Inclusive Development: Beyond Need, Not Creed

Mariz Tadros and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler

IDS Institute of
Development Studies

CREID
Coalition for Religious Equality
and Inclusive Development

About CREID

The Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development (CREID) provides research evidence and delivers practical programmes which aim to redress poverty, hardship and exclusion resulting from discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. CREID is an international consortium, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and is funded by UK aid from the UK Government. Key partners include Al-Khoei Foundation, CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide) and Minority Rights Group.

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Summary

This paper explores the extent to which development, in its frames of reference, policy and practice, is sensitive and responsive to religious inequalities. The research enquiry is guided by the question "to what extent does international development thinking and policy-making engage with freedom of religion or belief?" This paper is largely focused on Western development thinking and programming, while recognising that there are a plethora of actors who are also increasingly engaged in international development, notwithstanding BRICS and the Gulf. The relationship between freedom of religion or belief and development continues to be severely underexplored in the literature, despite the copious body of scholarship that distinctively deals with each separately. The relevance of exploring the nexus between freedom of religion or belief and development is particularly significant in view of the increasing visibility of multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental action aimed towards advancing freedom of religion or belief through development or humanitarian aid. Western development thinking, policy and practice has always struggled with how to engage with religion. In this critical enquiry, we interrogate how far international development has become religion-aware, where conceptual strides have been made in engendering religion in development, and whether this has incorporated questions of freedom of religion or belief. In order to support freedom of religion or belief and have a full understanding of religious inequalities within international development, we need a distinct agenda that goes beyond 'add religion and stir'.

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Acknowledgements

Acronyms

CT	*Christianity Today*
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DMCDD	Danish Mission Council Development Department
EU	European Union
FCO	UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
FoRB	Freedom of Religion or Belief
HD	Human Development
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HI	Horizontal Inequalities
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPPFoRB	International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PaRD	International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPI	Social Progress Index
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission on Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US	United States of America

Introduction

This paper is the first in a series exploring the nexus between freedom of religion or belief and international development. The objective of this paper is to interrogate how development practitioners and frameworks have engaged with the question of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) as experienced by populations in which development interventions have been implemented. We explore questions such as "how sensitive is development planning and programming to inequalities faced by people based on their religious identity?" and "what explains the extent of sensitivity to religious inequalities in conceptions, framings and practices of development actors?" It is important to note that the aim of this paper is not to present an evaluation of every development policy, programme or theory from the perspective of the extent to which it is FoRB-sensitive or blind. The Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development (CREID) aims to contribute to the production of such evaluations in the upcoming years, however, this paper sets the case for the rationale from existing evidence for exploring how development policies, practices and theories have been framed in relation to exclusions on the basis of religious marginality, what factors have influenced or account for this, while situating the opportunities and challenges for FoRB-sensitive development policies and practices.

We recognise that the notion of 'development' has many different meanings and is deeply contested and debated. For many, development refers to improvements in material prosperity, such as income, land or resources. This could be achieved through higher levels of education, health and training. For others, development means freedom from oppression. Still others talk about it in relation to social and psycho-social progress. Whatever it is, the term is always value-laden and normative. Here, we use it to refer to a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral process involving social, economic and political change that aims to improve wellbeing. First, we engage with 'development' as a set of institutional processes and dynamics, as the rules of the game which inform programmes, policies and practices. We also engage with 'development' as a set of actors such as policymakers, programme planners and practitioners.

Finally, we engage with development paradigms and key frameworks, denoting the idea that societies and countries are at differing stages of 'development' as set out by internationally recognised standards in relation to poverty, economic wellbeing, and a range of social and political indicators.

We realise that this eclectic use of the term 'development' runs the potential risk of generalising a wide array of actors' normative positions, framings and polices. In this paper, when known, we try to make any normative assumptions about development explicit.

The term 'religion' can also signify a wide array of phenomena, and, as with development, our use of the term here will refer to different aspects. At times, we use the term religion to refer to faith and spirituality (while being mindful that the two are not always the same), at other times, we are referring to religious institutions, including patterns of religious-inspired behaviour and practice, and in other places, we speak about features of lived religion that may not be exclusively religious. Religion is not only about a particular set of religious beliefs or doctrines. It has also manifested itself in some instances in syncretism, indicating a dynamic and complex amalgamation of beliefs. Moreover, the lines between the secular and religious are porous, and clear divides separating the two into distinct spheres do not always exist (Tomalin 2015:9), as in this paper with our almost inter-changeable use of the term freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and religious equalities. The most widely used definition of FoRB in much of the literature is informed by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, this right includes freedom to change, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance".

The strengths of the term freedom of religion or belief are many.

First, it is a definition that encompasses both those who have religious beliefs and those who do not. Second, it articulates a wide array of expressions of agency around which freedom must be secured, from the invisible (thought) to very visible dimensions such as practice, teaching, etc. FoRB is a concept whose definition stems from a UN document that also encompasses other freedoms, a document around which there is a wide consensus in the human rights community. A related strength is that the concept FoRB is widely used, having gained traction not only in human rights circles, but also in foreign affairs/international relations and diplomacy.

However, some of its strengths may also represent its weaknesses. Today, globally, there is a backlash against human rights organisations, thereby diminishing their ability to undertake country-level work. Moreover, although critiques by both state and non-state

actors around the inconsistent and double standard application of international human rights by Western governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are not new, they nevertheless cast their shadow on rights-based conceptions of FoRB. Finally, the fact that FoRB came to be associated with foreign policy engagements in some contexts has been a mixed blessing. On the one hand, high level foreign policy engagements meant that it assumed a high profile, while on the other, it became politicised in a manner that made it difficult at times to disentangle from the broader political agenda of the governments championing it.

As with any concept, the usefulness of the term FoRB for achieving its intended purpose is partly contingent on the audience or stakeholders it seeks to influence. One set of the key interlocutors for the CREID programme are practitioners and policymakers in international development - a sphere, it will be argued below, that does not have a long history of engagement with questions of inclusion/exclusion on account of religion or belief. The usefulness of using the term FoRB in the context of international development needs to be interrogated. On the one hand, Amartya Sen's framing of development as freedom (see section two of this paper) has shaped international framings of development in fundamental ways. Moreover, the human rights terms of reference for FoRB are also not alien to international development. In 2011, the UN celebrated the 25th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly declaration on the right to development, which declared that development is an "inalienable right". The document pronounced that everyone is "entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized".[1] Hence, both conceptions of freedom and rights, so integral to the conception of FoRB, have also informed various iterations of international development as a framework and as a concept.

However, it is also critical to note that the politicisation of FoRB also has implications for development programme policymakers and practitioners who are conscious of their positionality (see section one of this paper). In contexts where international development actors are working in deeply circumscribed spaces where being associated with political agendas with a big "P" can lead to them sharing the same fate as human rights organisations, this presents another consideration for how they speak to inclusion/exclusion. It is in this context and against the backdrop of issues of positionality that we engage with FoRB in this paper as religious equality.

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1   www.un.org/en/events/righttodevelopment/declaration.shtml

The concept and language of 'equality' in many development circles is very powerful. Gender equality, for example, is a core element of international development. The aim here is to redress inequalities that people suffer on account of their religion or beliefs. We recognise that there are limitations to the concept of religious equality. First, as it does not speak explicitly to those who have no beliefs, it can be misinterpreted as exclusively focusing on those who are marginalised on account of having religious beliefs or being perceived as such. Second, there is a risk of equality being associated with parallel sets of rights, i.e. separate groups who are equal. On the other hand, as will be discussed in section three, equality has come to be used in international development in a relational manner, i.e. equal in relation to whom/what, which means that we can use it to incorporate those of no belief too. Moreover, the term religious equality speaks to an intended outcome that entails redressing power differentials, not only addressing restrictions on freedom.

It is important to also engage with the question of religious equality in relation to whose rights need acknowledgement and redressing. In very broad terms, the reference here is to those who experience any process of "otherisation" or discrimination on account of the religious identity they hold or are associated with. This applies to situations where individuals or communities suffer because of intersecting identities. In other words, when their religious identity intersects with other identity qualifiers such as gender, race, class, geographic location, political orientation, or others. The need to redress religious inequality also applies to those who self-identify as atheist or are associated with atheism in contexts where society is intolerant of those who are of non-faith.

The need to address religious equality as part of an inclusive development agenda, it will be argued in this paper, is particularly pressing for individuals and groups where being a numerical minority is also associated with experiencing other forms of exclusion or marginalisation, be it political, economic, social, or a combination thereof. In view of the diversity of the situation and status of religious minorities globally, it is difficult to arrive at a definition of universal application that works consistently for every group. The UN's accepted definition is:

> A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the State - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language (OHCHR).

This definition is important in that it suggests that majority/minority demarcation is not only based on numbers but a relationship of non-dominance. In other words, a relationship where large members of a religious group experience power inequalities.

Undoubtedly these power relations of inequality are dynamic: members of a religious group may be a religious minority from a power point of view in one context but not another and their situation may change across time. Moreover, they may experience power differentials of privilege and subordination within the group based on class, gender and other identifiers. This is perhaps where the third qualifier to what constitutes a religious minority becomes very important: that the group shows implicitly or explicitly a sense of solidarity with a feature that they find distinguishes them from the religious majority. As with any grouping, this sense of community may experience periods of acute awareness and other periods where this identity is submerged under others - nationalistic, political, geographic, tribal or otherwise. There is no blueprint for how redressing religious inequalities in contexts of international development programming in-country can be addressed, but we endeavour to initiate the conversation on this in part three of this paper.

Perhaps where conceptual clarity is most needed is on the question of whether it is possible to use a religion-sensitive and FoRB-sensitive approach to development interchangeably. We argue in this paper that while there are some important convergences, we are also dealing with very distinct divergences. However, in order to understand the overlap and digression, we need to start with the genealogy of both ideas. In other words, the historical emergence of a movement to bring about a paradigmatic shift to integrate, conceptually and operationally, religious actors, beliefs, norms and practices in international development policy engagements and programming, and the historical emergence of FoRB as an ideal that cannot be ignored or sidelined in international relations and policy. We explore this largely by focusing on the actors and spaces through which these two movements emerged (see part one), seeking to probe behind the blind spots of development. In part two, we explore some of the conceptual, methodological and programmatic framings of international development, specifically the human capabilities approach, livelihood and social capital framings, horizontal inequalities and the most recent 'leaving no one behind' agenda. We explore the extent to which those discriminated against on the basis of religious identity, whether individually or collectively, have been recognised, engaged with, and integrated into development conceptual frameworks and programmes.

Drawing from this review and analysis, in the third and final part of this paper we explore where the opportunities and challenges lie for synergies between international development frameworks and programming and freedom of religion or belief. This is viewed from two perspectives; the first looks at ways in which addressing freedom of religion or belief can make development more inclusive and responsive to glaring inequalities on the ground; the second explores how international development can make FoRB more meaningful and relevant for the lives of those most affected by religious discrimination in ways which complement other strategies of engagement (such as diplomacy or human rights). We expose the critical tensions inherent in such processes, and the kinds of paradigmatic shifts that need to happen, in terms of language and framing, operational practice, and most importantly, epistemological changes needed to think outside the box to make FoRB-sensitive development a reality.

