Catholic Agency in International Society: An International Relations Analysis of the Santa Marta Group

Marianne L. Rozario

The University of Notre Dame Australia

Follow this and additional works at: https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING
The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.
Do not remove this notice.

Publication Details

This dissertation/thesis is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact researchonline@nd.edu.au.
CATHOLIC AGENCY IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ANALYSIS OF
THE SANTA MARTA GROUP

Marianne Louise Rozario
MA(Hons)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Notre Dame Australia

Principal Supervisor: Professor John A. Rees
Co-supervisor: Dr Rosemary Hancock

Institute for Ethics and Society
School of Arts and Sciences
Sydney Campus
July 2021
Declaration

To the best of the candidate’s knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis is the candidate’s own work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institution.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, updated 2018). The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00418), Approval Number #018138S.

Signature:

Name: Marianne Louise Rozario

Date: July 2021
For my dad, Simon Rozario
Abstract

This research examines the issue of Catholic agency in the academic discipline of International Relations (IR). Situated in the IR discourse on religion, its investigation is based on a select Catholic initiative in the international anti-slavery realm named the Santa Marta Group (SMG). It is a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition of predominantly Catholic and state actors collectively working together to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking. I specifically analyse dimensions of the SMG from April 2014 to May 2018. Methodologically, a mixed-methods approach is adopted, combining a desk review and key informant interviews. This thesis has two interrelated questions as its main research focus: (i) How does a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group? and (ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective? In response to these questions, and to better understand Catholic agency in IR, I analyse the SMG through repurposing a ‘thick’ religion framework theorised by Hassner. This framework—principally through its categories of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’—is operationalised to provide an IR analysis of the SMG. Using that analysis, I apply it to two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective identified from select English School voices on Catholicism. These two aspects are religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society, and a preference of the Catholic Church between pluralist and solidarist conceptions of international society. The present research study makes four original contributions: (a) an IR analysis of the SMG, (b) an application of ‘thick’ religion, (c) the integration of ‘thick’ religion into English School theory, and (d) additional perspectives on the English School discourse on Catholicism. This thesis provides an understanding of Catholic agency in international society.
Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisors, friends, and the wider community at Notre Dame who have accompanied me through these last few years. To John, I struck gold with you as my supervisor—you have been supportive beyond all measure, offering guidance with wisdom and tact, and I will treasure the sense of solidarity we shared when life took unexpected turns for the both of us. To Rosie, your methodology expertise and writing skills are second to none and I am grateful for the impact they had on my thesis. To my fellow ‘John’s chickens’—Kiara and Christian—this thesis would be less without your input and the years much less enjoyable without your company. I am eternally grateful that our paths crossed at this precise time and I look forward to a RGE reunion on ‘agency’ twenty years from now. I am immensely blessed and grateful to the Notre Dame community, the wider Catholic young adult scene in Sydney, and all the friends I made along the way. My heart was filled with joy and peace simply immersing myself in your presence. God placed the desire of being in Sydney on my heart at a very young age and fulfilled it exponentially with a place and community that I feel I can now always call home.

My sincere thanks go to David Ryall for supporting me from beginning to end of my PhD journey—encouraging my desire to do a PhD in the first place and proofreading this entire thesis. My gratitude extends to the many friends who proofread chapters—Becky, Julie, Laura, Letizia, Marie, Simone, and Tara—what excellent suggestions and what smart friends I have. My thanks extend to Capstone Editing for providing copyediting and proofreading services, according to the guidelines laid out in the university-endorsed national ‘Guidelines for Editing Research Theses’. I am grateful for receiving scholarships from the Australian Government under the Research Training Program (RTP) and the University of Notre Dame Australia through the International Fee Remission Research Scholarship (IFRRS) without which the thesis and the experience gained from it would not have been possible. Beyond financial support, I thank the university for the opportunity to study at a Catholic university with its intellectual and spiritual freedom.

To those closest to me—Mum, Michelle, Mark, and Nana—thank you for letting me go to the other side of the world even though you wanted me close by, supporting me always, and for being there in the ups and downs of life. ‘Meme’ is now home and free for all the playdates with Fia and Ava—the joy of being an aunt surpasses any words written on a page. To David, thank you for being a gift at a time when I needed you most. And to those in heaven, your prayers and heavenly guidance may not be seen but are known.
I recall being told when embarking on this road that life would not be the same after these years. But I could not have expected to go from reading in cafes along Sydney beaches drinking milkshakes and hopping from one Catholic event to another, to writing chapters from the car outside a London hospital. Dad never saw the completion of this thesis, but he would be so very proud of not just my achievements but of me and the strength I have shown through it all. Dad, thank you for giving me roots and wings: a childhood rooted in faith, nourished by love with a place to always call home; and the wings to explore the world and pursue all that is true, good, and beautiful. This thesis is dedicated to you.
Contents

Declaration .......................................................................................................................... ii
Dedication .......................................................................................................................... iii
Abstract ............................................................................................................................. iv
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................... v
Contents ............................................................................................................................. vii
Abbreviations ..................................................................................................................... x

Chapter One—Introduction ......................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Overview .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.2 Research Questions ................................................................................................. 3
  1.3 Overview of Method ............................................................................................... 4
  1.4 Original Contributions: context and definitions .................................................... 6
      1.4.1 An International Relations analysis of the Santa Marta Group ....................... 7
      1.4.2 An application of ‘thick’ religion .................................................................. 11
      1.4.3 Integration of ‘thick’ religion and English School theory ............................... 13
      1.4.4 Additional perspectives on the English School discourse on Catholicism ...... 15
  1.5 Researcher Positionality .......................................................................................... 19
  1.6 Structure of this Thesis ........................................................................................... 22

Chapter Two—Literature Review .................................................................................. 26
  2.1 An overview of the International Relations Discourse on Religion ...................... 26
      2.1.1 Religion Overlooked .................................................................................... 27
      2.1.2 A Turn to Religion ....................................................................................... 28
      2.1.3 A Postsecular Shift ..................................................................................... 30
      2.1.4 A Theological Turn ..................................................................................... 32
  2.2 ‘Broad’, ‘Deep’, and ‘Thick’ Religion: The International Relations Discourse on Religion .................................................................................................................. 33
      2.2.1 ‘Broad’ Religion ........................................................................................... 34
      2.2.2 ‘Deep’ Religion ........................................................................................... 35
      2.2.3 ‘Thick’ Religion ........................................................................................... 37
  2.3 ‘Broad’, ‘Deep’, and ‘Thick’ Catholicism: The Catholic Church in International Relations Discourse ........................................................................................................... 41
      2.3.1 ‘Broad’ Religion/‘Broad’ Catholicism ............................................................ 42
      2.3.2 ‘Deep’ Religion/‘Deep’ Catholicism .............................................................. 44
      2.3.3 ‘Thick’ Religion/‘Thick’ Catholicism ............................................................ 47

Chapter Three—Methodology ...................................................................................... 52
  3.1 Case Study—the Santa Marta Group ...................................................................... 52
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Qualitative Case Study Research</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 The Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Research Design</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Desk Review</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 Analysis</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Anti-Slavery Activities of the Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 ‘Thick’ Catholicism Analysis of the Santa Marta Group Applied to Aspects of Catholic Agency from an English School Perspective</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) The preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debates in the English School</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four—Theology</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Theology: ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Religious Ideas Underpinning International Society</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 A Common Good Framework</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Theology in Santa Marta Group Actions as Universal</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Theology in Santa Marta Group Motivations as Divinely Sourced</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 The Position of the Catholic Church in the Pluralism Versus Solidarism English School Debates</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Theology Inspires Solidarist Action in the Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Theology Suggests Solidarist Motivations to the Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five—Hierarchy</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Hierarchy: ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Religious Dialogue Drawing Actors in International Society Together</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Religious Dialogue in Vertical Hierarchy</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Religious Dialogue in Horizontal Hierarchy</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3 Religious Dialogue in Vertical and Horizontal Hierarchy</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 The Santa Marta Group as Actor in Pluralism Versus Solidarism English School Debates on ‘Diplomacy’</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1 The Santa Marta Group Fitting a Pluralist International Society as ‘Diplomat’</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2 The Solidarist ‘Diplomatic’ Practices of the Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3 Vertical and Horizontal Hierarchy Makes Effective ‘Diplomacy’</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six—Iconography</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Iconography: ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Santa Marta Group</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AoS</td>
<td>Apostleship of the Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBCEW</td>
<td>Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCEE</td>
<td>The Council of European Bishops’ Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELAM</td>
<td>The Latin American Episcopal Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CST</td>
<td>Catholic Social Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FABC</td>
<td>Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIO</td>
<td>Faith-inspired organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>Higher Degree by Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HREC</td>
<td>Human Research Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IASC</td>
<td>Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPO</td>
<td>Justice and Peace Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>Pontifical Academy of Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASS</td>
<td>Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMG</td>
<td>Santa Marta Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDA</td>
<td>University of Notre Dame Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCCB</td>
<td>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFDD</td>
<td>World Faiths Development Dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One—Introduction

You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know.

William Wilberforce on slavery

1.1 Overview

On 26 October 2016, I stood within the walls of the Vatican, organising an international conference between Catholic bishops, police chiefs, government officials, and other civil society actors. I witnessed a commitment of collaboration against crimes of modern slavery and human trafficking between these diverse global actors. During the two days of the conference, I looked on as these religious and secular actors shared their knowledge, experience, and struggles. The event was the fourth International Conference of the Santa Marta Group (SMG). The SMG describes itself as ‘an alliance of international police chiefs and bishops from around the world working together with civil society in a process endorsed by Pope Francis, to eradicate human trafficking and modern day slavery’ (SMG, 2021c). The interaction between Catholic, state, and civil actors during my time working with the SMG left a profound impact on me. This somewhat surprising alliance exerted, I believed, agency on the international political stage, and the experience left me pondering the influence of the Catholic Church in international affairs.

This thesis explores the issue of Catholic agency in the academic discipline of International Relations (IR). Situated in the IR discourse on religion, the present research seeks to examine the influence of Catholic involvement in the international anti-slavery political realm based on a study of the SMG. This site of analysis is employed to understand dimensions of Catholic agency from the perspective of the English School of IR. Catholic agency is defined in this study as the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations. The present thesis asks two interrelated research questions: (i) How does a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group? and (ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective? The current research project makes four original contributions to knowledge: (a) provides an IR analysis of the SMG through empirical data on this under-researched case study; (b) repurposes and applies a ‘thick’ religion framework theorised by IR religion scholar Ron E Hassner (2011) to an analysis of the SMG; (c) integrates ‘thick’ religion and English School theory together; and (d) provides additional perspectives on the English School discourse on Catholic agency.
Based on the two interrelated research questions, the research project has two aims. Firstly, I investigate the anti-slavery efforts of the SMG by instrumentalising the categories established in a ‘thick’ religion framework first theorised by Hassner (2011). Hassner constructs the acronym ‘THICK’ to employ five central characteristics of religion in IR: Theology, Hierarchy, Iconography, Ceremony, and Belief/Knowledge (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). The current research adapts Hassner’s approach to construct the analytical framework of ‘thick’ Catholicism. Specifically, the nature of Catholicism born out in the SMG has led to a repurposing of the acronym, subsuming the categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ into the three ‘thick’ categories of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’.

Secondly, while the repurposing of Hassner assists in illustrating constitutive attributes of a Catholic actor, further IR analysis is presented to decipher the influence of said attributes by Catholic actors. English School theory is adopted as a robust way to understand Catholic agency. Therefore, I apply a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG to existing conceptions of Catholic agency in the identified English School discourse on Catholicism. A central construct of English School theory is the concept of ‘international society’ whereby states as primary actors form a society despite the condition of anarchy by ‘collectively producing the rules and accepted practices by which they manage their interrelations’ (Green, 2014, p. 1). The English School discourse on Catholicism illuminates two aspects of Catholic agency with which the current thesis directly engages: (a) religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society, and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in English School debates between a pluralist and solidarist conception of international society. Pluralism stresses ‘a relatively low degree of shared norms, rules and institutions amongst the states, where the focus of society is on creating a framework for orderly coexistence and competition, or possibly also the management of collective problems of common fate (e.g. arms control, environment)’ (Buzan, 2004, p. xvii). In contrast, solidarism focuses on ‘international societies with a relatively high degree of shared norms, rules and institutions among states, where the focus is not only on ordering coexistence and competition, but also on cooperation over a wider range of issues, whether in pursuit of joint gains (e.g. trade), or realisation of shared values (e.g. human rights)’ (Buzan, 2004, p. xviii). Through its application of two aspects of Catholic agency in English School theory, the present thesis contributes original insight into Catholic agency in international society.

This research project presents the following findings. Theological principles, hierarchical structures, and elements of iconography evident in the mission, operations, and resources of the SMG reveal new insight into English School assumptions of Catholic agency
in international society. I suggest, firstly, that religious ideas, customs, and practices underpin the English School conception of international society: theology forms the basis of a common good framework sourced from a Deity, religious dialogue draws Catholic and secular actors together, and religious customs associated with Catholic iconography unites levels of society. Secondly, the Catholic Church possesses qualities that fit both pluralist and solidarist characteristics in an English School conception of international society. The current research posits that Catholic theology and iconography suggest a preference towards solidarism but one that is distinct in its identity as a society of states under God, whereas Catholic hierarchy illustrates attributes reflecting English School pluralist characteristics as well as solidarist idealism and practices.

I acknowledge there are a few limitations to this study. These will be explored in more depth in section 7.3. As an overview, these limitations include: (i) the SMG as a sole case study in an analysis of Catholic actors in international affairs more broadly, (ii) an in-depth narrowed focus on the initial stages of the SMG from April 2014–May 2018, (iii) a defined analysis of Catholic agency via two aspects of Catholic agency in English School discourse.

The present research is intended for a broad academic audience: IR scholars interested in research on Catholic actors in the IR discourse on religion, scholars interested in an under-researched case study of a Catholic actor in the anti-slavery field, and English School theorists. Moreover, the current research is useful for policy professionals confronted by or engaged with the phenomenon of religion, as it presents the qualities that Catholic actors bring to international politics. This thesis will also be of interest to those working for the SMG and more broadly within the Catholic Church to better understand their own spheres and limitations of influence.

1.2 Research Questions

As stated in the overview, this thesis is principally informed by two interrelated questions:

(i) How does a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group?

(ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective?

Alternative approaches to understand Catholic agency were considered, however these particular questions are valuable because, as the Section 1.4 will explore, such questions allowed for a contained empirical study of a Catholic actor which could then be
applied to theoretical questions on Catholic agency in the English School. Alternatively, a quantitative analysis of all Catholic actors internationally involved in anti-slavery action could have been conducted. However, while worthy, such a study would not enable an understanding of agency. Further I could have created a qualitative mapping of all SMG members and their influence in the anti-slavery realm. Undoubtedly this would constitute an important research study. However, the size of such a research project would be beyond the scope of a PhD thesis.

1.3 Overview of Method

The SMG, the case study of the research project, is the anti-slavery initiative developed by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW). The present thesis will focus on the constitutive elements of the SMG, which is an important first point of consideration in its ongoing establishment as a transnational Catholic-led coalition. Between 2014 and 2018, approximately 128 organisations have been part of the coalition, including Catholic actors, law enforcement agencies, government officials, and civil society actors. To date, there have been five international conferences, three regional conferences, significant bilateral collaborations, and multiple national meetings. Beyond conferences and meetings, many resources have been developed with spiritual and instrumental purposes. Further still, the motivations of the SMG stipulated by individuals involved in it reveal the mission grounding its anti-slavery actions. The present study focuses on the initial stages of the development of the SMG from April 2014 to May 2018. The timeframe encompasses the founding of the coalition until the resignation of Kevin Hyland OBE as the first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC) of the United Kingdom (UK), along with the SMG receiving the Path to Peace award at the United Nations (UN).

The SMG as the case study of the thesis will be investigated using a qualitative mixed-methods approach. Such an approach integrates two or more qualitative methods to analyse a given subject. The two qualitative methods used to collect data on the SMG are a desk review followed by supplementary key informant interviews. The desk review captured a vast gathering of documentary data on the SMG via predominantly internal grey literature. Supplementing this, semi-structured interviews were conducted on five key informants within the SMG. I interviewed key informants with a range of responsibility in the SMG, those in dual positions between the CBCEW and the SMG, those solely working for or appointed to the SMG. Between October and November 2019, I interviewed:

(a) David—Director of the SMG/Assistant General Secretary of the CBCEW and Secretary for the Department of International Affairs at the CBCEW
(b) Cecilia—Senior Policy Adviser to the Department of International Affairs at the CBCEW/Secretary for the Office for Migration and Policy at the CBCEW
(c) Matt—SMG Adviser and SMG Board Member. Matt was previously Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland
(d) Michael—Deputy Director of the SMG. Michael was previously Detective Chief Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police Service in London
(e) James—Digital Communication Manager of the CBCEW.

The method is borrowed from the development discourse on religion that intersects with the discipline of IR. Specifically, the research design of the current thesis has been repurposed from the method used by a project of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) and the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs at Georgetown University (Berkley Center and WFDD, 2016) briefly explored below.

The Berkley Center and WFDD (2016) developed a ‘County-Level Mapping Methodology’ to explore key religion and development work at the country-level in Bangladesh, Senegal, Kenya, and Guatemala. Under the guidance of Marshall, Berkley Centre researchers used this country-level mapping to better understand the nature of faith-linked development work within each country and thus draw conclusions (Berkley Center & WFDD, 2016). The country-level mapping consisted of the following: desk review, consultation, in-country fieldwork, interviews, analysis, and country report (Berkley Center & WFDD, 2016). The method of the current thesis borrows two of their categories: desk review and interviews. The remaining categories were not of relevance to the present study. I chose to repurpose the method used in this study because of the explicit parallels between an analysis of faith-based actors in the development realm and Catholic actors in the anti-slavery field.

Case studies of qualitatively driven mixed-methods design have precedence in social science research. Hesse-Biber gives six examples of case studies employing a qualitative mixed-methods approach (Hesse-Biber, 2010). These six examples use a variety of mixed-methods design, including a nested design, a sequential exploratory design, a sequential and layered design, a sequential explanatory design, and a sequential design with testing grounded theory (Hesse-Biber, 2010, pp. 458–464). Drawing on the six examples, she argues that qualitative mixed-methods occur throughout the research process, including at the data-gathering stage, the data analysis stage, and the interpretation stage (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 465). As Hesse-Biber articulates, there are advantages to a qualitative mixed-methods design: more representative and generalised research, an in-depth study of a target population,
enhanced validity and reliability of research findings, identified inconsistent results, tested validity of qualitative results; enhanced understanding of the research problem and research findings, convergence in findings by triangulation, and advocates for social transformation (Hesse-Biber, 2010, pp. 465–467).

A similar research design to the current thesis, albeit on a larger scale, was adopted by Lonergan et al. (2020) in their research project and subsequent paper, ‘Distinctive or professionalised? Understanding the postsecular in faith-based responses to trafficking, forced labour and slavery in the UK’. The paper and the larger research project attached to it are significant as, like the present thesis, they research faith-based actors in the anti-slavery field. The method adopted in their research study included case studies of six organisations, 86 in-depth qualitative interviews, and mapping textual documents and visual communication within the field (Lonergan et al., 2020, pp. 7–8). Therefore, in using the method of case studies, interviews, and desk review of documentary data, the Lonergan et al. article is similar to the research design of the present thesis as both use a sequential exploratory qualitative mixed-method design on case studies.

A qualitative mixed-methods approach comprising (a) desk review and (b) key informant interviews described above has benefited the research study for several reasons. Firstly, a mixed-methods approach enhanced the understanding of the case study. As the SMG is a new initiative and an under-researched case study in academic discourse, multiple methods allowed for a more thorough understanding of the coalition. Secondly, research focusing on agency benefited from a mixed-methods approach because the desk review described potential or actual activity. At the same time, the key informant interviews supplemented this description with understandings of motivation, involvement, and struggle. Thus, a mixed-methods approach enabled a more insightful account of the SMG.

1.4 Original Contributions: context and definitions

The present thesis claims originality via four contributions to knowledge. Firstly, the research project provides an IR analysis of the SMG. Secondly, the present study repurposes and applies a ‘thick’ religion framework theorised by Hassner (2011) to an analysis of the SMG. Thirdly, this thesis creates a connection between ‘thick’ religion as theorised by Hassner and the English School. Fourthly, the current study provides additional perspectives on Catholic agency to the English School discourse on Catholicism. The present section outlines each of these four contributions to knowledge, including definitions of key concepts that are of significance to the research. I do not seek to contribute to definitional discussions but utilise existing scholarly definitions and outline my understanding of these.
Before exploring the original contributions of this thesis, outlining the definition of modern slavery and human trafficking as understood by the current study is necessary. There is, to date, no accepted universal definition of modern slavery. Rather, contested definitions are found within legislative documents from different countries, international governmental and non-governmental organisations, and academic discourse. The research project intentionally does not enter into definitional debates in academia or policy; the definitions used mirror the definitions adopted by the SMG. The current thesis defines modern slavery mirroring the SMG adopting the UK Government definition of modern slavery. This definition has been chosen because the SMG was initiated in the UK and partnered with the Office of IASC of the UK, an office set up by the UK government through the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The UK Government states that modern slavery ‘encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment’ (UK Government, 2014). The UK Government has developed a typology of modern slavery offences stipulating 17 types of modern slavery offences in the UK under four principal categories: labour exploitation, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, and criminal exploitation (Cooper et al., 2017) (see Appendix A-1). The definition of human trafficking that the SMG uses, and shall be used in the present research, is set out in the Palermo Protocol of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It defines human trafficking as ‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation’ (UN, 2000). Appendix A-2 outlines the definition in full.

The four original contributions to knowledge of the present thesis will now be explored alongside an understanding of the context in which they situate.

1.4.1 An International Relations analysis of the Santa Marta Group

The research project provides an IR analysis of the SMG. The SMG is both vital and relative to the research study. Vital in that it is the case study through which I analyse Catholic agency, and relative in the sense that future research can substitute the SMG for an alternative actor. The SMG, to date, is under-researched in IR discourse on Catholicism. There is limited academic literature on the SMG, and currently, no research project analysing the anti-slavery efforts of the SMG. Leary (2015, 2018) provides the only scholarly
engagement of the SMG as a case study in law journals. Beyond this, other scholarship mentions the SMG by name, only providing a brief description of it (Broad & Turnbull, 2019; Enrile, 2017; Gadd & Broad, 2018; O’Loughlin, 2017). I contribute original and empirical data on the SMG to the discipline of IR: Appendix B-1 lists SMG actors, Appendix B-2 provides a summary of SMG data, and Appendix B-3 details a timeline of key SMG activity. This current study focuses on analysing the constitutive elements of the SMG as an important first point of consideration to this under-researched case study. Analysis of the SMG is, therefore, focused on the efforts in setting up the initiative by the CBCEW from April 2014 to May 2018 when SMG received the Path to Peace award at the UN and Hyland stepped down as the first IASC for the UK.

Defining the SMG as an actor in IR was no easy task. I define the SMG hereafter as a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition of Catholic, state, and civil society actors working together to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking. Numerous definitions were explored in the writing of this thesis, and all options are instructive. Broadly construed, ‘actor’ can be understood as ‘an identifiably human or collective subject that in principle can gain agency and thus become an agent in the context in question’ (Braun et al., 2019, p. 788). In many ways, defining the SMG is sympathetic to IR definitions of ‘religious actor’. Philpott defines a ‘religious actor’ as ‘any individual or collectivity, local or transnational, who acts coherently and consistently to influence politics in the name of a religion’ (2007, p. 506).

Adding to this, Toft et al. define a ‘religious actor’ as:

An individual, group, or organization that espouses religious beliefs and that articulates a reasonably consistent and coherent message about the relations of religion and politics. It is understood that this actor might well be a part of a larger religious entity and might be a collectively whose members themselves are not unanimous. (2011, p. 23)

According to Haynes (2011), religious actors are individuals or groups who seek to influence international relations to pursue social or political goals in line with their religious beliefs and traditions. An understanding of the SMG resonates with these definitions as it encompasses actors from within the Catholic Church seeking to transnationally influence international relations via the political goal of eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking.

However, defining the SMG as solely a ‘Catholic actor’ is arguably too limited due to the complexity of the actors involved. The SMG could be considered a transnational actor by drawing on the transnationality of SMG work. This definition would fit other definitions of
the Catholic Church (Ryall, 2001) or the Holy See (Hertzke, 2016). Alternatively, the SMG could be considered an example of what Haynes refers to as a transnational religious society or community (Haynes, 2011). Drawing on Lipschutz, a transnational civil society is described as ‘the self-conscious constructions of networks of knowledge and action, by decentred, local actors, that cross the reified boundaries of space as though they were not there’ (Lipschutz, as cited in Haynes, 2001, p. 146). Further, drawing on the work of Hancock on the Sydney Alliance, the SMG could be considered a coalition that brings religious actors into a political coalition with secular actors (Hancock, 2019). All these definitions have merit, and I thus acknowledge that there are various ways to define the SMG.

Drawing upon these various definitions, the research study defines the SMG as a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition. The SMG is transnational in that it operates across state boundaries reflected in its membership and activities (see section 3.1.2 for further information). It is Catholic-initiated and led as its foundations and leadership lie with various Catholic actors in England (see section 5.2 for further information). Furthermore, the SMG is a coalition. A coalition, according to Fogarty, is ‘a group of actors that coordinate their behaviour in a limited and temporary fashion to achieve a common goal’ (2007, n.d.). The SMG is a coalition of state and non-state actors coordinating their efforts to achieve the common goal of eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking. Therefore, the SMG hereafter is defined as a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition of Catholic, state, and civil society actors working together to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking.

Beyond the SMG, multiple Catholic actors constitute the Catholic Church. Broadly speaking and not exhaustively, examples of Catholic actors within the anti-slavery field include the following actors:

_The Pope_ is the Bishop of Rome and supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. He is understood to be the apostolic successor of St Peter, whom Catholics believe was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus who established the Church. St Peter became the first Bishop of Rome, and subsequent popes occupy the seat or chair of St Peter (Araujo, 2001, p. 293). Pope Francis is the current and 266th pope. He is elected from among the Sacred College of Cardinals (Vallier, 1971, p. 480). Pope Francis has drawn significant attention to the cause against modern slavery and human trafficking repeatedly, calling the crime ‘an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ’ (SMG, 2015b). He has supported the SMG, encouraging Cardinal Nichols to keep the alliance going (SMG, 2016d).
The Holy See, outlined in Canon 361 of the Code of Canon Law, refers to the central governance of the Roman Catholic Church, which includes the Pope and the Roman Curia (Martens, 2005, p. 730). The Roman Curia is the administrative institutions of the Holy See through which the pope conducts the affairs of the Catholic Church, including international affairs. The Vatican, or Vatican City State, is the state created by the Lateran Treaty of 1929 between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy (Martens, 2005, p. 731). It is a sovereign territory of approximately 108 acres (Vallier, 1971, p. 480). The Holy See is technically located in the Basilica of St Peter. However, ‘as an organization it is nearly coincident with the State of the Vatican City’ (Vallier, 1971, p. 480). States have diplomatic relations with the Holy See and not the Vatican City State (Martens, 2005, p. 755). The Holy See appoints apostolic nuncios as ecclesiastical diplomats to states. Pope Francis personally encouraged the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) and Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS) housed within the Vatican to focus their attention on examining human trafficking and modern slavery evident through a famous hand-written note (Pontifical Academy of Sciences & Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2017a). In response, the PASS initiated their #EndSlavery campaign (Pontifical Academy of Sciences & Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2017b). PASS has been instrumental in the work of SMG, hosting three of the five international SMG conferences (SMG, 2021b).

The Catholic Church has a complex ecclesiastical structure. The ‘whole earth’s surface is divided into territorial units–dioceses, abbacies, vicariates, prefectures apostolic’ (Vallier, 1971, p. 480). A Bishop oversees each diocese. Cardinals are senior ecclesiastical leaders who usually are an ordained bishop. Dioceses are then broken up into smaller units known as parishes, and these are overseen by a priest (and sometimes other ecclesial ministers, including assistant priests, deacons, and laypersons). Through this structure, there is ‘a vertical system of authority and administration’ (Vallier, 1971, p. 480). A Catholic Bishops’ Conference is a permanent institution [that] is a group of bishops of some nation or certain territory who jointly exercise certain pastoral functions for the Christian faithful of their territory in order to promote the greater good which the Church offers to humanity, especially through forms and programs of the apostolate fittingly adapted to the circumstances of time and place, according to the norm of law. (Code of Canon Law, 1983, c. 447)

As an example, the CBCEW is the permanent assembly of the Catholic bishops in England and Wales. Similarly, there are regional Catholic Bishops’ Conferences representing
specific regions, including the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE) and the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC). Many Bishops’ Conferences and dioceses have developed focus areas directed towards anti-slavery work. For example, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops established an anti-trafficking program (USCCB, 2021) and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney set up the Anti-Slavery Taskforce (Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, n.d.). The SMG, the case study of the current thesis, is the anti-slavery initiative of the CBCEW.

The Catholic Church also has religious orders and congregations. Canon Law defines a religious order as ‘a society in which members, according to proper law, pronounce public vows, either perpetual or temporary which are to be renewed, however, when the period of time has elapsed, and lead a life of brothers or sisters in common’ (Code of Canon Law, 1983, c. 607, § 2). Catholic religious orders include the Order of Preachers known as Dominicans, the Order of Friars Minor known as Franciscans, and the Society of Jesus known as Jesuits. Religious orders and congregations play a significant role in the anti-slavery domain. For example, Talitha Kum is an international network of consecrated life against human trafficking that works to collaborate and exchange information between consecrated men and women in 76 countries. It was founded in 2009 as a project of the International Union of Superiors General in collaboration with the Union of Superiors General from a desire to coordinate the activities of consecrated persons (Talitha Kum, n.d.-a). Talitha Kum, a member of the SMG, is represented in 92 countries: 14 in Africa, 18 in Asia, 17 in America, 41 in Europe, and two in Oceania (Talitha Kum, n.d.-b).

