh drew on extensive research on wellbeing and development⁴, supplemented by additional semi-structured interviews to explore religious and cultural dimensions in greater depth (Devine and White, 2009; White, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). It shows that:

- Everyday lived 'religion' is not a discrete set of doctrines and practices – although it includes specific beliefs and practices, it is primarily the source of an underlying moral order that informs people's perceptions of a 'proper' way of living and how good social relationships should be conducted.
- Rapid change resulting from development interventions or wider social and economic changes challenge and may undermine this order. People's concerns include unruly social behaviour (especially of young people), the fragmentation of local communities and challenges to established local leaders, who have an important role in maintaining (or restoring) social order.
- Some respond by advocating a more central role for Islam, resulting in the growth of pietist movements (e.g. the Tablighi Jamaat). However, others fear that increased religiosity might further undermine the ability of families and communities to maintain a proper way of living – for most, family and community relationships are as fundamental to the maintenance of individual and social wellbeing as religion.

Devine, J. and White, S. C. (2009) *Religion, Politics and the Everyday Moral Order in Bangladesh*, Birmingham: RaD WP 40.

White, S. C. (2009a) *Beyond the Paradox: Religion, Family and Modernity in Contemporary Bangladesh*, Birmingham: RaD WP 32.

White, S. C. (2009b) *Domains of Contestation: Women's Empowerment and Islam in Bangladesh*. Birmingham: RaD WP 36.

White, Sarah (2010) *Domains of contestation: women's empowerment and Islam in Bangladesh*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 33(3), 334-44.

A mixed qualitative and quantitative field study in two urban and two rural sites in Punjab and Orissa extended the research to religiously mixed India. Data was collected through the preparation of community profiles of the four localities, a survey of 300 households in each (with different religious and caste groups and an equal number of male and female respondents) and 80 semi-structured interviews with men and women from different social backgrounds.

The study confirms that it is impossible to disentangle religion from its interactions with the social, economic and political context in which it is lived. It reveals the complexity of religious landscapes and the relationships between religion, values and behaviour (White et al, 2011).

Key findings include:

- Religion is pragmatic, permeating everyday concerns and aspirations; it is thought to influence the physical world in which people live and is called upon to assist in solving problems, satisfying needs and explaining misfortune and good fortune. The supernatural, transcendental and practical go hand-in-hand.
- The primary significance of religion for wellbeing is as a grounding for the moral order on which society is based and that guides how individuals act or behave. It is closely linked to good social relations, but is only one of the influences that determine what is socially permitted and not permitted. Day-to-day choices reflect a balance between the 'normative' (what God commands) and the 'practical'. Religion informs both, but it is not the only inspiration for what people choose and how they act, and it may not be the dominant influence (see Box 1).
- Ideas of wellbeing are essentially social, focussed on the family and community.
- Satisfaction is often related to reducing the gap between aspirations and attainment, but this study reveals a different social value: of being satisfied with what one has.
- Wellbeing is gendered. Women's fulfilment is embedded in the wellbeing of their families.

White, Sara C., Joe Devine, Shreya Jha, and Stanley Gaines (2011) *Religion, Development and Wellbeing in India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 54.

- Religion can be a source of wellbeing, providing comfort in times of trouble, a framework to make sense of life's vicissitudes, and a community giving support and identity through a sense of belonging. However, identities and affiliations are much less fixed than the literature often implies. And while respondents acknowledged that religion is important in their lives, its importance should not be exaggerated.
- Religious institutions are seen primarily as places of worship; religious authorities are often held in scant regard.
- It is easy to attribute differences in wellbeing to religion that may be better explained by other factors such as level of prosperity or caste.

Religion plays an important role in people's lives and in how societies are organized: it is a source of identity, comfort, community and values. It is not the only source, however. In addition, people's religious identity is less fixed than sometimes imagined; religious institutions are much less important than family and friends as a source of help and support; many religious leaders and institutions are not held in high regard; and the links between religion, values and behaviour are far from straightforward.

The research suggests that the assumptions about religion made in mainstream development studies and policy fit best with Christianity, to a lesser extent with Islam and even less so with Sikhism and Hinduism, all of which are rooted in and influenced by the South Asian political and cultural context. More than the main religious traditions and their places of worship, groups formed more recently around religious leaders (e.g. gurus), particular places of worship (e.g. *deras*, ashrams) or revivalist agendas (e.g. Tablighi) seem to provide followers with fellowship and practical support in times of need.

Religion is a source of identity, comfort, community and values, but other sources may be more important and the links are far from straightforward.

Box 1: Religion as a source of values

Religious adherents supposedly live in accordance with the teachings and edicts of the religion they follow. This treats religion as a given rather than something that is historically, socially and politically defined; it fails to recognize the complex space between value statements and people's adoption of particular values (Devine and Deneulin, 2010). Interviews with people from a variety of religious and caste backgrounds in Orissa and Punjab found that values guide people's choices and actions, but:

- While religion is an important basis for the moral code of society, it is only one source of values and may not be the most important one.
- Values are operationalized through social norms and practices which vary between places and over time. People behave in certain ways because that is how things are done in particular societies, reproducing stable social relations even when there is potential for conscious choices.
- There is no automatic link between religion and values or between values and behaviour – religion inhabits the space between the 'normative' (what God commands) and the 'everyday', informing both but dominating neither.

Devine, J. and Deneulin, S. (2011) Negotiating religion in everyday life: a critical exploration of the relationship between religion, choices and behaviour, *Culture and Religion*, 12(1), pp 1-18.

2.3 Lived religion

Ethnographic research in Pune, Maharashtra revealed similarities and differences between the religious values, beliefs and practices of different groups – distinguished by religion (Hinduism and Buddhism) and class (poor and middle class).

The research took place in two slum areas with mixed Hindu and Buddhist populations and three Hindu organizations popular amongst middle class devotees - the Ramakrishna Movement, Guru Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma) and the Sadhu Vaswani Mission.⁵ It examined religious beliefs and practices to ascertain how they shape people's understanding of the world and their place in it, their visions of the future and their values, with particular reference to elements of the development discourse: wealth and poverty, gender, and women's education. In the slums it was based on informal conversations, observation, and semi-formal interviews with key figures in neo-Buddhist

organizations working in the slums, as well as analysis of local literature and media sources.⁶ In the Hindu organizations, it was based on informal interaction with devotees, semi-formal interviews with key figures in the organizations, reviews of materials produced by them and observation of some activities at the organizations' main locations (Bradley, 2010, forthcoming; Bradley and Ramsay, 2011).

The findings reveal both similarities and differences in the ways people conceptualize and draw on religion between Hindus and Buddhists living in the slums, and between poor and middle class Hindus.

- Hindus accept the concepts of *samsara* (life as an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth), *dharma* (duty, or an obligation to live in accordance with karmic laws) and *moksha* (unity between *atman* - the individual self – and *Brahman* – the ultimate reality, which, if achieved, releases the soul from the cycle of rebirth). People are ranked according to how close they are (perceived to be) to achieving *moksha*. Men, especially high caste men, are thought to be most likely to do so, as women's domestic responsibilities leave them little time for ascetic practices. Caste is fundamental to most Hindus, shaping how they relate to each other and the world; few wish it to be dismantled.
- People are also ranked according to the perceived purity of their occupations (*jati*). Dalits (the lowest caste)⁷ traditionally carry out menial jobs that keep them in poverty. Despite perceiving their poverty and disadvantage as rooted in the caste system, many low caste Hindus seek reform rather than abolition of the system, because it is through their caste identity that they understand their *dharma* and responsibilities.
- Poor Hindus' aspirations are limited to a desire for better treatment in day-to-day life and employment opportunities within the boundaries of what is considered appropriate to their caste and gender. For them, religious organizations are sources of material support and/or channels through which to articulate their dissatisfaction at inequality and mistreatment.
- Poor Hindus see religion and spirituality largely as coping mechanisms (spaces in which they can work through problems, seek support from their peers and

Bradley, T. (2010) Gender, mothering and development: case studies of three Hindu transnational movements. In Bradley, T. (Ed) *Gender and Religion in Developing Societies: Faith Based Organisations and Feminism in India*, London: IB Tauris.

Bradley, T. (forthcoming) The politicisation of mothering in Hindu missions, *Journal of Totalitarian Regimes and Political Religions*

Bradley, T. and Ramsay, Z. (2011) 'The people know they need religion in order to develop': *The Relationships between Hindu and Buddhist Religious Teachings, Values and Beliefs, and Visions of the Future in Pune, India*. Birmingham: RaD WP 51.

maintain connections with kin). They claim that their personal rituals and the practical (religiously informed) advice local leaders provide give them the strength to cope with their everyday lives. However, their vision is focused more on achieving equal, dignified and prosperous lives than their individual spiritual journeys and they rarely engage in public ritual activities, which are regarded as the preserve of the rich and upper castes.

- In contrast, middle class Hindus focus on their individual pursuit of spiritual growth: following a guru, affiliation with his or her organization, piety and charitable acts are mechanisms for achieving this.
- Buddhists are generally members of the untouchable Mahar caste, who have converted to Buddhism over the last 50 years. This mass conversion was inspired by Ambedkar, a highly educated Mahar, who viewed the caste system as the main obstacle to Dalits' ability to improve their socio-economic status: converting to an alternative religion would provide them with self-esteem and autonomy. In his specific interpretation of Buddhism, the central moral principle of compassion towards others is interpreted as a belief in social justice; liberation is seen as the achievement of an egalitarian society that frees untouchables from oppression.
- People in the slums attribute the mass conversions more to this political agenda than disillusion with the Hindu deities. Although their personal spiritual practices take the form of meditation and worship of Buddha and Ambedkar himself, many continue to worship Hindu deities as well. However, in their view, spirituality is meaningless unless translated into practical actions.
- Both Hindus and Buddhists living in the slums use all the resources available to them, including those offered by community organizations, guidance provided by local religious leaders, the teachings of gurus, support from religious social networks and the strength gained from personal reflective moments and religious practices. Both groups use various aspects of religion to make sense of their circumstances and negotiate a better existence for themselves, but both recognize that religion is no substitute for personal effort and hard work.
- In the slums, men who are prosperous and/or religiously knowledgeable are acknowledged as religious leaders – they wield influence and guide followers through their everyday lives. In turn, religiosity is regarded as a means of acquiring

Middle class Hindus focus on their individual pursuit of spiritual growth, whereas poor Hindus seek to achieve dignified and prosperous lives and see religion as a mechanism that gives them the strength to cope with their difficult circumstances.

power and authority, leading to economic prosperity; leaders (mostly men) and their close followers acquire social status. However, although such leaders are locally respected, they do not have a major teaching role and are not associated with significant organizations.

- In contrast, the gurus who launched the three Hindu organizations studied have large numbers of followers and a transnational reach. These enable the organizations to raise significant funds to promote the gurus' teaching and undertake extensive social activities. While ostensibly religious, the gurus' teaching tends to reinforce the social status quo and sometimes has political overtones. The Sadhu Viswani Mission in particular has a nationalist vision of a unified Hindu India.
- The term 'empowerment' is frequently used with reference to women, but means different things to different people and organizations:
 - For Ramakrishna devotees it implies individual achievement of spiritual goals.
 - For Amma followers it encapsulates a specific vision of gender equality in which both men and women can realize compassion in their everyday lives.
 - For devotees of the Sadhu Viswani Mission, it implies equipping girls to further its Hindu nationalist vision.
 - For poor Hindu women, empowerment means greater gender equality, better treatment by their husbands and vocational training opportunities to improve their financial independence.
- Education is seen as an important way to improve the status and opportunities of women, but the Sadhu Vaswani and Ramakrishna Missions in particular believe that education should be in line with women's *dharma*, preparing them for their lives as wives and mothers.
- The middle class organizations focus on *seva* (service) as the foundation for charitable and welfare activities, such as feeding the destitute. However, *seva* is a means by which followers can express compassion and love towards others – contributing to their own spiritual merit – rather than a way to reduce poverty. It requires passive and grateful recipients and so does not challenge or change the status quo.
- In contrast, both Hindus and Buddhists in the slums stress equality and dignity as the principal values on which society should be based, and believe that all

There are similarities, but also differences, in the ways people conceptualize and draw on religion between Hindus and Buddhists living in Pune's slums, and between poor and middle class Hindus.

humans should be treated with respect. Their vision is of a more socially just society, which for Buddhists implies adoption of a new religion and a rejection of caste. However, they recognize that their new religion is only one component in the wider struggle to overcome socio-economic marginalization. Caste remains a fundamental barrier to empowerment, despite political and developmental efforts at the community and wider levels.

2.4 Gender equality and education

Religious traditions are closely associated with patriarchy and religious organizations are dominated by men. Yet, religion is important to women's personal wellbeing and identity; their knowledge and piety is essential for passing religion on from one generation to the next. Many aspects of religious values, teachings and organizations, however, hinder the achievement of wellbeing for women and gender equality.

The research examined local religious teachings on gender equality and adherents' interpretations of these in urban and peri-urban localities. It relied mainly on informal conversations and individual and group interviews with religious teachers and adherents, as well as attendance at religious services and listening to or reading relevant materials. In Pakistan, respondents included leaders and followers of Sunni and Shia religious organizations, as well as informants not associated with such organizations, in Lahore and the more conservative Peshawar. In Nigeria, the study took place in Jos (Plateau State) and Ibadan (Oyo State) where informants included leaders and members of Christian and Muslim organizations, public servants, academics and ordinary men and women. In Tanzania, the research locations were Arumeru (mainly Christian) and Tanga (mainly Muslim), with many holding to traditional beliefs and practices in both.

The research paid particular attention to attitudes towards gender roles and responsibilities, including the development goal of equalizing girls' access to

Religion is important to women's wellbeing and identity, yet many aspects of religious values, teachings and organizations hinder their search for wellbeing and gender equality.

education. In practice, disentangling views influenced by religion from those embedded in equally patriarchal cultures is difficult if not impossible.