1   Development, Religion and FoRB: Contested Narratives

The definition of international development is contested. Over the years the definitions and framings have evolved substantially and there continue to be contending narratives that range between narrow econometric understandings and broader, more holistic conceptions. If development is defined as "organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement" (Nederveen Pieterse 2010:3), then the history of development can be traced back to colonialism and the interventionist strategies of colonial powers in the affairs of the colonised in the name of bringing enlightenment and progress (Deacon and Tomalin 2015). If international development were to be defined more narrowly in terms of a "deliberate and planned process of intergovernmental cooperation to promote human well-being" (Clarke 2009:385), it is generally traced back to the aid architecture put in place after the Second World War by Western powers to enable countries with newly gained independence to 'catch up'. Such an architecture involved the setting up of international development programmes whose *raison d'être* was to establish pathways of transition from underdevelopment to development.

The most dominant paradigm which informed thinking and development policy in the early 1950s was modernisation theory. Much of modernisation theory assumed that

economic development necessitated that societies shed their rural "backward" values, norms and beliefs in order to gradually move towards more "modern", scientific and rational ways of thinking (Ver Beek 2000; McDuie-Ra and Rees 2010). The backwardness, assumed to be associated with the agricultural arena, presented itself as religious beliefs, risk aversion and a general tendency that held up the steady march forward of economic progress. Development became associated with a secularism whose iterations meant not only a relegation of the "religious" to the private sphere, but an abandonment of norms and beliefs informed by religion more generally (Ager and Ager 2016; Deneulin and Bano 2009; Deneulin and Rakodi 2011). The prevalence of other theories of development, such as those proposed by Neo-Marxists, were no less teleological in elucidating a set of steps required by countries and societies in the Global South to follow in order to 'develop'. Such theories also tended to see religion as an obstacle to development, to be pushed to the margins if progress were to be achieved.

Clarke (2009:385) suggests that from the 1950s and for the next five decades, development was characterised by two approaches to religion: "secular reductionism", which he defines as "the neglect of religious variables in favour of other sociological attributes such as class, ethnicity and gender", and "materialistic determinism", in terms of "the neglect of non-material, especially religious, motivations in explaining individual or institutional behaviour". Moreover, international development was a sphere dominated by economists whose vision of change focused on bringing about economic growth (Jones and Petersen 2011; Narayanan 2016). Development assistance was given the semblance of being normative-free in the sense that it was represented as a technocratic process led by experts who can quantify, process and produce the objective facts to bring about optimum results (Mitchell 2002). Framed in that fashion, it was difficult to quantify the immaterial dimension of religion. Consequently, for several decades, development scholarship was "religion-blind" – disconnected from the pervasive power of religion as a reality. This in no way suggests that faith-based actors were not involved in development work, nor that they were excluded from funding. However, collaborations with faith-based actors came about in spite of their religious identity and not in acknowledgement of it (Tadros 2011). The oversight of religion in development was so systemic that Ver Beek suggests it amounted to a taboo. Ver Beek's seminal article *Spirituality: a development taboo* (2000) demonstrated the ways in which "people's spirituality is integrally interconnected with the decisions they make regarding their development and that development interventions often change people's spirituality and society without encouraging reflection upon or gaining consent to those changes" (Ver Beek 2000:41).

Moreover, the challenge was not only ideological, it was practical. Those leading the planning, programming and monitoring of international development in the Global South were often from Western contexts where secularism was predominant (Ver Beek 2000; McDuie-Ra and Rees 2010). This meant that, for the large part, development scholars, programmers and practitioners did not have the understanding or capacity to address the myriad ways in which religion manifested itself on the ground (MuDuie-Ra and Rees 2010). As mentioned in the introduction, religion can mean many different phenomena and will overlap with culture on the ground. Religious shapes culture insofar as religious-inspired values, rites and rituals inform people's everyday social norms and practices. Conversely, culture shapes religious practices insofar as dynamic and intergenerational societal values and practices that do not originate in religion influence how religion is practiced. This interface between religion and culture complicates the nature of the phenomena that development policymakers and practices engage with on the ground.

A critique of the disconnect between theories and reality contributed to a number of paradigmatic shifts that had implications on the positioning and role of religion in development. First, the fundamental precept of modernisation theory, that religion would lose its relevance as people develop and modernise, was incongruent with the reality on the ground and was challenged on account of its lack of universal application. For example, the relationships between modernisation, development and change were complex and non-linear. In many countries in the Global South, development in its myriad manifestations did not entail an abandonment of religion. In some cases, it co-existed with a rise in the prevalence of religion in various forms, such as expressed spirituality and through communal worship, but also through the formation of political parties and movements with fundamentalist and radical interpretations of religious doctrine, or pro-democracy social movements that were inspired by religious values. In many Gulf countries, development meant high economic growth, rapid technological development and the selective adoption of Western consumerist patterns with a strong retention of the power of the religious in the political, economic and social organisation of society. It was not only in the Global South that the myth of development leading to the erosion of religion was debunked. In US domestic and international policy, an alliance between religious "social conservatives" and predominantly secular "fiscal conservatives" in the Republican Party and their rising influence among the polity meant a pushback against the relegation of the role of religion to the private realm (Jakobsen and Bernstein 2009:12).

It is interesting that the scholarship critiquing modernisation theory for its religion-blind nature comes from scholars and practitioners from very different epistemic stances and vantage points; it was not only those for whom religion played a central role in their lives (in the West and in the Global South) that called for a paradigmatic shift. In the 1990s, post-colonialist theorists challenged Western development's engagement with actors "in their own image", excluding those who profess identities not aligned with their own, and challenged the notion that modernisation meant westernisation (Rakodi 2015:17). Post-colonialist critiques of international development as an ontological project became more prominent in development studies as they pressed for recognition of alternative models of change situated in the plurality of people's experiences, realities, perceptions and visions.

The importance of understanding the role of religious actors in development in the 1990s can also be traced to the shift from state welfare to welfare pluralism models of development, against the backdrop of the pursuit of the neoliberal policies of structural adjustment and retrenchment. While many faith-based organisations have been providing services for literally centuries, it is in the same time frame as adjustment policies and talk of social safety nets that they rose in significance in international development policy, practice and increasingly scholarship as well. The incurring hardship on the poor marked an increased role for civil society organisations (including faith-based organisations) to fill the gap in unmet welfare needs (Clarke 2006:837). Studies suggest that the role of faith-based organisations in mitigating hardship has been underestimated and that any promotion of grassroots community development involvement could not ignore their outreach capacity (White and Deneulin 2009).

The plethora of Christian and Muslim NGOs working in Africa and organisations working in some Middle Eastern countries are cases in point. For example, in Nigeria, Pentecostal churches (providing spiritual and material assistance) gained popularity against the backdrop of economic adjustment policies and their impact on vulnerable groups (Ruth Marshall 1991). While Marshall insists that there are other reasons for people's attraction to this new religious wave, she also points to the ways in which, through religious fellowship, followers have established informal faith-based initiatives to help peers survive economically. For example, small neighbourhood groups not only provide spiritual support but also welfare support and services for followers, including financial resources, in-kind support and health services (Marshall 1991:25). These are not only present in the

Global South but have a strong presence in the West as well in the form of organised campaigns against poverty, food banks, shelters, and a wide array of outreach activities.

A body of scholarship emerged showing how a religion-prejudiced lens meant that faith-based organisations (FBOs) were considered as partisan by donors and therefore deemed unfit to engage in broader development work (Boehle 2010; Carbonnier, Kartas and Tudor Silva 2013; Clarke 2009). Gary Clarke (2007) outlines how the shift within donor organisations towards engaging FBOs in development activities came in response to those advocating for the inclusion of religion in development. It is interesting to note that this shift in international development policy was donor-driven, mostly top-down, but championed by leaders/actors within the development arena. In 1998, the World Bank was one of the first organisations to engage with religion, rendering religious actors visible by creating platforms such as the World Faiths Development Dialogue, established in collaboration with the Archbishop of Canterbury. This dialogue focused on engaging religious actors, primarily FBOs, in poverty reduction efforts (Marshall 2015:386).

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA), in particular through the work of Azza Karam, became the UN agency most associated with interrogating ways of making international development less religion-blind. In the 1990s, bilateral agencies such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID) also, for the first time in history, developed a faith and development manifesto, spearheaded by Mike Battcock. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) also experienced a shift, later, to include an office for engaging religion. In all of these cases, these champions were well positioned to lead processes of engendering religion in development on account of their influential positions within their respective organisations, their dissemination of research elucidating the merits and pitfalls of religion-aware and religion-blind development respectively, and their efforts to create bridges with faith organisations.

In the 2000s, Western powers shifted in part their strategy for engaging with development and religion. In the aftermath of 9/11, there was a significant shift towards engaging with 'religion' through the security agenda. Western countries' engagement in the War on Terror, in the aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers in the United States in 2001, contributed to the securitisation of development. Security actors sought to instrumentalise religion and religious actors via international development as part of the exercise of soft power against Islamic radicalism (Tadros 2010). In Western policy, this

manifested itself in the strong collusion between the security and development agendas in Muslim-majority contexts in which Western international development donors sought to work with religious leaders in a bid to pull the carpet from underneath the feet of more radical groups. In these highly securitised contexts, donors conceived of religious actors as the conduits through which the "right religion" would be taught, particularly to young people. In some contexts, religious leaders came to be consulted on everything from the construction of roads to women's reproductive health (Balchin 2011). In other words, there were phases in some contexts where development programmers and practitioners shifted their country-level policies from ignoring religion to considering the involvement of religious actors to be essential for all development interventions. This was observed in particular through engagements with religious radical groups in contexts considered to be of top security concern for the West. Where development policy and practice had once shunned religion (secular reductionism), it was now considered essential (religious essentialism) (Tadros 2013).

This kind of religious "romanticism" essentialised people's identities, seeing them exclusively as believers, rather than as people with multiple, intersectional identities. In a bid to show the benefits of engaging with religious actors, sometimes the trade-offs and tensions that this entailed for inclusive development were overlooked or side-lined (Tadros 2013; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015). The late Cassandra Balchin (2011:17) an activist-practitioner, shared the following case study:

> I recall the fury of a women's rights activist from the Mindanao region in the Philippines in the 1990s. A foreign bilateral agency had apparently gathered local ulemas [religious leaders] in order to produce a statement supporting women's reproductive rights from an Islamic perspective. Although this was not a normal sphere of the local ulema's concern, the statement was duly issued, but more importantly, the gathering facilitated networking among the ulema that subsequently contributed to the formation of a political grouping that promoted a fundamentalist vision of Islam. In other words, a development approach reinforced conservative interpretations of religion and strengthened the power of those who do not have pluralism and equality at heart.

The above encapsulates the dangers of a pendulum that swings from complete oversight of religion to one that assumes religious actors are exclusive mediators and pathways for eliciting change for development. Similar incidents of the assumed capacity by Western

actors to instrumentalise religion have been noted by Fountain and Peterson (2018). In the case of the Mindanao region mentioned above, the unintended outcome was an undermining of women's rights activists who had been advancing women's reproductive health rights, and the empowerment of the *ulemas* to promote an agenda that circumscribed these rights.

In the next section we highlight the dangers of assuming that the promotion of a religious-sensitive lens onto development will, by default, incur a positive impact on the promotion of religious equality as a dimension of inclusive development policy and practice.

