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## **Always Read the Label:**

# **The Identity and Strategy of Britain's 'Christian Right'**

### **Introduction**

Religious extremism is one of the leitmotifs of our time. Issues of fundamentalism, religiously inspired violence, radicalisation and reactionary theology shape political events and create prominent media headlines in all parts of the world. In Britain, the debate around religious extremism has centred overwhelmingly on issues relating to Islam, with concerns about other faiths having been relegated to the margins. In particular, the subject of extremism within Britain's single largest faith – Christianity – has been notably under-explored. On the face of it this lack of attention might seem to be well deserved. Conservative Christian (often defined as 'fundamentalist') cause groups are relatively few in number and are typically considered to exert little practical influence, both in a cultural as well as a political sense. Yet further exploration of this topic is not entirely without merit. Indeed, in recent years conservative Christian groups have been involved in a variety of controversial issues and public policy debates, including high profile disputes around free speech, abortion, assisted dying, same-sex marriage, the regulation of medical technologies, religious freedom and equalities legislation, that make studying their political activities a meaningful and worthwhile endeavour.

An interesting question in this respect concerns the existence of a British 'Christian Right' comparable to the social movement that rose to prominence in the United States during the late 1970s. Commentators who assert the reality of such a grouping point to the political activism of conservative Christian groups as evidence of a mobilised fundamentalist force. Conversely, those critical of such claims point to a lack of actual political influence and

highlight the marked differences between the British and U.S. contexts in order to argue that a British ‘Christian Right’ does not exist.

What is absent from these debates, however, is an awareness of how labels such as ‘Christian Right’ or ‘fundamentalist’ are shaped by the underlying political dynamics of group mobilisation. Identity markers are an essential part of collective political action and play a key role in maintaining group solidarity and cohesion, as well as framing a group strategically for the pursuit of wider political aims. This paper explores these issues by utilising insights from Social Identity Theory and by drawing on elite-level interviews with representatives of the main conservative Christian groups that are linked to the idea of a British ‘Christian Right’. It shows that these actors reject the ‘Christian Right’ and ‘fundamentalist’ labels, but that this rejection is embedded within a broader public narrative that has been constructed as a strategic response to challenges posed by the process of secularisation.

### **Faith at the margins**

Academic studies into the notion of a British ‘Christian Right’ have, to date, been relatively few in number. Research into the historical, sociological and anthropological qualities of conservative Christian groups and viewpoints has tended to eschew such terminology,<sup>1</sup> and, as the Christian think-tank, *Theos*, notes: ‘There has been surprisingly little hard research into the alleged size, influence and strategy of a purported Religious Right in the UK’.<sup>2</sup> Most of the arguments and debates on this topic have subsequently taken place outside the walls of the Academy, principally involving members of the media, political activists and online commentators.

In both academic and non-academic spheres, however, opinion on the existence of a British Christian Right varies. Stephen Hunt, for instance, contends that while a Christian Right

exists, it is ‘in few ways comparable’ to its U.S counterpart (despite sharing ‘largely the same’ issues of concern),<sup>3</sup> while Cynthia Burack and Angelia Wilson highlight a shared emphasis on themes of homosexuality, noting that: ‘Since the 1970s, in both the US and the UK, the Conservative Christian Right has developed and operationalised its antigay ideology in order to perpetuate or challenge relations and institutions of power’.<sup>4</sup> By the same token, Jamie Doward and Gaby Hinsliff, writing in the *Guardian*, claimed that the case of the musical, *Jerry Springer the Opera*, in which the play was besieged by protests (leading to its eventual closure) orchestrated by conservative Christian groups, ‘raised fears that the spectre of Christian fundamentalism was stalking the land’,<sup>5</sup> and in 2008 a high-profile Dispatches documentary for Channel 4, entitled ‘In God’s Name’, warned that fundamentalist Christians inspired by the U.S Religious Right were ‘growing in number and influence’ and were ‘determined to impose their beliefs on the rest of society’.<sup>6</sup> Two years hence, Sunny Hundal, writing in the *New Statesman*, claimed that the influence of Christian fundamentalists (said to ‘form a noisy wing of the Conservative Party’) was ‘growing fast’,<sup>7</sup> and in 2013 Nelson Jones highlighted ‘a strong historic link between religious and moral conservatism and Conservative politics’, adding that ‘the conservative Christian lobby has powerful friends in government’.<sup>8</sup> Making a similar point, Ben Quinn warned of ‘a British-style religious right’, claiming that ‘the presence and influence of a socially conservative bloc is very real’.<sup>9</sup>

Others, however, have taken a rather different view. According to Terry Sanderson, the President of the National Secular Society, there is ‘no Religious Right in Britain’ and ‘those who aspire to create one have, so far, failed completely to make much progress’.<sup>10</sup> This is a view shared by Martyn Eden, the political editor for Premier Christian Radio, who notes that conservative Christian groups ‘are not yet a significant influence in British politics worthy of the religious right label’.<sup>11</sup> Scholarly rebuttals, notably from Steve Bruce, Martin Durham, and (to a lesser extent) *Theos*, have raised a number of pointed objections based on a direct

comparison to the core features of the U.S Christian Right. One issue here is the absence of a block conservative Christian vote linked to a single political party. While the U.S Christian Right has strong links to the Republicans, Christian voting and affiliation in Britain (even for its more conservative forms) is very much a divided, cross-party affair.<sup>12</sup> A second issue concerns the limited social and political influence of conservative Christians in Britain. Being numerically smaller and financially weaker than their U.S counterparts, conservative Christians have thus far struggled to make any obvious headway in key political areas. In recent years a series of high-profile campaigns involving opposition to abortion, scientific research using human embryonic stem cells and the legalisation of same-sex marriage, have been lost. Differences in political complexion are important here as well. Conservative Christians in Britain tend to engage with a different set of issues, and (for the most part) have more left-of-centre economic views than their counterparts in the U.S Christian Right. Besides a number of overlapping themes (centring, most notably, on issues such as the ethics of sexual reproduction and religious freedom), the concerns of the U.S. movement, with its support for military interventions, strong pro-Israel stance, its advocacy of creationism and its dislike of Big Government, are said to diverge substantially from those of conservative Christian groups in Britain.<sup>13</sup> Further differences are highlighted in the respective opportunity structures available to British and U.S. Christian groups. While the federal and de-centred structures of the U.S. political system provide numerous points of access for Christian groups seeking to shape and influence political life, the unitary, centralised and tightly controlled political system in Britain is said to provide far fewer opportunities for groups seeking to advance a political agenda.<sup>14</sup> Given these differences, the general view here, as Paul Bickley puts it, is that:

the oft-repeated claim that there is a coherent and organised network driven by a growing conservative religious base, machinating behind the scenes, waiting to lay hold of the levers of power in a way that is corrosive of public debate or the broader political culture, is either fearful misunderstanding, a deliberate misrepresentation or a mix of the two.<sup>15</sup>