Difficulties in achieving equal access for girls and boys to education are particularly associated with Islam. The research⁸ shows that:

- There is widespread support for education for women from local Muslim teachers and leaders, even the most conservative. However, Muslim men generally believe that the purpose and content of girls' education should differ from boys' education: girls need to focus on becoming good wives and mothers; boys need to earn enough to support their families. This statement by a man from the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan is typical: *"Allah has made man the breadwinner and woman is the weaker sex."*
- Many respondents stressed 'natural' differences between men and women and that medicine and teaching are respectable subjects for women – the perception being that women doctors and nurses are needed to treat female patients and female teachers to teach girl students.
- Muslim women also believe that women are at the centre of families and families at the centre of women's lives. Some women hold relatively conservative views similar to those of men whilst others are more liberal, emphasizing their right to a balanced education and rejecting the idea that their education should be restricted to home-making. In northern Nigeria, purdah is accepted by many Muslim women, but others note that purdah restrictions and limited education exclude women from many income earning activities, making them dependent on male earners, reinforcing purdah and precluding participation in the public sphere, thus reinforcing women's disadvantage.
- Most Muslims want religious education in the curriculum and schools to be single sex. They worry that mixed sex schools will violate moral norms, lead to loss of purity and piety, and contribute to the decay of family values. Some religious women in Pakistan and elsewhere feel that girls perform better in single sex schools. Yet in Nigeria (Ibadan in particular), some respondents favour better quality schooling over single sex schools. A fear that pupils might convert to Christianity leads some to prefer that girls attend Muslim schools (for example, in Jos, where there is a long history of Muslim-Christian competition).

There is wide support for education for women amongst Muslims, but many believe that the content and purpose of girls' education should differ from boys' education and that they should be educated separately.

Belief in a gendered division of labour and women's subordination to men in religious organizations and families pervades not only Islam but also other faith traditions. Other factors include class and where the religious views of respondents lie on the spectrum from conservative to liberal within a faith tradition. For example:

- For middle class Hindu organizations in Pune, education is the means by which the next generation will carry out *seva* and continue the vision of the guru. Education is based on an understanding of women's empowerment in terms of their symbolic and practical roles as mothers (Bradley, forthcoming c). Local faith-based organizations support educational projects among poor residents, including low caste Hindus and Buddhists. These aim to promote gender equality and enable households to increase their economic security but find it hard to maintain girls' attendance.
- For Christians in Jos and Ibadan, men are regarded as natural leaders; the submission of women to the authority of men is justified by biblical references. Both Christians and Muslims support educating girls, because of the important roles women are perceived to play in child-rearing and in transmitting values. However, differences in the attitudes between the more religiously and socially conservative north and the more liberal south can be discerned. For example, both Christian and Muslim respondents in Jos favour education that equips women for their reproductive roles in the household, while respondents in Ibadan are more likely to see education as a means to empower women and achieve greater social equality.

Belief in a gendered division of labour and women's subordination to men pervades all the faith traditions, but is also influenced by class and how conservative or liberal an individual's views are.

Box 2: Religious values and beliefs: what are the implications for development policy and practice?

- *Development actors need to guard against projecting their own or their tradition's assumptions about what religion is and to recognize that religion is understood in many different ways. It is associated with an underlying moral order and is central to everyday life, yet people's religious identity is not necessarily clear or fixed and the frequency and significance of participation in religious practices varies.*
- *Development actors need to understand religious traditions in their social and historical contexts – in particular how relationships between majority and minority groups are played out and the links between religion and the state.*
- *The development sector needs to be cautious about seeking to use religion for development ends. For many, development policies and programmes only have a limited impact compared to the moral order that governs how their lives are lived and societies run.*
- *Apparent associations between religion and differences in levels of prosperity and wellbeing should be treated with care, given that inequality may be associated with caste, other dimensions of social difference or minority status, rather than religion. Religion may enhance dignity and self-confidence but can also exacerbate disadvantage – for women, for example.*
- *Terms used in development policy and practice may be interpreted by religious actors in ways that are not compatible with development objectives – empowerment is one example.*
- *It is vital that religious freedom should be respected. However, while religious values, motivations and beliefs may encourage altruism, integrity and mutual respect, they may also reinforce the status quo, inequality and injustice, so arenas for dialogue between religious and development actors are vital.*
- *Some religious leaders and organizations may be committed to supporting challenges to oppressive social structures. Development actors should explore the potential for working with them, while being aware of the divisive potential of religious identity.*
- *Development actors need to assess the purposes and activities of religious organizations with care: some ostensibly committed to reducing poverty are primarily concerned with adherents' individual spiritual journeys or particular political agendas.*

2.5 Religion and corruption

“Unfortunately what is happening is we’re increasingly making God a stakeholder in our corruption”. Director, Anti-Corruption Bureau, Hyderabad

How do religious values and beliefs influence attitudes to corruption in India and Nigeria? The study carried out over 250 semi-structured interviews with well-educated informants from different religious persuasions and social/occupational groups (Pavarala and Malik, 2011; Simbine et al, 2011).

Limitations of technical, management-led attempts to tackle corruption have resulted in a desire to understand why individuals choose to be corrupt and how their values and attitudes towards corruption are shaped, so that anti-corruption initiatives can take into account the role of personal values in decision-making.

Religions worldwide are widely regarded as promoting the value of honesty, suggesting that religious organizations could play a useful role in addressing corruption (Marquette, 2010a, 2010b). However, countries with high levels of religiosity are also perceived as having high levels of corruption. There is a sense that the pervasiveness of corruption has reduced trust in the state and in society more widely.

It is common for people to pray to God to make them richer and more successful (although this varies between religious traditions). Many religious organizations seek to gain wealth and project an image of material success. Most respondents in both countries felt that religious organizations were more interested in the amount of money coming in than in its source. In addition, accusations of corruption within religious organizations are widespread, leading many respondents to be sceptical about whether they can play a role in combating corruption.

In Abuja, for example, a Muslim claimed that religious leaders do not ‘recognize’ members unless they make significant financial contributions and that those known to be corrupt are often given prominent positions in a religious community

Pavarala, V. and Malik, K. (2011) *Religions, Ethics and Attitudes towards Corruption: A Study of Perspectives in Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 53.

Simbine, A.T., Aiyede, R.A., Olaniyi, R. and Fagge, M.A. (2011) *Religion, Ethics and Attitudes Towards Corruption in Nigeria*, Birmingham: RaD Research Programme Unpublished paper.

Marquette, H. (2010a) *Whither Morality? ‘Finding God’ in the Fight Against Corruption*. Birmingham: RaD WP 41.

Marquette, H. (2010b) *Corruption, Religion and Moral Development*. Birmingham: RaD WP 42.

after making sizeable donations. In Ibadan, an interviewee claimed: “*Religious leaders are preaching prosperity in such a way that people are tempted to indulge in corrupt practices so that their names are mentioned in the Church bulletin*”. In Hyderabad, a Hindu bureaucrat argued that religious organizations “*don’t care, they do not even want to know what the source [of the donation] is. It could be a criminal who is giving all this money... As long as Lakshmi [the goddess of wealth] is coming in, it is all fine*”.

All the respondents offered robust definitions of corruption and very few claimed they would tolerate any form of corrupt behaviour. There is a strong sense of moral outrage in both countries regarding corruption. In India this tends to be voiced in secular terms, with respondents emphasizing the impact of corruption on poverty, growth, trust in government, and society in general. Nigerian respondents tend to see corruption as a lack of the fear of God; they draw clear links between religion and corruption.

However, most respondents in both countries see corruption as being so deeply entrenched within the system that individual actions are unlikely to make a difference.

Respondents also see corruption as something that ‘other’, immoral people do, while what they themselves might do – pay a bribe, for example – is seen as simply making the best of a bad situation. *Paying* the bribe does not conflict with their own moral values (religious or otherwise). The person *taking* a bribe or a neighbour who pays for preferential treatment, on the other hand, is not regarded as ‘truly religious’, because they are demonstrating a clear lack of ethics. This is the ‘demand’ and ‘supply’ of corruption. Few are on the demand side (public officials demanding and accepting bribes, embezzling public funds and so on): it is easy for those who do not have similar positions to condemn them as unethical and untrue to the tenets of their religion. However, many are on the supply side (those offering and giving bribes, for example) so more respondents

People in Nigeria and India see corruption as something that ‘other’, immoral people, who are not ‘truly religious’ do, but they are hesitant to condemn what they might do themselves, for example pay a bribe.

are hesitant to condemn such behaviour as unethical, especially if choosing not to be corrupt is likely to disadvantage their own families.

People feel strongly that religion should make people less corrupt, that it should have a positive effect on behaviour and attitudes. In India and Nigeria, this view is held across the faith traditions. A Sikh in Amritsar, for example, claimed, “*you cannot be corrupt and religious*”. However, the strength of respondents’ feelings is matched by their expectation that religion will not make a difference: disapproval of dishonesty and greed faces competition from other messages that value material success. Indeed, it is commonly felt that it is more acceptable to pursue and flaunt wealth today than it was in the past and that little attention is now paid to how wealth is accumulated. Although people often call for a return to ‘simple living and high thinking’, consumerism is linked to globalization and liberalization, which are seen as more powerful trends.

People feel that religion should make people less materialistic and corrupt, but do not expect it to reduce greed and dishonesty because other messages are more powerful.

Box 3: Religious values and beliefs: implications for anti-corruption initiatives

It is sometimes hoped that religious organizations and leaders might provide channels for communicating messages about honesty and integrity.

Other research indicates that religion helps build trust within groups but does not appear to build it between groups (La Porta et al, 1997) and this study revealed a sense that the pervasiveness of corruption has reduced trust not just in the state but also in society more widely. In a country like Nigeria, with high levels of religious competition and no clear majority religion, transmitting anti-corruption messages through religious organizations may result in further competitive behaviour, exacerbating existing tensions. Ideally, promoting anti-corruption messages would be best done collaboratively across religious groups rather than by individual organizations or leaders.

In India, Hinduism is the clear majority religion but it does not have regular meeting places or times and does not lend itself to easy communication of key messages. There may, however, be outlets through other faith traditions, such as Sikhism, Islam or Christianity.

Most respondents did not think that education and awareness campaigns alone can change current attitudes. It was felt strongly that religious leaders' own probity is key to their credibility in encouraging more ethical behaviour. Respondents also believed that only by rooting out and punishing corrupt behaviour would corruption levels decline. However, there may be scope for religion and values education to make modest contributions.

- *Including values in education could enable children to see things differently, but such an approach is unlikely to succeed for adults because it is difficult to counteract strong social pressures to accumulate and flaunt material wealth.*
- *Religious organizations can provide useful arenas for public debate on fighting corruption and introducing values into education. This is not always feasible, however, if religious traditions do not have regular meeting places, clear leaders and/or widely accepted doctrines, as is the case in India.*
- *Collective efforts are preferable to religious organizations or leaders working in isolation, to avoid exacerbating inter-religious competition and conflict.*
- *Religious organizations' ability to play a positive role in fighting corruption is directly related to their own perceived/demonstrated ethical behaviour.*
- *The link between excessive consumerism and corruption is a concern for many: allies in anti-corruption initiatives might include those already trying to change behaviour, such as environmentalists and those seeking structural economic reform.*

3 Religion, politics and governance

3.1 Religion (re-)enters public life

Traditionally, the involvement of religion and religious actors in the public sphere has been viewed as an obstacle to democracy and inclusive citizenship.

However, 'religion' cannot be treated as an independent variable. It is embedded in different and dynamic ways in political, social and economic systems.

The research first examined historical trends at the national level in the focus countries, drawing on published sources, and then undertook several case studies of salient episodes, organizations or issues, based on secondary and primary sources, in particular semi-structured interviews with key informants.

Political liberalization has opened up spaces for new political actors, leading to greater political inclusion and increased rivalry and conflict (Mahajan and Jodhka, 2009; Waseem and Mufti, 2009; Nolte et al, 2009). While religious actors have a long history of political engagement, this larger political space has enabled them to increase their influence and launch new political initiatives. Although the 'de-privatization' of religion can in some circumstances be exclusionary and anti-developmental, the indications are that it will continue.

The good governance agenda has impelled states to be more accommodating of cultural and religious diversity. The most striking change in the post-colonial period in India, Nigeria, Tanzania and Pakistan was the shift from predominantly secular constitutional settlements agreed at independence to political arenas in which religious organizations play active roles (Singh, 2011). The 'return of religion' to public life has been marked by electoral mobilization by and co-option of religious actors and new discourses centred on religious identities. In some instances, radical religious groups have sought to change the prevailing political order, as with the demand by some Sikhs for secession in India (Mahajan and Jodhka, 2009). Such attacks in India and elsewhere have been crushed but others continue to threaten the very viability of the state, as in Pakistan (Waseem and Mufti, 2009).

Mahajan, G. and Jodhka, S. S. (2009) *Religions, Democracy and Governance: Spaces for the Marginalized in Contemporary India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 26.

Nolte, I. with Danjibo, N. and Oladeji, A. (2009) *Religion, Politics and Governance in Nigeria*, Birmingham: RaD WP 39.

Waseem, M. and Mufti, M. (2009) *Religion, Politics and Governance in Pakistan*, Birmingham: RaD WP 27.

Singh, G. (2011) *Religion, Politics and Governance in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania since Independence*, Birmingham: RaD WP 55.

Does this mean that religion-based political parties will take over power? Such parties are not permitted in some countries such as Nigeria and Tanzania and even where they are, democracy appears to undercut the ability of religious extremists to take over; privileged and disadvantaged people exist in every religion and secular parties can take advantage of this to seek electoral support (as has happened in India), splitting the 'religious vote'. Authoritarian regimes' need for legitimacy, on the other hand, can lead them to co-opt and empower religious actors (as in Pakistan), with adverse implications for democracy and achieving human development objectives.

We can also look at the record of regimes in which religion is formally or informally integrated with politics (through the establishment of an Islamic state, control by religious political parties or permitting religious actors to exercise major influence in decision-making). The limited evidence available indicates that their record in terms of improving governance and achieving human development objectives is poor.⁹

In some countries, deficiencies in the constitution or electoral system exacerbate conflict, as in Nigeria, where the privileging of 'indigeneity' over national citizenship exacerbates religious and ethnic conflict at the State or local level (Nolte et al, 2009). However, as a counterbalance, governments also take steps to reduce the likelihood of inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflict, for example proportionality in or agreement to rotate presidential, ministerial, military or senior civil service offices between the major religious groups (Nigeria, Tanzania). In some instances, increased involvement of religion in the public sphere has generated creative responses, such as inter-faith forums (e.g. the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council). Such arrangements may, however, have only limited impact. In Nigeria, proportionality/rotation is not always practised at state or local level, and most state governments have not taken steps to facilitate inter-faith dialogue. For these and other reasons, there is a higher incidence of inter-religious conflict in some states and localities than others.

In some countries, deficiencies in the constitution or electoral system exacerbate inter-religious conflict, but it is also possible for governments to take steps to reduce the likelihood of conflict, for example through the system of appointments to public office or forums for dialogue.