1.1 Religion in development and FoRB: Two sides of the same coin or diverging foci?

A review of the religion and development literature shows minimal engagement with the question of religious marginality and inequalities among and within communities or with FoRB more broadly. There is some scholarship examining the institutional discrimination facing religious minorities; for example in the labour market (Basedau, Govien and Prediger 2018), housing sector (Marshall and Van Saanen 2007), health sector (Martin 2008), and some explorations of intersectionality, such as in David Mosse's seminal work on how the intersection between caste, religious affiliation and discrimination impacts on people's access to development in India (2012, 2018). Such work also includes Frances Stewart's (2008) important work on horizontal inequalities (2008) relating to religious and ethnic minorities' collective experience of marginalisation and its relationship to violence. Nonetheless, by and large, the nexus of religion-identity-development-inequality is virtually absent in the religion and development scholarship, and even more so in development programming.

What explains the paucity of academic and practical work on religious inequality and discrimination in the religion and development field, one that calls for a systematic study of religion on the ground? Perhaps one core explanation lies in the genealogy of religion in development and the movement for recognition of FoRB in international policy. The paradigmatic shift to integrate religion in development was brought about by development actors from within the field engaging with religious leaders and religious actors more broadly.

However, a movement to integrate FoRB in development is still very nascent. The movement to elevate FoRB to a critical feature of Western foreign policy has its origins in the work of pioneering academics such as Jonathan Fox, Timothy Shah, Allen Hertzke, Byron Johnson and many others.

Despite the fact that the principle of the right to FoRB has featured in international human rights conventions dating back to the 1950s, a scoping report of the origin of concerted action around FoRB (Barker and Bennett 2018) identifies 1998 as the critical juncture for bringing the issue to centre stage in global policy, when the United States prioritised the promotion and defence of international religious freedom through its foreign policy following the passage of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). Barker and Bennett (2018:17) note that since the IRFA was enacted, "violations of religious freedom have received greater attention by an increasing number of multilateral organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), and more than a dozen countries identify the promotion of international religious freedom as a core element of their foreign policy".[2] In 2016, the EU designated a special envoy for Freedom of Religion of Belief, Mr Ján Figeľ, and in 2018 the EU parliament published special guidelines on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief[3], with an intra-parliamentary group publishing an annual report on the state of FoRB globally.[4] A number of countries have followed suit with the establishment of their own special envoys for FoRB, including Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom (UK), the Netherlands and others.

The scoping report details fairly high-level action on FoRB, including bilateral government engagements and multilateral platforms, mostly also featuring governments. While established in the Cold War for cooperation across ideological divides, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) represents one of the oldest multilateral platforms through which issues of freedom of belief, conscience and thought are discussed. A more recent initiative includes the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB), established in November 2014 at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway. In that meeting, 30 parliamentarians from 17 countries signed the Oslo Charter for Freedom of Religion or Belief, the founding document of IPPFoRB. The Canadian government, via its Canadian Office for Religious Freedom, further

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2   See also the work of Hertzke on the origins of the emergence of FoRB in foreign policy and the edited volume by Durham et al.
3   EU Guidelines: www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0449_EN.html
4   European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance

established an International Contact Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief (ICG) in 2015. While the full list of the 20 participating countries has not been made publicly known, they include the United States, the UK, Norway, Cameroon, Jordan and Indonesia (Baker and Bennett 2018). A preliminary analysis of multilateral or bilateral activities suggests that most of their work is premised on documenting and monitoring FoRB violations in countries and raising issues of violations of FoRB through policy dialogues with the government at hand. There is additionally substantial work on collecting data, undertaking training for diplomats and providing toolkits.

Increasingly, however, a number of governments are claiming to include religious inequality in their development activities. For example, Barker and Bennett (2018) illustrate that the Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD), which manages a pooled fund that primarily supports poverty reduction initiatives in developing countries, had its budget increased by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2017 with the expectation that future development projects will address FoRB.

Three other initiatives are more focused on Christian minorities. In 2011, Norway established the Minority Project, focusing on Christian minorities in the Middle East and improving the situation of vulnerable religious groups worldwide. The project is led by the Special Envoy for Human Rights, who reports to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Initiatives "include the creation of monitoring and early warning mechanisms for vulnerable groups and the development of measures to improve conditions for persecuted religious minorities who are being subjected to harassment and discrimination" (Barker and Bennett 2018:61-2). There is also the State Secretariat for the Aid of Persecuted Christians in Hungary, which sits in the Prime Minister's Office, and as the name suggests is a state agency committed to improving humanitarian and developmental assistance to Christians suffering persecution in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, in 2019, the British government launched an investigation into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) response to the persecution of Christians globally, and issued a number of recommendations for targeted actions, presented in what became commonly known as the Bishop of Truro's Report.

Most of these initiatives are engaged in diplomacy and the exceptions, such as USAID's Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives, are more broadly committed to the inclusion of faith-actors in development. It is important to note here that there are other country-level initiatives that are specifically committed to supporting religious minorities of other

faiths (for example Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and increasingly Qatar are earmarking resources and technical support to supporting persecuted Muslims, however there is often very little information publicly available on their programmes or activities, see for example a report by Barzegar and El Karhili (2017) as an example of one scoping of the sector). Many of the large initiatives on the ground in the area of FoRB seem to have been designed and drawn in foreign affairs ministries and then rolled out in other countries. The implications of FoRB being the brainchild of foreign ministries for development are far reaching, as will be discussed below, however, it is important to note that Western governments also came under increasing pressure from internal lobby groups to demonstrate how not only their foreign policy but also their development and humanitarian policy was cognisant and responsive to the scale and severity of religious-inspired human suffering in many parts of the world. Such pressure came largely from identity-based advocacy groups. Human rights organisations, whose *raison d'être* is to advance rights more broadly, have not engaged with FoRB violations in the same way as they have with violations based on political belief, gender or other identifiers (Petersen and Marshall 2018). Petersen and Marshall (2018:13) argue that "this does not mean that mainstream human rights organisations did not care about religiously based discrimination and conflict, but that they tended to see the topic as being 'really' about something other than religion – whether ethnic or racial discrimination, gender inequality, or political oppression – and as such, something tackled more usefully within e.g. frameworks on minority rights, non-discrimination, women's rights, or freedom of expression than within a FoRB framework".

The challenge is that religious-inspired genocides were difficult to always subsume under different banners - ethnicity, geography or otherwise. Daesh's cleansing of the Yazidis, Christians and other religious minorities was more recently officially recognised by the US State Department and then by the UN as a genocide. Additionally, whereas there is religious discrimination across the world, religious minorities in the Middle East face an existential crisis; the numbers of Kakais, Sabeans and others have shrunk so significantly that they are at risk of becoming altogether extinct. The scale and severity of the genocide of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and religious cleansing of Christians in other parts of the country represents an international humanitarian crisis of a grand scale. Moreover, emerging research suggests that the scope, severity and reach of FoRB violations is no longer contained within national borders and is anything but of a modest scale. For example, the Pew Research 10 year (2007-2017) report shows that in 2017, 52 governments imposed 'either "high" or "very high" levels of restrictions on religion, up

from 40 in 2007. And the number of countries where people are experiencing the highest levels of social hostilities involving religion has risen from 39 to 56 over the course of the study' (Pew Research Center 2019).[5]

As a result of FoRB and religion in development having very different genealogies, their agendas converge on some points but significantly diverge on others. The common factor between a religion-sensitive development agenda and a FoRB-sensitive one is that both recognise that religion is important and influential and has not been duly acknowledged or engaged with in development planning, programming or evaluations. Both agendas push back against the way in which religion has been conceptualised, classified or understood. Both consider the realm of the immaterial as significant and reject reductionist explanations that perceive religion as more likely than not a by-product of another dynamic (class, ethnicity, geography). In order to make development more sensitive to religion, religious literacy would feature as one of the important elements of delivering on both agendas (FoRB and religion in development). Diane L. Moore, Director of the Religious Literacy Project at Harvard Divinity School, defines religious literacy as "the ability to discern and analyze the fundamental intersections of religion and social/political/cultural life through multiple lenses", specifically through an understanding of the beliefs, central texts and practices of religious traditions and how these intersect with social, political and cultural spaces (The Religious Literacy Project 2019). Some have argued for the integration of religious literacy in development (Gingerich et al. 2017) and a number of initiatives have been established to promote religious literacy in development using different methodologies and approaches. Some are in-house, involving the training of diplomats and policymakers inside ministries, while others are more open to anyone interested, such as the Joint Learning Initiative, the FoRB Learning Platform and ACT Alliance.

Development field practitioners undertaking scoping studies, planners undertaking political economy analysis, programmers and monitoring and evaluation specialists would need to have the knowledge, mindset, attitude and skills at understanding the broad breadth of ways in which religious agency, history and doctrine influence power dynamics on the ground. These power dynamics would also require an understanding of how they work within groups and across groups.

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5   The Pew Research measures restrictions on religion rather than inequalities across groups or restrictions on those of no belief. However, in many instances where restrictions on religion prevail, these also apply to those of no belief (Humanist International 2019).

A common deficit characterising attempts at integrating FoRB and religion-aware development on the ground is that the movers and shakers within religious circles who wield power are largely men of religion, often advanced in years. This often means that in making development more FoRB-sensitive or religion sensitive, those invited to establish the terms of engagement, take decisions and represent communities, are older men, thereby excluding both women and youth. How to make development withstand the tendency to replicate the same hierarchies that we see in religious institutional leadership, i.e. gerontocratic and gender-biased, is a challenge.

However, beyond recognition of religious agency and religious literacy competencies, there are some critical differences in the conception of a FoRB-sensitive development approach and a religion-aware one. If we conceive of both it would be wrong to assume that, since both agendas engage with religion, the terms they use would refer to the same phenomenon. The emphasis on the nature of power inequality at the heart of religion and development is different to that of the FoRB-in-development agenda. In religion-aware development policy, the desired outcome is the recognition and inclusion of religious discourses and actors (Berger 2014). A FoRB-sensitive development policy would focus not only on the secular-religious divide but on the divide within religious and non-religious groups as well. Moreover, whereas religion-sensitive development endeavours to integrate religious actors, norms and beliefs in understandings and interventions to bring about social change, a FoRB perspective also recognises the involvement of those of non-faith or no belief. Arguably since development programming, policies and practices have been secular by and large, it is the inequalities within groups and among those who hold religious beliefs that has been most challenging conceptually and operationally for development actors to tackle.

Second, the scholarship for a religion-sensitive lens on development sought to redress how international policymakers and programmers discriminated against or ignored organisations on account of their faith. The most commonly used example was a USAID regulation that prevented the organisation from funding FBOs - a regulation that was overturned in 2004 on the basis that "USAID may not discriminate for or against a program applicant because the organization is motivated or influenced by religious faith to provide social services, or because of their religious character or affiliation" (USAID n.d.). The normative underpinning of the religion in development agenda (or at least subsets of it) has been to bring to the fore the positive role that religious agency has, in the form of leadership, organisations and discourses, and how this can contribute

towards a more holistic form of development. A case in point is the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development, a convening platform funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). According to its mandate "PaRD brings together governmental and intergovernmental entities with diverse civil society organisations (CSOs) and FBOs, to engage the social capital and capacities vested in diverse faith communities for sustainable development and humanitarian assistance in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (PaRD n.d.). The point behind PaRD and other similar initiatives (such as the Joint Learning Initiative) is to bring to the fore the positive contributions of the religious in development.

