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Faith in development: What difference does faith make for Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh?

A research thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Religious organisations are the oldest social service networks known to humankind. However, the underlying topic of religion and development has been mostly ignored in development literature until more recently. Rapprochement between proponents of secular development and supporters of religious-based social transformation is called for. Some writers claim faith-based organisations (FBOs), of which Christian NGOs (CNGOs) are significant actors, add value, make distinctive contributions and offer comparative advantages over secular NGOs. Seven motivational, organisational and institutional advantages claimed are that FBOs: reach and are valued by the poorest, have a long-term presence and low costs, offer an alternative to secular development theory, and motivate voluntarism and civil-society advocacy. Three spiritual advantages claimed are that FBOs: offer spiritual / religious teaching; hope, meaning and purpose; and transcendent power (prayer). In contrast, two possible disadvantages claimed are that: religion is part of the problem for development and churches are difficult to work with. Other writers claim a lack of evidence regarding these claims.

My research investigated six CNGOs in Bangladesh, with the research question being: 'How do Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country, perceive that their faith identity influences their operating characteristics, making them distinctive from secular NGOs?' This sought to determine if the operating characteristics that the literature claims attribute to FBOs, were applicable to the CNGOs. The research method was primarily deductive, using the CNGO research data to test existing literature definitions, typology and claims. With much FBO literature seemingly sourced from broadly Christian cultural contexts, this research expands on this by researching CNGOs in a Muslim majority country, home to a very small Christian minority. CNGO representatives were interviewed using a structured questionnaire including qualitative and quantitative questions.

The research findings conclude that the Bangladesh CNGOs' faith identity critical to their vision and mission, results in some perceived differences compared with secular NGOs. These are found in the CNGOs' operating characteristics including distinctive contributions (to various degrees) in the seven motivational, organisational and institutional ways and three spiritual ways, along with one of the two possible disadvantages, claimed in literature. However, claiming advantages (or disadvantages) for FBOs over secular NGOs, without better evidence, is subjective and prone to bias, reflecting the claimant's positionality. The question of comparative advantage between NGOs of various types (faith-based or secular), requires a universal evaluation methodology able to assess and score any NGO operating in any project context. Until this exists, I suggest the literature claims of FBOs having comparative advantages (or disadvantages) should be reframed as distinctive operating characteristics.

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Glossary of Terms

Awami League	Bangladesh political party.
Bangla	Bangladesh national language.
Bangladesh	The land (*desh*) of the Bangla language speakers. Official title 'People's Republic of Bangladesh'.
Bangladeshi	A person from Bangladesh. Ethnicity may be Bengali or Tribal. Bangladeshi is both singular and plural.
Chittagong Hill Tribes	Various ethnic groups located in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in south-east Bangladesh, bordering with Myanmar. The majority are Buddhists with some Hindus and Christians.
Jamaat-e-Islami	A socially conservative Islamic political organisation founded by Abul Ala Maududi, an Islamist socio-political philosopher and theologian, in British occupied India in 1941. The party exists in a number of countries, maintaining global links. The Bangladesh party is the biggest Islamist political party in the country, but after much violence in 2013, it was deregistered by the Supreme Court.
Microcredit	Credit-based small loans.
Patronage	The giving of advantage from a patron (individual or organisation) to a client (family, friends, ethnicity, political party or religion), while excluding others. The advantage could be encouragement, privilege, money, a job or some other opportunity resulting in advantage for the receiver. Political patronage typically involves the use of public resources to reward a person for their political support. In a patron-client relationship, the client is dependent on the patron who controls the resources.
Shia Islam	A smaller branch of Islam believing that the Islamic prophet Muhammad selected Ali ibn Abi Talib to be his successor. Refer to Sunni Islam.
Sunni Islam	Islam's majority group believing that the Islamic prophet Muhammad did not select his successor. They believe Abu Bakr was the correct successor. Sunni and Shia disagree with each other's views of who was Muhammad's legitimate successor. This later developed into theological and political differences.
Urdu	Pakistan's official language, imposed on Bangladesh during the time when Bangladesh was East Pakistan. It is also spoken by the Bihari people in Bangladesh, along with five states in India.

Glossary of Abbreviations

BNGOAB	Bangladesh Non-Government Organisation Affairs Bureau
CNGO	Christian NGO (usually refers to the six Bangladesh CNGOs involved in this research, although sometimes refers to CNGOs in general)
DC	District Commissioner (Government local representative)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation (often operating in some sort of development way)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index (UNDP)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MDG	Millennium Development Goal (UN internationally agreed development goals from 2000 to 2015)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODA	Official development assistance (provided by one or more countries)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
RAD	Religion and Development
RMG	Ready Made Garment (clothing production factories)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal (UN internationally agreed development goals from 2016)
SHG	Self-Help Group
SMC	School Management Committee
Tk	Taka (Bangladesh currency)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDF	Village Development Forum (graduated self-help groups arranged into secondary level People's Institutions to enable a long-term mentoring and monitoring presence)

Chapter 1: Introduction

To begin, I present some brief background and rationale, leading to the research question, followed by an introduction to my analytical and conceptual framework, positionality, and the significance of the research and research methods. Each of these is explained in more detail in the later thesis chapters. However an overview at the outset is helpful, to indicate the thesis argument, logic and direction. This is followed by a summary of the thesis structure and chapters.

1.1 Background, rationale and research question

'*It is time that religion, spirituality and faith were taken seriously as factors shaping development and around which development can be shaped*' (Lunn, 2009, p948)

Christian NGOs (CNGOs) have been involved in international development for decades. However, until the 1980s mainstream development literature mostly ignored the underlying topic of religion and development, including faith-based organisations (FBOs), of which CNGOs belong. Due to a religious resurgence (political Islam, global conflicts and majority-world religious vitality) and increased FBO visibility, a renewed religious awareness has challenged the prevailing secular development theory. A growing body of development literature is emerging, investigating the history, role and characteristics of development FBOs.

Some writers claim FBOs add value and offer distinctive and comparative advantages compared with secular NGOs. Seven motivational, organisational and institutional advantages claimed are that they: (i) reach the poorest, (ii) are valued by the poorest, (iii) have a long-term sustainable presence, (iv) provide efficient development services, (v) offer an alternative to secular development theory, (vi) motivate voluntary service, and (vii) encourage civil-society advocacy. Three spiritual advantages claimed are that they can offer: (i) spiritual / religious teaching, (ii) spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose, and (iii) spiritual / religious transcendent power (James, 2011, p111; Lunn, 2009, p944; Tomalin, 2012, p691). There are also claims of two disadvantages with the questions: (i) Is religion part of the problem for development?, and in the CNGO context, (ii) Are churches difficult to work with for development (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111)? Others call for better research-based evidence regarding the claims (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p38-39, 46; Lunn, 2009, 944; Tomalin, 2012, p689-691, 697-700).

My research topic and question emerged from thirteen years of living and working in the Bangladesh CNGO development space. The research question is: 'How do Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country, perceive that their faith identity influences their operating characteristics, making them distinctive from secular NGOs?' The CNGO perceptions are tested against the literature claims of differences or distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs (of which CNGOs are major actors), compared with

secular NGOs. My research did not test the validity of the comparative advantage claims for FBOs, but rather determined if the operating characteristics that these claims attribute to FBOs, have relevance and application to the researched CNGOs. No comparative research involving other NGOs (religious or secular) was conducted. Including the words 'a Muslim majority country', signals a key feature of the development and religious context. Most FBO literature appears to be sourced from CNGOs working in broadly Christian cultural contexts, such as parts of Africa. This research seeks to widen understanding, by researching CNGOs working in the very different context of a South Asian, Muslim majority country, home to a very small struggling Christian community. The research title prefaced by the word-play 'Faith in Development', helps describe my research and positionality.

1.2 Analytical and conceptual framework

'*It is often asserted that FBOs are distinctive (ie: have characteristics that make them stand out from others) and even, more ambitiously, that they have comparative advantages (ie: that the distinct characteristics of FBOs place them in a better position than secular NGOs to engage in 'successful' development)*' (Tomalin, 2012, p692)

My research is framed within the broad field of enquiry and emerging analytical framework of 'Religion and Development' (RAD). The RAD framework aligns very well with my positionality, approaching the research through both a religious lens and a development lens. RAD helps answer the question: 'What difference does religion make to development?' My research resides within one part of the RAD framework, focusing on FBOs' distinctive contributions to development.

Investigating how CNGOs' faith identity works out through their operating characteristics involved finding and selecting relevant conceptual frameworks from literature. The CNGOs' operating characteristics are explored using pre-existing literature claims of distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs.

1.3 Positionality of the author

'*The question here is not whether researchers are subjective entities (everyone is), but whether we recognise ourselves as subjective, and whether we can manage our personal biases*' (O'Leary, 2014, p50)

Researchers need to be very aware of their positionality, subjectivity and bias. Credible research requires reflexive awareness of our worldviews and examining how these may bias our research conclusions (O'Leary, 2014, p50). In terms of religious identity, I am a Christian, a follower of Jesus. In terms of development identity, I lived and worked in Bangladesh in community development from 2002 to 2015. This was motivated by the Biblical theme of God's bias for the poor. Stemming from this synergy, I approach the research through both a religious lens and a development lens (McLaren, 2007, Chap 1; Myers, 1999, Chap 1). Working with CNGOs in

Bangladesh, gave me knowledge, skills and lived experience, and a number of Bangladeshi and expatriate development friends, contributed to my positionality and any bias.

1.4 Significance of the research

'*Most governments still view development as a secular enterprise. They want to engage with the institutional forms of faith (the religious institutions), but remain suspicious about the spiritual dimensions of faith (belief in a God). Not surprisingly, secular donors would still like a sanitised separation between the institutional and spiritual elements*' (James, 2011, p114)

Investigating the difference (if any) faith makes for CNGOs' development work, was a conversation during my development time in Bangladesh. Given my personal interest, commitment and positionality, this became an obvious area of research. I see the value of creating a tool enabling FBOs to explore how their faith identity might work out through some distinctive operating characteristics.

This research contributes to the emerging FBO development literature, the majority seeming to be sourced from CNGOs working in broadly Christian cultural contexts, such as parts of Africa. This study widens our understanding, by researching CNGOs working in the very different context of a South Asian, Muslim majority country, home to a very small Christian community.

Thirdly, underlying this research is the suspicion of motives and outcomes, between proponents of secular development and supporters of religious-based social transformation. CNGO development practitioners walk a difficult line between secular development people and Christian mission people. It is hoped this research will contribute to rapprochement between these two groups, generally unknown to each other (Belshaw, 2001, p220-240).

1.5 Research methods

'*For me, the importance of method is not whose approach one chooses but the 'quality' of the research findings produced by any approach*' (Bazeley, 2013, p11; Corbin, 2009, p52)

The research approach is exploratory, seeking to investigate and describe the Bangladeshi CNGOs' operating characteristics in the absence of pre-existing data. The research method to achieve this is primarily deductive reasoning, using the CNGO research data to investigate and test pre-existing literature claims of distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs. This method takes advantage of and adds to pre-existing analytical and conceptual frameworks. The research explores Bangladeshi CNGO perceptions and experience in relation to the literature statements about FBOs. No comparative research involving other NGOs (religious or secular) was conducted.

I selected six Bangladeshi CNGOs for the interview-based research. The CNGOs were mostly staffed, managed, directed and governed by Bangladeshi nationals. They were a diverse selection of small and medium sized CNGOs with mixed capabilities and capacities. My research questionnaires and interviews were conducted using Skype calls from New Zealand.

1.6 Thesis outline

This research thesis is comprised of six chapters. After the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 lays a broad foundation of the emerging development literature concerned with religion and development, along with my search to find an appropriate analytical and conceptual framework or lens to frame the topic literature, research and analysis. Previously ignored, religion has been rediscovered by some development writers, as they examine the history, role and characteristics of development FBOs. Linked to this are writings about FBOs' faith identity and claims of comparative advantages and disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs. Finally, I briefly mention FBOs and religious witness, an area of occasional speculation by people from outside FBOs.

Chapter 3 introduces the Bangladesh development and religious context, along with the six Bangladeshi CNGOs researched. Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country, 'born into poverty', but now considered a poster child for several Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The development context is critical for the intervention choice, design, implementation and outcomes. Understanding the development and religious context assists in better understanding the significance of FBOs' faith identity with respect to their operating characteristics.

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology used to answer the research question. This chapter includes research methods, ethics, supervision, fieldwork experience and the critical issues of security and trust. Of primary importance, is the deductive research methodology, using CNGO research data to test existing literature regarding FBOs. I also share my experience of the research and thesis writing process, as being an iterative non-linear process.

Chapter 5 presents the heart of my research findings, discussion and analysis about how the six Bangladesh CNGOs' faith works out through their operating characteristics. This considers differences or distinctive contributions from the perspectives of the CNGOs, and tests literature claims of advantages and disadvantages for FBOs, compared with secular NGOs.

Chapter 6 is the final chapter and presents my research conclusions in relation to the research question. The research question is answered in relation to the wider literature reviewed, analytical and conceptual frameworks, and the research findings. After my conclusions, I present recommendations consisting of key topics for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Analytical / Conceptual Frameworks for Researching Religion and Development

2.1 Introduction

The literature review introduces the topic of religion and development, relevant to my research into the difference faith makes for Christian non-government organisations (CNGOs) working in development in Bangladesh. A small body of development literature is emerging, examining the history, role and characteristics of faith-based organisations' (FBOs) involvement in global development activities, such as occurs in NGO-level projects. Before engaging with FBOs, is the need to understand more about them, assisted by an analytical and conceptual framework or lens in which to frame the topic literature, research and analysis regarding the difference faith makes to development. Chapter topics are: (i) Development and religion in development literature, (ii) Religion rediscovered - The rise of FBOs, (iii) Secular development challenged by religion, (iv) Analytical and conceptual framework for researching religion and development, (v) FBOs' faith identity, (vi) FBOs' operating characteristics - claimed advantages and disadvantages, and (vii) Proselytizing development?.

2.2 Development and religion in development literature

Religious groups have been involved with the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the poor, sick and marginalised for millennia. This (w)holistic concern has been delivered through individuals, congregations, informal groups and missions. Clarke and Ware (2015) say that a strong argument exists that religiously motivated agencies, particularly Christian missions, were the forerunners to more recent development NGOs. Over the last fifty years, while NGOs in general have become common, development focused FBOs affiliated with religious communities have become very prominent (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p37).

However, "the place of religion in development is an area that has too often been ignored in the development literature" (Benham Rennick, 2013, p176). Lunn (2009) wrote, "Religion, spirituality and faith have suffered from long-term and systematic neglect... consistently marginalised or avoided in development theory, policy and practice" (Lunn, 2009, p937, 946). The 1980 *World Development* journal special edition *Religion and Development* was considered a radical departure from the usual development writings of the time, by including religion in a peer reviewed scholarly development journal. However, even in 2000, when Ver Beek surveyed three key development studies journals published 1982–98, he found very few references to religion in development. Of the three journals, the *World Development* journal was typical, with just 5 articles focusing on religion, eighty three on the environment, eighty five on gender and eighty nine on population (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p45; Lunn, 2009, p939; Ver Beek, 2000, p37).

There are various possible reasons for the religious gap in development literature. Some of these included: FBOs sometimes remaining closely allied to their religious bodies, rather than identifying and collaborating more with the development sector (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p38); development concepts were typically driven by secular and economic assumptions rather than religious values (Tomalin, 2012, p691); and European preference for the separation of 'church-state' and government agency preference for secular framed development activities, avoiding any accusations of proselytising or favouring particular religions (Lunn, 2009, p940). Lunn (2009) states other reasons: belief in the state to deliver justice and wellbeing, confidence that prosperity is derived from economic policies, and a modernist belief that religion is irrelevant (or even inhibiting) to the progress of modern societies. This reflected cultural processes in the developed 'sending countries' rather than the developing 'receiving countries' (Lunn, 2009, p940).

2.3 Religion rediscovered - The rise of FBOs

Religion began to enter mainstream political and development consciousness during the 1980s. The 1979 Iranian revolution empowered by religion to replace a secular dictator, challenged the notion that religion had become an irrelevant relic of the past. The 1990s rise of political Islam, based on the inseparability of religion and politics, transformed international relations, making the religion topic unavoidable. Increased religious identity began motivating and mobilising religious involvement in public and political arenas. A sense that Islamic religion and culture was under threat from secular Western ideals saw violence such as the September 2001 terrorist attacks and the resulting war on terror. Assumptions that religion would decline as societies modernise and that political space is separate from religious space, did not happen outside the West. Religion continued to inform individual and often state identity, morals and ethics (Benham Rennick, 2013, p176; Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p46). James (2009) writes that the 9/11 terror attacks showing "the power of religion to motivate extreme action", was a tipping point for a renewed Western awareness of the importance of religion in global affairs. Following this, James Wolfensohn, the World Bank President, was able to persuade the World Bank to engage with religion, as an important issue to be considered in development policy and processes (James, 2009, p4).

FBOs became more prominent in the 1980s, partly due to the neo-liberal structural adjustment rolling back of state services (health and education), which resulted in non-state services providers, including FBOs, providing more social services. FBO driven prophetic calls for governments to adopt more people friendly economics included the Jubilee Campaign (2000), inspired by Biblical Old Testament teachings on debt relief. The similarly inspired Make Poverty History advocacy campaign followed (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p48). FBOs became more visible to the mainstream development community, seeking secular funding, speaking into development policy debates, and promoting major justice focused causes (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p38). The Millennium

Declaration (2000) and the ensuing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were a foundation for the development sector's new engagement with religion and faith. Faith communities and FBOs were seen as "important actors in galvanizing the moral commitment on which the MDGs depend and in popularizing them in local churches, mosques and synagogues" (Clarke & Jennings, 2008, p2; Tomalin, 2012, p691).

Since 2000, development donors in some countries sought increased engagement with FBOs, and in some contexts actually favoured FBOs over secular NGOs. For example, USA almost doubled funding to FBOs, from 10.5% to 19.9% from 2001 to 2005 during George W Bush's presidency. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) 2009 White Paper promised to double funding to FBOs in "recognition of the unique contribution that they can make in both delivering development on the ground and connecting with communities" (DFID, 2009, p134; James, 2011, p109; Tomalin, 2012, p690). The claimed unique contribution is discussed later in this chapter.

Also, since 2000, there have been several international forums for FBOs and larger international donors, exploring better cooperation towards shared goals of poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The World Faiths Development Dialogue beginning in 1999, grew out of World Bank discussions with various religious organisations, seeking improved understanding and links between faith, ethics and development service delivery (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p38). A number of studies to research faith communities' substantial contribution to development occurred. These included: mapping work at Berkley Centre at Georgetown University in the USA, and the 'Religions and Development' (RAD) research at Birmingham University in the UK, with multi-year funding from DFID beginning in 2005, ending in 2011 (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p45; James, 2011, p111).

Deneulin and Rakodi (2011) considered that the rediscovery of religion poses a challenge for secular development people who need to learn the motives and characteristics of FBOs to facilitate working together (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p52). The rediscovery of religion has also presented a challenge to any assumed dominance of secular development.

2.4 Secular development challenged by religion

Western development studies have had to reconsider a key assumption, "that secularization is a universal, desirable, and irreversible trend" (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p45). Berger (1999) wrote, "The assumption that we live in a secularised world is false. The world today... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled 'secularisation theory' is essentially mistaken" (Berger 1999, p2). Similar to Berger, Casanova (1994) refers to secularisation theory as a myth. While some religious groups are moving to a privatised form, expressed by personal

religious belief and experience, others are resurging into the public realm, seeking societal and global justice (Benham Rennick, 2013, p178-179; Casanova 1994, p6).

Approximately 80% of the world's people profess some sort of religious faith, making this a majority human characteristic influencing people's lives (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p39). It is a primary source of values, morality and ontology (identity and reality), in fact "In more traditional societies, religion continues to be so embedded in the traditions, foods, customs, dress and ways of life of a people as to be indiscernible from culture" (Benham Rennick, 2013, p177).

Being integral in most people's lives, religion cannot be ignored, neatly separated out or treated as an optional extra in development thinking. Lunn (2009) pragmatically wrote, "This does not mean that religion will be equally influential for all people or in all situations, nor that integrating religious world-views will effectively solve all development problems, but it provides possibilities of rethinking development" (Lunn, 2009, p946). Further to this, Deneulin and Rakodi (2011) wrote that the topic of religion (beliefs, values, practices and relevance) needs to be brought back into secular development theory and practice. Development practitioners "need to engage with religious doctrines and interpretations" and "believers' interpretations of social, economic, and political reality" (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p46, 52). Supporting this, Benham Rennick (2013) advised that development workers must be "knowledgeable about, concerned with and sensitive to the religious interests and values of a local community." Development project design and management (whether by secular or religious NGOs), needs to take the local religion(s) into account. However, she noted that this approach has not gained wide support in the development field (Benham Rennick, 2013, p176).

For Western secular development workers to engage meaningfully with religious communities, this presents epistemological (how we can know something) and methodological challenges. For a non-religious outsider, it can be very challenging to recognise and understand the role that religion plays in developing communities. Benham Rennick (2013) warns that if foreign development workers are perceived to be "contemptuous, dismissive or ignorant of local beliefs and values, they are very likely to create an atmosphere of antagonism that will undermine their best efforts." Further, she states that religious 'illiteracy' may reduce potential opportunities to work with local religious groups. In fact, in situations where religious belief is identified as limiting community development, it is all the more important to work with local religious people, seeking understanding and possible solutions (Benham Rennick, 2013, p179). In the same way, FBOs whose religion is different to the local communities' religion, need to seek understanding and goodwill.

To overcome this 'secular-sacred' divide, it is advantageous for secular NGOs (and government), to collaborate with FBOs who are embedded in the local social matrices, cultural norms, and religious worldview and practices (Benham Rennick, 2013, p176, 184). But, first is the need to understand some more about FBOs involved in development activities. This requires an appropriate analytical and conceptual development framework or lens in which to frame the topic literature, research and analysis regarding the difference religion makes to development in any context, and specific to my research, what difference faith makes for CNGOs working in Bangladesh.

2.5 Analytical and conceptual framework for researching religion and development

It is customary in development research reports, theses and doctoral dissertations for the writers to arrive at a conceptual framework through a mix of the writer's positionality in terms of what they consider development is, isn't, or could be, and a chronological journey of major development approaches or frameworks (theory, models and methods) perceived by development studies, writers and academics. I found this a challenging exercise, perhaps due to the nature of my thesis research question and also due to my thirteen years of working with development practitioners in Bangladesh, where I can recall little discussion of development frameworks, other than the obligatory and often used terms of sustainable development and / or sustainable livelihoods.

2.5.1 Development frameworks - a review

There is a huge body of development literature suggesting, analysing and contesting various development frameworks, by which to understand and evaluate development ideas, theories and activities. An extensive review is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, three features will be briefly discussed.

First, is the most important question of 'what is development?' There is no universally agreed development definition or method to achieve development (to achieve what?). In particular, development academics debate what development may or may not be (McLennan, 2012, p14 referencing Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Escobar, 2000; Pieterse, 2010; Thomas, 2000). Bebbington and Bebbington (2001) note that there is a tendency for development researchers to critically analyse (or criticize) other development practitioners attempts to 'do development', while being unable to present workable solutions themselves (Bebbington & Bebbington, 2001, p7). This has led some to declare a considerable amount of development research to be 'irrelevant or negative' (Chambers, 1983; Edwards, 1989 & 1994). In my own experience, on two occasions, in relation to my Bangladesh development activities, I have been asked (somewhat sceptically I believe) by Western educated development professionals (with Master of Development qualifications) - 'what is development?' My answer was to speak of positive change or a better future desired by poor Bangladeshi communities, in terms of social uplift such as peaceful cooperative relationships,

poverty alleviating economic uplift such as increased incomes from $US 1 per day to $US 2 per day, and environmental uplift such as reduced pollution. This was met with silence, perhaps due to the realisation, that after moving through complex theoretical development contestations, it is possible to reach an informed simplicity, assisting the poor to move towards the better lives they want, thereby suggesting at least one answer to the question 'what is development?'

Second, is the period of development which primarily focused on 'economic growth and modernisation', considered to have been dominant from post-World War 2 up to the 1970s. The primacy of economic growth was also referred to as traditional, conventional or mainstream development. Associated with the economic growth model was the notion of modernisation, built on the idea of progress. It was assumed that 'under-developed' countries can (or should) progress in a linear fashion to being fully developed or modern, moving to a "higher stage of civilisation" (Thomas, 2000, p776), and achieving higher levels of consumption as do industrialised countries (McLennan, 2012, p15-16). From the 1980s, the neo-liberal Washington Consensus increased focus on liberal economics (a new capitalism), market-based approaches, privatisation, economic deregulation, liberalisation of trade and finance, reducing the state's role, and facilitating foreign direct investment (McLennan, 2012, p14; Williamson, 1993, p1332-1333). Associated with this were Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and policies implemented by the IMF (mostly) and the World Bank (to a lesser degree), as conditions for developing countries to receive financial loans at lower interest rates (McLennan, 2012, p15).

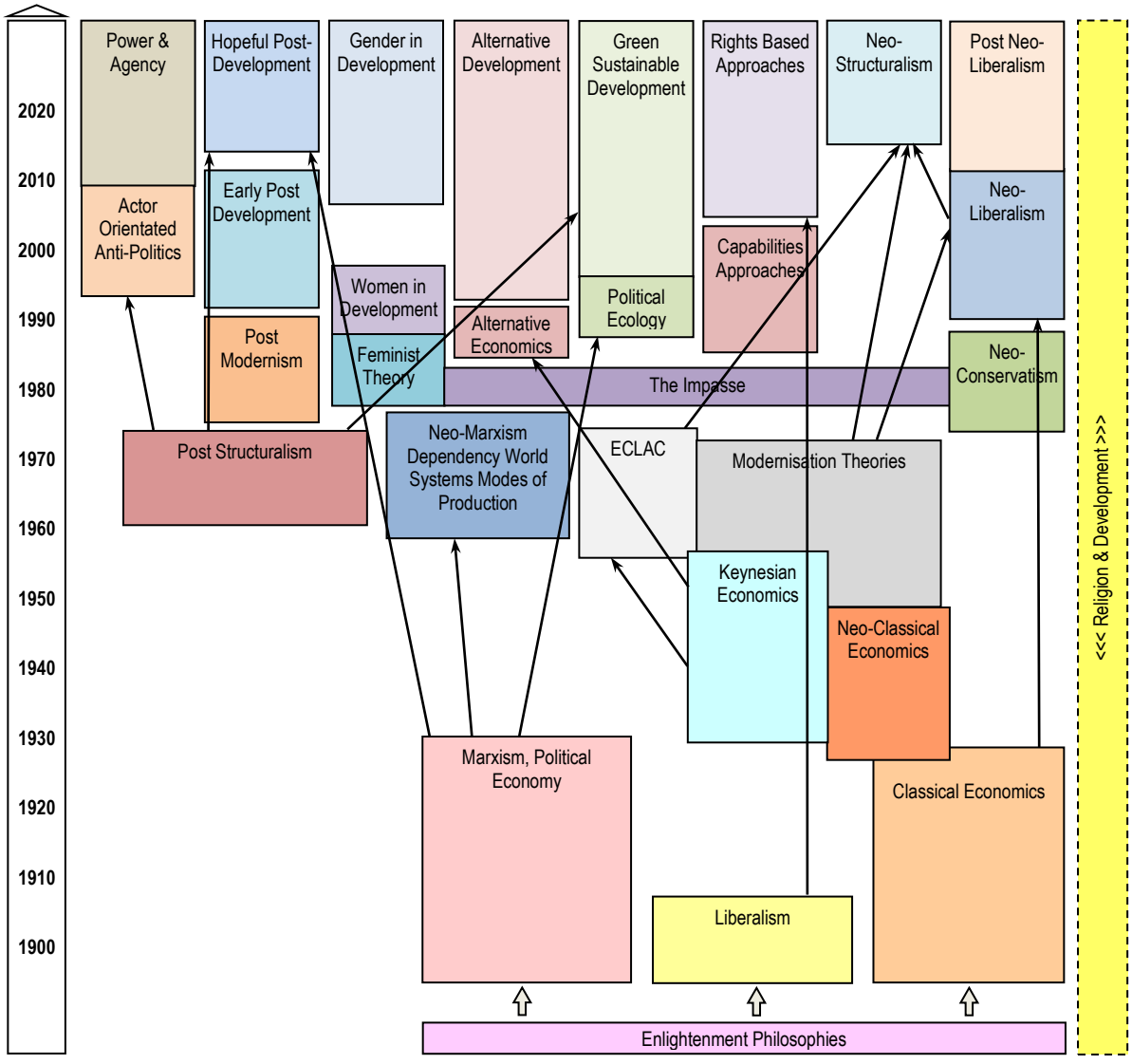
Thirdly, is the theory (or theories) of 'alternative development', which emerged in the 1980s. Supporters of this were critical of the dominant focus on economic growth, which previously had ignored issues of justice, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, and which sometimes increased poverty for the already poor and marginalised (Korten, 1990, p11; McLennan, 2012, p19). They called for alternatives which were more people focused, emphasising the capacity of people to create their own change (McLennan, 2012, p19; Pieterse, 1998). Key concepts underlying alternative development include, increased local initiative and accountability, a reduction in dependency on external resources, people mobilising and managing their own resources, increased equity and the meeting of basic needs (Korten, 1987, p146; McLennan, 2012, p19; Pieterse, 1998, p346, 352). However, alternative development is not a homogeneous single approach, but, rather a collection of development ideas and methods, which offer a critique of so-called 'mainstream development'. As mainstream development 'shifts', then so does alternative development (Pieterse, 1998, p345). Since the 1970s, alternative development has included "anti-capitalism, green thinking, feminism, eco-feminism, democratization, new social movements, Buddhist economics, cultural critiques, and poststructuralist analysis of development discourse" (Pieterse, 1998, p346). A characteristic of alternative development, has been that grassroots community-based organisations, particularly NGOs are responsible for development, rather than

the state, the market, political parties or large development organisations (McLennan, 2012, p20; Pieterse, 1998, p346; Sylvester, 1999, p708-709; Wilson, 1996, p620).