Mechanisms such as proportionality and rotation can, therefore, play a role in regulating competition for political power and office amongst social groups, but are unlikely to completely prevent attempts to harness religion in such competition, especially in countries where most voters are religious believers. When contenders for power attempt to co-opt religious groups, some resist (e.g. the Catholic Church in Anambra State, Nigeria), but some assent, demonstrating how challenging it is for religious actors to be drivers of governance reforms, because they remain socially embedded.

The interests of the poor are more likely to be addressed if, because of their numbers, political parties have an incentive to seek their support. In some instances, poverty is associated with religious (especially minority) status (Muslims in India, Hindus in Pakistan). However, even within minorities, there is generally considerable inequality. Whether political parties (secular or religious) appeal to poor religious groups or poor people within religious groups and address their needs when in power depends on the dynamics of inter- and intra-religious relations. It also depends on whether poor people are attracted or alienated by the use of a religious idiom in politics, whether their priorities are compatible with the values and interests of the powerful within religious groups, and whether they use their religious identity to gain increased political representation or take advantage of measures designed to reduce poverty.

Some affirmative action programmes may use religious eligibility criteria. However, governments are generally wary of doing so in case competition is exacerbated. For example, affirmative action programmes in India continue to use eligibility criteria based on caste rather than religion, despite the arguments of some religious groups. In addition, because affirmative action programmes may provide access to resources for a few within the eligible group, they may result in more inequality rather than poverty reduction. Some disadvantaged groups within religious traditions (for example, Dalit Sikhs and Hindus) have used not only electoral but also religious resources (conversion from Hinduism to

Many factors influence whether political parties appeal to poor religious groups or poor people within religious groups and address their needs when in power.

Buddhism, investment in religious places and social facilities) to secure increased rights and access to government resources, as well as improving their self-confidence and sense of identity.

Box 4: Religion and politics: what are the implications for development policy and practice?

- *Political economy and governance analyses should include analysis of the characteristics of religion and the relationships between religion, politics and governance.*
- *Democracy can facilitate the entry or renewed involvement of religious actors in politics. This may enable some disadvantaged groups to increase their political influence, or religious interests to integrate religion into law and policy. However, democracy can also provide safeguards against political actors who mobilize religion to further their own interests.*
- *Some religious visions of society and development can be exclusionary and anti-developmental. Instituting or sustaining appropriate secular constitutional arrangements appears preferable to the official or informal integration of religion with the state.*
- *On current evidence, it seems unlikely that regimes controlled by religious political parties will institute better governance or advance the achievement of human development objectives. However, further studies are needed on the developmental outcomes of policies adopted by regimes that integrate religion into the state, such as the northern Nigerian states that have adopted Sharia law.*
- *Measures to improve interaction between religious groups and ensure their proportional representation are needed, to counter the increased conflict between religious actors that may accompany political actors' mobilization of religious identity for political purposes.*

3.2 Participation in policy consultation processes

Despite their organizational strength, legitimacy and grassroots membership, religious organizations in Tanzania and Nigeria have hardly been involved in policy consultation processes – for preparing and reviewing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), for example.

There is a lack of opportunity for civil society to get involved in such processes. There is also an uneasy relationship between governments and religious organizations – the latter's engagement in politics is seen as suspect: they do not speak with a united voice, the competition between them is regarded as divisive, and their attitudes to government are seen as critical rather than constructive. In addition, religious organizations lack resources or the capacity to collect and represent to government the experiences and opinions of poor communities in a way that commands respect (Taylor, 2011).

Working with networks of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in Nigeria and Tanzania, a pilot study aimed to test whether these obstacles could be overcome by supporting collaboration between Muslim and Christian organizations. The research developed and tested 'prototypes' for cooperation between religious organizations to assemble and analyze data. The project demonstrated that:

- FBOs can cooperate across religious and denominational divides to assemble data at a grassroots level and analyze and present the findings to government.
- The reports reflected the perspectives of 'ordinary people' in the communities where data were collected – some in remote locations.
- Local management arrangements worked reasonably well; data on selected issues were assembled and analyzed; reports were prepared and submitted to government. However, capacity was limited and the pilot study could not overcome all the constraints:
 - Local providers of training and support were weak.
 - The reports appeared to reflect the perspectives of 'the poor' but did not always distinguish between poor groups or between the poor and religious leaders or 'local people' more generally.

Taylor, M. (2011) *Strengthening the Voice of the Poor? Participation by Faith-based Organizations in Policy Consultation Processes in Nigeria and Tanzania*, Birmingham: RaD WP 61.

- The submission seems more influential in Tanzania than Nigeria, where there have been political upheavals and a stalled policy process, as well as more sensitive relationships between religious organizations and the state, and less government interest in participatory processes.
- It is too early to assess fully the extent to which submissions have been followed up and influenced policy.

Box 5: FBOs' engagement in policy consultations: what are the implications?

There is potential for religious organizations working together to contribute positively to policy consultation and review processes. The 'prototypes' tested in this project could be rolled out more widely and sustained, with support and the necessary financial resources. This could increase the capacity of religious organizations to represent to governments the experiences and priorities of poor people and remote communities and enable them to contribute to policymaking processes, alongside other CSOs. However, their ability and willingness to do so depends on the wider interests of religious and government bodies and leaders and the power relationships within and between them.

3.3 Promoting human rights through legislative change: social movements engage with religion

Lasting social change is more likely to occur as a result of the efforts of social movements that command wide support and whose campaigns produce changes in social attitudes, legislation, policy and behaviour than through the interventions of single organizations, including governments and international agencies. Religion, however, is often seen as an obstacle to realizing human rights and improving social equality.

This research examined engagement with religion by the women's movement in India, Nigeria and Tanzania, and by Dalit movements in Punjab and Maharashtra, India.

Lasting social change is more likely to occur as a result of the efforts of social movements, such as campaigns by women and other disadvantaged groups for social equality.

Women's movements campaigning for social change

These studies examined campaigns for progressive social change: i) domesticating the UN Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and outlawing widowhood practices that infringe human rights in Nigeria; ii) Muslim women's rights in India; and iii) reforming customary land law in Tanzania. They drew on published accounts, secondary material and semi-structured interviews with informants from religious and secular organizations involved in the campaigns, religious communities and relevant government agencies.

There is Christian and Muslim opposition to legal changes seen to contradict religious beliefs – often intertwined with cultural practices – such as the equality of men and women in marriage, and reproductive health practices. Secular advocates of women's rights may accept religious views (and their establishment in law), seek to change them, or reject outright such views and the strategy of working with religious leaders and organizations.

What strategies do women's movements use vis à vis religious organizations? How do religious organizations react to proposed reforms and the campaign tactics?

Some women's organizations realise the importance of engaging with religious authorities to inform them about the issues, modify their claims if necessary and gain their support, but others do not. During the campaign to domesticate CEDAW into Nigerian law, the Nigerian CEDAW coalition lobbied members of the House of Assembly but made little effort to raise awareness and support amongst religious and traditional leaders or ordinary women, or to integrate faith-based women's organizations into the campaign. In Anambra State, however, the support of the Roman Catholic Church was essential to the success of a campaign to secure legal reform to reduce the mistreatment of widows (Adamu et al, 2011; Para-Mallam et al, 2011).

Traditional beliefs and practices are not considered to be 'religion' in Tanzania and so the women's organizations lobbying to reform land tenure felt able to

Adamu, F., Para-Mallam, O.J., Ajala, A.O. and Lanre-Abass, B. (2011) *Engagements of Women's Movements with Religion: Legal Reform in Anambra State*. Birmingham: RaD WP 60.

Para-Mallam, O.J., Lanre-Abbas, B., Adamu, F. and Ajala, A. (2011) *The Role of Religion in Women's Movements: The Domestication of CEDAW in Nigeria*, Birmingham: RaD WP 59.

challenge customary laws and practices. However, in order to obtain support from Muslims as well as Christians, they refrained from tackling the issue of how Muslim law affects women's inheritance rights (Killian, 2011).

Garnering the support of religious authorities for campaigns by the women's movement for legal change brings moral authority, organizational capacity and the potential for mobilising grassroots support. In Nigeria, while the Catholic Church did not take the lead in the successful campaign to outlaw widowhood practices, its backing was essential in mobilizing support from powerful local figures and the grassroots level. In Tanzania, the Catholic, Protestant and Lutheran churches and the main Muslim umbrella organization helped in 'sensitization' activities linked to the campaign for an improved Land Act.

Women may see religious values, beliefs and laws as insuperable obstacles to realizing their rights. They may reject religion as a basis for law, arguing for a universal civil code instead, and choose to work with others within the wider women's movement. However, the perceived limitations of such a strategy may lead some women to organize for social change within their religion. Muslim women in India, for example, are re-shaping the category 'Muslim women' to mobilize for their rights and challenging male-dominated religious institutions (Kirmani, 2009a, b, c). Working within a religious tradition may also build bridges between elite-dominated advocacy groups and grassroots women, as in the campaign for legal reform in Anambra State. These are not mutually exclusive: women's choices are influenced by their personal religious views and affiliation, their experience and their assessment of alternative strategies' chance of success.

Dalit movements in India

In India, caste and religion are the primary sources of identity and social/cultural organization, and have often been critical for the distribution of material resources and state patronage. While Dalits and other disadvantaged groups seek to achieve social inclusion and justice through secular channels, other movements consider it essential to engage with religion, although it cannot be

Killian, B. (2011) *Women's Land Rights Movement, Customary Law and Religion in Tanzania*, Birmingham: RaD WP 57.

Kirmani, N. (2009a) *Beyond the Religious Impasse: Mobilizing for Women's Rights in India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 35.

Kirmani, Nida (2009b) Claiming their space: Muslim women-led networks and the women's movement in India, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 11(1), pp 72-85.

Kirmani, Nida (2009c) Refashioning 'Muslim women': from symbolic victims to political agents, *Seminar*, 602(October), pp 38-42.

Some Dalits in India remain Hindus and seek reform within the religion, while others adopt more radical strategies, which may also have a religious dimension.

Box 6: Engaging with religion: implications for women's movements

These findings have implications for the provision of external support for civil society development, the achievement of greater gender equality and the strategies adopted by women's movements in campaigning for legal change.

- *The women's movement would do well to work alongside religious organizations that support their aims, because of their organizational capacity, moral authority and ability to mobilize grassroots support for legal change.*
- *Religious organizations are often rigid and resistant to change, but it may be possible to identify forces for change within them, opening up possibilities for women to influence change from within.*
- *Selectively engaging with religious organizations to achieve changes they support can pave the way for tackling more difficult problems.*
- *Organizations of religious women can draw attention to the disadvantages experienced by women within a religious tradition and challenge the ability of male religious leaders to (mis)represent their needs to governments.*

assumed that religious bodies are committed to socio-economic or gender equality. Some Dalits remain Hindus and seek reform within the religion. Others adopt more radical strategies, which may also have a religious dimension.

The Ad Dharmi/Ravidassi movement amongst the low caste Chamars of the Doaba sub-region of Punjab and the neo-Buddhist movement among the Hindu Mahars of Maharashtra both sought radical changes to the caste system rather than reforms. For their leaders, rejecting caste meant rejecting Hinduism, but not religion itself (Jodhka and Kumar, 2010); instead, they sought an alternative system to fulfil their spiritual needs, provide an alternative identity and restore dignity to their followers. Both groups chose a distinctive religious identity and then invested material and cultural resources to develop their ideology, rituals, and places of worship and pilgrimage. Both established facilities to improve access to social services, providing not only educational and employment opportunities for their followers, but also a variety of educational and health facilities for the wider community.

Jodhka, S. S. and Kumar, A. (2010) *Religious Mobilizations for Development and Social Change: Dalit Movements in Punjab and Maharashtra, India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 47.

Box 7: What are the implications for social change amongst the Dalits in India?

- *Political influence and legal/policy change are necessary but not sufficient to overcome deeply engrained systems of discrimination and prejudice.*
- *For many, rejection of the caste system implies rejection of Hinduism, but because religion plays an important role in people's spiritual wellbeing and everyday lives, religions that reject caste can provide an alternative source of meaning, identity and dignity.*
- *While leadership is important, investing in the development of spiritual and material religious resources is also important to secure understanding of, allegiance to, and the continued vitality of, 'new' religious traditions.*
- *Investment in social facilities serves multiple functions, including improving the status of a marginalized group in the wider community, as well as providing members and others with access to education, employment opportunities and healthcare.*

3.4 Religion and urban communal conflict

Violent conflict can appear to be inter- or intra-religious. Most research in this area has focused on the role religion plays in the violence, but much less is known about its role in the aftermath of conflict – the return to calm and process of reconstruction.

Studies in two cities each in India, Nigeria and Pakistan used published sources, secondary material and semi-structured interviews with key informants to examine the characteristics of conflict, to identify the key actors and understand the roles they played, and to assess how far they have addressed the concerns of those affected. The findings are summarised in Table 3.

Although the roots, characteristics and trajectories of violence between religious groups in urban areas and its aftermath vary, they clearly share common characteristics.

- Religion is often manipulated by other social actors.
- Governments do not always fulfil their responsibilities to stop the violence, provide relief, facilitate reconstruction, or bring criminals to justice, and in some cases are culpable.

Gupta, D. (2009) Citizens or victims, *Seminar*, 602(October), pp 48-53.

Gupta, D. (2010) *Elusive Peace: Seeking a 'New Normal' in Post-Conflict Ahmedabad and Mumbai*, Birmingham: RaD WP 44.

Gupta, D. (2011) *Justice Before Reconciliation: Negotiating a 'New Normal' in Post-riot Mumbai and Ahmedabad*. New Delhi: Routledge India.

Best, S.G. (2010) *Inter-religious Conflict and Post-Conflict Transformation in Jos and Kano, Nigeria*, Birmingham: RaD Research Programme. Unpublished paper.