On the other hand, the theory of change underpinning FoRB-in-development is that there is a need to recognise and redress the inequalities that face people who are discriminated against on the basis of their faith, which means addressing the prejudices of both secular and religious actors. It recognises that the political appropriation of religion for the exercise of power has led to a growth of fundamentalist religious discourses and activisms that negatively impact religious inclusivity. Champions of a religion-sensitive lens onto development, whether academics or development practitioners, have focused on the exclusion of religious actors, understandings and beliefs by a persistent secular straitjacketing of development. However, champions of freedom of religion or belief in development recognise that the threats to religious inclusion lie not only with those who wish to exclude all expressions and forms of the religious from development, but also a range of religious actors, beliefs and practices which perpetuate religious otherisation.

Third, and this is perhaps the greatest difference, is the question of the actors and agendas that are being incorporated into the development sphere. While not generalising, the rationale for bringing in religious leaders, FBOs and discourses into development was precisely because they are influential on the ground, because they have leverage, outreach and a gathering and sometimes provide critical services. In other words, religious actors may have been marginal to international development actors, spaces and agendas, but they were not in their own 'local' contexts. On the contrary, it was by understanding that they wield power in relation to others in their community that the case for recognition was made.

In contrast, the rationale for a religious equality agenda is precisely the reverse: that certain religious actors, often a numerical and political minority, are marginalised, overlooked, shunned and excluded, both individually and collectively. It is not that they do not have power, nor that we wish to engage with them as simply victims who have no agency, but that relationally they suffer from being excluded from mainstream religious discourses, from legitimacy and from influence on account of their affiliation – or at least association with a religious identifier, a difference that is looked down upon. In other words, it is precisely because they suffer from multiple, intersecting forms of exclusion and powerlessness that they need to be incorporated, to redress their inequalities for a more inclusive development agenda.

Table 1.1 Tadros presentation, 15th October 2019, CREID seminar "Where Need Meets Creed"

	Religion in development	**FoRB in development**
Genealogy	Led by development academics, programmers, practitioners and faith leaders in international development, early 1990s	Diplomats, faith lobby groups, human rights activists and academics from foreign policy, human rights, late 1990s
Aim	To integrate religious actors in their plurality and a faith lens into development	Promoting FoRB/redress of religious inequalities as an essential dimension of inclusive development
Paradigmatic shift needed	Challenge the secular blindness of development	Challenge secular blindness and blindness to religious inequalities
Rationale	Religious actors, institutions are powerful - cannot be ignored	Religious minorities have been ignored because they suffer from power inequalities
Who to involve?	Involvement of faith and religious actors in their plurality and diversity in development	Development/human rights/foreign policy/security as well as faith actors
Examples of interventions	Faith literacy, secular-religious dialogue	Inter-faith service delivery, projects for empowerment of religious minorities

Nemesis	Secularism	Religious, political and social homogenisation of all kinds that create a religious other
Main critiques	Potential reification of identities and exclusionary leadership	Too politically contentious and potentially divisive

The differences in making development more religion aware and FoRB sensitive on account of the differential power base and positioning of religious leaders and actors on the one hand and members of marginalised religious communities on the other is significant operationally. For example, whereas the inclusion of religion in development practically may mean the invitation of faith leaders and organisations to contribute and partner with development actors, it is not so straightforward for religious minorities and non-believers. In some countries such as Pakistan, Ahmadis conceal their identity in order to avoid government crackdown. In Iraq, the Kakais proclaim publicly that they are Muslim in order to avoid extremist group assaults.

The sensitivities around engaging with FoRB on the ground are immense; integrating FoRB in development is not a case of "add religious freedom to the religion and development agenda and stir". This is because, while it builds on the importance of recognising the role of religious norms and beliefs in influencing, it specifically tackles the unequal power relations that people experience on account of being seen as the religious 'other', be they of the same faith as the majority, of a minority faith, or of no belief.

Hence, the opportunities and challenges of mainstreaming FoRB in development are to a large extent different to those involved in adopting a religion-sensitive lens to development. The next part of this paper will highlight some of the specific issues with a FoRB-sensitive development agenda, and the subsequent part highlights some of the opportunities from within existing development frameworks.

1.2 FoRB's uneasy relationship with development

The challenges of making international development frameworks, policymakers and practitioners more cognisant and responsive to religious inequalities are marked by both the limitations of present frameworks but also by the positionality of Western actors (how

their intentions are perceived in the light of their identity).[6] A *longue durée* reading of Western powers' engagement with religious pluralism in colonised countries sheds much light on why development academics and practitioners who wish to break with their countries' past as colonisers are uncomfortable with incorporating FoRB in development. The history of British, French and Belgian colonialism is marked by a strategy of divide and rule or divide and conquer. Several religious conflicts around the world that have escalated into genocides have their roots in the interventions of colonialist powers in previous centuries. British colonialism in Myanmar has been considered to have contributed to the conditions for a backlash or desire for revenge against the ethno-religious minorities that the Buddhists began to perceive as a threat (Rogers 2018). In Egypt, British colonialist powers were believed to have sought to allocate resources in ways that created divisions between the Muslim majority and Christian minority. In India, the entrenchment of religious identities via the introduction of political and economic measures that supported mobilisation around communal religious identity lines is believed to have sowed mistrust and fear for loss of power. However, communal tensions and violence cannot all be reduced to the role of colonialism since in many cases tensions preceded colonialism, including in the cases mentioned above (Myanmar and Egypt).

The second challenge for development actors to engage with the promotion of FoRB is concern with being perceived as extending the legacy of missionary activity in the Global South, where missionary activity often accompanied a colonial presence. According to Fountain (2015:85), "contemporary Western development is a direct descendent of Christian proselytizing impulses, dispositions, practices, and organizational forms". As with this quote above, the Christian missionary legacy has by and large been represented in a deeply negative light in much of the literature that development draws on (post-colonialism, anthropology, etc., see Fountain for multiple examples of this). However, the salience of a negative representation of missionary activity also reflects the generalisation of a number of expressions of agency that are highly diverse in both denomination and relationship with the colonisers and the colonised across very different times and places. In a study of activist forms of Protestant missionaries, Woodbery (2012:254) notes that there is evidence that some missionary movements/groups played a central role in contributing to local groups' capacities and skills to mobilise the masses against colonialist rule, in particular in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, stating

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6   While it is beyond the scope of this paper to unpack the subtle differences between Western bilateral institutions and global ones such as the UN, it is important to note that in some quarters in the Global South, the UN is seen as an instrument of Western hegemony, see Puchala 2005.

that while some missionaries were paternalistic and racist, there is evidence too of others whose support for local populations was part of their commitment to societal reform, which in turn emanated from their faith. The evidence as expected will vary from context to context.

The extent to which countries can position themselves as the protectors of religious harmony and cohesion without their colonial past casting a shadow on their credibility, and most importantly, their intentions, needs to be explored at length. There is certainly a gap in the evidence we have in this area. Many countries consider the state of religious pluralism in their contexts as a matter of national sovereignty. The question is not one of the contemporary record of promoting religious freedom or its coherence, but rather a question of perception. For example, in many colonial contexts in the Middle East, some indigenous churches responded to British colonialism in the nineteenth century by aligning themselves with Muslims. Their rejection of colonial patronage for their protection was informed by the desire to define themselves as patriotic churches (Tadros 2016). In a context where indigenous churches' patriotism is always under scrutiny, the extent to which a collaboration with a former colonial power can create a public image problem cannot be underestimated. This of course varies from one context to another and one phase to the next.

Yet the United States, the most vocal promoter of religious freedom which does not have a colonial legacy of divide and rule, cannot boast a positive track record of pursuing policies that promote social cohesion, pluralism and religious equality. The legacy of the American occupation of Iraq following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein is believed to have contributed to the generation of religious intolerance which reached the level of religious cleansing in the beginning of the twenty-first century. The fact that the United States is spearheading FoRB through foreign policy instruments and continues to be the main player in the field is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has meant that there is substantial weight and visibility given to FoRB that was absent before. All of the multilateral initiatives, even when not led by the US, have involved high level US foreign representation. More recently in 2018, Mike Pence, the Vice-President of the US, held an inter-ministerial meeting on FoRB in Washington, followed by a second in 2019. These were well attended, with over 3,000 participants. This has given visibility to the issue and allowed for the exchange of ideas and strategies across different actors.

On the other hand, the association of US foreign policy with FoRB is not without its challenges for legitimacy. Wherever or whenever American foreign policy suffers from a credibility or legitimacy deficit, its promotion of FoRB by default also suffers among some domestic and external actors. The question of the alignment of American foreign and domestic policy with promotion of FoRB has again raised questions on the impacts and outcomes for redressing religious inequality on the ground for those who need it most. For example, while Donald Trump has explicitly identified Christians from countries such as Syria as particularly vulnerable and a priority for his administration (Brody 2017), this has not translated into consistent policy. A report in Christianity Today (CT) notes that for 2018, "though most of the refugees welcomed over the past year are Christians, the overall drop means far fewer believers are finding refuge in the US than in prior years. In the 2018 fiscal year, 15,748 Christian refugees entered the country, a 36.4 percent decline from the previous year and a 55 percent decline from fiscal year 2016" (Jackson 2018). Within that overall decline in refugee populations and in the number of Christian refugees admitted, the drop is also very notable for Christians from the Middle East, as noted by the CT report: "only 70 Christians from places like Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen were resettled in the US in the last fiscal year [2018], compared to more than 3,000 Christians from the region who came in fiscal year 2017". The restrictions on refugee entry harmed other religious minorities more substantially than Christians, yet even the latter's vulnerability has increased. This demonstrates that broader policy (restrictions of refugee intake) has had an impact that far outweighs that of having a high-level US government-sponsored summit on freedom of religion or belief.

Herein lies the conundrum: broader policies can have unintended outcomes, undermining religious freedom, that outweigh the formulation of policies that seem on the surface to specifically aim at redressing religious inequality. Operationally, for example, USAID has announced that it will pursue an aid policy that ensures that development assistance in Iraq is sensitive to FoRB. However, if the broader US foreign policy in Iraq contributes to insecurity, religious minorities will consider it unsafe to participate in developmental activities funded by USAID.

The challenge of integrating FoRB in development is exacerbated by polarisation globally, but particularly in the US, between the right and left on human rights. While the promotion of religious freedom is commensurate with a human rights approach to development, the polarisation between right and left has also seeped into this sector. Which rights become fashionable in development planning and programming is not only

premised on the urgency of the situation on the ground or the information available, but also on the political orientation of power-holders responsible for decision-making.

The extent to which FoRB is associated with a right-wing rights agenda and whether this has an influence on its uptake in development requires further exploration. One observation is that left-leaning academics, think tanks, development actors and sometimes politicians are more likely to defend the rights of religious minorities (particularly Muslims) living in the West, while their right-wing oriented counterparts tend to defend the rights of religious minorities internationally. For example, in the UK, the left-leaning Labour party released a Race and Faith Manifesto for the 2019 national elections (Labour 2019). In this manifesto Labour made one mention of Christians in passing, alongside other groups, in their right to attire without discrimination. On the other hand, in the same document, they made six mentions specific to the rights of Muslims domestically. Conversely, the Conservative party 2019 party manifesto spoke about defending all faiths from persecution domestically but also added that they will seek to implement the Truro report, which proposed a series of recommendations for improving the situation of persecuted Christians overseas (Conservatives 2019). These represent deep-seated ideological fault lines which are beyond the scope of this paper to analyse, but which are important to take note of as they inevitably have spill over effects for international development, whether directly or in more subtle ways.