Catholic NGOs uphold a Catholic ethos to impact issues often aligned with the priorities of Catholic Social Teaching. A ‘Catholic NGO’ commonly refers to both pontifically approved organisations and Catholic-associated organisations. Ryall draws attention to such groups, identifying them as Catholic NGOs, Catholic development agencies and so-called new movements (Ryall, 2001). Hertzke also speaks of numerous social arms of the Catholic Church, including charities, religious orders, and welfare institutions (Hertzke, 2016). A number of Catholic charities focusing on anti-slavery work and members of the SMG include Caritas Internationalis (Caritas Internationalis, n.d.) and the Apostleship of the Sea (AoS), recently renamed to Stella Maris (Stella Maris, 2020).

1.4.2 An application of ‘thick’ religion

The second contribution of the present thesis to knowledge is its repurposing of a framework of ‘thick’ religion (Hassner, 2011). ‘Thick’ religion holds both reflectivist and positivist methods on domestic and international levels of analysis. Hassner acknowledges
that the framework is based upon a ‘thick’ description of culture theorised by Geertz (1973), whereby a ‘thick’ description considers many details, meanings and interpretations compared to a ‘thin’ description that provides merely facts. According to Hassner, ‘thick’ religion requires a:

- Sensitivity to theology, religious organization, iconography, ceremony, and belief but also a willingness to generalize from particular religious movements, regions, or instances to arrive at broader conclusions for international relations. (Hassner, 2011, p. 38)

Reflecting this description, Hassner (2011) constructs the ‘thick’ acronym—‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, ‘iconography’, ‘ceremony’, and ‘belief/knowledge’. Therefore, he argues that applying a framework of ‘thick’ religion lends itself to ‘an issue-area approach, in which the focus of analysis is a particular area of concern in which religion and international affairs interact’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 38). Hassner offers ‘thick’ religion as distinct yet complimentary to ‘broad’ religion and ‘deep’ religion. A ‘broad’ approach focuses on the international level whereby ‘religion is essentialized, reduced to economics, politics, or some parallel sphere’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 37). In contrast, in a ‘deep’ approach, ‘the impact of religion in a particular region is examined at depth without offering generalizations for the international sphere’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 37). Both ‘broad’ and ‘deep’ religion provide important and significant contributions to an IR study of religion.

The current thesis repurposes a ‘thick’ religion framework in light of the primary research questions by constructing a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework. A ‘thick’ religion framework is appropriate for a study of the Catholic Church as a religious actor in IR because the Church possesses characteristics beholden within ‘thick’ religion—*theology* (Catholic doctrine and dogma, and other works in the Catholic intellectual tradition), *hierarchy* (ecclesiastical structures), *iconography* (Catholic rituals and symbolism), *ceremony* (the acting out of Catholic theology, hierarchy, and iconography), and *belief/knowledge* (Catholic confessional and lived beliefs). Appropriating Hassner’s ‘thick’ religion framework to Catholicism has not, to date, been achieved in IR discourse. Therefore, a ‘thick’ religion framework suits a study of the Catholic Church as a religious actor in IR and serves as an original contribution to knowledge.

Beyond a general application, a ‘thick’ framework is constructed in the present thesis by the way in which Catholicism is played out in the SMG. All five categories of ‘thick’ Catholicism are significant and important in analysing Catholic actors in IR. As a significant innovation, Catholicism is born out in the study of the SMG through the categories of
‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’, whilst the categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ are subsumed. This contraction is intentional and went through many revisions throughout the thesis writing process. The questions associated with ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’ are targeted, according to Hassner, specifically at religious actors. Therefore, it is aimed at understanding religion in an institutional capacity. This description fits the scope of the present thesis as its primary interest lies in investigating the agency of Catholic actors. In contrast, the categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’, according to Hassner, emphasise the individual believer of a religious tradition rather than a religious actor at large. Hassner stipulates that ‘ceremony’ inquires how believers of the religious movement act out theology, hierarchy, and iconography, while ‘belief/knowledge’ reveals collective belief (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). Therefore, according to Hassner, neither category is principally directed at analysing the organisational or institutional aspect of the religious actor itself but rather the individuals’ or community beliefs drawn from that particular religious tradition. Notwithstanding the importance of analysing individual and community belief, which would provide fruitful avenues of enquiry beyond the present study, and staying true to Hassner’s categorisation, certain attributes inherent to the categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ are thus subsumed in the current thesis. The acting out of theology, hierarchy, and iconography by the SMG at the institutional level has played a role in framing Chapters Four, Five, and Six further described below. ‘Knowledge’, or ‘belief’ as Hassner refers to it, features in the thesis through the beliefs expressed by the interviewees, who relay the beliefs of the individuals working for the SMG. Therefore, while ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ intentionally do not have their own chapters in the current thesis, elements of both categories feature through the lens of the SMG as the primary mode of analysis.

1.4.3 Integration of ‘thick’ religion and English School theory

The third contribution to knowledge of the current study is the integration of ‘thick’ religion and English School theory together. There is no prima facie connection between ‘thick’ religion as theorised by Hassner and the English School. There is an allusion to the natural fit of a ‘thick’ religion framework in existing English School discourse, which this thesis builds on. Troy, a leading English School Catholic scholar, mentions the approach of Hassner in a footnote (2016). He acknowledges categories of ‘broad’ and ‘deep’ religion theorised by Hassner as reflecting the functionalist-essentialist divisions in IR differentiating between what religions are in essence and what they do/how they function (Troy, 2016, p. 24). Intentionally not wanting to fall into either category, Troy states that he wants to shed
‘light on the questions of what the Church wants in international politics, what its actual role is, and how this role is practiced’ (Troy, 2016, p. 2). Therefore, he wants to engage both ‘broad’ and ‘deep’ religion in his analysis of the Catholic Church. However, the article does not comprehensively engage the ‘thick’ religion framework nor intersect it with any thorough analysis of the English School. Therefore, the current thesis is original in its substantive application of ‘thick’ religion intersected with English School theorising and thus, it is noteworthy as a contribution to knowledge.

A ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG communicates discrete and distinct elements of the Catholic actor. The framework, repurposed from Hassner, is instructive of constitutive attributes of Catholic actors. The ‘thick’ categories illustrate different characteristics inherent to Catholic actors and evident in Catholic action broadly construed. The discrete categories distil an analysis of the SMG, evidencing multiple understandings of the Catholic actor in its mission, operations, and resources. Despite the many valuable features resulting from a ‘thick’ Catholicism evaluation, the framework limits the investigation of Catholic agency. Catholic agency requires an analysis of the influence of the attributes of Catholic actors found in a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis.

The English School discourse on Catholicism provides a robust way to analyse Catholic agency for many reasons. Firstly, Catholic actors and secular actors exist within the conceptions of international society—which is an ideal fit for the SMG as a transnational Catholic-led coalition of principally Catholic and state actors. Secondly, English School theory is founded on and steeped in religious language in its theoretical foundations (Thomas, 2001; Jones, 2003; Troy, 2012; Hall, 2001). As will be explored in the next section, the founding fathers of the English School (i.e., MacKinnon, Butterfield, Toynbee, and Wight) are all credited for integrating aspects of religion into their theorising of international society. Thirdly, and most significantly, I identify a discourse on Catholic agency over the last two decades building on the religious rhetoric outlined by the English School founding fathers and incorporating more contemporary voices. This discourse, now resulting in a focused conversation on Catholic agency from an English School perspective, is extensively engaged in the current thesis and outlined in depth in the next section. The ‘thick’ Catholicism attributes bestowed on the SMG are evaluated through these English School theoretical conversation. Through this, an understanding of Catholic agency in international society is enabled. I acknowledge that alternative theoretical approaches or other frames of IR analysis could have been employed, such as Constructivism or Liberal Institutionalism. Using a Constructivist framework, a norm of anti-slavery could have been analysed in the work of the
SMG. For example, I could have explored the way in which the SMG played a pivotal role as a ‘norm entrepreneur’ enabling a ‘norm cascade’. A Liberal Institutionalist framework could have been adopted to explore the collaboration and soft power diplomacy of state and non-state actors. Whilst such alternative frameworks could have been engaged, and are encouraged for future research on the SMG, the English School was chosen as a robust way to better understand Catholic agency due to factors listed above.

1.4.4 Additional perspectives on the English School discourse on Catholicism

Lastly, this thesis adds an original contribution to knowledge in identifying and contributing to a focused English School discourse on Catholicism and specifically its existing discussions on aspects of Catholic agency. Drawing upon English School theory, I define ‘Catholic agency’ as the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations. The English School has a limited understanding of theorising agency, and more work needs to be done on how ‘agency’ is constituted by international society (Dunne, as cited in Bellamy, 2005, p. 15). Agency is defined more generally in IR as ‘the capacity for purposive action, or the exercise of power’ (Dunne et al., 2010). Similarly, agency is the ‘capacity to act in international politics’ and is considered with ‘questions of what given international agents do and how their behaviour can be explained’ (Braun et al., 2019, p. 788). Operating solely within the parameters of the English School, Thomas (2013) defines ‘agency’ as ‘the ability of a variety of actors—states, and non-state actors, to influence international relations’ (p. 29). Troy (2016) describes the agency of the Catholic Church as ‘its potential and actual power to act’ (p. 7). The definition of ‘Catholic agency’ adopted by this thesis incorporates both of these definitions.

In the present thesis, I identify specifically English School discourse on Catholicism over the last two decades. Key scholarship within this body of work includes, in chronological order, Scott Thomas (2000, 2001, 2005, 2013), Jodok Troy (2008, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2018), Alan Chong and Jodok Troy (2011), Adrian Pabst (2012; 2016), Mariano Barbato (2013), Thomas Diez (2017) and, most recently, Katharina McLarren and Bernhard Stahl (2020). Added to this list are Charles A. Jones (2003), Sean Molloy (2003), John Millbank and Adrian Pabst (2016), and William Bain (2020), who focus more broadly on Christianity and English School thinking. These scholars draw on classical English School theorists while themselves being associated with contemporary English School discourse. Within this English School discourse on Catholicism, two aspects of Catholic agency were identified: (a) religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in pluralism versus solidarism English School
debates. Chapter Three substantially outlines both these aspects of Catholic agency, drawing extensively on arguments outlined by English School scholars on Catholicism. Their arguments frame the English School analysis in the content chapters of the present thesis.

Considering the engagement of English School theorising in the present thesis, it is important to provide a brief overview of the history of the English School and the context of religion in it. The English School is an IR theoretical approach with two key characteristics: a common view that there is an international society and the importance of methodological pluralism (Bellamy, 2005, p. 12). Core to English School theorising lies its concept of ‘international society’, offering ‘a kind of middle ground, or what later became labelled the via media, between the extremes of liberal, or revolutionist and realist views of international relations’ (Buzan, 2014, p. 6)—but at the same time containing elements of Constructivism (Troy, 2012, pp. 86–87). Methodological pluralism is seen as the best way to study international society because a variety of methodologies is needed to understand the different material and ideational structures, agents, cultures, beliefs, and perspectives (Bellamy, 2005, p. 12). However, Navari argues that classical English School theorists ‘generally disdained discussion of methodology’ and scarcely discussed methods (Navari, 2008, p. 1).

The history of the English School has featured in much literature (Bellamy, 2005; Buzan, 2001, 2004, 2014; Linklater & Suganami, 2006; Navari & Green, 2014). English School discourse can be broken down into three waves throughout its 60-year existence (Green, 2014). The first wave began via the convening of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics in the late 1950s by its considered founders including Butterfield, Wight, and Bull. Emphasis was given to a new theory rivalling American IR schools of thought that was ‘increasingly quantitative, behavioral, and characterized by a nomological neorealism’ (Green, 2014, p. 2). Key texts within this first wave were ‘Diplomatic Investigations’ (Butterfield and Wight, 1966), ‘System of States’ (Wight, 1977) and ‘The Anarchical Society’ (Bull, 1977). Two key English School frameworks developed from this first wave were: Wight’s three ‘R’s concept (‘Realism’, ‘Rationalism’, and ‘Revolutionism’) to theorise the relations of states (for a summary, see Jackson et al., 2016, p. 132), and Bull’s adaption of ‘International System’, ‘International Society’, and ‘World Society’. ‘International System’ (‘Realism’) explores the power politics between each state, stressing the structure and process of international anarchy at the centre of IR theory (Buzan, 2001, p. 474). ‘International Society’ (‘Rationalism’) constitutes ‘the institutionalization of shared interest and identity amongst states’, putting the ‘creation and maintenance of shared norms, rules and institutions at the centre of IR theory’ (Buzan, 2001, p. 475). ‘World
Society’ (‘Revolutionism’) ‘takes individuals, non-state organizations and ultimately the global population as a whole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements’ (Buzan, 2001, p. 475). Of these three, the English School has become known for its emphasis on the ‘International Society’ with its classical definition of:

A group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system in, the sense that the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements. (Bull & Watson, 1984, p. 1)

The framework of ‘international system’, ‘international society’, and ‘world society’ theorised by Bull remains the dominant English School framework, which others have since adapted.

The English School has religious roots (Thomas, 2001, 2005; Jones, 2003; Troy, 2012; Hall, 2001). Wight, Toynbee, and Butterfield are credited, in the words of Weber, as ‘religiously musical’ (Weber, as cited in Troy, 2012, p. 86). These founders believed that religion was not a private affair to be kept separate from the study of society (Jones, 2003, p. 376) and recognised the role of religious doctrines in international society. MacKinnon laid out the ethical problem for the British Committee (Cochran, 2014, p. 185). His preferred concept of international ethics was based on a notion of the good, founded either on ideas of natural law or on a common way of life (Cochran, 2014, p. 188). Butterfield was a Wesleyan and ‘engaged those by lay preaching and by commenting extensively on international affairs from a Christian perspective’ (Sharp, 2003, p. 866). Butterfield argued that a society of states could ‘only emerge and be maintained when the actors in a states-system adhere to and uphold a common ‘moral framework’” (Hall, 2001, p. 940). He maintained that ‘without ethical and cultural norms, and despite material links and imperatives, neither system nor society could exist: no diplomatic interaction would be possible, no treaties would be honoured, no order could be maintained between states’ (Hall, 2001, p. 940). Wight remained all his life a devout and traditionalist Anglican (Jones, 2003, p. 376). His attitude to international affairs was driven by a powerful commitment that was ‘intellectual and moral—and, most fundamentally of all, religious’ (Bull, 1966, p. 11). Wight was convinced that Christianity, as a common cultural and religious underpinning, at least in Europe, prevented the kind of collapse into barbarity witnessed in the mid-twentieth century (Hall, 2014, p. 966).
The second wave of the English School is associated with Armstrong, Buzan, Cronin, Dunne, Hurrell, Jackson, Linklater, Little, Mayall, Navari, Stivachtis, Suganami, Vincent, Williams, and Zhang (Green, 2014, p. 2). Such scholars further theorised the themes set out by English School founders. During this second wave, Jones in 1981 famously called for the closure of the English School (Jones, 1981). His criticisms prompted a strong retaliation by English School scholars, some of whom re-energised lines of enquiry pursued by Bull. Ironically, the name the ‘English School’ was not coined until Jones used it, calling for its closure (Buzan, 2014, p. 5). A core discussion developing from this second wave, first articulated by Bull, surrounds pluralist and solidarist conceptions of international society. This debate continues in current English School thought.

Religion in the English School took an alternative path during this second wave—a move away from the beliefs of Wight, Toynbee, and Butterfield—and instead followed the thoughts of Bull. Bull was puzzled by the religious commitments of Wight and his interest in ethical and theological questions (Epp, 2014, p. 32). Instead, he was a ‘strong philosophical skeptic’, believing there to be no shared moral values and that justice would inevitably reflect the power and interests of particularly powerful states (Hurrell, 2014, p. 144). Following the views of Bull, the English School ‘privileged the formal-procedural dimension of international society over questions of substance such as natural law, community, association, or the common good that constitute the unity of the social world and humankind’ (Pabst, 2012, p. 1010). Due to this and a broader turn towards secularisation theory in the discipline, Christian terminology within the English School was gradually replaced by a discourse that focused on the institutions of international society’ (Pabst, 2012; Jones, 2003). As Jones states, a change took place as though from ‘sterling to dollar—leaving many Christians trading in secular currency, where formerly agnostics had quite comfortably used religious coinage’ (Jones, 2003, p. 372). The result of these secularist prejudices in the English School from Bull, Vincent and later Buzan have perhaps ‘prematurely cut in the bud contra Martin Wight’s theological proclivities’ (Paipais, 2018, p. 273). This direction of the English School thought remains the dominant trend within English School scholarship to date.

From the late 1990s to the present day, the third wave of the English School has seen a re-energising of English School research by a new generation of scholars with few or no direct links to the British Committee (Buzan, 2001, p. 473). Contemporary English School scholars include Bain, Bellamy, Cochran, Keene, Pella, Reus-Smit, Schouenborg, Shapcott, Sharp, Suzuki, and Williams (Green, 2014, p. 2). This wave has been ‘an unqualified success, spawning a boom in the geographic spread of the English School and a major expansion in
publishing output’ (Green, 2014, p. 2). Not all IR scholars have looked favourably on English School progress, considering that it lacks cohesion and is marked by division over method and theory. It has taken on the appearance of a microcosm of the ‘discipline’ as a whole (Hall, 2001, pp. 941–942). In retaliation to such criticisms, other English School scholars argue that it should be considered a cluster rather than a school due to it sharing a pattern of thought with no rigid boundaries between its insiders and outsiders (Linklater & Suganami, 2006, p. 41). Green outlines three trends to current English School research: firstly, a research agenda aimed at all English School aspects but creating separation between the empirical/social scientific approach and its normative questions (Green, 2014, p. 2); secondly, a focus specifying the methods of the English School; and thirdly, bringing the English School into closer contact with critical approaches embracing postcolonial IR sensibilities (Green, 2014, p. 3). It is into this context of the English School and its interaction with religion that this thesis situates itself.

1.5 Researcher Positionality

My positionality within the research project is both as a scholar–practitioner and an insider researcher. Scholar–practitioners are individuals who combine their expertise as both academics and practitioners. ‘Practitioners’, in the context of international affairs, are individuals working in professional roles inside government foreign affairs agencies, non-profit organisations and the private sector (Wilson, 2007, p. 147). ‘Scholars’ are appointed to traditional departments in faculties or specialised research or teaching institutes on university campuses (Wilson, 2007, p. 147). My researcher positionality as a ‘scholar–practitioner’ is due to this research being conducted for a doctoral degree from the University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA). However, I attach the ‘practitioner’ status to my positionality as, before starting this research, I worked for the CBCEW as Executive Assistant to the Department of International Affairs and Executive Assistant to the SMG. Knowledge acquired while working at the CBCEW and the SMG has been directly inputted into this study, including but not limited to context, contacts, and background of action.

Attributes of the ‘scholar’ and the ‘practitioner’ bring unique expertise to a research project. The ‘scholar’ ensures that research has undergone academic rigour, is mindful of social contexts surrounding the research and can delve deep and wide surrounding the research topic (Wilson, 2007, p. 150). The ‘practitioner’ brings a lived experience of agencies and policymaking and is action-driven, prioritising solutions and answers. However, both ‘scholar’ and ‘practitioner’ have their limitations too. It is implied by those in the policy world that scholars lack policy relevance, are preoccupied with theoretical models, and are
more interested in arguing against other academics. Weaver argues that ‘academics are
trained to examine the “why” and “how” of things, and not the “what should be done?”’
(1989, as cited in Wilson, 2007, p. 147). On the other hand, practitioners might lack the
theoretical or contextual understanding of a political situation, is biased by financial or other
agency pressures, and their knowledge might be deep but not wide (Wilson, 2007, p. 150).

A similar positionality of scholar–practitioner is evident in relevant academic
discourse. Hancock (2019) holds a scholar–practitioner positionality when collecting data on
the Sydney Alliance. While investigating the Sydney Alliance, she states that she was ‘an
ordinary, contributing participant in the Sydney Alliance and the PSA team’ (Hancock, 2019,
p. 4). In that role, she attended monthly team meetings and working groups, undertook a six-
day residential training, acted as a trainer, conducted 12 ‘relational meetings’ with members
of her team and conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with staff organisers and team
members (Hancock, 2019, p. 4). This shows that she was an integrated member of the team
that she was investigating. Further, Casey highlights a scholar–practitioner positionality as
the director of the Berkley Centre at Georgetown University and professor at its School of
Foreign Service, and formerly the US special representative for religion and global affairs
and director of the Office of Religion and Global Affairs at the US Department of State.
Casey spoke about scholars and policymakers assisting one another and drawing on each
other’s expertise to understand lived religion in a geographical context (Casey, 2017).

Insider research is defined as research conducted by complete members of
organisational systems and communities in and on their organisations (Brannick & Coghlan,
2007, p. 65). In the IR discourse on religion, an insider researcher is a practising religious
member of the religious group being studied. I am an insider researcher because I am a
practising Catholic who researches on Catholicism in IR. An insider researcher positionality
is often regarded academically as problematic and frequently disqualified because the
researcher is perceived to not have enough distance for critical intellectual rigour or
objectivity for valid research and that they are too emotionally invested in the organisation
(Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, p. 60). However, there is growing scholarship suggesting that
insider research can be valid and useful through a process of reflexive awareness (Brannick &
Coghlan, 2007, p. 72). Insider research provides important knowledge that outsider research
cannot obtain and is crucial for knowledge creation and transfer between practitioners and
2) argue that cultural insiders—researchers who share cultural commonalities with those they
are researching—conduct research more sensitively and have better insights into the research
because they are an accepted member of the group. Drake offers an insight into the problems that interviews conducted by an insider researcher can present, including the nature of personal relationships between the interviewer and interviewee and the motivations and emphasises of the researcher affecting the analysis of the interview data (Drake, 2010, p. 85). However, this does not invalidate interviews conducted by an insider researcher. It simply means that ‘the validity of insider research requires reflexive consideration of the researcher’s position’ (Drake, 2010, p. 85). Both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ researchers are necessary and valid. A discourse allowing both perspectives enable insights that one alone would not necessarily provide.

Insider researchers are needed because Hassner, one of the key IR scholars that this thesis engages, argues that there is a secular bias towards religion by non-religious social science academics (2011). Drawing on evidence from the 1984 Carnegie Survey, he argues that many political scientists researching religion and politics conduct biased research because they are ‘extraordinarily secular yet fundamentally uninterested in the impact of the secularity on their research’ (Hassner, 2011, pp. 42–43). In turn, this produces social scientific research on religion that is not neutral in the first place. An insider researcher holding a personal religious conviction to the studied religious actor allows for the theorising of religion without the secular guise in the political sciences.

There is precedence for an insider researcher positionality based upon personal religious affiliation in the IR discourse on religion. Stummvoll articulates that it is a powerful myth pushed by positivist social science that academic research must be pursued independently of personal motivation and interest (Stummvoll, 2018, p. xi). Instead, post-positivist scholars, Stummvoll suggests, encourage scholarship reflecting on underlying interests and motivations (Stummvoll, 2018, p. xi). He states his personal motivation and interests, outlining his upbringing in a Catholic family, involvement in Church life and bringing his Catholic faith into his undergraduate and postgraduate studies in IR (Stumvoll, 2018, pp. xi–xiii). Further, as explored in the previous section, the founders of the English School were religious themselves. Wight was a devout Anglican and Butterfield a Wesleyan. Both saw their faith as part of their vocation as Christian intellects contributing to the study of international relations (Thomas, 2001, pp. 906–907). These founders believed that religion was not a private affair to be kept separate from the study of society (Jones, 2003, p. 376). Thus, discrediting or dismissing the personal religious conviction of the researcher from their theorising of religion in international relations is in direct conflict with English School foundations.
Holding both a scholar–practitioner and an insider researcher positionality enables me to bring distinct insight into this research project. I can identify and understand the Catholic language used in the ‘desk review’ when analysing data. I can relate to the interviewees when asking questions, and I have an awareness of how the Catholic Church functions. To account for unintended biases, I took three steps. Firstly, I conducted a pilot test interview to identify any necessary adjustments before the key informant interviews and ensure, given my researcher positionality, the questions were not leading. I conducted a pilot test interview on 5 September 2019 before conducting the SMG interviews between October and November 2019. The pilot test interview was conducted on the Research and Projects Officer for the Justice and Peace Office (JPO), an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. The JPO at the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney has been involved in the anti-slavery efforts of the Catholic Church in Australia for several years. The pilot test interview had two parts: an interview lasting 45 minutes followed by a post-interview reflection for 15 minutes. During the post-interview discussion, I inquired about improvements to pre-emailed documentation, the experience of the interview, and the nature of the wording of the questions. The conclusions of the reflections from the pilot test interview are outlined in Section 3.2.2.

Secondly, I engaged in reflexive awareness throughout the entire research project constantly reflecting on whether my researcher positionality was biasing the research data. Using this reflexive approach, I made a few adjustments throughout the thesis including revising the wording of interview questions, analysing all data systematically rather than using my insider knowledge, and remaining within the boundaries as defined by Hassner rather than my understanding of theology, hierarchy, and iconography from my insider researcher positionality.

Thirdly, I provided participants with the interview transcripts before any analysis to allow an opportunity to provide written clarification. Four of the interviewees did not make any changes, and I analysed the originally transcribed data. One interviewee clarified some of their ideas and made minor changes. Accepting all recommended changes, I analysed the revised interview transcription. All interviewees had the option to opt out of the research study at any point without explanation. No interviewee opted out.

1.6 Structure of this Thesis

Chapter One—Introduction: Chapter One, the present chapter, introduces the thesis topic and provides an overview of the entire research project. The two interrelated main research questions are outlined, defining the aim of the thesis, along with an overview of the
method of this thesis. Four original contributions to knowledge are identified and substantiated: an IR analysis of the SMG, a repurposed application of ‘thick’ religion, an intersection of ‘thick’ religion and English School theory, and additional perspectives on the English School discourse on Catholic agency. Using these claims to originality, I identify key definitions and concepts engaged by the research project including, Catholic actor, the SMG, ‘thick’ religion, Catholic agency, and the English School and their concept of ‘international society’. The present chapter also describes my researcher positionality as both a scholar–practitioner and an insider researcher, articulating the steps taken to account for such a positionality. Finally, at present, I detail the structure of the entire thesis.

Chapter Two—Literature Review: Chapter Two provides a literature review of relevant IR discourse on religion more generally and Catholicism more specifically contextualising the present thesis. Section 2.1 provides a brief summary of the basic contours of IR discourse and definitions of religion via four dimensions: religion overlooked, a turn to religion, a postsecular shift, and a theological turn. Section 2.2 categorises IR literature on religion employing the categories of ‘broad’, ‘deep’, and ‘thick’ religion developed by Hassner (2011). I specifically set out the ‘thick’ religion framework theorised by Hassner, including its two avenues: first avenue ‘thick’ religion and second avenue ‘thick’ religion. Affirming the repurposing of this framework to the Catholic Church as a religious actor in IR, Section 2.3 adapts the categories, suggesting examples of ‘broad’, ‘deep’, and ‘thick’ Catholicism. A framework of ‘thick’ Catholicism is redefined by outlining the categories and associated questions of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, ‘iconography’, ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’.

Chapter Three—Methodology: Chapter Three sets out the methodology of this research project—the case study, research design, and methodological framework. Section 3.1 outlines in depth the case study of the SMG, describing its context, aims, structures, membership, and key activity. Section 3.2 describes the research design of the study: a qualitative mixed-methods approach comprising a desk review followed by semi-structured key informant interviews. Section 3.3 explains the ‘thick’ Catholicism framework applied in this thesis. I instrumentalise ‘thick’ Catholicism categories to the anti-slavery efforts of the SMG. As a robust mechanism to understand Catholic agency, I apply that analysis to English School theory. Two aspects of Catholic agency in English School discourse are principally engaged and thus are theorised substantially in this section: (a) religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debates in the English School.
Chapter Four—Theology: Chapter Four begins the ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG by exploring the theological principles evident in the anti-slavery motivations and operations of the SMG. The principal questions asked in this chapter are: (i) How does the category of ‘theology’ in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group? (ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective? The core aim of the chapter is to identify the key Catholic theological tenets expressed by the SMG and evaluate their impact on the identified aspects of Catholic agency in English School literature. Section 4.1 presents three theological tenets occurring in SMG action: the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice. These three theological principles are then explored via two avenues of Catholic agency from an English School perspective: (a) religious customs underpinning international society and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralist versus solidarist conceptions of international society. Section 4.2 investigates Catholic theological principles of the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice as evidenced in SMG motivations and actions as theology underpinning international society via a common good framework. Section 4.3 investigates the solidarist claims in the English School from the perspective of the Catholic Church by analysing the theological principles inherent to SMG mission and operations.

Chapter Five—Hierarchy: Chapter Five operationalises a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework to analyse the hierarchical structures of the SMG. The key questions asked in this chapter are: (i) How does the category of hierarchy in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group? (ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective? Section 5.1 outlines the simultaneous vertical and horizontal integration to structures of Catholic hierarchy evidenced in the SMG. This vertical and horizontal integration has a distinct impact on the anti-slavery political action of the SMG, which I analyse using the two identified aspects of Catholic agency present in English School discourse. Section 5.2 evaluates the integrated vertical and horizontal organisational structures of the SMG in drawing together international society actors through the flow of religious dialogue. Section 5.3 investigates the hierarchy of the SMG as both fitting a pluralist notion of international society as ‘diplomat’ and possessing solidarist ‘diplomatic’ qualities.