Table 3: Characteristics of violent urban conflict

India	Nigeria	Pakistan
<p>Hindu-Muslim violence in Mumbai in 1993 and Ahmedabad in 2002 had its roots in the partition of India and Pakistan and, more recently, in the emergence of a Hindu cultural nationalist agenda (Gupta, 2009, 2010, 2011).</p> <p>There were many more Muslim than Hindu victims of the riots in Ahmedabad. Muslims were also less able to cope in the short term and recover in the longer term because the state government of Gujarat backed the violence and the Muslim community in Ahmedabad is mostly poor.</p> <p>In Mumbai the government and security forces did their best to end the violence and the victims were supported by affluent Muslim businesspeople, secular citizens, government officials and concerned politicians.</p> <p>Muslim victims in Ahmedabad had to rely on short-term relief and assistance from Muslim organizations (and a few secular NGOs), which also assisted those who felt unable to return to their homes to resettle elsewhere. The violence in both cities led to increased residential segregation along religious lines.</p>	<p>Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have intensified since the restoration of multi-party democracy and the introduction of Sharia law in some northern states (Best, 2010). In Jos and Kano, interviewees believe that Muslim-Christian violence is motivated by mutual hatred and a fear of religious expansion, unequal treatment by the government and by Christian fear of Muslim desire for an Islamic state. They also believe competition for political control of local government and control of other resources, such as land, leads to violence.</p> <p>People affected by violence relocate to safer areas, which has led to residential segregation along religious lines, accompanied by the rebuilding or relocation of places of worship and schools. In addition there is overcrowding where religious minority communities cannot access land owned by indigenous groups and vigilante groups are emerging where the police cannot provide protection.</p> <p>Religious organizations played important short-term roles in assisting victims of violence, for example providing temporary relief and counselling, usually to members of their own faith. They also tried to document the events and their impact on people's lives and properties. Religious organizations have not, for the most part, developed longer term programmes such as rebuilding homes or livelihoods, and have made only limited attempts to prevent further conflict.</p>	<p>There was an upsurge in sectarian conflict in Sunni-majority Jhang in Punjab and in Shia-majority Gilgit in the Northern Areas in the 1990s (Waseem et al, 2010). The intermittent acts of violence can be explained by local economic, social and demographic changes, the legacies of partition, international power politics and the Islamicization agenda of the Pakistani state.</p> <p>Today there is uneasy peace in both places. In Jhang, the government eventually cracked down on Sunni extremist elements and some behind the conflict gained political power at the local level and are attempting to demonstrate that they can exercise responsible governance. In Gilgit, the government encouraged Sunni immigration; Shia perceptions that the security forces and government were pro-Sunni fuelled resentment and violence.</p> <p>Some NGOs played relief and social welfare roles, but in Jhang only a local traders' association appears to have taken on a role maintaining peace and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in Gilgit focuses its activities in surrounding villages.</p> <p>The government and security forces in both areas exacerbated sectarian differences and failed to play active roles in stopping the violence or providing relief and bringing criminals to justice. Yet they helped contain the violence, restore peace and improve governance. The long term legacy is one of bitterness, of residential areas segregated along sectarian lines, and a lack of confidence in civil society organizations and government alike.</p>

- Religious organizations only play a limited role in the aftermath of inter- or intra-religious violence, typically restricted to providing relief. Their initiatives to restore peace, prevent further conflict or support reconstruction are limited.
- Urban conflict inevitably results in increased residential segregation between religious groups, as people seek safer places to live.

Box 8: The implications of urban inter-religious violence and its aftermath

Some implications for those seeking to restore order, provide relief, support victims to rebuild their lives and prevent further violence include:

- *Victims' first priorities are security and access to justice, which are seen as prerequisites for rebuilding their lives and livelihoods, holding the perpetrators to account and preventing future violence.*
- *Neutral, well-trained security forces, competent government and democratic politics are vital to peace building and reconstruction; non-government organizations can make important contributions but they cannot replace the state.*
- *Religious organizations can play a positive role in providing immediate relief and assistance to victims of inter- or intra-religious violence, usually members of their own community, but their roles in long term reconstruction and peacebuilding have been limited. Further research is needed to identify and tackle the constraints on religious and secular organizations' ability to contribute to long term reconstruction and improved inter-religious relations.*

Waseem, M. with Kamran, T., Ali, M.A., Riikonen, K. and Rehman, A. (2010) *Dilemmas of Pride and Pain: Sectarian Conflict and Conflict Transformation in Gilgit and Jhang, Pakistan*, Birmingham: RaD WP 48.

4 Development and service delivery

Religious organizations take a variety of forms and are often not clearly distinguishable from secular organizations – the founders, members and employees of which may, nonetheless, be motivated by religion. In countries where most people claim adherence to one of the major world religions, religious attitudes influence virtually all institutional settings. Although religious organizations play a significant role in processes of development in many parts of the world, and there has in recent years been renewed interest in this because of their perceived advantages, including closeness to poor people, little systematic information is available on the scale, nature and effectiveness of their activities.

The programme started off, therefore, by trying to assemble a picture of the scale and scope of faith-based development activities. First, some findings from this ‘mapping’ exercise are presented. Secondly certain activity areas and religious organizations are described in more depth and their role in development assessed. While many of the organizations studied were engaged in education or HIV and AIDS, systematic assessment of the roles they play in the health or education sectors was beyond the scope of this programme.

4.1 Faith-based development activities

The scale and scope of ‘faith-based’ development activities vary depending on several factors including the definition of faith-based organization (FBO) adopted, a country’s colonial history, its religious composition, post-independence politics, local philanthropic traditions and degree of aid dependence.

In the absence of systematic data¹⁰ or a widely accepted definition of FBOs, as well as the reluctance of many informants to talk about religion, any ‘mapping’ exercise will be partial and illustrative.¹¹ The country research teams chose to concentrate on indigenous rather than international organizations. In addition, variations between the countries studied make direct comparisons difficult. However, it is possible to draw out common features (Tomalin and Leurs, 2011).

Tomalin, E. and Leurs, R. (2011) *Mapping the Development Activities of Faith-based Organizations in Pakistan, India, Nigeria and Tanzania*, Birmingham: RaD WP 62.

Summaries of the findings are presented in Table 4 (Iqbal and Siddiqui, 2008; Jodhka and Pradyumna, 2009; Leurs et al, 2011; Odumosu et al, 2009).¹²

The term FBO grew out of a Western context – specifically the rise of the religious right in the United States. It is influenced by a Christian notion of ‘faith’ and in developing countries is mainly associated with the development industry or not used at all. Its use is particularly problematic in Pakistan (see Table 4). ‘FBO’ does not adequately capture the organizational expression of religious traditions and their development activities and nor is it easy to distinguish between FBOs and secular organizations. Nevertheless, new organizations calling themselves FBOs have emerged and some existing organizations have re-labelled themselves FBOs to tap into funding that prioritizes faith groups; the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is one example.

Religion has long been associated with welfare and philanthropic work that predates the emergence of development as a global concern, the association of missionary work with ‘development’ in the colonial period and the more recent rise of FBOs. In particular, because non-Christian religions generally predate European colonialism, philanthropic activities associated with Islam and the Indic religions have a longer history in many developing countries.

European colonization brought Christian missionaries, who also set up schools and hospitals. In some instances, this was accompanied by an increase in organized activity within some existing religious traditions, for example, becoming more active in education to counter the impact of mission education, often linked to the emergence of local socio-political revivalist movements (such as the Deobandi movement in India). Colonial governments also sought to institutionalize voluntary organizations, to formalize and control their activities.

After independence, religious organizations had to re-negotiate their relationships with newly independent governments and (especially for the churches) their mother churches. The tricky nature of some of these relationships, the state-led

Iqbal, M. A. and Siddiqui, S. (2008) *Mapping the Terrain: The Activities of Faith-based Organizations in Development in Pakistan*, Birmingham: RaD WP 24.

Jodhka, S. S. and Bora, P. (2009) *Mapping Faith-based Development Activities in Contemporary Maharashtra, India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 28.

Leurs, R., Tumaini-Mungu and Mvungi, A. (2011) *A Preliminary Mapping of the Development Activities of Faith-based Organizations in Development in Tanzania*, Birmingham: RaD WP 58.

Odumosu, O., Olaniyi, R. and Alonge, S. (2009) *Mapping the Activities of Faith-based Organizations in Development in Nigeria*, Birmingham: RaD WP 38.

model of development adopted by most post-independence governments in the 1950s and 1960s, and increasingly authoritarian rule in many countries, inhibited the growth of civil society – including faith-based development activities. Indeed, governments' fear of the destabilizing effects of religious competition and acceptance of responsibility for service delivery, led, in some instances, to the nationalization of education and health services (and *zakat* administration in Pakistan).

However, many of these arrangements were reversed in the face of the debt crisis (Tanzania), the downturn in oil revenues (Nigeria) and poor state performance in service delivery (Nigeria, Pakistan). Political and economic liberalization, increasingly overt religious expression in the public sphere – as well as increased funding from the Middle East to Muslim countries, from the United States to Christian organizations and from diaspora populations to their areas of origin – led to the reinstatement of some traditional activities and to growth in the numbers and scope of religious organizations and facilities. This includes the rise of radical FBOs with extremist or sectarian agendas, including Islamist organizations, right-wing Hindu cultural nationalist groups and Sikh nationalist groups.

The scale of FBO involvement in development today is significant. However, it is impossible to give exact estimates, because it depends, for example, on which organizations are considered FBOs, what is considered a development activity and whether unregistered as well as registered organizations are included. Attempts to devise typologies of NGOs, including FBOs, have been problematic. NGOs often do not profess to be faith-based but are nonetheless motivated by religion; some religious organizations have secular organizational management practices; the definition of and distinction between charitable, philanthropic, welfare, humanitarian and development activities are complex.¹³ The boundaries between different organizational types are blurred.

The scale of FBO involvement in development today is significant, but the boundaries between organizational types are blurred and it is impossible to give exact estimates.

Table 4: Characteristics of faith-based organizations

Nigeria	Tanzania	India	Pakistan
<p>FBOs are defined locally as being affiliated to a faith community, based on religious values, engaged in social provision and seeking to generate social change through their religion.</p> <p>Their distribution and characteristics have been influenced by the organizational nature, origins and history of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria although no data are available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FBOs' geographical distribution and scope of activities varies between states, depending on their religious history and composition, with Muslim organizations concentrated in the predominantly Muslim north, and Christian organizations more widely spread. ▪ FBOs possess substantial influence, resources and organizational capacity with extensive networks of people, institutions and infrastructure, especially in rural areas, where few others exist. ▪ They provide services and engage in community development and thus potentially contribute to poverty reduction. ▪ FBOs can have a direct impact through churches, mosques and schools by influencing values and attitudes. 	<p>The number of religious buildings, fee-paying religious educational institutions and civil society organizations has increased since economic and political liberalization. Established religious organizations (Christian and Ismaili) have played a significant role in providing education and health services since colonial times. Despite the government's privatization efforts in the 1970s and 1980s, FBOs have expanded this earlier role and newer organizations are also delivering services (Leurs et al, 2011). Their scope seems to have shifted from a traditional focus on charity, emergency relief and service delivery to a concern, amongst some, with development, democracy, human rights and advocacy.</p> <p>Access to international funds from a variety of sources, the increasingly overt entry of religion into politics and public life and participation by religious communities in the general proliferation of non-state organizations have led to increased inter- and intra-religious competition, although there are also existing and new mechanisms for ecumenical and inter-faith collaboration.</p>	<p>Following independence, the adoption of a state-centred development model meant that religious organizations' involvement in welfare and charitable activities took a back seat. The number and contribution of non-state service providers has increased since economic liberalization. And the new communitarian and religious consciousness that has emerged since the 1980s means that more FBOs participate in so-called 'secular' spheres, including education, health and community development.</p> <p>The research focused on Pune and Nagpur in Maharashtra, which has a large Hindu majority and a number of minority religions – typical of India.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two thirds of FBOs are Christian, working mainly in education and health. They are more visible and easier to locate than Hindu and Muslim organizations. ▪ Most FBOs across all religious traditions are small, although some also operate elsewhere in India and a few operate internationally. ▪ The priority of Christian organizations is conversion; those organizations associated with other faith traditions regard themselves as charitable or development-related. 	<p>Religion underlies the motivations and social activities of many organizations and individuals in Pakistan. And with its 'western' associations, the term FBO is sensitive.</p> <p>For the purposes of this research, an FBO in Pakistan provides at least one social service and either identifies itself as an FBO or is affiliated with a religious congregation or promotes religious beliefs and administers religious services and rituals alongside development activities. This includes madrasas (which were not included in the other countries studied) but excludes some organizations which may be associated with a religious tradition but do not define themselves as 'faith-based'.</p> <p>A 2005 survey of the 20 largest voluntary welfare organizations showed that most claimed religious inspiration but did not define themselves as 'faith-based' and nor are they viewed as such by the public (Bano, 2005).</p> <p>It is estimated that over a third of non-profit organizations are FBOs engaged in education, healthcare, social welfare and poverty alleviation.</p> <p>Madrasas dominate numerically (over 90 per cent of the total), although estimates of their numbers and student enrolment vary.</p>

Nigeria	Tanzania	India	Pakistan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FBOs are often among the first to raise awareness of and promote discussion about development issues. ▪ FBOs can raise funds from members and can thus be less dependent on government funding than secular NGOs. ▪ FBOs can rely on volunteers rather than paid staff and keep costs down. ▪ FBOs believe they command respect and trust from their followers, who see their actions as less politically driven and selfish than those of government. <p>Yet, although FBOs are seen by some as having a strong vision, they appear weak when it comes to putting in place practical strategies to ensure material wellbeing and equality. Community level work is seen as too small scale to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction. Some FBOs are criticized for poor management which limits their ability to collaborate with government agencies effectively or to manage complex social services. FBOs themselves say they lack financial capacity and are only marginally involved in policy formulation and implementation.</p>	<p>There are variations between and within Islam and Christianity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The geographical distribution of the faith traditions and their associated organizations and facilities vary: Muslims and Muslim organizations are concentrated in Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam and the coastal region; the geographical distribution of Christian organizations reflects patterns of colonial missionary activity. ▪ Most Christian denominations (e.g. Catholics, Lutherans) have more formal and hierarchical organizational arrangements than Islam.. ▪ The balance between expenditure on religious buildings and charitable and development activities varies within traditions (for example, Pentecostal churches prioritize church planting). ▪ Traditional Christian churches play a larger role than Muslim organizations in service delivery and development, for reasons of history and doctrine. ▪ The extent to which activities are intended primarily for adherents or for the wider community varies between organizations. ▪ Relations with government vary between the faith traditions and denominations and over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All FBOs are registered and many access government funds; however, their relationships with the government are not close. ▪ Most FBOs have non-discriminatory humanitarian motives; some are right-wing and sectarian and devoted to advancing Hindutva (Hindu nationalism) through development activities. 	<p>Other Islamic FBOs include the welfare wings of religious political parties (see Section 4.4), charities, welfare organizations and research institutions. Most are small, local and urban-based although some do have a wider reach. Fewer than two per cent of Pakistanis are Christian, yet churches (especially Catholic) actively provide social services – education in particular. Some international FBOs are involved in relief and development activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a continued role for FBOs in providing humanitarian relief and informal social security in the face of state failure. ▪ Changes are taking place in madrasa education in the light of government reform, international influence, parental demand and labour force changes. ▪ Muslim FBOs are increasingly engaged in public debates on important social and political issues. ▪ Muslim and Christian FBOs are increasingly delivering social services, whilst other religious minorities (Hindus and Parsis) have lost momentum in this area.