Over time, so-called mainstream development has been influenced by and incorporated many alternative development ideas and approaches, such as participation, empowerment, poverty reduction, basic needs, gender equality, human rights and environmental issues (Cornwall & Brock, 2005, p1043-1044; McLennan, 2012, p21; Pieterse, 1998, p348, 350). This has raised the question "in what way alternative development remains distinguishable from mainstream development" (alternative to what?), as "yesterday's alternatives become today's institutions" (Pieterse, 1998, p343, 349). The chronological journey of key development frameworks is visually presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Key development frameworks over time

Modified from (Scheyvens, 2015)



Broadly speaking, none of the above development frameworks specifically recognise the inter-relationship between religion and development. The original diagram (Scheyvens, 2015) did not include the 'Religion and Development' rectangle on the right. However, Thornton et al (2012) states that "Religious organisations are the oldest social service networks known to humankind", and that "With religion thriving, FBOs continue to play active roles in civil society and provide much-needed social services." As has been previously noted, "in the dominant development policy discourses in Western countries, FBOs have generally not been identified as a specific sub-set of civil society organisations, in part due to the legal separation of the state and the church" (Clarke & Jennings, 2008, p1; Thornton et al, 2012, p780). In response to this, I propose that a separate development framework broadly referred to as Religion and Development is called for to enable better understanding and more defined research. I have inserted the Religion and Development rectangle into the above diagram, indicating a long history of religiously motivated development, beginning well before the Enlightenment. This is discussed further below.

2.5.2 Finding an analytical and conceptual home for Christian NGOs

I turn now to finding a conceptual home or lens through which to understand development FBOs in general and CNGOs in particular, within the conceptual development landscape. One suggestion could be to include FBOs in the alternative development camp. However, this raises the question: 'alternative to what?' In my experience, Bangladesh NGOs (faith-based or secular) implement a wide range of development activities involving a mix of social, economic and environmental objectives, subject to identified community needs and aspirations, and the capacity and capabilities of the NGO involved. There is no one approach. For example, projects may include elements of education, health, economics (savings / loans / vocation skills / livelihoods / business / market access), human rights and gender equality, and environmental care. This is a reasonably standard suite of development activities implemented by NGOs, whether identified as secular or religious. So-called mainstream development includes very similar activities. Therefore, imposing an alternative development framework lens is not relevant to my research question concerning the identity and characteristics of CNGOs in Bangladesh. I will now present a more suitable framework for considering the religion and development relationship, integral to my research thesis.

2.5.3 Religion and Development (RAD) - an emerging analytical framework

A 'Religion and Development' (RAD) analytical framework has been emerging within development studies. This is largely the result of a multi-million dollar study carried out by the International Development Department - University of Birmingham during 2005-11, with significant funding from UKAid / DFID. A total of 67 working papers including case studies were produced and are available on the website (RAD, 2016). RAD is best described as an 'analytical' rather than 'conceptual' framework and this is discussed further below.

RAD is very much just an emerging framework, due to the 'neglect' and otherness of religion within development studies. Being only recently published, it did not exist for the development studies fraternity to investigate, even just six years ago. This analytical framework helps answer the question: 'What difference does religion make to development?' It is in this framework I situate my research and hope to help fill a gap in the literature, regarding specifically CNGOs working in Bangladesh, and more broadly development FBOs in general. The RAD framework aligns very well with my own positionality, presented in Section 4.4, in approaching the research through both a religious lens and a development lens.

In 2007, near the start of the RAD research programme, Rakodi wrote in *Working Paper 9*:

> "One of the outcomes of the neglect of religion in the mainstream development literature is that there is no generally accepted conceptual framework for studying the relationships between religions and development. We believe that it is not possible to develop such a conceptual framework at the outset: not only is the field of study wide and complex, it also needs to draw on the insights of work in several disciplines (anthropology, religious studies, sociology, economics, political science, philosophy, ethics etc). Even if it is not possible at present (and may ultimately be neither possible nor desirable) to devise an over-arching conceptual framework for the research, some conceptual clarification is necessary at the outset. In particular, we need to consider the two concepts: development and religion" (RAD / Rakodi, 2007, p17).

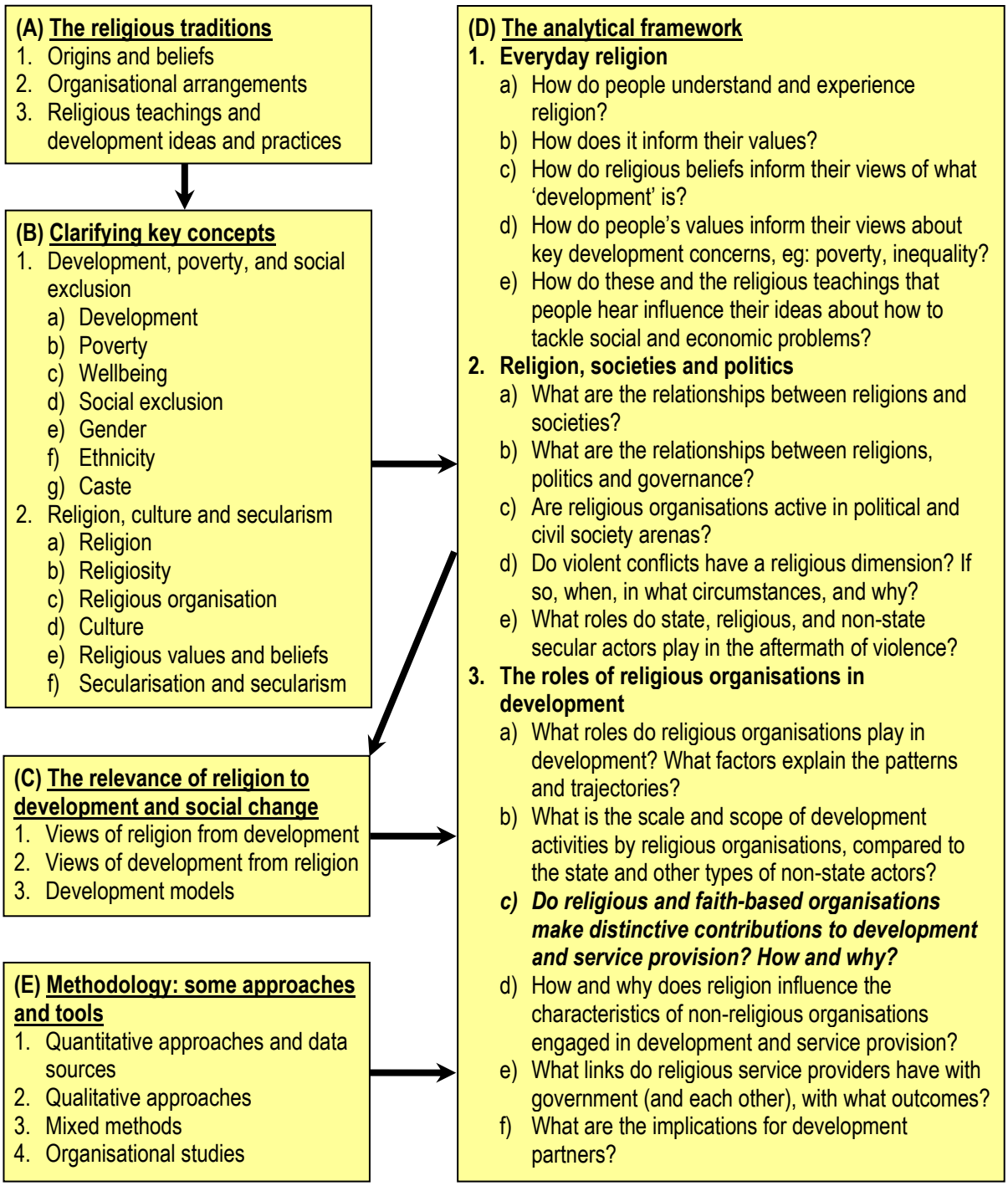
Some four years later, in 2011, RAD published the final *Working Paper 67*, 'A Guide to Analyzing the Relationships between Religion and Development' (148 pages) (RAD / Rakodi, 2011; ibid, 2012b; ibid, 2014b). This contains an analytical framework to assist policy makers, practitioners and researchers to help understand the "complex links between religion and development." This seeks to assist in addressing the question "how can the presence, nature, and activities of religious people and organisations best be understood so that they can be taken into account in the course of development activities?" Although the analytical framework is situated within a development studies, policy, and practice perspective, it fully recognises that "religion and development are not separate spheres of life - they are intertwined and each influences the other" (Rakodi, 2012, p635). The analytical framework is presented in Figure 2 below.

It is important here to make a distinction between analysis and theory. A theory proposes ideas about how a social phenomenon can be explained. However, Rakodi (2012) states that our "understanding of the links between religion and development (or religion and society) is too fragmented and incomplete for such theory to have been developed." The RAD analytical framework, "does not attempt to explain the relationships between religion and development (or

society); instead it seeks to assist those trying to analyse some aspects of those relationships to clarify their thinking about what is required and how the questions they ask might be framed" (Rakodi, 2012, p637). It is beyond the scope of this research thesis to present a detailed description of the entire framework, however, the aspects relevant to my research topic will be discussed here.

Figure 2: Religion and Development (RAD) framework for analysing the relationships between religion and development

Modified from (Rakodi, 2012, p636)



In terms of my research question 'How do Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country, perceive that their faith identity influences their operating characteristics, making them distinctive from secular NGOs?', the analytical home is found in Part D, Section 3 of the framework presented above: 'The roles of religious organisations in development', and more specifically, question 3c 'Do religious and faith-based organisations make distinctive contributions to development and service provision? How and why?' For my research of the CNGOs, I have specifically focused on their distinctive contributions in terms of how their faith identity works out through their 'operating characteristics', testing the literature claims about this.

Having determined the RAD analytical home to be the most relevant for my research, I will now present the conceptual frameworks from literature used as a basis for framing my research. First, the importance of being aware of FBOs' organisational 'faith identity' by way of definitions and typology is briefly presented in Section 2.6. Following this, the primary research conceptual framework for investigating the six Bangladesh CNGOs' operating characteristics is presented in Section 2.7, consisting of pre-existing literature claims of distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs.

2.6 FBOs' faith identity

FBOs have been defined and classified in various ways. They share many characteristics with secular NGOs, such as being independent from government, not-for-profit, voluntary and altruistic. However, FBOs are different to secular NGOs, in self-identifying or branding themselves as 'faith-based', usually by way of their connection with a religious structure, doctrine or community (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p40). 'Secular' here, refers to development organisations and activities not specifically shaped by a religious framework or connected with a religious structure, doctrine or community, although individual employees may be motivated by faith (Tomalin, 2012, p701). In my experience, FBOs consider their faith identity critical to their vision and mission.

Clarke and Jennings (2008) prefer a broad definition for FBOs, being "any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teaching and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith" (Clarke & Jennings, 2008, p6; Tomalin, 2012, p693). However, the catch-all term 'FBO' is not entirely helpful - What does faith-based actually mean? A good typology enables a clear understanding of different FBOs in terms of their identity, objectives and activities (Sider & Unruh, 2004, p109-110).

Religious identity typologies assist governments, donors, practitioners and humanitarian scholars to be aware of critical differences among FBOs. Strengths, weaknesses or tensions experienced with one organisation should not be assumed for all. For example, some FBOs may encourage verbal witness (sharing their faith verbally with others) while others may obfuscate their religious

affiliation to avoid persecution (Thaut, 2009, p321, 347). Other reasons for avoiding verbal witness, include that an FBO may consider that verbal witness is not part of their mandate, FBO staff may not be adherents to the FBO's religious identity, or FBO staff may not have the skills to verbalise their faith in a relaxed conversational way within the context of their service delivery (or after hours). Where a donor overlooks FBO typology assuming all FBOs operate the same way (perhaps based on a negative experience), this may result in avoiding all other FBOs, with the loss of excellent humanitarian work. It may also hinder collaboration of FBOs with secular NGOs, and even among FBOs themselves (Thaut, 2009, p347). James (2011) considers another benefit for FBOs to clarify their religious or faith identity, is to enable coherence between belief (theology of development) and activity (organisational behaviour and programmes). "Coherence between identity and action is vital for any organisation, faith-based or not" (James, 2011, p116).

A review of the literature indicates a number of FBO faith identity conceptual frameworks in the form of typologies. I selected three typologies which help identify and describe FBO faith identities, and assist FBOs to reflect on their identities and *raison d'être*. However, so as to target my research on primarily the CNGOs' operating characteristics, the faith identity typologies were not formally used in the thesis analysis. Refer to Appendix 1: FBO faith identity typologies. Having briefly introduced literature relating to FBO faith identity, I will now turn to conceptual frameworks in literature relating to FBO operating characteristics.

2.7 FBOs' operating characteristics - claimed advantages and disadvantages

A small amount of development literature comments on FBOs' operating characteristics. Some writers claim FBOs have 'distinctive characteristics' and 'comparative advantages' compared with secular NGOs, and in fact 'add value' to development, in seven motivational, organisational and institutional ways, and also in three spiritual ways (James, 2011, p111; Lunn, 2009, p944; Tomalin, 2012, p691). In addition to possible comparative advantages, some writers claim two comparative disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111).

For my research conceptual framework, I have selected the principal claims of advantage and disadvantage, by which to examine the operating characteristics of the six Bangladesh CNGOs involved in the research and to help determine the difference their faith makes for them. The claims of advantage and disadvantage are sourced from James (2009, 2011), based on his referenced development researchers and writers, and his wide experience of Christian FBOs and some experience of Islamic FBOs. It is unknown how relevant the claims are for FBOs of other faiths (James, 2011, p110). Each of the typologies relating to claims of FBO advantage and disadvantage, after being used as the basis for the research fieldwork, are returned to in Chapter 5 as part of the findings, discussion and analysis.

2.7.1 FBOs' motivational, organisational and institutional advantage claims

Seven comparative advantages have been claimed for FBOs compared with secular NGOs, in motivational, organisational and institutional ways (James, 2011, p111-113). The seven claimed advantages sourced from James (2011) are summarised below.

Claim 1: Reach the poorest

FBOs are preferred due to their grassroots presence, and found in the most remote and inaccessible areas where there are few government services. Naidoo (2000) says "FBOs probably provide the best social and physical infrastructure in the poorest communities... because churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship are the focal points for the communities they serve" (Naidoo, 2000). Lunn (2009) states that this representation on the ground makes for more efficient and effective distribution systems (Lunn, 2009, p944). Sourced from (James, 2011, p111-113).

Claim 2: Valued by the poorest

Poor communities are largely faith-based communities, where religion remains central to the social, cultural and moral life. A World Bank study (Foreword by James D Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank and George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury) concluded "In most developing countries, religious leaders are close to the poor and among their most trusted representatives" (Wolfensohn & Carey, 2001, pvii). Positively (but also negatively) faith leaders may be gatekeepers and opinion leaders. "Motivationally religious organisations stand out because of their commitment to and zeal for serving people and communities. They are perceived to work for the public good and, in comparison with government agencies, it is believed that they are more sensitive to people in times of catastrophe, chaos or conflict, are responsive to people's needs and flexible in their provision, act with honesty and take distribution seriously. Through common belief, religious organisations create strong social networks and promote social capital. Because of their values and being rooted in the local community, people are more likely to trust FBOs over state bodies or secular NGOs, and trust religious leaders over government ministers or foreign experts" (Lunn, 2009, p944). Sourced from (James, 2011, p111-113).

Claim 3: Long-term sustainable presence

Local and national religious institutions are generally more sustainable than most civil-society organisations (CSOs). An international NGO worker said "I know that when I go back to Kenya my church will still be there, but I don't know if my development organisation will be. They are in today and could be out tomorrow, but the local church is there for years" (Chester, 2002, p12). Linked to this long-term presence, is long-term social capital. Sourced from (James, 2011, p111-113).

Claim 4: Efficient development services

Historically, FBOs have lead the way in providing vital services to the poor, particularly health and education. According to DFID (2005, p4), FBOs have provided 50% of health and education services in sub-Saharan Africa. Faith-based provision is more efficient than state-run services, and costs the state less due to being subsidised by the faith community. "Organisationally many religious organisations are part of wider structures through which resources are channelled. They operate at every level of society and are present in every community; in particular they have unrivalled rural reach and are grounded in some of the world's most troubled areas. This representation on the ground makes for effective distribution systems, particularly in times of emergency or disaster" (Lunn, 2009, p944). Sourced from (James, 2011, p111-113).

Claim 5: Alternative to secular development theory

Human development is more than income, GDP and economic development. Religion broadens development with questions of values and meaning. Tyndale (2000) argues that "faith-based values of inclusion, stewardship, generosity, integrity, compassion and justice provide an essential alternative approach to development." Sourced from (James, 2011, p111-113).

Claim 6: Motivate voluntary service

Religions have a high coefficient of commitment, motivating action through "compassion and service; unity and interconnectedness; justice and reconciliation." Mobilising large numbers of motivated volunteers is possible. Hilary Benn (then UK Secretary of State for International Development) wrote "As I visit communities around the world I am always struck by the extent to which it is faith which inspires people to do something to help their fellow human beings" (DFID, 2005, p1; Lunn, 2009, p944). Sourced from (James, 2011, p111-113).

Claim 7: Encourage civil-society advocacy

Religious institutions can have an influential voice in the village and nation, through their enduring and extensive network of congregations, affiliates, organisations, and individuals. These networks can be highly effective channels of communication, human and financial resources. Large national constituencies (social networks) enable advocacy. They have played big roles in social-justice issues at national political levels. Historically, churches (but not all) were at the forefront of the US civil-rights movement; the Latin American democratisation process; and the Poland Solidarity movement. Gordon Brown (former UK Prime Minister), described the debt-relief Jubilee 2000 campaign as the "most important church-led social movement in Britain since the campaign for the abolition of slavery 200 years ago" (James, 2011, p113). Sourced from (James, 2011, p111-113).

I could not detect any particular hierarchy in James' original order, and reordered the list (above) to better suit my development thinking and research question. I consider the first three items (i) reach the poorest, (ii) are valued by the poorest, and (iii) have a long-term sustainable presence - to be the

most important from a poverty alleviation basis. Item (4) provide efficient development services - is next in importance in terms of maximising poverty alleviation with limited funding. Item (v) offer an alternative to secular development theory - is essential when assessing an FBO within the RAD framework. The final two items (vi) motivate voluntary service, and (vii) encourage civil-society advocacy - are similar with respect to motivating volunteers and wider society to work for the betterment of the poor and disadvantaged. The typology is very relevant to assessing what difference faith makes for Bangladesh CNGOs' operating characteristics and development outcomes. I was surprised to find such a typology, so closely aligned with my research question in the limited body of development literature related to FBOs. However, there are some practical limitations related to researching the claimed advantages, presented in Section 2.7.4.

2.7.2 FBOs' spiritual advantage claims

In addition to the previous claimed advantages, claims are made for three spiritual advantages of FBOs compared with secular NGOs (James, 2011, p111-114). The three claimed spiritual advantages sourced from James (2011) are summarised below.

Claim 1: Spiritual / religious teaching

Religious teaching includes important development principles, such as "justice, compassion, reconciliation and stewardship. Justice is the bedrock of development... Compassion and care for the poor is at the heart of most religions... Forgiveness and reconciliation are central to many religions and desperately needed in the world... Stewardship is an essential concept in environmental sustainability." Sourced from (James, 2011, p113).

Claim 2: Spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose

James (2011) says that "Hope is the antidote to the fear, powerlessness and dependence that are at the root of many development challenges." Meaningful development requires that values and attitudes change, and values and attitudes are the core business of religion. Matthew Parris writes about this in *The Times* in December 2008, in his article 'As an atheist I truly believe Africa needs God': "Now a confirmed atheist, I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from the work of secular NGOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good" (Parris, 2008). Sourced from (James, 2011, p113).

Claim 3: Spiritual / religious transcendent power

At the heart of faith-based development is faith in a transcendent power. Divine power energises human spirits, going beyond human effort. Many FBOs believe prayer can bring an 'extra-ordinary' power to assist developmental change. Sourced from (James, 2011, p114).

Similarly to the previous claimed advantages, James derived the above three items from his experience and other sources. The three items summarised to religious teaching, hope and prayer are essential when assessing FBOs and secular NGOs within the RAD framework. During my years in Bangladesh, the topics of religious teaching and prayer were occasionally discussed in the context of comparing CNGOs with other NGOs. There were fewer references in development literature about these spiritual-type characteristics compared with the previous more tangible motivational, organisational and institutional characteristics.

2.7.3 FBOs' disadvantage claims

In addition to possible comparative advantages, some writers claim comparative disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs. The two FBO disadvantages presented as questions for research are: (i) Is religion part of the problem for development? and in the CNGO context, (ii) Are churches difficult to work with for development? For example, religion could be seen to inhibit development by promoting conservative gender roles, and churches could be seen to interfere with FBOs or NGOs working through their congregations or denominational level (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111). The two claimed disadvantages sourced from (James, 2009, 2011) are summarised below.

Claim / question 1: Is religion part of the problem for development?

Official donors have traditionally been sceptical about religion in development, seeing religion as 'part of the problem', a negative force holding back development. Religion may be perceived as:

- Divisive - a rallying point for division and conflict.
- Regressive - maintaining (if not promoting) injustices such as slavery, colonialism, apartheid, and inequalities of caste and gender.
- Irrelevant - development is seen as an autonomous technical discipline, about which 'other-worldly' religion has nothing valuable to say.
- Insensitive - exported in ways that are highly insensitive to local culture.
- Proselytising - seeking to convert others to an alien faith.

Sourced from (James, 2011, p110-111)

Claim / question 2: Are churches difficult to work with for development?

Some FBOs work closely with local and / or national faith groups, while others operate independently. FBOs are more likely to realise comparative advantages (presented previously), when they collaborate with either local faith communities or national religious denominations. However, working too closely can create issues of:

- Interference
- Patronage

- Control

Working with churches (*presumably referring to church initiated or hosted community development*), may be perceived to have weaknesses as follows:

- Welfare-oriented - giving handouts rather than capacity building development programmes.
- Discriminatory / favouritism towards members - using aid to favour their own.
- Hierarchical leadership and organizational cultures - spiritual authority of local church or denominational leaders interfering in development activities.
- Unprofessional staffing - lacking skilled personnel in contexts of poverty. Professional staff often moving on due to low salary levels in line with other church workers.
- Weak management systems - weak financial, human resource, monitoring and evaluation systems. Sometimes due to a weak commitment to better systems, due to overriding spiritual concerns.

Sourced from (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111).

In fairness to FBOs, James (2011) says that some of the listed FBO weaknesses are also typical of many secular NGOs, who often fail to meet donors' accountability and reporting requirements. There is a lack of skilled staff, low literacy rates and low salary levels requiring an element of voluntarism. In general there are weak management systems (James, 2011, p111). This can result in difficulty in scaling up development services to a broader level (Lunn, 2009, p944).

Based on my experience in Bangladesh, I think both of the above claimed weaknesses are relevant to assessing what difference faith makes for Bangladesh CNGOs' operating characteristics. In relation to claim one, that religion holds back development, I think the claim is targeted at everyday religion in all of society, rather than specifically FBOs implementing development. However, for the sake of completeness, I included it in the research. In relation to claim two, that churches are difficult for FBOs or NGOs to work with, I have seen and experienced on some occasions the listed issues of interference, patronage and control, along with the listed weaknesses of welfare-orientation, discrimination / favouritism towards members, hierarchical leadership and organizational cultures, unprofessional staffing and weak management systems. I felt it essential to include claim two in my research.

Discovering James (2009, 2011) FBO literature after my 13 years of working with Bangladesh CNGOs, confirmed my experiences of finding churches both valuable and challenging to work with. James (2011) says that although secular donors have had greater engagement with FBOs, residual ambivalence remains, in part due to the claimed disadvantages, noting that "Faith can be a powerful but flammable fuel for change." He cautions "Religious faith has always had an intense but uneasy relationship with development… to take advantage of the considerable contribution that

FBOs can bring and at the same time mitigate the inherent risks, requires good understanding of faith and of FBOs. It needs faith-literacy" (James, 2011, p109).

2.7.4 Issues of comparability, context and evidence

Due to the claims of comparative advantages for FBOs in development, there has been an increased interest by development scholars to explore the claims. Some writers raise questions about the very positive claims made. A key issue stated by Tomalin (2012) is the lack of empirical evidence regarding the claims of comparative advantage for FBOs. Context specific assessments are difficult to generalise or scale up. Better evidence-based research is required (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p38-39, 46; Lunn, 2009, 944; Tomalin, 2012, p689-691, 697-700). Tomalin (2012) suggests, rather than trying to create a list or schedule of distinctive FBO qualities or attempting to assess their advantages compared with secular NGOs, it would be more useful to compare all types of NGOs (including FBOs) working in a specific development sector, and evaluate development outcomes for the same type of activities (Tomalin, 2012, p700). This would require an evaluation tool consisting of a standard set of development indicators, to assess development inputs, outputs, outcomes, cost / benefits and such like, applicable to any NGO, any project, anywhere, and able to be used in a routine operational way. However, based on my experience and enquiry, I have not encountered such evaluations occurring, I have not seen any sort of standardised operational evaluation tool created by the development fraternity able to perform the task, and I have not encountered any routine available funding to do this type of comparative evaluation.

In a similar way, Rakodi (2012) states "it is not possible to provide a single answer to the question: do FBOs have a comparative advantage in achieving development objectives?" The reasons include: "The categories of 'FBO' and 'NGO' are both complex. The faith traditions and the types of organisations associated with them differ in many respects. The organisations operate in a great variety of contexts. There are methodological obstacles to both assessing performance and attributing development outcomes to the activities of individual organisations." (Rakodi, 2012, p642). Instead, Rakodi says it is more sensible to ask "whether and how religious organisations make 'distinctive contributions' to development and service delivery, with respect to the inputs they use, their ways of operating and the outcomes and impacts of their activities" (Rakodi, 2012, p642). This is the approach my research has taken.

In line with the complexity of comparing FBOs with secular NGOs, my research was developed to explore Bangladesh CNGO perceptions and experience in relation to the literature statements and claims about FBOs' operating characteristics. More specifically, it seeks to determine if the operating characteristics that these claims attribute to FBOs, are applicable to the researched CNGOs. This involves looking for both exemplar and divergent CNGO responses and stories in response to the literature typologies and claims.

Another major issue from my perspective, is that it appears most development literature relating to FBO 'comparative advantage' originates from the religious and cultural contexts of Africa. Africa has very large and growing Christian communities (Commission for Africa, 2005, p31). This is a very different context to Bangladesh which is Muslim majority, South Asian, and with a very small struggling Christian community. This gap in the literature raises another question for other research: Would the FBO comparative advantage claims be relevant for FBOs working with participant / beneficiaries of other religions, particularly in contexts where the majority religion is different to that claimed by the FBO?

2.8 Proselytizing development?

And finally, there is the 'elephant in the room' issue of FBOs and religious witness, or more specifically verbal witness (sharing faith verbally with others). This is usually referred to as proselytising in development literature, without a clear definition provided. The concept of proselytization brings to mind negative images of a forced-coercive-exploitative conversion or change of religion. However, in my experience, it is not clear how anybody, even the poor and desperate can be forced to change their religious beliefs, any more than they can be forced to change other cultural beliefs, worldviews and practices, for example about human relationships, gender roles and such like. The dynamics involved in a genuine and sustained personal faith, set of beliefs, values and behaviour, and any switch from one religious faith to another, are much more complex than simply the result of a development worker sharing their views.

James (2011) says it is not straight forward to separate the spiritual from the material assistance provided by FBOs, although funding can be clearly delineated. Spiritual faith provides FBOs their 'fuel for action', as they holistically address peoples' physical, emotional and spiritual needs. At which point may a word or action be called proselytising? For example, is praying for a dying AIDS patient offering comfort or is it taking unfair advantage of a vulnerable person? It depends on who is judging (James, 2011, p115-116). Current discussion (where there is any) in my experience, seems limited to opposing statements with little empathy for shades of grey in between.

Different approaches to the sharing of faith is perhaps the area of greatest divergence within FBOs. Some FBOs encourage explicit verbal witness, while other FBOs obfuscate their religious affiliation altogether (James, 2011, p110-111; Lunn, 2009, p944; Thaut, 2009, p321, 347). A middle road is where FBOs implicitly seek to 'provoke the question', such that participant / beneficiaries may enquire 'Why are you helping us?' By invitation, FBO staff are free to share their religious motivation, worldview and beliefs, just as any other development practitioner is free to share their ideologies (Myers, 1999, p17-18, 204-211). Provoking the question has a Biblical

basis: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do it with gentleness and respect” (Bible, 1 Peter 3:15b-16a).

In discussing the topic of FBOs and witness, Fountain (2015) has introduced a new term ‘proselytizing development’ which is intentionally ambiguous as it asks the question: is it only some development FBOs who proselytise, or do in fact all development actors, whether labelled religious or otherwise proselytise their beliefs and ideologies? (Fountain, 2015, p80). Some other scholars have also “observed the irony that the development discourse, while secular, displays many of the characteristics of a religion” (Lunn, 2009, 940). Although this topic has some relevance to my research question, apart from noting it here, further discussion is beyond the scope of this research thesis.

2.9 Summary

This chapter presented a brief review of key development literature concerned with religion and development, and more specifically the claimed distinctive characteristics of FBOs involved in development activities. This involved my search to find an appropriate analytical and conceptual framework or lens in which to frame the topic literature and research. This led to ‘Religion and Development’ (RAD), an emerging analytical framework, able to help answer the question: ‘What difference does religion make to development?’ My research about Bangladeshi CNGOs resides within one part of the RAD framework, focusing on FBO ‘differences or distinctive contributions’ to development. Within this analytical framework, I presented the conceptual frameworks from literature used to plan and frame my research. First, the importance of being aware of FBOs’ organisational faith identity via definitions and typology was briefly presented. Second, the primary research conceptual framework for investigating the CNGO operating characteristics based on pre-existing literature claims of distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs, was presented. I will now examine the Bangladesh development and religious context within which the CNGOs operate, and introduce the six Bangladeshi CNGOs involved in the research.