Chapter Six—Iconography: Chapter Six focuses on a ‘thick’ analysis of examples of iconography present in the SMG. The core questions this chapter ask are: (i) How does the category of ‘iconography’ in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group? (ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency
Section 6.1 outlines two primary accounts of iconography present in SMG action: the Catholic Tradition of saints via the imitation and intercession of St Josephine Bakhita; and symbols of a bishop’s crosier and a gesture of the pope clasping hands with a survivor. These two accounts of iconography—saints and symbols—are analysed via two aspects of Catholic agency in the English School: (a) religious customs underpinning international society and (b) pluralist versus solidarist understandings of international society. Section 6.2 evaluates saints and symbols as religious customs integrating individual, national, and global levels of society. Section 6.3 assesses English School solidarist ideas of cosmopolitanism and world society against saints and symbols as accounts of iconography by the SMG.

Chapter Seven—Conclusion: Chapter Seven presents the concluding remarks of the thesis. Section 7.1 summarises the research project restating the main interrelated research questions. Section 7.2 presents the findings and the contributions to knowledge of the current thesis. It presents four key findings: (a) the value in an empirical IR analysis on the SMG, (b) the originality of an operationalisation of ‘thick’ religion, (c) the distinct contribution of integrating Hassner into English School discussions on Catholic agency, and (d) the insight gained to the English School discourse on the Catholic Church. Following on from the contributions to knowledge, Section 7.3 details some limitations of the study. Section 7.4 addresses the operational implications of the thesis findings to spheres of academia, the world of politics, and the SMG and the Catholic Church. Section 7.5 proposes avenues for future research.
Chapter Two—Literature Review

We may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body.

From a letter to Diognetus

This thesis is broadly situated within the IR academic discipline and its discourse on religion, specifically within its English School discussions on Catholicism. To this end, the present chapter analyses existing literature in IR to ground the current research project. Section 2.1 gives a brief overview of the IR dialogue on religion thus far. It gives a chronological account of the discourse, highlighting four dimensions: ‘religion overlooked’, ‘the religious turn’, a current ‘postsecular shift’, and ‘theological turn’. To relay the IR literature on religion within these dimensions, I have chosen to adopt the framework theorised by Ron E. Hassner. Therefore, Section 2.2 uses the categories stipulated by Hassner of broad religion, deep religion, and thick religion. In this section, I outline examples given by Hassner and offer further literature encompassed by each category. In Section 2.3, I repurpose core elements of the framework to highlight select IR discourse on the Catholic Church, providing examples of broad Catholicism, deep Catholicism, and thick Catholicism. This is significant, as the present thesis adopts a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework in the chapters to come. In the third chapter, I detail the distinct way a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework is applied in the present thesis via a ‘thick’ Catholicism investigation of the anti-slavery efforts of the SMG. To better understand questions of agency, the thesis will then apply that analysis to select voices that together demonstrate an understanding of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. In this way, ‘thick’ religion is the framework of the present thesis, and English School discourse is the application of that analysis. The principal aim of the current chapter, therefore, is to ground the research project in IR literature on religion more broadly and Catholicism more specifically through the lens of broad, deep, and thick religion.

2.1 An Overview of the International Relations Discourse on Religion

The IR discourse on religion, which stretches over the last four decades, can be categorised into four dimensions: ‘religion overlooked’, ‘the religious turn’, a ‘postsecular shift’, and a ‘theological turn’. It is important to overtly state that these four dimensions are not clearly defined, are contested, and overlap. Categorisation in this manner constitutes a summary of how the discipline has engaged religion thus far, providing an overview of the basic contours of the discourse and its developments in defining religion. Outlining these four
dimensions sets the foundations and context for the present thesis. It is important to state that the arguments presented in this section hold implicit value to the thesis; they provide foundational context but are not explicitly explored in the thesis itself. The current thesis situates itself broadly into the IR discourse on religion, specifically within its English School discourse on Catholicism. The arguments principally taken up in the thesis are from select voices within English School scholarship, which will be outlined in Chapter Three.

2.1.1 Religion Overlooked

The first dimension of IR discourse on religion, located at the origins of IR as an academic discipline, saw the discourse overlook religion due to accepting Westphalian assumptions and adhering to the secularisation thesis. Pabst speaks of this phase, stating, ‘the role of religion in international affairs has not so much been neglected and overlooked as misrepresented and under-theorised’ (Pabst, 2012, p. 997). The origins of IR as an academic discipline can be traced back to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648: a series of treaties that ended the Thirty Years War and established the modern international system of states. These treaties enshrined notions of sovereignty and non-intervention into the modern state system (Anderson, 2008, p. 208). Westphalian sovereignty meant that each state had exclusive control within their territory. The principle of non-intervention implied that one state could not interfere with the domestic affairs of another. In the treaties, it is evident that religion went from having a role in the public sphere to being relegated to the private sphere (Anderson, 2008; Jackson, Sørensen & Møller, 2013; Petito & Hatzopoulos, 2003). One Westphalian assumption enshrined the notion that the ruler of each state controlled the religion of that state through the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* (Anderson, 2008; Petito & Hatzopoulos, 2003). Thus, state actors were dominant over religious actors. IR, as an academic discipline, grew out of the Westphalian notion of the modern international system of states. Therefore, as a discipline, it accepted states as the dominant entities in the international system. Religion was rejected from this system unconsciously—the ‘rejection of religion’ (Fox, 2001, p. 53-74) seems to be inscribed in the genetic code of the discipline of IR’ (Petito and Hatzopoulos, 2003, p. 1). Pabst sums up this point, stating, ‘for its part, the field of IR has remained wedded to the Westphalian system that privileges absolute state sovereignty over matters of faith, which formally removed religion from interstate relations and subordinated the transnational church to the national state’ (Pabst, 2012, pp. 997–998).

Religion was further omitted from IR literature because the social sciences, the discipline in which IR situates itself, rejected the significance of religion (Anderson, 2008, p. 208; Fox & Sandler, 2004, p. 4). Instead, the social sciences broadly speaking supported the
secularisation thesis. The latter proposes the decline of the social and political significance of religion as the world becomes more secular in response to increasingly scientific rationality and processes inherent to modernisation (Anderson, 2008; Fox & Sandal, 2013). Fox and Sandler argue that this body of work ‘rejected religion as an explanation for the world and believed that in the modern industrial age more rational, scientific, and legalistic means were needed in order to explain the world we live in as well as to manage it’ (Fox & Sandler, 2004, p. 10). Simply put, ‘secularization theory holds that as modernization advances, religion recedes’ (Hoover & Johnson, 2012, p. 1). Religion, requiring belief without proof, is in direct conflict with scientific, rational explanations of the secular. Thus, religion was relegated to the private sphere (Anderson, 2008; Jackson et al., 2013; Petito & Hatzopoulos, 2003; Fox & Sandal, 2013). As Pabst writes, in IR, ‘faith was either relegated to the sphere of religious transcendence that is apolitical or subjected to the hegemony of secular immanence—or both at once’ (2012, p. 998).

### 2.1.2 A Turn to Religion

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, IR scholarship began to make a more serious contribution on the subject of religion. The so called ‘religious turn’ prompted a new direction and saw an increase volume of literature arguing for the inclusion of religion within IR. This phase spanned two decades from the early 1990s to the early 2010s. Within this dimension, ignoring religion as a major international force was no longer possible, and it led to a gradual increase in the attention dedicated to religion and the growth of plurality in terms of methodology, research focus, and the willingness to compromise with mainstream research (Kratochvíl, 2009, p. 5). This section does not intend to give a thorough account of this phase but identifies several sources that summarise the ‘turn to religion’ dimension in IR literature.

Rees (2013), Kratochvíl (2009), and the edited compendium by Hoover and Johnson (2012) are sources that highlight this ‘turn to religion’ phase in IR. Rees (2013) addresses the new dimension of IR research on religion, stating that the shift is evident through foundational levels of teaching and research journals, including the ‘Politics, Religion and Ideology’, ‘The Review of Faith and International Affairs’ and essential readings including Hurd (2012); Clarke (2013); and Hoover and Johnston (2012). Rees differentiates between four suggested types of religion research in IR (policy, cultural, global, and postsecular research) and three additional types (disciplinary, data, and primary source research) (2013, pp. 129–134). This summary shows the breadth and depth of the discourse. Another way to categorise the plethora of literature on religion that emerged in this second phase is through Kratochvíl (2009), who proposes six types of religion-related inquiry in IR. Kratochvíl
divides the research agenda into two primary groups: religious past and the present role of religion. The religious past category includes the religious inspiration of IR scholars, the religious roots of IR concepts, and the religious roots of (international) politics and the modern state (Kratochvíl, 2009, p. 8). The present role of the religion category includes the contestation over liberalism in political philosophy, the resurgence of religion as a political force, and the secularisation debate (Kratochvíl, 2009, p. 8). Further, the edited compendium by Hoover and Johnson (2012) offers an alternative way to collate the literature in the ‘turn to religion’ dimension. The compendium brings together a vast collection of religion and IR scholarship covering over 10 separate categories. The categories are (1) secularisation, desecularisation, and the disciplines of international affairs; (2) theoretical foundations from antiquity; (3) ethics of force; (4) religion and conflict; (5) religion and peace-making; (6) religion, globalisation, and transnationalism; (7) religion and economic development; (8) religion, democracy, and the state; (9) religious freedom and human rights; and (10) religion and the future of US foreign policy (Hoover & Johnson, 2012, pp. 4–8). The compendium gives an exhaustive overview of the IR discourse on religion during this ‘turn to religion’ dimension. It is a first-of-its-kind, partnering with Baylor University Press and the journal *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*, and features a diverse sample of learned yet accessible essays by distinguished scholars and practitioners at the intersection of religion and IR (Hoover & Johnston, 2012, p. 4). Evidently, all three summaries of the IR discourse of religion during this second dimension suggest that ‘the study of religion in IR is now as prominent as it was once neglected’ (Rees, 2011, p. xiv). Looking back, it is evident that religion went from a place of non-relevance, an outlier in the discipline, to gaining a cemented status in IR scholarship.

A definition of religion most fitting to this ‘turn to religion’ dimension is given by Haynes (2011). He offers two interconnected but analytically distinct attributes to religion: a spiritual sense and a material sense. In a spiritual sense, importance is placed on the ideas of transcendence related to supernatural realities, on sacredness with the language and practice of those deemed as holy, and on ultimacy and the ultimate conditions of existence (Haynes, 2011, p. 4). In a material sense, ‘religious beliefs can motivate individuals and groups to act in pursuit of social or political goals’ (Haynes, 2011, p. 4). The definition offered by Haynes depicts the turn to religion phase as beginning to explore aspects of religious behaviour through the effect of religious belief and the actions of religious agents.
2.1.3 A Postsecular Shift

The third dimension of the IR discourse on religion, arguably present in the discourse for the last decade and still ongoing, encompasses a postsecular shift. The concept of ‘postsecular’ (a term borrowed from the wider social sciences) articulates that in the current age, largely secularised or ‘unchurched’ societies have ‘come to terms with the continued existence of religious communities, and with the influence of religious voices both in the national public sphere and on the global political stage’ (Sheedy, 2016, p. 64). IR has been slow to pick up on this postsecular shift, but such a notion is gaining momentum. This is evident in the fact that the edited book by Haynes (2009, 2016), entitled the Routledge Handbook on Religion and Politics, added a new chapter—‘Postsecularism and International Relations’—between the publication of its first edition in 2009 and the 2016 reedition. However, some IR scholars contest the occurrence of a ‘postsecular’ shift in IR (Camilleri, 2012). Mavelli and Petito (2012) have identified two interconnected but substantially different directions that postsecular research has developed in the discipline thus far: one is a ‘return or resilience of religious traditions in modern life’, and the other a ‘form of radical theorising and critique (whereby) the secular may well be a potential site of isolation, domination, violence and exclusion’ (Mavelli & Petito, 2012, p. 931). Such a rupture between the two modes is identified and advanced in a special edition of the Journal of Religious and Political Practice by Rees and Smartt (2018). They frame religion using a mode of ‘religious resilience’ and a mode of ‘radical critique’ theorised by Mavelli and Petito to interrogate the politics of religious freedom in contexts of the Asia-Pacific (Rees & Smartt, 2018).

The first mode of postsecularism—‘the return or resilience of religious traditions in modern life’ (Mavelli and Petito, 2012, p.931)—has developed conceptual frameworks to account for this ‘unexpected feature of modernity beyond the paradigmatic assumptions of the secularisation theory’ whilst also desiring new frameworks to include religious views (Mavelli and Petito, 2012, p.931). This mode of religious resilience treats religion as ‘a sui generis impulse in human cultures that is essentially distinct from other types of human endeavour—commonly labelled “secular”—such as politics, economy, art, etc.’ (Cavanaugh, n.d., p. 56). Religion is ‘a primary subject whereby religions are conceived as distinct entities, though also increasingly understood as part of socio-historic, cultural and economic entanglements that shape sacral beliefs, traditions and practices in particular ways’ (Rees & Smartt, 2018, p. 2). Within this mode of postsecular research, the religiosity of religious actors is explicit. Appleby argues ‘religious actors make a difference when they remain religious actors’ (Appleby, 1999, p. 16). Similarly, Powers (2010) argues, ‘the most
important distinction between religious and other civil society actors is the mission and self-understanding of religious bodies *qua* religious bodies’ (p. 324). Removing the religiosity of religious actors ‘deprives [them] of agency and religious experts of expertise’ (Omer, 2018, p. 125). Thus, first mode postsecularism maintains an argument for a distinct nature to religion and pursues the religious aspects inherent to religious action. This thesis is not framed by first mode postsecularism, nevertheless it aligns itself to its broad understandings of religion.

Within this mode, a number of definitions of religion are given by prominent IR scholars. Fox states that ‘religion seeks to understand the origins and nature of reality using a set of answers that include the supernatural’ (Fox, 2018, p. 19). He defines religion as a social phenomenon and institution influencing individual and group behaviour manifested through the influences of religious identity, religious institutions, religious legitimacy, religious beliefs, and the codification of these beliefs into authoritative dogma (Fox, 2018, p. 19). Toft et al., borrowing from Alston, define religion as containing: (1) a belief in a supernatural being (or beings); (2) prayers or communication with that or those beings, (3) transcendent realities, including ‘heaven’, ‘paradise’, or ‘enlightenment’; (4) a distinction between the sacred and the profane and between ritual acts and sacred objects; (5) a view that explains both the world as a whole and humanity’s proper relation to it; (6) a code of conduct in line with that worldview; and (7) a temporal community bound by its adherence to these elements (Toft et al., 2011, p. 21). Both definitions of religion significantly allude to notions of a Deity. In its application of a ‘thick’ religion framework, specifically with its category of ‘theology’ and a case study on Catholicism, the current research study thus suits a definition of religion fitting to first mode postsecularism.

The second mode of postsecularism, outlined by Mavelli and Petito, speaks of ‘a form of radical theorising and critique prompted by the idea that values such as democracy, freedom, equality, inclusion, and justice may not necessarily be best pursued within an exclusively immanent secular framework’ (Mavelli & Petito, 2012, p. 931). This understanding of the postsecular ‘may well be a potential site of isolation, domination, violence, and exclusion’ (Mavelli & Petito, 2012, p. 931). The scholarship of this second mode draws inspiration from the critical school of thought from the wider social sciences. Hurd argues that the point of this second mode is to ask certain types of questions such as ‘what counts as a religion and what does not, who speaks for “religion” or the “religious” and who cannot, and what questions and concerns are occluded on this deeply politicized and “religionized” global institutional and intellectual landscape?’ (Hurd, 2018, pp. 11–12). This
mode of radical critique is against treating religion as *sui generis*, essentially distinct from secular pursuits like politics, economy, and art. Instead, it proposes religion as either reducible to other more basic factors or not a transhistorical and transcultural aspect of human life but rather an invention of the modern West (Cavanaugh, n.d., pp. 59–60). Key to the second mode of postsecular research lies in the understanding that religion is seen as being ‘deployed in the service of particular ideological and political agendas’ (Mavelli & Wilson, 2016, pp. 12–13). Hurd argues that religion is often ‘wielded most powerfully by those in power, including states market forces, institutionalised religions, international organisations, and others’ (Hurd, 2012, p. 946). To counteract this, second mode postsecular scholars share a belief that ‘we need to broaden our understanding of what “religion” is, noting its infinite variation across different cultural and political contexts and levels’ (Mavelli & Wilson, 2016, p. 5). Therefore, second mode postsecularism protests religion as *sui generis*, seeing it instead as reducible to other secular realms as a construction of power, and thus requiring attention.

Within this second mode of postsecularism, definitions of religion differ. Hurd states three categories of religion—expert religion, lived religion, and official or governed religion (Hurd, 2018, p. 12). Expert religion incorporates ‘experts—religious and secular—and who generate what is considered to be policy-relevant knowledge about religion’ (Hurd, 2018, p. 12). Lived religion is ‘practiced by ordinary people in everyday situations as they interact with authorities, rituals, texts, institutions, and as they seek to navigate and to make sense of their lives, connections with others, and place in the world’ (Hurd, 2018, p. 12). Official or governed religion is ‘for the purposes of law and governance, as construed by judges, administrators, and bureaucrats’ (Hurd, 2018, p. 12). Hurd argues that ‘religion is not and never was entirely outside of power … to the contrary, religion is often wielded most powerfully by those *in* power, including states, market forces, institutionalised religions, international organisations, and others’ (Hurd, 2012, p. 946). Wilson suggests that ‘what “religion” is and what it is perceived to be are the products of complex social, political, economic, cultural and historical dynamics’ (Wilson, 2014, p. 348). Such definitions of religion are in contrast to definitions aligned to first mode postsecularism.

### 2.1.4 A Theological Turn

Existing within current IR discussions on religion is the notion of a ‘theological’ turn in the discipline. Here it forms the fourth dimension of the IR discourse on religion. The special edition edited by Paipais (2018) defines and pushes forward such a discussion on political theology in IR. The distinction between ‘religion’ and ‘theology’ prompts an interesting dialogue. Until this point, religion, rather than theology, had been the traditional
focus in IR. It is understood as ‘an identity marker’, a ‘thick’ element of ‘culture’ or an affective dimension of transnational civil society (Paipais, 2018, pp. 269–270). Religion ‘relates human beings to one another and it negotiates their relationship with God in terms of certain beliefs’ (Bain, 2020, p. 3). With a different orientation, theology is usually treated as an expression of meta-physical dogmatism (Paipais, 2018, p. 270). Thus, Bain states that ‘religion centres on the act of believing—that is, subscribing to a system of beliefs—and theology investigates a system of beliefs to which the believer subscribes’ (Bain, 2020, pp. 3–4). Therefore, political theology ‘involves interpreting and analysing politics—institutional arrangements, sources of authority, patterns of order, purposes and justifications of rule, and so forth—in the context of theological concepts and categories’ (Bain, 2020, p. 3). Schmitt is considered one of the most significant contributors to the notion of political theology (Bain, 2020, p. 4). Bain explores his key thought that the modern theory of the state is essentially a secularised version of theological concepts (Bain, 2020, p. 5). Beyond Schmitt, the renewal of political theology has exploded, according to Paipais, and there is a growing awareness of theodical-political dimensions in IR made evident through the works of Guilhot (2010), Pabst (2012), Troy (2013), Gentry (2013), Rengger (2013), Pasha (2013), Bain (2016), Paipais (2017) and Molloy (2017) (Paipais, 2018, p. 271). Paipais (2018) argues that political theologies underpinning international politics are a necessity in IR discourse as they serve ‘a global research agenda bringing together diverse theoretical and disciplinary perspectives, and cultural practices in the global field of IR’ (Paipais, 2018, p. 276). A pluralist research framework, he furthers, requires taking matters of faith, religion, and theology seriously (Paipais, 2018, p. 276). It is important to state that this thesis is primarily focused on religion and not on political theology. However, I engage the latter here as an interesting and valid dimension to the IR discourse on religion. It is also mentioned since discussions in the present thesis draw on analogies from political theology evident in some of the earlier-mentioned IR scholarship on theological-political discourse (Pabst, 2012; Troy, 2012; Bain, 2020) that also engage English School theorising.

2.2 ‘Broad’, ‘Deep’, and ‘Thick’ Religion: The International Relations Discourse on Religion

The four dimensions outlined in the previous section gave a chronological overview of IR engagement of religion. A way to relay the literature found in these aspects is through adopting the framework of Hassner (2011)—*broad* religion, *deep* religion, and *thick* religion. This section firstly explores each category defined by Hassner in light of the texts he identifies. Secondly, I offer further examples encompassing the phases of IR discourse on
religion. Selecting core attributes in the framework theorised by Hassner to establish the IR discourse on religion is intentional. It foreshadows the next section of the present chapter, which applies the same framework to the IR literature on Catholicism. In turn, this prefigures the current thesis adopting a ‘thick’ religion approach via the ‘thick’ acronym to frame analysis of the SMG. I outline this in the next chapter.

2.2.1 ‘Broad’ Religion

Hassner splits existing IR literature on religion into two predominant categories: ‘broad’ religion and ‘deep’ religion. ‘Broad’ religion focuses on ‘the international level of analysis and religion is essentialized, reduced to economics, politics, or some parallel sphere’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 37). The concern with a ‘broad’ approach results in scholars focusing their attention on the international arena at the cost of examining religion in depth; their analysis essentialises and reduces religion (Hassner, 2011, p. 43).

Literature taking a ‘broad’ approach, according to Hassner, includes: Bringing Religion into International Relations (Fox & Sandler, 2004), Sacred and Secular (Inglehart & Norris, 2004), The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations (Thomas, 2005) and The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (Huntington, 1996). Hassner concedes that Huntington provides one of the clearest examples of ‘broad’ religion because his argument about clashes of civilisations is essentially about conflicts between religious groups (Hassner, 2011, p. 44). He says, ‘there is little about Islam or Christianity, for example, that explains conflict between these two civilizations other than the fact that Islam is not Christianity’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 44). Hassner goes on to identify that Huntington fails to connect religious cause to conflict at the international level. In fact, only four paragraphs of the text’s 360 pages discuss the religious cause of the clash, offering only sophomoric analysis at best (Hassner, 2011, p. 44). Rather, Huntington explains the global clash of religions via concepts of demographic, economic, technological, or political concern (Hassner, 2011, p. 44). This analysis results in Hassner stating that ‘Huntington is writing on religion, he is not writing about religion’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 44) and thus provides an example of ‘broad’ religion.

Expanding upon the given examples of ‘broad’ religion, I make further suggestions. The second dimension of the IR discourse on religion expressed ‘broad’ religion approaches that focused primarily on religion through an international level of analysis without detailing the religion which they analysed. Fox (2001) wrote a foundational article opening up preliminary discussions in the IR discourse of religion. It examples ‘broad’ religion as Fox firstly questions why religion had been overlooked by policymakers and academics and
secondly articulates how religion influences international politics (Fox, 2001, p. 53). He advances the argument that this influence operates in three ways—‘foreign policies are influenced by the religious views and beliefs of policymakers and their constituents’; religion as ‘a source of legitimacy for both supporting and criticizing government behaviour locally and internationally’; and religious issues and phenomena becoming international issues (Fox, 2001, p. 59). This is a clear example of ‘broad’ religion since it argues that religion should be taken more seriously in international politics without any reference to the elements of religion. Marty presents another example of ‘broad’ religion. He argues the world is ‘neither exclusively secular nor exclusively religious, but rather a complex combination of both the religious and the secular, with religious and secular phenomena occurring at the same time in individuals, in groups, and in societies around the world’ (Marty, 2003, p. 42). Once again, analysis remains at the international level without specific engagement with tenets of the religion which he theorises. Thus, these texts offer good examples of ‘broad’ religion. A ‘broad’ religion approach perhaps was necessary in the second phase of religion and IR discourse to push forward a research agenda in IR that took religion more seriously.

The third dimension of the IR discourse on religion also features texts with a ‘broad’ religion outlook. These examples essentialise religion, reducing it to the realms of power, politics, and economics. Hurd took the discourse of religion and IR from its second to its third phase by proposing an alternative narrative in IR scholarship, whereby religion was not fixed but rather socially and historically constructed, and secularism was a form of political authority (Hurd, 2008). This more critical engagement can be considered at the forefront of the ‘broad’ approach that essentialises religion to power. As mentioned earlier, Hurd advocates religion as exerted by states, market forces, institutionalised religions, and international organisations (2012, p. 946). Similarly, Wilson demonstrates a ‘broad’ religion approach, reducing religion to an alternative sphere. She states that ‘religion’ is not something that exists ‘out there’ that can be defined, contained, fixed, and known (Wilson, 2014, p. 349). Rather, Wilson suggests that ‘religion shifts depending on geographic, cultural, political, economic and historical context’ (2014, p. 349). She also claims that ‘when specific definitions are made about what religion is and does, it is frequently an exercise of power’ (Wilson, 2018, p. 278). Such texts are examples of ‘broad’ religion because they essentialise and reduce religion to alternative secular notions.

2.2.2 ‘Deep’ Religion

Alternatively, ‘deep’ religion is when ‘the political impact of a particular religious movement or the impact of religion in a particular region is examined at depth without
offering generalizations for the international sphere’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 37). Hassner identifies that the dangers of a ‘deep’ religion approach result in familiarity with specific religious movements or a particular geographical region, but such analysis does not generalise implications for the international arena (2011, p. 43).

According to Hassner, examples of ‘deep’ religion include the Fundamentalism Project by Marty and Appleby (n.d.) and The Shia Revival by Nasr (2006). The comprehensive survey of over 100 studies from numerous scholars on fundamentalism by Marty and Appleby is an example of ‘deep’ religion because ‘the analysis, throughout, is sensitive to religious practices and beliefs, the content of scripture, exegesis and interpretation, rituals and symbols, religious hierarchies and leadership structures’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 45). Hassner elaborates that despite its extensive array of case studies, the volumes do not encompass ‘broad’ or ‘thick’ religion because they do not amount to an international theory of fundamentalism. Rather, the chapters ‘remain distinct case studies and their findings are not generalized beyond the particular region or religion each discusses’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 45).

Hassner praises Nasr for producing the most accessible and significant contribution to the study of Shi’ism (Hassner, 2011, p. 45). It is considered an account of ‘deep’ religion as Nasr engages ‘Shia history, theology, and religious hierarchy; he is as interested in the political significance of ashura rituals and the symbolism of the Battle of Karbala as he is in the demographic or economic underpinnings of the spread of Shi’ism’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 45). The book falls short of anything beyond a ‘deep’ religion approach, as Hassner states, because Nasr does not apply ‘his conclusions to global Shi’ism and he does not develop his argument about this particular branch of Islam in a manner that would facilitate its extension to other religions or regions’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 45).

Further suggestions of ‘deep’ religion include articles that thoroughly engage the religious beliefs of IR scholars. Thomas (2001) writes on the faith and history of Martin Wight as one of the English School founders. This is an example of ‘deep’ religion from the second dimension of the IR discourse on religion—the ‘turn to religion’ dimension. Its purpose, I believe, was to relay the religious roots of the English School through investigating the religious beliefs of one of the founders of the theory. Thomas recalls Wight as ‘a devout Anglican throughout his life … Wight’s personal faith—his sense of calling or vocation as a teacher, scholar, and as a Christian intellectual— Influenced his contribution to the study of international relations’ (Thomas, 2001, pp. 906–907). Wight’s main contribution to the English School, Thomas argues, was his ‘willingness to take religious doctrines, cultures and civilizations seriously by focusing on their role in different historic states-systems’ (Thomas,
By Thomas engaging directly with the faith of Wight in founding the English School, this article demonstrates ‘deep’ religion. Thomas offers some remarks for future English School research based on Wight’s beliefs. For example, he suggests developing ‘a more social conception of religion, rooted in the practices of different religious traditions’ and re-telling the stories of expansion beyond a Western lens (Thomas, 2001, p. 927). While this suggests elements of ‘thick’ religion, I suggest the article reads predominantly as an account of ‘deep’ religion, which then poses some ‘thick’ religion questions, rather than being an example of ‘thick’ religion itself.

A ‘deep’ religion approach examining the impact of a particular religious movement within a specific context and the third dimension of the IR discourse on religion—a postsecular shift—is further evident in ‘Praying with one’s legs again’ (Omer, 2018). Omer offers numerous specific examples of movements and activities challenging institutionalised Judaism and anti-Semitism in the US, including the youth-led Jewish movement ‘If Not Now’ standing in front of Trump Tower in Chicago in 2017 and the Center for Jewish Nonviolence working in solidarity with West Bank Palestinians. This can be seen as an example of ‘deep’ religion, as Omer engages the political impact of particular religious movements. The text is part of the third dimension as Omer engages but challenges critical scholarship that essentialises religion. Omer argues that ‘religiosity is not reducible to ideology and power nor should religious meanings, symbols and texts only be understood in terms of a social movement’s objectives and repertoire of protest’ (2018, p. 4). She states that religion as an instrument of hegemony or resultant from power reductionism is an inadequate lens (Omer, 2018, p. 4). Omer challenges critical approaches in IR within the postsecular turn which she believes takes religious agency away from the actor itself, and instead reduce religion to acts of power and hegemony. This demonstrates an example of critical scholarship from the third dimension of the IR discourse on religion by providing an example of ‘deep’ religion that specifically explores Jewish movements challenging anti-Semitism.