The crux of this debate, and hence the question of whether or not a British ‘Christian Right’ can be said to exist, however, is to a large extent a definitional one. Those rejecting the idea (and, by extension, the existence of a politically influential conservative Christian movement) typically do so by highlighting the lack of practical political impact exerted by conservative Christian groups, and by comparing them directly to the characteristics and features of the U.S movement, against which they are duly said to fall short. Those arguing that a British Christian Right does exist, on the other hand, claim that rejecting its existence purely on the basis of a U.S comparison is a tautological form of reasoning that obscures the fact that politically influential (at least potentially) conservative Christian groups are a reality.

The issue is compounded by the fact that there is no consensus over what a British Christian Right might actually look like in terms of its key characteristics and features, nor over which groups may or may not belong to it. Statistics on the extent and nature of Christian fundamentalism in Britain, and hence details about the broader social constituency to which a Christian Right might appeal, are also lacking. This poses an intractable methodological dilemma for assessing whether, and to what extent, a ‘Christian Right’ in Britain exists, but at stake are more than issues of typology or academic boundary marking. Arguments about the use of descriptors such as ‘Christian Right’ or ‘fundamentalism’ reflect, and are enmeshed with, an array of wider factors around the political dynamics of group mobilisation. These themes are usefully highlighted with the conceptual framework of Social Identity Theory.

Deriving from the disciplines of psychology and sociology, this attempts to provide a holistic account of cognitive and social processes, centring on the key role that identity issues play in group cohesion and collective political action.<sup>16</sup> While identity is considered to be an essential component of an individual's conception of self, it is also intricately embedded within a broader web of social and cultural relations. The particular components of an identity are also far from being static and fixed, but involve on-going and open-ended processes of reaffirmation and reconstruction. In this, the role of groups is thought to be particularly important. Although the precise motivations behind group membership vary,<sup>17</sup> groups provide key sites for the development and maintenance of identities; facilitating a sense of belonging and meaning as well as establishing norms for appropriate beliefs and behaviours. In this way, a collective basis for identity provides a focal point around which individual agents can coalesce, and can form a motivating factor for the promotion of shared interests based around common themes, issues and concerns.<sup>18</sup>

A key feature of collective identity is a corporate desire on the part of groups to maintain a sense of internal cohesion and intergroup differentiation. This requires constant efforts to police for internal deviance that might threaten the solidarity and interests of the group, as well as to monitor the boundary between the group and the rest of society in order to ensure that a sense of distinctiveness is sustained.<sup>19</sup> Notions of collective identity also serve broader political objectives. The way in which the values, needs and interests of a group are framed plays a crucial role in helping to position the group in respect of wider society and in legitimising its activities, viewpoints and claims (while simultaneously trying to delegitimise and negate those of its opponents).<sup>20</sup> These dynamics of group mobilisation are typically sharpened in situations involving uncertainty and/or where a threat to the group and its interests is thought to exist.<sup>21</sup>

In this context the value of Social Identity Theory is that it highlights two salient points. The first of these is that the use of identity markers is an essential part of collective action framing: being necessary to energise and unify the membership of a group, but also forming a means of strategically positioning it in order to help facilitate the achievement of wider political ambitions. The second point is that these considerations mean that the adoption or rejection of an identity marker (such as ‘Christian Right’) will be shaped by a number of factors, including the main social, political and cultural issues that are thought to be affecting the group, the character of the relationships that exist within the group as well as between the group and wider society, and the specific nature and composition of the group itself, including its primary goals and objectives.

### **The composition of the ‘Christian Right’**

This paper explores these issues by examining the collective action frames deployed by the main groups that are typically said to belong to a British ‘Christian Right’. Although there is no consensus on which groups might be involved in such a bloc, a number of core organisations attract consistent and repeated attention within the literature and commentary on the topic. These groups, primarily, include: the Christian Institute, the Evangelical Alliance, Anglican Mainstream, Christian Concern, Christian Voice, Christian Action Research and Education (CARE), the Conservative Christian Fellowship, the Christian Medical Fellowship, Core Issues Trust and the Christian Legal Centre.<sup>22</sup>

The bulk of the empirical research for this study was based on a series of eight semi-structured interviews with elite-level representatives drawn from these organisations. Requests for an interview were directed either to the head of the organisation itself or, where this was not appropriate (for instance, where such a position was unclear or did not exist) to the organisation’s preferred contact point. All but two of the organisations (CARE and the



Christian Institute) agreed to take part in the project. Five of the interviewees were directly responsible for leading their organisation, and all participants were involved at a senior operational and decision-making (e.g. managerial or directorial) level. The interviews, which were conducted during the spring of 2013, typically lasted for one hour and followed a standard pattern of questioning. This core research was supplemented by a further series of interviews (conducted between spring 2013 and spring 2015) with elite representatives from a number of more mainstream religious and non-religious organisations. Amongst these included bishops from the Church of England, Christian think-tanks and the British Humanist Association.

The relatively small number of interviewees involved in the core study means that care needs to be taken when generalising from its findings. The composition of the main sample was also predominantly male and white, and was largely (but not exclusively) London-centric. This may also limit the wider applicability of the views and opinions expressed. Nevertheless, these limitations are not unduly prohibitive. The primary interview sample included representatives from most of the main ‘Christian Right’ organisations in Britain and, as such, provides a valuable insight into critical aspects of their worldview.