Chapter 3: Bangladesh Development / Religious Context and the Six CNGOs Researched

3.1 Introduction

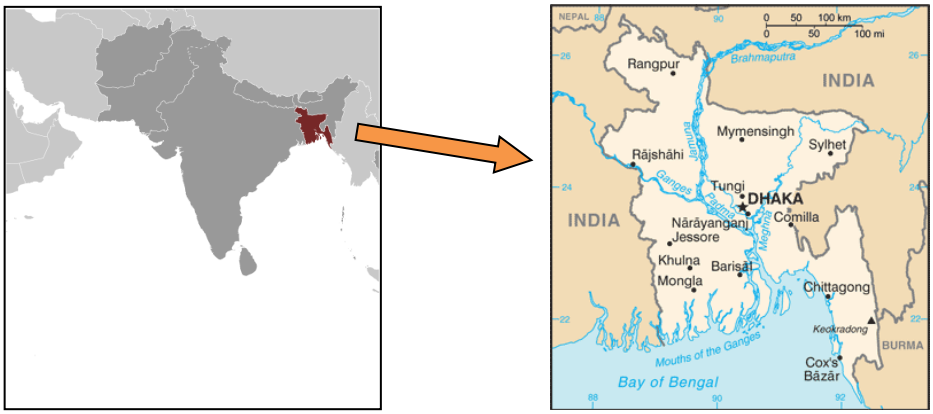
This chapter introduces the Bangladesh development and religious context, along with the six Bangladeshi CNGOs involved in the research. The context in which development occurs is critical to conceptualising what a better future might look like, including the design and implementation of development activities and hoped-for outcomes. Investigating the development and religious context assists to better understand the significance of FBOs' faith identity and their operating characteristics. An overview of the researched CNGOs' organisations and activities is presented to give an idea of their scope and scale, including: description, origin and history, development sectors, development methods, and demographics (projects, participant / beneficiaries, budgets, and staff). Chapter topics are: (i) Bangladesh beginnings, (ii) Bangladesh development context, (iii) Competing visions - Bangla-*desh* or Bangla-*stan*?, (iv) NGO capital of the world, and (v) Bangladesh six CNGOs researched - organisations and activities overview.

3.2 Bangladesh beginnings

Bangladesh is located in South Asia, bordering India to the west, north and east, Myanmar to the southeast and the Bay of Bengal and Indian ocean to the south. The Bangladesh location and map is presented in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: South Asia and Bangladesh map

Sourced from (CIA, 2015)



Previously known as East Bengal, consisting of a Muslim majority, Bangladesh was originally part of British ruled India. West Bengal consisting of a Hindu majority, lay adjacent to the west. India's independence from Britain in 1947, resulted in the separation of Hindu majority India from Muslim majority Pakistan, itself made up of West Pakistan to the west of India, and East Pakistan (later to become Bangladesh) to the east of India. The more populous East Pakistan call for the use

of their own language Bangla, rather than West Pakistan's imposed language Urdu and a desire for greater autonomy, led to a Bangladeshi independence movement. That movement, led by the Awami League (AL) political party, won a war of independence from Pakistan, resulting in the bloody and tumultuous birth of the modern-day 'People's Republic of Bangladesh' in 1971. Bangla-*desh* translated as the 'land of the Bangla speakers', was founded on principles of secularism, democracy, socialism (social justice) and nationalism.

3.3 Bangladesh development context

3.3.1 MDGs - a global development basis

I consider the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), having recently completed their final year (2000 to 2015), an excellent global basis for discussing the Bangladesh development context. Irish rock star Bono of U2, using religious imagery, called the MDGs "the beatitudes for a globalised world" (Bono, 2007). At the Millennium Summit (2000), 189 UN member states committed to the MDG framework of 8 goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators to measure development progress. In January 2008, 21 targets and 60 indicators were set. As an example, MDG 1 'eradicating extreme poverty and hunger', committed to halving between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $US 1.25 per day, and who suffer from hunger. The MDGs were: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) Achieve universal primary education, (3) Promote gender equality and empower women, (4) Reduce child mortality, (5) Improve maternal health, (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, (7) Ensure environmental sustainability, and (8) Develop a global partnership for development (BPC, 2014; UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2003). In my experience, the MDGs were very influential, with many development projects identified and designed within a framework of (i) Country national level Millennium Development Goals, and (ii) Local community needs identified through local level participatory enquiry. Before looking more closely at the Bangladesh development context in which the researched CNGOs operate, it is helpful to briefly consider wider Muslim views of development, recognising the country as a Muslim majority.

3.3.2 Muslim views of development

Existing academic and other literature indicates a number of positive Muslim views of development, not revealed in Western TV news and imagery of conflicts involving Muslims. Islam has a rich history of belief and practice of pro-poor development, based on Muslim poverty alleviation tools (*zakat*, *sadaqa*, *waqf*) originating in religious texts, the *Quran* and *Hadiths* (Kroessin & Mohamed, 2008, p191). The third pillar of Islam (following (i) Declaration of faith, and (ii) Praying five times a day, and followed by (iv) Fasting during Ramadan month, and (v) A pilgrimage to Mecca) is '*zakat*' (charity), a poverty alleviation tool, mentioned thirty times in the *Quran*. It provides for many welfare needs and giving this through various channels to assist the poor is obligatory, currently set at 2.5% per year of a person's assets (Riddell, 2013, p18; Yumina,

2013, p288-289). Over and above *zakat*, the wealthy are called to provide '*sadaqa*', voluntary monetary assistance. *Sadaqa* is used to support worthy causes, including: relatives, hospitality, feeding the poor, medical care, and assisting during disasters, wars and famine. It is also used for mosque building and religious outreach. Giving *sadaqa* is a symbol of individual religious piety (Burr & Collins, 2006, p19; Riddell, 2013, p19). The third charity tool is '*waqf*', found only in the *Hadith*, and is a long term investment which provides perpetual charity for non-income activities. There are three kinds of *waqf*: (i) religious *waqf* for mosque construction and support, (ii) philanthropic *waqf* for education, health, parks, etc and (iii) poverty alleviation *waqf*. *Waqf* enables ongoing religious merit for the deceased giver (Hassan, 2010, p265; Riddell, 2013, p19).

Muslim aid and development generally carries serious 'religious overlay', often expressed by twin priorities of supporting fellow Muslims and promoting Islam. One expression is Arab official development assistance (ODA) funding, led by Saudi Arabia to support other Muslim countries. Another expression is the rise of Islamic NGOs, working globally, some doing conventional aid and development, while others focus on Islamic expansion, or both (Clarke, 2008, p21; Petersen, 2012, p133, 140-146; Riddell, 2013, p19-28; Yunis & Jolis, 1998, Chap 10 & 24, p153-155).

3.3.3 Muslims and gender equality

Based my Bangladesh experience and wider literature review, most Muslims are supportive of the majority of the eight MDG goals, however, MDG 3: 'Promote gender equality and empower women', is the most contested development goal. Many Muslims prefer 'complementarity' rather than 'equality' in male / female relations. However, there are Islamic feminist movements seeking full equality in all areas, both religious and secular. Related to these issues is the role of Islam (and which expression of it) in public and political spheres (Badawi, 1995; Obermeyer, 1992, p46-47; Pearson & Tomalin, 2008, p59). Ahmed (1999) considers that the "lack of religious education among the public allows extremists to use Islamic texts against women." However, there is a "growing literature by Islamic scholars of both sexes, which challenges the denial of women's rights using religious texts" (Ahmed, 1999, p70-72; Tomalin, 2013, p192). Various Islamic groups in Muslim majority countries are supportive of women's rights, while maintaining religious conviction and rejecting Western style secularism. For example, Women Against Fundamentalists (WAF) and Sisters in Islam (Foley, 2004; Sleboda 2001) are women networks in Malaysia who stand against oppressive and anti-women practices, while not rejecting religion (Pearson & Tomalin, 2008, p59). My observation in Bangladesh, is that human rights and gender equality are core CNGO development activities.

3.3.4 MDGs progress in Bangladesh

Following the UN Millennium Declaration (2000), Bangladesh integrated the MDGs into its developmental agenda reflected in (i) Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, (ii) the Sixth Five Year

Plan (SFYP) (2011-2015), and (iii) Vision 2021. Vision 2021 established strong development targets for Bangladesh by the end of 2021 (BPC, 2011, p1).

The mid-term review of the Sixth Plan revealed Bangladesh was on-track to achieve many MDGs. Bangladesh received a number of MDG related global awards and recognitions, such as the 'UN MDG Award 2010' (BPC, 2015, piv). Bangladesh achieved MDGs in: "reducing headcount poverty, reducing the prevalence of underweight children, increasing enrolment at primary schools, attaining gender parity at primary and secondary education, lowering the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio, improving immunization coverage, reducing the incidence of communicable diseases, detection and cure rate of TB, containing HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs, and children under five sleeping under insecticide treated bed nets" (BPC, 2015, piv, 9). Gender equality progress is discussed in Section 3.3.5.

Despite this excellent progress, some MDGs faced challenges including: "hunger-poverty reduction and employment generation, increases in primary school completion and adult literacy rates, ensuring quality education at all levels, creation of decent wage employment for women, increase in the presence of skilled health professionals at baby delivery, increase in correct and comprehensive knowledge on HIV/AIDS, increase in forest coverage, and coverage of Information and Communication Technology" (BPC, 2015, pviii, 9). Still, as at 2015, 66 million people (out of 160 million) lived on less than $US 1.25 per day, approximately 32% were malnourished and there was only 61% adult literacy for 15 years+ (CIA, 2015).

Overall, Bangladesh is no longer a 'bottomless basket' of poverty and misery, as described by Henry Kissinger, the influential US Secretary of State in the 1970s (Scholte, 2011). Despite the country still having many poor people compared with developed countries, it is regarded as a poster child for several MDGs. In fact, Bangladesh is poised to rise from being a 'low income country' to enter the bottom rung of 'middle income countries' by 2021 (BPC, 2011, p1). Continued development inputs by many actors, including the researched CNGOs is required.

3.3.5 Gender equality progress in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made great strides in gender equality, demonstrated by full gender parity in primary and secondary education, and tertiary education gender parity making good progress (BPC, 2015, piv, 9, 40-53). Bangladesh was awarded the prestigious Women in Parliaments (WIP) Global Forum Award in 2015, for its outstanding success in closing the gender gap in the 'political empowerment sphere' - Bangladesh ranked 10th out of 142 countries (BPC, 2015, piv). Bangladesh has a long serving female prime minister and female head of the opposition, with both women's families having dominated national politics since 1971 independence. Despite the very positive view of progress towards gender equality in official Bangladesh development documents,

it is important to note other realities on the ground. There is still much women's empowerment work to be done by development practitioners of all types, including the researched CNGOs.

3.4 Competing visions - Bangla-*desh* or Bangla-*stan*?

Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country, with around 90% Muslim (vast majority Sunni), 9% Hindu, 0.6% Buddhist, 0.4% Christian and other (CIA, 2015). Although declared a 'secular' state in 1971, and regarded as a 'moderate' Muslim majority country (not an Islamic governed state), there are very different competing visions for the future, which will greatly impact development directions: Will it be 'Bangla-*desh*' - a secular democracy, or 'Bangla-*stan*' - an Islamic autocracy? On one side is a secular movement wishing for development in education, gender equality and freedom of expression. For example, Bangladesh's Vision 2021, first broad development goal is: "to build a secular tolerant liberal progressive democratic state", indicating the government's secular intention (BPC, 2011, p20). Opposed to this is a very conservative Muslim movement feeling Islam is under threat, wishing for a Talibanic type Islamic state, with limited freedom for women, and the death penalty for blasphemy. Politically and religiously motivated violence is common. One notable example (amongst many) was when a new conservative Muslim movement (*Hefajat*) placed a '13 point demand' before the government, concerned about alleged defamation of Islam by so-called 'atheist bloggers' in 2013. They threatened that if their demands (including a blasphemy death penalty law) were not met within three weeks, they would bring the government down, through continuous *hartals* (strikes and shut-downs) and a 'siege' of Dhaka. Around 300,000 to 400,000 *Hefajat* supporters held a long march to and protest in Dhaka, waiting for the deadline. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina responded to the 13 point demand just one day before the deadline expired. Following Hasina's refusal to *acquiesce* to the demands, there was violent confrontation between the police and the *Hefajat*, resulting in wide spread property destruction, injury and a number of deaths (The Daily Star, 2013). With such opposing visions and on-going violent incidents between radical Islam and the secular government, I find it difficult to envisage compromise for a peaceful and constructive way forward.

For those planning and working for the on-going development uplift of the country, along the lines of the global MDGs and replacement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is a real concern that a move to a more conservative expression of Islam would result in a stagnation or reversal of development gains. For example, Ahmad (2004) suggests the danger for Bangladesh, is that a more Islamic political party (as opposed to the secular Awami League) could firmly resist women's development, resulting in a loss or reversal of women's rights (Ahmad, 2004, p17). This conservatizing Islam would likely have serious impacts on the rights and freedoms of the researched CNGOs to exist and operate, due to their Christian basis, commitment to secular democracy and teaching of gender equality.

The way forward - Clash or Reconciliation?

What is the development way forward for Bangladesh as a Muslim majority country? Samuel Huntington in '*Clash of Civilisations*' suggested that "Islamic fundamentalism is not the problem, Islam itself is." His solution was isolationism, 'Islam *verses* the rest', with little hope of common humanity developing together (Huntington, 1996, p70). On the other hand, the late Benazir Bhutto, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, and the first women to head a Muslim majority nation, in her book '*Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*' strongly advocated that true Islam is a religion of peace and justice. It is able to embrace the modern era, multi-culturalism, democracy and gender equality, but it has been exploited by fanatics. Her solution was reconciliation, between 'Islam *and* the West', requiring peace-making dialogue, and Western supported development programs in Muslim communities (Bhutto, 2008, p150-151, 300-306, 313). Very sadly, Bhutto was assassinated shortly before her book was published. Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, proposed an innovative idea in her '*Mosques for development*' plan, which would see mosque-based community development activities. This expressed perhaps a truly Muslim friendly development (The Independent, 2010).

3.5 NGO capital of the world

No Bangladesh development discussion can exclude mention of NGOs, major development contributors of which FBOs and more specifically CNGOs are significant actors. NGOs are "ubiquitous in Bangladesh, described as the land of NGOs" (Kroessin, 2012, p201). Dhaka the capital city is known anecdotally as the 'NGO / development capital of the world'. Bangladesh has one of the "largest and most sophisticated NGO sectors in the developing world. Over 90% of villages had at least one NGO in 2000" (Gauri & Galef, 2005, p2046). A typical Bangladesh village, contains signboards advertising an NGO-like entity (Haider, 2011, p241).

Many NGOs began work in Bangladesh after the 1970 devastating cyclone and subsequent war of independence from Pakistan in 1971, and again after the famine-like conditions of 1974-75. The 1980s-90s saw a rapid growth of NGOs, many working with women in various sectors including family planning, education and micro-credit (Davis, 2006, p8; Naher, 2010, p316). NGOs became an important instrument for helping achieve improved socio-economic conditions. It is reported that due to state inefficiencies in the delivery of goods and services, the vacuum was filled by NGOs, to such an extent that NGOs became synonymous with Bangladesh (Islam & Morgan, 2012, p371).

The number of NGOs quoted by various sources is confusing and depends on classifications used. It is reasonable to estimate there are currently (i) Approximately 20,000 NGOs of all types (local, national, international) in Bangladesh, and (ii) Approximately 2300 NGOs registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau - able to receive foreign funding, implying national and international NGOs

(BNGOAB, 2016; Davis, 2006, p8; Haider, 2011, p241). However, not all listed NGOs would self-identify as development NGOs or operate development programmes. For example, an NGO may focus on promoting a specific worldview or religion.

NGO activities

As presented in Section 2.5.2, Bangladesh NGOs implement a wide range of development activities involving a mix of social, economic and environmental objectives, subject to identified community needs and aspirations, and the capacity and capabilities of the NGO involved. For example, projects may include elements of education, health, economics (savings / loans / vocation skills / livelihoods / business / market access), human rights and gender equality, and environmental care. This is a reasonably standard suite of development activities, regardless of whether an NGO identifies as secular or religious. The researched CNGOs' activities are described later in this chapter.

It is important to note NGOs which focus on microcredit as a poverty reduction tool, the most well-known being Grameen Bank, started by Noble Peace prize winner Muhammad Yunus. The microcredit focus is credit-based loans for poor women who, without collateral (savings, assets etc) are excluded from the conventional banking system. This is very different to the 'savings-based' loans approach used by the researched CNGOs, although both may be described using microfinance terminology. Microcredit has received a huge amount of both praise and criticism over the last fifteen years. Further discussion of this is beyond the scope of this paper.

Response to NGO activities

In my experience, Bangladeshi perceptions of NGOs' contributions towards development is generally positive, aware that millions of Bangladeshi have benefited from the various health, education, participatory social empowerment and economic development activities. NGOs have been recognised as making significant contributions to assisting Bangladesh to make excellent achievements in the MDGs, particularly in poverty alleviation, health and education. For example, the 2005 Bangladesh Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) presented the NGOs' role as an "integral contribution to achieve national poverty reduction targets, particularly in delivering and facilitating pro-poor services" (World Bank, 2006, pi). However, not all perceptions of NGOs are positive. In particular NGOs' microcredit programmes (offering high interest loans from external funding, rather than savings-based loans) have been robustly criticized, with claims that large NGOs have become rent-seeking institutions, charging among the highest interest rates (20–30 percent per year) on loans to the poor (Islam & Morgan, 2012, p371). The World Bank (2006) commented that "the public image of the (microcredit) NGOs reflected an illegitimate shift into for-profit activity, with low service quality and only limited development impact" (World Bank, 2006, p5-8).

The participation of women as beneficiaries in NGO development activities has been the main focus of some isolated attacks by Bangladeshi Islamists against NGOs (whether they be secular or faith-based) in the 1990s and more recently. Two reasons suggested, are the growing presence of religious conversation in the socio-political life, and the desire to regain deeply rooted patriarchal control over women (Naher, 2010, p316). Muslim religious leaders have felt justified to exercise '*fatwa*' (religious-based decisions) to protect and preserve Islam against perceived anti-Muslim cultural infringement (Rashiduzzaman, 1997, p239-240). This raises the question: Is reconciliation between secular modernising NGOs (including CNGOs) and very conservative Muslims possible in Bangladesh?

3.6 Bangladesh six CNGOs researched - organisations and activities overview

I will now present a brief overview of the scope and scale of the six Bangladesh CNGOs' organisations and development activities. The CNGOs regard their organisations and development activities as broadly similar to other NGOs, but with some distinctive differences.

3.6.1 Description, origin and history

The six CNGOs had a wide range of backgrounds reflected by their description, origin and histories. This heterogeneity is best seen in Table 1 below. The data has been generically blurred for security reasons.

Table 1: Bangladesh Christian NGOs - Description, origin and history

#	Bangladesh Christian NGOs - Description, representation, reporting and start date	
	Criteria	**CNGOs data**
1	Description - secular focus	• Independent Bangladesh development NGO (x2) • International NGO with Bangladesh country branch • International NGO with Bangladesh country branch (x3)
2	Description - religious & secular focus	• Bangladesh church denomination development arm • International Christian mission & development organisation • Bangladesh Christian development organisation • North American church denomination development arm (x2) • Bangladesh & international church denomination development arm
3	Origin, represents & reports to	• Bangladesh church denomination • International Christians • Bangladesh Christian board • North American church denomination (x2) • Bangladesh & international church denomination
4	Start date	1860s, 1920s, 1950s, 1960s, 1990s, 2010s
5	Start date Bangladesh	1880s, 1970s, 1970s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s

All the CNGOs may be described generically as 'community development NGOs' implementing similar development activities to secular NGOs (row 1). However, a closer examination indicates a

variety of Christian faith support bases, affiliations and parent bodies in various locations (row 2 and 3). These include a Bangladesh church denomination, international Christians (from anywhere), a Bangladesh Christian board, two North American church denominations (USA and Canada supporting both) and a Bangladesh and international church denomination. This is a wide range of support bases, but all clearly linked to a Christian faith identity in some way.

The Bangladesh start dates reflect historical happenings and relationships (Row 4 and 5). A number of Western Christian mission organisations started work in the Indian sub-continent in the late 18th century, in what is called the 'modern mission movement'. The next Bangladesh significant start date was in response to the 1970 cyclone and 1971 war of independence from West Pakistan, resulting in a war-torn country of poverty. It was at this time, Henry Kissinger described Bangladesh as a 'bottomless basket' of poverty and misery (Scholte, 2011).

3.6.2 Development sectors

As presented previously, NGOs in Bangladesh (including CNGOs) implement a wide range of development activities involving a mix of social, economic and environmental objectives. These are identified and designed based on the Bangladesh development context, focusing on the 66 million people (out of 160 million) living on less than $US 1.25 per day, approximately 32% malnourished and 61% adult literacy for 15 years+ (CIA, 2015). Local development activity choice is also determined by community needs and aspirations, and the capacity and capabilities of the NGOs involved. The six CNGOs' development sectors are presented as a collective, rather than by individual CNGO, for security reasons, as discussed in Section 4.8.3. Sectors include:

- Education: child preschool, child tutorial (homework support for children attending public schools), adult literacy, rights-based approaches to supporting and empowering school management committees (SMC) and parent teacher associations (PTA) to achieve better educational services from government schools.
- Health: primary healthcare, nutritional awareness for pregnant women / lactating mothers / malnourished children, WASH - water, sanitation and hygiene, assisting disabled children into main-stream schooling.
- Economic: savings and loans groups creating capital for income generating savings-based loans, livelihood skills training (agriculture), vocation skills training, business training and market access, assistance for youth and school dropouts.
- Human rights and gender equality: child protection, peace and justice, trafficking issues, rehabilitation and education of commercial sex workers.
- Environment: caring for the natural environment and climate change adaptation (CCA), disaster risk reduction (DRR) response training for climate events and climate change.
- Values formation: values awareness cross-cutting across all activities, sometimes sharing Biblical and other values.

As explained previously, the above development sectors and activities, other than 'values formation' are a reasonably standard suite implemented by other Bangladesh NGOs, whether secular or religious. However, the values formation cross-cutting activity, sometimes including Biblical values, is quite distinctive to CNGOs. This is discussed further in Section 5.4 and 5.5.

3.6.3 Development methods

Five CNGOs carry out their development activities within a 'group formation' approach. This consists of multiple self-help groups of about twenty poor and marginalised adult participant / beneficiaries per group. Groups focus on solidarity, participation, empowerment, capacity building and sustainable (long lasting) development, typically formed around adult functional literacy and savings and loans activities. This involves both group 'organisational capacity building' and 'community capacity building'. The goal is for individual self-help groups to graduate from direct project intervention and become part of larger secondary people's institutions (groups of groups), able to pursue further development activities with minimal external assistance. The projects then phase out and relocate to new areas after five to ten years.

One CNGO works via a sponsorship programme, supporting children and youth to attend public schools. Support includes educational tutorial assistance, health, nutrition, extracurricular activities and income generation for their families. Children and youth may stay in the programme up to twenty one years, beginning when their mother is pregnant with the child.

The majority of projects are rural based, which is historically typical of NGOs, whether secular or religious. However, increasing urban drift into slums is attracting more urban development projects.

3.6.4 Demographics - projects, participant / beneficiaries, budgets, staff

The six researched CNGOs include a variety of operational scale. Key demographic data is presented and discussed briefly in the following sections, with metrics presented in Table 2 below. The data has been generically blurred for security reasons.

Projects and locations

The CNGOs vary considerably in scope, capacity and complexity, indicated by the number of projects and locations. A project may operate in one or more locations. Five CNGO's projects ranged from 4 to 23, and locations ranged from 3 to 34. The sixth CNGO involved in child sponsorship recorded 169 projects in 169 locations, essentially repeating the same activities in each location.

Table 2: Bangladesh Christian NGOs - Demographics - projects, participant / beneficiaries, budgets, staff

#	Bangladesh Christian NGOs - Demographics - projects, participant / beneficiaries, budgets, staff	
	Criteria	**CNGOs data**
1	Projects	5 CNGOs - range 4 to 23 projects; 1 CNGO - 169 projects
2	Locations	5 CNGOs - range 3 to 34 locations; 1 CNGO - 169 locations
3	Participant / beneficiaries - direct	Direct adults (18 years and over) • Number - range 0 to 46,558, total 83,866, average 13,978 per CNGO • Gender - 20% male, 80% female • Religion - 4% Christian, 80% Muslim, 13% Hindu, 3% Buddhist, 0% other / no-religion • Beneficiaries 96% non-Christian adults • Child sponsorship CNGO - no direct adult beneficiaries --- Direct children and youth (up to 17 years) • Number - range 443 to 37,500, total of 67,338, average 11,223 per CNGO • Gender - 48% male, 52% female • Religion - 18% Christian, 50% Muslim, 29% Hindu, 3% Buddhist, 0% other / no-religion • Beneficiaries 93% non-Christian child and youth --- Excluding the very large child sponsorship CNGO, the other 5 CNGOs religion - 7% Christian, 75% Muslim, 18% Hindu, 0% Buddhist, 0% other / no-religion
4	Participant / beneficiaries - indirect	Indirect adult participant / beneficiaries (18 years and over) including family members, relatives, neighbours and friends - estimate 4 x 83,866 (direct) = 335,000 adults, children and youth --- Indirect children and youth participant / beneficiaries (up to 17 years) - estimate 2 x 67,338 (direct) = 135,000 adults, children and youth --- Total indirect participant / beneficiaries will be less than (335,000 + 135,000) as it is likely some (or many) adults, children and youth are from the same families
5	Budgets & source	2015 / 16 operating budgets ($NZ) Range $357,000 to $20,536,000 per year, total $25,558,000, average $4,260,000 per CNGO --- Excluding the very large child sponsorship CNGO, the other 5 CNGOs budget - total $5,022,000, average $1,004,000 per CNGO --- Funding source - almost entirely or totally foreign sourced funds Estimate 80 to 90% from foreign Christians; remainder from Western governments
6	Staff & volunteers	Full-time paid staff • Number - range 11 to 169, total 469, average 78 per CNGO • Country source - 458 Bangladeshi, 11 foreigners • Gender - 67% male, 33% female • Religion - 71% Christian, 20% Muslim, 7% Hindu, 1.5% Buddhist, 0.2% other / no-religion --- Volunteers - see discussion

Participant / beneficiaries

The CNGO direct adult (18 years and over) participant / beneficiaries ranged from 0 to 46,558, a total of 83,866, an average of 13,978 per CNGO. The child sponsorship CNGO has no direct adult beneficiaries. In terms of gender, 20% were male and 80% female. The very high proportion of female adult beneficiaries (80%) is typical, or even a bit low for the village-based self-help group *modus operandi*. CNGOs (and others) consider this an effective way to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Bangladesh, which typically has conservative gender roles. In terms of religion, 4% were Christian, 80% Muslim, 13% Hindu, 3% Buddhist and 0% other or no-religion. These are reasonably typical religious percentages for adult beneficiaries of CNGO activities, except for Buddhists who only exist in a few areas. It is typical in CNGO projects that a greater percentage of Christians (4%) are assisted than the national Christian demographic (approximately 0.3%), usually due to the presence of local churches in the areas they work in. However, the data shows that the CNGOs' project beneficiaries were 96% non-Christian adults, a typical outcome for CNGO run projects.

The CNGO direct child and youth (up to 17 years) participant / beneficiaries ranged from 443 to 37,500, a total of 67,338, an average of 11,223 per CNGO. In terms of gender, 48% were male and 52% female, indicating approximate male / female parity, or even slightly advantageous for females, typical for village-based child and youth supported projects in Bangladesh. CNGOs (and others) see this as an effective way to promote gender equality and women's empowerment beginning at an early age in Bangladesh, confirming improved MDG educational outcomes presented in Section 3.3. In terms of religion, 18% were Christian, 50% Muslim, 29% Hindu, 3% Buddhist and 0% other or no-religion. This is a very high percentage of Christians and Hindus, due to the large child sponsorship CNGO, which has proportionally more Christian and Hindu participant / beneficiaries. Considering only five CNGOs, without the child sponsorship CNGO, the religion of the beneficiaries becomes 7% Christian, 75% Muslim, 18% Hindu, 0% Buddhist and 0% other or no-religion. These are more typical beneficiary religious percentages. Again, it is typical that a greater percentage of Christians (7%) are assisted than the national Christian demographic (approximately 0.3%), usually due to the presence of local churches in the areas they work. The data shows that CNGOs' project beneficiaries were 93% non-Christian child and youth, a typical outcome for CNGO run projects. The very large number of participant / beneficiaries of all ages belonging to religions different to the CNGOs is a very distinctive difference for CNGOs. During my thirteen years in Bangladesh, I did not encounter any non-Christian FBOs assisting such a high proportion of people from other religions.

Indirect adult participant / beneficiaries (18 years and over) including family members, relatives, neighbours and friends, are estimated using a multiplier of 4x the direct adult beneficiaries, equating to approximately 4 x 83,866 = 335,000 adults, children and youth. Indirect 'child and

youth' participant / beneficiaries (up to 17 years) are estimated using a multiplier of 2x, equating to approximately 2 x 67,338 = 135,000 adults, children and youth. Due to the likelihood that some (or many) adults, children and youth from the same families will be in CNGO development projects, the total indirect participant / beneficiaries will be somewhat less than the two figures combined.

Budgets and source

The CNGOs vary considerably in size, indicated by 2015/16 operating budgets ranging from $NZ 357,000 to $NZ 20,536,000 per year, a total of $NZ 25,558,000, an average of $NZ 4,260,000 per CNGO. Excluding the large budget child sponsorship CNGO, the total of the other five CNGOs is $NZ 5,022,000, an average of $NZ 1,004,000 per CNGO. The $NZ 1 million represents about five projects of the $NZ 200,000 per year size, I previously worked with in Bangladesh.