2.2.3 ‘Thick’ Religion

Complementing a ‘broad’ and ‘deep’ approach to religion, Hassner proposes an alternative category—‘thick’ religion. As discussed, ‘broad’ religion embraces both a domestic and international level of analysis while predominantly engaging a positivist methodology. ‘Deep’ religion encompasses methods both reflectivist and positivist in nature but largely presents a domestic level of analysis. Distinct to both ‘broad’ and ‘deep’ religion is ‘thick’ religion. ‘Thick’ religion, according to Hassner, holds both reflectivist and positivist methods on both domestic and international levels of analysis. It requires
Sensitivity to theology, religious organization, iconography, ceremony, and belief but also a willingness to generalize from particular religious movements, regions, or instances to arrive at broader conclusions for international relations (IR). This implies an issue-area approach, in which the focus of analysis is a particular area of concern in which religion and international affairs interact. (Hassner, 2011, p. 38)

Hassner acknowledges that the framework is based upon the ideas of Geertz (1973), who theorised a ‘thick’ description of culture wherein a ‘thick’ description takes into account many details, meanings and interpretations compared to a ‘thin’ description providing merely facts. Hassner states that the challenges facing a ‘thick’ religion approach are two-fold: ‘[the approach] must bridge the levels of analysis separating religion from international relations, and it must adapt a reflectivist methodology, useful for gaining insight into religious beliefs and practices, to a discipline with a positivist orientation’ (2011, p. 47).

The framework below outlines the questions Hassner associates with each category of the ‘thick’ religion acronym:

- **Theology**—What are the tenets of this religious movement? What do its most important texts and scholars propose?
- **Hierarchy**—How is the religious movement organised, socially and politically? Who rules and makes decisions? How are these individuals chosen and ranked?
- **Iconography**—How does this religious movement use symbols, myths, images, words, or sounds to convey its ideas? How do believers treat these icons?
- **Ceremony**—How do believers act out the theology, hierarchy, and iconography of this religious movement? What are their rituals, practices, feasts, and commemorations?
- **Belief [or Knowledge]**—What do members of this religious community believe in? What are the foundations of their faith? (Hassner, 2011, p. 49)

Hassner outlines several requisites or assumptions to a ‘thick’ religion framework. Firstly, such a perspective ‘implies an issue-area approach that focuses analysis on a particular topic of concern in which religion and international affairs interact’ (2011, p. 49). It ‘traces a comprehensive logical chain, from the content of specific religious ideas to particular outcomes in international politics, and thus identifies causal or even constitutive relationships between religious ideas, and political behaviour’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). Secondly, ‘thick’ religion investigates ‘the religious micro-foundations of a particular phenomenon and then constructs successive layers of explanation, each more removed from the religious and closer to the political, until it reaches the outcome to be explained’
Hassner proposes two avenues of ‘thick’ religion present in the IR literature: *first avenue thick religion*—comprising issues linked to fundamental concepts in international affairs, and *second avenue thick religion*—comprising issues related to contemporary international concerns (2011, p. 51). First avenue ‘thick’ religion, according to Hassner, sheds light on core themes in IR theory, from identity and sovereignty to legitimacy, power, leadership, and global governance (2011, p. 51). It is interested in the religious foundations of IR concepts to ‘trace the identities and interests of international actors to their roots in religious beliefs and practices, uncover the religious foundations of international legitimacy and leadership, or establish the religious sources of power in the international sphere’ (Hassner, 2011, pp. 51–52). In first avenue ‘thick’ religion—linked to a fundamental concept in IR—Hassner proposes scholars ask questions such as: ‘How do theology and religious hierarchy inform notions of hierarchy and law in international affairs? How do religious rituals, beliefs and symbols underpin international institutions and organisations, foster cooperation, and bolster alliances? How can religious communities contribute to the spread and institutionalisation of international taboos and norms?’ (2011, p. 52). Evident in each of these questions is a clear engagement of one or more components of the ‘thick’ acronym components—theology, hierarchy, iconography, ceremony, belief/knowledge—with a fundamental aspect of IR—such as law, international organisations, cooperation, alliances, and norms. Hassner identifies IR literature that falls into a first avenue ‘thick’ religion approach: *Revolutions in Sovereignty* (Philpott, 2001). *Revolutions in Sovereignty* is an example of ‘thick’ religion because Philpott ‘succeeds in linking the religious underpinnings of the Protestant Reformation—indeed, the theological foundations of that Reformation—to the ensuing revolution in the structure of international relations in less than four pages’ (Hassner, 2011, pp. 50–51). Philpott engages the theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin and expands these theological foundations of the Reformation to their political implications. Philpott states, ‘sovereignty, in substance if not in name, comes directly out of the very propositions of Protestant theology in all its variants’ (2001, pp. 107–108). Philpott concludes ‘this coup de main by contrasting Protestant theology to the theology of other “heresies” of the period to demonstrate why the particular ideas at the core of the Protestant Reformation
unleashed political effects that other theologies did not’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 51). This, Hassner states, is ‘thick religion at its finest’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 51).

Hassner proposes that second avenue ‘thick’ religion:

Encompasses issues of current concern, from weapons proliferation and war to underdevelopment and state collapse … research projects might seek to reveal the link between religious ideas and military doctrine, uncover how faith informs key aspects of war (the willingness to fight, how and when to fight, what weapons are considered legitimate), and establish links between religious power structures and the rise of militant fundamentalism. (Hassner, 2011, p. 52)

In second avenue ‘thick’ religion—linked to a contemporary issue of international concern—Hassner proposes that scholars ask questions such as: ‘What role do religious leaders play in exacerbating or restraining the costs of civil and ethnic wars? How do believers employ the sacred, be it sacred land, ritual, language, or icons, to justify, motivate or constrain violence?’ (2011, p. 52). Once again, evident in each of these questions is a clear engagement of the ‘thick’ acronym—religion, hierarchy, iconography, ceremony, belief/knowledge—with an issue currently occurring in international affairs, such as civil wars, ethnic wars, or violence. *Terror in the Mind of God* (Juergensmeyer, 2000) offers an excellent account of second avenue ‘thick’ religion, according to Hassner. Juergensmeyer achieves ‘thick’ religion by firstly examining distinct fundamentalist religious movements in five locations across the globe and then uses this analysis to identify commonalities among these cases, expanding the case studies into a generalised argument about religious violence worldwide (Hassner, 2011, p. 50). In doing so, Hassner states that Juergensmeyer turns ‘deep’ religion into ‘thick’ religion (Hassner, 2011, p. 50).

Further, I suggest that first avenue ‘thick’ religion is demonstrated by ‘Isaiah’s Vision of Human Security: Virtue-Ethics and International Relations’ (Thomas, 2006), and second avenue ‘thick’ religion is evident in *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Appleby, 1999). Both texts, included in the religious turn dimension in IR discourse, are examples of ‘thick’ religion because they engage religious scripture or specific case studies of religious actors and then imply generalisations towards the international arena. Thomas evidences an intimate knowledge of the vision of peace by Isaiah in his article on virtue-ethics in international relations (Thomas, 2006). Thomas states that the Book of Isaiah, contrary to realist narratives of power, presents a holistic view of sustainable peace and security in international relations based on wellbeing, authenticity, and development (Thomas, 2006, pp. 21–22). The text weaves a ‘deep’ engagement with the Biblical story of Isaiah seamlessly with modern
conceptions of IR, security, peace, and justice. The text is considered first avenue ‘thick’ religion through its ability to connect scripture and biblical stories to fundamental issues in IR. In *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, Appleby demonstrates second avenue ‘thick’ religion by bringing new insight to religious roots inspiring violence. Appleby takes on an impressive task relaying religious extremism and nonviolent religious militance, through a flurry of case studies of religious actors, and brings the analysis together to form a coherent argument on religious peacebuilding in the international arena. The work demonstrates ‘thick’ religion because its methodology evidence both elements of reflectivism and positivism and engages the domestic and international levels of analysis. Second avenue ‘thick’ religion is evident here by approaching the current issue of peacebuilding from a ‘thick’ religion perspective.

### 2.3 ‘Broad’, ‘Deep’, and ‘Thick’ Catholicism: The Catholic Church in International Relations Discourse

Having established categories of *broad*, *deep*, and *thick* religion according to Hassner, the current section applies these categories specifically to a Catholic context, reviewing texts explicitly within IR literature on the Catholic Church. Thus, it categorises IR literature into *broad* Catholicism, *deep* Catholicism, and *thick* Catholicism. I acknowledge that this section does not comprehensively engage all IR literature on the Catholic Church. The literature I explore is merely to highlight the spectrum of the discourse. IR has a porous boundary; thus, the texts engaged in the present section reflect that nature. Further, I have intentionally chosen scholarship that does not fall within an English School and Catholic Church realm as these texts will be the subject of review in the next chapter. The purpose of the present section is to demonstrate authority in IR discourse on Catholicism, in which the present thesis situates itself.

Before asking the first main research question of this thesis—how a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework helps analyse the SMG—it is necessary to establish whether a ‘thick’ religion framework can be applied to the Catholic Church as a religious actor in IR. I argue a ‘thick’ religion framework is profitable for a study of the Church as a religious actor because the Catholic Church holds characteristics that are included in a ‘thick’ religion approach.

- **Theology**—Catholic theology is evident through Catholic doctrine, dogma, and other works in the Catholic intellectual tradition. Dragovic (2015) draws on in his article facets of Catholic theology present in Second Vatican Council documents, papal encyclicals, conciliar teachings, which are rooted in the scriptures, Church fathers and preceding conciliar and papal teachings.
- **Hierarchy**—the Catholic Church has numerous ecclesiastical structures. It is the oldest and largest transnational actor in the world (Ryall, 2001, p. 41), which, in IR terms,
is suggested to fit definitions of a state through the Vatican City State and governance structures through the Holy See and definitions of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) (Ferrari, 2006; Hertzke, 2016). Iconography—the Catholic Church possesses a variety of ritual activity, both expressive and instrumental, and symbolic systems including saints as icons (Gudeman, 1976). Ceremony—the Catholic Church has ‘resources of religion’, as defined by Rees and Rawson as ‘the unique capabilities and inherent qualities that may be associated with religious actors’ (2018, pp. 173-174), which enable the acting out of theology, hierarchy, and iconography. Belief/Knowledge—The Church brings together over one billion adherents who make up nearly one-sixth of the population of the world and half of all Christians (Hertzke, 2016, p. 36). Amongst the faithful, there exist Catholic confessional and lived beliefs. The teachings of the Church and its structure are to further its mission that, ‘first and last is to continue the work of Christ’ (Araujo, 2013, para. 13). Fulfilling the criteria, a ‘thick’ religion approach can be applied to the Catholic Church as a religious actor in IR. That being said, ‘thick’ Catholicism in the current thesis is not the transfer of Hassner’s framework into Catholicism. Rather ‘thick’ Catholicism is a constructed concept for this thesis. The framework is repurposed in how Catholicism is born out in the SMG. This will be explained in depth in Chapter Three.

2.3.1 ‘Broad’ Religion/‘Broad’ Catholicism

According to Hassner, ‘broad’ religion, research:

Falls towards the international end of the level of analysis continuum because it tends to emphasize the effects of religious behaviour on the international sphere. At the same time, this research, so far, tends to restrict its methodology to positivism. These authors are interested in the effects of religion on international conflict and cooperation, diplomacy, or globalization, but they have been hesitant to trace these effects to their origins in religion itself. (Hassner, 2011, p. 46)

Therefore, ‘broad’ Catholicism encompasses literature that engages the global or international nature of the Catholic Church, understands the effects of the Catholic Church in an international setting without reference to elements of Catholicity and investigates the Catholic Church through a reductionist lens.

In the first instance, I suggest that literature falling predominantly into a category of ‘broad’ Catholicism relates to the discourse of the Catholic Church as a transnational actor. Tarlton describes the Catholic Church as one of the most prominent transnational actors due to its influence in political, economic, and social matters in the international system (Tarlton, 2012). In his article titled ‘The Catholic Church as a transnational actor’, Ryall (2001)
explores the historical evolution and contemporary character of transnational Catholic political behaviour and examines Catholic groups operating transnationally and the role of the Holy See as an international actor (Ryall, 2001, p. 42). It is a formidable account of the Catholic Church’s transnationalism sweeping through a variety of Catholic actors, including long-established religious orders like the Jesuits to newer actors (i.e., Focolare, Opus Dei and Communion and Life), numerous bodies within the Holy See (i.e., the curia, the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) and aspects of Catholic hierarchy (i.e., national Catholic bishops’ conferences and the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community) (Ryall, 2001). Ryall concludes, ‘Catholicism remains one of the few belief systems or ideologies which operates on a global level and which aspires to global influence. In essence, the universal Church draws its international influence from its national roots’ (2001, p. 55). The article illustrates ‘broad’ Catholicism because despite impressively addressing the transnational nature of the Catholic Church, it does so without substantial engagement with the origins of Catholicism itself. Similarly, ‘The Roman Catholic Church: A Transnational Actor’ by Vallier (1971) demonstrates ‘broad’ Catholicism by extensively describing the Catholic Church as a transnational actor through its organisational structures. The article explores the struggles of the Catholic Church as a transnational actor in relation to nation-states, transnational political movements (communism), and other Christian religions (Vallier, 1971). Despite its emphasis on the organisational structure of the Catholic Church, the article exemplifies ‘broad’ Catholicism through its lack of engagement with aspects of Catholicity such as (though not exclusively) theology, exegesis, and ritual in its exploration of the Catholic Church as a transnational actor.

Secondly, IR literature that showcases the Catholic Church in an international setting demonstrates another type of ‘broad’ Catholicism. Byrnes analyses the Holy See and the pope’s role in international affairs through the Church’s diplomatic relations with states and its status at the UN through the Catholic Church’s international role in Poland, the US, and Nicaragua. Byrnes further explores its wielding of soft power via the three policy areas of climate change, refugees, and the definition of marriage (Byrnes, 2017). It is ‘broad’ in that it analyses the Catholic Church from a global perspective. Haynes (2001) draws upon the case study of the Catholic Church to assess whether transnational religious actors undermine state sovereignty. He addresses two particular instances—the breakdown of communism in Poland and democratisation in Africa—to argue that the role of the Catholic Church ‘should be seen not as symptomatic of a desire to undermine state sovereignty but rather primarily as a
reflection of processes of growing globalisation and nationalisation which increasingly affected the Church’ (Haynes, 2001, pp. 149–150). It offers a ‘broad’ Catholicism account by mapping Catholic action in response to state sovereignty. These examples highlight ‘broad’ Catholicism by operating predominantly at the international level through demonstrating the effects of religious action on an aspect of global affairs. Significantly, they do not substantially engage in the origins of the religion itself and therefore cannot translate ‘broad’ Catholicism into ‘thick’ Catholicism.

Further, another aspect of ‘broad’ Catholicism is when Catholicism is essentialised and reduced to another realm. Critical literature on the Catholic Church encompasses this category, reducing aspects of Catholicism to interests of power, hegemony, or territory. This argument is evident in academic literature following the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition on the theme of ‘Heavenly bodies: fashion and the Catholic imagination’. In her article on this event, Anderson suggests Catholic clothing reflects ‘Catholicism’s pomp, rather than its poverty’ (Anderson, 2018). This gives evidence of critical scholarship reducing sacred symbolism beheld in clerical attire to pieces of fashion attached to social issues. Similarly, Orsi writing on the same event speaks out against clergy attire, arguing that liturgical garments mask sexual power (Orsi, 2018). Orsi highlights that despite one of the exhibition’s major themes being aesthetics providing access to the sacred in Catholicism, ‘the connection between beauty and the sacred in Catholic culture is not a direct one. It is always mediated by and implicated in power, gender, and sexuality’ (Orsi, 2018). Thus, this is a good example of ‘broad’ Catholicism that reduces Catholic symbolism and ritual to ideas of power, gender, and sexuality. Another example of critical scholarship essentialising Catholicism, albeit differently, is Kratochvíl and Hovorková’s (2017) article on papal geopolitics. The article analyses Urbi et Orbi messages delivered every Christmas and Easter by Pope Benedict and compares them with Pope Francis via categories associated with spatial relevance, spatial agency, and spatial closeness. The article is methodologically thorough in investigating the words of Catholic Church leaders and articulating the distinctive spatial order they create. However, it is an example of ‘broad’ religion, because firstly, while engaging papal messages, it fails to deeply engage the theology behind the Urbi et Orbi messages. Secondly, it reduces the messages to categories of spatial hegemony.

2.3.2 ‘Deep’ Religion/’Deep’ Catholicism

A ‘deep’ religion approach in IR literature, according to Hassner:

Has adopted a reflectivist stance on religion and politics by using a religious context to understand religious behaviour. At the same time, this research has, so far,
restricted itself to operating at or below the domestic level of analysis. These authors study a single religious movement or religion in depth, often revealing insights regarding ritual practice, the meaning of symbols and language, the implications of theology and exegesis, and the role of beliefs in local political practices. However, they seldom if ever extend these conclusions to the international sphere. (Hassner, 2011, pp. 46–47)

‘Deep’ Catholicism, therefore, encompasses texts that posit elements analysing the Catholic Church in depth solely, exploring the Catholic Church within a domestic setting, and investigating Catholic ritual, symbols, language, theology, and scripture.

Firstly, ‘deep’ Catholicism in IR literature discusses the organisational structures of the Catholic Church primarily through the functions of the Vatican, the Holy See and the pope. This can be considered ‘deep’ Catholicism because it focuses on the Catholic Church as an organisation within domestic settings. Walsh’s (2000) ‘Catholicism and international relations: papal interventionism’ evidences ‘deep’ Catholicism by explaining the history of the papacy and two domestic case studies. In the first half of the article, Walsh explores the historical background to the papacy and papal diplomacy foundations. The second half draws upon two case studies—the Middle East and Europe—exploring the history of Vatican diplomacy and papal diplomacy within each context. Providing two separate case studies exemplifies ‘deep’ Catholicism, whereby an aspect of the structure of the Catholic Church, namely papal diplomacy, is examined on a regional basis, not an international scale. Therefore, Walsh (2000) evidences ‘deep’ Catholicism in deeply exploring the Catholic Church without drawing conclusions to the international sphere.

Secondly, IR literature demonstrates ‘deep’ Catholicism through texts exploring Catholic symbols, ritual, theology, and exegesis of Catholic belief without extending conclusions to the international realm. In Between Heaven and Earth, Orsi (2005) demonstrates a good example of ‘deep’ Catholicism by engaging Catholic sacred figures, such as the Virgin Mother of God, the angels, and the saints, in their relationship to those on Earth. Orsi argues that the saints, on the one hand, could be dangerous enforcers of cultural structures, norms, and expectations. However, on the other hand, they are called upon by those on Earth for their assistance (Orsi, 2005, p. 4). Orsi suggests that ‘the saints are never innocent, nor are the effects of their presence singular … these holy figures get caught up and implicated in struggles on earth’ (Orsi, 2005, p. 4). The ‘deep’ engagement with Catholic saints present a favourable account of ‘deep’ Catholicism. Further, Brachtendorf’s (2012) chapter, ‘Augustine: peace ethics and peace policy’, demonstrates an example of ‘deep’
Catholicism. Here he engages metaphysical understandings of St Augustine on the concept of peace. He explores how St Augustine speaks of peace as ‘a general characteristic contained in every existing object in addition to unity, truth and ingrained good’ (Brachtendorf, 2012, p. 49). The article takes as its premise St Augustine’s thoughts when speaking of concepts such as just war, Christians as soldiers, and religious wars. Starting from the premise of one of the Doctors of the Church, as St Augustine is known, the chapter provides an example of ‘deep’ Catholicism. These are examples of ‘deep’ Catholicism because they draw deeply into Catholic theology, symbols, and rituals without extending conclusions to the international realm.

Thirdly, ‘deep’ Catholicism is evident in IR literature through analysis of the Catholic Church within national settings. Enyedi and O’Mahony examine the impact of democracy on the Czech and Hungarian Catholic Churches. They investigate how these Churches have endured and responded to the realities and demands of liberal pluralist regimes (Enyedi and O’Mahony, 2006). Buckley (2014) concentrates on public Catholicism in the Philippines, exploring how Catholic elites exert influence yet do not directly control the outcomes of democratic politics (Buckley, 2014). Using the reproductive health debate within the context of the 2013 elections, the article identifies three distinct varieties of public Catholicism which relate to the democratic dilemma and identifies their impact on the interior life of the Church and alliances between other social actors and the Church (Buckley, 2014, p. 313). Dillon speaks about the Irish Catholic Church providing a ‘sacred canopy’ within which democratic politics can be conducted (Dillon, 2002). Manuel describes the predominance of the Catholic Church in the Iberian countries of Portugal and Spain. However, he argues that it does not serve as a source of national identity or as a particularly strong competitor in the political process (Manuel, 2002). Finally, Gill analyses the Catholic Church’s role in traditionally supporting anti-democratic regimes in South America and becoming ‘instrumental in effecting the transformation of any regimes into their contemporary democratic forms’ (Gill, 2002, p. 193). A further example of ‘deep’ Catholicism is Hanson’s (1987) *The Catholic Church in World Politics.* While it does not investigate the Catholic Church in one particular national context, I suggest that it reads like a compendium of individual ‘deep’ religion chapters on a specific aspect of Catholicism within a specific setting. These instances of ‘deep’ Catholicism evident in IR give evidence of an appropriation of ‘thick’ religion by only theorising a single religious movement, that of Catholicism, in depth at a national or regional level of analysis.
2.3.3 ‘Thick’ Religion/‘Thick’ Catholicism

As articulated earlier, Hassner proposes a complimentary approach to the study of religion and international relations—*thick* religion. ‘Thick’ religion is:

Both *deep*, in that it traces the pathways by which religion affects international affairs to their origins in the content and meaning of religion, and *broad*, in that it offers generalisable implications across states and regions. A *thick religion* approach to the study of religion and international politics requires an understanding of religious detail but also a willingness to generalise from particular religious movements, regions or instances to arrive at a broader conclusion. (Hassner, 2011, pp. 48–49)

Appropriating the ‘thick’ religion framework by Hassner identified in Section 2.2.3, here, I amend the questions to specifically suit Catholicism in particular, rather than religion in general. I suggest the following categories in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework:

- **Theology**—What are the tenets of Catholicism? What does the Magisterium, the Popes, and the Holy See, along with its important texts (e.g., the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Compendium of Social Doctrine, the Bible) propose?
- **Hierarchy**—How is the Catholic Church organised socially and politically? How does the Catholic hierarchy function?
- **Iconography**—How does Catholicism engage symbols, myths, images, words, or sounds to convey Catholic ideas? How do believers treat these icons?
- **Ceremony**—How do believers act out Catholic theology, hierarchy, and iconography? What are the Catholic Church’s rituals, practices, feasts, and commemorations?
- **Belief [or Knowledge]**—What do members of the Catholic Church believe in? What are the foundations of their faith?

This ‘thick’ Catholicism framework is the principle framework that the present thesis will adapt to analyse the case study of the SMG. The adaptation of this framework will be explored in depth in the Chapter Three on methodology.

As presented earlier in this chapter, Hassner identifies two categories in a ‘thick’ religion approach: issues linked to fundamental concepts in international affairs and issues related to contemporary international concerns (2011, p. 51). As discussed above, Philpott (2001) and Thomas (2006) fit into first avenue ‘thick’ religion through their analysis of sovereignty and human security, respectively. Juergensmeyer (2000) and Appleby (1999) fit into second avenue ‘thick’ religion due to their analysis reflecting on current religious fundamentalism and religious peacebuilding issues, respectively. These two categories of
‘thick’ religion are also evident in a ‘thick’ Catholicism approach. Pabst (2016), Cavanaugh (2015), and Araujo (2001) exemplify first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism, while Dragovic (2015), Joustra (2017), and Rees and Rawson (2018) demonstrate second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism. While accepting these two avenues of ‘thick’ Catholicism, the present thesis applies a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework distinctly and originally, which will be substantially explored in the next chapter.

First avenue ‘thick’ religion, according to Hassner (2011), sheds light on core themes and concepts in IR theory by investigating their religious foundations. Similarly, first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism identifies Catholic roots in core IR concepts. For example, scholarship in this realm would correlate constitutive elements of IR theory to foundations of Catholic theology, exegesis, or structure. I suggest that within the IR literature on Catholicism, Pabst’s (2016) ‘International Relations and the “Modern” Middle Ages: Rival Theological Theorisations of International Order’ fits first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism. It can be identified as such because Pabst discusses Franciscan and Dominican influences on IR foundations. He outlines the embeddedness of Catholic theology in shaping contemporary international relations, tracing it back to late medieval ideas, ‘notably Franciscan conceptions of inalienable individual rights, centrally vested sovereign power, and a natural state of anarchy that requires an artificial social contract’ (Pabst, 2016, p. 2). He argues against secular hegemony, which, Pabst argues can be traced back to late medieval Franciscan theology, and that instead, the Dominican tradition offers ‘conceptual resources to chart an alternative modernity’ (Pabst, 2016, p. 2). Pabst (2016) offers an example of ‘thick’ Catholicism by deeply engaging Catholic theology and exposing its roots within IR foundations. A further example of first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism is Cavanaugh’s (2015) ‘Return of the Golden Calf: Economy, Idolatry and Secularization since Gaudium et Spes’. In this example, Cavanaugh (2015) uses a historical papal encyclical and current papal teachings to suggest that ‘the theological lens of idolatry can be a productive way to approach secularization generally and economy more particularly’ (p. 699). The article begins with a ‘deep’ engagement of Gaudium et Spes followed by writings and speeches of Pope Francis on economic matters. The author brings this to IR understandings of secularisation within the context of a capitalist economy. Thus, he brings a ‘deep’ engagement of Catholic theology to current IR concepts. Araujo’s ‘The International Personality and Sovereignty of the Holy See’ (2001) further demonstrates first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism. The article ‘demonstrates why the Holy See is a subject of international law, which possesses a recognized personality and exercises sovereignty in the law of nations’ (Araujo, 2001, p. 294). It articulates first
avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism in deeply engaging the historical background of the evolution of the sovereignty of the papacy and the Holy See’s participation in international affairs in the first half of the article. The second half brings that knowledge into concepts of international law, international personality, sovereignty, and state practices and customs. In this manner, Araujo successfully exhibits first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism by bringing the roots of the Catholic Church’s organisational makeup into conversation with key concepts in international affairs.

Hassner (2011) proposes that second avenue ‘thick’ religion intersects religious concepts and attributes of faith with current issues in international affairs. Similarly, second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism weaves together elements of Catholicism with a current international issue of concern in world politics. Such elements of Catholicism include, for example, aspects of Catholic theology, examples of Catholic Tradition and instances of Catholic symbolism. Examples of second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism are evident in existing IR literature. In Religion and Post-Conflict Statebuilding, Dragovic (2015) gives an example of second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism by linking salvation and current peacebuilding concerns. He draws a teleological view, embracing salvation as a hermeneutical key of Catholic theology to understand the motivations of a religious institution in the realm of post-conflict statebuilding (Dragovic, 2015, p. 3). His argument lies in the notion that facilitating salvation, the desire of God for all people to be saved, is the Church’s primary role and impetus for its involvement in post-conflict statebuilding (Dragovic, 2015, p. 61). Dragovic states, ‘to put it somewhat crudely, the critical variable is not members gained but rather, in the case of the Catholic Church, souls saved. The Church can achieve this goal by engaging in the post-conflict statebuilding process’ (2015, p. 61). Thus, this text exemplifies second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism by bringing a key idea within Catholic theology, that of salvation, into conversation with the current international issue of post-conflict peacebuilding. In addition, ‘Rerum Novarum and the right to work: 19th-century lessons for 21st-century labor’ by Joustra (2017) draws explicitly on Rerum Novarum as a ‘spiritual blueprint … for the revitalisation of organised labour in North America’ (p. 39). Throughout the article, Joustra explicitly engages with ideas in the papal encyclical to argue that it is ‘one of the best sources for the recovery of a moral vocabulary through which to understand and practice present-day labour unionism’ (2017, pp. 46–47). He argues that Rerum Novarum presents a ‘spiritual blueprint’ for identifying the potential of workers, for recognising the discernment and dignified vocation of workers, and for noting the fair treatment and just compensation for worker contribution (Joustra, 2017, p. 47). Thus, it demonstrates second avenue ‘thick’
Catholicism through its ability to draw a Catholic encyclical into present conversation on a current political issue of labour. Further, Rees and Rawson’s (2018) article, ‘The Resources of Religious Humanitarianism: The Case of Migrants on Lampedusa’, brings Catholic symbolism into the humanitarian realm of the current refugee crisis. Employing the celebration of a penitential Mass presided by Pope Francis on the island of Lampedusa during the 2015 refugee crisis, Rees and Rawson draw attention to the symbolism of wooden wrecks turned into objects such as an altar, chalice and ambo. They ‘suggest that one cannot fully understand Francis’ critique of the dehumanisation occurring at Lampedusa, nor his call for a universal humanitarian ethic, outside of the sacral nomenclature unique to the conceptual and liturgical resources of the Catholic tradition’ (Rees & Rawson, 2018, p. 183). Thus, the liturgical symbolism held in the penitential Mass understanding demonstrates ‘deep’ Catholicism turned into ‘thick’ Catholicism by bringing Catholic ritual and symbolism into conversation with a current international issue.