Moreover, the integration of FoRB in development operationally carries different risks to those involved in raising the issue through diplomatic channels. The promotion of FoRB in foreign policy does not involve grassroots work often because of concerns that direct engagement with the population on the ground would be considered a violation of a country's sovereignty or a form of espionage. Diplomats often raise issues of religious freedom in bilateral policy dialogues or through multilateral conferences/summits, etc. Some embassies do have, through their political office, local researchers that gather information on the state of religious freedom, which sometimes involves interviews with various stakeholders, however, these interviews tend to be with elites and undertaken in a relatively insulated environment.

On the other hand, the integration of freedom of religion or belief in development has very different risks associated with it. First, if development programmes are funded through bilateral or multilateral assistance, the programme must be negotiated with the host government. As several donors interviewed pointed out, if a partner country does

not identify issues of religious inclusion as a priority issue in the development agenda, it is very difficult to include it. For FoRB to be meaningful, it needs to be embedded in existing development programmes and it needs to be multiscale, involving work with communities at a grassroots level. Similar challenges are faced by non-state actors working on FoRB as human rights organisations, however with some major differences.

In many religiously heterogeneous contexts where religious intolerance is high, the status and situation of religious minorities is considered a national security matter, which means that it is conceived to be the remit of security officials to govern sectarian tensions and manage them. For example, in Egypt, when sectarian violence erupts against Christians in local communities, the security apparatus convenes what they term "reconciliation committees" which force perpetrators and victims to sit together and agree to non-escalation. These reconciliation committees have obfuscated the role of the police and the judiciary in enforcing rule of law and have led to the usurping of justice for victims (Tadros 2013). The local development practitioners who wish to engage in work that promotes social cohesion in such contexts may be seen to cross a red line since they are 'intruding' on the sphere governed by the security apparatus, unless the latter has given them the greenlight to work.

The risks of backlash for bilateral or multilateral actors, should they be seen as working in a highly sensitive area, are very substantial in some contexts. A very conspicuous risk is that authorities would regard working on religious inequalities as an act of domestic interference, not of poverty alleviation, and on account of this, rule out the aid package altogether. One donor[7] working in Pakistan said that any inclusion of religious inequality issues in their development work might put their whole programme at risk of closure if the government were hostile to it.

The second and related risk is that at a community level, a foreign-funded programme engaging with issues affecting religious minorities would incur the wrath of nationalist and religious fundamentalists who would collectively organise to thwart it. In other words, it carries the risk of a societal backlash if communities reject interventions that serve to improve the situation of religious minorities, leading to their rejection of other developmental interventions and jeopardising further work with other vulnerable groups (Mohmand, unpublished paper 2018).

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7   All reference to donors in this section have been anonymised upon their request.

A third, and again inter-related risk is that both bureaucracies and political parties back home (where donors are based) would dispute the value and relevance of aid that does not have immediate and demonstrable impact on the ground. Given the pressures on donors to show how funding for development interventions has produced impact, demonstrating changes in the status of religious minorities or changes in social cohesion is very difficult within the cycle of a project.

In addition to the positionality of donors and contextual sensitivities, there are also institutional challenges for development actors to engage with integrating or mainstreaming freedom of religion or belief in their programming. The first is associated with planners'/practitioners' own positionality and personal stances on issues to do with religious discrimination. This is distinctly different from a lack of knowledge associated with religious illiteracy, but rather about the personal insights and experiences of development professionals. It is not part of their conventional development practice to be reflexive about their own personal prejudices, stances and positioning on matters to do with religious persecution. Do practitioners consider religious discrimination as "artificial" or "imposed by the West"? Do they have issues with recognising a group being religiously marginalised in one context but in the position of a perpetrator of religious prejudice in another? As the late Cassandra Balchin (2011:11) reflected from a number of workshops with staff at Oxfam:

> What does being politically neutral mean? No matter what Oxfam's institutional approach, the NGOs it partners with and individual staff are bound to have their own political preferences. In many contexts, political preferences are closely tied up with approaches to religion (e.g. supporting a party that promotes secularism, or conservative interpretations of religion), while partner NGOs may be the public wings or undisclosed fronts of political forces.

One of the major disconnects in attitudes towards engaging with FoRB is the assumption amongst some practitioners that those who seek to redress religious inequalities are people of faith. This is not specific to those who work in development, with the same assumption observed by Petersen and Marshall (2018:15) amongst human rights activists: "Among secular human rights organisations, conversely, this misperception of FoRB as a right that primarily concerns religious communities and individuals is – in part – to blame for their lack of engagement with FoRB". However, an underlying reason may be a

question of normative perceptions among human rights advocates (and development practitioners as well). Whereas advocating for women's liberation in the Global South is considered progressive, the same image does not hold for championing the rights of those who hold religious beliefs. The same applies for environmentalists, development practitioners and human rights activists who are seeking to protect indigenous people and their ecologies but who are not originally from these communities. Undoubtedly promoting the ability of indigenous people and religious minorities to represent themselves and amplify their voices where they are marginalised is key, however, what is argued here is that there is a need to challenge the misguided assumption that one needs to be religious (a person of faith) to engage with the cause of advancing religious freedom or redressing religious inequalities. For example, in the aftermath of the Egyptian uprising in 2011, there was significant interest on the part of international and national civil society organisations with the commitment to supporting locally-led inclusive development policies, as well as on the part of international feminist organisations to ensure that any political transition was gender-sensitive. However, both the documentation of risks and policy recommendations completely ignored how the political ascendency of religiously conservative Islamist movements was affecting the position and situation of poor Coptic women (i.e. intersection of poverty, religious marginality and gender). In other words, feminist activists and development programmers that may or may not be people of faith, should have, on account of their commitment to inclusivity, incorporated the inequalities experienced by Coptic women in their analysis of the situation of women on the ground more broadly and the kinds of policies they formulated (see Tadros 2015).

Another major challenge to development programming engaging with religious inequalities seriously are the potential tensions with other inequalities. For example, some international donors would put religious minorities, indigenous groups, transpeople and the disabled all under the same basket of vulnerable people or those suffering from exclusion. However, on the ground, although all of the above may experience various levels of powerlessness, they do not necessarily see themselves as part and parcel of the same process of exclusion. For example, in Nigeria, while there have been instances where women leaders from the two main faiths (Islam and Christianity) were able to collaborate around championing girls' education as part of a common agenda around gender equality, their commitment to gender equality did not extend to lesbian women,

and in fact they organised collectively against the extension of rights to LGBTQI (Nagarajan 2018).

In some instances, marginalised members of religious minorities may not only *not* show any solidarity with LGBTQI as a marginalised group but may, indeed, hold the same homophobic attitudes towards them as are prevalent in that society more broadly. One LGBTQI activist queried how CREID can advocate for the rights of religious minorities when many of its leaders are homophobic? (personal conversation with LGBTQI activist, anonymised, September 2019). The idea of the indivisibility of rights, while theoretically coherent, is very messy on the ground for a number of reasons.

First, as mentioned above, the assumption that individuals or groups who experience a violation of rights may empathise with each other's exclusion is not a given. Second, there may be real tensions ideologically and pragmatically between one set of rights and another (for example in the case above, between women's rights and religious interpretations of religious texts on sexuality). Third, which rights gain public visibility domestically or internationally is often associated with factors beyond the actual rights in question. As mentioned earlier, the association of the US promotion of FoRB with the Republican party has meant that those endorsing or challenging FoRB domestically have had to contend with how they wish to position themselves in relation to the political agenda more broadly of this political party. The indivisibility of rights conceptually is perhaps underpinned by the assumption that all rights will be given the same prominence in any framings of inclusive development. However, which rights assume centre stage in international development policy frameworks shifts across time, with operational implications for implementing any agenda that is premised on an integrated approach to the promotion of inclusion.

2 Development Frameworks

In this section we reflect on a number of well-known development frameworks, all of which have been influential at different times in the last 40 years. We examine them for whether and how they incorporate attention to religion, belief or religious inequalities. We find that religion, belief and faith have been largely absent from explicit incorporation into development frameworks. Yet, the same literature frequently incorporates other

vulnerability-identifying factors of individuals and social groupings – such as gender, disability, ethnicity and refugee status. There are reasons for this, related largely to what has been discussed in part one. These include, among others, a rejection of the positive rhetoric of colonisation which became so heavily associated with religion, the secularisation of the social sciences, the politicisation of religion and a general post-modern milieu of the rejection of anything that looks like a dogmatic truth claim. Another reason is likely linked to the increasing momentum from multilateral agencies for the development of scientific and measurable indicators for determining the impact of development interventions. Religion, faith and belief are less straightforward to measure than many other variables and tend to be neglected on this basis.

Development frameworks (which translate to policy and programmes) frequently identify many minority ethnic groups or refugee populations as vulnerable and excluded on the basis of their ethnicity, gender or political leanings, leading to programmatic interventions targeted as gender-based empowerment, sensitisation and literacy training for migrants, etc. Yet, the religious and belief systems of these social categories have not been well integrated or considered. Interestingly, many of the identifying labels for the poor, marginalised and vulnerable are intimately related to, and often a proxy for, an individual's or group's religious identity or beliefs. An example would be Rohingya refugees who are often referred to as the 'Rohingya Muslims', which is a self-labelling they feel comfortable with using, but which is at odds with the Burmese state's term for them as "Bengali". This lack of inclusion of religion and belief in development frameworks and programming (whether intentional or through mere oversight) has very likely muted the hoped-for outcomes of many development initiatives, and may even have unintentionally led to regressive outcomes for those individuals and groups that development actors are seeking to serve, a theme we will explore in future CREID papers.

Over the last 20-30 years, development paradigms have been increasingly open to considerations of wellbeing, participation, rights and inclusion – on paper at least, moving away from a largely economic evaluation of lives and their contribution to economic progress (for instance the move from neoliberal theory to capabilities and 'development with a human face'). Frameworks of capabilities and human development, livelihoods and sustainable development, wellbeing, social inclusion, social inequalities and social rights have all helpfully moved what was previously a fixation on economic modernisation and improvements in income along to a much richer and deeper understanding of the human

condition.[8] In fact, it would be fair to suggest that we have arrived at a global consensus on what constitutes good development – as epitomised in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 'leaving no one behind' agenda. Within the international development arena, no one disagrees with the language of inclusion, wellbeing, rights, participation and equality. Yet, most development actors, operational and academic, have yet to develop meaningful ways to focus on religious communities in terms of their advantage or disadvantage within a society.

Surely, any development framework that claims to be fit for purpose in and of itself should be non-exclusionary regardless of whether it translates in any practical sense. A framing or a conceptual understanding of development should be able to accommodate all groups. Operationalisation of the framework may differ as it will stumble on politics, implementation and capacity problems, conflict and culture, but the framework must nevertheless aspire to be all-encompassing. Our purpose here is to review some well-known international development conceptual and programmatic framings, highlighting if and how they engage with the language of 'religion' and belief. We spend time reflecting on why religion, belief and religious inequalities are largely absent from key influential frameworks and whether they can indeed be integrated into these frameworks.