One key feature of these groups is that they are overwhelmingly evangelical in their orientation. While evangelicalism comes in a variety of forms and has no centralised, doctrinal authority, its principal features (following Bebbington’s famous ‘quadrilateral’) are often said to rest on four central pillars: conversionism (the view that lives need to be changed through discipleship), Biblicism (regarding the Bible as the word of God), activism (promoting the word of God through evangelistic methods) and cruciocentrism (referring to the centrality of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross).<sup>23</sup>

Firm data on the exact numbers of people that are likely to be members or supporters of ‘Christian Right’ organisations, though, remains elusive. Some groups (such as Christian

Concern and Anglican Mainstream) do not have formal membership structures, and others (such as Christian Voice) do not make details of their membership publicly known. The variable quality of the available information also makes direct comparisons between groups difficult. The Christian Medical Fellowship, for example, counts over 4,000 doctors and 800 medical students among its membership; the Evangelical Alliance (Britain's largest umbrella organisation for evangelical Christians) purports to represent evangelicals from no fewer than seventy-nine denominations (with more than 23,000 members); while Christian Concern points to a mailing list of over 43,000 individuals and churches.<sup>24</sup>

In financial terms these organisations are relatively small. According to the latest annual accounts submitted to the Charity Commission, the Christian Institute had a yearly income of £2.6 million for the year ending December 2014, the Evangelical Alliance had £2.3 million (up to March 2015), CARE had an income of just under £2 million (March 2015), and the Christian Medical Fellowship had an income stream of £1.3 million (December 2014). Virtually all these earnings came from voluntary donations. These figures, however, pale in comparison to the larger charities (both religious and non-religious) in Britain. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, for example, has an annual income in excess of £134 million, while the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has a comparable income of £132 million. The largest (overtly) religious charity, Christian Aid, had an income of £100 million, followed by the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance, with £68 million, and Tearfund, with £62 million.<sup>25</sup>

Measuring the wider social support for these organisations is also problematic. One issue here concerns the inadequacies of existing survey data. The 2011 census question on religious identification in England and Wales, for instance, simply allowed Christian respondents to categorise themselves in general terms, as: 'Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)'.<sup>26</sup> More specific statistics, from

the 2005 English Church census, showed that two-fifths of regular churchgoers in England attended evangelical churches, equating to a (not insignificant) figure of 1.26 million people.<sup>27</sup> The largest survey of evangelical opinion in Britain (conducted by the Evangelical Alliance and involving a poll of over 15,000 self-identifying evangelicals) found strong support for conservative views (with almost two-fifths of respondents professing a belief in hell and around a fifth maintaining that Christianity and evolution were incompatible),<sup>28</sup> but the proportion of evangelicals likely to sympathise with the political activities of a Christian Right remains unknown. Research also shows that while most fundamentalists tend to be evangelicals, the opposite relationship is not true,<sup>29</sup> and the negative connotations associated with the term ‘fundamentalist’ (along with the fact that survey respondents are unlikely to self identify themselves in this way) makes gaining more detailed information a highly difficult task.<sup>30</sup>

### **Aims, activities and challenges**

Conservative groups linked to a ‘Christian Right’ have a number of similar aims. Within the general remit of promoting a greater role for Christianity in British public life, common campaigns in recent years have included: attempts to lower the legal time limit for abortions (an amendment to the 2008 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill sought to lower this from 24 to 20 weeks), opposition to developments in medical technologies (notably research using human embryonic stem cells), opposition to the legalisation of same-sex marriage (which became law in 2013 despite the most coordinated and concerted campaign effort involving conservative Christian groups seen in recent years) and opposition to the legalisation of assisted suicide (the most recent attempt to liberalise the law in this regard was defeated in 2015). Anti-drug, anti-pornography and anti-gambling campaigns, as well as on-going efforts to defend and promote religious freedom, are popular causes too.

Beyond this, conservative Christian organisations also engage in a variety of group-specific activities. The Christian Medical Fellowship was established in 1948 to help and support Christians in the medical profession. Christian Action Research and Education was set up in 1971 as the direct successor to the Festival of Light (a 1970s movement which emerged in response to concerns about the permissive society), and the Christian Institute began in the late 1980s (being formally established in 1991) as a reaction to concerns about ‘the moral direction of the nation’.<sup>31</sup> More recently, Anglican Mainstream (established in 2005) and Core Issues Trust (in 2007) emerged in response to changing social views and issues around sexuality. Christian Concern was formed in 2008 to act as a sister organisation to the Christian Legal Centre, which was established to defend and support the legal rights of Christians the previous year.

Following the tenets of Social Identity Theory, the activities of conservative Christian organisations are primarily directed towards two separate kinds of audiences: internal and external. The former of these (what might be termed ‘inward-facing’) activities, are tailored towards members of the group or like-minded constituencies, and are designed to address issues and concerns that are particular to the group itself or to its own sectional area of expertise (such as providing legal support or advice). In this respect, a key role of conservative Christian groups is to help reinforce a sense of identity and belonging. According to one interviewee, for instance, a central goal of their organisation is to show ‘ordinary Christian people’ that someone is out there making their case, and to reassure them that they are not ‘swivel-eyed loons’.<sup>32</sup> Another notes that the direction of their organisation is ‘not so much campaigns, it’s more drawing things to people’s attention’, and that its efforts are ‘not so much aimed at the general public, but just to raise up a standard so that people who are listening who agree with me say “oh yeah, hang on a minute, somebody there’s

saying what I believe”’. The general aim is ‘to provide a testimony ... a little flag that people can rally around’.<sup>33</sup>

Running parallel to this, the external (or ‘outward-facing’) activities of conservative Christian groups are aimed principally at shaping opinions at the level of British society and culture with a view to promoting a greater role for Christianity and influencing public policy issues. These goals are clearly expressed in the public mission statements of conservative Christian groups themselves. The declared aim of Christian Concern, for example, is ‘to work to infuse a biblical worldview into every aspect of society ... to be a strong Christian voice in the public sphere’, and to ‘change public opinion on issues of key importance and affect policy at the highest levels’. In like fashion, the aim of the Christian Institute is ‘the furtherance and promotion of the Christian religion in the United Kingdom’, with the overall objective being for the British state ‘to adopt Christian values and to implement godly laws’.<sup>34</sup>