Systematic information is scarce. Generally, the proportion of Christian organizations (in terms of numbers and the scale of activities) seems to exceed the proportion of all religious adherents who are Christian (see Table 4), because of their doctrine, mission agenda, history, the organizational structure of Christian churches and their international networks. However, the number of FBOs has increased recently within Islam as well as Christianity.

FBOs are engaged in emergency relief, education, health, water supply, feeding the poor, caring for orphans, caring for people living with AIDS and so on. These are traditional charitable concerns but many organizations also now undertake development activities designed to improve livelihoods and support communities – especially Christian organizations, those with international links and those receiving ‘development’ funding. Some are re-casting themselves as development agents to access additional funds. Although some are inclusive and oriented to the poor, many primarily benefit members of their own faith, who are not always poor, sometimes deliberately and sometimes despite their claims about inclusivity.

The range of activities and the organizational arrangements through which activities are provided vary between and within faith traditions depending on their history, beliefs, organizational structure, size, and reach; and the relationships between religious organizations and governments affect the scope for autonomous action and availability of funding. The influence, legitimacy, resources and organizational capacity of religious organizations may be considerable (see Table 4 on Nigeria), with extensive networks, institutions and infrastructure – especially in rural areas – where few others exist. They may make an important contribution given the deficiencies in state provision (as in Nigeria and Pakistan – see Table 4), but their community level work is perceived by some as too small scale and/or charity-oriented to make a significant contribution to sustainable development. In addition, despite their ability to generate funds from indigenous sources, many lack the financial resources to

FBOs maintain their traditional charitable concerns but many also undertake development activities: the organizational arrangements vary between and within faith traditions and not all are pro-poor and socially inclusive.

continue existing programmes **and** start new ones. Finally, some informants raised doubts about the efficiency of their management and the effectiveness of their activities.

The research also reveals that FBOs in different countries face similar challenges:

- FBO relations with government are often more complicated than those of other non-state development organizations, because of the links between politics and religion, the potentially destabilizing effects of religious competition, religious organizations' receipt of foreign funding, and debates over the place of religion in national constitutions and sources of law.
- Decisions on whether to provide services and facilities solely for members of their own religious group or to the wider community depend on FBOs' motivation, their perceived motives, their relations with other religious communities, and the availability of funding.
- As with other non-state providers, information and documentation about the 'sector' is poor.
- FBO ideas of effectiveness may differ from those of government or the international development industry. However defined, evaluations of their effectiveness are rare.

4.2 Do faith-based organizations make a distinctive contribution?

The research carried out case studies of selected organizations engaged in development activities in the four focus countries. FBOs are commonly said to have advantages over other civil society organizations for several reasons:¹⁴

- FBOs draw on spiritual and moral values and can mobilize religious adherents estranged by secular development discourses.
- Their strong organizational structures enable FBOs to reach into remote areas; they have strong grassroots links, are trusted, are close to poor people and can be responsive in their activities.

FBOs are commonly said to have comparative advantages over other civil society organizations, but this is a difficult assertion to test.

- FBOs have a high degree of legitimacy and strong national networks; they are usually effectively embedded in politics and governance; they also have international links, which may safeguard their autonomy.
- They are less dependent on donor funding than NGOs and have capacity and expertise in some important development areas.

Do FBOs have a comparative advantage? There is no easy answer. FBOs and NGOs are complex: faith traditions differ in many respects; organizations operate in different contexts and there are methodological obstacles to assessing performance and attributing development outcomes to the activities of individual organizations.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, the case studies focused on three NGOs and four FBOs (two Christian and two Muslim) in Kano State (mostly Muslim) and Lagos State (mixed religions) (see Box 9). The studies sought to identify distinctive characteristics of FBOs with respect to their goals, values, organizational characteristics and activities (Davis et al, 2011). The organizations studied are well-established, with good reputations, and are engaged in HIV/AIDS-related work.

The Nigerian government's desire, after 2000, to address the rising incidence of HIV and AIDS raised sensitive issues, as did the proliferation of NGOs attempting to implement relevant programmes – especially in largely Muslim areas – where they were perceived as donor-driven and lacking in credibility. This is a key development area for which funding is available and in which differences between secular and religious organizations might be expected.

Main findings

- FBOs see their development activities as a response to their religious beliefs and use religious language to express and justify their work.
- The 'truth claims' of Christianity and Islam encourage adherents to spread their religion. FBOs believe that, in addition to making adherents good Christians or

FBOs and NGOs in Nigeria express their mission and values in religious and secular humanitarian terms respectively.

Box 9: The case study NGOs and FBOs in Nigeria

Kano State

- **Nassarawa and Tudun Wada LGAs**

NGO: Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAAN)

FBO: People Oriented Development of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (POD-ECWA) (Christian)

- **Tarauni LGA**

NGO: Community Support and Development Initiatives (CSADI)

FBO: Al-Noury Specialist Hospital (Muslim)

Lagos State: *Ikorodu LGA*

NGO: Humanity Family Foundation for Peace and Development (HUFFPED)

FBO: Nasiru-Ilahi Fati Society of Nigeria (NASFAT) (Muslim)

FBO: Methodist Church of Nigeria (MCN) (Christian)

FBO: Redeem AIDS Programme Action Committee (RAPAC) of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) (Christian)

Davis, C., Jegede, A., Leurs, R. Sunmola, G. and Ukiwo, U. (2011) *Are Faith-Based Organizations Distinctive? A Comparative Study of Selected FBOs and Non-government Organizations in Nigeria*, Birmingham: RaD WP 56.

Muslims through their humanitarian work, they have a responsibility to represent their faith to the world and invite people to join; humanitarian work is a means to that end.

- NGOs express their mission and values in secular humanitarian terms, even if their founders, employees and volunteers have religious motives, as many do given that almost everyone sees themselves as religious. Nonetheless, observers think NGOs are less able and willing than FBOs to adhere to religious principles in their practices.
- An organization's values influence the design and implementation of their programmes. FBOs may exclude groups of which they disapprove, such as sex workers. They also vary in their willingness to advocate condom use by the unmarried, with some stressing abstinence and faithfulness. Some foreign funders accept religious objections to condom use.
- While NGOs concentrate on improving the physical wellbeing of people living with HIV and AIDS, FBOs focus on messages about values and behaviour and provide spiritual succour to users of their services. Most beneficiaries seem to prefer FBOs' combined material and spiritual approach.

- All the FBOs studied deliberately recruit staff from within their faith, at least for senior and management positions. They also display symbols of their religion in the dress of their staff, in their facilities and on their vehicles, and observe daily prayer rituals.

Responses indicated that differences in the perceived performance of the FBOs and NGOs studied are not marked. However:

- While some beneficiaries feel that the NGO approach to condom use is likely to be more effective, others prefer FBOs' focus on abstinence and their approach to HIV/AIDS education, which uses moral and religious language, values and messages.
- When differences are perceived, beneficiaries' and observers' judgements are mainly based on the perceived quality of the service provided, judged in terms of an organization's local presence, frequency of contact with local communities and the nature of the services provided.
- Few NGOs and FBOs systematically assess their impact, although those receiving official donor funds are required to monitor progress. FBOs believe that complying with religious values is a more important criterion for assessing performance than typical indicators of progress and outcomes.

The context in which an organization works matters and this may affect their performance more than any religious or secular difference. Respondents attributed good performance to the level of trust in an organization, closeness to a community, acceptance by local and religious leaders, community participation and ownership, and the credibility, honesty and altruism of an organization and its staff. Both NGOs and FBOs demonstrated these characteristics, although the perceived greater effectiveness of some FBOs was attributed to their religiousness.

Both Christian FBOs and NGOs find it difficult to work in Kano State, which is mostly Muslim. Links with traditional religious leaders and partnerships with Islamic FBOs can provide NGOs with legitimacy and access to local

The organizational effectiveness of some voluntary organizations in Nigeria is attributed to their local roots, acceptance, credibility, honesty and altruism, rather than secular/religious differences.

communities. For example, the Society for Women and AIDS and local observers attributed the success of its HIV and AIDS outreach programmes to its collaboration with local religious leaders and organizations. Similarly, funding obtained through the AIDS Relief project has strengthened collaboration between Community Support and Development Initiatives, an NGO, and religious care givers, such as the Al-Noury Specialist Hospital and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Hospital, enabling them to deliver comprehensive awareness, prevention, care and treatment services, including free anti-retroviral treatment, to people living with HIV/AIDS in Kano State.

Tanzania

A 'civil society sector' in Tanzania, with roles in governance and development, is a recent, largely externally-driven, phenomenon. The boundaries between CSOs, NGOs and FBOs are blurred and different types of organization have remarkably similar development aims and activities (Green et al, 2010). Larger CSOs are usually branches of international NGOs; most CSOs are small and revolve around a founding person or small group of people. They are part of a non-state sector seen to be 'closer to the poor' and better at implementing 'development activities'.

The traditional Christian churches (especially Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican) established educational and health facilities during the colonial period and continue to play a major role in service delivery (13 per cent of dispensaries, 22 per cent of health centres and 40 per cent of hospitals in 2008, for example). They have also established organizations for other development purposes; the largest can raise funds from their own and parent churches, providing some independence. A range of churches provide development services for different purposes – for the benefit of the wider community or as a means of evangelizing, for example.

Green, M., Mercer, C. and Mesaki, S. (2010) *The Development Activities, Values and Performance of Non-governmental and Faith-based Organizations in Magu and Newala Districts, Tanzania*, Birmingham: RaD WP 49.

Organizations associated with Islam, which does not have similar hierarchical religious structures, are less well represented in civil society. However BAKWATA, the government-supported Muslim umbrella organization, does promote projects that can obtain international donor funding.

During the period of one-party rule, autonomous civil society organizations were rarely permitted, but since political liberalization in the early 1990s, the civil society sector has been aggressively promoted through international spending and targeted programming, culminating in the early 2000s in an NGO policy, formal registration provisions and the formation of an NGO Forum.

Donor support has been central to the evolution of the sector and in forming the characteristics and activities of its constituent organizations. The Foundation for Civil Society, funded by multiple donors, supports a sub-national civil society sector operating in defined areas of good governance and capacity building. CSOs that are members of regional and district networks can apply to the foundation for small grants. Following capacity building support from international CSOs, local CSOs have proliferated. CSOs which are successful in applying for funding can develop management skills and pay their key staff, at least for a limited period, while those that are unsuccessful remain dormant. Funding from the foundation has enabled some small organizations to launch their activities and professionalize their organizations.

Research took place in two typical rural districts – Newala (remote, poor, largely Muslim) and Magu (prosperous agricultural region, largely Christian). In neither are there substantial social facilities run by FBOs. Meetings with key stakeholders, semi-structured interviews and observational techniques with CSOs, local residents, local government officials and religious leaders gathered information from active CSOs and faith institutions.

Since political liberalization in Tanzania in the early 1990s, the civil society sector has been aggressively promoted through international spending and targeted programming.

Main findings

- Agricultural cooperatives, women's groups and savings and credit associations continue to operate. Most contemporary CSOs are almost entirely dependent on external donors, with funding over the last five years linked to AIDS awareness and prevention (PEPFAR, the Global Fund) and disbursed through the national AIDS commission, or to welfare support for children and orphans and distributed to CSOs through an international NGO (PACT) via District Councils. By 2009, most CSOs saw these as their key areas of work, even though many had been established to undertake other activities.
- Supply-driven funding has led to a proliferation of CSOs, increased competition between them for funding, and poor coordination of activities.
- While formal registration is a criterion for accessing funds, HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention and support for most vulnerable children are considered 'crosscutting' issues and it would seem that relevant expertise is not required. There is thus little difference between the activities undertaken by Christian, Muslim or secular organizations; where specialist knowledge is needed, work is sub-contracted, sometimes to local government staff.
- Assumed boundaries between secular and faith organizations are blurred: many working for CSOs are religious; organizations that started out as FBOs carry out development work identical to those of other organizations. The livelihood strategies of the middle class in towns often involve 'straddling' influential positions in local politics, local bureaucracy, religious organizations and civil society.
- Religious affiliation does not appear to enable small FBOs to be 'closer to the poor', more effective or more innovative than similar NGOs. Success in accessing funding is down to organizational competence rather than 'closeness to the poor' or a religious vision of development.
- Most people involved with CSOs are Christian or Muslim: faith informs their values and affects their stated motivations – these are generally moral and inclusive, legitimizing approaches that include members of all faith groups, reflecting the longstanding place of religion in Tanzanian popular culture and national ideology.

Religious affiliation does not appear to enable small FBOs in Tanzania to be 'closer to the poor', more effective or more innovative than similar NGOs.

Do religious values lead to different developmental outcomes? This is difficult to assess as there are few institutional settings in which religious values do not have some influence and funding available to CSOs and FBOs is either for intangibles (AIDS awareness and prevention) or is short-term.

India

Education provision in India by religious bodies (Hindu gurukuls, madrasas, and the Catholic Church especially) predates independence. Increased state provision since 1947 has failed to ensure 100 per cent enrolment of children, eliminate illiteracy or provide good quality education at all levels. The shortcomings of state provision and the need to possess qualifications to access India's highly competitive labour market has led to many more non-state providers, including institutions run by religiously affiliated organizations.

The research set out to identify and explain similarities and differences between education providers associated with different faiths, in particular the extent to which their ethos and activities are pro-poor. Six educational organizations in Mumbai and Pune were studied, through semi-structured interviews with staff and beneficiaries and observation of their activities (Box 10).

Box 10: The case study organizations in India

- Modern Educational, Social and Cultural Trust (MESCO) (Muslim), Mumbai
- Don Bosco, a Catholic boys' shelter, Mumbai
- Guru Mata Amritanandamayi (Hindu), Pune
- Sadhu Vaswani Mission (Hindu), Pune
- Bahujan Hitay (Buddhist), Pune
- Gandhian Memorial Trust (Hindu, Gandhian), Pune

Main findings

- The aspirations of the organizations are expressed primarily in caste and class terms. All advocated 'secular' forms of academic and/or vocational education alongside varying levels of religious/moral education. Most are ostensibly open to

Rew, M. (2011) Pro-poor? Religious Organizations, Class and Education in Mumbai and Pune, Maharashtra, Birmingham: RaD Research Programme, unpublished paper.

pupils from all religions; some promote a more specific but often denied faith agenda. The Sadhu Vaswani Mission claims to be multi-religious but promotes Hindu religious practices and cultural nationalism.