It is important to identify some of the limitations to this ‘thick’ religion/‘thick’ Catholicism framework. Firstly, the categories of ‘deep’, ‘broad’, and ‘thick’ have a malleable nature. Some texts fulfil both ‘broad’ and ‘deep’ religion approaches but are not examples of ‘thick’ religion. For example, ‘The Catholic Church and Catholicism in Global Politics’ (Hertzke, 2016) is ‘broad’ in that it offers an overview of the Catholic Church in global politics per continent, and ‘deep’ in that it speaks only of the Catholic Church and contextualises the article with Catholic theological and historical insight. Yet, it falls short of being an example of ‘thick’ Catholicism by not anchoring its ‘broad’ analysis through its ‘deep’ aspects: the Catholic Church’s role in politics per continent is not grounded in attributes of Catholic theology. Despite the categories not being strictly fixed, they still distil different characteristics of religious research in IR. Secondly, ‘deep’ and ‘broad’ religion do not encompass all attributes of religious discourse in IR, hence Hassner proposing a ‘thick’ religion category (2011). However, significantly ‘thick’ religion alone does not reconcile everything. Instead, a ‘thick’ religion approach should be considered as contributing another dimension of ‘deep’ and ‘broad’ religion. As Hassner would agree, it is far better to think of ‘deep’, ‘broad’, and ‘thick’ religion as three dimensions held together to categorise IR literature on religion. Thirdly, the core elements theorised by Hassner to categorise IR research on religion neither captures the waves of the discourse nor establishes how one particular IR theory has engaged religion. To account for this, I provided a summary of the discourse in Section 2.1 and I will extensively engage the English School, as one theory in IR, and its exploration of religion in the next chapter.
Conclusion

The present chapter has reviewed IR literature on religion within the parameters for the present thesis. The three sections in the current chapter contextualised and embedded the thesis into the IR discourse on religion broadly construed and within Catholic discourse particularly. Section 2.1 suggested four dimensions to the IR discourse on religion encompassing phases wherein religion was overlooked, a turn towards theorising religion, a postsecular shift, and a theological turn. Section 2.2 reviewed IR literature on religion in these dimensions via adopting a framework of broad religion, deep religion, and thick religion theorised by Hassner. Appropriating core elements of this framework in light of the present thesis, I explicitly engaged the IR discourse on Catholicism in Section 2.3, creating the categories of broad Catholicism, deep Catholicism, and thick Catholicism. Having grounded the thesis in IR literature through substantiating and repurposing Hassner’s framework, the next chapter applies a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework to the present research study. ‘Thick’ Catholicism is instrumentalised distinctively in the current thesis. Initially, I instrumentalise and repurpose a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework and apply its categories to the SMG’s anti-slavery motivations, actions, and operations. Using this analysis, I draw upon select voices in a body of scholarship on Catholic agency from an English School perspective. Two aspects of Catholic agency in English School theory have been identified and will be outlined in the next chapter: (a) religious ideas, practices, and customs underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debate in the English School. To this end, the framework of this thesis incorporates a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG and subsequently applies that analysis to English School theorising on Catholicism. Thereby, the present thesis is situated into the IR discourse on religion broadly and the English School discourse on Catholicism specifically.
Chapter Three—Methodology

Saint Martha has been considered not only a patron saint of hospitality but also of hard work! When I think about the Santa Marta Group, I see that same hard work and hospitality.

Archbishop Auza

Having reviewed the IR discourse on Catholicism via the categories of ‘broad’, ‘deep’ and ‘thick’ religion, the current chapter outlines the methodology of the present thesis. After summarising the qualitative case study research methods in IR, Section 3.1 details this research project’s case study—the SMG. The SMG is a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition of Catholic and state actors, who join forces to fight modern slavery and human trafficking. The coalition comprises Catholic actors, law enforcement agencies, government officials, and other societal actors. Section 3.2 relays the research design used to investigate the SMG: a qualitative mixed-method approach of a sequential explanatory design comprising a desk review followed by supplementary key informant interviews. Section 3.3 outlines the original application of a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework engaged by the present thesis. Firstly, I analyse the anti-slavery efforts of the SMG through a ‘thick’ Catholicism lens. Requiring further analysis to understand agency, I secondly apply that analysis to two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. The two identified dominant avenues of Catholic agency in English School theory, which will be substantiated upon throughout the thesis, are (a) religious ideas, practices, and customs underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debates in the English School. This distinct methodological framework directly relates to the two interrelated research questions of the current study. The purpose of the present chapter is to outline the methodology of the thesis, including its case study, research design, and methodological framework. In doing so, the current chapter develops the contribution of the present research study to the discourse summarised in the literature review and sets the framework of the research project that the next three chapters will follow.

3.1 Case Study—the Santa Marta Group

3.1.1 Qualitative Case Study Research

The discipline of IR favours qualitative research. Bennett and Elman state in IR, ‘qualitative methods are indisputably prominent, if not pre-eminent’ (2008, p. 1). To highlight this, they draw on a 2007 survey that suggests ‘95 percent of US international relations scholars reported that qualitative analysis is their primary or secondary
methodology, compared with 55 percent for quantitative analysis and 16 percent for formal modelling’ (Bennett & Elman, 2008, p. 1). In line with this dominant methodological approach in IR, the present research chooses to adopt a qualitative approach to analyse Catholic agency. The main research focus of the study is (i) How does a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group? and (ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective? These interrelated research questions warrant a qualitative research method because agency, defined as the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations, is best measured through observation and a description of actions, rather than using quantitative data.

Within qualitative methodology, the thesis adopts a case study research method. A case study is defined as ‘an in-depth examination and intensive description of a single individual, group, and organisation based on collected information from a variety of sources, such as observations, interviews, documents, participant observation, and archival records’ (Kalaian, 2011, pp. 725–731). Case study research aims to provide ‘a detailed and comprehensive description, in narrative form, of the case being studied’ (Kalaian, 2011, pp. 725–731). There is precedence for case study research in IR. Maoz argues that ‘case study is arguably the most common methodology in International Studies—including both international relations and comparative politics. It is also the most widely used across subfields of the discipline’ (Maoz, 2002, p. 455). Maoz suggests that case study research is not just a worthy research methodology in International Studies, it also offers several advantages compared to other methodologies (2002, p. 455). However, Maoz argues that the analysis of case study methodology and its use in International Studies needs improvement. He stresses the need to pay attention to three attributes in case study methodology: case selection, case design, and cross-comparison (Maoz, 2002, pp. 462–471). I consider the suggestions provided by Maoz (2002) and specifically explain the case selection of the SMG below.

Among research in the broader social sciences, case study methods are also often utilised to study the role of religion in various domains of political life. For example, Hancock (2019) draws on the case study of the Sydney Alliance. She describes it as an urban grassroots political coalition in Australia made up of multiple religious actors, including Christian denominations, Jewish organisations, and Islamic groups working in political coalition with trade unions and secular community groups (Hancock, 2019, p. 1). The case study examines how autonomous and distinct religious organisations engage in grassroots
politics and the impact of this upon the nature of coalition building within politics (Hancock, 2019, p. 1). Hancock derives from this case study that religious institutions and communities bring resources, symbolic or otherwise, into political action and political–religious actors as examples of ‘the complex interplay between religious belief, practice, and political life … politics is thus a practice directed both outward towards the world, and inward towards “the Church”’ (2019, pp. 1–2). This example is similar to my investigation on the SMG as both are coalitions of religious and secular actors collaborating on political action. Further, Barbato et al. (2012) draw on two empirical Catholic case studies in their article. They describe the apparitions of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sant'Egidio movement in Algeria to analyse how claims of religious truth by Catholic actors contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation during conflicts where religion is an important dimension (Barbato et al. 2012, p. 53). In their case study selection, the two articles suggested here investigate the relationship of Catholic actors and politics broadly construed. Thus, the approach taken in this thesis is consistent with the method selection of others in the general thematic area.

Case selection requires further explanation by IR scholars, according to Maoz. He warns that case studies have become ‘freeform research where everything goes’ (Maoz, 2002, p. 458). Further, he states that researchers using case studies do not feel compelled to detail their selection, their use of data, how they processed or analysed the data (Maoz, 2002, p. 458). Therefore, Maoz strongly advises to explicitly state the case study selection process, the scope of the case study and the process of data analysis from the case study. Using these suggestions, I will now explain the case selection and scope of the SMG, followed by an explanation of SMG data analysis in Section 3.2.

The SMG has been chosen as the case study of the research project because it is an example of how there is no singular and monolithic ‘Catholic actor’, but rather multiple ‘Catholic actors’. It thus reflects, in a contained context, how Catholic agency functions in international society. As a transnational coalition, multiple autonomous Catholic actors exist within the SMG. There are approximately 60 Catholic actors involved with the SMG in some capacity from 2014–2018 (see Appendix B-1). The Catholic actors partnered in the SMG demonstrate the structural dynamics of the Catholic Church. While predominantly Catholic bishops, the SMG membership also includes other Catholic actors such as priests, chaplains, religious orders, Vatican officials, and Catholic charities. This provides the research study with a rich, diverse array of Catholic actors. It incorporates many types of Catholic actors that were explored in Section 1.3.1. Further, the SMG is currently one of the largest Catholic
initiatives involved in political anti-slavery movements. Thus, it makes for an excellent example of a dominant actor in the field of study and an important actor to analyse. Additionally, my researcher positionality, explored in depth in the Introduction of this thesis, of a scholar–practitioner and insider researcher informs my knowledge of the SMG, thereby making this study an example of inductive research. The SMG is an accurate ‘case’ sufficiently contained for the scope of a thesis, but accurately reflects how Catholic agency functions.

The scope of the case study was consciously narrowed throughout the PhD process. The initial focus is on analysing the constitutive elements of the SMG as an important first point of consideration for an under-researched case study. Therefore, analysis of the SMG is via the lens of the efforts of the initial stages of setting up the coalition by the CBCEW. The scope of the case study is narrowed to analysing the actions of the SMG, which have involved collaborations at a national, transnational, and global level. I have chosen to limit the study’s timeframe from the start of the SMG in April 2014 to May 2018. The end date has been set based on two major events for the coalition: the SMG receiving the Path to Peace award at the UN and Kevin Hyland OBE stepping down as the UK’s first IASC. Therefore, the period from April 2014 – May 2018 represents the significant initial period in the life of the SMG. Further, due to the SMG’s infancy, more time is needed before performing a social science analysis of SMG action with all its partners. Hence, the present study’s timeframe is limited to 2018, when I began the data collection on the SMG. That being said, the present research provides a foundation for future studies on the SMG, employing data from other actors within the coalition in due course.

For the first time in academic discourse, the present study illuminates the SMG at large and the extent of the organisations and initiatives captured under the umbrella of it. Future research can engage in new avenues of thought using the original data provided in this thesis. The SMG is both vital to the thesis and yet relative to it. On the one hand, the SMG is part of the central claims to the originality of the current study. On the other hand, the SMG could be substituted with another context because another claim to originality is the theoretical framework of ‘thick’ religion and its articulation into the English School. Therefore, the use of the SMG as the case study is part of a larger project available to the discipline of IR.

3.1.2 The Santa Marta Group

Holding an insider researcher positionality, the SMG is ‘an alliance of international police chiefs and bishops from around the world working together with civil society in a
process endorsed by Pope Francis, to eradicate human trafficking and modern-day slavery’ (SMG, 2021c). From an outsider researcher positionality, the SMG can be defined as a transnational Catholic-led coalition against modern slavery and human trafficking. As a coalition, between 2014 and 2018, approximately 128 organisations partnered with the SMG, of which the majority were Catholic or state actors (see Appendix B-1). The 60 Catholic actors constituted Catholic bishops, episcopal conferences, religious orders, priests, Catholic charities, and Catholic transnational bodies. The 58 state actors constituted government officials, ambassadors, police chiefs, law enforcement agencies, and international crime agencies. Beyond Catholic and state actors, 10 additional actors involved in the coalition include intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, and other religious actors. No record of all SMG partners is available. The SMG website provides an overview list of actors involved in the SMG, including representatives from the Catholic Church, police agencies, and international organisations from 34 countries (SMG, 2021e). I have used data from numerous sources to add to this list (see Appendix B-1), identifying actors that had attended at least one of the five SMG international conferences between 2014–2018. The list is not an exhaustive list as no record of all SMG partners is available and the list does not identify levels of engagement in the SMG beyond conference attendance. In this way, some actors in Appendix B-1 may have attended one conference with little prior or subsequent engagement with the SMG and actors that are continuously collaborating with and on SMG initiatives.

As a Catholic-led coalition, the aims and objectives of the SMG are framed through the lens of Catholicism. Therefore, the SMG stipulates its main objectives are to:

1. Raise awareness about the nature and scale of slavery;
2. Develop trusting relationships among law enforcement agencies, the Church and civil society across the world;
3. Animate those relationships so that they result in practical collaboration, improved public policy, legislation, law enforcement and pastoral care for victims;
4. Help put the care of victims at the centre of law enforcement approaches to trafficking;
5. Share experiences, best practice and skills among SMG members to improve prevention of trafficking, pastoral care for victims, including empowering their reintegration in society and the prosecution of criminals (SMG, 2015c).

To meet these objectives, the SMG aims to develop and maintain numerous projects and initiatives, conferences, and events, have a permanent secretariat responsive to members’ needs, and develop and commission applied research and a research network (SMG, 2015c).

The SMG was founded in 2014 by His Excellency Cardinal Nichols through his dual roles of Archbishop of Westminster and President of the CBCEW, the ‘permanent assembly
of Catholic Bishops and Personal Ordinaries in the two member countries’ (CBCEW, n.d.-b). It is housed within the Department of International Affairs at the CBCEW and operates out of its headquarters in London. The SMG is funded by a number of private donors. The secretariat of the SMG is interwoven with the clergy attached to and staff of the CBCEW. The roles of Director of the SMG and Executive Assistant of the SMG were occupied by staff members who held dual roles between the SMG and the Department of International Affairs at the CBCEW. These positions have been constant during the period analysed. Other staff of the CBCEW assisted the work of the SMG, including, among others, the director of communication, digital manager, senior policy adviser and Africa project coordinator. In 2017 two new roles, that of deputy director of the SMG and project development officer, were created on a fixed-term basis to work on SMG initiatives solely. Beyond staff roles to the secretariat of the SMG, others assisted the work of the coalition. The SMG secretariat was assisted by appointed roles of trustees and advisers, including former police officials and government actors. Further, as common practice among Catholic Church-led initiatives, numerous Catholic bishops held appointed positions in the SMG. Most notably, Cardinal Vincent Nichols is the president of the SMG and Bishop Patrick Lynch (Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Southwark, UK) oversees the SMG UK projects.

The vision of the SMG comes from the CBCEW, under the leadership of Cardinal Nichols, deciding to direct its mission and place significant resources towards a Church-led campaign against modern slavery, and lay Catholics working at the CBCEW. At its foundations, the SMG was one element of the anti-slavery approach of the Church, initially known as the Bakhita Initiative. Other elements to the Bakhita Initiative comprised a research institute studying modern slavery at St Mary’s University, Twickenham and a London-based safe house for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking, Bakhita House. Both these elements remain and are loosely interconnected with the SMG. Cardinal Nichols speaks of three key moments that encouraged him to direct the efforts of the Catholic Church in England and Wales towards fighting modern slavery: witnessing a young English women forced into sex trafficking work in Italy, witnessing a partnership between religious women and the London Police Force and encouraging words from Pope Francis to keep the initiative of the SMG going (Vincent Nichols, 2016b).

The SMG adopts a flexible approach to its membership. Initial membership to the SMG focused on international Catholic bishops and police chiefs. Since then, numerous other relevant actors have been invited into membership of the SMG culminating in the 128 partner organisations involved by the end of 2018 (see Appendix B-1). The flexible approach to its
membership is evident in several ways. Firstly, membership to the SMG is strictly by invitation, and there is no formal admittance process. The secretariat of the SMG and the Catholic clergy appointed to the SMG have the authority over the permittance of SMG membership. While it is by invitation, the criteria is largely a Catholic actor or law enforcement agency directly involved in anti-slavery work. There is no formal agreement or signatory requirement once an actor is invited and accepted as an SMG partner. Rather, the model of membership is based on a partnership of trust rather than formalities. Secondly, membership to the SMG is not fixed but operates on a continuous basis. This means that invitation to each international SMG conference is required; presence at one conference does not mean automatic permittance to subsequent SMG conferences. The intention is for the SMG not to be a conference-led initiative but rather a transnational coalition of action with the conferences acting as mechanisms for successful collaboration. Thirdly, membership in the SMG does not erode the independence or autonomy of each actor. There are no set requirements from each member, but rather the extent of the involvement of each actor is dependent upon their convictions.

Here, I want to summarise some of the data found on the SMG which will be analysed in the chapters to come, namely international and regional conferences and meetings, bilateral collaborations, national initiatives, resources, motivations, personal experience, spiritual aids, and saints. As mentioned in the introduction, the present study investigates the constitutive elements of the SMG as a first point of consideration to analysing it. Therefore, I focus specifically on data from its setup and initial stages of its development. Appendix B-2 maps all the data I found on the SMG from my primary source data from 2014 to 2018. This data was largely sourced from internal grey literature on the SMG gathered from the ‘News and Media’ page on the SMG website (SMG, 2021d) as well as through the key informant interviews. The research design is outlined in depth in the following section. It is important to state that some of the collaborations and actions of the SMG that will be discussed are in development and, therefore, analysis of such action is premature at the present time. Due to the coronavirus pandemic much SMG activity including seminars, training, meetings, and conferences have been postponed since early 2020. Other action stated below is out of the time frame of the present research study but are nevertheless worthwhile to mention in brief here. Furthermore, at present, the SMG is re-developing from a transnational coalition to holding a global charity status. The present study is therefore significant as it records the first phase of the SMG with actions and motivations that may not be recorded otherwise. Future
research on the SMG as a global charity can build upon the data gathered in this research study.

On the international front, there has been, to date, five international SMG conferences. A timeline of these conferences is included in Appendix B-3. Prior to these five official international SMG conferences, the CBCEW and the Vatican’s Justice and Peace office hosted a conference in 2012 on combating human trafficking (CBCEW, 2012). The first international meeting of SMG was held at the Vatican between 9 and 10 April 2014. At this first international conference, SMG members signed a declaration, the Santa Marta Commitment, committing themselves to a partnership with the SMG to eliminate human trafficking (SMG, 2015b). This declaration was signed in a personal rather than institutional capacity. The second international SMG conference took place in London (UK) on 5–6 December 2014 to strategise approaches to combat human trafficking and emphasise the welfare of the trafficked victim at the heart of law enforcement. The third international SMG conference occurred in Madrid (Spain) on 30–31 October 2015 and was opened by Queen Sofia of Spain. The fourth international SMG conference happened in the Vatican on 25–27 October 2016 and stressed the importance of shared experience to fight this serious cross-border organised crime. The fifth and latest international SMG conference was held in the Vatican on 8–9 February 2018, focusing on different geographical regions and the regional approach needed to combat human trafficking (SMG, 2021b). Other major events of the SMG are also included in the timeline in Appendix B-3.

Following the emphasis on regions at the 2018 international SMG conference, a number of regional SMG conferences have been born. Two regions have been emphasised in particular—Africa and Latin America. The first African regional conference of the SMG was held in Abuja, Nigeria from 14–15 November 2018. The theme was ‘Church and State Working together to restore dignity to trafficked persons’ and the goal of the conference emphasised the need ‘to bring together Church and law enforcement agencies to address the lingering problem of human trafficking in the African continent by developing strategies for pastoral care of victims and nurturing of partnership with state institutions in Africa’ (SMG, 2021a). A second African regional conference of the SMG from 1-4 October 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya focused on the theme of ‘sensitising the communities on human trafficking in Africa’. Participants included the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, representatives of the National Government of Kenya and Law enforcement, delegates from Swaziland, South Africa, Angola, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, the UK, and the Vatican. As a result, a communique of proposed action was recommended (SMG, 2019b). The first Latin American SMG
conference took place in Buenos Aires on 8–11 February 2019. The conference slogan was ‘Together against human trafficking’ and was attended by Church representatives from across Latin America and the Argentinian Federal Police Force (SMG, 2021b).

Bilateral collaborations have developed as part of the network-building objective of the SMG. Bilateral collaborations are evident between the SMG and other national collaborations between the Church and police. For example, a strong bilateral partnership exists between the SMG actors in the UK and members of the Lithuanian Catholic Church, Lithuanian government, and law enforcement. On 21 March 2017, Mr Stončaitis, the Chancellor of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Lithuania, led a delegation from the Lithuanian Police and the Lithuanian Internal Affairs Ministry to meet with Cardinal Nichols. The meeting provided an opportunity to share best practice and knowledge between the SMG action in the UK and the newly formed SMG Lithuania (SMG, 2017b). Following this meeting, Cardinal Nichols addressed the Lithuanian Parliament on 26 June 2017 and met with the Lithuanian Prime Minister Skvernelis to strengthen the partnership and encourage their anti-slavery commitment (SMG, 2017b). A bilateral partnership has also formed between the SMG UK and the Argentine Federal Police, specifically between Cardinal Nichols and General Commissioner Roncaglia. This partnership was formative in the Argentine Federal Police partnering with the Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer to run training sessions on human trafficking in 2018 (SMG, 2018d). As noted above, this partnership resulted in the first SMG Latin American conference in Buenos Aires.

Additionally, the SMG was involved in an investigation on modern slavery and human trafficking in the UK by the Evening Standard and the Independent in partnership with the Office of the IASC. As president of the SMG, Cardinal Nichols chaired the first roundtable of the new task force set up as part of the investigation, comprising leading figures from business, law, philanthropy, and the media (SMG, 2017c). The investigation resulted in a report titled ‘Slaves on our Streets’, which highlighted the findings and recommendations of the task force (SMG, 2018a). The report was subsequently handed to Pope Francis at the 2018 SMG international conference. A further example of bilateral collaborations is evidenced by Kevin Hyland, as senior special adviser to the SMG, meeting with government ministers, politicians, business leaders, NGOs, healthcare professionals and church leaders in Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, and Australia (SMG, 2019c).

Beyond conferences and collaborations, SMG action has extended to the UN. In 2016 the SMG jointly organised a special side event at the UN with the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN to galvanise coordination to implement action against
modern slavery and human trafficking into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN (SMG, 2016b). This event added to the individual efforts of Pope Francis, Bishop Sanchez Sorondo and Kevin Hyland, which together resulted in the implementation of SDG 8.7 which asked for immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, n.d.). More recently, the work of the SMG has been recognised through being awarded the Path to Peace award by the Path to Peace Foundation at the UN. The Path to Peace award is bestowed upon an individual or representative of a group in recognition of their commitment, on a national and international stage, to the development of peace (the Path to Peace Foundation, n.d.). Cardinal Nichols and Kevin Hyland accepted the award on behalf of the SMG in 2018. President of the UN General Assembly Miroslav Lajcak praised the approach of the SMG stating that it is ‘a surprising alliance but effective’ (SMG, 2018c).

Nationally within the UK, there have been numerous SMG-led initiatives. The SMG has held several events in East Anglia as part of a focused region of the UK for its anti-slavery campaign. As part of this campaign, two meetings were held in Peterborough. The first was a roundtable discussion on 22 June 2016 between the Bishop of East Anglia, the bishop in charge of SMG UK, representatives of the Office of the IASC, local specialised police officers and Catholic priests (SMG, 2016c). Following this initial discussion, a senior meeting took place on 29 November 2016. The meeting included senior members of the SMG UK; the IASC; Bishop Hopes; CEO of the GLA; representatives of Slovak, Romanian, Lithuanian, Polish, African and Portuguese communities; modern slavery lead police officers from Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, and Kent forces; and Catholic parish priests, sisters, and parishioners (SMG, 2016e).

Along with meetings and national events, the SMG has produced and distributed anti-slavery resources in the UK. For example, the SMG UK has instructed workshops on human trafficking to parish groups, including members of the Bexley Deanery at St Stephen’s Catholic Church in Welling on 8 February 2020, addressing the nature of and raising awareness of the crime and informing participants of signs to identify a potential modern slavery victim (SMG, 2020). Further, the SMG secretariat has produced many resources at the disposal of Catholic individuals, schools, and parishes (SMG, 2021f). These resources include posters, leaflets, prayer cards, school, and liturgy resources that all draw attention to the crime, list indicators to identify a victim, action to report a crime and an overview of the work of the Catholic Church to fight modern slavery. Additionally, the Catholic Church
installed the St Josephine Bakhita Feast Day, directly resulting from the initial stages of setting up the SMG. This feast day is now annually celebrated within the Catholic Church, enabling the SMG to produce resources surrounding this celebration to distribute to parishes and schools. The resources include a St Bakhita prayer card, a pastoral letter, and liturgy resources.

An important example highlighted in the SMG data was the role of saints in the work of the SMG. In particular, St Bakhita was mentioned by the interviewees and featured predominantly in SMG activity (SMG, 2021f; Appendix D-7 (bookmark); Appendix D-1 (prayer card); Appendix D-2 (resource guide)). The role of saints will be the subject of Chapter Six on iconography. Saints can be understood as humans chosen by God to be elevated to higher status after death who continue to play an important spiritual role on Earth while in heaven. The Catholic Church believes that saints are given by God to the Church to be ‘models and intercessors’ (CCC, 1997, para. 828). In particular, St Bakhita is drawn on extensively in SMG data. St Bakhita is a Sudanese saint who herself was a victim of slavery and human trafficking. However, she overcame her abuses and eventually became a Catholic and dedicated her life to God as a religious sister. According to Catholic Tradition, her life is a model to be followed, and her intercession sought in response to contemporary injustices of modern slavery on Earth.

Beyond material resources produced by the SMG in their anti-slavery efforts, the voice of those who work for the SMG or who assist in the work of the SMG also provide valuable sources of SMG data. I interviewed five key informants of the SMG encompassing a variety of roles in the coalition. It is through their voices that the motivations grounding SMG action are materialised, along with dimensions of spiritual mission to SMG work.

3.2 Research Design

The SMG will be investigated using a sequential exploratory, qualitative mixed-methods design: a desk review followed by supplementary key informant interviews. This research design has been adapted from methodology used by The Berkley Center and WFDD ‘County-Level Mapping Methodology’ (2016). The present section explains this research design.

3.2.1 Desk Review

In the Berkley Center research study, a ‘desk review’ was described as a ‘review of existing literature scholarly and grey literature on the country in question’ (Berkley Center and WFDD, 2016, p. 1). Their desk review had three streams. Firstly, they identified and analysed government development strategy and planning documents and other grey literature
from government and major international development organisations active in the country (Berkley Center & WFDD, 2016, p. 1). Secondly, researchers investigated the faith landscape of the country through academic sources, including scholarly monographs, edited volumes, and journal articles (Berkley Center & WFDD, 2016, p. 1). Thirdly, the desk review focused on mapping the faith-inspired organisations (FIOs) active in the country via government NGO registration lists or other lists from NGO associations or UN clusters. From this, researchers searched online for available information on the history and mission, size, focal areas, strategic approach, and active projects of the faith-inspired organisation (Berkley Center & WFDD, 2016, p. 2).

Adapting the above approach, I conducted a desk review on the case study in the present thesis. This resulted in an extensive desk review comprising two streams: academic literature on the SMG and grey literature on the SMG. Stream One accumulated scholarly literature on the SMG from across academic fields. Academic literature was gathered using scholarly web search engines searching for the following words: ‘Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales’; ‘Santa Marta Group’; ‘human trafficking Catholic Church’ and ‘Catholic actor modern slavery’. I initially limited my searches to literature within the disciplines of IR and political science. However, widening the scope of academic disciplines was necessary. Scholarly literature that I found on these actors came primarily from the disciplines of law, criminology, and sociology. This first stream of the desk review resulted in minimal engagement of academic literature on the SMG. The sources found included Broad and Turnbull (2018), Enrile (2017), Gadd and Broad (2018), Leary (2015, 2018) and O’Loughlin (2017). Such academic literature mentioned the SMG in a brief descriptive fashion. The exception was Leary (2015, 2018) who used the SMG as the primary case study in both articles, however her analysis is descriptive more than as a result of any empirical research. Due to the lack of academic literature on the SMG, the focus of the desk review came from grey literature on the SMG in Stream Two.

Stream Two gathered grey literature on the SMG from internal sources. Internal sources are defined as coming directly from the actor itself. I gathered internal grey literature from the following official SMG sources:

- [http://www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)
- [http://santamartagroup.com](http://santamartagroup.com)
- [https://twitter.com/santamartagroup](https://twitter.com/santamartagroup).
The main source of internal grey literature on the SMG resulted from the ‘News and Media’ page on the SMG website (SMG, 2021d). This webpage presented the activity of the SMG, in chronological order, since its inception in 2014. Written as individual posts, each article contained further information, with relevant links to other pages or documents. I analysed all the posts on the ‘News and Media’ SMG website with corresponding documents and weblinks, which are publicly available, within the timeframe of the research study. Due to my positionality as an insider researcher, I acknowledge that I had pre-existing knowledge of the SMG. My researcher positionality, including the steps I took to ensure a critical approach to data collection and analysis, has been discussed in the Introduction chapter of this thesis.

3.2.2 Key Informant Interviews

In the Berkley Center research study, interviews were conducted on actors from numerous FIOs within each case study country. The interview questions were drawn from a specific list but supplemented by additional questions relevant to each context (Berkley Center and WFDD, 2016, p. 4). Thus, the interviews were semi-structured. In general, each interview included the following categories: history and mission of the organisation, motivation for involvement in development sectors, strategic approach, partnership and networking with other faith and/or development actors, challenges and trends over time, future plans, stories of success or lessons drawn from failures, perspectives on the place of religion in the country, perspectives on what ‘development’ in the country should look like and perspectives on what makes their work unique (Berkley Center & WFDD, 2016, p. 4). The interviewees had to give written consent, including the publication of their name and the organisation's name (Berkley Center & WFDD, 2016, p. 4). The interviews, where permitted, were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Additionally, the interviewees provided further relevant documentation for the research study.