Interviewees maintain that these objectives do not reflect a desire to impose religious values on the rest of society, but are simply about ensuring equal participation in British public life. As one respondent puts it, politics is ‘a dirty old business but it’s an important business, it’s about running the country, why wouldn’t you want men and women of faith and values being involved in it to bring their principles and their integrity, their faith and so on, into that square?’<sup>35</sup> Another explains that the general aim is not ‘to create some kind of theocracy that overrules the rights and views of people who differ fundamentally from ourselves’, but simply to find a way ‘that allows society to enable different points of view to function’.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, another representative maintains that a key ambition is to see a society ‘in which the central position of the church in the country is still maintained, and there’s a recognition and understanding that Biblical principles, the outworking of individuals and the church’s position on Christian faith is recognised as being one for the public good’.<sup>37</sup>

The public policy activities of conservative Christian groups are promoted through a wide variety of methods. These include the production of briefing papers, journals, newsletters and books, providing web-based resources and social media engagement, involvement in public talks, debates and media interviews, as well as lobbying activities such as meetings with MPs and related parties for campaign and informational purposes. The ability of such groups to access the structures of power, however, are variable. One of the more politically engaged organisations, CARE, supplements its lobbying activities by directly supplying interns to MPs as a way of gaining a foothold inside the political system. This scheme is described by a former member of CARE with close links to the programme as having been designed to:

train-up Christian leaders who were politically savvy, knew what was what, understood the political process ... and would therefore influence public life in their own right when they were established in their political public life career ... It was the goal of the programme to have political influence when these interns became MPs.<sup>38</sup>

Most organisations, however, lack such a direct channel of access and seek to effect change by other means. One interviewee, for example, notes that evangelical Christians in Britain are ‘a small minority’ (being variously described as ‘a sub-culture’ and ‘aliens in exile’), and are ‘trying to influence the direction society takes by ensuring or doing what we can in a democratic society with what limited power we have’. A central aim in this is to shape what are described as the ‘Mountains of Culture’ (including Parliament, the Courts, universities, the Church and the media), ‘and part of that is ... trying to get laws which embody Judeo-Christian values on the statute books, trying to get Christian values shaping public life’.<sup>39</sup> Supporting this wide-ranging approach, another representative declares that ‘all facets of the public sphere, law, politics, media, even the academies’ are central to their mission, because

‘in terms of influence in the public sphere ... they’re intertwined’.<sup>40</sup> Another maintains that the core goals of their organisation are based around ‘influencing the social, cultural and spiritual discourse in a number of ways ... so it’s a bit of lobbying, it’s a bit of advocacy, it’s a bit of representation’.<sup>41</sup>

Despite this organisational diversity, Christian Right groups face a number of common challenges that are linked to the growing pressures of secularisation and the long-term decline of religion in Britain. According to official figures from the Office for National Statistics, the proportion of the adult population in England and Wales describing themselves as ‘Christian’ declined from 71.7% in 2001 to 59.3% in 2011,<sup>42</sup> while figures from British Social Attitudes in 2013 found that a straight majority of people (50.4%) now described themselves as belonging to ‘no religion’ for the first time.<sup>43</sup> A raft of other surveys suggesting that secularising trends continue to run through every indicator of religiosity – including beliefs, attendance and membership – further underpin these findings.<sup>44</sup>

A meta-analysis of opinion poll data (drawn from 123 national and 35 local surveys) reveals a similar picture of decline in the status of the Bible, suggesting a growing disjuncture between one of the central pillars of the evangelical worldview and mainstream British society. While 82% of evangelical churchgoers professed to read or listen to the Bible at least once a week in 2010, the overall proportion of British adults doing so at least once a month fell from 24% in 1973 to just 8% in 2013. Literal interpretations of the Bible are also in decline. In 1973 56% of the British public proclaimed a belief in ‘Bible truth’, but in 2008 just 26% agreed that the Bible represented the divinely inspired word of God. Evangelical opinion, on the other hand, was far stronger. In 2010 almost three quarters (72%) of evangelical churchgoers claimed that the Bible was without error. In 2011 83% of evangelicals claimed that the Bible was the supreme authority guiding their beliefs, opinions and behaviours.<sup>45</sup>

These dynamics present a twin dilemma for conservative Christian groups: imposing strategic pressures to position themselves within what is now an increasingly secularised environment, but to do so in a way that maintains a sense of internal cohesion and unity amongst group members. Here, the main response in terms of collective action framing has been the construction of a narrative built upon two primary assertions. The first is that secularisation poses a serious threat to the social and moral probity of the nation. The second is that it represents a danger to religious rights and freedoms.<sup>46</sup>

A key theme here is that the decline of Christianity has led to a loss of social cohesion, the rise of a crude individualist, consumerist culture and a sense of moral relativism, all of which are considered to be at the root of many of Britain's social problems. Common assertions in this respect include the claim that 'there's no longer a consensus about what's right and wrong', and that 'we're in a post-Christian multi-faith relativistic society where each person decides their own view';<sup>47</sup> that 'the whole system is breaking down, at every level', with the 1960s/70s being a pivotal turning point in the emergence of 'this diversity stuff and being politically correct';<sup>48</sup> and that many of Britain's problems are attributable to the fact that '[w]e don't love Jesus enough ... We don't believe in a God that will judge, and in heaven and hell'.<sup>49</sup> In the same way, another respondent maintains that Britain's social malaise is directly linked to the loss of Biblical principles. As they put it: 'This is what happens when a society does not follow something straightforward like the 10 commandments, but says "no no no, we're free to do what we want"'.<sup>50</sup>

The second prominent claim in respect of secularisation is that Christianity in Britain is becoming increasingly marginalised at the hands of vocal minority groups, most notably homosexual, Islamic and secularist campaigners keen to drive religion from the public square. A central feature of this claim is the notion that there now exists a competing hierarchy of rights in Britain, and that the rights of Christians have become subordinate to



those of other social groups. Legal provisions on human rights (such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the 1998 Human Rights Act) alongside legislative measures designed to promote greater equality and fairness (such as the 2004 Civil Partnership Act, the 2007 and 2010 Equality Acts as well as, more recently, the legalisation of same-sex marriage) have been instrumental in the adoption of this approach too.<sup>51</sup> Claims that measures such as these pose a direct threat to religious freedom have been accompanied by a series of high-profile legal challenges, most of which have centred on issues of alleged employment discrimination on religious grounds. Four of these cases were heard, and three of them rejected, by the European Court of Human Rights in 2013.