2.1 Human development and capability approach

The human development approach marked an important and monumental shift in development thinking – from a focus on economic growth as the necessary component of development to a people-centred approach that emphasised the quality of people's lives. This approach takes a normative stance on the meaning of development and underpins more multidimensional, participatory and inclusive forms of development. Amartya Sen's conception of "development as freedom" grew into the capability approach that focused on whether people were free and had the ability to fulfil their wants and needs. This freedom naturally encompasses the freedom to practice one's religion, along with many other axes of freedom. The lack of such freedom would significantly reduce the capability for most human beings to fulfill their needs and wants. Sen's work provides the philosophical basis for the human development (HD) approach.

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8   While this is a huge leap forward in terms of recognising the value of spheres other than the economic for people's wellbeing, the measurement of wellbeing remains economic and adheres to one of cost-effectiveness.

First launched in 1990 by Haq and Sen, the Human Development Report (HDR) is an independent annually published report, commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its goal was to place people at the centre of the development process in terms of economic debate, policy and advocacy. The HDR 1990 defined human development as "both the process of widening people's choices and the level of their achieved wellbeing" (UNDP 1990:9). In other words, the purpose of development in this vision is to enhance people's capabilities in a range of areas of their lives. These areas are specifically identified as the economic, social, political and cultural. Religion is not identified as a separate category but is subsumed, rather superficially, under the 'cultural' area. Of course, since 1990 the report has highlighted a wide range of themes, and more than 140 countries have published some 600 national Human Development Reports, so religion has certainly been covered by some of these. However, overall while the HD approach looks like an all-encompassing and inclusive approach, the religious and spiritual dimension to capabilities and quality of life gets very little attention.

One of the key contributions of the HD approach was the development of non-economic indicators to measure wider aspects of development, most notably the Human Development Index. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistical composite index of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. Notably absent are indicators associated with religion, ethnicity, culture, etc. This is unsurprising considering the human development approach and HDI were developed in the 1980s. There was a need to keep them relatively simple to calculate and compare across countries and the measurement of development at that time was contained within the 'secular' spheres of life - as discussed in the first section.

Nevertheless, in the last 20 years some attention has been paid to religion within the human development and capability approach. In 2000, the World Bank released its Voices of the Poor study (Narayan et al. 2000) which was informed by primary research using participatory poverty assessment in 23 countries, and through talking to thousands of poor people. The findings showed clearly that religion and spirituality constitute major aspects of people's conception of wellbeing. In addition, it showed that poor people tend to have more trust in religious leaders than political leaders (as do a number of social barometers). It was through this study and other similar global consultations with people, such as the UNICEF and UN Women synthesis reports mentioned above, that religion and

spirituality began to be recognised as critical issues within the realm of development. However, matters of religious inequalities exacerbated by political, economic and social factors did not feature in the findings.

The spiritual dimension of wellbeing can be as important as the material dimension. Clearly, access to material or economic resources is key for physical survival and even for facilitating spiritual wellbeing and the adherence to certain beliefs. Yet, as shown by Alkire (2002) in a case study of a development project in rural Pakistan, a group of women chose a rose-cultivation project over a higher-income return goat-rearing one on the basis of the spiritual dimension of wellbeing that would be greater from the former. Roses were used in their religious ceremonies, and other benefits included the experience of connecting with the Maker through walking in rose fields.

In 2004, the UNDP's Human Development Report focused on cultural liberty, of which faith was a key sub-topic. As in the inequality framework (discussed below), this report conflates religion and culture. The report argues that faith is one of the most common reasons for cultural exclusion. Nevertheless, further Human Development Reports, such as the ones in 2010, 2011 and 2016 mention religion and faith only in passing or not at all.

In a relatively recent 13-chapter edited volume on the human development and capability approach (Deneulin and Shahani 2009), one part of one chapter on culture and religion is devoted to a discussion of religion and the human development approach. This represents a step forward in bringing 'religion' to bear on development framing, however it is also indicative of the marginal status of considerations of religion - even within a development framework that claims to be all encompassing, multidimensional and inclusive. Reading through the edited volume, it is clear that religion and spirituality are not consistently incorporated or engaged with in any meaningful way, except for in one section. In this section, Deneulin argues that various forms of discrimination, including religious, prevent people from fulfilling their wants and needs, which limits their capabilities. Recognising that "religion is often a significant, if not the most foundational part, of people's lives which infuse what they value, who they are and what they do" (268), Deneulin argues that it should therefore be considered as a key contributor to wellbeing. Furthermore, Deneulin convincingly critiques the way that most development models take an instrumental approach to religion, using various religion indicators as variables that impact negatively (and sometimes positively) on a set of goals of development indicators. This is classically the case in economic growth models of

development, but was also obvious in the MDGs, and now in the SDGs, which are (arguably) premised on the implicit assumption that economic growth and economic opportunities are the primary development goals to be achieved. Wilber and Jameson (1980) criticised this approach to development on the basis that religion provides the moral fabric of many societies, thereby providing the norms within which the legitimacy of the development process can be assessed. They argue that viewing religion as simply a policy lever to achieve pre-defined goals that are external to the moral fabric of society will jeopardise any development process as it may alienate the people it is attempting to serve.

Deneulin also takes time to point out the intricate linkages between religion and politics. Using case studies, she shows that "religion is never immune from power and is always embedded in social structures and political economy" (Deneulin 2009:268). In reference to the human rights-based framework, which the human development approach adheres to, we see that there can be a practical conflict between rights to religious liberty on the one hand and other rights, such as gender equality, on the other. Whether one set of rights takes precedence over another will clearly be worked out in the messy politics and culture of the context. In other words, religion does not sit entirely in a separate sphere from the other classic development domains – economy, politics and society. As Deneulin points out, the topics of culture and religion "remain a challenge for development for they expose the fragility of any conception of development with universalistic aspirations, and the complexities of the strive for human flourishing" (269).

While Deneulin's chapter on religion provides an important discussion of religion within the human development and capability framework, this work has not yet influenced the mainstream in terms of development theorising or mainstream policy documents. Nonetheless, there appear to be obvious entry points for bringing considerations of religion into the HD approach. The barriers are really around the inability of the paradigm to simultaneously hold competing norms and rights that might on the one hand impinge on a person's freedom, while at the same time provide liberty and increased functioning for another person. In this regard, the project of 'mainstreaming' religious inequality into development seems significantly more difficult than it has been for gender, ethnicity or disability. Following is a discussion of a number of propositions for how the human development and capability framework can engage with religious inequalities, in terms of people being excluded on the basis of their faith intersecting with other identifiers.

2.2 Horizontal inequalities

While most of the religion and development literature is silent on the topic of religious inequalities, there is, nonetheless, one sub-section of the inequalities framework that incorporates a consideration of religion, namely the horizontal inequalities literature. Over the past 15 years, Frances Stewart has been one of the most influential thinkers in the area of inequalities and development. The novelty of her work, as epitomised in an edited volume in 2005, has been to distinguish between vertical and horizontal inequalities (HI). Previously, development theories and measurement had been replete with discussions and measurement of economic inequality as measured by the classic Lorenz curve and Gini coefficient, where analysis of inequality was only ever linked to the 'vertical' differences between individuals or households as measured by their income, expenditure or any other measure of accumulated resource (land, assets). Horizontal inequalities, on the other hand, "are inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups" (Stewart 2005:3). For instance, the differences in health or education status of different ethnic groups in any one population might reflect horizontal inequalities in access for these groups to health and education provision. Stewart argues that inequality between groups significantly increases the likelihood of conflict occurring (Stewart 2005; 2008; 2010). The primary focus of this literature is to show how horizontal inequalities spur conflict. To a much lesser extent, it also looks at the way such inequalities may be redressed.

While focused primarily on the role of HI in causing and influencing conflict, this work has been influential for development thinkers and practitioners in understanding the role of the social, ethnic, cultural, political and religious in creating and sustaining inequality and deprivation. Along with a range of other identifiers (such as gender, ethnicity and geography) religion is identified as one obvious axis that can lead to cleavages between groups and resources in any society, yet it is not afforded the attention that is given to ethnicity and other categories. The HI framework does draw attention to religion as a cause of inequality as well as showing that culturally ascribed religious status can be an outcome of inequality, yet the inclusion of religion and religious inequality remains largely marginal within this framework. One reason for this is that Stewart's work gives prominence to the role of culture in defining group status - 'culturally-defined groups'. Of course, different cultures ascribe value and norms to different characteristics of individuals and groups, yet, as already discussed, more recent work makes the case that religion (along with its associated characteristics such as belief, spirituality) cannot be easily subsumed into a culturally defined category.

In a similar way, most policy documents consider religious inequality as a sub-section of cultural inequality (WSSR 2016). Despite some similarities, the conflation of religion and culture is problematic as the former is based on transcendental fundaments that cannot be shifted, while culture is a social construct that is more flexible to change (Deneulin and Bano 2009). Even when disregarding the debate as to whether religion should be a sub-section of culture, cultural inequality is usually elaborated on with examples other than religion, as was demonstrated in the *2016 World Social Science Report* on inequalities. This report addressed seven main categories of inequalities, one of which is cultural inequality. Despite the inclusion of religious inequality under this cultural theme, the issue is not addressed in depth.

A noteworthy report in relation to religion and inequality comes from the global thematic consultation on the post-2015 development agenda organised by UNICEF and UN Women. This report is not a policy document but a synthesis report of a global public consultation. The report features religion to a much greater extent than other policy documents reviewed, going as far as to recommend the collection of data on religious and intersectional discrimination. This might be expected as religion is an important concern for the vast majority of people across the world. It is intriguing to see that a report based on a global public consultation consistently includes considerations of religious inequalities, whereas reports written by development organisations themselves and academics have tended to downplay or exclude them. This indicates a disconnect between the development apparatus and general public perceptions of the significance of religious inequalities. Despite this highlighting of religious inequalities in the report, consideration of religion was still not included in its key messages.

In addition, many reports that engage with intersecting inequalities typically frame religious inequality as a possible compounding factor, but no examples of how religious inequality interacts with (and reinforces) other inequalities is given. This is the case in the 2016 World Social Science Report. Another example is a 2013 report by the UN Economic Commission on Europe (UNECE) that focused specifically on creating an index to measure intersecting inequalities. While this report mentions religion as a possible compounding factor, it is not included in the proposed index. This gives the impression that religion is considered as an afterthought in the intersectionality framework. Furthermore, there are a few influential global reports that do not contain any mention of religion, such as the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)'s *Report on the World Social*

Situation 2013: Inequality Matters. The report proposed that in order to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs and shape a global vision for the development agenda after 2015, stakeholders, along with addressing poverty, needed to tackle inequalities. Vertical inequality related to income, education, health indicators and wealth are discussed in detail, as are some horizontal inequalities related to social groupings such as age, disability, ethnicity and migration status. Yet, there is no mention of religious inequalities.

In summary, while most development literature that addresses horizontal inequalities mentions religion as a possible ground for discrimination, very little elaboration is provided. This is in stark contrast with other factors such as gender, race and ethnicity, which are considered in depth.