The interviews conducted on actors in the SMG followed a similar approach to that of the Berkley Center and WFDD project. Prior to data collection, I received ethics approval from the UNDA’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The research study was designed and the fieldwork conducted by myself with Professor John A. Rees, my principal supervisor, as the chief investigator. Dr Rosemary Hancock, my co-supervisor, was a co-investigator of the project. Due to the international nature of the interviews, a full ethics review was necessary. The ethics approval reference number is 018138S, and the approval letter is attached in Appendix C-1. All interviewees had the option to opt out of the research study at any point without explanation. No interviewee opted out. Before the interviews, three
documents were emailed to each participant with the opportunity to ask further questions. Firstly, each interviewee was given a Participant Information Sheet that outlined the project, the risks associated with their participation, the subsequent publication from the research data and relevant contact details. Secondly, each participant received a Consent Form. The Consent Form detailed the declaration of the interviewee to participate in the interview. Significantly, it explicitly stated that the interview would be audio-recorded, their name and position identified in published outcomes, and the research data would be retained for five years in line with the Open Access Data usage policy at the UNDA. The Consent Form of each interviewee was signed prior to the start of the interview, with one copy being retained by the participant and one copy retained for my records. The signed Consent Forms and interview audio files have been stored under the policies and procedures of the UNDA’s School of Arts and Sciences. Thirdly, each interviewee was emailed in advance a list of five broad questions that would be asked in the interview, stipulating that the interview would also be semi-structured in its approach adopting a conversational style. The list of the questions can be seen in Appendix C-2.

Prior to the SMG interviews, I conducted a pilot test interview on 5 September 2019. A pilot test interview is understood as a ‘dress rehearsal’ to determine whether problems exist that need to be addressed before the interviews in the field (Rothgeb, 2011). This was necessary to identify any adjustments prior to the key informant interviews and ensure that the questions were not leading due to my researcher positionality. A pilot test interview was one of the tools to account for my researcher positionality, as described in Section 1.4.3 in the Introduction chapter of this thesis. The interview was conducted on Ruth, the Research and Projects Officer for the JPO, an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. It took place at the JPO at the headquarters of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. The JPO has been involved with the anti-slavery initiatives of the Catholic Church in Sydney for many years. Therefore, the organisation and the individual had the relevant experience for the pilot test interview.

As Rothgeb (2011) suggests, the pilot test interview should entail all the procedures present at the research study interview. Prior to the pilot test interview, I sent the interviewee all the documentation. The pilot test interview had two parts: a 45-minute interview followed by a 15-minute post-interview reflection. The post-interview reflection was essential as it provided an evaluation of the interview by the interviewee. During the post-interview discussion, I inquired about improvements to the Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet, whether interview questions prior to the interview would be helpful, the interview
experience, and if any questions or comments were overtly biased. Following the pilot test interview, I spent time reflecting on the feedback from the post-interview discussion with the pilot test interviewee and my personal reflection of the pilot interview, including re-listening to the audio recording. Several changes were made to the SMG interviews based upon this experience, including the need to take notes throughout to enable prompt questions, follow up questions via email or phone, email the questions before the interview, positively employ my positionality as a scholar–practitioner and insider researcher, explore the differences between a rigid and flexible question framework, supply definitions of key terms and concepts, identify and differentiate between personal motivations of staff members and the vision of the organisation, and emphasise the distinct nature of the SMG as a Catholic actor.

I conducted key informant, semi-structured interviews on five SMG personnel. A key informant is defined as ‘a proxy for her or his associates at the organization or group’ (Parsons, 2011, pp. 406–408). Key informant interviews are ‘in-depth interviews of a select (nonrandom) group of experts who are most knowledgeable of the organization or issue’ (Parsons, 2011, pp. 406–408). I identified a list of around 10 key informants of the SMG as most suitable to provide information on the SMG: individuals involved in the initial set-up stages by the CBCEW and individuals involved during the research study period. The identification of key informants was based on my researcher positionality as a scholar–practitioner, having previously worked as the Executive Assistant of the Department of International Affairs at the CBCEW and the Executive Assistant of the SMG. Interview with key informants were necessary for the research study. Parsons argues that key informant interviews, while rarely the sole method of data collection, are useful when information gathering and hypothesis building (2011, pp. 406–408). Key informant interviews were important for this study to supplement desk review data because the evidence on the development and initial stages of the SMG and the motivations and vision of the SMG is hard to obtain solely from documentary evidence in the public arena.

I interviewed five key informants ranging in responsibility in the SMG. As Parsons argues, ‘it is important that there be a mix of persons interviewed, reflecting all possible sides of the issue at study’ (Parsons, 2011, pp. 406–408). Between October and November 2019, I interviewed:

(a) David—Director of the SMG/Assistant General Secretary of the CBCEW and Secretary for the Department of International Affairs at the CBCEW

(b) Cecilia—Senior Policy Adviser to the Department of International Affairs at the CBCEW/Secretary for the Office for Migration and Policy at the CBCEW
(c) Matt—SMG Adviser and SMG Board Member. Matt was previously Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland
(d) Michael—Deputy Director of the SMG. Michael was previously Detective Chief Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police Service in London
(e) James—Digital Communication Manager of the CBCEW.

The roles represented those in dual positions between the CBCEW and SMG, those solely working on the SMG and appointed positions in the SMG. Several other key informants contacted for an interview that unfortunately were not available: Bakhita House Manager, Senior Adviser to the SMG/First IASC of the UK, president of the SMG and bishop in charge of the SMG UK. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I could not conduct any further interviews. Insight from the individuals in these positions would have been helpful to the research study. However, as they were mostly public figures, their speeches and written reports were analysed through the desk review method.

Key informant interviews are most commonly conducted face-to-face, include closed-and open-ended questions, audio-taped and transcribed (Parsons, 2011, pp. 406–408). All five interviews were in-person and held at the CBCEW headquarters in London or a public cafe close to the headquarters. The interviews were audio-recorded on my iPhone, with permission and written consent detailed on the Consent Form. There are advantages and disadvantages to in-person interviews. The main advantage of face-to-face interviews ‘is the presence of the interviewer, which makes it easier for the respondent to either clarify answers or ask for clarification for some of the items on the questionnaire’ (Dialsingh, 2011, p. 259). Dialsingh also identifies several disadvantages to in-person interviews. These include respondents not having enough time to provide answers that might be thought out thoroughly, as compared to a mail or internet survey; privacy issues including a level of trust needed between the interviewer and interviewee for the disclosure of more sensitive information; and the cost of carrying out in-person interviews (Dialsingh, 2011, p. 259).

The interviews were semi-structured. A semi-structured face-to-face interview consists of open-ended questions based on topics stipulated by the researcher, allowing opportunities to explore answers more widely and respond to the discussion more spontaneously (Dialsingh, 2011, p. 260). Prior to the interview, I emailed all interviewees five broad questions. The questions are seen in Appendix C-2. This ensured the interviewee had time to think through what he or she wanted to convey and thus addressed the disadvantage above of face-to-face interviews. As the research design intentionally stated semi-structured interviews, I was able to prompt participants and steer the conversation for
additional information while conducting the interview. The audio recordings reflect the varied nature of ordering the questions and conversational style resulting from a semi-structured technique.

The questions were framed around two dominant themes relevant to the two interrelated research questions of the thesis at large: (i) *How does a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group?* and (ii) *What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective?* Firstly, the core framework of the current thesis is through the categories stipulated in a ‘thick’ Catholicism approach. While not wanting to explicitly state each ‘thick’ category to the interviewee, which sets up the interview to evaluate the framework, I integrated elements of a ‘thick’ approach into the interview questions. Secondly, a key message underlining the questions evolved around the idea of agency. This is important as a core contribution of the present thesis surrounds the evaluation of Catholic agency—the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations. Therefore, the influence behind the motivations and SMG actions was emphasised in the questions and drawn out from the interviewees.

Following the interviews, I wrote down notes to reflect on the interview immediately and transcribed the audio recordings within days. As stipulated on the HREC form and a means to account for my researcher positionality, each interviewee was emailed their interview transcripts before any analysis. Four of the interviewees did not make any changes, and I analysed the data as originally transcribed. One interviewee clarified a few ideas and made some minor changes. I accepted all of the recommended changes and analysed the revised interview transcript. Reflecting upon the key informant interviews, I noticed that the interviewees were comfortable because of my researcher positionality—I had previously worked with all the participants. While I acknowledge the need to be critical, such a researcher positionality also meant that the key informants disclosed information that otherwise might not have been given. As Dialsingh suggests, a face-to-face interview should ensure the interviewer is comfortable and establish a positive rapport with them (2011, p. 261). He also states that ‘a higher degree of cooperation is likely if the tone of the interview is relatively informal and the respondent feels comfortable enough to give private information’ (Dialsingh, 2011, p. 261). Both these attributes were a result of my scholar–practitioner and insider researcher positionality. It reflects the positive contribution such a research positionality brings to a research study.
In accordance with the ‘Procedure: Data Storage and Retention in the School of Arts and Sciences (Sydney) for Staff Researchers, Postgraduates and HDRs’ at the UNDA, interview data and related confidentiality and consent agreements were stored in a password-protected folder on the Arts & Sciences ‘M Drive’. There was no other sensitive data collected in this research project. The data from this research was given directly to the School of Arts and Sciences via a USB as soon as possible after the data collection was completed. The data was submitted through the ‘Arts and Sciences Research Metadata Form’ signed by the principal supervisor, Professor Rees. The School of Arts and Sciences managed the upload of the data, and the Dean of the School (or delegate) has access for extraordinary situations. As permitted by the School of Arts and Sciences at UNDA, copies of the primary data were stored in a password-protected folder on my personal device, which only I had access to. The principal investigator and co-investigator, Professor Rees and Dr Hancock, respectively, had access to copies of the data. The original primary data will be stored in the School of Arts and Sciences (Sydney) at UNDA for at least five years after the examination results, as per the ‘Policy: Code of Conduct for Research’ at UNDA. Sensitive data (e.g., names/contact details) will be destroyed after five years per HREC conditions and relevant UNDA policies and procedures. In accordance with open access of data and associated policies and procedures at UNDA, non-sensitive data may be made available to other researchers upon request and approval of the Sydney Research Office and HREC, in line with UNDA’s ‘Guideline: Code of Practice for Name-Identified Data’. The research data will be destroyed after five years.

3.2.3 Analysis

Following data collection, I coded and analysed the data. Coding is generally described as ‘the procedural function of assigning concise and specific values (either alpha or numeric) to data elements collected through surveys or other forms of research’ (Brill, 2011, p. 103). Brill speaks of the development of a coding practice prior to data collection. He states that such an approach ‘requires that there is some theoretical basis for anticipating the possible responses’ (Brill, 2011, p. 103). I established a pre-coding scheme due to the theoretical basis of the research study, a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework and my pre-existing knowledge of the SMG through my researcher positionality. I used the established categories of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, ‘iconography’, ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ from a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework (the categories are described in more detail in section 2.3.3 and my application of the categories is described in section 3.3). I coded the data three times by hand, with each ‘thick’ category highlighted by a different coloured pen. Initially I began coding
the data from both methods—desk review and key informant interviews—separately. However, as the research design was a sequential exploratory mixed-method design, I realised that it was important to collate all data and code it as one data set. To ensure consistency, I coded a section of the desk review data followed by an interview transcript. Following the coding process, I created a database of coding for each ‘thick’ category. It resulted in five separate databases for each ‘thick’ category referencing desk review and interview data. This process was particularly helpful, as each chapter would draw from each database individually.

3.3 ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied

The SMG, as the case study of this thesis, is investigated in a distinct way to understand dimensions of Catholic agency—the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations. The methodological framework of the thesis will now be outlined in further depth in the next two sub-sections. As an overview, firstly, I investigate the anti-slavery efforts of the SMG by instrumentalising the categories established in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework. Adapting the framework, three of the ‘thick’ categories, namely ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’, are utilised to analyse the SMG. ‘Ceremony’ and ‘Belief/Knowledge’ are subsumed into the other categories. Such an analysis illustrates the constitutive attributes of a Catholic actor. However, further IR analysis is needed to decipher the influence of said Catholic attributes. Therefore, to better understand Catholic agency, I secondly draw on identified aspects of Catholic agency from the English School theoretical approach of the discipline of IR. Two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective are identified: (a) religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debates in the English School. I apply a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG to existing conceptions of Catholic agency in the identified English School discourse on Catholicism. Through its application of two aspects of Catholic agency in English School theory, the present thesis contributes original insight into Catholic agency in international society.

3.3.1 ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Anti-Slavery Activities of the Santa Marta Group

A ‘thick’ Catholicism framework is instrumentalised to investigate the SMG. The framework has been adapted based on how Catholicism is born out in the SMG. Based upon the categories of Hassner in Section 2.2.3 and repurposed for the Catholic Church in Section...
2.3.3 of this thesis, here I present the specific questions framed by a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework intended explicitly for the SMG:

- **Theology**—What are the Catholic theological tenets expressed by the SMG? What do these theological tenets in Catholic texts and by Catholic scholars propose?
- **Hierarchy**—How is the SMG organised? How is Catholic hierarchy reflected in the functioning of the SMG?
- **Iconography**—How does the SMG engage Catholic symbols, myths, images, words, or sounds to convey its anti-slavery ideas? How are these accounts of iconography treated?

In the current thesis, Chapters Four, Five and Six individually engage the categories of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’, respectively. The questions stipulated above frame the analysis in the first section of each content chapter. Specifically, these questions are asked in Sections 4.1, 5.1, and 6.1. In this way, ‘thick’ Catholicism questions, based directly from core theoretical elements of Hassner, are incorporated into a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the anti-slavery activity of the SMG.

Three of the five ‘thick’ categories, namely ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’, are substantially engaged in the present study, whilst the categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ are subsumed into them. As explored in the Introduction, this contraction is intentional as ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’ are focused at the institutional and organisation level of a religious actor. In contrast, the categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’, according to Hassner, emphasise the individual member of a religious tradition. The research project is principally interested in the SMG as an actor in IR, and thus the focus is at the institutional level. However, individual beliefs are incorporated into the study through the acting out of theology, hierarchy, and iconography by the SMG, and through the expressed beliefs of the interviewees as those working for the SMG. Therefore, while ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ intentionally do not have their own chapters, elements of both categories feature in this thesis through the lens of the SMG as principal actor.

The framework of the current thesis adapts the core framework of Hassner in an original way incorporating elements of both first and second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism. It analyses core theoretical questions in the IR theory of the English School (first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism) and explores an issue at the forefront of contemporary international concern of modern slavery and human trafficking (second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism). However, in employing a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of SMG data applied to two aspects of Catholic
agency from an English School perspective, the current thesis presents a distinct way to appropriate the framework theorised by Hassner.

There exists limited academic discourse engaging the work of Hassner; none however have instrumentalised the framework to analyse a Catholic actor. Some articles apply ‘thick’ religion in an abstract way (Hassner, 2014; Chow, 2011; Alexander, 2015). Hassner (2014) uses his own ‘thick’ categories to fit the discourse on religion in the military (p. 8). Chow engages a ‘thick’ description to ‘reveal the meanings that religious adherents ascribe to religious norms and their underlying beliefs’ (2011, p. 11). Alexander bases her study about religious commitment within states and their propensity to initiate international conflicts on a ‘thick’ religion approach that takes context seriously whilst willing to generalise (2015, p. 4). Other scholarship has raised criticisms regarding how a ‘thick’ religion framework relates to IR theory (XU, 2012), the all-encompassing nature of such a framework (Lakitsch, 2018) and the inclusivist approach it entails (Kono, 2017). While there exist limited articles that, to some extent, have engaged core elements from Hassner, there is a gap in current IR literature to instrumentalise the framework to a study on a Catholic actor.

Alternative frameworks to study religious actors exist. For example, Woodhead offers a ‘taxonomy of five major concepts of religion in social scientific study’—religion as culture, religion as identity, religion as relationship, religion as practice and religion as power (2011, pp. 122–123). Within each of these five concepts, Woodhead outlines academic scholarship that fit into each category, arguing that ‘all five concepts are needed for a full and rounded study of religion’ (2011, p. 138). Further, within development discourse on religion, Clarke proposes five categories for faith-based organisations: ‘faith-based representative organisations or apex bodies, faith-based charitable or development organisations, faith-based socio-political organisations, faith-based missionary organisations and faith-based illegal or terrorist organisations’ (2006, p. 840). These categories create a typology of activity by faith-based organisations in the development realm. Rakodi’s analytical framework (2012) addressing the personal, social, and organisational dimensions could also be adopted. In particular, the third dimension—an organisational dimension—could have been employed because it seeks to understand the nature, aims, and activities of religious organisations. I acknowledge these alternative frameworks to study religious actors, or indeed others in the discipline of IR, are valid frameworks as a tool of analysis of religious action. An alternative analysis of the SMG could be through the ‘emergence’ and ‘cascading’ of a norm of anti-slavery following the norm life cycle theorised by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) that I used elsewhere to describe a norm of social justice by a Catholic actor (Rozario, 2014).
3.3.2 ‘Thick’ Catholicism Analysis of the Santa Marta Group Applied to Aspects of Catholic Agency from an English School Perspective

The method of the present study, firstly, investigates the anti-slavery mission, operations, and resources of the SMG by instrumentalising the categories established in ‘thick’ Catholicism. A ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of SMG data requires further theoretical investigation to understand Catholic agency. To that end, I adopt an English School approach as one approach which speaks into aspects of Catholic agency. I apply an SMG ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis to two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. These two aspects of Catholic agency are identified as: (a) religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debates in the English School. These two aspects of Catholic agency, that frame the main research focus of the current thesis, are present in the focused English School discourse on Catholicism over the last two decades. Key scholarship within this body of work include, in chronological order, Thomas (2000, 2001, 2005, 2013), Troy (2008, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2018), Chong and Troy (2011), Pabst (2012, 2016), Barbato (2013), Diez (2017) and, most recently, McIarren and Stahl (2020). These select voices together comprise a conversation of English School thought on aspects of the Catholic Church. Beyond this literature, several others worth mentioning, which adopt a broader focus on Christianity and English School theory, include Jones (2003), Molloy (2003), Millbank and Pabst (2016) and Bain (2020). To date, while these scholars have alluded to the works of the others in this group as normal practice in scholarship (Pabst, 2016, p. 29; McIarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 190), they have not been identified as a corpus of literature. Therefore, this thesis adds an original contribution to knowledge in identifying and analysing a focused English School discourse on Catholicism. I draw upon these specific texts extensively in the present section, as their individual arguments are specifically theorised throughout the thesis concerning the two aspects of Catholic agency. It is important to be explicit in stating that the English School is not the framework of the current thesis. Rather, it is the recipient of an application of a ‘thick’ religion framework. I acknowledge that alternative theoretical frameworks could have been adopted including a classical Realism, Liberal institutionalism, or Constructivist approach.

The two avenues of Catholic agency which encompass the spectrum of English School thought can be identified among the select voices of English School theorising: one addresses notions discussed by English School founding fathers, and the other analyses a more contemporary and ongoing debate in the discourse. Thomas (2000) and Troy (2012)
allude to both avenues as directions in which Catholic thought intersects with English School theorising. The first avenue discusses whether a common culture was necessary for the existence of international society (Thomas, 2000, p. 829). Thomas thanks Wight, Butterfield, and Donelan for recognising the explicit role of religious doctrines in different cultures and civilisations and examining their consequences for international society (Thomas, 2000, p. 829). Troy draws attention to the second avenue of Catholic agency in the English School, which he believes incorporates ‘the concept of world society and solidarism and its opponents, international society and pluralism’ (2012, p. 87). These two avenues interact with one another via a sense of commonality and social action (Thomas, 2000, p. 833). Thomas argues that the first avenue emphasises a sense of commonality emerging from a common religion, culture, or civilisation underlying international society. In contrast, the second approach explains it as an outcome of social action by developing common practices or institutions of international society (Thomas, 2000, p. 833). Both avenues of Catholic agency in English School discourse identified here will be addressed substantially throughout the thesis. Thus, I now relay the dominant arguments presented by the select voices of English School thought via these two aspects of Catholic agency.

(A) Religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society

One aspect of Catholic agency from an English School perspective lies in the ability of religious ideas, customs, and practices to underpin or draw together actors in international society. This idea stems from the Christian foundations of the English School and a need to re-engage them. Millbank and Pabst argue that the Christian realism direction of the English School outlined by Wight, Butterfield, and MacKinnon favours both a metaphysical and political conceptualisation of international affairs beyond the secular categories of the Westphalian settlement (Millbank & Pabst, 2016, p. 359). This starting point, based upon a metaphysical worldview connected with Christianity, is more favourable than ‘a secular discourse centred on increasingly abstract, vacuous categories as common interests, common values … a common set of rules … and common institutions’ (Millbank & Pabst, 2016, p. 359). Similarly, Thomas outlines the theorising of Wight and Butterfield on the role and its consequence on international society of religious doctrines in different civilisations and cultures (2000, p. 829). Responding to this, Thomas desires to investigate whether, as Wight theorises, religious ideas, movements and practices provide the basic components in the English School for an alternative narration of the global resurgence of religion in international politics (2001, p. 927). Thomas explicitly states that he wants to revitalise the dialogue between theology and international relations by the early English School thinkers.
(Thomas, 2005, p. 17). Both Pabst and Thomas desire to re-engage the Christian heritage of the English School through theorising how religion underpins international society. However, both scholars have subsequently theorised different ways of such re-engagement.

Pabst wants to revisit but advance early English School scholarship. He claims that religiously framed ideas and practices are central to international society (Pabst, 2012, p. 997). However, he wants the definition of religion, which has moved from the community of believers to abstract principles, to return to being defined by religious practices and customs by believers (Pabst, 2012, p. 1000). He praises Butterfield and Wight for focusing the shift back to the social nature of mankind, ideas of human cooperation, a common culture gluing societies together nationally and internationally, and appealing to the practice of love and charity ‘which complements both power politics and natural law by relating the dignity of all persons to their shared transcendent origin and finality’ (Pabst, 2012, p. 1012). However, he argues that Butterfield and Wight were only partially correct because they did not properly theorise religion in international affairs (Pabst, 2012, p. 1010). For example, Pabst claims they did not separate sacred from secular (2012, p. 1011). He desires to push the Christian foundations of English School thinking further ‘in the direction of a metaphysical-political realism that centres on the synthesis of reason and faith, the relational nature of the world’s ontological structure and various forms of association around notions of the common good’ (Pabst, 2012, p. 1012). Faith and reason are both needed, both the ideas of belief and those of theology (Pabst, 2012, p. 1000). The notion of the common good is tied to the belief that the ‘dignity of the human person’ is valuable because of their origin (Pabst, 2012, p. 1014). He also theorises the integrating element of international society is one whereby religious customs, ideas and practices integrate different levels of society. He says, ‘among the ideas and practices that unite societies nationally and internationally, the flow of religion and religiously framed cultural customs is what most of all integrates individuals into a global community and nations into a global polity’ (Pabst, 2012, p. 1016). Therefore, Pabst wants to theorise how religious ideas and customs underpin international society through faith and reason, the notion of the common good and the integration of different societal levels.

Thomas wants to investigate how religion underpins international society based upon a more social conception of religion. He argues that English School theorising should move away from a modern conceptualisation of religion as privately held doctrines and beliefs and instead to a social definition of religion based on how people understand their religious, moral, and social lives (Thomas, 2000, p. 820), rooted in the practices of different religious traditions (Thomas, 2001, p. 927). In this way, religion would be ‘interpreted as a community
of believers rather than a body of doctrines or beliefs’ (Thomas, 2000, p. 820). Thomas argues that while the invention of religion, as a set of privately held doctrines or beliefs, was essential in the development of states in the modern international society, a social definition of religion provides ‘the missing element of the work of IR scholars on the origins of the modern state and modern international society’ (2000, p. 821). Thomas says that under the modern concept of religion, practices and virtues associated with the Christian Tradition come to be severed from the communities they were embedded in and which sustained them (2005, p. 24). Thomas wants English School scholarship to better engage with religious social roots underpinning international society.

Further, Thomas, like Pabst, theorises religion underpinning international society via notions of the common good. He articulates that:

The word, ‘catholic’ in English, of course, ‘cattolico’ in Italian, comes from the Greek καθολικός (‘katholikos’), meaning ‘general’ or ‘universal’, and was first used by Ignatius of Antioch, the Bishop of Antioch, in his Epistle to the Smyrnaeans (around 110 AD) to describe the universal scope of the Church as a type of world society that transcends distinctions based on races, peoples, nationalities, and languages. (Thomas, 2013)

The universal nature this alludes to is a part of the notion of the common good which has the ability to underpin international society. This idea is based upon the arguments of Wight that modern Catholic social thought, through its complex strategies of engagement and a language of the ‘common good’ for ‘all persons of good will’, uphold the Rationalist tradition today (Thomas, 2000, p. 828).

McLarren and Stahl (2020) also theorise the role of religious ideas underpinning international society. However, their argument differs from that of Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000) by not engaging the founding fathers of the English School but rather basing their theorising on Buzan (2004). McLarren and Stahl outline two principal arguments. Firstly, international society based on a common religion should not necessarily mean one particular religious tradition but rather the commonality of being religious. They stress this argument denoting the similarities between the Holy See and Iran in that they are both religious. The ‘religious’ aspect then invites interreligious dialogue, which creates a common religious underpinning to international society. They argue:

Religion, as Buzan hints at, but only marginally elaborates, provides a strong foundation for building societies—and this must not be limited to just one religion, but rather is open to include a multitude of religions. However, religion not only
offers a strong set of long-term and enduring goals, values and rules; it also impacts the constitution of actors and their possibilities of interacting. (McLarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 199)

For them, a religious foundation, more than emphasising one common religion, suffices to provide a foundation to international society.

Secondly, McLarren and Stahl argue that transnational hybrid actors such as religious actors can shape and even effect a shift from one type of society to another. They suggest that the Holy See as a hybrid actor ‘is capable of shaping not only institutions but also the shift from international to transnational or even world society’ (McLarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 195). Hybrid actors are defined by them as being international and transnational, diplomatic and public, political, and religious (McLarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 198). Transnational actors ‘recognize shared goals, values, and have a wider variety of possibilities of interacting’ (McLarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 198). They ‘also offer a bridge between the three domains of the individual, the state and the international level’ (McLarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 199). They infer through the case study of the Holy See and Iran that interreligious dialogue is an example of this bridge between the different levels of society happening:

Hybrid actors provide a bridge between international, diplomatic, and political actors with a status of legal subjects in international law and religious transnational non-state actors of the public sphere, which have and will continue to play a vital role in the future. These hybrid actors clearly did not suddenly appear on the international stage, on the contrary, they have been there and what is more, they are well-equipped to continue to shape the evolving international, transnational and world societies, reaching an ever-growing public that transcends state and religious borders. (McLarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 199)

Therefore, McLarren and Stahl (2020) introduce new insight into how religious ideas underpin international society through a common religious foundation and transnational hybrid actors of religion, providing a bridge between different societal levels.

(B) The preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debates in the English School

The second aspect addressing Catholic agency in English School discourse theorises the preference of the Catholic Church between a pluralist and solidarist concept of international society. The pluralist versus solidarist debate is an enduring debate in the English School based on the theorising of Hedley Bull (1966). Pluralism ‘stresses the instrumental side of international society as a functional counterweight to the threat of
excessive disorder in an international anarchy’ (Buzan, 2001, p. 478). The shared corners about international order surround the ideas of sovereignty, diplomacy, and non-intervention (Buzan, 2001, p. 478). Jackson sits on the ‘pluralist’ side, arguing that the society of states should focus on the minimum goal of orderly coexistence rather than ideals of universal human rights based on international guarantee and protection, which he would consider having negative side effects (Suganami, 2010, p. 26). Hurrell (2014) argues that a pluralist characteristic is the idea that ‘moral values should, so far as possible, be kept out of international life and of particular international institutions’ (p. 147). This argument rests on the idea that diplomacy is better conducted based on state national interests rather than fundamental values or deep ideological commitments (Hurrell, 2014, p. 147). In contrast, solidarism ‘focuses on the possibility of shared moral norms underpinning a more expansive, and almost inevitably more interventionist, understanding of international order’ (Buzan, 2001, p. 478). Wheeler (as cited in Suganami, 2010) is suggested as at the forefront of the ‘solidarist’ side arguing that ‘humanitarian intervention ought to be made legal or ought at any rate to be accepted under certain strict conditions or that it has already become plausible to suggest that it is legally permissible under certain exceptional circumstances’ (p. 25).

Solidarist English School theorists are most interested in how these norms emerge, the justification of these norms and the stronger enforcement of such norms and rules in international law (Hurrell, 2014, p. 149). The pluralist versus solidarist debate in the English School is brought into discussions of Catholic agency principally by Troy (2008, 2012, 2017, 2018), Diez (2017) and Barbato (2013).

Troy (2008, 2012, 2017, 2018) articulates that the Catholic Church fits aspects of both a pluralist and solidarist international society. He emphasises the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church through the Catholic understanding of solidarity matching that of English School understandings of solidarism. He says:

The Catholic concept of solidarity, which is characterised as ‘a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good,’ can be seen within the context of the English School theory in its controversial but nevertheless important concept of world society and basis of solidarism with a tendency towards cosmopolitanism in its ethical commitments. (Troy, 2008a, p. 70)

Troy draws upon ideas of cosmopolitanism and world society as tools that enable a Catholic understanding of solidarity to match that of English School understandings of solidarism.
Further, the Church holds an English School solidarist perspective, according to Troy, based upon its diplomacy guided by a ‘vision of peace, which consists of four main elements: human rights, development, solidarity, and world order’ (2008a, p. 68). The diplomacy of the Catholic Church is akin to ‘soft power’ in terms of persuasion by non-military means and empowering a world society by using cooperation rather than a balance of power in international relations (Troy, 2008a, p. 68). This argument is also evident by Troy in his discussion on Vatican diplomacy. He states ‘Vatican diplomacy, by its very nature, is basically spiritual and sacerdotal. It does not aim at political power, material advantage, or the defense of the interests of any particular group’ (Troy, 2008a, p. 67). When theorising the role of the pope and the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), Troy emphasises their solidarist diplomatic endeavours. He says ‘what is presented as crucial in world politics by the pope and the UNSG as moral leaders is the paramount value both attribute to peace and human rights’ (2017, p. 71). He goes on to say that both the pope and UNSG perceive themselves as ‘moral authorities, working for the common good … moral authority invoking the common good is not only a publicly called for demand, but a necessity of human conduct in a globalized world’ (Troy, 2017, p. 68). Therefore, Catholic diplomacy leans towards English School notions of solidarism.