Perceptions of marginalisation are highly prevalent among representatives of conservative Christian groups. Describing a situation of ‘residual, secular antipathy towards all religion generally, but Christianity specifically’, one interviewee describes the situation in Britain as one in which:

Christians are discriminated against in the public square ... We are being marginalised, there’s no doubt about that ... you’ve got a hundred years of a secular experiment that’s gone all wobbly all over the place and people see religion as a threat to their power, to their influence and their world view.<sup>52</sup>

Another representative, making the same point, claims that: ‘secularists want to drive religion out of the public sphere, to leave the field clear for them’, and are ‘creating a spiritual vacuum ... that Islam is waiting to fill’.<sup>53</sup> From a similar vantage point is the argument that the marginalisation of Christians has been driven by ‘an aggressive secularism that claims to be value neutral’ but in reality represents ‘an attempt to rid Western civilisation of Judeo-Christian values ... it’s reminiscent, really, of the Soviet state, and it’s a complete denial of

an individual or groups' right to be able to express themselves freely'.<sup>54</sup> Another asserts, equally vigorously, that 'the whole equalities agenda' is 'predicated upon a very liberal view', and has led directly to 'oppression and censorship' to the extent that anyone disagreeing is 'cut out of the public space'. Thus: 'if your equality and diversity policies mean that, let's say, homosexual rights trump the Christian's rights, then ... politically you have no rights because the political ideology does not recognise your right to manifest your faith in the public sphere'.<sup>55</sup>

Interestingly, alongside the actions of militant minority groups, 'Christian Right' organisations also put much of the blame for the marginalisation of religion on the actions of government and the churches themselves. Alongside the extensions to human rights and equalities legislation introduced by New Labour during the first decade of the twenty-first century is a pervasive sense of disappointment and anger with the actions of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government. Key complaints here have centred on the legalisation of same-sex marriage and on the government's treatment of religious groups, especially in terms of the greater role for faith-based organisations that was pledged for the Big Society agenda, but which was never fully delivered. Typical opinions here include the claim that the various restrictions that have been imposed on charities in the delivery of the Big Society, especially in respect of equality and diversity measures, mean that 'the ability for the church to serve is then strangled';<sup>56</sup> that the government were 'quite religiously illiterate in different ways, and even hostile' towards religion;<sup>57</sup> and that 'the problem is what the government has wanted is the benefit that the Christian organisations bring in particular – which is loads of good social work on the ground – but you try and put Jesus in or prayer in, the thing that actually changes lives', and the real attitude was 'don't give out the bibles, don't talk about Jesus'.<sup>58</sup> One interviewee puts the point more forcefully still, claiming that the legalisation of same-sex marriage was 'completely bonkers ... even demonic',<sup>59</sup> and

another accuses the government of having ‘abused religious people’. As they complain, the government’s approach is ‘an attempt to, on the one hand, say that religions are important, and on the other hand to completely emasculate them in terms of any effectiveness in society’.<sup>60</sup>

The role of the church in the marginalisation of religion, on the other hand, is said to reside in its own wilful, decades long abandonment of the public square. One representative claims that their organisation ‘would not need to exist if the church of England had spoken with a clear voice’, and laments that many of the problems associated with secularisation have emerged as a result of ‘the church failing to take her place, others vying loud in the public space’.<sup>61</sup> Supporting this view, another respondent notes that ‘a number of other organisations’ have been ‘very active and very strong when it comes to lobbying ... there is a tide that’s turning, and unless the church stands up and speaks, we won’t be entitled to hold that position in the public sphere’.<sup>62</sup> Highlighting the lack of engagement from Christians themselves, one interviewee expresses a desire to see ‘Christ’s church militant here on earth’ and for Christians to become more politically organised, ‘getting out on to the streets and being active in the public sphere, getting elected, all these sorts of things’.<sup>63</sup>

## **Labels and framing**

A key and related feature of this narrative is a wholesale rejection of the idea that a ‘Christian Right’ exists in Britain. Two key themes are particularly apposite here. One is the notion that efforts to create such a movement would be doomed to fail given Britain’s social and political situation. As an example of this point, one interviewee claims that: ‘I don’t think there’s any purchase for a heavy-handed Christian right over here at all’, and notes that while there are ‘some of the old-fashioned UKIP-y type people who might want to buy into that ... I just don’t see the need for it or desire for it’.<sup>64</sup> Another similarly maintains that the kind of

extremists that might be constitutive of a Christian Right are usually no more than ‘screaming mullahs ... somebody with a laptop in a bedroom with an attitude’. While developments in the United States are said to be ‘really influential in terms of how it informs the Evangelical church in the UK’, the idea of importing some form of U.S.-style ‘culture wars’ is regarded as wholly inappropriate. Despite noting that ‘there are some here in the UK church who’d like to see the same thing’, the idea of attempting to gain political advantage by fostering a split between the values of the religious and the non-religious is one that simply ‘doesn’t work’.<sup>65</sup>

The second key theme here is a rejection of the use of identity markers such as ‘Christian Right’ or ‘fundamentalist’ as ways of describing conservative Christian groups. The use of such labels is not only considered to be a misrepresentation of their actual beliefs – which are said to be straightforward, mainstream, orthodox Christianity – but is also a point of political contestation given the negative connotations attached to such labels in the British context. As such, their use is considered to be little more than an attempt by opponents of conservative Christian groups to undermine their efforts without having to actually engage with the arguments. On this point, for example, one representative claims that ‘We’re not trying to be a religious right’, and that:

People very often want to label you a fundamentalist as if it’s something dangerous and scary ... Well if fundamentalist means whether I believe the fundamentals of the Bible, yes I believe the fundamentals of the Bible ... but believing in those fundamentals doesn’t make me an extremist it makes me mainstream because I believe what Jesus believed. I believe what the apostles and the disciples believed.<sup>66</sup>

Another interviewee makes an equally robust assertion. As they put it, the language of fundamentalism is nothing more than ‘a strategy that is being used to undermine a particular point of view’. Thus:

It does my head in, because I think just because an individual believes in the fundamentals of the Christian gospel doesn’t make them a fundamentalist ... just because I have sincerely held Christian views, literally believing in the resurrection, in the atonement of sin, and just because I happen to believe that homosexuality in a sinful practice, you know, I’m labelled as a fundamentalist.<sup>67</sup>