All CNGOs were funded almost entirely or totally by foreign sourced funds. However, there was a small but perceptible introduction of local funding budget place-holders, for very small amounts. This is in recognition that Bangladesh is experiencing economic growth and foreign funding priorities are unpredictable with a declining Western church funding base, and governments making frequent political changes to funding 'aid'. It was estimated by the CNGOs that at least 80 to 90% of their funding was sourced directly from foreign Christians, with the bulk of the remainder being from Western governments. This aligns with my experience in the New Zealand church, observing many overseas projects and workers being supported by churches and their members. This is a distinctive difference of CNGOs.

Staff and volunteers

The CNGOs' full-time paid staff numbers ranged from 11 to 169, a total of 469, an average of 78 per CNGO. Of the 469 staff, 458 were Bangladeshi and 11 foreigners. In terms of staff gender, 67% were male and 33% female, a reasonably good result for Bangladesh, which typically has conservative gender roles. In terms of religion, 71% were Christian, 20% Muslim, 7% Hindu, 1.5% Buddhist and 0.2% other or no-religion. It is normal in Bangladesh for CNGOs representing a microscopic minority group, to employ a greater percentage from their own faith communities, so as to have and retain a Christian distinctive. However, one CNGO was an exception, employing only 27% Christian compared with 65% Muslim. Staffing is discussed further in Section 5.4.

Regarding staff numbers, some CNGOs operate as direct implementation organisations, employing more staff. Some other CNGOs have less staff as they are support / funding organisations involved in capacity building, monitoring and evaluating other partners who implement the actual project activities.

With regard to volunteerism, both full-time and part-time, it at first appeared that volunteerism was not common or well developed in the Bangladesh culture. In fact the word volunteerism had some alternative meanings, for example, CNGOs spoke of 'paid local volunteers'. Some local CNGOs also spoke of foreign Christian workers as volunteers, as their salaries are budgeted from outside Bangladesh, and because their salaries are minimal 'expense reimbursement allowances' similar to mission workers, rather than international development salaries. Volunteerism is discussed further in Section 5.4.

3.7 Summary

This chapter introduced the Bangladesh development and religious context, and the six Bangladesh CNGOs involved in the research. Although born into poverty in 1971, Bangladesh is now considered to be a poster child for several MDGs, including poverty alleviation, education, health and women's empowerment. However, there are still vast human development needs and rising inequality between the rich and the poor. Established as a secular country, Bangladesh has a 90% Muslim majority. There are very different competing visions for the future which will greatly impact development directions: Will the country be 'Bangla-*desh*' - a secular democracy, or 'Bangla-*stan*' - an Islamic autocracy? This development and religious context is critical for conceptualising what a better development future may be, and what the researched CNGOs' operating characteristics may look like. An overview of the CNGOs' organisations and activities to give an idea of their scope and scale of work was presented. I will now present the research methodology used to answer my research question.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The key purpose of research methodology is to answer the research question. If the research methodology is unable to do this, then either the methodology or the research question itself needs to change (Maxwell, 2013, p116; O'Leary, 2014, p105). This chapter presents the main steps and issues related to planning and implementing the research. The research approach is exploratory, seeking to investigate and describe the Bangladeshi CNGOs in the absence pre-existing data. The research method to achieve this is primarily deductive reasoning, using the CNGO research data to test existing literature definitions, typology and claims regarding FBOs. Chapter topics are: (i) Research question, (ii) Ontology and epistemology, (iii) Positionality, (iv) Significance of the research, (v) Exploratory research, (vi) Research methods, (vii) Ethics, partnership and security, (viii) Supervision and reflection, and (ix) Data analysis.

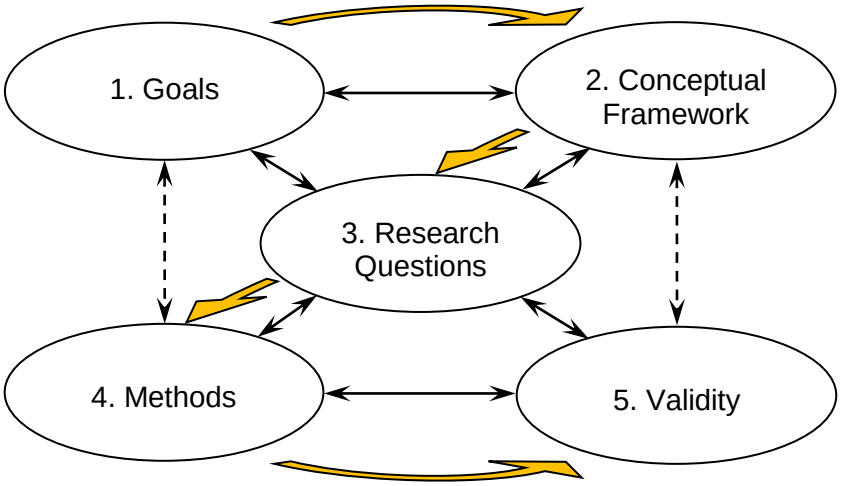
4.2 Research question

My research topic and question evolved over several years, as I lived in Bangladesh, working in the CNGO development space. Over the year, before and during my research, my research question changed in small and nuanced ways, as I sort to articulate a question which (i) I felt comfortable with intellectually, emotionally and religiously, (ii) Was easy to explain to lay people, (iii) Would provide some useful findings to interested parties, and (iv) Was research-able within the scope of a 120 credit point research thesis. The research question, finally became: 'How do Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country, perceive that their faith identity influences their operating characteristics, making them distinctive from secular NGOs?' I felt it important to retain the words 'a Muslim majority country' to signal a key aspect of the development and religious context being researched. The word-play 'Faith in development', applies well to my research and positionality.

I agree with Maxwell (2013), that research questions should be at the centre of research design, shown in his interactive model of research design in Figure 4 below. Although conceptual frameworks and methods are important to research design, it is research questions that are most central (Baldwin, 2015, p55; Maxwell, 2013, p4-5). Bazeley (2013) referencing Maxwell (2013) reinforces the importance of relevant research design over conceptual rigidity, stating "Rather than 'forcing on an ill-fitting shoe', it is better to ensure (and show) that the conclusions being drawn have coherence and validity in terms of purpose, questions, sampling, data gathered, and methods of analysis" (Bazeley, 2013, p11; Maxwell, 2013, p39). Corbin (2009) quoted by Bazeley (2013) further supports this: "For me, the importance of method is not whose approach one chooses but the quality of the research findings produced by any approach" (Bazeley, 2013, p11; Corbin, 2009, p52).

Figure 4: An interactive model of research design

Modified from (Maxwell, 2013, p5)



4.3 Ontology and epistemology

Research involves assumptions and potential discoveries regarding 'ontology' (what we can know and the plausibility of what is real) and 'epistemology' (how we can know). Research methodology defined by O'Leary (2014) refers to "macro-level frameworks that offer principles of reasoning associated with particular paradigmatic assumptions." Methodologies provide both the "strategies and grounding for the conduct of a study" (O'Leary, 2014, p10-11, 352). As discussed in the literature review, researching FBOs presents ontological and epistemological (and methodological) challenges to secular orientated development actors. To overcome this 'sacred-secular' dualism, it is advantageous for a researcher who is open and respectful, with a religious worldview and practice, ie: who is faith-literate (Benham Rennick, 2013, p179; James, 2011, p109).

A related challenge for my research involving a Muslim majority country, was the risk of encountering dubious literature and biased opinions, driven by dislike or fear of Islam, especially in a context of militant Islam (this is discussed further later). Benthall (2007) gives a clear reminder, of the "the normal requirement that serious social researchers should check their information from different sources, make allowances for their own prejudices and those of informants, and situate their findings in a broad political context" (Benthall, 2007, p6; Clarke, 2008, p35). This points to the related topic of positionality.

4.4 Positionality

Researchers need to be very aware of their positionality, subjectivity and bias. Stewart-Withers et al (2014) describes positionality as about recognising how our own "gender, religion, class, sexual

orientation, race or ethnicity, or other more personal attributes such as age, life experiences or history" influence our view of the research topic, our formulation of the research questions and the research methods used. This can influence the research in several ways, for example the type, source and interpretation of the data. This is a potential weakness of qualitative research, although need not be, if acknowledged and managed (Stewart-Withers et al, 2014, p61-62).

Related to positionality, is subjectivity and bias. O'Leary (2014) defines subjectivity as recognising that "conclusions are influenced by an individual's experiences, opinions, impressions, beliefs and feelings rather than observable phenomena" (O'Leary, 2014, p357). Further to this, O'Leary states with great certainty, "The question here is not whether researchers are subjective entities (everyone is), but whether we recognise ourselves as subjective, and whether we can manage our personal biases. Working towards credible research therefore demands reflexive awareness of our worldviews and a conscious effort for us to take them into account as we enter into the research journey" (O'Leary, 2014, p50).

Due to conscientisation (through development studies), development researchers are taught to be more self-aware of their positionality in relation to a research topic or people being researched, and to intentionally reflect (be reflexive) about how their biases may negatively influences the research process (Scheyvens & McLennan, 2014, p15). More specifically, Sultana (2007) considers that reflexivity involves reflecting on "self, process, and representation, and critically examining power relations and politics in the research process, and the researcher accountability in data collection and interpretation" (Stewart-Withers et al, 2014, p62; Sultana, 2007, p376).

With the above awareness (and warnings) I will present my positionality. I chose my research topic for a number of personal and professional reasons. I lived and worked in Bangladesh in community development for thirteen years (2002 to 2015). During that time I helped establish an operational CNGO. This involved establishing policy, procedures and tools enabling the CNGO to access New Zealand Aid Programme project funding, and to fund and capacity build local Bangladesh partner NGOs.

In terms of religious identity, I am a Christian, a follower of Jesus. I have a theological bachelor's degree. I was 'sent' by my New Zealand church to serve in Bangladesh in both mission and development. This was a practical outworking of extensive Biblical teaching, telling of God's bias for the poor. For example, the writer of Proverbs in the Old Testament says "The righteous care about justice for the poor…" (Bible, Proverbs 29:7), while in the New Testament, Jesus says "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me..." (Bible, Matthew 25:40).

I approach this research through both a religious lens and a development lens (McLaren, 2007, Chap 1; Myers, 1999, Chap 1). My unique angle is having gained a reasonable amount of knowledge, skills and lived experience working with CNGOs while living in Bangladesh. This led to a number of collegial relationships with Bangladeshi and expatriate development practitioners. All of these personal and professional learnings, experiences and relationships contribute to my positionality, worldview and any bias (recognised and unrecognised).

I found O'Leary's (2014) strategies for managing subjectivities and biases ("crucial to the production of credible data and trustworthy results") to be very useful. These included: "Appreciating your own worldview, appreciating alternative realities, suspending initial judgements, checking for interpretation of events, situations, and phenomena with 'insiders'; getting the full story, and seeking out and incorporating alternative and pluralistic points of view" (O'Leary, 2014, p357). Living and working, surviving and thriving long-term, immersed in a non-Kiwi, South Asian culture, resulted in frequent self-reflection about our very different worldviews, relationships and processes. It was essential to suspend quick judgement about how the 'other' thinks and acts.

Although I sought to be reflexive in my research (encouraged to be more-so by my supervisor), to take advantage of my 'insider' positionality, and to bring my perspectives to the research, I have been very cautious of being seen to project white, male, Western, Christian perspectives onto Bangladesh NGOs creating a perception of dependency on foreign masters. My research question was developed to explore Bangladesh CNGO perceptions. CNGO interviewees answer the research questions reflecting their positionality, informed by their beliefs, values and lived experience. It is their reality and story.

4.5 Significance of the research

Investigating the difference (if any, or in which way) faith makes for CNGOs working in development, was an occasional but ongoing conversation during my thirteen years of working in development in Bangladesh. Conversationalists with me included: CNGO development workers, mission (non-development) personnel, prayer and financial supporters, secular development workers, interested onlookers both religious and otherwise, government compliance officers… in fact, almost anyone could ask a question, pass an opinion, make a comment (or restrain from making a comment) relating to FBOs involved in development activities. This became an obvious area of research, given my personal interest, commitment and positionality. I hope to be able to develop the research and findings into a workshop resource to share with various development actors.

Secondly, my intention is to investigate, complement and add to the wider development literature regarding FBOs, the majority of which appears to be sourced from research about Christian-faithed organisations working in broadly Christian cultural contexts, such as in parts of Africa. I hope to fill the gap by researching the very different context, of CNGOs working in a South Asian, Muslim majority country, home to a very small Christian community.

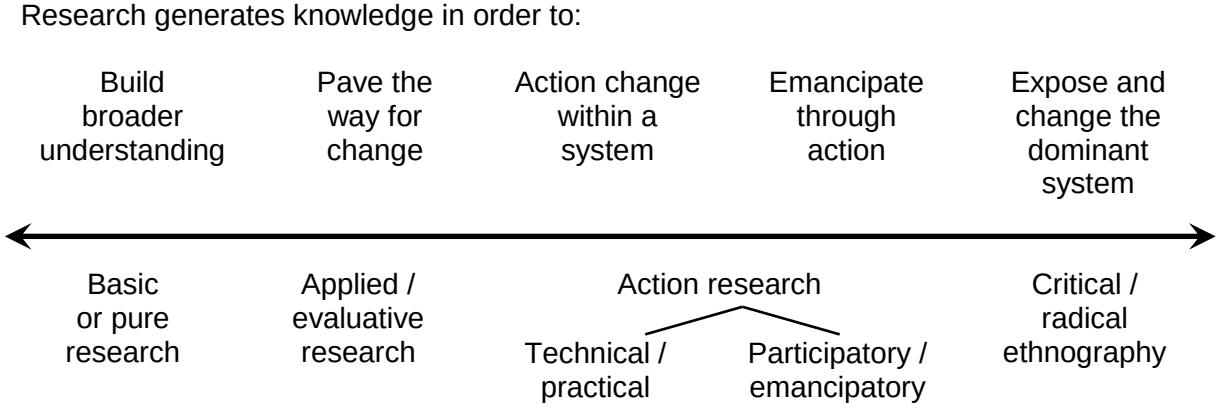
Thirdly, underlying this research is the suspicion (misunderstanding, misrepresentation and animosity) between proponents of secular development and proponents of religious-based social transformation. It is essential to recognise that, "Both development and religion are concerned with the meaning of progress or a better life" (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2011, p45). My and other people's experience is that Christian faith-based development practitioners walk a difficult line between secular development people and Christian mission people. I have experienced criticism from both sides towards the 'other'. I hope this research will contribute to rapprochement (greater awareness, knowledge, respect, relationship) between the secular development fraternity (academia, government, donors, practitioners) and the Christian mission and development communities (Belshaw, 2001, p220-240).

4.6 Exploratory research

O'Leary (2014) states that the goal of research can be placed on a continuum from gaining knowledge to facilitating change. At one end is 'basic or pure' research producing knowledge to better understand the world. At the other end is 'critical / radical ethnography' research aiming for change to dominant systems and structures (O'Leary, 2014, 157). The continuum is shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: From knowledge to change - the goals of research

Sourced from (O'Leary, 2014, p157)



In a similar way, Marshall and Rossman (2006) present a research purpose (or goal) continuum from 'exploratory' at one end to 'emancipatory' at the other, as they seek to match research

questions with research purpose (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p34). Their continuum is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Matching research questions with research purpose

#	Purpose of the study	General research questions
1	Exploratory • To investigate little understood phenomena • To identify or discover important categories of meaning • To generate hypothesis for further research	• What is happening in this social program? • What are the salient themes, patterns or categories of meaning for participants? • How are these patterns linked with one another?
2	Explanatory • To explain the patterns related to the phenomenon in question • To identify plausible relationship shaping the phenomenon	• What events, beliefs, attitudes or policies shape this phenomenon? • How do these forces interact to result in the phenomenon?
3	Descriptive • To document and describe the phenomenon of interest	• What are the salient actions, events, beliefs, attitudes and social structures and process occurring in the phenomenon?
4	Emancipatory • To create opportunities and the will to engage in social action	• How do participants problematise their circumstances and take positive action?

Source (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p34)

Considering my positionality presented in Section 4.4 and the significance of the research presented in Section 4.5, I believe my research best resides within (i) The O'Leary research goal at the 'Build broader understanding' position, and (ii) The Marshall and Rossman research purpose of being 'exploratory, explanatory and descriptive'. The research seeks to investigate, identify, describe and help explain any perceived differences and distinctive contributions of development CNGOs working in Bangladesh, and contribute this to the wider literature relating to FBOs. The research is exploratory in terms of gaining and using data that was not generated prior to the research and where there was a gap in knowledge, specifically about CNGOs in Bangladesh, a South Asian Muslim majority context. The research methodology to achieve this is presented next.

4.7 Research methods

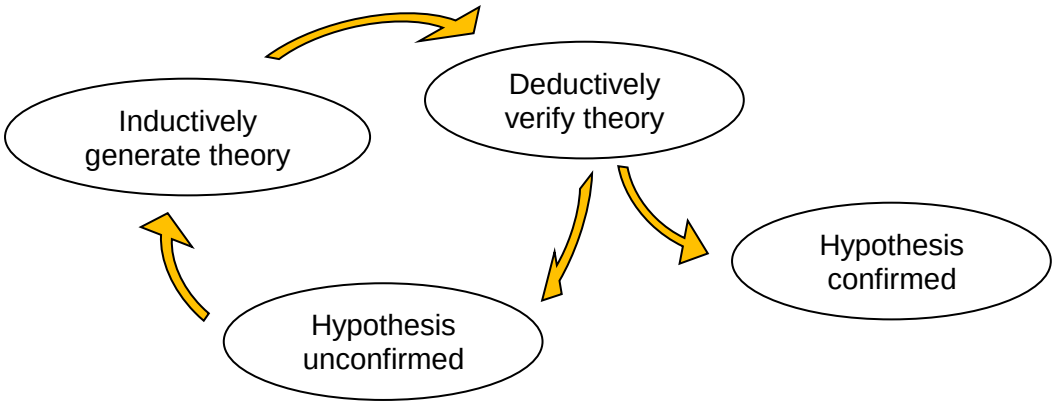
4.7.1 Testing theory - deductive reasoning

O'Leary (2014) describes the process of moving from raw research data to meaningful understanding as a "process reliant on the generation / exploration of relevant themes." These themes can be either discovered (through inductive reasoning) or uncovered (through deductive reasoning). Inductive reasoning explores data without a predetermined theme or theory in mind. This seeks to discover specific themes and generalised theory from the data, often referred to as grounded theory (O'Leary, 2014, p305). Alternatively, deductive reasoning begins with

predetermined themes and theories (or hypotheses), that may have come from literature or previous experience. This approach uses the research data to test existing theory - verifying, disproving or changing the theory. This requires a researcher be willing to acknowledge the unexpected which might arise from their data which lies outside the expected theory. Theory generation depends on progressive verification rather than discovery from raw data (O'Leary, 2014, p305). Another likely reality, is that theory and data occur in a more interactive, iterative and ongoing manner (abductive reasoning). This involves cycles of inductive discovery and deductive confirmation (O'Leary, 2014, p306). This is shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Cycles of inductive and deductive reasoning

Sourced from (O'Leary, 2014, p306)



My research method to move from raw data to meaningful understanding consists primarily of deductive reasoning. This is able to take advantage of and add to pre-existing analytical and conceptual frameworks. The CNGOs' researched operating characteristics are used to investigate and test pre-existing literature claims of distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs. The research was developed to explore Bangladesh CNGO perceptions and experience in relation to literature statements about FBOs, without comparative research involving other NGOs (religious or secular). I say 'primarily' deductive, as I have sought to be open to unexpected research outcomes.

4.7.2 Quantitative and qualitative methods

My research used mixed methods involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches. O'Leary (2014) says that quantitative and qualitative methods are not able to be neatly separated, and limited to exclusive use, but rather are suitable in a case by case situation (O'Leary, 2014, p147). First, the fieldwork collected data using a questionnaire to investigate the demographics and context of the six Bangladesh CNGOs researched. This was more quantitative, helping to answer 'what, where and when' questions, enabling some classification and comparison in terms of organisational profile and activities across the CNGOs. Refer to Appendix 2: Research Questions

1. Second, the fieldwork used structured interviews to investigate the faith identity and operating characteristics of the six CNGOs. This was more qualitative, helping answer 'what, how and why' questions, enabling some classification and comparison in terms of the CNGOs' faith characteristics and the difference faith makes to the CNGOs' development approach compared with secular NGOs working in Bangladesh. This aimed to illicit some deep rich episodic experiences. Refer to Appendix 3: Research Questions 2. The questionnaire and interviews were conducted by Skype calls from New Zealand to Bangladesh. Third, I sought information about the number, expenditure, faith connections, staffing and participant / beneficiaries for NGOs (of all types) in Bangladesh via two government departments: (i) Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau website and staff, and (ii) Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics website and staff. Unfortunately the department websites yielded minimal useable data and there was no response from staff to my emails.

The questionnaire (investigating demographics and context) and interviews (investigating faith identity and operating characteristics) contained some overlapping topics, resulting in some similarity and repetition of questions across different topics, enabling elements of triangulation. The interview questions were quite focused, but open ended, enabling segues to occur. Where applicable, interviewees were asked for past tense episodes and experiences, a technique discussed more later. Interviewees were encouraged to answer questions with evidence, examples, stories and the what, where, when, who, how and why questions.

4.7.3 Structured questions

I intentionally designed my interview topics and questions using a reasonably high level of structure, enabling easier comparability of information across organisations and contexts (Maxwell, 2013, p88-89). This took advantage of and added to the pre-existing analytical frameworks, investigating the 'claimed comparative advantages and disadvantages' of FBOs, and simplified analysis to answer the research question. However, I also tried to allow flexibility for any emerging insights, facilitated by less structured questions at times (O'Leary, 2014, p149).

4.7.4 Interview questions - design, revision and testing

Maxwell (2013) says that interview based research requires interviewers to have enough background knowledge to make sense of the interview conversations. All data can be interpreted in different ways, so requires critical assessment. Good interview questions should be real, creative and insightful. In a more symmetrical and collaborative research relationship, both the researcher and researched are interested in the answers (Maxwell, 2013, p88, 100-101). My personal and professional background of Bangladesh-based development activities and the people involved, greatly assisted in designing the interview questions. This enabled me to generally anticipate reasonably accurately (although not in all cases) how CNGO interviewees would interpret the questions.

It is good practice for researchers to pilot-test their interview questions to determine if questions work as intended and to make any revisions needed (Maxwell, 2013, p101). I did not formally pre-test the interview questions, due to my previous experience in creating and implementing questionnaires and evaluations of various types in Bangladesh. However, I took note of and clarified any confusion arising in the Skype interviews. The interview questions were emailed to the interviewees at least one week prior to the Skype calls, with a request to read and discuss the questions with other colleagues and to seek clarification from me, or others, if anything was unclear. All interviewees were very familiar with donor driven application and reporting requirements, plus monitoring and evaluation processes - involving multi-page questionnaires.

4.7.5 Triangulation for data validity

Triangulation involves collecting information using multiple methods as a check, to see if the different methods all support one conclusion. This reduces the chance that research conclusions may be biased by a specific method, enabling a more assured understanding of the issues being investigated, building credibility and validity. Triangulation can be achieved in a number of ways for example, the joint use of observations and interviews. While observation may describe settings, behaviour and events, interviewing provides understanding of perspectives and goals (Maxwell, 2013, p102, 104). Another triangulation method is the joint use of generalised, present-tense (semantic) questions, giving a kind of theory or policy about what is most typical; and specific, past-tense (episodic) questions, giving a story or experience of what actually happened. In this way the same issue is explored from different perspectives (Maxwell, 2013, p103-104).

With reference to the above explanation of triangulation, my research enabled triangulation by including the following research methods: (i) Interviews asking generalised, present-tense (semantic) questions, (ii) Interviews requesting specific, past-tense (episodic) stories, and (iii) Some minor primary document review. My research did not involve any current direct organisational observation. Although not formally triangulation, my previous thirteen years of living in Bangladesh, and learning about and practising development similar to that of the researched CNGOs, did provide a long period of observation and experience which I am careful to present as such. Based on this I offer some experience-based reflections and comments regarding the research findings.

4.7.6 CNGO selection and sampling

I put a lot of thought into research methods design, to determine where to research and who to include. Good selection (or sampling) decisions often require considerable knowledge of the research settings, including the viability of access and data collection, researcher relationships with participants, validity concerns and ethics (Maxwell, 2013, p99). Different selection (or sampling)

strategies facilitate different research purposes. In qualitative research, or research involving small populations, 'purposive sampling' is generally used, enabling settings, persons or activities to provide information relevant to the research question(s) (Maxwell, 2013, p96-97; O'Leary, 2014, p181-183).

Maxwell (2013) describes five possible goals of purposeful sampling: (1) 'Representativeness' or typicality of settings, individuals or activities, (2) 'Heterogeneity' or difference in the population, (3) 'Testing a theory' or hypothesis began with or which is emerging, (4) 'Comparison' between settings or individuals, and (5) 'Most productive relationships' to best answer the research question(s) (Maxwell, 2013, p98-99). Other purposeful sampling approaches, with more goal options are described by other writers (Laerd Dissertation, 2016; O'Leary, 2014, p189-190), however I found Maxwell's goals to be suitable for my research purposes.

My primary purposive sampling goal was to achieve 'representativeness' or typicality of the CNGOs in terms of the 'faith in development' research question. My secondary sampling goal was to investigate a 'comparison' between two groups of CNGOs, characterised by their linkage (or not) with local churches and / or local Christian communities. This linkage is typically characterised by CNGOs being 'hosted' by local churches for the benefit of all community members. CNGOs of this nature are primarily working in the same locations as local churches, although it is not the local church congregational members doing the actual development work.

I created a list of fourteen Bangladesh CNGOs based on my experience from which to select from. Due to previous interactions with most of them, I considered it likely all (or almost all) would agree to take part in my research. There were pros and cons of selecting some CNGOs over others in terms of their characteristics, likely responses and my previous relationship with them. I then narrowed this to six CNGOs to invite as research participants, based on my familiarity with them and my perception of how they would understand the research question and their willingness to spend time interviewing. My initial thoughts were to select eight to give a bigger sample and achieve more representativeness, however, my research supervisors strongly recommended fewer to make the work more manageable, which in hindsight was a good thing. The CNGOs were predominantly staffed, managed, directed and governed by Bangladeshi nationals. My original intended gold standard or target was to have CNGOs with only Bangladeshi staff and governance, so as to seek a more truly Bangladeshi perspective. However, in response to the practical realities of various partnership arrangements, which see mutual benefits for Bangladeshi and foreigners working together, I slightly relaxed the 'Bangladeshi only' criteria. All six CNGOs were registered with the Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau, indicating some ability to receive foreign funding and sufficient professionalism to manage development project design, reporting and accountability requirements of the Bureau and donors. All the CNGOs were either a national or part of an

international organisation. They were a diverse selection of small and medium sized CNGOs with mixed capabilities and capacities, as presented in Section 3.6. This allowed for a spread of responses, including any outlier responses. My assumption was that three of the CNGOs were likely to fit the 'local church hosting' criteria, to enable a comparison with those not linked with local churches, however, the linkage (or not) was to be confirmed later.

4.7.7 CNGO and interviewee recruitment

A key feature of my research design, was consideration of research relationships in terms of CNGO recruitment. Maxwell (2013) states, the kind of rapport is critical, as relationships both facilitate or hinder decisions, such as participant selection and data collection. In qualitative studies the "researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationships are the means by which the research gets done." While research methods may be poorly done, such as poorly worded questions, it is critical to maintain a working partnership to produce useable material (Maxwell, 2013, p91). Fortunately, due to my previously strong relational, cultural and professional linkages with the Bangladesh CNGO community, I had good access to a number of CNGOs of various backgrounds, sizes and development work. As anticipated and very pleasingly, the recruitment of the six suitable CNGOs was reasonable straight forward, with all readily joining the research.

Relational research introduces issues of privilege and power (Stewart-Withers et al, 2014, p62). Relationships with important research participants, sometimes known as gatekeepers can facilitate or interfere with research. We need relationships that allow the researcher to "ethically gain the information to answer the research question(s)" (Maxwell, 2013, p90). In my research, the CNGO directors or country directors and managers were the gatekeepers. They all expressed enthusiasm for the 'faith in development' research topic and a willingness to be involved. Based on my previous relationships with five of the six CNGO heads, I sensed they thought the research would be worthwhile for both them and myself. Other potential gatekeepers, such as government officials, were denied any opportunity for interference in relation to having to get a research visa, by my doing Skype-based fieldwork from outside the country (Banks & Scheyvens, 2014, p172-173).

The research interviewees were one director or country director from four CNGOs and one senior manager from two CNGOs. The goal was that all six CNGO informants or interviewees would be Bangladeshi, however five were, with one being a Western foreigner. Based on my previous experience, I had envisaged that five out of the six interviewees would be male, however, only four were male and two were female. With such a large focus on gender equality by NGOs (of all types) in Bangladesh, it was pleasing to have a better female representation than anticipated. One Bangladeshi interviewee belonged to a Tribal ethnic minority, while the other four were from the

Bengali ethnic majority. The process of invitation and agreement to take part in the research is discussed in Section 4.8.

4.7.8 Personal or official representation?

Considerable thought was put into the research method question: 'Who is the CNGO interviewee (person who answers the research questions) representing?' All the CNGO interviewees elected to (i) Give their personal opinions / experience based on their current CNGO organisation and activities, rather than (ii) Present their CNGO official response. This greatly assisted the interviewees to have freedom to answer interview questions. It also helped to ensure privacy and confidentiality for the CNGOs, as it was their interviewee opinions rather than an official CNGO response being given. Seeking an official CNGO response, would most likely have taken a long time, requiring draft written responses to and from CNGO governing boards. Each interviewee received permission from their CNGO directorship to take part.