At the same time, Troy highlights characteristics of the Catholic Church as fitting a pluralist international society. Troy speaks of the global outreach of the Holy See as highly institutionalised (Troy, 2018, p. 2). When theorising papal nuncios as Holy See diplomats, he discusses them as a strange case of agents that are clergy, while simultaneously mirroring secular diplomats represented around the globe and present in embassies and acknowledged by international law (Troy, 2018, p. 2). Holy See diplomats, Troy articulates, hold a hybrid character of their ecclesiastical role as representatives of the pope and their legal diplomatic status and commencement to ordinary diplomatic practice (2018, p. 2). This hybrid character enables papal nuncios to be actors in a pluralist international society which supports notions of order. Further, the pluralist nature of the Church is highlighted through Troy discussing the necessity of power and human fallibility. He states that the activities of the Holy See detect a pluralism of realistic and idealistic tendencies—‘realistic because of its awareness of the necessity of power and the nature of human fallibility, mainly the St. Augustine tradition, which comes close to Reinhold Niebuhr’s concept of Christian moral realism’ (Troy, 2008a, p. 71). Therefore, the Catholic Church possesses pluralist tendencies via its diplomatic agents and its awareness of the nature of power.
Bringing both sides of the debate together, Troy argues that the Church would most significantly fit into a ‘pluralistic world society’ (Troy, 2012). A pluralistic world society structure integrates religion into international relations because firstly it pays attention to the pluralistic condition of international politics and human nature. Secondly, it addresses transnational values (as they are characterised by cosmopolitanism) of the individual (Troy, 2012, p. 100). The Catholic Church fits a pluralistic world society model, according to Troy, by the Holy See being embedded into a world of states and thus acknowledging the lasting importance of the state, and through the growing influence of transnational issues with the Holy See in favour of multilateralism and international law (2012, p. 101). Thus, Troy concludes that the Catholic Church is theorised as containing attributes that fit both pluralist and solidarist understandings of international society.

Diez argues that international society has moved towards a solidarist understanding by the increased responsibilities of individuals beyond a state’s territory, the elevated relevance of non-state actors and a change in diplomatic practices (2017, p. 34). This move towards a solidarist international society, according to Diez, provides the pope and the Holy See with greater opportunities. Firstly, Diez argues that the pope and the Holy See benefit from the structural changes of a solidarised international society because it results in the rise of the inclusion of non-state actors as both partners and addressees in developing international policies and practices of paradiplomacy (2017, p. 37). In a traditional pluralist understanding of international society, the Holy See holds an atypical status in international society; it is not a fully sovereign and equal member of international society but rather ‘it occupies a liminal, ambiguous status’ (Diez, 2017, p. 35). The structural nature of international society has not changed the formal-legal position of the Holy See. However, ‘it has become increasingly “normal” for states to involve non-state actors in their deliberations, that individuals have become a more central reference point for state action’ (Diez, 2017, p. 36). For the Holy See, this means that ‘it no longer has to rely on its contested status to make claims in international society, but can also act as a representative of world society. Its borderline status allows it to play both parts’ (Diez, 2017, p. 36). The solidarisation of international society is further evident through changes in the practice of diplomacy as ‘one of the core institutions through which states meet each other in this society’ (Diez, 2017, p. 32). In a traditional pluralist international society, diplomacy was heavily regulated and involved practices confined to states. This includes the extraterritoriality of embassies, dress code and behaviour at receptions, sending diplomatic notes, withdrawing ambassadors or calling ambassadors to the foreign office (Diez, 2017, p. 34). However, Diez argues that the
nature of diplomacy has changed to include foreign ministers using Twitter, a rise in paradiplomacy understood as diplomacy performed by non-state actors from subnational units to NGOs and celebrities aided by advances in technology (2017, p. 34). Diez argues that this changing nature of diplomacy, which is seen as an institution of international society, is linked to solidarisation. This is resultant upon the increased necessity of including the views of individuals in international society. Therefore, governments need to win the hearts and minds of the people, which can be considered as public diplomacy. Governments now rely on a complex network of actors rather than only states to deal with the speed of international problems arising (Diez, 2017, p. 34).

Secondly, Diez argues that the solidarisation of international society has led to ‘the overlap of the values of a solidarist international society and the core beliefs of the Catholic Church’ (2017, p. 37). These core similarities include the increased relevance of human rights, development, environmentalism, and peace, which Diez claims are core norms in a Christian worldview (2017, p. 36). The overlap of these ideas enabling the pope to be heard by papal encyclicals and states and non-states alike on topics from environmental protection to a broader understanding of peace is ‘effective communications of the concerns of at least a subgroup of world society in a solidarizing international society’ (Diez, 2017, p. 36). However, Diez acknowledges that Christian norms in a narrowly political sense related to peace, environmental sustainability and development have become easily translatable in a solidarist international society. Yet other norms on issues such as marriage or abortion, for example, have become more contested and thus marginalised in international society in its broader understanding (Diez, 2017, p. 32). On such issues, the pope becomes ‘merely one actor among many trying to influence public debate’ (Diez, 2017, p. 37). Diez concludes that there is no guarantee that the normative stance in current international society remains favourable to the Holy See. Therefore, ‘the Pope and other representatives of the Church need to engage continuously in a discursive struggle to shape the norms of international society’ (Diez, 2017, p. 37).

Barbato emphasises the Catholic Church’s position as both pluralist and solidarist due to the Holy See playing on several layers through its simultaneous ‘actorness’ (in his terms) as a ‘diplomat’, a sovereign of a territorial state, and leader of a transnational Church. Barbato (2013) alludes to the pluralist tendencies of the Catholic Church based on it being a peer in the society of states because the Holy See acts as a state, diplomat, and transnational Church. At the same time, he argues that the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church is based on its internal ideational setting. This focuses not on state division matters, but rather
on teachings of the Gospel meant for all mankind on Earth (Barbato, 2013, pp. 33–34). Barbato links the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church based on its message of universality for all people on Earth. Therefore, Barbato articulates that the Catholic Church possesses attributes fitting both pluralist and solidarist understandings in English School theorising. Significantly, Barbato adds the ultimate purpose of the Church is to follow the will of God and be at the service of the people of God. He writes:

Notwithstanding the Church’s readiness to cooperate with all people of good will and its preparedness to accept competing solidarist views and a pluralistic society of states and beliefs, the spiritual dimension of God’s will is the bottom line of the Church’s conception of itself and of its service to the people as the constitutive force of social rules and conduct. (Barbato, 2013, p. 37)

Therefore, Barbato argues that the Catholic Church’s ability to be state, diplomat, and transnational Church enables it to play a role in a pluralist international society while remaining true to its solidarist perspectives. Still, ultimately its agency is a part of its primary mission of service to God.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research project’s methodology—the case study, research design, and methodological framework. Section 3.1 outlined the case study of the present thesis. The SMG is a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition of Catholic actors, law enforcement agencies, government officials, and other societal actors collaborating against crimes of modern slavery. The case study is described in depth in this section, outlining its history, activity, and membership. Significantly, analysis of the SMG emphasises its constitutive elements via its initial set-up phase by the CBCEW as an important first point of consideration to this under-researched case study. Section 3.2 describes the sequential exploratory, qualitative mixed-methods research design of the present study in investigating the SMG. Repurposed from development methods on religion, I conducted a desk review followed by supplementary key informant interviews. The desk review constituted primarily interior grey literature from the SMG website. The key informant interviews took place on five SMG personnel following a semi-structured format. Section 3.3 established the methodological framework of this thesis. I originally apply an adapted ‘thick’ Catholicism framework to an analysis of the SMG. Subsequently, I apply that analysis to two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective: (a) religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism debate in the English School. The next three chapters will
now engage this methodological framework, applying the research design of Section 3.2 to the case study articulated in Section 3.1. Individually, Chapters Four, Five and Six use the data collected on the SMG via the research design and present the findings of a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG and then apply that analysis to two aspects of Catholic agency in the English School.
Chapter Four—Theology

*He did not intend that His rational creature, who was made in His image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation—not man over man, but man over the beasts.*

Augustine, 426AD, book 19 ch 15

‘Theology’ is the first category in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework. It encompasses the theological tenets present in the religious movement and demonstrates how such examples are proposed by the most important texts and scholars of the religious actor (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). The present chapter analyses the SMG’s expressions of Catholic theology and their impact upon Catholic agency from an English School perspective. Section 4.1 outlines three key examples of Catholic theology identified in the SMG: (a) the dignity of the human person, (b) solidarity, and (c) justice. To understand their influence, these three theological principles are subsequently explored via two avenues of Catholic agency from an English School perspective: (a) religious customs underpinning international society and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in English School debates on pluralism versus solidarism. Section 4.2 investigates the engagement of the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice in SMG action and motivations as religious notions tied to a common good framework underpinning a conception of international society. Section 4.3 analyses examples of the theology both behind the SMG mission and within its operations to explore pluralist and solidarist qualities. Reiterating the main research focus of the thesis, the two interrelated questions for the present chapter are: (i) *How does the category of ‘theology’ in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group?* (ii) *What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective?* I argue throughout this chapter that the category of ‘theology’ helps distil discrete explanations behind the motivations and actions of this Catholic-led coalition. Its contribution to the English School lies in affirming that religious ideas underpin international society through a common good framework. This is based upon a constrained universal outlook in its operations and a Deity as a source of inspiration for its motivations. I also suggest in this chapter the theology of the SMG highlights both solidarist operations and motivations based on a preventative strategy and a spiritual mission from God.

4.1 Theology: ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Santa Marta Group

‘Theology’, as theorised by Hassner (2011), asks, ‘What are the tenets of this religious movement? What do its most important texts and scholars propose?’ (p. 49).
Reframing this understanding of theology to a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework applied to the studied transnational Catholic-led coalition, I ask: What are the Catholic theological tenets expressed by the Santa Marta Group? What do these theological tenets in Catholic texts and by Catholic scholars propose? Catholic approaches to theology adopted in the current chapter, in a similar vein to Dragovic (2015), are drawn from Church documents including papal encyclicals, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) and the Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church (2004). These documents ‘in and of themselves build upon the past 2000 years of Church teaching creating a contemporaneous magisterium that is rooted in the scriptures, Church fathers and preceding conciliar and papal teachings’ (Dragovic, 2015, p. 7). Theology seen through these documents relays the views of clergy and other officials within the institution that are distinct from theological views of outsiders, theologians, and scholars (Dragovic, 2015, p. 6). While both important, the thesis draws more heavily, though not exclusively, on theological approaches from Church documents, rather than scholarship from theologians, as authoritative conciliar teachings holding theological presuppositions. A ‘thick’ Catholicism framework reveals three Catholic theological tenets expressed by the SMG: (a) the dignity of the human person; (b) solidarity; and (c) justice. These tenets are evident in both SMG actions and motivations. Thus, I suggest theology is a tool of motivation and operation for a Catholic actor. This section outlines the identified theological tenets in the SMG through the aforementioned Catholic documents and conciliar teachings. This will subsequently be analysed via two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

The dignity of the human person is a key theological principle, evident as foundational to the vision of this transnational Catholic-led coalition and present in its operations. Cardinal Nichols, president of the SMG and the CBCEW, emphasises the dignity of the human person as core to the involvement of the Church in anti-slavery work. Addressing the UN, he said:

In asserting this commitment of the Church, I emphasise the foundations from which we act: a radical commitment to the dignity of every human person, a dignity which has to be protected and promoted in every circumstance and time; a dignity which does not depend on the abilities or status of a person but which is rooted entirely in the inner depth of the person's existence, in the gift of human life which always comes from the Divine Creator who has shown himself to be our loving Father. Human trafficking and slavery radically strips a person of this fundamental dignity, reducing
them to the status of a commodity. It is an evil crying out to heaven. (Vincent Nichols, 2016)

Cardinal Nichols, through this statement, reveals the Catholic theological tenet of human dignity in three ways. Firstly, he references the innate sense of dignity due to our existence. That very existence is because we are made in the image and likeness of God. He states:

The fundamental message of Sacred Scripture proclaims that the human person is a creature of God (cf. Ps 139:14–18), and sees in his being in the image of God the element that characterises and distinguishes him: “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”. (Gen 1:27, as cited in Catholic Church, 2004, para. 108)

Therefore, the imago Dei, is a ‘central truth … not just another label for human beings but a way of speaking profoundly about human nature’ (Groody, 2012, p. 411). Secondly, Cardinal Nichols asserts that human life is a gift from the Divine Creator. Exploring this further, Pabillo argues that each human life is rooted in the very intention of the Creator by stating that ‘not one of us wills to be, to exist. Our existence is a gift. God has willed us, each one of us … God created each person in the image and likeness of himself!’ (Pabillo, 2013, p. 4). Thirdly, Cardinal Nichols identifies that human trafficking and modern slavery reduce human life to a commodity. Similarly, St Augustine wrote in response to slavery that God ‘did not intend that His rational creature, who made in His image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation—not man over man, but man over the beasts’ (Augustine, 2009, book 19 ch 15). Therefore, the dignity of the human person affirms that no human being should be the slave of another, and no life should be a commodity at the disposal of another. The Catholic theological principle of human dignity is foundational to the anti-slavery motivations of this Catholic initiative.

The SMG operationalises the dignity of the human person through Caritas Bakhita House. Bakhita House, as it is more often known, is a safe house in London for rescued female survivors of modern slavery, and was developed as part of the wider anti-slavery project of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The 2016 SMG Progress Report stipulating UK activity states:

In June 2015, Cardinal Nichols established Caritas Bakhita House as a place to provide a sanctuary of welcome, healing and hospitality for victims in London and the rest of the United Kingdom (UK). Run by Westminster Diocese, Caritas Bakhita House works closely with police forces, local government, social welfare agencies
and religious congregations to support survivors. Caritas Bakhita House is a tangible expression of the SMG’s values of partnership, care, trust and respect and a sign of the Local Church’s commitment. (SMG, 2016f)

This extract from the report indicates the victim-centred approach of the Bakhita House by stating it as a sanctuary of welcome, healing, and hospitality for victims as well the partnerships which are pursued in order to support the victim. This uttermost importance of its victim-centred approach is illustrative of theological teachings on the dignity of the human person, which state that ‘every individual, precisely by reason of the mystery of the Word of God who was made flesh (cf. Jn 1:14), is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church. Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church’s very heart’ (Paul II, 1995, para. 3). Since its opening in June 2015, Bakhita House has housed 86 female survivors of human trafficking and five new babies (Anstiss, 2018). In this way, the theological tenet of human dignity is core to operations in this example.

Solidarity is another example of a Catholic theological principle present in the mission and actions of the SMG. It is evident in two ways. Firstly, the SMG evidence solidarity in its emphasis on standing with victims. Cardinal Nichols, in an address to Pope Francis at the 2018 SMG conference, stated:

In all our efforts we try to keep before our eyes the face of those who are enslaved, those who are rescued, those who are making the long road of recovery. It is they, our brothers and sisters, whom we wish to serve, as well as striving wholeheartedly to find, stop and prosecute the perpetrators of these evil and brutal crimes. (SMG, 2018b)

The reference to victims as ‘our brothers and sisters’ highlights an understanding of solidarity. Solidarity in Catholic theology is understood as ‘a firm and preserving determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all’ (O'Neil & Black, 2003, p. 38). The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church speaks of solidarity as a ‘willingness to give oneself for the good of one's neighbour, beyond any individual or particular interest’ (Catholic Church, 2004, para. 194). The social teaching of the Church begins with a presumption that ‘we are a human family. As such we are entrusted to one another’s care … Solidarity presumes a mutual interdependence among the members of the human family’ (O'Neil & Black, 2003, p. 255).

Therefore, solidarity with victims of modern slavery and human trafficking is embedded into
the mission of the SMG via the theological tenet encouraging the notion of a united human family of God. Secondly, solidarity is evidenced in the coalition through coordinated transnational action to fight modern slavery. With involvement from approximately 128 partner organisations, the SMG is a coalition of Catholic, state, and civil society actors actively choosing to work in solidarity with one another in combined anti-slavery actions. Solidarity is evidenced through all members at the first SMG conference in 2014 signing a Declaration of Commitment (SMG, 2015b), pledging to work together and unite their efforts. Solidarity has been operationalised via the five international SMG conferences, three regional SMG conferences in Latin America and Nigeria, and numerous national meetings and events. These concrete examples of solidarity in the actions of the SMG echo St Pope John Paul II’s description of the theological understanding of solidarity. He spoke of solidarity as:

Not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all. (John Paul II, Sollicitudo rei Socialis, 1987, no. 38)

This model of committed partnership between the Church and police demonstrates an act of firm and persevering determination of solidarity between secular and religious bodies. This act of solidarity in the SMG puts aside self-interest and instead pursues a commitment to the common good. Activity resulting from such partnerships is distinctive of the Catholic notion of solidarity.

Further, justice is a core Catholic theological tenet expressed by SMG in its motivations and operations. It is evident through the collaborative effort to obtain justice for crimes of modern slavery between Catholic and law enforcement actors. At an SMG regional event in Peterborough in the UK, Hyland, the former IASC of the UK, said:

The partnership between the Church and the police is an unusual one but it is the perfect match because the police are there to deal with vulnerable communities and to protect them and to bring people to justice. The Church is there for the same thing, to look after vulnerable communities, to promote equality and to promote justice across the world. (as quoted in SMG, 2016d)

Similarly, Baggott, adviser to the SMG and former Chief Constable of the Northern Ireland Police Service, said:
The partnership between the Church and police is one of the most powerful and effective ones that you can have because both are caring organisation with a heart for the people, particularly the vulnerable, and want to make sure that justice is delivered. (as quoted in SMG, 2016d)

While these quotes identify other mutual connections, justice is enlisted as a main point of agreement between the Church and police. The understanding of justice will inevitably vary between a secular actor, the police, and a theological understanding from a Catholic perspective. Catholic theological understandings of justice consist in giving to God and neighbour their due (CCC, 1997, para. 1807). A law enforcement definition of justice ensures the pursuit of justice under the system of law based on natural and legal rights. Leary states that at times, ‘law enforcement may have policies—such as arresting victims of prostitution, arresting minors, or deporting illegal immigrants—that are antithetical to a religious point of view and be an obstacle to a productive alliance’ (Leary, 2018, p. 54). Despite this, the SMG, as a coalition of Church and police, collaborates on a common desire inherent to justice: victims freed, perpetrators convicted.

The theological tenet of justice is evident in operations between the Metropolitan Police in London and Catholic nuns. Cardinal Nichols spoke of this partnership as a key moment in his life that convinced him of the need to address modern slavery. He said:

I began to witness a remarkable partnership being built in London between religious women and London Police Force, Scotland Yard. This partnership transformed the effectiveness of operations to rescue victims, care for them and pursue to prosecution the perpetrators of this horrendous crime. I realised then the effectiveness of such partnerships, especially between unlikely partners. Religious women, working on the street, did not instinctively trust the law enforcement agencies who they understood, with good reason, were in all likelihood going to prosecute the very women the sisters were trying to protect. Yet over time the partnership was established. It was the fruit of the hard work of building trust, a work made up of many demanding practical steps, requiring change in mindsets and procedures. For one thing, it was essential that the police gave to the sisters the assurance that the victims of trafficking would not be prosecuted, but rather they would be helped. (Vincent Nichols, 2016)

Once again, justice is one of the elements of collaboration between the police and religious women. Religious women and the police desire justice in the prosecution and perpetration of the criminals, while religious women advocate for the protection of the victims.
In addressing the first part of the main research questions, the current section analysed the theology of the SMG via an application of a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework. Three key theological tenets—the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice—have been identified in the motivations and operations of the SMG. They all sit within Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in Catholicism which offer a series of statements and short documents constituting principles which aim to inform a wider social theology (Rowlands, 2012). CST principles outlined in numerous encyclicals and papal documents are from the perspective of God’s revelation to the world analysing various situations including labour exploitation, injustice, inequality, nuclear deterrence, financial speculation, and global trade understood through (Deneulin, 2013, pp. 59-60). Theology is emphasised here as both a motivational and operational tool for Catholic actors. A ‘thick’ Catholicism framework revealed discrete elements of theology in the SMG and thus is instructive of characteristics beholden by Catholic actors and in Catholic action. Still, the ability of such attributes to enable influence requires additional frameworks of analysis. To enable this, the remainder of the chapter applies the analysis stipulated above to aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. The English School has been identified as a robust avenue to explore Catholic agency resulting from its discourse on Catholicism emerging through select voices discussed in Chapter Three.

Two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective were identified in English School discourse on Catholicism: religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society, and a preference of the Catholic Church between pluralist and solidarist conceptions of international society. Drawing on the analysis of the SMG via a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework, the remainder of the current chapter contributes to both aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. In turn, this addresses the second part of the main research questions. Section 4.2 investigates the theology of SMG motivations and actions as religious ideas that underpin international society through a framework of the common good. Section 4.3 analyses the theology of the SMG behind its mission and operations to explore the pluralist versus solidarist debates in the English School from the perspective of the Catholic Church. I argue in the sections to come in the present chapter that religious ideas can underpin society via a common good framework, and Church teachings have a solidarist preference. Catholic agency—the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations—reaches out universally and is interventionist in its operations; it is directed by a Deity and inspired by a Divine mission in its motivations.
4.2 Religious Ideas Underpinning International Society

This section applies a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of theology expressed by the SMG to the first aspect of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. In this first aspect of Catholic agency, current scholarship suggests the need to further theorise the Christian foundations of international society by emphasising that religious ideas underpin international society through ‘various forms of association around notions of the common good’ (Pabst, 2012, p. 1012). Wight took religion and culture seriously in analysing international relations and believed that ‘religion’ was a ‘fundamental—and not a derivative—category to the understanding of culture, society, and civilization’ (Thomas, 2001, p. 925). Both Thomas (2000) and Pabst (2012) credit Wight for recalling the extent that Catholic social thought has developed a language of the ‘common good’ as a discourse creating a common culture underlining the international society. However, their theorising differs—Pabst (2012) draws attention to the transcendent source of the common good, while Thomas (2000) focuses on associated universal claims. The key question of the current section: What do theological principles in the Santa Marta Group reveal about notions of the common good underpinning international society? This section firstly tests the English School theoretical idea that religious ideas underpin international society via a common good framework by analysing the theology of the SMG against the theology of the common good within Catholic documents. Through SMG engagement of the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice, I argue in this section that theology makes a framework of the common good intelligible, contributing to religious ideas underpinning international society. Thus, theology plays a role in underpinning religious motivations and actions. Bringing this into discussion between Pabst and Thomas while drawing on other dialogic voices, I suggest that a common good framework based upon theological ideas bestows a cautioned universal outlook upon SMG operations and has a Divine source to its motivations.

4.2.1 A Common Good Framework

Thomas (2000) and Pabst (2012) articulate that a common good framework is a helpful tool to theorise how religious ideas underpin international society. The present section seeks to test that theoretical assumption via the theological aspects of the SMG. The realms of theology and religion in this way interconnect: religion being the subscription to a system of beliefs or act of believing, and theology investigating the subscribed system of beliefs (Bain, 2020, pp. 3–4). Pabst praises Butterfield and Wight for focusing the shift back to the social nature of mankind, ideas of human cooperation, a common culture gluing together society nationally and internationally, and appealing to the practice of love and charity. He
wants to advance classical English School thought ‘in the direction of a metaphysical-political realism that centres on the synthesis of reason and faith, the relational nature of the world’s ontological structure and various forms of association around notions of the common good’ (Pabst, 2012, p. 1012). Therefore, for Pabst, one way in which religious ideas and customs underpin international society is through the notion of the common good. Based upon the thoughts of Wight, Thomas argues that modern Catholic social thought, through its complex strategies of engagement and a language of the ‘common good’ for ‘all persons of good will’, upholds the Rationalist tradition today (2000, p. 828). Petito and Thomas (2015) speak of the common good as an ideal ‘political–religious frame of reference’ for a successful model of religious engagement of state foreign policy mediated by Catholic actors (p. 48). They also speak of longstanding relationships of an official nature or a friendship between Catholic and non-Catholic actors existing due to cooperation for the common good (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 47).

The purpose of the present section is to establish whether the theology of the SMG adheres to a framework of the common good outlined in Catholic conciliar teachings and simultaneously whether, as Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000) suggest, a common good framework is a tool for religious ideas to underpin international society. The three theological principles present in this coalition (dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice) adhere to a common good framework based on its three attributes: respect for the individual, social wellbeing and development of the group, and the requirement of peace. I emphasise that theological assertions render this framework intelligible. Subsequently, the next section deduces the different approaches taken by Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000) to the common good underpinning international society.

Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000) do not explicitly state the elements that constitute a framework of the common good. I suggest their descriptions allude to a definition of the common good from the perspective of Catholicism. Catholic Tradition describes the common good as:

The sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily. The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. (CCC, 1997, para. 1906)

Further, the Compendium of Social Doctrine describes the common good as:

A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level is a society that has the common good—the good of all people and of the whole
person—as its primary goal. The human person cannot find fulfillment in himself, that
is, apart from the fact that he exists with others and for others. (Catholic Church,
2004, para. 165)

According to Catholic documents, the common good consists of three essential
elements creating a framework: respect for the person, social wellbeing and development of
the group, and the requirement of peace (CCC, 1997, paras. 1907–1909). The theological
principles of the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice in SMG motivations and
actions evidence compatibility with this framework. Thus, theology plays a role in religious
ideas underpinning international society.

The first essential element of the common good is the respect for the person, which
Corresponds with the theological tenet of the dignity of the human person identified in SMG
actions and motivations. The Catechism states:

First, the common good presupposes respect for the person as such. In the name of
the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and
inalienable rights of the human person. Society should permit each of its members to
fulfill his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the
exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human
vocation, such as ‘the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to
safeguard... privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion’. (CCC, 1997,
para. 1907)

This explanation identifies key attributes of respect for the person as an essential
element of the common good: the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person,
the fulfilment of vocation, and the exercise of natural freedoms. I suggest these attributes are
evident in the SMG via Bakhita House, demonstrating the Catholic theological principle of
the dignity of the human person. The protection and promotion of human dignity are
expressed through an emphasis on pastoral care and the reintegration and rehabilitation of
survivors. This emphasis on respect for the person is a prerequisite of a common good

According to Cecilia:

[It] exemplifies the desire to restore people to the dignity … Caritas Bakhita House
with the volunteers provides support for women with access to health and counselling,
legal advice, personal support, education, they have English and Maths lessons,
accompaniment when people have to go to offices, computer skills, just about
everything, therapeutic advice, people coming to just befriend them as well. So, it
really shows how the Church supports and places a lot of premium on the dignity of the human person. (personal communication, October 30, 2019)

Bakhita House is an example of a safe house wherein the orientation of action is towards the survivor. A victim-centred approach at Bakhita House protects and promotes every human life based upon Catholic theology. Each human is uniquely made and holds inherent dignity as the *imago Dei*. It highlights this first essential element of the common good through emphasis on the restoration of the rights of the human person as holding inherent dignity, the rehabilitation of each individual through assistance with improving skills which lead to jobs and vocations, and the provision of a place of safety that contributes to a natural freedom. The example of Bakhita House evidences the SMG upholding and acting out the Catholic theological principle of the dignity of the human person in its actions. This, in turn, demonstrates the attributes inherent to the first element of the common good: respect for the person. According to Catholic theological presuppositions, respect for the person is a necessary condition of a common good framework.

Further, Bakhita House is open to all survivors regardless of faith background and with no expectation of practising a particular faith tradition. Michael was surprised by this, saying:

For an outsider walking into Bakhita House, you wouldn’t think, this is a Church run place. It doesn’t have a feel of … there’s no demands at you to go for prayer everyday or … and that really surprised me. There’s a sort of multi-faith room that they do yoga in. That was quite a surprise to me. So that shows how open the Church is to helping everybody. (personal communication, November 7, 2019)

Bakhita House is an example of what Thomas describes as the common good for all persons of good will (2000). This upholds the first element of the common good; it evidences the exercise of the natural freedoms, a requirement of the common good, by being non-discriminatory and open to people of all and no faith.

The second essential element of the common good is the social wellbeing and development of the group, which matches that of solidarity present in SMG partnerships. The Catechism states:

Second, the common good requires the *social well-being* and *development* of the group itself. Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a
truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on. (CCC, 1997, para. 1908)

Evident in the description of the second element of the common good are characteristics such as the development of the group and the function of authority to facilitate the needs of the individual. Such characteristics are clear in the demonstration of ‘solidarity’ for the good of the individual by the SMG. The second essential element of the common good is illustrated through solidarity in bilateral partnerships turning into regional conferences while retaining a victim-centred approach. An example of this is through a bilateral partnership between the SMG and the Archdiocese of Benin and Diocese of Uromi.