- 'Hindu' nationalism is entrenched in the domestic middle class and communal imaginings of an often dislocated and nostalgic Indian middle class diaspora in the UK and United States. Sadhu Vaswani relies on financial contributions from middle class Sindhis abroad.
- Organizations focusing on low caste groups are small and poorly funded. Large transnational Hindu institutions provide secondary or professional education for middle class people; they may operate small scale sponsorship and adoption schemes for poor children but a 'middle class' ethos persists.
- The identities of schools and their pupils are fostered in line with models of 'self improvement', in which employment aspirations intersect with class/caste expectations. Class is reproduced in some and challenged in others (the Muslim organization was founded to foster the emergence of a Muslim middle class; the Buddhist and Gandhian organizations provide access to education for low caste children and women).
- Norms concerning the purpose and nature of appropriate education for girls vary. Apart from the Catholic boys' shelter, all prioritize education for girls and women. Some seek to empower women to participate in the labour market; others emphasize future domesticity as the ideal, aiming to ensure girls are equipped for their roles as mothers.
- The organizations generally claim to inculcate a sense of responsibility towards the poor in their pupils, although how this happens varies – from *seva* (charitable activities for the poor) in the large Hindu organizations to challenging disadvantage through empowerment in others (Gandhian and Buddhist organizations working in slums).
- In the Hindu organizations, funding reflects a class hierarchy: material wealth flows into the organizations from the wealthy middle classes, some of which is handed out to the poor.
- While the cult of personality and authority is personified in the living gurus of Dada Vaswani and Amma, Don Bosco's style of leadership follows conventional Catholic modes of authority. The director has to be a priest and has leadership and decision-making powers. MESCO and Bahujan Hitay are more participatory:

The class and gender orientation of religious education providers in Maharashtra vary – not all provide education to the poor or seek to increase social equality.

MESCO is keen to appoint former scholarship pupils to the board of the organization, while Bahujan Hitay emphasizes that it is Dalit led.

Pakistan

Charity and philanthropy in Pakistan is closely associated with religion. It is taken for granted that faith is important for Muslims and that Islam entails an obligation to care for the poor and needy through charitable giving; philanthropy and welfare provision are well-established amongst Muslims. However, as noted above, the term 'faith-based organization', which is associated with radical religious organizations that are conservative and extreme in their views, is problematic in the Pakistani context.

Research in Karachi and Sindh examined ten large local voluntary organizations (Box 11). Six that appeared to have a religious motivation were studied in some depth and less detailed profiles prepared of the remainder, in which religion did not appear to have any role. Information was gathered through secondary research and over eighty semi-structured interviews with senior and middle-level staff and volunteers (Kirmani and Zaidi, 2010).

Comparing the six main case study organizations with the others studied, the study found that a simple division into faith-based and non-religious is inappropriate. However, a broad difference between local charities and professional development organizations can be discerned (see Table 5).

The six main charities studied are all influenced by religion, in terms of their identity, motivation or source of funds, although the extent and nature of the influence differs, with some framing themselves in explicitly religious terms and others having a more subtle relationship with religion. Many of their staff and supporters believe that they are more sincere, cost-effective and able to mobilize support than NGOs because of their faith. In contrast, the professional development organizations appear to have little or no relationship with religion; most were explicit about taking a 'non-religious' approach.

Kirmani, N. and Zaidi, S. (2010) *The Role of Faith in the Charity and Development Sector in Karachi and Sindh, Pakistan*, Birmingham: RaD WP 50.

Box 11: The case study organizations in Pakistan

Humanitarian organizations

- Al Khidmat network, which includes various organizations affiliated to the Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest religious political party in Pakistan. Members of the Al Khidmat Foundation, the Al Khidmat Welfare Society (including its women's wing) and the Al Khidmat Khawateen Trust were interviewed.
- Alamgir Welfare Trust
- Saylani Welfare Trust
- Edhi Foundation
- Behbud Association
- Caritas (Roman Catholic, Karachi and Hyderabad dioceses)

Development organizations

- Orangi Pilot Project
- Indus Resource Centre
- Thardeep Rural Development Programme
- Sindh Agricultural and Forestry Workers Association

The main distinction appears to be between those organizations that rely on local, individual sources of funding, mostly religiously mandated, and those that rely on national and (mostly) international institutional donors. The Pakistan government now collects *zakat*, but widespread distrust of the system motivates many to donate to voluntary organizations (or individuals in need). The organizations supported by such donations tend to focus on welfare and service delivery. Unlike all the local charities, with the exception of Caritas, the choice of activities by those receiving institutional funding is influenced by international development thinking: unlike the Muslim organizations, Caritas is influenced by both Catholic liberation theology and international ideas about development practice. Although some activities (such as healthcare or vocational training) are undertaken by both charitable and development organizations, all the latter focus primarily on development. Furthermore, most of the development organizations explicitly include gender equality and women's empowerment in their mission statements and activities, while few philanthropic organizations include this in their priorities.

Voluntary organizations in Pakistan are differentiated more by their sources of funding than their relationship with religion.

Table 5: Comparing voluntary organizations in Karachi and Sindh

Local charities	Professional development organizations
<i>Focus of activities</i>	
Mainly charity, relief and welfare	Long term and sustainable development Secure livelihoods Empowerment and mobilization of disadvantaged communities and groups (including women)
<i>Relationship with religion</i>	
Islamic motivation and identity	Mostly explicitly secular
Islamic injunctions guide choice of activities	Choice of activities influenced by international development thinking
<i>Sources of funding</i>	
Rely on religiously motivated charitable donations from individuals	Rely on international and national institutional donors

Further general findings

Findings from the research in all four countries include:

- The explicitness of the religious motivation, priorities, funding sources and organizational forms of religious organizations vary greatly, between and within faith traditions and countries. In highly religious societies, many of those involved in organizations that do not claim to be faith-based are religiously inspired.
- Because of their reliance on religiously-motivated charitable giving and/or their isolation from development thinking, many FBOs focus on individual charity and welfare services rather than sustainable development.
- Some FBO activities primarily benefit members of the organization's own religious group, by intention, because use of their funds is limited to certain activities, the religious composition of the societies in which they operate, or others' fear they may have a conversion agenda. NGOs and many FBOs do not favour one religious group over others.
- Religious organizations often have closer relationships with governments, communities and local leaders than NGOs, because of their legitimacy, high levels of trust, and rootedness in countries and localities. Power relationships

Religious organizations often have closer links with governments, communities and local leaders than NGOs, but power relations influence their service delivery and development activities.

between and within religious and government institutions influence the characteristics and implications of these links for service delivery and development activities, however.

- Most FBOs are based on religious values, especially compassion, and have humanitarian concerns; they may also be class-based (caste-based in India), dominated by members of the elite and men, and fail to challenge social injustice.
- Most staff and supporters of FBOs are motivated by a desire to bear witness to their faith; some are potentially socially divisive, for example, those seeking to convert others and those associated with fundamentalist strands, which may have overt or covert religio-political agendas.
- FBOs claim closeness to the poor, wide reach, good delivery and cost-effectiveness, but the evidence is limited and many are unable or reluctant to professionalize their management systems, institute systematic monitoring and evaluation, and/or operate transparently.

Some implications of the findings from this study are summarized in Box 12.

FBOs claim closeness to the poor, wide reach, good delivery and cost effectiveness, but the evidence is limited.

Box 12: The development activities of religious organizations: what are the implications for development actors?

Policy analysts and funders

- *The term faith-based organization makes more sense in some contexts than others. Everywhere, a simple division between secular and religious organizations should be avoided, especially in countries where most people adhere to a religion, where FBOs and NGOs share common objectives and where international donors provide funds and have a pervasive influence on development thinking and organizations' choice of activities.*
- *Rather than being regarded as simple organizational types, religious and secular organizations need to be distinguished and understood in terms of the ways in which religion manifests itself in their operations, as well as their class, caste and gender characteristics, and their relationships with parent bodies, government and wider societies.*
- *Many religious organizations' reliance on religious giving and/or their interpretation of religious principles, class/caste base and isolation from international development thinking leads them to focus on charitable and welfare activities rather than long term poverty reduction and development.*
- *Religious organizations' political and social networks are poorly understood, in part due to a lack of transparency and mutual distrust. Some are concerned that support for FBOs may fuel religious tension or imply support for conversion or a political agenda.*
- *Religious organizations do not necessarily have distinctive priorities, approaches or organizational forms and only do so in certain circumstances. FBOs that rely on international funding tend to be supply-driven and similar to other NGOs.*
- *Information on the faith-based sector is insufficient to test claims of supposed advantage: understanding of different ideas about what constitutes 'effectiveness' is limited and evaluations of FBOs are rare. More assessment is needed of the activities and quality of services provided, including their cost effectiveness and outcomes.*

International or national funders

- *It is vital to appreciate the relationships between religion (and FBOs in particular) and governments, which are often tricky.*
- *Decisions about whether and how to engage with FBOs must be made on a case by case basis, based on an understanding of each organization, its context, and the issues it covers.*
- *NGOs and FBOs are not necessarily alternative partners for development activities; joint working may be appropriate and effective in certain religiously sensitive contexts.*

FBOs and NGOs

- *FBOs need to assess the desirability of external funding: while generating useful financial and other resources, it may also lead to supply-driven programmes, reduced autonomy, loss of local standing and greater instability.*
- *NGOs with development expertise can benefit from forging links with local religious organizations, which in some circumstances can provide entry to local communities and legitimacy, potentially increasing the achievement of development objectives.*

4.3 The role of a transnational faith-based organization in development

Today there are substantial diasporas in industrialized countries from poor groups or regions in developing countries. They often maintain links with religious organizations back home; as they become more prosperous, these links develop different dimensions.

A study of Dera Sant Sarwan Dass in Ballan (DSSDB) in Punjab, India and its association with the Ravidassi a religious movement demonstrates the complexity of the links between DSSDB, Punjabi society and its diaspora followers, in particular those of a religious movement associated with a lower caste group (Singh et al, 2010). The study drew on historical and sociological literature on the Ravidassi/Dalit movement in Punjab and overseas, DSSDB literature, quantitative DSSDB data on funding, official Government of Punjab data, and interviews with leaders and prominent followers in the UK's West Midlands and Punjab.

Religious centres established by Hindus or Sikhs are scattered all over India. DSSDB was established by *Baba Pipal Dass* in 1902 in Ballan, Punjab. He and his successor, Sant Sarwan Dass, developed a popular following among the Scheduled Castes associated with leather work and weaving, today known as Ravidassias (devotees of the mediaeval guru Ravidass). Ravidassias and DSSDB have been guided by a succession of *sants* stressing the importance of education and the opportunities offered by migration. Early South Asian migrants to Asia, Europe and North America included many Ravidassias.

The study revealed that the links between Ravidassias in the UK and their area of origin (the Doaba region of Punjab) are mainly family-oriented. However there are religious dimensions too:

- The religious dimension arose, in part, out of gratitude for the religious inspiration and support that encouraged Ravidassias to aspire to more dignified and prosperous lives and to undertake *seva* (service). Continued caste discrimination experienced in the UK amongst fellow Punjabis led them to establish their own places of worship, consolidating a process of identity formation that began with the founding of the DSSDB.¹⁵
- DSSDB has maintained strong links with its overseas followers, enabling it to invest in religious buildings and build social facilities, such as hospitals and schools. UK members have contributed significantly to these projects and have influenced organizational and other characteristics of the DSSDB projects in India that they finance.
- The education and health services associated with the DSSDB are open to all regardless of religion or caste, including the very poor. Ravidassias believe that this secures recognition by members of other religions and castes (especially higher castes) of the group's religious principles and socio-economic progress.

Singh, G. and Tatla, D.S. (2011) *New Forms of Religious Transnationalism and Development Initiatives: Dera Sant Sarwan Dass, Ballan, Punjab, India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 52. (revised edition)

Box 13: Transnational religious organization and development: what are the implications?

- *Transnational religious practices have helped members of a marginalized group create a strong community and carve out a new religious identity for themselves, enabling transformation of the group's social, economic and political status at home and overseas.*
- *The community associated with the DSSDB has invested in education and health facilities in Punjab which, although only contributing in a limited way to development objectives in the state as a whole, has improved considerably the social status of a previously marginalized community.*
- *The contribution of social services funded by transnational remittances channelled through links between individual religious organizations may be significant. A better understanding is needed of its overall scale, the associated flows of ideas and practices, and the contribution 'social remittances' make to development.*
- *Any attempt to harness remittances for development purposes must be underpinned by a sound understanding of the complex motives and social and political dynamics that characterize transnational links.*

4.4 Religious political parties and the provision of welfare and educational services

Religious political parties – constitutionally permitted in some countries but barred in others – generally have associated organizations that provide social welfare services, including education, healthcare, emergency relief and orphan support.

Vidya Bharati, one of a network of organizations associated with the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India, is one example. Vidya Bharati runs an extensive network of schools and the Jama'at-i-Islami parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh are involved in a range of charitable, welfare and service provision activities (Bano, 2009a; Nair, 2009a). Conventionally, their engagement in providing social welfare services is attributed to their desire to attract votes, undermine government legitimacy and compensate for gaps in government service delivery.

The research is based on reviews of published and other secondary sources, including documents produced by the organizations under study, and semi-structured interviews.

India

- Vidya Bharati's schools seek to groom young minds towards the concept of a Hindu nation, but there are tensions between it and the BJP; Vidya Bharati fears the BJP is watering down its commitment to Hindu nationalism in its search for broad electoral support.
- The pressure for Hindu nationalist ideology to be incorporated into Vidya Bharati and government school curricula during periods of BJP rule has not been adequately addressed by national and state education ministries ostensibly committed to constitutional secularism.

Bano, M. (2009a) *Marker of Identity: Religious Political Parties and Welfare Work - The Case of Jama'at-i-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh*, Birmingham: RaD WP 34.

Nair, P. (2009a) *Religious Political Parties and their Welfare Work: Relations between the RSS, the Bharatiya Party and the Vidya Bharati Schools in India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 37.

Pakistan and Bangladesh

- The welfare programmes of Jama'at-i-Islami are intended to demonstrate the parties' commitment to their religious ideology and attract a cadre of committed members – the desire to attract votes is less important.
- They are organized in very different ways for historical, political and practical reasons: in Pakistan through a network of its own welfare and service delivery organisations; in Bangladesh through Jama'at-i-Islami members playing key roles in the management of apparently independent organizations.
- They require a well organized party structure, meaning that religious political parties that are smaller and less well organized have much less extensive service delivery programmes.
- They charge a basic fee for the services they provide (except to those who cannot afford to pay), which users are prepared to pay because of the perceived good quality of the services.