4.7.9 Skype meetings

The fieldwork consisted of Skype calls from my home in Dunedin, New Zealand to Bangladesh. This involved two calls for around three hours (total) with the six CNGO interviewees, equating to eighteen hours of direct 'virtual' fieldwork. This was possible due to suitable internet capacity at both ends (except for one CNGO's internet signal dropping), my previous relationship with the CNGOs and strong familiarity with the Bangladesh development, cultural and religious context. All verbal communication was in Bangla accented English, which I was very comfortable with. Conducting fieldwork by Skype meetings rather than physical travel to Bangladesh had a number of advantages, including: removing fieldwork travel costs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other travel related pollution to zero, and negating the need for a local research assistant. An unexpected issue with Skype meetings, was the difficulty in getting firm commitments to meet on line, sometimes taking days or weeks to occur. A downside of Skype meetings was that I was not going to be able to show my appreciation to the interviewees in person. However, an unplanned opportunity to visit Bangladesh arose a few months after the interviews, enabling me to properly thank five of the six interviewees in person, by way of small New Zealand souvenir gifts and a nice restaurant meal.

4.8 Ethics, partnership and security

4.8.1 Partnership, participation and protection

Researching people's lives involves ethical issues, related often to "unequal power between the researcher and the researched" (Banks & Scheyvens, 2014, p160). Related to this are two competing issues of integrity. The first issue is achieving a research outcome: to produce knowledge, which is reliable and enables unbiased conclusions to be reached. The second issue is

maintaining relationships: working with others, and ensuring their rights and wellbeing are protected or enhanced (O'Leary, 2014, p47).

My research protocol focused on 'Partnership, Participation and Protection', between myself as researcher and the Bangladesh CNGOs as participants. These three concepts embedded in the 'Treaty of Waitangi' are intended for research involving or relevant to Maori, however, they are very useful in other contexts. Research carried out this way, is conducted in a "culturally sensitive and appropriate manner in full discussion and partnership with participants" (MUHEC, 2015a, p5-6). Initially, I intended to establish a more formal research partnership, setting out the Partnership, Participation and Protection approach between myself and each participant. The goal was to promote a strong partnership, where by both the researcher and researched conceptualised and co-designed the research for the mutual benefit of both sides. However, due to the time that establishing such a formal research partnership would have taken and the likely impact on my Master's timeframes, I decided to use the more simple and conventional Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form. This did however still involve research protocol focusing on the principles of Partnership, Participation and Protection. Refer to Appendix 4: Research Thesis - Information Sheet, and Appendix 5: Research Thesis - Participant Consent Form.

Ethical concerns did not cease at the writing of the Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form. Apart from any formal ethical approach, it is the researcher's personal traits and morality such as "integrity, maturity and sensitivity to the local cultural context" that are essential to navigate unforeseen ethical situations arising (Banks & Scheyvens, 2014, p185; De Laine, 2000, p28).

4.8.2 Massey University ethics process

Prior to beginning formal contact with the participating Bangladesh CNGOs, I sought ethical approval via the Massey University research ethics system. A low risk notification seemed appropriate rather than a full ethics application, due to: (i) Fieldwork interviews being done by Skype, not visiting in person, (ii) Research protocol focusing on principles of Partnership, Participation and Protection, noting rights and responsibilities for both the researcher and researched, (iii) Interviewees presenting their personal opinions and experience based on their current CNGO organisation and activities, rather than presenting their CNGO official responses, and (iv) Other low risk factor indicators such as no direct conflict of interest. I received Massey University approval for my low risk notification, valid for three years (23-2-2016).

4.8.3 Security issues

As a researcher with previous experience of living and working with CNGOs in Bangladesh, I had security concerns about the 'risk of harm' and 'exposing the person or group to discrimination',

due to CNGOs representing a microscopic minority religion in Muslim majority Bangladesh, which was experiencing a level of militant Islamic violence. Specific security concerns were addressed as follows: (1) Handling information / data: All data (audio and text) was stored in secure and safe storage, with multiple back-up copies, (2) Participant's rights and protection: Research participants had rights to: (i) Withdraw from the research at any time, (ii) Decline to answer any particular question, (iii) Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time during the interviews, (iv) Ask any questions about the research at any time during participation, and (v) Privacy and confidentiality of the CNGOs and interviewees, (3) Privacy and confidentiality: The CNGOs very strongly requested privacy and confidentiality for themselves and their interviewees. No single CNGO was described clearly by its demographics or individual characteristics, but rather general characteristics were attributed across all CNGOs. Each participating CNGO had the final say about how their organisation was described, to prevent descriptions of them or their work making them vulnerable to discovery and persecution. They each received a thesis draft for their review and feedback. From a thesis writing perspective, this resulted in a deliberate generic blurring across the CNGOs, making it difficult to assign causal linkages between specific CNGOs and specific findings. Reporting on the collective six CNGOs, required wisdom, to avoid a risk of collective discrimination against any or all CNGOs in Bangladesh. As my primary purposive sampling goal was to achieve representativeness or typicality, the use of generic blurring was not a big issue.

4.8.4 Dhaka Terrorist attack

Just three days after my initial CNGO contact, on Friday night 1 July 2016, a home-grown Islamic terrorist attack with ISIS claims of support occurred in a Dhaka cafe. This resulted in twenty two (plus) deaths apart from the five attackers, including eighteen foreigners - hacked to death, for not being Muslims, or able to recite the Koran. This attack, the first of its type, was extremely unsettling for NGOs (of all persuasions), but more so for CNGOs, the national Christian and Hindu communities, and foreigners. This was the first terrorist mass killing in Bangladesh, and the first major killing of foreigners, who are typically treated as guests. This built on the trickle of about thirty individual killings, over the previous three years, by radical Sunni Islamists against other religions (Shia Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists), pastors, secularists, writers, bloggers, LGBT activists and others. A question asked by many (Bangladeshi and foreigners): Has Bangladesh turned a corner, with a small but persistent movement away from being a 'moderate Muslim majority country'? The attack achieved one of its aims: to scare foreigners away, seen as a secularising influence by fundamentalist Muslims (The Daily Star, 2016).

It was apparent to me the CNGO interviewees felt a level of concern, ranging from shock, disbelief and jitteriness to real fear for the future. With respect to my research fieldwork, I could foresee delays with the CNGOs preoccupied with reviewing and strengthening their security arrangements, rather than focusing on a foreigner's research. On the other hand, given the nature of the

religiously inspired terrorist attack and increased Islamic militancy, I felt my research topic centring on religion and development to be even more relevant.

4.8.5 Relationship, trust and goodwill

By the end of the formal fieldwork, I felt a deep sense of privilege and trust. In the vulnerable context of CNGOs feeling fear of discrimination and physical harm, the interviewees shared beliefs, values, vision and mission statements, operational methodologies and development outcomes. I think the privilege, trust and goodwill, was a direct response to my previous working relationship with some of the interviewees and their CNGOs. I was known and trusted as a fellow Christian co-worker, not just another unknown foreigner using Bangladesh as an instrument to gain higher research-based qualifications. With this trust, came the responsibility to use the CNGO information carefully. Despite the heightened concerns about security and uncertain futures, all the CNGO interviewees expressed their enjoyment at being part of the research. As Maxwell (2013) encourages, the CNGOs found the topics and questions to be somewhat new, interesting and relevant for their work (Maxwell, 2013, p93).

4.9 Supervision and reflection

This thesis involved one primary supervisor, and two support supervisors selected by the Institute of Development Studies, Massey University. We established a supervision contract agreement with expectations for both parties. Skype meetings (face to face) were held about every month for sixty to ninety minutes, based on my agenda points. Meeting minutes were drafted, agreed upon and distributed.

The supervision was invaluable in three ways. First, receiving advice, clarity and correction about a number of academic norms, protocols and *modus operandi* mostly to do with writing style and format. Second, changing my incorrect thinking that the research and thesis writing process would be linear. In practice it was much more iterative, requiring reviews of earlier work, based on later work. Third, learning to write in first person and being more reflexive in academic research writing, showing I'm interested and involved not detached, and avoiding any pretence of objectivity.

A key way the supervision was very useful was through the reflection process. I wrote comprehensive minutes after each supervision meeting, seeing this as a place to reflect about key issues, where relevant, producing 'thought pieces'. While I didn't keep a field diary, my supervision minutes, particularly the expanded reflections, fulfilled a similar purpose. Maxwell (2013) writes of researchers writing memos to formulate and reflect on research goals, methods, theory, prior experiences, relationship with participants and such like, helping facilitate and

stimulate analytic insight about the data (Maxwell, 2013, p105). My meeting minute thought pieces were my memo equivalents.

4.10 Data analysis

Planning for analysis is an important part of research design (Maxwell, 2013, p104). As discussed in Section 4.7.1, my research method to move from raw data to meaningful understanding consists primarily of deductive reasoning, using my research data to investigate and test existing literature claims regarding FBOs. This enabled structuring of my research interview topics and questions, to take advantage of and add to pre-existing analytical and conceptual frameworks, for example, investigating the 'claimed advantages and disadvantages' of FBOs compared with secular NGOs. This assisted the analytical work required to answer the key research question.

Maxwell (2013) presents categories (distinctive types) and connections (relationships) as basic strategies for qualitative data analysis. Categorising strategies use coding and thematic analysis to 'fracture' the data, to look for similarities and differences, comparisons, contrasts, concept clusters, and similar groups, which lead to more abstract categories and eventually to hierarchical taxonomies. Connecting strategies uses narrative analysis to look for contextual relationships, consequences, systems, process, and flow of events over time, which leads to a better understanding of contiguity - the influence of one thing on another, and actual connections between things, rather than similarities and differences. Both strategies reveal different forms of relationship in research data. The goal of using both strategies is to look for a more holistic, systemic, interdependent network of events at the concrete level and concepts and propositions at an abstract level (Maxwell, 2013, p105-107).

Due to my primary focus on deductive testing of existing theory through structured questions, I have focused on identifying key research findings which support or don't support the literature claims. A limited amount of inductive investigation was conducted at the sub-question (or sub-theme) level to explore categories (distinctive types) and connections (relationships), in the search for any new theory.

4.10.1 Use of interview extracts

I include a lot of interviewee extracts, as my research strategy intentionally facilitated the CNGO interviewees to provide their perceptions, reality and story. The CNGO "quotes" presented in this thesis have been paraphrased and summarised from the original words spoken by the interviewees. This was done to clarify the original comments received in second-language English into more succinct and clear statements. All quotes can be referenced to particular CNGOs, although as discussed previously, the security situation precludes including actual CNGO names.

4.11 Summary

This chapter presented the research theory and methods, including ethical concerns, used to answer the research question. An important learning, was that the research and thesis writing process is not linear, but more iterative. A key method was using Skype calls from New Zealand to Bangladesh, rather than a field visit, made possible due to my relationships and familiarity with the Bangladesh context. While the research is exploratory regarding the Bangladeshi CNGOs' operating characteristics in the absence pre-existing data, the primary research method is deductive reasoning, testing research findings against existing FBO related theory. In light of an unprecedented Islamic terrorist attack resulting in multiple deaths, the research necessitated great care on my part, and great trust on the CNGOs' part, as I sought to preserve their confidentiality, protecting them from discrimination and harm. The next chapter will present the research findings, discussion and analysis of the six CNGOs' operating characteristics, compared with literature claims for FBOs.

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Chapter 5: Bangladesh CNGOs' Perceptions of Faith Identity Influence on their Operating Characteristics

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my research findings, discussion and analysis about the difference faith makes for the six Bangladesh CNGOs. As presented in Chapter 2, the research was carried out within the emerging analytical 'Religion and Development' (RAD) framework. From within this, the CNGOs' operating characteristics are examined and used to test existing conceptual theory, consisting of literature claims of distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs, compared with secular NGOs. The research explores the CNGOs' perceptions and experience in relation to the FBO claims, to determine if the operating characteristics that these claims attribute to FBOs, are applicable to the CNGOs. Key questions raised in the analysis, I consider beneficial for further research, have been placed in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter. Chapter topics are: (i) Faith identity, (ii) Church linkage, (iii) Motivational, organisational and institutional advantage claims, (iv) Spiritual advantage claims, and (v) Comparative disadvantage claims.

5.2 Faith identity

Before considering the main research focus regarding the Bangladesh CNGOs' operating characteristics with respect to the literature claims, it is useful to consider briefly their claimed faith identity and a distinctive out working of that faith identity, being church linkage. All the six CNGOs claimed a very clear, transparent and unambiguous Christian identity. CNGO statements included: "We are a denominational program representing the Christian church... we have a Christian focus within our mission and vision... all our policy, procedures and practices are run in a Biblical way", "We are widely known as a CNGO to the community and the government..." and "All our staff regardless of religion, know this is a Christian organisation." There seemed no obfuscation regarding Christian identity, to either the communities in which they work, or to Bangladesh government departments with whom they must comply. This clarity supports the view that faith is very important in helping explain the CNGOs' distinctive identity and some operating characteristics. The CNGOs' organisational profiles contained in their primary documentation, reinforced their Christian faith identity claims, providing a form of triangulation as discussed in Section 4.7.5. The organisational profiles, including their vision, mission, values, one-liner and logo, provided clear examples of how CNGOs perceive their organisational identity to be Christian faith-based, and distinctively different to that of secular NGOs they mix and work with.

5.3 Church linkage

As explained in Section 4.7.6, my primary purposive sampling goal was to achieve representativeness or typicality of the CNGOs. My secondary goal was to investigate a comparison

between two groups of CNGOs, characterised by their linkage (or not) with local churches and / or local Christian communities. The first group (linked) is typically characterised by CNGOs being 'hosted' by local churches for the benefit of all community members. CNGOs of this nature are primarily working in the same locations as local churches, although it is not the local church congregational members doing the actual development work. The second group (not linked) are CNGOs operating independently of local churches.

Investigating possible CNGO church linkages, the research sought to find out whether a CNGO had any formal linkage with a Bangladesh church denomination or were hosted by local churches or Christian communities. A linkage can operate in various ways, for example, a CNGO could be affiliated with, a representative of, governed by, funded by, hosted by, or operate in the same location as a church denomination, local church or Christian community.

Regarding Bangladesh church denominations, various linkages existed. Two CNGOs had clear linkages, being denominational development organisations. One independent CNGO signed MOUs with national church denominations to facilitate working through their local churches. One CNGO's work was implemented by local partners, some of whom have denominational linkages. The remaining two CNGOs did not have national church denominational linkages.

Regarding local churches, all CNGOs had multiple linkages. Five CNGOs had some or all development projects hosted by local churches to varying degrees. Two CNGOs work only through local church hosting, one CNGO works 80% (by their estimate) through local churches, and two other CNGOs implement some of their activities via local churches. Interestingly, one denominational CNGO mostly works in areas away from local churches, with just one of six projects involving a local church. I would have expected a denominational CNGO to work predominantly through the denomination's churches. In the church hosting development model, activities are performed by CNGO staff for the benefit of the church and wider community. Local churches are seen by the CNGOs as project partners in hosting the work in their area. Sometimes church members may be involved in some sort of local project governance. CNGO comments included: "The local church is the major player for the project activities... we use the local church land and facilities...", "The relationship can be described as being 'hosted' by local churches to work in their locations... it suits us to work via church partners, but also assists local churches to learn and understand broader community and interfaith issues", "Local churches are both participant / beneficiaries and the development agent reaching out into the wider communities", and "It helps our CNGO to maintain a Christian identity... we want to build up the churches where we partner... it's win-win for our CNGO activities and the local church." The comments indicate that for the researched CNGOs, their faith identity is not somehow separate from local churches or national denominations, but rather is an extension of the church (local and national) faith identity.

The CNGOs were generally enthusiastic about the local church hosting model, believing it facilitates a long-term sustainable presence among the poor. Host churches provide a physical presence and social entry points into a community, and also provide spiritual or prayer support for project people and the activities. The issue of CNGOs being linked with or 'hosted' by local churches is discussed further in this chapter, as part of looking at the operating characteristics and claimed advantages and disadvantages of CNGOs compared with secular NGOs. Faith identity and operating characteristics are not discrete analysis topics.

5.4 Motivational, organisational and institutional advantage claims

As discussed in Section 2.7, some writers claim FBOs have distinctive and comparative advantages compared with secular NGOs, and in fact 'add value' to development, in seven mostly motivational, organisational and institutional ways, and also in three spiritual ways (James, 2011, p111; Lunn, 2009, p944; Tomalin, 2012, p691).

However, as discussed previously, other writers claim there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the claims of comparative advantage for FBOs. Better evidence-based research is required (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p38-39, 46; Lunn, 2009, 944; Tomalin, 2012, p689-691, 697-700). In addition, it appears most development literature relating to FBO comparative advantage originates from the religious and cultural contexts of Christian Africa (Commission for Africa, 2005, p31), a very different context to Bangladesh which is Muslim majority, South Asian, and with a very small church.

The seven advantages claimed by some literature are that FBOs: (i) reach the poorest, (ii) are valued by the poorest, (iii) have a long-term sustainable presence, (iv) provide efficient development services, (v) offer an alternative to secular development theory, (vi) motivate voluntary service, and (vii) encourage civil-society advocacy (James, 2011, p111-113). I will now present and discuss each of these literature claims based on the six Bangladesh CNGOs' perceptions.

<u>Claim 1: Reach the poorest</u>

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs 'reach the poorest', due to social and physical infrastructure, such as local church facilities based in the poorest communities, through which development activities may be implemented (James, 2011, p111-113).

The CNGOs all claimed to strongly prioritise the poorest, although one CNGO said "I can't say more than other NGOs." CNGOs commented: "Our first priority is to reach the poorest and most vulnerable" and "we ignore other invitations for projects." CNGOs gave various descriptions of

what prioritising the poorest involves. Poverty is associated with remote areas having limited or difficult physical and communication access and limited or no electricity, as one CNGO noted: "FBOs are found in the most remote and inaccessible areas, for example, deep in the forests." Accompanying remoteness, another CNGO expressed: "Poor areas usually have limited communication" with few government services (mail, telephone, internet and transport). Poverty, remoteness and limited communication are typical of the CNGO rural project poverty contexts. Other NGOs also experience this.

Several CNGOs have historically worked with (and still do) the previously neglected Tribals, considered amongst the poorest and most culturally stigmatised people in Bangladesh. One CNGO shared: "Tribals were really neglected by Bengali people... Tripura, Orao, Malo, Santal and Bihari are the poorest communities we work with. Previously Orao people could not use a tea-stall cup, having to use their own. Our development work has resulted in good education, better healthcare, savings groups and capital, some businesses... they can now mix with other people." Other CNGO accounts of working with Tribals all similarly referred to their cultural exclusion and marginalisation from the majority Bengali culture.

Five CNGOs mostly implement their development activities close to or hosted by local churches, for the benefit of all, taking advantage of churches located is very poor and remote locations. CNGOs observed: "There are more CNGOs than secular NGOs away from main roads due to the presence of churches. Some are so remote, that even after one hundred years, there is still no main road nearby" and "Our churches are already with the poor, including the Tribals. We reach the poorest by working through churches, giving us an in-built opportunity. Many churches have a good set up, even in poverty stricken areas." Church hosting is considered an advantage to help access very poor rural communities. The sixth CNGO mostly works "where there are no other NGOs or churches", implying minimal other development services.

Being located and working in a poor and remote area, does not guarantee reaching the poorest. Development approach matters. One CNGO observed: "Reaching the poorest depends on your approach. The need to produce predetermined outputs and outcomes can create difficulty in working with the poorest." This requires very thorough project identification and design, along with frequent project reviews and course corrections, where possible. Another challenge is working with the transient poor, with the CNGO noting that "The poorest are often transient, but capacity building works best through a stable group process, attending literacy classes, saving groups, livelihood training etc." CNGOs generally work with extremely poor 'settled' people.

Related to development approach, four of the six CNGOs opined that some big well known secular microcredit NGOs do not work with the poorest, due to the requirement that beneficiaries repay

credit-based loans at high interest. CNGOs' comments included: "Big secular NGOs work in the surface areas, near main roads, with easy-to-reach people... they show their big sign boards. They work through microcredit (rather than savings-based loans) giving loans with outside money to the not-so-poor, who must generate more income to repay the high interest" and "They don't risk working with the excluded poorest... they don't care for the poorest, the way we CNGOs do." There was a general scepticism expressed regarding credit-based loan methods, resulting in a loss of capital from the community. Although this may appear to be differentiating between development NGOs and microcredit NGOs, the CNGOs' comments were consistent and strong regarding secular microcredit NGOs.

Claim 2: Valued by the poorest

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs are 'valued by the poorest', due to a mix of living and working in poor faith-based communities and observable religious motivation to serve the public good, rather than for personal or political gain (James, 2011, p111-113).

The CNGOs all strongly believed they were valued by the poorest, based on relational reciprocity they experience. CNGOs declared: "Christians love the poorest, so vice-versa, the poorest love Christians" and "People value what and who they see benefit them." One CNGO suggested "I'm not sure the faith (belief) bit makes a difference in terms of appreciation, but rather it's the development assistance given by FBOs", indicating FBOs deliver good development assistance. Over time trust, goodwill and friendship grow between CNGO staff and local participant / beneficiaries, leading to relational intimacy and shared problem solving. This was explained by one CNGO: "The poorest grow to trust us and become friends... they especially trust Christians... they share openly a problem with us, knowing we keep things confidential... together we search for solutions." CNGOs are valued due to the significance, scope and scale of development assistance given, as explained by one CNGO: "Beneficiaries see the huge inputs... including mid-day meals, educational expenses, healthcare assistance including curative treatments, various training etc."

The Indian sub-continent (and elsewhere) over the last 200 years, experienced a mission history of health, education and agriculture development activities. One CNGO stated "Education and health (hospitals) are a legacy of Christian missions. Many educated people in Bangladesh are aware of this. Occasionally a Bangladeshi will say 'I'm thankful for the Christian mission schools... I went to one'." Mission initiated schools originally for the poor still operate and new ones continue to be established, although the focus is changing to teacher training.

One CNGO suggested, that possibly Muslims may value a development practitioner of Christian faith, over a secular person of no religious faith, recognising a co-religionist, with a shared identity based on reverence for the 'creator God'. The CNGO opined "With more interfaith learning about

each other, Muslims will see Christians as their friends, however, currently there is little understanding of Christianity. Global War on Terror messages negatively influence Bangladesh Muslims against both the West and Christians (local and expat)." Based on my questioning and an acquaintance's PhD Bangladesh village field enquiries, there is anecdotal evidence that some Muslims may prefer a development practitioner of Christian faith, over a person of no religious faith. Lewthwaite (2017) shared "The Muslim villagers strongly preferred a religious practitioner, regardless of the religion. They believed religious people, through believing in God, have a basis for values whereas non-religious people don't. Secondarily, they prefer Christians over Hindus, even sometimes over fellow Muslims. Christians have a track record of good values and trustworthiness. Details of theology did not seem important" (W. Lewthwaite, personal communication, February 2017). This idea that Christians are very trustworthy in their development activities, was shared by several CNGOs.

The 'valued by the poorest' claim generated eight significant episodic stories, more than for any other claim. The significance lies in the clarity of the common narrative, involving the retelling of project participant / beneficiaries expressing their appreciation to the CNGOs for the assistance received and relationship experienced. Story summaries were: (i) A local poor community defended the CNGO in a government investigation, (ii) Santal (Tribal) parents appreciated their children's education, (iii) A conservative Muslim father expressed thanks and tears for his son's funded life-saving heart operation, (iv) A local non-Christian community member gave land for the CNGO's office, (v) A women expressed thanks for her child's life-changing education, (vi) Beneficiaries gave thanks for development capacity building rather than receiving things, (vii) A community worked with project staff to ensure the rapist of a disabled girl was caught and sent to prison, and (viii) A stigmatised people group expressed trust in a CNGO. I will present just one story which exemplifies CNGOs being 'valued by the poorest'.

> CNGO story: "Three years ago we had an evaluation. Our CNGO was not giving relief, but was capacity building. We heard from the people, that they value our capacity building more than money or other things from the government or other NGOs. The government people said our CNGO is different and that many NGOs come with big money and a big programme, but most of them cheat. The project participant / beneficiaries said 'when your CNGO first came, we didn't want to accept you, you didn't give us things. But, you stayed and we gave you the hard time, but you were always with us, and respected us, and you didn't touch our money and savings, but you taught us how we will manage our own things'. Our project participant / beneficiaries say we are different to other NGOs."

This story demonstrates trust, goodwill and friendship growing over time, along with shared problem solving between the CNGO and project participants / beneficiaries. The CNGO reference

to other NGOs 'cheating' is likely referring to group members' savings being stolen by other NGOs' staff, an occasional occurrence in Bangladesh. According to this participant, government officials and project members both think that the CNGO is different (in a good way) to other NGOs by focusing on long term capacity building, enabling the village people to learn to manage their own issues. In this key developmental way the CNGO is valued by the poor they work with.

This specific, episodic, past-tense story give an example of the CNGOs' experience of what actually happened, strongly supporting the claim of Bangladesh CNGOs being 'valued by the poorest', or at least, the very poor people they work with. The stories helped verify the more generalised, present-tense data, which in some situations can express a more hoped-for-ideal policy or procedure, rather than the actual situation.

Claim 3: Long-term sustainable presence

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs have a 'long-term sustainable presence', linked with religious institutions embedded in the local community, for example churches and mosques, which are generally longer lasting than civil-society organisations (James, 2011, p111-113).

Several CNGOs indicated long-term programmes based in one area, ranging from 10 to 30+ years, involving more than just one or two project cycles. One CNGO revealed "Our programme is up to twenty two years for a child, beginning before their birth, until they have graduated", and another stated "We have worked with a very stigmatised people group for thirty years so far." For the CNGOs, operating in one locality for as long as possible, makes good sense, as one locality may easily reach one hundred thousand people over multiple project cycles. However, this is usually prevented by donors, who are weary of intended finite length projects becoming long-term programmes, without clear and measurable graduation of participant / beneficiaries. Most CNGOs expressed that eventually their NGO-type activities will finish and leave. One CNGO observed the likely future funding reality: "One day our CNGO organisation will leave... there are many empty NGO buildings around the country." However, some try to organise their graduated local self-help groups into secondary level People's Institutions (PIs), called Village Development Forums (VDFs), to enable a long-term mentoring and monitoring presence.

CNGOs who were hosted by local churches (five out of the six researched) to implement their activities locally for the benefit of all, believed that after the CNGO development activities formally stop, local churches will continue a long-term development presence (of some sort). One CNGO explained enthusiastically, "Although our CNGO will go, our long term presence is through the church... we work with the local church for the benefit of all... the church's long term presence is essential." Another CNGO shared: "Church people are on our local project development boards, so the work will carry on. God says my people are the church, so CNGO staff are also the church."

Long-term church involvement grows long-term social capital with the local community, resulting in on-going development benefits. One CNGO expressed: "The church's long-term institutional focus is crucial for building social capital, rather than NGOs which come and go."

Planning for the local church to have a useful ongoing post-CNGO development role, requires both motivating and capacity building the church in community development during the active CNGO project phase. This is perhaps an 'elephant in the room' and least evidenced in terms of literature claims made for FBOs and the CNGOs' research findings. Mobilising and equipping poor Bangladesh local churches, belonging to a microscopic 0.3% Christian minority perceiving itself to be very poor and discriminated against by the 90% Muslim majority is extremely challenging. For many churches, the focus is on surviving and looking after its own poor members, rather than altruistically working to mobilise the wider community into community development activities. From the funding side of the development spectrum, secular sourced funding typically has strict conditions relating to any perceived religious support. This would likely make it impossible for intentional capacity building of local church congregations in community development during active CNGO projects. The issues of local churches' intended long-term development role / activities, the capacity building required and funding for this to occur, all need further exploration.

Claim 4: Efficient development services

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs provide 'efficient development services', by faith communities subsidising services and channelling resources through their existing networks (James, 2011, p111-113).

Several CNGOs considered this a difficult claim to assess due to comparability issues. With no common basis for comparing different development contexts, activities, scale and outcomes, it is difficult to know about efficiency. A large CNGO remarked "There is no common basis for cost comparison... different NGOs provide different development services. Most NGOs focus on 'software' (awareness and training programmes) which are cheap to run. Our sponsored children receive health and education activities, training for nutrition, water and sanitation, adolescent health, leadership, education for parents etc." NGOs operate at different scales of economy and unit costs. The same CNGO commented "As a big CNGO, we have good operational efficiency... the more children, the less cost per child. We don't hire external trainers or consultants for training... our staff give training using our web-based training curriculum."

However, regardless of comparability issues, all the researched CNGOs believed they provided efficient development services, due to living amongst the village participant / beneficiaries, using modest offices, accommodation and public transport, and other operating characteristics. CNGOs explained: "Our village workers live amongst village people, with very low living costs… we use

public transport" and "We rent basic operating facilities, like a rural house - tin shed, mud floor etc." Several CNGOs referred to more costly secular NGOs, with one CNGO saying: "Secular NGO staff don't live in villages... they use an office in a nearby town, travel to the community, spend little time there and then depart to the office. Their living and transport costs are high." The majority of Bangladesh CNGOs pay lower salaries than some well-known large secular NGOs. In particular, denominational CNGOs have paid low salaries to limit any perceived in-equality of salaries across all denominational staff. One CNGO explained "Our staff receive less salary… we mostly hire new staff at low salaries and capacity build them… this costs less."

CNGOs implementing activities hosted by local churches, generally make savings through lower set-up and operational costs, in effect subsidised by churches. One CNGO noted "Being hosted by church compounds in very remote areas costs very little to set-up or operate... churches subsidise development facilities and activities." However, sometimes churches see development programmes as a source of funding, discussed further below.

General Muslim acceptance of church hosted development activities assisted with economical multiple use of facilities. As one CNGO explained "Muslims generally trust Christians, the church and CNGOs, perhaps due to previous health and education services, although there can be some mistrust when new projects start in new areas. Building trust enables lower cost development through church hosting. Muslims often want to send their children to Christian mission schools to get a good education... resulting in comparative cost advantages for CNGOs." There are however, a minority of situations where some local Muslims do not accept CNGOs or church hosted development activities. They may pressure Muslim participant / beneficiaries, particularly women to leave the project activities. On a very rare occasion, if conciliation is unsuccessful, the project may depart from that area.