Making the exact same point, another respondent maintains that their organisation is ‘more Methodist socialism than any kind of ... right wingery’, and claims that the term ‘fundamentalist’ is simply used as a term of abuse, amounting to little more than ‘a kind of name-calling’, the throwing of ‘insults’ and ‘an ad hominem attack’. As they put it: ‘Everybody believes something fundamentally, I just happen to believe that God exists and he became man in the Lord Jesus Christ, walked this earth, died, was buried and rose again and is seated in heaven and will come again in glory, you know, I believe the creed ... it’s just ordinary Christianity’.<sup>68</sup> Making the distinction equally clear, another interviewee (noting that ‘a lot of people would probably say I’m on the lunatic fringe’) maintains that the term ‘fundamentalist’ is intensely problematic ‘because I don’t think people understand what it means’. ‘Personally’, they add, ‘I don’t see ... us as being right-wing fundamentalist in any sense ... I’d say we’re just orthodox’.<sup>69</sup>

Basing a collective action frame on the dangers of secularisation and the marginalisation of Christianity might serve as a useful agent of group cohesion, but a central (and to an extent, paradoxical) feature of this narrative is its overtly secular character. While the beliefs and

activities of conservative Christian groups are driven and motivated by theological concerns the ‘outward-facing’ arguments that are deployed in respect of trying to shape sociocultural attitudes and issues of public policy are overwhelmingly framed in terms of secular norms and values. Arguments about abortion, for example, are typically based on issues such as survival rates for premature births, medical advances involving human embryo research are often opposed on ‘slippery slope’ grounds involving the social consequences of unregulated scientific technology, the case against assisted dying has been similarly based around the implications for the most vulnerable groups in society, while opposition to the legalisation of same-sex marriage was based primarily around claims of historical tradition, the lack of an electoral mandate, and the social problems that (it was said) would invariably result.<sup>70</sup>

Framing core arguments in this way reflects a recognition (if tacitly) of the fact that, in an increasingly secularised society, religious groups can best hope to influence wider opinion by avoiding narrative claims that are couched in theological terms and by framing them within a secular language of minority rights and freedoms.<sup>71</sup> These strategic requirements are well recognised by representatives of conservative Christian groups themselves. Explaining the reasoning behind the use of secular rather than religious arguments by their own organisation, for instance, one representative notes that:

It’s not because they don’t have these convictions ... it’s because we live in a post-Christian society, so if I use Christian arguments most people are not going to be persuaded by them ... you’ve got to use the language that people connect with ... if I’m talking to a Christian audience, then I’ll couch it in different ways.<sup>72</sup>

On the same theme, another respondent states that the choice of ‘when to use explicit religious arguments and language in public life’ is ‘a big issue’ for their organisation, and

maintains that while it remains impossible to ‘separate the theology out from public discourse’, the danger of giving a green light to the use of theological arguments was that they ‘could end up with all sorts of stuff’ that could be politically disadvantageous. Thus, as they explain:

There’s a time and a place for it ... 99% of your Christian discourse is going to be implicit rather than explicit in that context, so you’ve got to be sensible about this, I think, because it plays into the hands of the secularists who just want to paint us as some sort of gung-ho.<sup>73</sup>

A related theme here is that the use of secular arguments does not contradict theologically-based claims, but, rather, that the two are complementary forms of reasoning, with the findings of science and social scientific research said to be supportive of the underlying theological position. Thus, as one respondent observes, on the specific issue of same-sex marriage: ‘It’s not that we’re dinosaurs or, you know, stick-in-the-muds ... it’s everything to do with the way the world is made ... all the evidence is that children in a secure mother-father family do best’.<sup>74</sup> The decision to use secular, as opposed to theological arguments, then, is:

Because what we’re trying to do, what Christians in this are trying to do, is persuade ... the majority, the people who are not swayed by religious arguments as such, that this particular view is right ... the appeal is made on arguments that are common ground arguments, common good arguments, and they should be. If God is the creator, then what is good for the creation will be in harmony with what God says.<sup>75</sup>

Another interviewee sets out the same line of argument. As they put it: ‘the kind of apologetics that I would offer around the position we take is not couched in a religious argument ... in my view there is enough in science that would support the view that we take’. The use of an overtly secular language, then, is because ‘most religious groups realise that they have a particular take on reality which is not shared across the board’, but also that the findings of science and religion on issues such as the dangers of homosexuality and abortion are such that ‘in terms of the scientific data ... there’s no need to appeal to the religious argument’.<sup>76</sup> Another representative argues that a successful defence of heterosexual marriage can be made on secular grounds because ‘science shows and studies show that children do best when raised by a mother and a father’. As they put it: ‘I think a lot of secular interfacing arguments were made because they can be made’, and that ‘I believe them from a faith perspective, from believing in the bible, but science and sociology and life backs it up, it always does ... that’s the truth’.<sup>77</sup>

### **Conclusion: the limits of secular discourse**

The application of Social Identity Theory to an analysis of Britain’s ‘Christian Right’ yields a number of important points. One is that the debate about the existence of a Christian Right comparable to that in the U.S. is, to a large, extent a definitional one. Determining the scale and character of ‘fundamentalist’ Christianity remains an intensely problematic exercise due to gaps in the available data as well as the pejorative context and lack of consensus that surrounds the meaning of the term. A critical issue here, then, is the way in which collective identity markers such as ‘Christian Right’ are enmeshed within a variety of broader political factors relating to the dynamics of group mobilisation. These centre on the need to maintain internal cohesion and distinctiveness, while at the same time position a group externally to achieve wider political goals. In this respect a central challenge for conservative Christian



groups in Britain has been the increasing secularisation of British society and culture. The common response to this has been the deployment of a collective action frame based on the social problems of secularisation and the threat posed to religious rights and freedoms. A key part of this narrative also involves the rejection of negatively perceived labels, such as ‘Christian Right’ and ‘fundamentalist’, which are said to be little more than an ad hominem attack by opponents wishing to paint conservative Christian groups as hotbeds of religious extremism.

This approach, however, is far from problem free. Framing core arguments in secular terms may well be necessary for appealing to a wider audience but the evidence to date suggests that their influence has been mixed. Notwithstanding some limited measures of success, such as helping to shape a popular news agenda around themes of religious discrimination (with close links between certain conservative Christian groups and sections of the right-wing media), such gains need to be weighed against other, and potentially more substantial, reversals such as the failures on abortion, medical science and same-sex marriage as well as the repeated loss of legal challenges brought on issues of employment discrimination.