2.3 Convertibility of capital theories of development

Stewart sees HI presenting themselves in four areas: political participation, economic aspects, social aspects and cultural status. There are obvious links between these areas and typically an inequality in one leads to the compounding of inequality in another, usually leading to inequality in access to an economic outcome. In fact, "one type of capital requires others to be productive" (Stewart 2005:13). The four areas presented by Stewart build on the different 'capitals' or 'assets' so widely used in the social capital literature and the sustainable livelihoods framework – economic, social, human, political and natural. A number of sociologists have sought to explain how different forms of capital and resources produce and reproduce inequality and opportunity. Bourdieu, in his classic work on *The Forms of Capital* (1986) expands the concept of capital to include assets formed by access to culturally valuable symbols, ways of life and social networks. Money carries powerful symbolic properties that confer meaning, dignity and relevance to people's lives (Carruthers and Espeland 1998). By thinking of worth only as economic value we overlook (1) other important measures of wealth and (2) "other economically important types of exchange". For instance, as shown by Adato et al (2016) from their work in South Africa, adolescents indicate that they obtain self-worth and dignity through a range of 'status' goods, such as clean clothes, accepted hairstyles, the 'right' shoes, etc.

Bourdieu goes on to make a further point: that all capitals (social, assets, cultural, symbolic) are, under certain conditions, convertible to economic capital or monetary value. For instance, in the case of status goods for youth, these can be converted into valuable status capital, which facilitates them staying on in school, inclusion in social

networks and ultimately opportunities that convert to economic capital. In the same way symbolic capital can convert to economic gain, social capital is also convertible. Bourdieu sees social capital as the capital "one gains from personal connections" such as membership in groups, including families, clubs, and solidarity groups. These connections can lead to jobs, loans, valuable connections and investment opportunities. In other words, they can alleviate material constraints in an indirect way. These connections are sustained through an exchange of material goods (e.g. gifts) and symbolic goods (e.g. mutual recognition). In fact, "the profits which accrue from membership in a group [network] are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible" (Bourdieu 1986:286). An important contribution of Bourdieu is the realisation that people are motivated by social and psychosocial incentives and constraints as much as by material incentives and constraints. In other words, while the other capitals might eventually convert to material, economic benefits, not all incentives are primarily economically motivated.

How does any of this relate to religious or spiritual capital, concepts that have been completely overlooked and under-theorised by livelihoods and social capital literature? It is entirely plausible, even obvious, that some forms of religious capital might equate with what Bourdieu terms "symbolic" or even "cultural" capital. For instance, in the sense that adherence to specific religious affiliations or denominations form symbolic capital, such as attendance at a politically established institution (such as the Church of England), or wearing specific religious attire and dress, might convert into certain social or political privileges and economic resources. Yet religious capital in the form of internally held beliefs and faith systems are unlikely to have standard economic convertibility simply because the incentives for holding these "capitals" are not based upon economic fundamentals but rather on spiritual ones. The fulfilment of wellbeing and needs does not proceed through the standard pathways of economic liberalism and material and consumptive satiation. Rather, the fulfilment is based on 'transcendental fundaments' – that is, spirituality that transcends the material realm and is not able to be tweaked by the classic economic policy levers. This is perhaps the most compelling reason as to why development theories and policies writ large do not make any committed attempts to integrate religious beliefs and faith.

It would be difficult for this latter type of spiritual capital to be integrated into development theories and frameworks as a significant number of them of them implicitly or explicitly rest on the notion of *homo economicus* (the economic man). A 2015 World Development Report on 'Mind, Society and Behaviour' signalled an effort by the World

Bank to move away from rational behavioural approaches to development and decision making, yet the objective of development remained firmly focused on the economic realm. By recognising that behaviours cannot always be modified and manipulated by appealing to economic, social or political rationality, it is more understandable why people and groups are willing to sacrifice needs, rights, wellbeing, and even life, in pursuit of other belief-motivated goals. Or, conversely, in the name of ideology, people can propagate social harmony or hate towards the religious other!

2.4 Social inclusion

The World Bank defines social inclusion as "the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society" (World Bank 2013). Considering religion is often a defining factor in making up one's identity, it would be expected that religion features in the social inclusion framework. Social exclusion based on religion is extremely common, with proven resultant negative effects of alienation and resentment (Myanmar being a case in point). It would therefore be beneficial to include this factor in social inclusion analyses. However, while religion is often mentioned as a common ground for exclusion, this is rarely elaborated on. This is similar to what can be observed in the inequality framework.

One report that does consider religion at some length is the World Bank's (2013) *Inclusion Matters* report. It recognises religious identity as one of the most common grounds for exclusion along with gender, race, caste, ethnicity and disability status. In addition, it shows religious inequality as one of multiple intersecting inequalities. While the report addresses the fact that religion has often been a strong exclusionary force in many societies, it also argues that religious leaders can therefore be engaged as possible agents of inclusion. The report pays considerable attention to the exclusion of migrants. Considering the fact that large groups of migrants do not share the same religion as their host country or community, religion often plays a part in their social exclusion. This group could therefore be an important case study for social exclusion on religious grounds, as well as its intersection with migrant identity. Finally, the report includes religious freedom in its proposed measures of wellbeing. Amy Chua (2004) provides another interesting insight into the role of minorities – ethnic and religious – in creating tensions because they are the dominant power holders in a country. She makes the case that this phenomenon is particularly prevalent in developing countries (South East Asia especially).

UNDESA's 2018 *World Social Situation* report aims to promote inclusion through social protection. The report devotes significant space to inclusion and protection based on gender, youth, old age, disability, indigenous people, and migrants. However, religion is mentioned only in passing as a ground for exclusion without being discussed further. In addition, the most recent International Labour Organization (ILO) *World Social Protection Report* (2017-2019), which focuses on labour market discrimination, includes no mention of religion.

2.5 Sustainable development and the Leaving No One Behind agenda

In the early 1990s 'sustainable development' emerged as a popular catchphrase for thinking about a new recipe for development. While the early discussions of sustainable development faltered on competing and often vague definitions, it evolved and has been embraced by a range of non-governmental and governmental organisations as a new paradigm of development. The term sustainable development brings together two very distinct concepts. The first being 'development' as frequently understood and measured by growth in national income, the economy, or other socially desirable phenomenon related to material wellbeing. The second, 'sustainable', is frequently related to 'ecological sustainability' or being environmentally sound (Tolba 1984). In other words, sustainable development is a process by which economic and social change is also ecologically sustainable. Of course, the notion of sustainable development, particularly when development is assumed to be synonymous with economic growth, has been critiqued as internally inconsistent, but this is not our purpose here (see Lele 1991).

Most recently, the sustainable development paradigm has attracted unprecedented attention as it provides the impetus for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The global political shift from the MDGs (where the focus was on lower income countries only and targets to grow them out of poverty and low economic growth through investments in education and health), to the SDGs (where the focus is a commitment by all countries to simultaneously tackle development and sustainability), marked a significant recognition of the interconnectedness of 'the North' and 'the South' as well as the ecological with the economic.

Furthermore, a move from the MDGs to the SDGs also facilitated an innovation with the "inclusion of the concept of Leaving No One Behind, implying a clear intent to move away from the former approach of picking off the low-hanging fruit" (Stuart and

Woodroffe 2016:70). The Leave No One Behind policy agenda aligns to the questions of social inclusion/exclusion discussed above. The SDG document says:

> *As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavor to reach the furthest behind first (United Nations 2015).*

Given the explicit focus on Leave No One Behind in Agenda 2030 (where the SDGs are laid out), one would imagine that religion and beliefs would get significant airtime, especially as the SDGs form the basis of most global development policies and programmes. In fact, leaving no-one behind implies two things: first, that non-income-based inequalities are tackled (for instance for those facing discriminations through access, social or cultural constraints); and second, that governments and development partners need to ensure that the most marginalised and excluded groups make progress more quickly than other groups. This would ensure that the inequality gap is reduced - not just inequality in income, but across a range of wellbeing indicators. Agenda 2030 does pay attention to gender, age, disability, ethnicity, and a whole range of other identity indicators that are correlated with exclusion and marginalisation, yet religion and belief as an identity marker are conspicuously not dealt with. Religion is mentioned only in passing in the 'leave no one behind' clause, as well as in SDG 10.2 on reducing inequalities, which recognises religion as a possible ground for discrimination. It is therefore unsurprising that most flagship development programmes that ground their vision in Agenda 2030 do not take religion into account, beyond vowing not to discriminate on religious grounds and engaging religious leaders and organisations to further the SDGs. While the latter is already an improvement, Agenda 2030 does not suggest a path or a development initiative for development organisations to address religion as a basis of exclusion and discrimination.

Considering the importance of religion, belief and spirituality to people's wellbeing across the world, it appears that the limited attention to these issues in the SDGs is an oversight. Yet, there must be reasons for this, similarly to those discussed above, that relate to the political and economic ethos which implicitly frame and promote global development agendas and policy.

As pointed out by Lele years ago, "the proponents of sustainable development are faced with a dilemma that affects any program of political action and social change: the dilemma between the urge to take strong stands on fundamental concerns and the need to gain wide political acceptance and support" (Lele 1991:618). While the Leave No One Behind agenda recognises that people face different forms of inequality other than those related to income which influence their experiences of poverty, the ideology framing the SDGs is still fundamentally a neoliberal one, with economic growth and income indicators as the gold standard measure. It would be naïve for us to assume that governments and global actors, by virtue of signing up to the SDGs, now universally embrace the embedding of religion and religious equality within their development policies. There are political, territorial and ideological reasons why considerations of religious equality are not given a good airing.

There are also practical reasons related to the practical difficulties of measuring religion and belief and thus creating efficient indicators for these. Gough and McGregor (2007) argue that religion is not traditionally included in wellbeing indicators as it cannot be expressed in economic terms. In addition, religion is a relatively ill-defined social category and is therefore difficult to assess. Deneulin and Rakodi (2011) argue that religion should largely be analysed through discourse as it changes and is multidimensional. However, discourse analysis is not traditionally used to inform mainstream development policy. For this reason, it would be beneficial to create wellbeing indicators that also portray religious dimensions, like religious discrimination. While important, this is complicated by the overall lack of data on religion (Rakodi 2012). What is needed in order to measure religiously related discrimination and inequalities is first and foremost disaggregated data on religious affiliation. This may be complicated in terms of the sensitivities related to gathering such information, but it is not conceptually complicated.

In 2009, Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi published a report on the request of the French government on the measurement of economic performance and social progress. The aim of this report was to move away from measuring progress and wellbeing only in terms of GDP. In this report, several suggestions were made for religious indicators and sub-indicators, such as an indicator for access to justice, with sub-indicators for ethnicity, religion, race, gender, etc. Creating such sub-indicators could help mainstream a religion-sensitive approach to wellbeing. However, it seems that the report's recommendations have not yet been implemented as most wellbeing indices do not account for religion. A rare example of an existing index with a sub-indicator for religious freedom is the Social

Progress Index (SPI). This was developed under technical guidance from Harvard Business School and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In 2013, the global SPI was launched for 50 countries in 2013 to measure a comprehensive array of components of social and environmental performance and aggregate them into an overall framework. The index contains three elements: basic human needs, wellbeing, and opportunity. A key feature of the index is that it excludes economic variables.

3   Synergising FoRB and Development

One of the key messages emerging from this critical enquiry is that any approach premised on "add religious freedom to the religion and development agenda and stir" will be deeply flawed and potentially unintentionally worsen religious inequalities on the ground. In this final section we highlight some of the critical questions central to mainstreaming FoRB in international development and development paradigms. These questions are clustered around a number of themes: (1) Why should we consider mainstreaming religious inequalities in development? (2) How fit for purpose are our existing development framings? and (3) What opportunities exist for integrating FoRB in development?