The community partnership and empowerment process common amongst CNGOs, facilitates low cost development. Self-help groups are capacity built for their own self-development, avoiding costly material inputs and beneficiary-costly high interest microcredit. One very experienced CNGO commented: "Development is efficient when both CNGOs and communities contribute three things: time, energy and money... we hire staff, but the beneficiaries and their communities give time for meetings and training at no cost." Related to this, CNGOs spoke favourably of their savings and loans group methodology compared with credit-based loans (as discussed several times in this thesis). One CNGO explained: "We implement savings-based microfinance, where participant / beneficiaries save and borrow from their own group money, paying modest interest to the group, rather than using expensive microcredit, charging high interest for payment to external providers, resulting in money departing the community."

It is important to note, that not all these CNGO operating characteristics are helpful for good quality development outcomes. In particular the practice of church denominational CNGOs having paid lower staff salaries, to limit any perceived in-equality of salaries across all denominational staff, has been a major problem. This has resulted at times in a rapid turn-over of entry-level development staff, who after receiving training and experience, move onto better paying opportunities, leaving little evidence they were ever employed. In this way meeting denominational priorities can be at the expense of more pure development priorities. Anecdotally, in one of the denominational CNGOs, this situation has seen some recent improvement. There is now more acceptance that a development manager for a project, for example funded by a foreign government, requires a more sophisticated set of knowledge, skills and reporting ability, than a local church outreach coordinator. One CNGO raised another issue, that "sometimes churches see development programmes as a source of funding," perhaps to create better facilities. Although this may be seen as opportunistic, gaining good facilities for ongoing local use is usually a good thing, provided they are used as intended. In this way church hosting of CNGO development activities, like any other partnership, will have a mix of shared and different goals to suit the partners.

Claim 5: Alternative to secular development theory

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs offer an 'alternative to secular development theory', particularly with questions of values and meaning (James, 2011, p111-113).

A distinctive contribution of many CNGOs, is a 'values formation' cross-cutting activity, sometimes including various Biblical values. Separate to the values formation activity, all CNGOs expressed a strong commitment to Biblical values, which they see as informing and driving their work. Some Biblical values are common to secular NGOs, for example so-called alternative development features of sustainability and stewardship, which have become pretty much main-streamed. One CNGO clearly articulated how their Biblical faith identity values informed their development theory and practice: "We focus on five Biblical principles, (i) Stewardship: development is for beneficiaries and their communities, so they contribute a little, with dignity and ownership, (ii) Generosity: group solidarity results in self-help group members belonging and working together, (iii) Integrity: money received is used for the intended purpose, (iv) Compassion: people help each other, coming out of poverty and developing together, and (iv) Justice: we work for human rights and gender equality." As discussed previously, although principles (and related values) such as the five above are used by a wide range of development practitioners (faith-based or secular), the CNGOs clearly identify them from a Biblical basis.

Some CNGO staff live in participant / beneficiary communities, perceived by the CNGOs to be a distinctive difference from most other NGOs. One CNGO explained, "Living in the community, we are observed in what we say and do." Several CNGOs contrasted *insitu* incarnational living

with some secular NGOs. One CNGO elucidated: "Other secular NGOs may be very professional, but we can't see the love of Christ in their work... they are not rooted relationally in the community… they arrive in the morning, advise on how to development, departing in the afternoon... they have an activity-based relationship." This 'incarnational' approach models Jesus, who "though being equal to God, came to live on earth, fully identifying with humanity's joys and challenges" (Bible, Philippians 2:6-8). The incarnation of 'God in heaven' to 'Jesus on earth' is a foundational and distinctive Christian teaching reflected in many of the CNGOs' staff living and working arrangements.

One CNGO encourages beneficiary communities' creativity to solve their own problems, as an extension of the Biblical idea, that "all people are made in God's image, full of creative potential" (Bible, Genesis 1:26-28). The CNGO elucidated: "God's creation in the world is huge, so we respect and facilitate community creativity to find solutions. Sometimes development donors and officials think they know development better... but the community has reality and experience." While capacity building to help people solve their own issues is an *a priori* development concept, the CNGOs foundation this with the theological term applied uniquely to humans, *imago dei* (made in God's image).

Another CNGO has a very strong focus on peace-making, derived from Biblical teaching, such as Jesus' Beatitudes, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they will be called the children of God" (Bible, Matthew 5:9), and "You have heard that it was said, eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also" (Bible, Matthew 5:38-39). The CNGO explained "Our peace focus is a very strong, unique and specific value... a cross-cutting lens to assess all we do. Our church denomination's Biblical peace theology is an alternative to secular development theory."

<u>Claim 6: Motivate voluntary service</u>

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs 'motivate voluntary service', inspired by their faith to assist fellow human beings (James, 2011, p111-113).

Two CNGOs considered the Bangladesh poverty context works against some forms of volunteerism seen in the West. One CNGO explained: "Volunteering in Bangladesh is not the same as in developed countries... poor people need money to live. Westerners say 'you can work with volunteers', but, we say 'paid volunteers', giving a little money to maintain the poor volunteers' lives." In a related way, CNGO staff on lower wages, are encouraged to see their work as a Godly vocational calling, similar to pastoring a church. However, this sense of call is stronger for some than others, as one CNGO clarified "Staff need Godly motivation and a calling... however, some staff are not motivated to work hard or do overtime, although a few might."

Another issue to arise was that of dependency which some staff have towards their employing organisations. One CNGO shared: "There is a kind of Christian dependency syndrome... staff expect their CNGO to pay them to do anything..." Contrasting this was the aspect of community volunteers who sometimes assist development projects. A CNGO stated: "It's been easier to motivate more voluntary service from the community people than from the implementation staff. This presents a picture suggesting the CNGOs are not overly successful in motivating voluntary service from their Christian (and other) employees. This is discussed further below.

Specific and distinctive to CNGOs, is the hosting of projects by local churches. Local churches volunteer in various ways, offering mainly facilities and labour. For example, one CNGO explained "165 Bangladesh local churches partner with, host, volunteer for and own the development work which they host... church Elders visit and support participant / beneficiary families." Linked with this, local resource mobilisation is being intentionally introduced to help reduce dependency on fickle foreign funding. As an example, one CNGO reported: "We've started trying to mobilise local resources, to set-up good facilities to start work in new areas. This requires an office facility, training rooms, water supply and toilets." It is the local hosting church who shares the responsibility to help mobilise its members and the wider community to establish these facilities. In a similar way CNGOs and / or the local hosting church try to motivate government officials to volunteer support. For example one CNGO recalled a "Government official was motivated to volunteer facilities for meetings and training."

Post-project community voluntary institutions operate with volunteer leadership and management. As introduced in 'Claim 3: Long-term sustainable presence', the government-supported Village Development Forum (VDF) model which enables graduated local self-help groups to receive long-term mentoring and monitoring, is open to any NGO's graduated self-help groups. Three CNGOs spoke about VDFs. One CNGO explained: "VDFs managed by self-help group volunteers lead the work after projects localise. The VDF combined group savings are levied 10% for community social services... this social responsibility comes from faith-based values... other secular NGOs don't do this." Another CNGO speaking of VDFs shared: "This is all run by volunteerism, not salary… community volunteerism shows ownership and sustainability - this is 'my / our' community, 'I / we' have to help." My research boundaries prevented further verification about the 10% levy for social services with regard to secular NGOs.

Although the research focus is on CNGOs in Bangladesh, volunteerism also includes foreign involvement in terms of funding and at times personnel. The CNGO projects are heavily funded by overseas Christian supporters, for example, one large CNGO noted "Our Bangladesh child development activities are funded by almost 40,000 foreign sponsors (not only Westerners)." Another contribution is that of time, made by foreign volunteers working in some CNGOs. One

CNGO said "Our foreign staff are called volunteers, paid an 'expense reimbursement allowance', not paid international consultant salaries... we get a lot more people for the dollar." In this way the Bangladeshi CNGO local projects motivate and facilitate foreign volunteerism (including funding).

The 'motivate voluntary service' claim generated four significant episodic stories, the second highest of any claim. The narratives described project participant / beneficiaries and community officials volunteering time and resources. Story summaries were: (i) A very conservative Muslim community volunteered bricks, adding to the local church's funds to build child tutoring facilities, (ii) A women's self-help group volunteered $NZ 36 (a large amount) towards medical costs for a sick woman and two group members took her to hospital, (iii) A government doctor volunteered to assist with medical diagnostic camps in villages, and (iv) A local council chairman, who despite claiming to not like NGOs, volunteered his office and conference room for CNGO trainings. I will present just one story which elucidates CNGOs ability to 'motivate voluntary service'.

> CNGO story: "In one very strong 'Jamaati-e-Islami' (conservative political movement) Muslim area our CNGO needed to build a kitchen and dining facility costing about $NZ 12,500 to start our child development work. The CNGO provided $NZ 8,900 (71%), but the construction could not be completed, with a short fall of $NZ 3,600. We asked the community to support this shortfall as it was for their children. Each of the children's families (majority Muslim) volunteered two bricks, equating to a total of $NZ 2,700 (22%). Then the local church volunteered another $NZ 900 (7%) enabling the work to be completed."

This story is an excellent example of a CNGO motivating voluntary service in a number of ways (primarily by funding in money or in kind) from a number of different people and groups (locals, foreigners, Muslims, Christians, donors and participant / beneficiaries). Of particular significance was the willingness of the Christian minority and Muslim majority to voluntarily work together for the shared benefit of all their children. It exemplifies several key research findings such as the community partnership and empowerment process and general Muslim acceptance of church hosted development activities, along with local churches volunteering and other local resource mobilisation.

It at first appeared that volunteerism is not well developed in the Bangladesh poverty context, compared with Western countries. The original research question enquired about regular committed volunteers, with four of the six CNGOs listing none. However, after exploring the situation further with additional probing questions, it became apparent the Bangladesh CNGOs and their foreign donor CNGOs do in fact motivate a lot of volunteerism, but in different ways, in different places, at different times, offering a huge range of voluntary inputs, including: time,

money, knowledge, skills, resources and facilities. A better research starting question would have been: 'Who and in what way are people (local and foreign) volunteering to help fund or implement your development projects?'

Claim 7: Encourage civil-society advocacy

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs 'encourage civil-society advocacy', through their extensive network of individuals, congregations and related organisations (James, 2011, p111-113).

Some Bangladesh CNGOs have had little precedent for national level advocacy, although this is changing. The more urgent poverty alleviating development service provision has dominated. One CNGO expressed: "Our CNGO's previous country leaders didn't prioritise advocacy, but we're reconsidering... we're now a member of an international Christian advocacy network with a local chapter in Bangladesh." Perhaps related to this, is a perception that national networking and advocacy for NGOs has involved much 'meet-seat-eat', with few tangible activities or measurable outcomes. For example one CNGO recalled that several years earlier "Stop the Traffik (international anti-trafficking NGO) posters were distributed to many NGOs and church offices, but I don't know what happened after that."

Several CNGOs shared that being a very small Christian minority in a Muslim majority context, experiencing a level of militant Islam, greatly limits their sense of freedom and security to be involved in larger public campaigns. One CNGO shared: "It's easy for Westerners to talk about advocacy, but for a Christian organisation working in a Muslim country, it's not always possible. We network with other like-minded organisations on some issues." A large international CNGO expressed: "Our parent CNGO working in twenty eight countries does most civil-society advocacy in Latin America, because of the Christian cultural presence, but as a microscopic minority in a Muslim country… we're careful." Another international CNGO commented: "Our international parent denominational CNGO has advocacy offices for influencing the USA and Canadian governments, and the UN, but are unrelated to Bangladesh affairs." Overall there was a sense that advocacy or speaking truth to power at a higher political or religious level is difficult where there are concerns for personal or organisational safety, for example in Bangladesh where religious and politically motivated violence occurs.

All CNGOs were involved in local level rights-based advocacy / development. There are two stakeholder groups in rights-based development, (i) The rights holders (people entitled to development resources, but often excluded), and (ii) The duty bearers (people and institutions obligated to fulfil the holders' rights, but often underperforming). Rights-based approaches aim to "strengthen the capacity of duty bearers (to deliver the development resources) in addition to

empowering the rights holders (to receive their development entitlements)" (Bruno-van Vijfeijken et al, 2009, p19-20). Promoting local level human rights and gender equality issues are core business for Bangladesh NGOs, regardless of their religious or secular identity. Local rights-based issues include early marriage, land rights and human trafficking. One CNGO shared: "Motivating communities for rights-based work, to seek their rights and speak on behalf of others, is a long process. We build relationships by connecting local government officials, civil society members, programme beneficiaries and their communities... we raise awareness of community strengths and needs... we educate and motivate beneficiaries and their communities to go and seek locally available resources from the resource holders." This has resulted in for example, elderly people, pregnant women and persons with disability gaining access to government assistance which they were previously ignorant about or deprived of.

As a good example of the rights-based approach, some CNGOs have sought to influence educational providers such as schools and teachers to provide better education. A large CNGO working with children noted: "We influence schools to provide better quality education, through dialogue and parents meetings. Schools want to receive our sponsored children (150 to 400 children in each location), because we supply extra coaching and pay all tuition fees, but first the school must show improvement." This is a counter argument to the previous view expressed that networking and advocacy has often resulted in few tangible activities or measurable outcomes. Children receiving better (and longer) education is a core foundation for good development outcomes, such as better decision making later in life.

One very experienced CNGO opined that seeking to apply pressure to government departments and other resource holders operating in a culture of patronage and corruption, places CNGOs at a disadvantage, due to their Biblically derived morals and ethics. The CNGO commented: "It's challenging for us CNGOs... we can't pay bribes (*gush*) or lie to get things done, we must be honest and patient." It is commonly perceived that most organisations including NGOs pay bribes to facilitate various approvals to be granted. However, amongst Christian organisations (CNGOs and businesses) there is considerable angst and debate about honesty and integrity verses a level of pragmatism in paying facilitation money to achieve the greater good.

I will now assess the Bangladesh CNGO research findings in terms of the three spiritual advantages claimed by some writers for FBOs.

5.5 Spiritual advantage claims

The three spiritual advantages claimed by some literature for FBOs compared with secular NGOs, is that they can offer: (i) spiritual / religious teaching, (ii) spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose, and (iii) spiritual / religious transcendent power (James, 2011, p111-114).

Claim 1: Spiritual / religious teaching

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs can offer 'spiritual / religious teaching' to assist development outcomes, as religious teaching includes important development principles, such as justice, compassion, forgiveness, reconciliation and stewardship (James, 2011, p111-114).

The CNGOs included a strong focus on presenting and demonstrating Biblical values, as previously discussed under 'Alternative to secular development theory'. However, there was considerable variation as to 'if' and 'how' religious teaching is used to support the values teaching. For example, one CNGO stated: "My CNGO presents spiritual and religious teaching as part of our values training. Our CNGO staff, both Christian and non-Christian can refer to and use our religious teaching about values." This contrasts with another CNGO commenting: "We don't give any direct religious teaching... when we teach on peace and reconciliation, we don't teach from the *Bible* or *Koran*, rather it's taught as values." Similarly, one CNGO believed their development work and lifestyle shows their religion, rather than using spiritual and religious teaching.

Some CNGOs use contextualised religious stories, such as Jesus' parables in their values teaching. For example, '*The Parable of the Good Samaritan*' (Bible, Luke 10: 25-37) is popularly used and acceptable to all religions in Bangladesh. In this parable, Jesus challenges his listeners, that it was the 'other', the religious and social outcast (the Samaritan) who obeyed God by assisting the victim of robbery, while the religious 'insiders' walked on by. The Old Testament Ten Commandments (Bible, Exodus 20) are also used by some. One CNGO explained: "We may use some religious stories, but we don't say where these are from... if people ask, we explain where they are from." Another CNGO may in some contexts refer to Jesus, acceptable to both Christians and Muslims. This was explained: "A story may include Jesus, the son of God for Christians, or the prophet *Issa* for Muslims."

One CNGO uses a Biblically-based Holistic Child Development (HCD) curriculum, explaining: "We implement HCD separately and in addition to children attending local government schools... HCD can be studied at a Master's level in an Asian university."

The way 'Spiritual / religious teaching' is done, varies considerably based on the operating context, the CNGO's faith identity, government regulation and donor rules. For example, more caution is taken in a Muslim majority context, compared with a Christian or Hindu context. Great care is taken to comply with the Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau and any donor requirements. Some CNGOs have a more conservative approach to sharing teaching than others, or they might not share at all.

Claim 2: Spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs can offer 'spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose', helping change values and attitudes to facilitate good community development (James, 2011, p111-114).

This was a more difficult question for the CNGOs to answer, due to abstract or metaphorical ideas surrounding the word 'hope'. Several CNGOs spoke of beneficiaries gaining hope for a better future, although it was not clear how this had spiritual or religious roots. One CNGO reflected: "Hope gives a dream for a better future... hope is the inspiration for participating in development, believing transformation (change) is possible." Further to this, hope is worked out practically, with CNGOs explaining hope is: "... seeing educated children eat two meals per day" and "… working for peaceful relationships, changed lives, values, attitudes and behaviour." Some project participant / beneficiaries have hope for the next generation, as their children will benefit from today's development activities. One CNGO explained: "Beneficiaries commonly say 'we have hope, we're learning, we're making money, so our next generation (children) will have a better future'." Hope included an overarching focus on future development benefits and wellbeing.

One CNGO spoke of hope in the Great Commandment, wanting to see people love God and neighbour (Bible, Matthew 22:34-40), elucidating: "We share a vision and hope of community development and 'integral mission' (speaking and showing God's love)... we share this with donors, implementing partners, the community, churches, everybody" (refer to story below). Another CNGO shared about hope in the Kingdom of God, the over-arching Biblical theme of God's rule and reign, both now and future. The CNGO explained: "We present hope in a formal way, through a life plan, including both personal and spiritual development. Our hope is to see churches strengthened and more responsible to care for other human beings." The CNGOs considered their Christian faith identity, Biblical worldview and church-in-society ideas to be integral to their hope story alongside their development ideas.

Eternal hope in a future existence, for those who suffer now, also arose. One CNGO observed: "Sometimes poor people express 'we don't have food or shelter or hope… what is the meaning of this life?' In response, we can share the *Bible* story '*The Rich Man and Lazarus*' (Bible, Luke 16: 19-31), when in the after-life, the previously poor beggar Lazarus is now OK, while the previously rich man is now tormented in Hades, begging for pity. Through this role reversal, the poor have eternal hope in heaven." The Christian belief in both the temporal and eternal, provides hope in some sort of future existence where peace, justice and sufficiency is a reality for those experiencing poverty and injustice in this life.

The ‘spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose’ claim generated three significant episodic stories. The narratives were all quite different, each revealing a different aspect of hope, adding authenticity to them. Story summaries were: (i) Eternal hope in a future existence for those who suffer now, (ii) Women previously abused by their husbands, gaining hope by seeing their husbands’ lives changing, and (iii) Development partner organisations gaining hope in a development vision for the future involving the Great Commandment - loving God and neighbour. I will present one story which demonstrates CNGOs offering spiritual / religious hope as a vision for their development.

> CNGO story: “Our implementation partners working with us, say that they now know the meaning of community development and integral mission (speaking and showing God’s love). They know what is the goal, the hope of what we are doing, and why we are doing it. Before we were unclear, so that is why we are emphasising with our partners. There is a slogan: ‘Having vision is good, but more good is shared vision’. In many ways we have to ensure our vision is shared… by the donors, by the community, by the churches, everybody. So the vision is shared. Our vision is in a way, the Great Commandment, to love God and our neighbour etc (Bible, Matthew 22:34-40). Now there is a vision and a hope.”

The story gives a practical and distinctive example of spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose being facilitated by one CNGO, to participant / beneficiaries, their communities, project donors, implementing partners and churches. Their vision for development includes hope in the Great Commandment, the Biblical mandate of Jesus to love God and love your neighbour as yourself. Not all the CNGOs were able to express such a clear mandate, reflecting variation in their faith identities, theology of humanitarianism, security concerns, donor requirements and such like.

Claim 3: Spiritual / religious transcendent power

Literature claim of comparative advantage: FBOs can offer ‘spiritual / religious transcendent power’ which energises human spirits, and prayer to assist participant / beneficiaries and development change (James, 2011, p111-114).

All the researched CNGOs prayed as an integral part of their faith identity. One CNGO shared: “In our Christian culture, we pray before starting any event. Secular people can’t pray as we do.” All CNGOs have prayer and devotions with staff during work time. Another CNGO explained: “Prayer is our driving force every morning in the office... we pray for our staff, projects, beneficiaries and their communities. We have experienced God meeting our organisational needs when we pray. Staff of all religions give their personal and work requests, and thanks and praise.”

Alternatively, one CNGO commented "in some of our district offices with no Christian staff, there is no office prayer." The CNGOs being very aware of secular NGOs *modus operandi*, considered their practice of prayer to be a unique and distinctive advantage, as discussed further below.

All the CNGOs offer prayer with beneficiaries of any religion and their communities, subject to the village context and whether staff feel prayer is welcome. One CNGO said: "Most beneficiaries pray in some way and welcome our prayer... some request prayer. They see Christian prayer is powerful and some have experienced God's transcendent power. There are so many examples of 'you prayed for my child, now they are well, thank you'." Another CNGO agreed: "They are happy to receive prayer. This is always happening. Our partner CNGOs receive prayer requests from the communities and beneficiaries." The CNGOs understand their faith makes a real difference in the way they request God's transcendent power to be worked out by praying for people. Bangladesh along with many other developing countries is permeated by religious faith, with an *a priori* acceptance and expectation that spiritual / religious faith is part of life and overcoming problems.

Prayer with other religions is carried out in various ways, if the people wish. One CNGO shared: "Praying to a common 'creator God' is common in Bangladesh interfaith settings". Further to this, another CNGO explained: "Using the appropriate religious language of the person being prayed with is common, for example, God (in English) or *Issor* (in Bangla), becomes *Allah* (in Arabic). Similarly, *Jesu* (the son of God for us Christians) can be called *Issa* (the prophet for Muslims). For Hindus, our prayer is generally no problem... one of their names for God (*Ish*) is similar to our name for God (*Issor*)." None of the CNGOs expressed any concern or serious caution in praying with people of other religions (representing 96% of adult and 93% of child project participants).

The 'spiritual / religious transcendent power' claim generated two significant episodic stories, although there were other stories to choose from, as the topic and practice of prayer is so intertwined in the CNGOs' faith identity and operational characteristics. Aspects of prayer have been included in some of the previous stories presented. The two story summaries were: (i) Project participant / beneficiaries of any religion requesting prayer from CNGO staff or local Christians for sick or needy people, and (ii) CNGO staff asking if sick or needy people would like to be prayed with. I will present one story.

> CNGO story: "The project participant / beneficiaries (Christian or non-Christian) have sometimes asked for church leaders to come and pray for their sick child. 'Please pray to your God that my child will get healed from the sickness'. This is how they see that Christian prayer is very powerful. We are not saying directly that our God is almighty God. They have an experience of transcendent prayer. For example in my last visit to the

field, a development project committee member described how non-Christian parents came to him and requested prayer for their sick boy. The boy became well and the parents gave thanks for the prayer."

This specific, episodic, past-tense story gives a clear record of the CNGO either offering to pray or being asked to pray for sick and needy project participant / beneficiaries, and then doing it. Christian prayer is seen as powerful and the Christian God's power is experienced following prayer, rather than through words.

I will now assess the Bangladesh CNGO research findings in terms of the two comparative disadvantages claimed by some writers for FBOs.

5.6 Comparative disadvantage claims

As discussed in the Literature Review, some writers claim comparative disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs. The two FBO disadvantages presented as questions for research are: (i) Is religion part of the problem for development? and in the CNGO context, (ii) Are churches difficult to work with for development (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111)?

Claim / question 1: Is religion part of the problem for development?

Literature claim / question of comparative disadvantage: Is religion part of the problem for development, a negative force holding back development - perceived as: divisive, regressive, irrelevant, insensitive and proselytising (James, 2011, p110-111)?

One CNGO interviewee said the idea that 'religion inhibits development' is a Western secularism idea, observing: "It's a secular Western response, to be dismissive or suspicious about church-based development activities... some donors, especially foreign governments, stipulate development funding shall not be used for religious work or include any Christian content." Another CNGO said: "I've never heard that religion is a problem for development… but some of our donors say that we shall not use their money for mission work, especially the government donors. I don't know why they're saying this." Although Bangladesh was originally established as a secular country, a religious worldview (belief, values and behaviour) pervades society, making it difficult to separate life into separate sacred and secular compartments. Another CNGO stated: "The idea that religion inhibits development is non-sensical. I've heard the 'anti-religion argument' but have not seen it in practice in Bangladesh... religion is not part of the problem, unless you're an Islamic fundamentalist." All the CNGOs spoke of Islamising forces within Bangladesh challenging human rights and political and gender freedoms sought within an MDG development framework.

Some CNGOs reported institutional bias against them, from secular funders or Muslim majority staff fronted institutions. One CNGO elucidated: "Sometimes we experience bias from institutional funders... with concerns about possible conversion activities. Our CNGO was not considered for partnership with an international secular WASH (water, sanitation, hygiene) donor, due to assumptions we would be biased towards churches and Christians. I explained to the potential donor 'there are only 0.3% Christians in Bangladesh serving 35% of the population... we do not focus on our own community, but focus on the needs of the poor regardless of their religion'. Despite explaining this, we were ignored." This type of negative assumption from secular donors results in lost development partnerships and sometimes valuable development activities not occurring. Most CNGOs have experienced a negative government Muslim staff bias, fronting supposedly secular government departments, similar to the previous institutional bias. This bias results in increased compliance issues for the CNGOs and some development activities stopping. Another CNGO expressed: "Muslim government people know we are a CNGO... sometimes they say we may have hidden agendas to convert people. Sadly, we had to close a development programme amongst very poor tribal people (non-Muslims) due to wrong government Muslim staff perceptions."

Most CNGOs have experienced local Muslim concerns when they start working in new locations. Several CNGOs recounted their experiences: "In new project areas, Muslims sometimes think we will somehow make them Christians... but when we enter and prove that we want to transform their whole life… we become their trusted friend… Christians are very trusted." The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh, evidenced by killings of non-Muslims and secularists discussed in Section 4.8.3 and 4.8.4, presents a religious-based threat to CNGO development activities. In this sense, religion *is* 'part of the problem' inhibiting development freedoms of democracy and gender equality. This prevents further development and in fact can undo previous development gains. One CNGO voiced their concerns: "A religious challenge to development is the rise of Islamic fundamentalism... they think Christians are agents of Westerners... sometimes Muslim preachers give negative information in sermons after Friday prayer... this is a big problem."

The 'Is religion part of the problem for development?' claim / question generated one significant episodic story from a CNGO interviewee.

> CNGO story: "I heard part of a fascinating discussion between the Bangladeshi Christian director of a Bangladesh denominational CNGO and the Western atheist country representative for a Western CNGO. The Bangladesh Christian director simply could not understand how somebody could be an atheist at all... and particularly why an atheist would be working for an FBO!"

This story was interesting, as it typified a worldview chasm between a Bangladesh Christian and a Western atheist, both working for CNGOs. This account of an actual discussion, gives some support to the CNGOs who said they had not heard and could not understand how religion could be a problem for development. This demonstrated the great value of having NGO staff who are open and respectful, with a religious worldview and practice, ie: who are faith-literate when dealing with an FBO, as discussed in Section 4.3.

Claim / question 2: Are churches difficult to work with for development?
Literature claim / question of comparative disadvantage: Are churches difficult to work with for development, indicated by 'interference, patronage and control' and 'welfare-orientation, discrimination / favouritism towards members, hierarchical leadership and organizational cultures, unprofessional staffing, and weak management systems' (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111)?

All the CNGOs have experienced difficulty in working with churches (at local or denominational levels) for community development. The CNGOs lamented: "Working with churches is the most challenging part of our work...", "we experience all the problems stated...", "sometimes it's difficult to have good partnerships", "we must be careful not to get dragged into internal politics of the church or denomination who host our work", "church-based programmes often involve leadership conflict, money misappropriation and quarrels… churches want to be part of management and leadership, and to employ their own people for financial gain… they are not professional, their education is inadequate, and they don't have a volunteer mentality." These comments overwhelmingly support the notion that churches can be difficult to work with. However, one CNGO said: "These issues are not happening in every place, but certainly in some places." The statistical frequency and severity of issues was not captured by the research.

Based on the various comments and stories, it appears the overriding challenge of working with churches is caused by patronage, a very strong Bangladeshi cultural characteristic, governing relations of influence and control in every strata and sphere of society. This results in a mix of favouritism, cronyism and nepotism, as patrons give advantage (patronage) to their clients (preferred group), which could be family, friends, ethnicity, political party or religion, while excluding others. This is a key cause of corruption. Western parlance includes: 'it's not what you know, it's who you know', 'being part of the old boy's network', 'the inner circle' and 'shoulder tapping'. Learning about the negative issue of patronage, points to the small Clarence Maloney '*Behaviour and Poverty in Bangladesh*' book, written 30 years ago (1988), investigating causes of persisting poverty in Bangladesh. His unique focus was on people's behaviour, rather than more conventional issues of economics, resources, population growth and history (all of which play a part). Maloney found the "pattern of interpersonal behaviour inhibits the building up of solid

institutions which are necessary for all-round development" (Maloney, 1988, front cover). More specifically, he believed the "behavioural complex of patronage expectation and authoritarianism retards the development process..." (Maloney, 1988, p48). Reading this book for the first time several years after arriving in Bangladesh, can best be described as an epiphany experience, as in, 'Aha… that describes and helps explain what I have seen happening'. A number of other Westerners who had lived and worked in Bangladesh for several years or more, had a similar experience upon first reading the book.

The CNGOs considered that denominational CNGOs experience more interference and influence from their denomination and churches, due to their affiliation and governance links, while independent CNGOs have significantly more freedom from churches they 'choose' to work with. Denominational CNGOs said: "Church members want our denominational CNGO to work primarily for church people..." and "some church members ask why should others gain advantage? We try to make them understand, development is for the whole community, church and non-church people." Another CNGO commented: "I've seen a lot interference and control... a church denomination may appear not very interested in our CNGO activities, and then, suddenly they're interfering. Local village church people always request extra help, over and above the planned project activities. A church minister may request development activities in their location, simply because they are located there, not based on any formal needs survey."