The use of a secularised discourse for collective action framing is also something of a double-edged sword. For one, assertions of marginalisation and claims that religious groups need to be accorded the same formal rights and equalities as other social interests themselves go to highlight the sectional character of religious groups, thereby undermining claims about the need for special treatment in the form of political and legal privileges in defence of religious freedoms. This is especially pressing when these privileges can be seen as traducing the rights of other minorities. Another, and potentially more serious, problem, however, is that the adoption of a secular discourse effectively reduces the amount of control that religious groups have over the direction of their own narrative claims and structures. In contrast to the use of theological arguments, about which religious groups can claim to have particular

expertise, attempting to legitimise public policy arguments with recourse to secular norms supported by scientific research can expose groups to unexpected shifts in the evidence base that can challenge and undermine the core assertions that are being made. If same-sex marriage does not lead to growing social problems, for instance, or if the legalisation of assisted dying does not lead to a greater number of deaths amongst vulnerable groups in the way that conservative Christian groups contend, then the credibility of the arguments being used is likely to be eroded. Moreover, the internalisation of secular norms and a commitment to evidence-based argument could compel religious organisations to move in directions they may not wish to go (being forced to accept same-sex marriage once expected problems fail to materialise, for instance), creating the risk of internal splits and fissures within their own memberships.<sup>78</sup>

The central conclusion here, then, is that the identity and strategy of Britain's 'Christian Right' are inextricably linked. Collective identity labels reflect wider structures and processes of political power, and can only be properly understood by locating them within this wider context. Further research into this subject might seek to expand upon this point by exploring the political activities of conservative Christian groups in other areas. Fruitful avenues here might include studies of the tactics used by conservative Christian groups in specific campaign issues (such as opposing same-sex marriage), analyses of groups and individuals that could be said to be on the periphery of the 'Christian Right' (such as the Christian Party, or the Jubilee Centre, for instance), or analyses of grass-roots conservative Christians that compare and contrast the views presented by group leaders with those of the rank and file. With 'Christian Right' groups set to remain a feature Britain's religio-political landscape for the foreseeable future, research such as this is essential if we are to expand our understanding of their processes and dynamics.

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<sup>1</sup> For example see David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989); John Wolffe (ed.), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980* (London: SPCK, 1995); Todd Thompson, 'The Evangelical Alliance, Religious Liberty, and the Evangelical Conscience in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of Religious History*, 33:1 (2010): 49-65; David W. Bebbington D. W. and David C. Jones (eds.), *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom During the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Anna Strhan, *Aliens and Strangers? The Struggle for Coherence in the Everyday Lives of Evangelicals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Walton, Andrea Hatcher and Nick Spencer (2013), 'Is there a "Religious Right" in Britain?' *Theos*, February 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Hunt, 'The rhetoric of rights in the UK Christian churches regarding nonheterosexual citizenship', *Politics and Religion*, 2 (2010): 183-200.

<sup>4</sup> Cynthia Burack and Angelia Wilson, 'Constructing Christian Right enemies and allies: US, UK and Eastern Europe', in Peter Manley Scott, Christopher R. Baker, Elaine L. Graham (eds.), *Remoralising Britain? Political, Ethical and Theological Perspectives on New Labour* (London: Continuum, 2009). On this theme also see Stephen Hicks, 'The Christian Right and Homophobic Discourse: A Response to "Evidence" That Lesbian and Gay Parenting Damages Children', *Sociological Research Online* 8(4), 2003.

<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/8/4/hicks.html>

<sup>5</sup> Jamie Doward and Gaby Hinsliff, 'Who would Jesus vote for? (Christians are on a mission to tell us)' *Observer*, 20 March 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Dispatches, Channel 4, 'In God's Name'. Broadcast 19 May 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Sunny Hundal, 'The right hand of God', *New Statesman*, 24 April 2010,

<http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2010/04/conservative-christian>

<sup>8</sup> Nelson Jones, 'Britain's Religious Right: Myth or reality?' *New Statesman*, 1 February 2013. <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2013/02/britains-religious-right-myth-or-reality>

<sup>9</sup> Ben Quinn, 'Britain's Religious Right is on the rise', *Guardian*, 1 February 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Terry Sanderson, 'There is no American-style Religious Right in Britain, but the general theo-political landscape is lurching rightward', National Secular Society, 6 February 2013.

<http://www.secularism.org.uk/blog/2013/02/there-is-no-american-style-religious-right-in-britain-but-the-general-theo-political-landscape-is-lurching-rightward>

<sup>11</sup> Martyn Eden, 'Has Britain a "Religious Right"?' *Premier.org*, March 2014,

<http://www.premier.org.uk/Topics/Society/Politics/Has-Britain-a-Religious-Right>

<sup>12</sup> See Ben Clements and Nick Spencer, 'Voting and Values in Britain: Does religion count?', *Theos* (2014); also see Evangelical Alliance, '21st Century Evangelicals: Faith In Politics?', Evangelical Alliance (2015).

<sup>13</sup> See Walton et al, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Bruce, *Conservative Protestant Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); 'Motive and opportunity: British Christian parties 1997-2011', *Politics and Religion* 6: 3-24 (2013); Martin Durham, 'Abortion, Gay Rights and Politics in Britain and America: A Comparison', *Parliamentary Affairs* 58(1): 89-103 (2005); Walton et al., op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Bickley, 'Beware the Religious Right red-herring', *Talking Politics*, 13 September 2011. <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/comment/talking-politics/beware-religious-red-herring-090040831.html#rfkxW3H>

<sup>16</sup> On this point see, for example: Matthew J. Hornsey, 'Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory: A Historical Review', *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2(1): 204-222 (2008); Joanne R. Smith and Michael A. Hogg, 'Social Identity and Attitudes', in William D. Crano and Radmila Prislin (eds), *Attitudes and Attitude Change* (New York:

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Psychology Press, 2008); Stephen Reicher, Russell Spears and S. Alexander Haslam, 'The Social Identity Approach in Social Psychology', in Margaret S. Wetherell and Chandra T. Mohanty (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Identities* (London Sage, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Rupert Brown, 'Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems and Future Challenges', *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30(6): 745-78 (2000).