Box 14: Religious political parties' welfare programmes: what are the implications?

- *Religious political parties' welfare wings or associated organizations might be appropriate partners for those wishing to improve the delivery of welfare and services, because they have established networks of voluntary organizations and their programmes may be cost effective due to their reliance on committed party members and volunteers.*
- *However, the implications of their ideological and political agendas need to be carefully considered. Alliances between governments and religious political parties mix struggles for political control with a quest for religious dominance and religion-state integration. This may have adverse implications for members of other religious groups and those whose rights are threatened by religious ideology – especially women.*

4.5 Progress with madrasa reform

Most children from religious communities enrol in government schools. Efforts to improve enrolment and educational outcomes should focus on the state education system. However, the state has failed to provide adequate education

for all in some countries where Islam is important. As well as religious education, madrasas provide education to children unable or unwilling to attend public schools.

There is an existing network of madrasas, which may be making an important contribution to education provision, in terms of volume or the provision of education to under-served groups. For example, earlier research shows that madrasas contribute to increased school enrolment by girls in rural Bangladesh (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2006, 2007); they also reach girls in Pakistan (Bano, 2010a). However, madrasas' focus on religious rather than secular subjects is a matter of ideological and practical concern: they are suspected of training religious extremists, exacerbating sectarian divisions, reinforcing religious ideology at odds with internationally recognized human rights, and providing an education that is of little use in equipping graduates for life outside the religious sphere.

Should funds be diverted from the public education system to madrasas? To answer this question, a thorough understanding is needed of the historical and socio-political factors shaping state relations with religious groups and their implications for religious freedom and other rights. How do madrasa education systems work in practice? What contribution do they make to forming values and to enrolment, particularly of girls? Public investment in madrasas may be inappropriate. However, some governments are attempting to reform the madrasa system. The reforms typically focus on introducing or improving teaching of secular subjects alongside religious education and quality enhancement, through regulation and/or funding. Evaluations are scarce; it is clear, however, that progress and outcomes are varied.

Comprehensive evaluations of madrasa reform programmes need to ask several important questions:

- Why is madrasa education growing or declining?
- What are the motives of the donors on which madrasas depend?

Bano, M. (2010a)
Female Madrasas in Pakistan: A Response to Modernity.
Birmingham: RaD
WP 45.

- What values are promoted by the schools and how do they influence students?
- Have intended changes to the curriculum been implemented?
- How effective is regulation?
- Has the quality of education improved?
- What are the secular and religious educational and occupational trajectories of graduates?
- What are the wider implications of madrasa education for religious tolerance, social harmony and the development of a good quality public education system?

Evaluating madrasas in this way was beyond the scope of this research, which instead focused on how relationships between madrasas and the state have influenced the reform policies adopted and the progress achieved. The study examined reform programmes in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kano State (Nigeria) and India (Bano, 2008a, b, 2009b, 2010a; Nair, 2009b). It drew on secondary sources, including government data, as well as visits to selected senior madrasas (seven in Bangladesh; four in Rawalpindi and ten in North West Pakistan; six in West Bengal and five in Uttar Pradesh in India) and semi-structured interviews with key informants.

Main findings

- State-madrasa relationships are shaped by their different visions of knowledge, the political aspirations of the religious elite and the level of trust between the state and madrasas, which is influenced by the latter's fear that 'modernization' implies 'westernization' and 'reform' means increased state control.
- Reform programmes are hindered where madrasas fear that governments wish to increase their control over religious organizations (e.g. West Bengal) and more acceptable where relationships between religious leaders and groups and the state are good (e.g. Kano State, Nigeria).
- Assistance packages intended to encourage madrasas to introduce secular subjects into the curriculum and improve teaching quality have mostly been poorly designed and implemented. Madrasas have participated more widely and willingly in government programmes where the financial and material assistance packages are well-designed and efficiently implemented.

Bano, M. (2008a)
Allowing for Diversity: State-Madrasa Relations in Bangladesh, Birmingham: RaD WP13.

Bano, M. (2008b)
Contested Ideologies and Struggle for Authority: State-Madrasa Engagement in Pakistan, Birmingham: RaD WP 14.

Bano, M. (2009b)
Engaged yet Disengaged: Islamic Schools and the State in Kano, Nigeria, Birmingham: RaD WP 29.

Bano, M. (2010b)
Madrasa as partners in education provision: the South Asian experience. Development in Practice, 20(45), 554

Nair, P. (2009b) *The State and Madrasas in India*, Birmingham: RaD WP 15.

- Reform programmes are more acceptable to madrasas where they have collective organizations that can be involved in the design of the programme and negotiate with governments on their behalf.
- A distinction should be made between senior madrasas that provide religious education for those seeking careers as religious professionals and others, especially smaller madrasas providing basic education. The former are generally less in need of government funds and less likely to welcome government intervention; support for the latter may contribute to achieving national educational objectives.

Box 15: Attempts at madrasa reform: implications

It may or may not be appropriate for governments to support madrasas. To assess this, a thorough understanding of madrasa education systems and comprehensive assessments of existing reform programmes are needed. In the interim, this study shows that for governments to make progress with the introduction of secular subjects and improvements to educational quality:

- *The government must win the trust of the religious community.*
- *Madrasas that are collectively organized are more able to negotiate reform programmes that suit their needs.*
- *Adequate government financial support and administrative capacity are required to achieve the reform objectives.*
- *Financial packages encouraging madrasas to participate in government programmes and introduce secular subjects into their curriculum must be well-designed and efficiently implemented.*

5 Conclusion

In development policy and practice, religion tends to be either neglected or taken as a given. Where its relevance is recognized, it tends to be regarded as either an obstacle or the solution. Religious people and institutions react in different ways to development debates and policies: some are uninterested, some have close connections with politics and government, and others are critical of the whole paradigm or particular policies. Neglect is inappropriate when most people in developing countries claim to be religious, religious organizations play active roles in politics and society, and religion motivates many supporters of development assistance. Religion has both positive and problematic implications for the achievement of development objectives. It may be implicated in conflict or oppose desired social changes, but it is also considered to be an important source of ethics and humanitarian motivations, and associated with some of the most developed social organizations in many societies.

Neither ‘development’ nor ‘religion’ can be taken as self-evident – both need to be conceptualized, defined and understood not just from the outside but also through eyes of those involved. Concepts of development as economic growth and the individual accumulation of wealth sit uneasily with religious ideas about the purpose of human life and a good society – contemporary ideas about multidimensional human development have greater resonance with religious people and institutions. It is clear from the research undertaken for this programme that religion has spiritual, moral and practical dimensions, both for individual devotees and for religious organizations. However, what is labelled ‘religion’ in different faith traditions is so different that great care must be taken to understand not just formal religious teaching about beliefs and moral principles but also lived religion as manifest in people’s day-to-day lives and socio-political structures and processes.

In addition, ‘development’ and ‘religion’ are not separate spheres: many people are engaged in both and development actors have always interacted with religious individuals and organizations.

What is labelled religion in different faith traditions is so different that care must be taken to understand not just formal religious teaching but also lived religion as manifest in people’s day-to-day lives and socio-political structures and processes.

The Religions and Development Research Programme sought to improve understanding of social and political aspects of the relationships between religion, society and development practice. As set out in the introduction, it focused on three broad questions, addressing each through a series of research projects undertaken in one or more of its four focus countries: India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania. Because the links between religions and development have been neglected in social science research, existing studies, proven methodologies and experienced researchers are scarce. In addition, religion raises sensitive issues and systematic data are limited. Because of the nature of the questions to be addressed and the limited availability of quantitative data, qualitative methods designed to capture the understandings and interpretations of those involved were considered most appropriate.

Much of the research was therefore case-study based, focusing on selected localities, faith traditions and organizations. Although the case studies were carefully selected, this approach limits the scope for generalizing from the findings of an individual project to a country or religion as a whole. Nevertheless, overviews of findings from the research undertaken in three of the focus countries have been prepared (Jodhka, 2011; Kirmani, 2011; Odumosu and Singine, 2011). The questions addressed by the projects were also selected for their relevance to the countries and researchers involved. As a result, direct and rigorous cross-country and cross-religion comparison has to be undertaken with care and is not always possible. However, the individual projects each contributed to improved understanding of broader issues, making it possible to draw some overall conclusions from the findings presented in this paper.

These conclusions and some associated implications for policy and practice are grouped below in accordance with the three over-arching questions, starting with the role of religious beliefs and values in people's lives and perceptions of development and social change.

Jodhka, S.S. (2011) *Interactions between Religion and Development in India: Values, Organizations and Social Movements*. Birmingham: RaD WP 63.

Odumosu, O. and Simbine, A. (2011) *Religious Organizations, Values and Rivalry in Nigeria: Exploring the Implications for Development and Politics*. Birmingham: RaD WP 64.

Kirmani, N. (2011) *Interactions between Religion, the State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Some Implications for Development*. Birmingham: RaD WP 65.

Religious beliefs: how relevant are they to development?

Several of the research projects examined how religious values and beliefs are reflected in adherents' perceptions of concepts and issues relevant to the setting and achievement of development policy objectives.

It is clear that for most people in developing countries, development and religion are not separate domains – individuals are part of many political, social and religious orders and these are closely intertwined. People's perceptions of 'development' include modern cultural practices, imported technologies, a national vision or the formal 'development sector', as well as their own aspirations and strategies to improve their lives and livelihoods. 'Religion' does not have a particular relationship with 'development' - rather ideas about development and ideas derived from religion about the nature of reality and right social ordering are mutually constitutive.

For most people, everyday lived 'religion' is not a discrete set of doctrines and practices – although it includes specific beliefs and practices, it is primarily the source of an underlying moral order that informs their ideas about the right way to live and good social relationships. Rapid change resulting from development interventions or wider social and economic trends, such as penetration by global economic and cultural influences or increased consumerism, may undermine this order. In addition, religion is pragmatic, permeating everyday concerns and aspirations; it is thought to influence the physical world in which people live and is called upon to assist in solving problems, satisfying needs and explaining misfortune and good fortune. For many, especially the disadvantaged, religion and spirituality seem to be coping mechanisms; rather than individual spiritual journeys, their priority is to achieve dignified and prosperous lives.

The lives that most people seek are essentially social, not purely individual: they are focussed on the family and community. Religion contributes by providing comfort in times of trouble, a way of making sense of life, and a community that gives support, a sense of belonging and an identity. Both religion and ideas about

For most people, everyday lived 'religion' is not a discrete set of doctrines and practices, it is primarily the source of a moral order that informs their ideas about the right way to live and good social relationships, is thought to influence the physical world in which they live, and is called upon to assist in solving problems, satisfying needs and explaining fortune and misfortune.

right social ordering are highly gendered: like society more broadly, all the religious traditions are patriarchal and may resist the changes needed to achieve greater equality, especially between men and women, although in practice, it is difficult to separate religious from cultural justifications for social structures and practices that may be oppressive.

Generalizations about faith traditions must be approached with care. Not only do religions differ from each other, there are differences within every faith tradition between sects or denominations, which are in turn influenced by national and local history and culture. In addition, within each there is generally a spectrum of theological and social views from fundamentalist and conservative to liberal, as well as formal and mystical/ experiential strands (such as Sufism in Islam, and charismatic Christianity). These differences all affect adherents' views of the world. Finally, class-related factors such as poverty/wealth or level of education may influence individuals' or groups' understanding and interpretation of religion.

In development studies and policy, it is commonly assumed that religion is

- a form of social identity
- a provider of community and social welfare and
- a source of values and authority.

However, our research found that many people's religious identity is less fixed than sometimes imagined; religious institutions are generally less important than family and friends as a source of help and support; and the links between religion, values and behaviour are far from straightforward.

Identity is important to people's self-confidence and wellbeing and religious affiliation may contribute to a person or group's sense of identity. However, being borne into a faith tradition is not the same as active engagement. People tend to assemble their beliefs and practices from a variety of religious and cultural traditions, they may convert from one to another, and religious boundaries are often blurred. In addition, identity may be associated with disadvantage and

Many people's religious identity is less fixed than sometimes imagined and religious institutions are generally less important than family and friends as a source of help and support.

discrimination rather than privilege or wellbeing. As well as religion, inequality is related to various dimensions of social difference, including class, caste, ethnicity and gender, especially for minorities. Thus apparent inequalities between religious groups may be better explained by other factors. While religion is important in people's lives, as a source of dignity and self worth, and as a marker of identity, its importance should not be exaggerated.

Some implications of the findings include:

- *Development actors need to guard against projecting their own or their tradition's assumptions about what religion is and to recognize that it is understood in many different ways. They need to understand religious traditions in their social and historical contexts and be cautious about seeking to use religion for development ends.*
- *Apparent associations between religion and differences in wellbeing or disadvantage should be treated with care: while religion may enhance wellbeing, it can also, alongside other dimensions of social difference, exacerbate disadvantage.*

Second, belonging to a local congregation, a larger structure and specific organizations associated with a religious sect or denomination can provide adherents with spiritual, psychological and practical support. However, religious organizations' contribution to creating a sense of community, providing welfare and challenging injustice varies between faith traditions, countries and localities, depending on religious doctrine, history and the extent to which national or local governments (or other organizations) fulfil similar roles. In Islam and the Indic religions, a long philanthropic tradition continues today, with various types of religiously inspired organization providing charitable and welfare services. In much of Africa, because of the scale of missionary activity in the past, the churches continue to play important roles in the provision of education, health and other services. However, religious organizations may not be important sources of welfare and social assistance, especially where the state performs these functions.

Whether religious organizations accept and reinforce the socio-economic and gender status quo or challenge it varies within and between religious traditions, depending on their leaders' interpretation of religious teachings and the context. In addition, respect for religious leaders varies: it seems to be widespread in Nigeria and Tanzania, but more selective in South Asia. Questions related to the social activities of religious organizations are discussed further below, but implications of the research that examined people's perceptions of religious organizations include:

- *Terms used in development policy and practice may be interpreted by religious actors in ways that are not compatible with development.*
- *Some religious leaders and organizations may be committed to supporting challenges to oppressive social structures. Development actors should explore the potential for working with them, but need to assess the purposes and activities of religious organizations with care and be aware of the divisive potential of religious identity.*

Third, religious adherents supposedly live in accordance with the teachings and edicts of the religion they follow. In practice,

- *religion is an important basis for the moral code of a society, but is only one source of values and may not be the most important one.*
- *values are operationalized through social norms and practices which vary between places and over time.*
- *there is no automatic link between religion and values or between values and behaviour.*

For example, it is sometimes hoped that religious organizations and leaders might provide channels for communicating messages about honesty and integrity, thereby contributing to anti-corruption initiatives. In practice, the research revealed scepticism about their role because incentives to participate in corrupt practices tend to outweigh moral principles, many religious leaders and organizations are thought to be implicated, and families are more important channels for inculcating ethics than religion. In addition, religious leaders may

There may be links between religion and values and between values and behaviour, but these are not automatic.

use anti-corruption messages as weapons in inter-religious conflict, and not all religious traditions have widely accepted doctrines or organizational arrangements suitable for deriving and disseminating messages.