One CNGO spoke of welfare mentality, a culture of dependency of some Bangladesh churches, expecting external assistance, especially from CNGOs. This can result in animosity between CNGO staff working for the whole community and local poor Christians feeling deprived. One CNGO explained: "The welfare and dependency mentality creates a sense of obligation between the development organisation and the local church. However, I do have sympathies with the church being very poor and a minority religion in a Muslim majority country." This illustrates the patron-client expectation between a perceived resource rich CNGO (patron) and a poor local church (client).

Patronage creates leadership and governance issues with expectations of favour for churches, which when unfulfilled by CNGOs, create relational difficulties. One CNGO remarked: "Some church ministers are very much top-down 'big leaders', resulting in governance issues for denominational CNGOs." In the face of this fight for control, it becomes very difficult for a local development project manager to truly implement the planned development projects activities.

One CNGO with extensive church and development experience, related that denominational CNGOs previously had professionalism and management issues with poor policies and procedures. This resulted in patronage-based selection of inadequate staff, including relatives. Because

churches know Biblical love and values like forgiveness, there was lots of forgiveness in response to issues of favouritism, unprofessionalism and staff skill issues. In recent years, Western donors have applied considerable pressure for better accountability, capabilities and reporting, and in some cases where problems have continued, they have withdrawn funding. The CNGO stated: "There has been weak management. Sometimes churches nominated local members to be development staff, without sufficient knowledge, skills or experience. In some CNGOs, Christian staff were less likely to be fired for stealing than non-Christian staff... a very unprofessional way... what should the Christian way be?"

Some CNGOs have attempted to reduce church interference, by creating operational agreements to clarify relationships and responsibilities. One CNGO voiced positively: "We now have policy guidelines to explain the working relationship between our CNGO, the local church, project participant / beneficiaries and their local community. We arrange coordination meetings with the church... we have discussion, suggestions and corrective measures. We've overcome many problems... it's a learning journey." Another CNGO stated: "Bad behaviour now has consequences… we're now much more clear, more black and white, about our expectations and bottom lines... if things are bad for too long, we stop the project and depart." The CNGO had pulled out of one area due to internal politics within the local church.

The 'Are churches difficult to work with for development?' claim / question generated four significant episodic stories. The narratives were broadly similar, around the issue of patronage, resulting in favouritism and advantage to a relational few. Story summaries were: (i) Conflict of interest between project staff and governance who were related, (ii) Church leadership control over a CNGO considering working with them, (iii) Church power politics resulting in the loss of a CNGO project, and (iv) A denominational CNGO previously operating in a nepotistic way employing mainly denominational relatives. I will present one story which exemplifies churches being difficult to work with for development.

> CNGO story: "My church denomination started community development in 2005. At first there was a lot of favouritism and nepotism, as they mainly employed denominational relatives, with no open merit-based staff hiring. A foreign donor requested my international CNGO to be a consultant and trainer to help capacity build and sort the issues out. I went as a professional, not as a denominational relative. They would say to me 'you are our daughter, our sister, you could help us, you could give us more money and jobs... why are you not kind to your own people?' This was a very hard time for me, but slowly they learnt and became more professional."

This story presents a clear example of churches and denominations having been difficult to work with for community development, with specific reference to a denominational CNGO. Issues of favouritism, nepotism and relational advantage were apparent, reflective of the strong Bangladeshi cultural characteristic of patronage. The foreign donor exerted pressure on the CNGO to operate in a more accountable, task orientated and less relational manner, focusing on better project identification, design, implementation and reporting. This required donor funded external intervention over a number of years, resulting in observable improvements. It is possible that the issues of working with churches and denominations existed for an historical period, from the 1980s, when CNGOs became more prevalent, and that a learning curve of improvement has occurred. However, my research did not specifically investigate this.

A topic worthy of further research is the relationship between the Bangladesh patron-client cultural context and organisations (including churches) existing within that context. A key question related to this claim is: Are churches and denominations any more difficult to work with, than other religious or non-religious groups birthed and nurtured in the same patron-client culture? One point of difference, is that Christians believe the gospel (good news) of the Kingdom of God demonstrated by Jesus through word, deed and sign, has the power to transform individuals, communities and societies, for the good of all, in essence a form of community development. However, in the Bangladesh microscopic church context, regular Biblical input is competing with the very strong and pervasive underlying patron-client culture. Spiritual and cultural transformation takes time.

5.7 Summary

This chapter presented the research findings, discussion and analysis about the difference faith makes for the six Bangladesh CNGOs. The CNGOs' operating characteristics were tested against existing literature claims of distinctive contributions, advantages and disadvantages for FBOs. Specifically, it sought to determine if the operating characteristics that these claims attribute to FBOs, have relevance and application to the researched CNGOs. The research involved only the CNGOs' perceptions, without comparative research involving other NGOs. Prior to considering their operating characteristics, note was taken of their claimed faith identity and a distinctive out working of that being church linkage. In general, the Bangladesh CNGOs' operating characteristics, broadly supported the literature claims of seven motivational, organisational and institutional characteristics, three spiritual characteristics, and one of the two claimed disadvantages. There were however a number of nuances depending on the local operating context and each CNGO's *modus operandi*. The research findings strongly indicate that the CNGOs' operating characteristics, supported by their underlying faith identity, generally support existing literature claims of distinctive contributions. However, the literature claims of advantage or

disadvantage compared with secular NGOs are not conclusive and are discussed in the final chapter presenting the research conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I present my research conclusions and recommendations in relation to the research question: 'How do Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country, perceive that their faith identity influences their operating characteristics, making them distinctive from secular NGOs?' The research question is answered in relation to the wider literature reviewed, analytical and conceptual frameworks used, and the actual research findings. Investigating the difference faith makes for the six Bangladeshi CNGOs focuses on the way their faith identity, critical to their vision and mission, is worked out through their operating characteristics. This includes differences or distinctive contributions and literature claims of advantages and disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs. I conclude with recommendations arising from my findings, consisting of key topics for further research.

6.2 Faith identity - The 1st difference

The first way faith makes a difference for the six CNGOs, compared with secular NGOs, is the importance and significance of their corporate faith identity to their stakeholders including leadership, governance, staff, supporters, funders and recipients (to varying degrees). All six CNGOs claimed a strong, explicit and open Christian identity. There appeared to be no obfuscation regarding Christian identity, to the communities they work with, or to Bangladesh government departments with whom they must comply. Faith identity is critical in determining the CNGOs' vision and mission, and helps explain some of their distinctive operating characteristics, compared with secular NGOs. The CNGOs' organisational profiles, including their vision, mission, values, one-liner and logo, reinforced their Christian faith identity claims.

6.3 Church linkage - The 2nd difference

A second way faith often makes a difference for the CNGOs distinctively different to secular NGOs, is having an operational linkage with national church denominations or local churches. A CNGO may be affiliated with, representative of, governed by, funded by, hosted by, or operating in the same location as a church denomination or local church. A popular arrangement is a local church hosting a CNGO for the benefit of the whole community. Four CNGOs had a church denominational linkage, and five CNGOs had some or all development projects hosted by local churches. Hosting typically includes use of a local church's land and facilities, often in very remote and poor locations. Local church hosting facilitates a long-term sustainable presence among the poor, provides a physical presence and social entry point into a community, and offers spiritual or prayer support for project people and the development activities. Synergistic benefits for host church communities include being both 'participant / beneficiaries' of development assistance and 'development agents' assisting the wider community.

6.4 Operating characteristics - The 3rd difference

The third important way faith makes a difference for the six CNGOs is through their operating characteristics. The research to investigate this was based on claims (by some) in literature that FBOs have distinctive characteristics and comparative advantages compared with secular NGOs, adding value to development, in seven motivational, organisational and institutional ways, and three spiritual ways (James, 2011, p111; Lunn, 2009, p944; Tomalin, 2012, p691). The research also investigated claims of two comparative disadvantages for FBOs compared with secular NGOs (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111). The research sought to determine if operating characteristics that these claims attribute to FBOs, are applicable to the CNGOs.

6.4.1 Motivational, organisational and institutional operating characteristics

The research conclusions concerning the CNGOs' operating characteristics compared with the seven motivational, organisational and institutional operating characteristics (and advantages) claimed by some for FBOs are presented here.

The CNGOs all agreed that they as FBOs 'reach the poorest' (claim #1), due to social and physical infrastructure, such as local church facilities based in the poorest communities, through which development activities may be implemented (James, 2011, p111-113). All have extensive knowledge, skills and experience in poverty alleviating development work. They prioritise the poorest in project selection, often hosted by local churches in remote areas with few services (mail, telephone, internet and transport), and work with previously neglected Tribals, considered the poorest and most socially stigmatised people in Bangladesh. The CNGOs consider their 'savings-based loans' system more suited to the poor, than the large secular microcredit-based NGOs, working with the not-so-poor, charging high interest to repay 'credit-based loans' to outside funders (investors), resulting in a capital outflow from communities. The CNGOs work with the 'settled' poor, capacity building stable self-help groups over time, however they do not work with the transient poorest, due to the difficulties of stable group formation. The research concludes that the CNGOs reach very poor people, but it was not possible to determine that they 'reach the poorest'. The literature claim superlative term 'poorest' is problematic. Many organisations claim to reach the 'poorest of the poor', perhaps implying they are more worthy of funding. Based on my research findings, I suggest the FBO literature claim should be reworded with the more accurate and modest wording 'reach the very poor'.

The CNGOs perceived they are 'valued by the poorest' (claim #2), due to a mix of living and working in poor faith-based communities and observable religious motivation to serve the public good, rather than for personal or political gain (James, 2011, p111-113). Relational reciprocity means people value who they see benefit them. Linked with this were accounts of trust, goodwill

and friendship growing overtime, and shared problem solving between project staff and participant / beneficiaries. The CNGOs offer a significant scope and scale of development activities, building on a 200 year mission history of health, education and agriculture in the Indian sub-continent. There is anecdotal evidence that some Muslims may prefer a development practitioner of Christian faith, over a person of no religious faith. Each of the eight episodic, past-tense stories (the most for any claim) gave similar narratives of very poor participant / beneficiaries expressing thanks to CNGOs for the assistance received and relationship experienced. In summary, the CNGOs appear to be valued by the poor, of any religion they work with. However, as previously discussed, the superlative claim term 'poorest' is a problem. Based on my research findings that CNGOs work with a range of poor people, I suggest the FBO literature claim should be reworded to 'valued by the poor they work with'.

The research strongly supported claim #3, that FBOs have a 'long-term sustainable presence', linked with religious institutions embedded in the local community, for example churches and mosques, which are generally longer lasting than civil-society organisations (James, 2011, p111-113). CNGOs like other NGOs eventually leave areas, but local hosting churches continue a long-term development presence (of some sort), although the nature and usefulness of this lacked evidence and explanation in both the literature and my research. A useful post-CNGO community development presence, requires that churches be motivated and capacity built in community development during the active CNGO project phase. Although local churches have an advantage in being a settled and coherent group, the Bangladesh church is a microscopic entity, perceiving itself to be very poor and discriminated against by the 90% Muslim majority. The churches' focus is typically survival and member care, lacking skills and resources to altruistically mobilise the wider community for the common good. It is also unlikely that secular sourced funding could be used to capacity build local churches in community development, which is an issue for further research.

There was very strong support for claim #4, that FBOs provide 'efficient development services', by faith communities subsidising services and channelling resources through their existing networks (James, 2011, p111-113). CNGO field staff often live very simply in project participant / beneficiary villages, requiring less salaries. Using very modest office buildings and public transport reduces costs. Projects hosted by local churches, generally acceptable to Muslims, enables sharing land and buildings, with lower set-up and operational costs. The CNGOs generally use a low cost community partnership and empowerment process, based around capacity building local self-help groups to work for their own development, along with savings-based microfinance, avoiding expensive externally funded credit-based microcredit. While the research points to low cost, value for money development services, there are two issues to consider further. First, is comparability issues, with no common basis for assessing efficiency for different development

activities and outcomes in different contexts. Second, is church denominational CNGOs paying lower salaries to limit any perceived inequality across all denominational staff, resulting at times in a rapid turn-over of entry-level development staff. Meeting denominational priorities can be at the expense of more pure development priorities.

The research confirms that FBOs offer an 'alternative to secular development theory' (claim #5), particularly with questions of values and meaning (James, 2011, p111-113). This is unsurprising given the CNGOs' strong Christian faith identity helping shape their vision, mission and operating characteristics. One distinctive cross-cutting activity is values formation, sometimes including Biblical values. Field staff living in participant / beneficiary villages, models Jesus' incarnation, coming to earth to identify with humanity. CNGOs *a priori* believe all people are made in God's image, full of creative potential, able to solve many of their own development issues, when supported by justice, capacity building and opportunity. Peace-making activities are motivated from a Biblical peace theology based on justice and forgiveness. All CNGOs seek to implement the Great Commandment (loving God and neighbour). By implementing a range of activities, the CNGOs reveal different aspects of a Biblical approach and worldview to development, demonstrating that whether viewed through a secular or Biblical lens, there is no one approach to development.

The operating characteristic that FBOs 'motivate voluntary service' (claim #6), inspired by their faith to assist fellow human beings (James, 2011, p111-113), was strongly supported by the research. However, the nature of the volunteerism (who, what, where) was surprising. Initially, it seemed that volunteerism, understood as regular local volunteers was not well developed in the Bangladesh poverty context, where 'poor people need money to live' and the 'paid volunteer' approach offering small living costs is used. Four CNGOs had no volunteers, while two had a few. The CNGO expectation that staff having a Godly vocational calling, is sometimes replaced by a dependency on foreign funding. However, further probing revealed the Bangladesh CNGOs and their foreign donor CNGOs motivate tens of thousands of volunteers (inside and outside of country), offering a huge range of inputs, including time, money, knowledge, skills, resources and facilities. Volunteers include local church and community people, expatriate development workers, overseas funding supporters, local government officials and post-project community institution leaders. Each of the four episodic, past-tense stories (the second highest for any claim) gave clear examples of CNGOs motivating volunteerism from different people, in different ways and places. On reflection, the research field question should have been broader, enquiring of the who, what and where of volunteerism.

The research only partially supported claim #7, that FBOs 'encourage civil-society advocacy', through their extensive network of individuals, congregations and related organisations (James,

2011, p111-113). A lack of national level advocacy has been due to the more urgent focus on local poverty alleviating activities, the enormous challenge of overcoming a culture of patronage and corruption, and in particular, safety concerns of being a very small religious minority in a Muslim majority context, experiencing a level of religious and politically motivated violence. Public advocacy works best in an atmosphere of equality, tolerance, rule of law, and political and religious freedom. However, the CNGOs have all been extensively involved in local-level rights-based advocacy, seeking to 'empower the rights holders' (the poor and marginalised) to receive their development entitlements from the resource holders (the government and such like). This has included influencing educational providers to improve services.

6.4.2 Spiritual operating characteristics

The research conclusions concerning the CNGOs' operating characteristics compared with the three spiritual operating characteristics (and advantages) claimed by some for FBOs are presented here.

The research partially supported the FBO operating characteristic (claim #1) of offering 'spiritual / religious teaching', to assist development outcomes, as religious teaching includes important development principles, such as justice, compassion, forgiveness, reconciliation and stewardship (James, 2011, p111-114). Some CNGOs may on occasion offer small amounts of contextualised spiritual / religious teaching as part of their values focus. This varies considerably based on the operating context (religious), CNGOs' faith identity features, government regulation and donor rules. For example, more caution is taken in a Muslim majority context, compared with a Christian or Hindu context. Great care is taken to comply with the Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau and any donor requirements. Some CNGOs in line with their specific faith identity, are more reticent in sharing religious teaching, or might not share at all, believing their work and lifestyle show their religion. However, most CNGOs felt freedom to present contextualised religious stories such as the Jesus parable '*The Good Samaritan*', useful for values teaching and acceptable to all religions in Bangladesh, with Jesus believed to be the Son of God for Christians, and the Prophet *Issa* for Muslims.

The research findings supported the operating characteristic that FBOs can offer 'spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose' (claim #2), helping change values and attitudes to facilitate good community development (James, 2011, p111-114). This was initially a difficult question for CNGOs due to abstract or metaphorical ideas surrounding the word 'hope'. However, further probing found that the CNGOs and / or their participant / beneficiaries experienced a mix of different types of hope, both temporal and eternal, physical and spiritual. This included development hope for a better future and hope for the next generation, due to activities such as education being implemented now. Some sort of spiritual hope also exists for the CNGOs,

including hope in the Great Commandment (loving God and neighbour), hope in the Kingdom of God (God's rule and reign), and eternal hope for those suffering now. Three episodic, past-tense stories gave good examples of the CNGOs facilitating a distinctive spiritual / religious aspect of hope in participant / beneficiaries, their communities, project donors, implementing partners and churches. This presented hope in the Great Commandment, the Biblical mandate of Jesus to love God and love your neighbour as yourself.

The operating characteristic that FBOs can offer 'spiritual / religious transcendent power' (claim #3) which energises human spirits, and prayer to assist participant / beneficiaries and development change (James, 2011, p111-114), was very strongly supported. The CNGOs practise prayer and staff devotions, with all religions welcome but not obliged. They strongly believe in and pray for their staff, projects, participant / beneficiaries and communities. This is a strong commonality among the CNGOs and a point of difference from secular NGOs. Bangladesh is permeated by religious faith, with an *a priori* acceptance and expectation that spiritual / religious faith is part of life and overcoming problems. Most participant / beneficiaries of any religion pray in some way, welcoming prayer. Christian prayer is seen to be powerful, but CNGOs only pray with local people (of any religion) if they feel welcome to do this. Two episodic, past-tense stories provided clear examples of CNGOs offering or being asked to pray for sick and needy people. During my thirteen years in Bangladesh, I cannot recall any time where my occasional offer to pray with project participant / beneficiaries was declined. Praying with a needy person (or being prayed for myself in need) produced a solidarity, as we humbled ourselves as equals before our creator God.

6.4.3 Disadvantages claimed

The research conclusions concerning the CNGOs' perceptions of the two disadvantages claimed by some for FBOs are presented here.

'Is religion part of the problem for development', a negative force holding back development - perceived as: divisive, regressive, irrelevant, insensitive and proselytising (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111) (claim / question #1)? Almost all the CNGOs had never heard that religion is a problem hindering development, refuting the wider literature claim / question for FBOs. The one CNGO aware of the idea, thought it to be a Western secular view, which didn't make sense in Bangladesh where a religious worldview is pervasive and a dualistic sacred / secular divide is little known. An episodic, past-tense story revealed the worldview chasm between a Christian Bangladeshi and an atheist Westerner, both working for CNGOs. The Christian could not comprehend how somebody could be an atheist and why an atheist would work for an FBO. While most CNGOs beginning work in a new location had experienced local Muslim concerns about the possibility of participant / beneficiaries switching religions, these have almost always been overcome by the transformative development activities, leading to trusted friendships. The research did however, reveal three ways in which religion has been a problem for the CNGOs

themselves. First, some have experienced a negative institutional bias from secular donors who will not fund FBOs, resulting in lost development opportunities. Second, the rise of Bangladeshi Islamic fundamentalism has clashed with CNGO-promoted development freedoms of democracy and gender equality. Third, some Muslim staff of secular (so called) government organisations have been very obstructive against the CNGOs. Although these appear to be specific examples of religion being a problem, the CNGOs' response was focused on the bigger picture of whether they consider religion to be a problem for development. They considered that it isn't a problem.

'Are churches difficult to work with for development', indicated by 'interference, patronage and control' and 'welfare-orientation, discrimination / favouritism towards members, hierarchical leadership and organizational cultures, unprofessional staffing, and weak management systems' (James, 2009, p5; James, 2011, p110-111)? All the CNGOs have emphatically experienced difficulty in working with churches (or denominations) strongly supporting the wider literature claim / question for FBOs. This is primarily due to the very strong Bangladeshi cultural characteristic of patronage in a relational-based society, governing relations at all levels. The result is favouritism, cronyism and nepotism, as patrons give advantage (patronage) to their clients (preferred group), while excluding others. This is a key cause of corruption and procedure breaking. Denominational CNGOs experience interference from their governing churches. A welfare mentality among some churches, expecting priority assistance from CNGOs, leads to animosity between CNGO staff working for the whole community, and local poor Christians feeling deprived. Patronage has led to a serious lack of professionalism with weak leadership, governance and management due to inappropriate people (such as unskilled relatives and friends) being selected for key organisational positions. Some CNGOs have implemented operational agreements to clarify relationships and responsibilities between the CNGO, the local church, project participant / beneficiaries and their local community. External funders have pressured for better accountability, capabilities and reporting, and clarified that bad behaviour has consequences such as project funding stopping. Four episodic, past-tense stories provided good examples, such as a donor funded external intervention over a number of years, to bring more professional governance and management practices to a denominational CNGO. Further research is warranted to assess whether churches and denominations are any more difficult to work with than other groups in the patronage-based cultural context, and whether there has been any improvement due to operational agreements and donor interventions.

Responding to and building on the research findings regarding CNGOs' difficulties in working with churches for community development, I suggest improvements may lie in the following three areas. (1) *Discipleship in churches*: Biblical teaching to explore and address Bangladeshi 'patron-client' interpersonal behaviour issues, with the goal of local churches working well together internally and externally with other groups. (2) *Community development skills in churches*: Basic

capacity building to gain awareness, motivation, knowledge and skills in community development activities and objectives, with the goal of local churches being motivated and equipped to work with their communities for development. (3) *Operational agreements between churches and CNGOs*: Establish agreements clarifying relationships and responsibilities between CNGOs, local churches, beneficiaries and their local communities, with the goal of working well together for all round community development.

6.5 Reframing FBO 'comparative advantages' to 'operating characteristics'

In attempting to answer the thesis research question: 'How do Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country, perceive that their faith identity influences their operating characteristics, making them distinctive from secular NGOs?', I have explored the wider literature in relation to 'faith in development' and FBOs (of which CNGOs are a major part), investigated analytical and conceptual frameworks in which to position the research (specifically Religion and Development - RAD), and gained more insights from the research with the six Bangladesh CNGOs. From the research findings, I conclude that the CNGOs' faith identity critical to their vision and mission, does make a real difference for them as a subgroup of FBOs, compared with secular NGOs. The difference is found in the CNGOs' operating characteristics including some distinctive contributions (to various degrees) in the seven motivational, organisational and institutional ways and three spiritual ways claimed in literature. Alongside this, the research confirmed one of the two possible disadvantages claimed in literature. The differences and variations found in the CNGOs' operating characteristics is nuanced by various factors, such as the operating context, the organisation's specific faith identity and history, government regulation and donor rules.

However, the literature claims that FBOs have comparative advantages compared with secular NGOs are problematic, with a lack of evidence. I agree with Rakodi (2012), stating that it is impossible to give a single answer to whether FBOs have comparative advantages in achieving development objectives. The main issue is methodological, with a great variety of NGOs (faith-based and secular) operating in a wide variety of contexts, in a range of similar and different ways. It is better to ask, in what way do FBOs make distinctive contributions to development interventions (Rakodi, 2012, p642). Claiming advantages (or disadvantages) without robust and statistically valid evidence, is subjective, and prone to bias, according to the claimant's positionality. I suggest the literature claims of FBOs having comparative advantages (or disadvantages) should be reframed as distinctive operating characteristics.

In an attempt to gain better evidence, Tomalin (2012) suggests evaluating the development outcomes for all types of NGOs (faith-based and secular) working in the same development sectors (Tomalin, 2012, p700). This would require a universal evaluation methodology and tool able to

assess and compare development inputs, outputs, outcomes, cost / benefits and such like, applicable to any NGO (faith-based or secular), operating in any project, in any context, and able to be used in a routine operational way. I have not encountered such a methodology and tool, and believe this would be useful.

6.6 Recommendations for further research

I suggest a number of topics for further research arising from my research findings, focusing specifically around CNGOs working in Bangladesh, but relevant to FBOs in general. A brief rationale is presented as to why the topics are relevant to my findings and should be considered for research, along with possible research questions.

1. Religious literacy of development practitioners

Literature suggests that religious-literacy is advantageous for development practitioners working in religious contexts (see Section 2.4: Secular development challenged by religion). The research findings included one CNGO suggesting that some Muslims may value a practitioner of Christian faith, over a secular person of no religious faith (see Section 5.4: Claim 2 - Valued by the poorest). This is an important issue as Bangladesh CNGO staff are often Christians working with Muslim participant / beneficiaries. This could be explored by the research question:

- Would Bangladeshi Muslims value a development practitioner of Christian faith, over a person of no religious faith, and if so, under what context and in which way?

2. Religious teaching used in values teaching

Literature claims that religious teaching includes important development principles (see Section 2.7.2: Claim 1: Spiritual / religious teaching). Some researched CNGOs may use contextualised religious stories to teach values (see Section 5.4: Claim 5 - Alternative to secular development theory; Section 5.5: Claim 1 - Spiritual / religious teaching). Sometimes the values-based teaching includes Biblical stories or parables, although not exclusively. It would be helpful to find out the attitude of non-Christian recipients and secular funders towards this. Research questions could be:

- What use of religious teaching (for example the Bible) would Bangladeshi Muslims find acceptable for CNGOs to use in values teaching?
- What use of religious teaching (for example the Bible) would secular funders find acceptable for CNGOs to use in values teaching?

3. Prayer for participant / beneficiaries of other religions

Literature claims that FBOs can offer prayer to assist project participant / beneficiaries and development activities (see Section 2.7.2: Claim 3 - Spiritual / religious transcendent power). All the CNGOs practised prayer, praying for participant / beneficiaries of any religion if welcome (see Section 5.5: Claim 3 - Spiritual / religious transcendent power). It would be helpful to explore

further how welcome the offer of prayer is for non-Christian recipients and the attitude of secular funders towards this. Possible research questions are:

- What kind of Christian prayer for project participant / beneficiaries and development activities would Bangladeshi Muslims find acceptable from CNGOs?
- What kind of Christian prayer for project participant / beneficiaries and development activities would secular funders find acceptable from CNGOs?

4. Church long-term development role after projects end

Literature claims that long after an NGO departs, the church will remain offering some sort of development presence (see Section 2.7.1: Claim 3 - Long-term sustainable presence). The researched CNGOs were enthusiastic about the long-term development role of the church after a project ends. However, both the literature and the CNGOs provided little evidence or explanation of what the local churches' long-term development role would be, and what capacity building they are receiving to implement this (see Section 5.4: Claim 3 - Long-term sustainable presence). This is a crucial gap in both the literature and the research findings, which determines the validity (or otherwise) of Claim 3. Research questions could be:

- What are the Bangladeshi local churches' intended long-term development role / activities after their hosted CNGO activities stop, and is this occurring anywhere?
- What specific capacity building do the local churches require to implement the long-term development role / activities, and is this occurring anywhere?
- Would secular funders be willing to fund the capacity building of local churches in community development, during the active CNGO project phase, to try and ensure they have a useful post-CNGO development role?

5. Are churches difficult to work with for development?

Literature presents a claim / question: Are churches difficult to work with for development? (see Section 2.7.3: Claim / question 2). All the CNGOs have experienced difficulty in working with churches and denominations. However, neither the literature nor the research considered whether churches and denominations are any more difficult to work with than other groups (religious or non-religious) in the Bangladesh patronage-based cultural context. Foreign donors have exerted pressure on CNGOs to operate in a more accountable and professional manner for a number of years. This includes operational agreements to clarify relationships and responsibilities between the CNGO, the local church, project participant / beneficiaries and their local community (see Section 5.6: Claim / question 2). This is a very important issue to seek better evidence on, as the local church hosting of CNGOs for the wider community benefit, is contingent on having good working relationships between the CNGOs and the churches. Possible research questions are:

- Are churches and denominations any more difficult to work with, than other groups (religious or non-religious) in the Bangladesh patronage-based cultural context?

- Has there been any improvement in working with Bangladeshi churches and denominations for community development over the previous years, and if yes, how and why?

6. Evaluation tool to assess development outcomes for all types of NGOs (faith-based and secular)

Literature claims a lack of empirical evidence regarding the claims of comparative advantages (and disadvantages) for FBOs compared with secular NGOs. The researched CNGOs had never been evaluated against other NGOs. Tomalin (2012) suggests evaluating the development outcomes for all types of NGOs (faith-based and secular) working in the same development sectors (see Section 2.7.4: Issues of comparability, context and evidence; Section 6.5: Reframing FBO 'comparative advantages' to 'operating characteristics'). The possibility of creating such an evaluation tool could be explored by the research question:

- Can the development fraternity (academia, government, donors, practitioners) devise a universal evaluation methodology and tool able to assess and compare development inputs, outputs, outcomes, cost / benefits and such like, applicable to any NGO (faith-based or secular), operating in any project, in any context, and able to be used in a routine operational way?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: FBO faith identity typologies

Literature includes a number of FBO faith identity conceptual frameworks in the form of typologies. Three typologies have been selected which help identify and describe FBO faith identities, and assist FBOs to reflect on their identities and *raison d'être*. The text below refers to faith-based organisations (FBOs) and more specifically Christian non-government organisations (CNGOs), a major group within FBOs.

1. Religious organisational affiliation

This typology categorises FBOs according to their religious organisational affiliations (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p40). Typology options are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Religious organisational affiliation for FBOs (literature typology)

#	Religious organisational affiliation for FBOs (literature typology)
1	FBO directly linked to a local congregation or religious leader.
2	FBO directly linked to a religious denomination and formally incorporated within that religious body.
3	FBO directly linked to a religious denomination but incorporated separately from that religious body.
4	FBO self-identifying as part of a broad religious tradition from which motivation is received.

Source (Clarke & Ware, 2015, p40)

The Clarke and Ware typology helps clarify religious governance links and likely support bases. These are critical in determining the core vision and mission of FBOs. For example a CNGO linked to a religious leader has a small reporting focus. Alternatively, a Christian denominational CNGO is generally required to represent denominational spiritual interests (to various degrees) in addition to more pure developmental interests. Although useful, this typology does not describe any faith-based distinctive characteristics in development or religious activities, which requires a consideration of faith influence.