<sup>18</sup> Robert D. Benford and David, A. Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology*. 26: 611-39 (2000); Renwick K. Monroe, James Hankin and Renee B. van Vechten, 'The Psychological Foundations of Identity Politics', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3: 419-47 (2000); Marilyn Brewer, 'The Many Faces of Social Identity: Implications for Political Psychology', *Political Psychology* 22(1): 115-125 (2001).

<sup>19</sup> Vivian L. Vignoles and Natalie J. Moncaster, 'Identity Motives and In-Group Favouritism: A New Approach to Individual Differences in Intergroup Discrimination', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 46: 91-113 (2007).

<sup>20</sup> Benford and Snow, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Renate Ysseldyk, Kimberly Matheson and Hymie Anisman, 'Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14(1): 60-71 (2010).

<sup>22</sup> Beyond this core grouping are a number of other Christian organisations that are sometimes connected to a British Christian Right. These include the Christian Party, the Jubilee Centre, LIFE and the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. Since the purpose of this study was to focus only on those organisations that were at the heart of a British Christian Right, these 'secondary' groups (as well as other high-profile individuals sometimes said to be part of a Christian Right) were not included.

<sup>23</sup> See Bebbington, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> Membership details are taken from <http://www.cmf.org.uk/about/>, <http://www.christianconcern.com/about>, and <http://www.eauk.org/connect/about-us/>

<sup>25</sup> All figures were taken from the website of the Charity Commission (<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/>). Accessed: 18 January 2016.

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/measuring-equality/equality/ethnic-nationality-religion/religion/index.html>

<sup>27</sup> Peter Brierley (ed.), 'Religious Trends 6' (Christian Research, Swindon: 2007).

<sup>28</sup> See Evangelical Alliance, '21st Century Evangelicals: A Snapshot of the Beliefs and Habits of Evangelical Christians in the UK', (Evangelical Alliance, London: 2011).

<sup>29</sup> See Bebbington, op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> For more on Christianity in Britain see Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000* (Routledge, London: 2009); Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain: A Persistent Paradox*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Wiley-Blackwell, London: 2015).

<sup>31</sup> Christian Institute, 'Twenty Years of Christian Influence' (2011), <http://www.christian.org.uk/wp-content/downloads/twenty-years-of-christian-influence.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Interview #6, conducted 22 May 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Interview #7, conducted 4 June 2013.

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.christianconcern.com/about>, Christian Institute, 'What We Believe' (2008), [http://www.christian.org.uk/wp-content/downloads/what\\_we\\_believe\\_thestate.pdf](http://www.christian.org.uk/wp-content/downloads/what_we_believe_thestate.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Interview #4, conducted 23 April 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Interview #8, conducted 6 June 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Interview #2, conducted 18 April 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Interview #9, conducted 25 April 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Interview #1, conducted 16 April 2013.

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- <sup>40</sup> Interview #5, conducted 25 April. 2013.
- <sup>41</sup> Interview #3, conducted 23 April. 2013.
- <sup>42</sup> Office for National Statistics, 'Religion in England and Wales 2011', December 2011.
- <sup>43</sup> British Social Attitudes, 31st Report. NatCen, 2013, p.133.
- <sup>44</sup> For example, see Steve Bruce, 'Post-Secularity and Religion in Britain: An Empirical Assessment', *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28(3): 369-384 (2013).
- <sup>45</sup> On these points see Clive Field, 'Another Window on British Secularization: Public Attitudes to Church and Clergy Since the 1960s', *Contemporary British History*, 28(2): 190-218 (2014).
- <sup>46</sup> This contains strong similarities to the approach taken-up by the Christian Right in the United States, see Ted G. Jelen, 'Political Esperanto: Rhetorical Resources and Limitations of the Christian Right in the United States', *Sociology of Religion* 66(3): 303-321 (2005); Nathanien J. Klemp, 'The Christian Right: Engaged Citizens or Theocratic Crusaders?' *Politics and Religion* 3: 1-27 (2010); Jeremy N. Thomas and Daniel V. A. Olson, 'Evangelical Elites' Changing Responses to Homosexuality 1960-2009', *Sociology of Religion*, 73(3): 239-272 (2012).
- <sup>47</sup> Interview #1.
- <sup>48</sup> Interview #7.
- <sup>49</sup> Interview #5.
- <sup>50</sup> Interview #6.
- <sup>51</sup> On this, see Carl F. Stychin, 'Same-Sex Sexualities and the Globalization of Human Rights Discourse', *McGill Law Journal* 49(4): 951-68 (2004).
- <sup>52</sup> Interview #3.
- <sup>53</sup> Interview #7.
- <sup>54</sup> Interview #8.
- <sup>55</sup> Interview #5.
- <sup>56</sup> Interview #2.
- <sup>57</sup> Interview #3.
- <sup>58</sup> Interview #5.
- <sup>59</sup> Interview #7.
- <sup>60</sup> Interview #8.
- <sup>61</sup> Interview #5.
- <sup>62</sup> Interview #2.
- <sup>63</sup> Interview #7.
- <sup>64</sup> Interview #4.
- <sup>65</sup> Interview #3.
- <sup>66</sup> Interview #5.
- <sup>67</sup> Interview #8.
- <sup>68</sup> Interview #7.
- <sup>69</sup> Interview #1.
- <sup>70</sup> See Steven Kettell, 'I Do, Thou Shalt Not: Religious Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage in Britain', *Political Quarterly* 84(2): 247-55 (2013); Stephen J. Hunt, 'Christian Lobbyist Groups and the Negotiation of Sexual Rights in the UK', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 29(1): 121-136 (2014).
- <sup>71</sup> Jelen, op. cit.
- <sup>72</sup> Interview #1.
- <sup>73</sup> Interview #3.
- <sup>74</sup> Interview #6.
- <sup>75</sup> Interview #6.

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<sup>76</sup> Interview #8.

<sup>77</sup> Interview #5.

<sup>78</sup> On these points see Thomas and Olson, op. cit. Also see Jeremy N. Thomas, ‘Outsourcing Moral Authority: The Internal Secularization of Evangelicals’ Anti-Pornography Narratives’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 52(3): 457–475 (2014); Katherine E. Knutson, ‘Breaking the Chains?: Constraint and the Political Rhetoric of Religious Interest Groups’, *Politics and Religion*, 4: 312–337 (2011).