Implications of research into the links between values, religious organizations and behaviour include:

- *Religious values and beliefs may encourage altruism, mutual respect and integrity, but may also reinforce the status quo, inequality and injustice, so arenas for dialogue between religious and development actors are vital.*
- *It is preferable for religious organizations and leaders to tackle issues like corruption collectively, to avoid exacerbating inter-religious competition and conflict.*
- *Religious organizations' ability to play a positive role in fighting corruption is directly related to their own perceived/demonstrated ethical behaviour.*

Religion, politics and governance

The links between religion, politics and governance have deep historical roots, change over time, are complex, and are almost always contentious. Improved understanding of the links is important for general development policy and practice and for particular aspects of governance, such as deepening democracy, improving participation in policy making, developing and implementing policies and laws to reduce poverty and inequality, and responding to violent conflict. The research considered the roles played by selected religious organizations in politics, the preparation and review of policy, campaigning for legislative change and inter-religious conflict and its aftermath.

It emerged that democracy can facilitate the entry or renewed involvement of religious actors in politics. This may enable some disadvantaged groups to increase their political influence and religious interests to integrate religion into law and policy. However, some religious visions of society and development can be exclusionary and anti-developmental. On the basis of current evidence, it

Democracy can facilitate the entry or renewed political involvement of religious actors in politics, which may enable some disadvantaged groups to increase their political influence, but some religious visions of society can be exclusionary and anti-developmental.

seems unlikely that regimes controlled by religious political parties will institute better governance or enhance the achievement of human development objectives.

The findings are relevant to governments, development partners, social movements and religious and secular non-governmental organizations. Some implications of the findings related to the links between religion, politics and policy making include:

- *Democracy and secular constitutional arrangements provide safeguards against political actors who mobilize religion to further their own interests.*
- *Further studies are needed of the developmental outcomes of regimes in which religion is integrated into the state, such as the northern Nigerian states that have adopted Sharia law.*
- *Measures to improve interaction between religious groups and ensure their proportional representation are needed, to counter the increased conflict between religious actors that may accompany political actors' mobilization of religious identity for political purposes.*
- *Political economy and governance analyses should include analysis of the relationships between religion, politics and governance.*
- *There is potential for religious organizations working together to contribute positively to policy consultation and review processes, in particular representing the experiences and priorities of poor people and remote communities to governments. For this potential to be realized, sustained capacity building efforts, financial support and partnerships with other civil society organizations are needed.*

Studies of social movements' engagement with religion during the course of campaigns for social and legal change have implications for the achievement of greater social equality, the campaign strategies adopted by social movements and the provision of external support for civil society development. The research demonstrates that women's and Dalit movements have engaged with religious ideas and organizations in different ways, with different outcomes. It shows that

Social movements' engagement with religion has implications for the achievement of greater social equality, the campaign strategies adopted and the provision of external support for civil society development.

political influence, legal/policy change and religious mobilization are necessary but not sufficient to overcome deeply engrained systems of discrimination and prejudice. Renewed attempts to achieve legal reform, sustained attention to implementation of new laws, and ongoing investment in organizational activities are also needed.

- *Social movements, including the women's movement, would do well to work alongside religious organizations that support their aims, because of their organizational capacity, moral authority and ability to mobilize grassroots support for legal and social change.*
- *Religious organizations are often rigid and resistant to change, but it may be possible to enlist their support for selected legal and social changes and to enable disadvantaged groups, including women, to influence change from within faith traditions.*

Studies of the roles played by religion and religious organizations in violent inter- and intra-religious conflict in urban areas found that religious organizations played a positive role in providing immediate relief and assistance to victims, usually members of their own community, but do not appear to have played significant roles in long term reconstruction, improving inter-religious relations or preventing further outbreaks of inter-religious violence. Victims' first priorities are security and access to justice, which are seen as prerequisites for rebuilding their lives, holding perpetrators to account and preventing future violence.

The implications for those seeking to restore order, provide relief, support victims to rebuild their lives and prevent further violence include:

- *Neutral, well-trained security forces, competent government and democratic politics are vital to peace building and reconstruction; although non-governmental organizations can make important contributions, they cannot replace the state.*
- *Further research is needed to identify and tackle the constraints on religious and secular organizations' ability to contribute to long term reconstruction and improved inter-religious relations following violent conflict.*

In violent inter-religious conflicts, religious organizations play positive roles in providing relief to victims, usually from their own community, but less significant roles in reconstruction or preventing further outbreaks of violence.

Religious organizations, development and service provision

Religious organizations take a variety of forms and are often not clearly distinguishable from secular organizations, the founders, members and employees of which may be motivated by religion. In countries where most people claim adherence to one of the major world religions, religious attitudes influence virtually all institutional settings. Religious organizations play significant roles in processes of development in many parts of the world, and there has in recent years been renewed interest in this because of their perceived advantages, including closeness to poor people. However, little systematic information is available on the scale, nature and effectiveness of their activities. The research undertaken during this programme has started to fill some of the gaps, although much remains to be done.

The scale and scope of 'faith-based' development activities vary depending on the definition of faith-based organization adopted, local philanthropic traditions, and a country's colonial history, religious composition, post-independence politics and aid dependence. Although the scale of involvement by religious organizations in activities related to development appears to be significant, definitional and data problems mean that it is impossible to give exact estimates.

Attempts to address definitional problems by devising typologies of NGOs, including FBOs, and distinguishing between different development activities have not solved the problem: NGOs do not profess to be faith-based but many of those involved are motivated by religion; some religious organizations have secular organizational management practices; defining charitable, welfare, humanitarian and development activities and distinguishing between them is difficult. Religious organizations are engaged in emergency relief, feeding the poor, caring for orphans, education, health, and so on. These are traditional charitable and welfare concerns but many organizations also now undertake development activities designed to improve livelihoods, support communities and

Although the scale of involvement by religious organizations in activities related to development appears to be significant, definitional and data problems mean that it is impossible to give exact estimates.

address inequality and injustice. The boundaries between different organizational types are blurred.

The range of activities and organizational arrangements varies between and within faith traditions, depending on their history, beliefs, organizational structure, size, and reach. Their current roles also depend on government policies and their relationships with government agencies, their scope for autonomous action and the availability of funding. Religious organizations' relationships with government may be sensitive, affecting the contractual and regulatory arrangements that influence their activities. The funding sources on which they depend (individual or institutional, domestic or international) influence their choice of activities, scale of operation and management practices. The ideas that accompany flows of funds are equally important.

For example, Qur'anic teaching on Muslims' duty to give generates significant volumes of funds within countries and internationally but interpretations of the uses to which the funds can be put tend to favour welfare activities and support for needy individuals. However, some charitable religious organizations are recasting themselves as development agents to access other funds. Although some are inclusive and oriented to the poor, many mainly benefit members of their own faith group, who are not always poor. Some organizations that receive funds from international sources and are exposed to international thinking about development and management seem to prioritize long term development over short term charity, but others are supply-driven and engage in activities similar to other NGOs. The funds remitted by diaspora groups to their homelands, including to religious bodies, are often accompanied by new thinking about religious identity and service provision.

The influence, legitimacy, resources and organizational capacity of religious organizations may be considerable. However, they also face challenges. For example, many lack sufficient funds and capacity to scale up or professionalize their activities, their opposition to certain principles and practices (e.g. non-

The range of activities and organizational arrangements varies between and within faith traditions, depending on their history, beliefs, organizational structure, size, reach, relations with government and access to funding.

discrimination, gender equality) may be incompatible with international and domestic development partner policies, their resistance to forging positive and transparent relationships with other civil society organizations leads to distrust and a failure to cooperate when desirable, and their support for conversion or a political agenda has potential for fuelling religious tension.

The findings have implications for those seeking to better understand, manage relationships with and provide support for religious organizations, including policy analysts, national and international institutional funders, and religious and secular organizations.

- *The term faith-based organization makes more sense in some contexts than others. Everywhere, a simple division between secular and religious organizations should be avoided. Instead, religious and secular organizations need to be distinguished and understood in terms of the ways in which religion manifests itself in their operations, as well as their class, gender and other characteristics, their political and social agendas, and their wider links.*
- *It is vital to appreciate the relationships between religion (in particular FBOs) and governments, which are often sensitive.*
- *Information on the faith-based sector is insufficient to test claims of supposed advantage: understanding of different ideas about what constitutes 'effectiveness' is limited and evaluations of FBOs are rare. More assessment is needed of their activities and the quality of services they provide, including their cost effectiveness and outcomes.*
- *Religious organizations may or may not have distinctive priorities, approaches or organizational forms, depending on circumstances. Decisions about whether and how to engage with them must be made on a case by case basis, based on an understanding of each organization, its context, and the principles and practices it adopts.*
- *NGOs and FBOs are not necessarily alternative partners for development activities; joint working is often appropriate. For example, NGOs with development expertise can sometimes benefit from forging links with local religious organizations, easing their entry to local communities and enhancing their legitimacy.*

The influence, legitimacy and capacity of religious organizations may be considerable, but they and their partners also face challenges.

- *FBOs need to assess the desirability of external funding: while generating useful financial and other resources, it can also lead to supply-driven programmes, reduced autonomy, loss of local standing and greater instability.*
- *Any attempt to harness remittances for development purposes must be underpinned by a sound understanding of the complex motives, social and political dynamics, religious dimensions, volume and use of funds, and flows of ideas and practices that characterize transnational links.*

Notes

- ¹ 88 per cent of Christians and 87 per cent of Muslims in Nigeria; 83 per cent of Christians and 82 per cent of Muslims in Tanzania claim to attend religious services at least weekly (Pew Forum, 2010).
- ² The remainder in each case were recorded as 'don't know' or refused to answer the question.
- ³ In 1953, 45 per cent of the population was Muslim, 21 per cent Christian and 33 per cent belonged to other religions, mostly traditional religions. "By 1963, the proportion of the population that belonged to other religions had declined by 15 percentage points, nearly matching the 13.1 point increase for Christians; during this same time period, the percentage of Muslims increased by less than 2 percentage points" (Grim, 2007, p 10). According to the 1967 census in Tanzania, 34 per cent of people were Christian, 31 per cent Muslim and 35 other religions (or none), mainly traditional religion (Pew Forum, 2010, p 64).
- ⁴ As noted above, although Bangladesh was not one of the focus countries for the Religions and Development Research Programme, it was possible to build on extensive earlier research on wellbeing and development to explore the links between religion, culture, wellbeing and development.
- ⁵ Research was also undertaken in Dharmasala, the centre of Tibetan Buddhism in India. This enabled a comparison between two Buddhist traditions, revealing the importance of history and context in the role and interpretation of religion.
- ⁶ While most Dalits are Hindu, and they account for more than a fifth of Hindus countrywide, 90 per cent of the 8 million Buddhists in India (see Table 2) are Dalits.
- ⁷ Dalit is the term commonly used for people considered to be outside the caste system. They were previously called 'outcastes' or 'untouchables'.
- ⁸ Saigol, 2010; Dugbazah et al, 2010; Kipacha and Dugbazah, 2010.
- ⁹ For example, the Hindu-oriented Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in India, 1998-2004; the national government in Pakistan; and the Islamist Muttahida-Majlise-e-Amal government in the then North West Frontier Province, Pakistan, 2002-7. Although primary school enrolment and some health indicators improved while the MMA government was in power, this was largely due to donor influence and funding. The government had limited freedom of manoeuvre on some issues because of its dependence on central government funding, but did pass Islamic laws that restricted political freedoms and opportunities for women (Waseem and Mufti, 2009). The cases reviewed in this programme suggest that integrating conservative religious traditions and theologies with politics and governance can undermine trends towards greater equality and social inclusion, potentially worsening the position of women and religious minorities and destabilizing the existing order. It should be noted, however, that if human rights are undermined by a regime, it is usually subject to internal as well as external challenges: the BJP and MMA regimes were voted out after a single term.
- ¹⁰ The features of FBOs described in this section are based on some good data and documentation, but more often on the perceptions of key informants and unsystematic samples of organizations. There is a notable lack of systematic documentation and evidence and assembling it on a country or even State-wide basis was beyond the scope of this research programme. Instead, some of the questions were followed up through a series of case studies of selected locations and organizations.
- ¹¹ The typology of FBOs developed by Clarke (2008), used initially, was of limited value, especially in South Asia. Sider and Unruh (2004) distinguish between organizations in terms of how religion is manifest in various organizational characteristics and activities. Hefferan et al (2009) built on Sider and Unruh's typology and applied it in South America. However, their work appeared too late to inform the initial research design.

- ¹² In Nigeria, the research was based on a review of secondary sources and interviews with key informants in Abuja, the federal capital, and six states (Oyo, Lagos, Plateau, Anambra, Enugu and Kano). The focus was on identifying organizations with a national or regional reach. In Tanzania, the interviews were mostly in Dar es Salaam (with some in Zanzibar) although the organizations visited operate in many other parts of the country. In the absence of secondary sources, 133 organizations were identified and interviewed in Pune and Nagpur districts in Maharashtra, India. A disproportionate number were Christian, because they were more visible and easier to identify. In Pakistan, the team was able to draw on two systematic data sources: the Ministry of Education's national census of 2006, which included madrasas, and a 2002 Johns Hopkins University survey of civil society organizations, the data from which were reworked to examine faith-based organizations.
- ¹³ The role of religious bodies in education is particularly complex. All religious traditions have ways to socialize children into their faith, including religious educational institutions (madrasas, Sunday schools), training institutions (monasteries, seminaries, madrasas), and schools that provide a secular education (madrasas, church schools, schools associated with large Hindu organizations, universities endowed by religious groups). Universities invariably include religious education in their curriculum and may be linked to the public education system (through funding or regulatory arrangements) or they may not; governments may or may not seek their support in achieving national educational objectives. Some may be similar to private for profit schools, providing fee paying education to the middle and upper classes (possibly with arrangements to enable some poor children to attend), aimed at social transformation by providing education to the disadvantaged, or have a covert political agenda.
- ¹⁴ See also Lipsky, 2011.
- ¹⁵ Wider debates about religious identity and social integration in Britain are not considered here.

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