3.1 Why should we consider mainstreaming religious inequalities in development?

This paper has delineated the historical, political, conceptual and methodological challenges and conundrums of recognising, let alone integrating FoRB in international development. Indeed, the very legitimacy of the proposition that FoRB should feature as one of the issues that international development should be engaging with is deeply contested. In a seminar on whether the integration of religious marginality in development is a pathway of recognising that creed and need converge, (Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 14th October 2019[9]), one of the recurring questions was whether, as outsiders, we have any right to hold to account other countries for their FoRB record. The problematique of external, Western actors finger-pointing in the arena of human rights, be it women's equality, FoRB or other rights, has consistently been raised, in particular on account of the inconsistency and indeed

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9   See: www.ids.ac.uk/events/religious-inequalities-in-development-where-need-meets-creed/

hypocrisy with which human rights have been championed. However, a counter argument is that it would be inconsistent, even hypocritical, to pronounce a commitment to leaving no one behind while purposely leaving behind those who suffer from the intersection of religious marginality and poverty.

The efforts at eliciting a paradigmatic shift in international development towards removing its secular blinkers are important for understanding the multidimensionality of the power dynamics at work, beyond the visible and the material. Such efforts are also important in encouraging a more comprehensive and realistic mapping of actors on the ground, which include both secular as well as religious expressions of agency, and those where the demarcations are more blurred. However, the integration of a religious lens into development is a necessary but insufficient approach to addressing FoRB. On account of the reasons for this that have been highlighted in this paper, there cannot be an "add religion and stir" approach to addressing religious inequality. It needs to be recognised in its own right as an issue that merits its own concerted focus. In other words, a deepening of a religion-sensitive lens onto development, even if consistently applied across the board, will not by default contribute to redressing inequalities that intersect across religion and other identifiers. Redressing religious inequalities needs to be recognised in its own right as part of the broader agenda of tackling the kinds of inequalities that lead to exclusion and marginalisation.

As with the global advocacy for gender equality in international development, we cannot overlook sensitivities around a deeply politicised theme such as FoRB. However, as with gender equality, the critical questions are who is doing the mainstreaming, what legitimacies do they wield in relation to whom, and how is mainstreaming promoted? Admittedly, as a social category of analysis, gender and religion are not the same thing, and neither are gender and religious equalities/inequalities necessarily driven by the same dynamics. However, gender mainstreaming in development may be relevant for mainstreaming religious inequalities because both are deeply politicised and contentious. Moreover, development actors, policy and practice also suffered from being inadvertently and deliberately gender blind, with gender power hierarchies representing a clear blind spot. Given the resistance to addressing religious equalities in international development, the historical and ongoing struggle to mainstream gender in development presents insights into eliciting positive change. The intention here is not to duplicate strategies and tactics, but rather to understand processes of negotiation, navigation, and even normalisation. A forthcoming paper on the lessons learned from fifty years of gender

mainstreaming will feature in 2020. However, one starting point highlighted in the upcoming paper is that collection of evidence is needed on many levels. These include how intersecting inequalities affect the lives of religious minorities, the extent to which they are included/excluded from development access and outreach, and also the extent to which development programmes have implicitly affected the positioning of religious minorities on the ground, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

3.2 How fit for purpose are our existing development framings?

The consideration of a range of influential development frameworks above show very clearly the extent to which these development paradigms have not, and in many cases cannot, accommodate themes of FoRB. Despite the fact that recent development frameworks have made huge efforts to include consideration of historically excluded and vulnerable groups (such as those with disabilities, ethnic minorities, children, refugees, women and older people), overall, religion and faith have been absent from explicit incorporation into development frameworks. Any mention of religious-inspired forms of exclusion are largely superficial. This has resulted in the policy and programmatic outworking of theoretical paradigms which has meant that many people have been unintentionally, and sometimes intentionally, excluded from participation in, and benefits from, development processes. For these people and groups, the frameworks are not fit for purpose.

Theoretically, under the most recent umbrella of inclusive development (leaving no one behind and the SDGs), all kinds of excluded causes and peoples can be addressed alongside each other. Sadly, while religion as a categorical and measurable factor has become an increasingly accepted variable and policy lever of development, considerations of faith, belief, spirituality and religious inequalities remain a taboo for some international development actors. Foreign policy and development actors writ large are not explicitly interested in the religious and spiritual wellbeing of individuals and groups. They remain fundamentally interested in economic progress and development. Yet, as Ver Beek (2000:41) points out, "people's spirituality is integrally interconnected with the decisions they make regarding their development".

We have argued that, despite some progress towards adopting a more holistic approach, a substantial challenge facing well-established development frameworks is their implicit acceptance of the economic as the only measure for development success. For example,

the livelihood capitals and assets people own can be used for, and converted to, the accumulation of economic capital. We have made the claim that this type of model is only minimally useful for considerations of religion. The spiritual (and faith) realm is not convertible to the economic - it is private, and not understandable to all those trying to engage with it. By its very nature then, this makes it a very different 'capital' and for this reason it cannot easily be incorporated into current framings. The understanding of religion or faith as capital, or spiritual capital, is critical for understanding religious minorities' coping strategies when faced with religious-inspired forms of exclusion and targeting. For example, when faced with discrimination or even persecution, how does their religious capital affect their choice of responses? Does it inspire resistance, subversion, accommodation or "cacoonisation", a response of finding solace in one's own community's heritage while assuming a minimal role for the broader public good? What influences those interfaces between human agency and reacting or coping with religious-inspired exclusion?

The less obvious challenges to the incorporation of religion and religious inequalities in development framings lies in the implicit normative assumptions that have underpinned the vast majority of development paradigms over the past 50-60 years. This assumption, that is rarely stated, is about where power is located within a society or economy. Power lies with states and governments and this can be influenced by external actors and global commitments to a significant degree. It is further implicit that, overall, states represent people's interests and their interest is primarily for economic prosperity for all – implying accessibility for all regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, etc. Once we recognise that power is very often held by other groups and entities (often overlapping with the interests of those who hold state-funded positions), frequently with specific and passionately-held religious beliefs, it becomes clear that the notion that the state will be able to manage a development process in ways that venerate universal rights, equal opportunities and inclusion for all is flawed. Development frameworks need to evolve to recognise and include pathways for change that are directed and managed through power situated in different places and groups within society, and also within institutionalised religion. How this pans out in terms of the classic 'universalising' principles' rhetoric of the current 'leaving no one behind' agenda needs to be carefully considered and theorised within development frameworks that can accommodate more than simply the economic or that which can be reduced to the quantifiable.

As Deneulin points out, the topics of culture and religion "remain a challenge for development for they expose the fragility of any conception of development with universalistic aspirations, and the complexities of the strive for human flourishing" (2009:269). Most development models include considerations of religion in an instrumentalist way by using various 'religion indicators' as variables that impact negatively (and sometimes positively) on a set of goals of development indicators. Viewing religion simply as a policy lever to achieve pre-defined goals that are external to the moral fabric of society will jeopardise any development process as it may alienate the people it is attempting to serve.

Our analysis here suggests that development framings and paradigms need to embrace ethics - an ethics of development. The language of universal and equal rights is not acceptable to many societies and therefore development studies does not have a credible normative position in these places. Are there some basic ethical principles that can inform a more credible framing of development? How would we arrive at these? Perhaps 'do not harm' is the one that has the most chance of any form of universal buy-in.

3.3 What opportunities exist for integrating FoRB in development?

International development has been increasingly adopting a multi- and inter- disciplinary approach in its framing. One of the merits is the recognition that reflexivity is key to good practice (Eyben 2014). Development academics, programmers and policymakers relate to religion in a deeply subjective manner (like others) and it is expedient that this would extend to how they relate to freedom of religion or belief as well. How do we get development actors to reflect on their own biases, assumptions and discomforts with engaging with religious inequalities as they would with other forms of inequalities? Drawing on feminist conceptions and standpoints may be a good starting place, encouraging actors to articulate in explicit terms where they position themselves in relation to the debates on integrating freedom of religion or belief in development. The concept of positionality is especially important for unpacking where development actors are perceived to have legitimacy to champion an agenda that incorporates religious inequalities and where they have a serious legitimacy deficit to do so, even when they have the best of intentions of being inclusive. With many parts of international development being more open to thinking reflexively about their positioning, not just their technical interventions, this may allow for a nuanced approach to navigating the sensitivities of engaging with religious inequalities.

The second inroad to integrating FoRB in development is in its framing. This paper has purposely framed FoRB in terms of religious (in)equalities. Like any frame of reference, religious inequalities as a term has its strengths and weaknesses. An obvious weakness is that the term FoRB is more all-encompassing since it includes those of no belief or those whose beliefs are at variance with the mainstream even if they belong to the same religion. Another weakness with the term religious equality is that some may equate it with equivalent rights, one set for one group and another set for another.

In some countries, the term freedoms may seem less contentious, for example, a government may grant certain 'measured' freedoms such as freedom to worship under certain conditions or freedom to engage in religious education, but with constraints. Conversely, equality means that there are no special privileges for minorities, while majorities hold privileged positions. Equality is non-discriminatory between people. These weaknesses are perhaps outweighed by the opportunities for integrating FoRB through the concept of religious equalities. One key recommendation is that mainstreaming equality along the lines of religion, gender, class, race, geography, etc. in international development may seem more in line with addressing intersecting inequalities than introducing FoRB-sensitive development. The politicisation of FoRB in terms of its association with being a tool of foreign policy means that it can be read as inflammatory.

Even if "non-belief" is not explicit in religious equality, it is important to note that development, having been secular in its framings, had no qualms with the absence of belief. The evidence shows very clearly that atheists are vulnerable to religious otherisation and are indeed targeted in many contexts on account of their self-proclaimed non-faith (or even rumours surrounding individuals being associated with atheism even when they did not publicise such views). However, this discrimination was largely initiated by state and society: international development programming, being by and large a secular construct, did not discriminate against those who suffered on account of their non-belief. Nonetheless, this is a propositional statement on the nature of international development programming and frameworks and cannot be confirmed or challenged without comprehensive review of evidence on the ground.

The language of equality is one that is decipherable in international development. International development has recognised the importance of equality along racial, gender, income and geographic lines among many. Moreover, as development shifts more towards recognising the intersectionality of identity, this paves the way for

exploring how religious marginality intersects with poverty, gender, geography, political orientation and other factors in influencing how individuals and people experience exclusion.

Perhaps another important opportunity in the use of the term religious equality is it disentangles the cause from the political baggage with which it has been associated, namely its political appropriation to advance foreign policy interests that trump redress of religious discrimination, or the inconsistency and incoherence with which some of its advocates have selectively endorsed it. What is proposed here is not that religious equality as a concept or goal will be the magic bullet that will ensure the inclusion of all. At the very least, it endeavours to *normalise* thinking about religious marginality, where relevant, in the scoping, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any initiatives that endeavour to make development more inclusive. More importantly, it is a stepping stone towards addressing the two key conundrums that this paper has identified as affecting the potential for FoRB-sensitive international development policy, practice and frameworks. First, redressing religious inequalities where they intersect with other inequalities is a framing of the problematique that is one step removed from the deeply politicised framing of FoRB emanating from its genealogy and its sometimes contentious appropriations in foreign policy. Second, the language of equality is not alien to international development frameworks that speak of inclusion, leaving no one behind, addressing the needs of people on the margins and so forth. In the upcoming series of CREID papers, we will explore further the conceptual, ideological and operational dimensions of what international development that is FoRB-sensitive or addressing religious inequalities may look like.

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