2. Faith influence

Sider and Unruh (2004) present several systems to categorise FBO organisations and activities in different ways. These include (i) Organisation classification in terms of where / how faith is manifest using 8 criteria, (ii) Programmes / activities classification in terms of where / how faith is manifest using 4 criteria, (iii) Faith influence (tangibly manifest) on the 'organisation' or 'programme / activities' classified using 6 criteria, (iv) Religious programme / activity classified using 9 criteria, and (v) Integration of religious components into / with other programme components using 5 criteria (Sider & Unruh, 2004, p109-134). While all of these analyses are stand alone and useful for different purposes, to limit the amount of analyses, I have selected only (iii) Faith influence (tangibly manifest). Typology options are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Faith influence for FBOs (literature typology)

#	Faith influence for FBOs (literature typology)
1	Faith-permeated The faith connection is evident at all levels of mission, staffing, governance and support. The religious dimension is essential to programme effectiveness.
2	Faith-centred Founded for a religious purpose and remains strongly connected. Participants can readily opt out of religious elements.
3	Faith-affiliated Retains influence of founders, but staff not required to affirm religious beliefs or practices (except some board and leaders). May incorporate little or no explicitly religious content. May affirm faith in a general way and make spiritual resources available to participants.
4	Faith-background Looks and acts like secular NGOs. Has a historical tie to faith tradition. Religious beliefs may motivate some staff, but this is not considered in selection. Core programme activities have no explicit religious content.
5	Faith-secular partnership An FBO works with secular agencies to create a temporary hybrid, resembling the 'faith-background' type. Core activities have no explicit religious content. The FBO may add extra religious resources and activities within parameters agreed by the secular partner.
6	Secular No reference to religion in mission statement or founding history. Improper to select staff or governance based on religious commitments. Secular activities include no religious content.

Summarised from (Sider & Unruh, 2004, p109-134)

This Sider and Unruh typology is useful to assist FBOs to "understand and describe their religious character - for purposes of strategic planning, fundraising and evaluation" and to assist donors to choose appropriate organisations with which to work (Sider & Unruh, 2004, p132; Tomalin, 2012, p695). This typology is relevant for investigating the difference faith makes for FBOs, as it categorises according to different ways faith influences or is tangibly manifest in an FBO. Whether an organization is faith-based cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no', but rather in which way it is influenced by faith. Faith-influence is multidimensional, requiring a range of types. Both 'organizations' and 'programmes / activities' are classified using six criteria, acknowledging that religious characteristics of an organization may differ from its activities. Having considered both religious affiliation and faith influence, some sort of assessment of religious motivation and goals is useful, helping to predict likely operating characteristics.

3. Theology of humanitarianism

This typology describes how different theological beliefs and roots result in different forms of humanitarianism (Thaut, 2009, p319-350). It describes three distinct Christian theologies of FBO humanitarian engagement. Typology options are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Theology of humanitarianism for FBOs (literature typology)

#	Theology of humanitarianism for FBOs (literature typology)
1	Accommodative-Humanitarian An NGO of this type has religious roots, but its activities don't have any religious agenda. It is difficult to distinguish from a secular humanitarian agency, with a blurring of secular and religious boundaries. 'Faith' maybe used in a humanistic sense eg: faith and goodwill to all. Religious principles are a 'vaguely articulated motivation' for the agency's service or may simply inform its original founding. Legitimacy is based on effectiveness of service. The mission statement is not very religious, if at all (Kniss & Campbell, 1997, p101).
2	Synthesis-Humanitarian An NGO of this type may appear similar to secular agency operations, but a clear religious orientation is the primary motive for its work / mission. Christ is central, but this is not a cover for direct evangelism. Acceptance of a religious message is not a prerequisite for assistance. Humanitarian service is the witness to God's love (Samuel & Sugden, 1994, p25).
3	Evangelistic-Humanitarian An NGO of this type has the primary mission to 'meet the needs of and expand the fellowship of Christian believers'. Mission statement language will clearly reflect Christ-centred motivation with no danger of secular-sacred blurring. Explicit Christian witness is combined with humanitarian work, so the 'gospel of Christ can bring spiritual transformation to the root of the world's problems'. Mission is essentially evangelism, and humanitarianism provides support to and through local churches and missionaries (Berger, 2003, p35).

Summarised from (Thaut, 2009, p319-350). References in the table cited by Thaut.

The Thaut (2009) typology helps explain how variations in FBO theological beliefs and roots lead to different forms of humanitarianism. Thaut considers that FBO similarities or differences compared with secular NGOs, is primarily determined by the "extent to which religion informs the structure, mission and operations." However, no typology is static, as agencies may migrate over time due to external forces and mission creep (Thaut, 2009, p327, 346). I selected this typology, as in my experience the 'theological roots' of CNGOs, sometimes called the 'theology of mission', and often included in vision and mission statements (although not always for security or promotional reasons) are critical to understanding the primary mission(s) and goal(s) of the organisations. These beliefs and derived goals, determine an FBO's distinctive contribution to development in terms of inputs, ways of operating and intended outcomes. However, theology of humanitarianism, vision and mission statements are just that - aspirational statements of intent. An FBO's desired missional or develop outcomes cannot simply be 'willed' into being, but depend on many external factors beyond the control of the organisation.

Appendix 2: Research Questions 1 - Questionnaire / survey - Demographics & Context

Version date: 26-6-2016

Purpose

This records demographic information about the Bangladesh Christian NGOs being researched. This will enable some classification and comparison between the Christian NGOs, in terms of organisational profile, characteristics, context (development and religious) and activities.

Info method & source

- Questionnaire / survey form. NGO participants to complete as much as possible.
- Skype call. Julian to follow up and clarify or complete.

Christian NGOs in Bangladesh - Demographics - Questionnaire / Survey form

Copy & paste [✓] for tick box questions.

#	NGO Demographics	Informant to complete											
	Organisational Profile												
1	NGO name												
2	Abbreviation												
3	Website(s)												
4	Vision statement												
5	Mission statement												
6	Values statement												
7	Logo												
8	One liner / by line												
9	Origins / history / dates / milestones												
10	Independent Bangladeshi organisation or parent organisation elsewhere												
11	Budget BTK (15/16)												
12	# Staff Paid (Full-time) - by gender & religion	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:	
13	# Staff Paid (Part-time) - by gender & religion	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:	
14	# Volunteers (Full-time) - by gender & religion	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:	
15	# Volunteers (Part-time) - by gender & religion	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:	
	Characteristics	(Brief answers as some questions dealt with in more detail later)											
16	Bangladeshi identity	NGO Bangladeshi? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].											
		Explain:											
17	Christian identity (more detail later)	Christian identity? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].											
		Explain:											

18	Staff, management, director, governance	Staffed by Bangladeshi? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Managed by Bangladeshi? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Directed by Bangladeshi? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Governed by Bangladeshi? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Any foreign staff involved? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
19	Implementation method (more detail later)	Implementation method - NGO staff? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Implementation method - Church congregational members? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
20	Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau registration	Registered with the Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
21	Local or foreign funding	Receive local funding? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Receive foreign funding? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
22	Church denominational or local linkage (more detail later)	Church national denominational linkage? Linkage could be various eg: affiliated with, representative of, governed by, funded by, hosted by, same location etc? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Church local linkage? Linkage could be various eg: affiliated with, representative of, governed by, funded by, hosted by, same location etc? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
	Context (development & religious)	**Give evidence, examples, stories etc - what, where, when, who, how, why etc**
23	Development context	What is the poverty / development context you are working in, in terms of social, economic, environmental, human rights and gender equality? ?
		Bangladesh was described as a poverty 'basket case' after independence in 1971. Is this still the case overall in Bangladesh? ? Is this still the case in your project context? ?

		Bangladesh has been praised for achieving success with some MDGs. What development changes have you seen overall in Bangladesh? ? What development changes have you seen in your project context? ?
24	Religious context	What is the religious context you are working in, in terms of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and other? ?
		Bangladesh was established as a secular governed country in 1971. Is this still the case overall in Bangladesh? ? Is this still the case in your project context? ?
		Bangladesh has been praised as a moderate Muslim majority country which practices religious equality. Is this still the case overall in Bangladesh? ? Is this still the case in your project context? ? What religious changes have you seen overall in Bangladesh? ? What religious changes have you seen in your project context? ?
		Is there religious-based discrimination in Bangladesh? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Are Christians discriminated against as a minority religion in Bangladesh? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
		Do Christian communities receive 'equal' development assistance from the government and other NGOs both faith-based (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist) and secular (non-religious)? Yes [ ], No [ ], NA [ ].
		Explain:
	Activities	
25	Development activities / sectors / type / rural / urban	
26	# Projects	
27	# Locations	

28	# Direct **adult** beneficiaries - by gender & religion (18 years old +)	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		
29	# Direct **child & youth** beneficiaries - by gender & religion (17 years old -)	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		
30	# Indirect **adult** beneficiaries - by gender & religion (18 years old +)	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		
31	# Indirect **child & youth** beneficiaries - by	Christian		Muslim		Hindu		Buddhist		Other		Total		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	

	gender & religion (17 years old -)												
		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:		Tot:	
etc	Other criteria and metrics - to be decided ???												

Anything else you wish to add?

Appendix 3: Research Questions 2 - Structured interviews - Religious identity & faith difference

Version date: 29-7-2016

Purpose
This records religious identity and faith difference information about the Bangladesh Christian NGOs being researched. This will enable some classification and comparison between the Christian NGOs, in terms of faith characteristics and the difference faith makes to their development approach.

Topics
The research is covered in 5 topics as follows:

Topic 1: Religious identity
- Topic 1a: Religious organisational affiliation
- Topic 1b: Faith manifestation
- Topic 1c: Theology of humanitarianism

Topic 2: Distinctive contributions - (RAD) framework
Topic 3: Comparative Advantages
- Topic 3a: Motivational, organisational & institutional advantages
- Topic 3b: Spiritual advantages

Topic 4: Comparative Disadvantages
- Topic 4a: Religion 'part of the problem'
- Topic 4d: Interference by church - local or national

Topic 5: Opportunities & Constraints

The topics contain overlap, resulting in some similarity of questions across different topics.

Info method & source
Semi-structured interviews (Skype call).
Give evidence, examples, stories etc - what, where, when, who, how, why etc.

Topic 1: Religious identity

To answer questions: Give evidence, examples, stories etc - what, where, when, who, how, why etc.

Topic 1a: Religious organisational affiliation

This typology categorises FBOs according to their religious organisational affiliations.

#	Religious organisational affiliation
1	NGO directly linked to a local congregation or religious leader.
2	NGO directly linked to a religious denomination and formally incorporated within that religious body.
3	NGO directly linked to a religious denomination but incorporated separately from that religious body.
4	NGO self-identifying as part of a broad religious tradition from which motivation is received.
Q	Which of the above 'organisational arrangements' best describes your Christian NGO?

Topic 1b: Faith manifestation

This typology categorises FBOs according to different ways 'faith' is tangibly manifest. Whether an organization is faith-based cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. The influence of faith is multidimensional, requiring a range of types. Both 'organizations' and 'programmes / activities' are classified, recognizing that religious characteristics of an organization may differ from its activities.

#	Faith manifestation
1	Faith-permeated The faith connection is evident at all levels of mission, staffing, governance and support. The religious dimension is essential to programme effectiveness.
2	Faith-centred Founded for a religious purpose and remains strongly connected. Participants can readily opt out of religious elements.
3	Faith-affiliated Retains influence of founders, but staff not required to affirm religious beliefs or practices (except some board and leaders). May incorporate little or no explicitly religious content. May affirm faith in a general way and make spiritual resources available to participants.
4	Faith-background Looks and acts like secular NGOs. Have a historical tie to faith tradition. Religious beliefs may motivate some staff, but this is not considered in selection. Core programme activities have no explicitly religious content.
5	Faith-secular partnership An FBO works with secular agencies to create a temporary hybrid, resembling the 'faith-background' type (above). Core programme activities have no explicitly religious content. The FBO may add supplemental religious resources and activities within parameters set by the secular partner.
6	Secular No reference to religion in mission statement or founding history. Improper to select staff or governance based on religious commitments. Secular programmes include no religious content.
Q	Which of the above 'faith manifestations' best describes your Christian NGO?

Topic 1c: Theology of humanitarianism

This typology describes how different theological roots result in different forms of humanitarianism. This typology describes 3 distinct Christian theologies of FBO humanitarian engagement.

#	Theology of humanitarianism
1	Accommodative-Humanitarian An NGO of this type has religious roots, but its activities don't have any religious agenda. It is difficult to distinguish from a secular humanitarian agency, with a blurring of secular and religious boundaries. 'Faith' maybe used in a humanistic sense eg: faith and goodwill to all. Religious principles are a 'vaguely articulated motivation' for the agency's service or may simply inform its original founding. Legitimacy is based on effectiveness of service. The mission statement is not very religious, if at all.
2	Synthesis-Humanitarian An NGO of this type may appear similar to secular agency operations, but a clear religious orientation is the primary motive for its work / mission. Christ is central, but this is not a cover for direct evangelism. Acceptance of a religious message is not a prerequisite for assistance. Humanitarian service is the witness to God's love.
3	Evangelistic-Humanitarian An NGO of this type has the primary mission is to 'meet the needs of and expand the fellowship of Christian believers'. Mission statement language will clearly reflect Christ-centred motivation with no danger of secular-sacred blurring. Explicit Christian witness is combined with humanitarian work, so the 'gospel of Christ can bring spiritual transformation to the root of the world's problems'. Mission is essentially evangelism, and humanitarianism provides support to and through local churches and missionaries.
Q	Which of the above 'theology of humanitarianism' models best describes your NGO?

Topic 2: Distinctive contributions - (RAD) framework

To answer questions: Give evidence, examples, stories etc - what, where, when, who, how, why etc.

A 'Religion and Development' (RAD) conceptual framework has been slowing emerging within development studies. This framework essentially asks the question: 'What difference does religion make to development?' Put another way: 'How do religious organisations make *distinctive contributions* to development and service delivery, with respect to the inputs they use, their ways of operating and the outcomes and impacts of their activities?' We want to find out: 'What are the distinctive contributions to development and service provision made by Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country?'

#	Distinctive contributions
1	Does your Christian NGO make any distinctive (different) contributions to development and service provision - due to your faith nature, compared with other NGOs? How and why, with respect to:
a	Inputs The choice of activities, design of programmes, source of funding etc?
b	Ways of operating Recruitment of staff, volunteers, beneficiaries; use of religious teaching, symbols and practices etc?
c	Outcomes Results etc?
d	Impact Contribution to development objectives such as poverty reduction or gender equality etc?

Topic 3: Comparative Advantages

To answer questions: Give evidence, examples, stories etc - what, where, when, who, how, why etc.

Some writers claim FBOs have 'distinctive characteristics' and 'comparative advantages' over secular NGOs, and in fact 'add value' to development, in mostly motivational, organisational and institutional ways. The 7 advantages proposed are that FBOs: (i) reach the poorest, (ii) are valued by the poorest, (iii) have a long-term sustainable presence, (iv) provide efficient development services, (v) offer an alternative to secular development theory, (vi) motivate voluntary service, and (vii) encourage civil-society advocacy.

Topic 3a: Motivational, organisational & institutional advantages

#	Motivational, organisational & institutional advantages
1	Reach the poorest Claim: FBOs are preferred due to their grassroots presence, found in the most remote and inaccessible areas where there are few government services. Kumi Naidoo says "*FBOs probably provide the best social and physical infrastructure in the poorest communities... because churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship are the focal points for the communities they serve*" (CIVICUS, 2000). This representation on the ground makes for more efficient and effective distribution systems (Lunn, 2009, p944).
	Is your Christian NGO 'reaching the poorest' - more than other NGOs?
2	Valued by the poorest Claim: Poor communities are largely faith-based communities, where religion remains central to the social, cultural, and moral life. A World Bank study (Foreword by James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank and George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury) concluded "*In most developing countries, religious leaders are close to the poor and among their most trusted representatives*" (Wolfensohn & Carey, 2001, pvii). Positively (but also negatively) faith leaders may be gatekeepers and opinion leaders. "*Motivationally religious organisations stand out because of their commitment to and zeal for serving people and communities. They are perceived to work for the public good and, in comparison with government agencies, it is believed that they are more sensitive to people in times of catastrophe, chaos or conflict, are responsive to people's needs and flexible in their provision, act with honesty and take distribution seriously. Through common belief religious organisations create strong social networks*

	and promote social capital. Because of their values and being rooted in the local community, people are more likely to trust FBOs over state bodies or NGOs, and trust religious leaders over government ministers or foreign experts" (Lunn, 2009, p944).
	Is your Christian NGO 'valued by the poorest' - more than other NGOs?
3	Long-term sustainable presence Claim: Local and national religious institutions are generally more sustainable than most civil-society organisations (CSOs). An international NGO worker said "*I know that when I go back to Kenya my church will still be there, but I don't know if my development organisation will be. They are in today and could be out tomorrow, but the local church is there for years*" (Chester, 2002, p12). Linked to this long-term presence, is long-term social capital.
	Is your Christian NGO having a 'long-term sustainable presence' - more than other NGOs?
4	Efficient development services Claim: Historically FBOs have lead the way in providing vital services to the poor, particularly health and education. According to DFID (2005, p4), FBOs have provided 50% of health and education services in sub-Saharan Africa. Faith-based provision is more efficient than state-run services, and costs the state less due to being subsidised by the faith community. "*Organisationally many religious organisations are part of wider structures through which resources are channelled. They operate at every level of society and are present in every community; in particular they have unrivalled rural reach and are grounded in some of the world's most troubled areas. This representation on the ground makes for effective distribution systems, particularly in times of emergency or disaster*" (Lunn, 2009, p944).
	Is your Christian NGO providing 'efficient development services' - compared with other NGOs?
5	Alternative to secular development theory Claim: Human development is more than income, GDP and economic development. Religion broadens development with questions of values and meaning. Tyndale (2000) argues that "*faith-based values of inclusion, stewardship, generosity, integrity, compassion, and justice provide an essential alternative approach to development*."
	Is your Christian NGO offering an 'alternative to secular development theory' - more than other NGOs?
6	Motivate voluntary service Claim: Religions have a high coefficient of commitment, motivating action through "*compassion and service; unity and interconnectedness; justice and reconciliation*." Mobilising large numbers of motivated volunteers is possible. Hilary Benn (then UK Secretary of State for International Development) wrote "*As I visit communities around the world I am always struck by the extent to which it is faith which inspires people to do something to help their fellow human beings*" (DFID, 2005, p1; Lunn, 2009, p944).
	Is your Christian NGO 'motivating voluntary service' - more than other NGOs?
7	Encourage civil-society advocacy Claim: Religious institutions can have an influential voice in the village and nation, through their enduring and extensive network of congregations, affiliates, organisations, and individuals. These networks can be highly effective channels of communication, human and financial resources. Large national constituencies (social networks) enable advocacy. They have played big roles in social-justice issues at national political levels. Historically, churches (but not all) were at forefront of the US civil-rights movement; the Latin American democratisation process; and the Poland Solidarity movement. Gordon Brown (former UK Prime Minister), described the 'debt relief' Jubilee 2000 campaign as the "*most important church-led social movement in Britain since the campaign for the abolition of slavery 200 years ago*" (James, 2011, p113).
	Is your Christian NGO 'encouraging civil-society advocacy' - more than other NGOs?

Topic 3b: Spiritual advantages

In addition, claims are made for 3 'spiritual' advantages: (i) spiritual / religious teaching, (ii) spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose, and (iii) spiritual / religious transcendent power.

#	Spiritual advantages
1	Spiritual / religious teaching Claim: Religious teaching includes important development principles, such as "*justice, compassion,*

	reconciliation and stewardship. Justice is the bedrock of development... Compassion and care for the poor is at the heart of most religions... Forgiveness and reconciliation are central to many religions and desperately needed in the world... Stewardship is an essential concept in environmental sustainability" (James, 2011, p113).
	Is your Christian NGO presenting 'spiritual / religious teaching' - more than other NGOs?
2	Spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose Claim: "*Hope is the antidote to the fear, powerlessness and dependence that are at the root of many development challenges.*" Meaningful development requires that values and attitudes change, and values and attitudes are the core business of religion. Matthew Parris writes about this in The Times in December 2008, in his article 'As an atheist I truly believe Africa needs God: "*Now a confirmed atheist, I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from the work of secular NGOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good*" (James, 2011, p113).
	Is your Christian NGO presenting 'spiritual / religious hope, meaning and purpose' - more than other NGOs?
3	Spiritual / religious transcendent power Claim: At the heart of faith-based development is faith in a transcendent power. Divine power energises human spirits, going beyond human effort. Many FBOs believe prayer can bring an 'extra-ordinary' power to assist developmental change (James, 2011, p114).
	Is your Christian NGO experiencing 'spiritual / religious transcendent power' - more than other NGOs?

Topic 4: Comparative Disadvantages

To answer questions: Give evidence, examples, stories etc - what, where, when, who, how, why etc.

Official donors have traditionally been sceptical about religion in development, seeing religion as 'part of the problem', a negative force holding back development. Religion may be perceived as: divisive, regressive, irrelevant, insensitive and proselytising.

Topic 4a: Religion 'part of the problem'

#	**Religion 'part of the problem'** Divisive, regressive, irrelevant, insensitive and proselytising
1	Has your Christian NGO been seen or described as being 'part of the problem' (religion), a negative force holding back development - perceived as: divisive, regressive, irrelevant, insensitive and proselytising?

Topic 4b: Interference by church - local or national

A close institutional affiliation between an FBO and local and / or national faith groups, will assist collaboration. However, working too closely can create issues of interference, patronage and control.

Working with churches (*presumably referring to church initiated community development*), may be perceived to have weaknesses as follows: welfare-orientation, discrimination (JD: favouritism) towards members, hierarchical leadership and organizational cultures, unprofessional staffing, and weak management systems.

#	**Interference by church - local or national** Interference, patronage and control + Welfare-orientation, discrimination / favouritism towards members, hierarchical leadership and organizational cultures, unprofessional staffing, and weak management systems
1	Has your Christian NGO worked closely with local churches or a Christian denomination?
2	Has this 'close working relationship' with local churches or a Christian denomination resulted in issues

	of 'interference, patronage and control'?
3	Has this 'close working relationship' with local churches or a Christian denomination experienced issues of 'welfare-orientation, discrimination / favouritism towards members, hierarchical leadership and organizational cultures, unprofessional staffing, and weak management systems'?

Topic 5: Opportunities & Constraints

To answer questions: Give evidence, examples, stories etc - what, where, when, who, how, why etc.

This topic seeks to answer key research questions (i) Opportunities and constraints experienced by Christian NGOs?, and (ii) How do Christian NGOs experience working with participant / beneficiaries of other religions?

#	Opportunities & Constraints
1	Western Christian NGO funders Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints in working with Western Christian NGO funders?
2	Western secular funders Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints in working with Western secular funders?
3	Bangladesh government and local authority departments Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints in working with Bangladesh government and local authority departments, such as the NGO Affairs Bureau, District Commissioners, Security Divisions etc (officially secular, but may not be in practice)?
4	Religious communities (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist) Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints (due to having a Christian religious identity - values, beliefs, worldview, spirituality, morals and ethics) in working with various religious communities (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist)?
5	Other NGOs Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints in working with other NGOs both faith-based (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist) and secular (non-religious)?
6	Development professionals, experts and academics Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints in working with other development professionals, experts and academics (eg: University)?
7	Church (local and national) Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints in working with national Church denominations and / or local Church communities?
8	Foreign Christian mission Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints in working with foreign Christian mission organisations?
9	Christian religious identity and witness Has your Christian NGO experienced any opportunities / constraints to share your Christian religious identity - values, beliefs, worldview, spirituality, morals and ethics?
10	Other opportunities / constraints Has your Christian NGO experienced any other opportunities (strengths, advantages) / constraints (weaknesses, disadvantages) in doing your development activities?
11	Future opportunities / constraints Can you foresee any new or increased opportunities / constraints for Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh in the future?

Anything else you wish to add?

Appendix 4: Research Thesis - Information Sheet

Version date: 26-6-2016

Researcher: Julian Doorey, -- ----- --, -- -----, ------- ----, New Zealand.
Ph -- -- -------, -- -- ------- (cell). Email -.-.------@-----.---, Skype -------.
NZ time zone: 6 hrs ahead of Bangladesh

Researcher Introduction

Kemon Achen? My name is Julian Doorey, living in New Zealand. I lived and worked in Bangladesh in community development for 13 years (2002 to 2015). During that time I helped establish an operational CNGO funding projects with NZ Aid Programme funds. Currently I am studying for a M.Int.Dev (Master of International Development) through Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. This requires that I carry out a research thesis. I am interested to investigate what difference faith makes for Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country.

Project Contacts

Researcher:	Julian Doorey - refer above.
Supervisor:	Dr Robyn Andrews - Senior Lecturer, Social Anthropology Programme, Massey University. Ph -- -- ------- ext -----. Email -.-------@------.--.-- .
Supervisor Support:	Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Development Studies, Massey University. Ph -- -- ------- ext -----. Email -.-.----------@------.--.-- .

Research Thesis Description & Invitation

Christian NGOs have been active in international development for decades. However, Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), including Christian NGOs, were mostly ignored in mainstream development literature until the 1980s. Due to a resurgence of religion (political Islam, global conflicts and majority-world religious vitality) and increased visibility of FBOs, there has been a renewed religious awareness, challenging the dominant secular development theory.

The primary aim of this research thesis is to investigate: What difference does faith make for Christian NGOs working in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country? Related questions include: Who are Christian NGOs in terms of identity? How are they the same or different to other NGOs? Is there a distinctive Christian development contribution? What are the opportunities and constraints experienced by Christian NGOs? How do Christian NGOs experience working with participant / beneficiaries of other religions?

I propose to carry out field research (questionnaire and Skype interviews) with Bangladeshi Christian NGOs in June 2016, and write the thesis by August 2016. The research protocol will focus on 'Partnership, Participation and Protection', between the researcher (Julian) and Bangladeshi Christian NGOs. It is hoped this research will be mutually beneficial to both myself as researcher and the participating NGOs.

I wish to invite you to be involved in this research as a Christian NGO participant.

Participant Identification & Recruitment

The research will involve six Bangladeshi Christian NGOs, which receive foreign funding. These will generally be staffed, managed, directed and governed by Bangladeshi nationals, although some variation in terms of foreign staffing or governance may be considered. Participants will answer the research questions based on their perceptions and lived experience.

The following research participant criteria apply:

- Recruitment: Based on my previous relational, cultural and professional linkages with the Bangladesh Christian NGO community, I am aware of a number of Christian NGOs suitable for this research.
- Interviewees: Research contact will generally be with a Bangladeshi manager or the director of each NGO, although a foreigner may be included where appropriate. Both male and female are desired.
- Representation: Each NGO interviewee (person who answers the research questions) is to answer in terms of their personal opinions / experience based on their current NGO organisation and activities. This may or may not represent the NGO official response. This will assist the interviewee to have freedom to answer research questions as they think best, without the requirement to arrange an NGO official response. Privacy and confidentiality of both the NGO and the NGO interviewee is assured.

Research Procedures

The following methods will be used to collect primary field information:

1. Questionnaire / survey: Brief organisational and activity information from selected Christian NGOs.
2. Semi-structured interviews (Skype): Open ended answers from selected Christian NGOs about their religious identity and the difference faith makes in doing their development activities.

Time involved: Estimated 2 to 3 hours per person. This will be carried out in short time segments at the most convenient time for the NGO interviewees.

Data Use & Management

The data is proposed to be used and managed as follows:

- Use of information / data: To write the Master's research thesis, and provide reflective feedback to participant Bangladeshi Christian NGOs. If appropriate, feedback may be shared with other stake holders such as: NZ NGOs funding Bangladesh NGOs and the NZ Aid Programme. The research findings may also be disseminated through publishing articles, seminars and conferences.
- Skype interviews: These will be audio recorded, with interviewee permission, to assist with writing accurate summary notes. At the end of each interview, the interviewee will be given opportunity to confirm their data is able to be used.
- Handling information / data: Secure and safe storage and back-up of data (audio and text) will occur.
- NGO access to information: Each participating NGO will receive the research findings in a pre-agreed way, such as: draft research findings, the final thesis or some other suitable summary.

Massey University Ethics Classification

This research thesis is a 'Low Risk Notification'. This research has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher (Julian) is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, ph ---- ------- ext -----, email ----------@------.--.-- .

Participant's Rights & Protection

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Withdraw from the research at any time.
- Decline to answer any particular question.
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time during the interviews.
- Ask any questions about the research at any time during participation.
- Privacy and confidentiality - your NGO and your interviewee name will remain private and confidential.

- Be given access to a suitable summary of the research findings when it is concluded.

NGO response - Participant Consent Form

If you wish to participate in this research, I kindly ask you to complete the attached 'Participant Consent Form' and email this back to me.

Please contact me with any enquiries or questions you may have.

Yours faithfully
Julian Doorey

Appendix 5: Research Thesis - Participant Consent Form

Version date: 26-6-2016

Researcher: Julian Doorey, -- ----- --, -- -----, ------- ----, New Zealand.
Ph -- -- -------, -- -- ------- (cell). Email -.-.------@-----.---, Skype -------.
NZ time zone: 6 hrs ahead of Bangladesh

Copy & paste [✓] for tick box questions.

#	NGO research participant to complete		
1	Date of filling this form		?
2	NGO contact person	Name	?
		Job title	?
		Organisation	?
		Gender	?
		Ethnicity	?
		Country origin	?
		Religion	?
		Phone	?
		Email	?
		Skype	?
		Website(s)	?
		Post address	?
		Street address	?
		Other	?

I have read the research Information Sheet and understand the details of the research.

I agree to participate in the research under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet and any other correspondence or discussions.

I understand that I may contact the researcher to ask questions at any time.

I agree to the Skype interview being audio recorded, to assist with writing accurate summary notes.

Signature (scan / digital)	?
Name	?
Job title	?
Date	?

End

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