The SMG Progress Report 2016 stated:

The CBCEW is working closely with the Office of the UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner, the UK Government and Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (Archdiocese of Benin and the Diocese of Uromi), on a project on human trafficking in Edo State. This area is the epicentre of human trafficking in Nigeria, especially for sexual trafficking of young women into Western Europe. The project will provide pastoral care to victims, assist them with education, and enhance economic empowerment through employment schemes. The UK Government is committed to funding the scheme. (SMG, 2016f)

Since this report, the SMG has progressed with two regional SMG African conferences and a collaboration of the ‘GrowEdo’ project. The first African regional conference of the SMG was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 14–15 November 2018, and the second conference occurred between 1 and 4 October 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The conferences were attended by Church representatives, government officials, and law enforcement agencies. The ‘GrowEdo’ project, funded by the Archdiocese of Southwark, is described as:

A new agricultural development project for young people in Edo State, Nigeria. This project has been launched by the Dioceses of Benin and Uromi in collaboration with the Santa Marta Group. It aims to use agriculture to develop livelihoods for young people at risk of human trafficking. It seeks to help young men and women from all backgrounds develop skills and confidence to enable them to become ‘agripreneurs’ and promote food security. Developing the rural economy and individuals skill set works to prevent young people being lured into modern slavery. (SMG, 2021g)

It is evident in this description that the project has developed and, at the same time, still places the needs of individuals through the development of skills and agricultural
livelihoods at the centre. Therefore, this gives an example of the second essential element of the common good; solidarity, which drives the development of the group and its associated projects emphasising the needs of the individual. Solidarity is a requirement of a common good framework, and reflects the arguments made by Petito and Thomas (2015) of a longstanding relationship between Catholic and secular actors based on cooperation for the common good.

According to Catholic Tradition, the third essential element of the common good is the requirement of peace, which is evident through the theological tenet of justice in SMG mission and actions. The Catechism states:

Finally, the common good requires peace, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the security of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defense. (CCC, 1997, para. 1909)

Elements identified here describe a need for a just order and a secure society. This understanding of the requirement of peace as an attribute of the common good is illustrated in the SMG’s active advocacy for justice. The SMG argued that the crime of human trafficking deserved a just sentence. David, director of the SMG, on the crime of modern slavery stated:

I think we’re not asking for it to be a priority, we are asking for it to be recognised for what it is. Once you begin to recognise the scale and extent of it, penetration, then you’re going to look at it differently and employ resources in a different way because this is something which is very serious organised crime. And for it to be treated in a same seriousness and commitment as drugs for example are given is an appropriate level of response. (personal communication, November 8, 2019)

Calling for modern slavery to be justly seen as serious organised crime, David highlights the need for a just order based on fair treatment and equal measurements of criminal activity. In the SMG submission to the Inquiry of a Modern Slavery Act in Australia, the SMG advocated for new provisions in the law on withholding or retaining of passports. It reads:

Finally, in the UK, it is not illegal for employers to withhold or retain the passport of an employee, but it can be one of the indicators of exploitation. The holding of these kind of documents can in itself place an individual under a feeling of being controlled. The Santa Marta Group would like the UK Government to amend this by updating the
Modern Slavery Act to include this new provision. We believe this might also be something for your Committee to consider following this consultation. (SMG, 2017d).

The SMG once again advocates justice through the tightening of law. Therefore, the SMG demonstrates the requirement of peace as an essential element of the common good as attributes to encompass peace reside in the need of justice. Pabst articulates that ‘justice’ is wrongly perceived as an example of a universal human virtue separated from religious faith (2012). Aligned with Pabst’s thinking, justice here is tied to the common good established by Catholic Tradition, thus bringing together justice and religion.

These three elements—respect for the person, the social wellbeing and development of the group, and the requirement of peace—have been established as a Catholic framework of the common good. The theological tenets present in this Catholic-led coalition’s action can be situated within such a framework. Therefore, it is illustrative of the theoretical arguments outlined by Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000) that the common good can underpin international society. Beyond modern slavery, whether other issues like the death penalty or stockpiling nuclear weapons also hold to a common good framework should be the topic for future research. Supporting the claims of Pabst of a ‘metaphysical-political realism’, I suggest that on the SMG, it is through theological principles that a common good framework underpins international society. A common good framework with theology as its basis implies that theology plays a role in religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society. Associated discourse on political theology contributes to this discussion. Religion and theology ‘are not synonyms, but rather entail distinct orientations’ (Bain, 2020, p. 3). Bain argues that ‘religion relates human beings to one another and it negotiates their relationship with God in terms of certain beliefs. In contrast, theology involves the systematic study of the concepts and categories in terms of which these beliefs are intelligible’ (Bain, 2020, p. 3) Concerning Catholicism, religion would be defined as the subscription to the Catholic faith and beliefs broadly construed, while theology would investigate the beliefs of Catholicism. This distinction holding, it is the theology, not the religion investigated of the SMG, that correlates with a common good framework. Thus, the theological tenets evident in the SMG make a common good framework intelligible.

The extent to which a theologically informed common good framework underpins assumptions of international society is now the subject of our discussion. The next two sections explore the arguments outlined by Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000). Not contradictory to one another, Thomas (2000) emphasises the universal nature of the common good, while Pabst (2012) theorises notions of the common good, looking back to a
transcendent origin. Based on SMG evidence, SMG operations demonstrate a cautious
universalistic outlook, while the motivations of the SMG are arguably derived from a
transcendent source.

4.2.2 Theology in Santa Marta Group Actions as Universal

The SMG possesses a universal outlook in its operations, reflecting the argument
articulated by Thomas (2000). He argues that the Catholic Church upholds the English
School Rationalist tradition, the notion of a society of states, because Catholic social thought
links the common good to universal claims. Thomas argues the common good is universal:
the ‘language of the “common good” as a discourse which “all persons of good will” who are
capable of reason can be appealed to’ (2000, p. 828). He emphasises that the world ‘catholic’
comes from the Greek καθολικός (katholikos), which means ‘general’ or ‘universal’ and
describes the Church as a type of world society that transcends race, peoples, nationality, and
language (Thomas, 2013). Thomas intersects Catholicism and a universal dimension via
attributes inherent to a common good framework. Adding dialogic voices to the discussion,
Joustra (2017) argues that Rerum Novarum, a papal encyclical at the foundation of CST
incorporating notions of the common good, provides a spiritual blueprint for labour today.
Aspects aligned with the common good in Rerum Novarum—a dignified vocation, fair
treatment, and just compensation for worker contributions—are seen as moral vocabulary
presented to benefit a universal idea of labour (Joustra, 2017, pp. 46–47). This aligns with the
thinking of Thomas that through universal attributes, a common good framework underpins
international society. Bain adds an interesting dimension to such discussions. He speaks of a
necessary pattern of right order involving every state being arranged for the good of the
whole. He says, ‘all things, states included, have a place and purpose that contributes to the
common good in which individual goods are realized’ (Bain, 2020, p. 10). This accords with
universal ideals; however, it is conditioned on the common good as not being ‘anything more
than an aggregate of individual goods’ (Bain, 2020, p. 10). The adoption of the common good
as a framework to underpin international society depends according to Bain on the condition
that universal dimensions do not impinge upon the preservation of the independence of
independent states and of facilities of cooperation (Bain, 2020, p. 10).

The operations of the SMG give empirical evidence to the theoretical articulations of
Thomas (2000) and adhere to the caution theorised by Bain (2020). All three theological
tenets expressed in SMG actions hold a universalistic outlook. Firstly, Bakhita House is open
to all survivors of modern slavery irrespective of any societal category. The dignity of the
human person, a universal claim bestowed on each individual, underpins the mission of
Bakhita House and therefore enables action of a universal nature. Secondly, the global solidarity exemplified by the SMG action of signing the Declaration of Commitment by SMG members illustrates a universal act. This act of public declaration stated, ‘we work together on the international stage to develop strategies in prevention, pastoral care and re-integration, placing the victim at the centre of all we do’ (SMG, 2015b). Thirdly, the SMG’s advocation for penalties on the retention of a passport illustrates universally stricter measures on crimes of modern slavery because it is based on a universal notion of justice. Therefore, the theological tenets present in SMG’s operations fit a common good framework, as evidenced in the previous section. SMG actions possess qualities beholden to a notion of universalism, affirming the thoughts of Thomas (2000).

Analysis of one of these examples in more depth—solidarity through signing the Declaration of Commitment by SMG members—demonstrates the caution articulated by Bain. Bain anchors his thoughts on universal dimensions structured through the notion of order. For him, the common good should be structured around every part being arranged for the good of the whole (Bain, 2020, p. 205). The Declaration of Commitment was signed by Catholic bishops and police chiefs as they gathered at the first SMG conference in the Vatican in 2014 in the presence of Pope Francis. The commitment, however, was a personal declaration by newly formed SMG partners on the international stage to combine the resources of the Catholic Church with those of law enforcement agencies and to develop strategies to prevent, protect, and re-integrate victims (SMG, 2021b). Solidarity here reflects the common good as members joining together as part of a whole but doing so for the good of the whole. Bain speaks of a global society as ‘the product of agreement, reflecting an aggregate of interests, which is valuable only so long as it is deemed useful’ (2020, p. 207). A personal commitment of SMG members reflects the remarks by Bain because a personal commitment is easily broken when interests do not align in comparison with a commitment from the organisation or body to whom they represented. The common good evident as a universal act of solidarity is conditioned by preserving the independence of each individual entity. Bain encourages such an understanding of the common good as one where the common good is a universal framework but constrained by each autonomous entity for the good of each individual actor. In this way, Bain alludes to the Catholic understanding of subsidiarity wherein ‘It is the responsibility of the State to safeguard and promote the common good of society. Based on the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity...it plays a fundamental role, one which cannot be delegated, in working for the integral development of all.’ (Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 2013, no. 240). Speaking of international organisations
like the League of Nations or the UN, Bain states that membership of such an organisation ‘does not diminish the quality of “stateness”… states accept restraints on their freedom in exchange for the benefits of membership … entering into such an association does not qualify their existence or identity as a state’ (2020, p. 207). Mirroring the understanding of a society of states more generally conceptualised, the SMG can be seen as a society of states and other entities, each exercising supreme and exclusive jurisdiction. SMG operations as evidenced here are universal act of global solidarity, which is an attribute of the common good, but are constrained by the autonomous nature of entities at the same time. In this way, the basis of the common good as universal articulated by Thomas (2000, 2013) holds true, but is tempered by the limitations expressed by Bain (2020) on the independence of states broadly construed in international society.

4.2.3 Theology in Santa Marta Group Motivations as Divinely Sourced

Beyond their operations, the SMG mission articulated through a common good framework is derived from a Deity. This mirrors arguments articulated by Pabst that notions of the common good are valuable because they originate from an “invaluable” source and are ordered to an “invaluable” end (2012, p. 1014). These ideas stem from a transcendent principle providing what is valuable and how it ought to be valued (Pabst, 2012, p. 1014). The religious ideas associated with the common good are set by a Deity and ordered towards a transcendental mission. Aligned with the thinking of Pabst, Bain expresses a fundamental relationship between God and theological metaphors and analogies (2020, p. 17). He asserts that ‘God, conceived as either a rational being of a willful person, is the absolute presupposition that grounds rival theories of order’ (Bain, 2020, p. 18). Removing God, he goes onto say, from a ‘system of presuppositions and the corresponding pattern of thought collapses into confusion’ (Bain, 2020, p. 18). Chong and Troy express a similar argument when referring to the mission of the Holy See as part of a Catholic Christian idealism that is transcendental and personal, motivated through Providence and to spirituality (2011, p. 353).

Dragovic, whose work sits at the porous boundary of the English School and Realism, adds a further dimension to these discussions. Dragovic concurs with the former point of view but argues that Catholic agency lies in the Church being a vehicle of knowledge of the Divine and natural laws (2015, p. 64). As such, he sees the role of the Church, or indeed Catholic actors, as sitting alongside the state but helping foster a connection between the Divine and the human to achieve the common good (Dragovic, 2015, p. 64).

The motivation and mission behind the SMG suggest a Deity as its source, matching theoretical ideas from Pabst (2012). This is most evident through the expressions of the
purpose of the SMG by the interviewees and their individual involvement. When speaking of the SMG logo, James states:

The one thing I like about it is that on the one hand, you have a crosier, a bishop’s crosier, like a shepherd’s crook type-of-thing, and on the other hand, you have the cross—Christ—you know, again, the reason why we do these things. (personal communication, November 7, 2019)

The fact that Christ is given as the reason for SMG actions demonstrates a Deity as a source of the motivations of Catholic action. Christ is evident as the source of Catholic agency, and the crimes of modern slavery and human dignity are in opposition to theological principles of the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice. Removing God from the basis of common good attributes renders the understanding of it unintelligible—a notion Bain would agree with. Further, Matt spoke of his personal involvement in the SMG, highlighting the meaning of Providence. He stated:

I was inspired by that first conference at Rome. And I felt … I just felt called … in a sense that something was going to happen. I couldn’t say what. This is going to sound really weird but I got to know Kevin and I got … I guess we had a very similar outlook on life on the vulnerable and social justice. And I got to know David. And when I got back to England having retired someone gave me a prophetic word that I would be involved with anti-slavery … which is, you know, out there … okay, fair enough. So I waited. And then I got a letter out the blue from the Catholic bishops saying we feel you should come and work with us. (Matt, personal communication, October 24, 2019)

Matt feeling ‘called’ and describing receiving a ‘prophetic’ word comparable to how Chong and Troy (2011) speak of ‘Providence and spirituality’. Both indicate a Catholic idealism grounded in transcendental claims. The transcendentally anchored motivations of the SMG illustrate the theoretical ideas of Pabst (2012) on Catholic action ordered by a Deity to an ordered will. Further, the SMG reflects discussions presented by Dragovic (2015) of Catholic actors as vehicles for Divine laws on Earth represented by theological principles and inspired by a Deity. The SMG demonstrates such a position as a transnational Catholic-led coalition steeped in Catholic theology but inclusive of secular actors, enabling the SMG to be a distinct vehicle between Divine and earthly realms.

Overall, evidenced by the expression of theology in the SMG, Catholic agency in international society functions through a framework of the common good underpinning international society, as suggested by Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000). The essential
elements of the common good—respect for the individual, the wellbeing and development of the group, and the requirement of peace—correspond with the SMG’s theological principles of the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice. Theology, therefore, helps to provide the understanding of a common good framework. Analysing the theology in SMG operations and motivations in conjunction with theoretical discussions, principally from Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000), suggests a way to understand the ability of a common good framework to underpin international society. I argued that a common good framework underpins international society through both a universal nature and a Deity. This is reflected by a constrained universal outlook in SMG operations and a Divine source to its mission.

4.3 The Position of the Catholic Church in the Pluralism Versus Solidarism English School Debates

The second aspect of Catholic agency from the English School perspective that the current thesis investigates is the preference of the Catholic Church in pluralism versus solidarism debates. English School scholarship acknowledges the pluralistic tendencies of the Catholic Church as an actor in international relations (Barbato, 2013; Troy, 2012) and concurrently evidences its solidarist ideals (Barbato, 2013; Diez, 2017; Troy, 2008a, 2012). The present chapter aims to analyse whether the theological principles evident in the SMG imply that the Catholic Church suits pluralist or solidarist ideals in international society. The primary question of the current section is: What can we infer about the position of the Catholic Church in the pluralism versus solidarism English School debates from the theological principles present in the Santa Marta Group? I argue that the theological tenets in the SMG suggest a preference towards English School solidarist notions in their operations and motivations based upon a preventative strategy but one that is guided by a Divine mission. I acknowledge that this section is principally concerned with motivations and actions of the SMG based upon Catholic truths which hold solidarist attributes. However, the SMG also possesses pluralist attributes as an actor in international society, which will be the subject of discussion in Chapter Five.

4.3.1 Theology Inspires Solidarist Action in the Santa Marta Group

Diez (2017) argues that English School theorising leans towards the existence of a solidarist over pluralist understanding of ‘international society’ and that this aligns with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. Diez differentiates between a pluralist and a solidarist international society stating that in solidarist conceptions individuals and transnational actors are holders of rights in this society, and thus states bear a duty beyond their own citizens (2017, p. 32). He claims that the concept of international society has moved towards a
solidarist understanding that has ‘provided the Pope with greater opportunities to voice his views and influence international politics’ (Diez, 2017, p.32). The change has resulted in, firstly, structural change to now include non-state actors; secondly–normative change in the increased relevance of human rights, development, environmentalism, and peace—which he claims are core norms in a Christian worldview (Diez, 2017, p. 36). This said, Diez presents a balanced argument challenging the notion of the Church as solely solidarist. Issues such as abortion or marriage as personal norms are, he argues, contestable as solidarist according to English School theorising (Diez, 2017, p. 32). In the current section, I bring the discussions presented by Diez into conversation with the theological principles evident in the anti-slavery action of the SMG. I specifically analyse whether the theological principles evident in SMG operations—the dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice—reflect the argument of Diez that Catholic actors have an increased agency due to Christian norms matching that of a solidarising international society. Accepting the premise of a solidarising international society, I argue below that SMG actions illustrate theology via interventionism, prevention, and collaboration, and align with English School solidarist claims.

The theology expressed in SMG operations evidence interventionism, preventative action, and collaboration; qualities with English School solidarist tendencies. The theological principle of the ‘dignity of the human person’ present in SMG action inspires Catholic action based on early interventionism, which is an attribute of solidarism from the perspective of the English School. In the SMG submission to the Inquiry of a Modern Slavery Act in Australia, the SMG evidences their preventative approach to identify potential victims from specific communities. It states:

Santa Marta’s experience is that for all those working in countering modern slavery there has to be a fundamental focus on the wellbeing and safeguarding of the victim, irrespective of the immigration status of the victim … in conjunction with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and other partners, Santa Marta has been able to identify specific communities that are vulnerable to human slavery in particular sectors of the economy. For example, we see Filipino and Indian domestic workers, Lithuanian construction workers, Polish, Romanian and Albanian agricultural workers, Columbians and Ecuadorians in the cleaning industry, Vietnamese and Filipinos in nail bars and Kosovans and Bulgarians in car washes. This has helped us to be more focused in our awareness raising efforts both here in the UK and in the countries of origin. (SMG, 2017d)
The SMG identify particular communities that are vulnerable to crimes of modern slavery because their fundamental focus is on the wellbeing and safeguarding of the victim. Actively seeking potential victim communities highlights an interventionist approach. Interventionism is a quality of English School understandings of solidarism. In solidarism, ‘states […] have an obligation to observe human rights and prevent and respond to gross human rights violations. They have a duty, in Wheeler’s words, to “save strangers” if these are existentially threatened’ (Diez, 2017, p. 33). Therefore, the idea of ‘saving strangers’ is evident in the interventionist approach taken by the SMG based upon the protection of the dignity of the human person.

SMG action based on the theological tenet of solidarity demonstrates English School solidarist qualities through a preventative approach. Two examples highlight preventative action. Firstly, the SMG has collaborated with the AoS in their North Atlantic Maritime Project, developing preventative anti-slavery strategies within the fishing and maritime industry. The SMG Report 2016 from the UK states:

Trafficking in the fishing industry was the theme of a high-level workshop organised by Santa Marta partners from the Irish Police and Bishops’ Conference and hosted by Mary Immaculate College in Limerick from 10–11 May 2016. This brought together law enforcement, chaplains, industry and civic groups from Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England and Wales, to look at how to tackle trafficking in the North Atlantic fishing and processing sectors. The CBCEW, through the Apostolate of the Sea is contributing to that process as well as more broadly in identifying and supporting trafficking victims entering UK ports. (SMG, 2016f)

The SMG and AoS partnership has resulted in preventative training methods for those working in UK ports. The AoS presentation at the SMG conference in 2018 given by Father Ciceri, AoS International Director, stated that the partnership had orchestrated its first ‘pilot project’ training in Tilbury, involving port workers with objectives to (a) raise awareness of modern slavery and trafficking of humans within the ports, (b) increase understanding of the legislation, the local situation and potential partners, and (c) understand how to prevent and protect victims of trafficking and work with others to eradicate modern slavery (SMG, 2018e). Father Ciceri went onto state that AoS intended to have these training sessions in ports around the world. This is a significant contribution as the AoS is a Catholic ministry serving seafarers, fishers, and their families in 261 ports across 55 countries with over 200 port chaplains (SMG, 2018e). As Diez (2017) articulated, prevention to stop human rights violations is a characteristic of solidarist action. The example here of AoS in partnership with
the SMG advocating for preventative action therefore illustrates the theology of solidarity holding English School solidarist attributes.

Secondly, the cooperation of the SMG in the ‘Slaves on our Streets’ report in 2017 demonstrates solidarity through preventative action, in turn, aligning with English School understandings of solidarism. In partnership with the IASC, two UK newspapers, the Evening Standard and the Independent, launched a special investigation into modern slavery and human trafficking in September 2017. Cardinal Nichols, as president of the SMG, chaired a roundtable of leading figures from business, law, philanthropy, and the media. This led to a report entitled ‘Slaves on our Streets’, which was handed to parliament on 30 January 2018 (SMG, 2018a). Working in solidarity, the report and its media coverage hoped to raise awareness of the crime and suggested recommendations for preventative action against modern slavery crimes. Preventative action is aligned with solidarist attributes from an English School perspective, specifically the arguments held by Wheeler. Wheeler speaks of the pluralist versus solidarist debate with an emphasis on humanitarian intervention. For him, solidarist attributes occur when humanitarian intervention is justified to uphold minimum standards of humanity such as humanitarian emergencies or just war principles (Bain, 2014, p. 162). Similarly, Dunne states that individuals are entitled to basic rights in a solidarist international society in terms of values. As such, ‘there is a duty on the members of international society to intervene forcibly to protect those rights’ (2011, p. 9). In this instance, preventative action by the SMG is an example of English School solidarist action to prevent humanitarian crises of modern slavery and a duty to protect the rights of potential victims.

Further, the theological principle of solidarity in SMG operations evidences collaborative action that aligns with English School solidarist qualities. The SMG and Argentinian Federal Police have formed a close bilateral partnership and partnerships between the local Church and police in Argentina. Such partnerships echo English School solidarist ideals as an example of collaborative action. Diego De Campos of the Argentinian Federal Police presented at the SMG 2018 saying:

The essence of the Santa Marta Group is to bring together National Police Forces, the church, and Church institutions working on this predicament of human traffic [sic], to put together objectives and actions for a more effective fight against human traffic [sic]. Néstor Roncaglia gives an important step forward, bringing the objectives of Santa Marta Group into our country. Therefore, with Roncaglia, the work takes place in Argentina concretely with the priests, through religious congregations that are committed to working together. (SMG, 2018b)
The report goes on to describe meetings occurring within Argentina involving Church and police. Firstly, a high-level meeting took place between the national police force heads and the episcopal conference and religious communities. This was followed by a second meeting between senior police officers, head officers in the operative branches and religious sisters from the Oblatas congregation (SMG, 2018e). Because of their effectiveness, these meetings were replicated in two other regions in Argentina—Rosario and Río Gallegos (SMG, 2018e). They give example to solidarity in partnerships forming between Church and police and mirrors English School understandings of solidarism. In an English School conceptualisation of solidarism, there is an emphasis on collaborations binding international society members together beyond state sovereignty. As Dunne notes, a guiding thought of solidarism 'binds individuals to the great society of humankind' and that this is different from pluralism, which stresses rules and institutions enforce separation (2011, p. 8). Further, Dunne referring to ‘the collective enforcement of international rules and the guardianship of human rights’ (2011, p. 9) is reflected in this example by the collective enforcement and guardianship of human rights by the Argentine police force and Church. The collaborative action of the SMG to enforce the law and guard the rights of victims of modern slavery evidences solidarity that mirrors English School solidarist qualities.

Therefore, theology expressed in SMG actions and operations reveals attributes fitting a solidarist international society based on the qualities of interventionism, preventative action, and collaboration. Diez argued that international society has moved toward a solidarist understanding that has enabled greater inclusion of non-state actors, including religious actors, and normative change with increased relevance of norms befitting a Christian worldview (2017, p. 36). Catholic agency in international society is increased as a result of both these accounts. SMG actions of interventionism, preventative action, and collaboration, matching English School solidarist attributes, give evidence of increased Catholic agency by collaborations between state and non-state actors in international society and Christian norms uniting both sets of actors.

4.3.2 Theology Suggests Solidarist Motivations to the Santa Marta Group

The theology expressed in SMG motivations implies a Divinely driven mission, which provides evidence of ‘spiritual sovereignty’ articulated by Diez (2017). Diez argues that the Catholic Church beholds ‘spiritual sovereignty’, which is at odds with central norms of a pluralist international society borrowing from the works of Casaroli (1981) and Ryngaert (2011) (Diez, 2017, p. 35). Ryngaert states that the Holy See’s governance, jurisdiction, and authority is ‘not based on territorial sovereignty but rather on spiritual sovereignty’ (2011, p.
He suggests, however, that ‘the international legal personality of the Holy See can best be conceived as ‘unique’, *sui generis*, and based on a spiritual mandate that knows no borders’ (Ryngaert, 2011, p. 838). I address this specific idea of Catholic agency by way of a spiritual mandate in the current section concerning the theological principles inherent in the SMG mission. Elaborating on the arguments of Diez, it is this notion of ‘spiritual sovereignty’ that indicates solidarist qualities to SMG motivations. As mentioned earlier, I acknowledge that beyond the realm of Catholic truths, motivations behind Catholic action can take on pluralist characteristics, some of which will be explored in Chapter Five on the role of the SMG as ‘diplomat’ in international society.

Aligning with the arguments of Diez, Chong and Troy emphasise the spiritual mission of the Catholic Church. They speak of the Holy See as representing a universal sacred mission to pursue peace and work towards the universalisation of human rights (Chong & Troy, 2011, p. 335). They argue that the Holy See perceives its mission for all people globally regardless of socio-political boundaries (Chong & Troy, 2011, p. 353). Its mission authorises ‘a universal moral law or at least guiding the society of humanity organized into states into producing a reasonable standard of world morality’ (Chong & Troy, 2011, p. 342). The idea of spiritual sovereignty resonates with wider notions of the spiritual mission of the Church seen elsewhere in IR discourse. Araujo claims that since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has been challenged to better understand the world ‘so that the Church and its members must be more effective agents of the message of Christ and his mission of salvation’ (2013, p. 4). Similarly, Hertzke speaks of the Catholic Church as being able to provide ‘moral guidance and a spiritual institution’ (2016, p. 49). He speaks of the Church as seeking to ‘wield the two swords of spiritual and temporal authority to perpetuate its vision of a united Christendom’ (Hertzke, 2016, p. 37). This section draws on the idea of a spiritual mission based upon analysis of the theological tenets motivating the SMG. I suggest that the SMG evidences the spiritual mission through advocating justice via forgiveness, the dignity of the human person, and a mission embedded in prayer. The theology behind the motivations of the SMG highlights a Divine mission that leans towards English School solidarist understandings mandated by a Deity.

More generally, the spiritual mission of the SMG was identified by one of the interviewees. Matt stated that the SMG worked at ‘an informal level, it works at a spiritual level, and it works at a political level’ (personal communication, October 24, 2019). He added:
The Church brings a spiritual mission which is far, far more fundamental in terms of motivations than anything else. A lot of people are working their way to heaven but actually we do believe we are guided by the spirit and therefore it has a far deeper, deeper influence on human nature which other charities don’t have. So the conscience and the mission are really important. (Matt, personal communication, October 24, 2019)

Matt recalling the SMG as ‘being guided by the spirit’ suggests a spiritual mission or ‘spiritual sovereignty’.

As previously stated, I suggest the spiritual mission of the SMG is evident using three examples—justice through forgiveness, the dignity of the human person, and prayer. Each of these hold qualities likened to a solidarist international society, albeit one that is transcendental. After all, as political theology reminds us, if there is no room made for God, the scaffolding that supports theories of international order and its underlying authority falls to the ground (Bain, 2020, p. 24). I argue in this section that SMG motivation reflects English School solidarist characteristics but one that is grounded in a spiritual mission ordered by Divine will.

An example of the spiritual mission in the SMG is evident through advocating forgiveness connected with the theological principle of justice. Cecilia introduces the notion that, for the Catholic actor, forgiveness plays an interconnected role with justice. Drawing on the life of St Bakhita, she describes her life as:

One of pain and anguish, of love and forgiveness, and really that’s the model that we use, that’s what underpins the work we do. In suffering, you can experience the love of God, and in experiencing the love of God, you have the capacity to forgive…which as human beings we find very hard to do. St Bakhita’s life and her example becomes a model for victim support, they experience love and care and they in turn can look back, forgive the hurt and the pain and move on. (Cecilia, personal communication, October 30, 2019)

In reflecting the model of faith of St Bakhita, the SMG suggests that the requirement of complete freedom from abuse goes beyond the physical and psychological harm of human trafficking. Rather, the SMG proposes forgiveness as a means of justice. Speaking of the connection between justice and forgiveness, St Pope John Paul II says:

The pillars of true peace are justice and that form of love which is forgiveness … because human justice is always fragile and imperfect, subject as it is to the limitations and egoism of individuals and groups, it must include and, as it were, be
completed by the forgiveness which heals and rebuilds troubled human relations from their foundations. (John Paul II, 2002)

Justice is intertwined with forgiveness as a form of love of neighbour reflecting the love of God in Catholic theology. Justice here, through the example of St Bakhita, contradicts feminist Christian Realist claims that justice within the balance of power is a series of ‘gendered, racialized and heteronormative propositions privileging primarily white men and rendering most others marginalised’ (Gentry, 2020, p. 370). Gentry suggests that ‘women and people of colour have been assumed not to possess the necessary faculties for functioning in public life, such as the capacity to evaluate notions of power and justice’ (2020, p. 370). In contrast, justice is seen here not only promoted by a Sudanese woman. It is suggested as also tied to the notion of forgiveness, complicating the links of justice and power. In advocating justice through forgiveness, St Bakhita relays its importance to the SMG mission. The Church promotes the forgiveness of sins, where sin is understood as the separation of man from God, stating that there is no offence, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. The Catechism states that ‘Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin’ (CCC, 1997, para. 982). The SMG reflects this message through St Bakhita who advocated for the forgiveness of the perpetrators of her abuse and calls on others to forgive too. It is, therefore, an example of a spiritual mission as the reason to forgive is ultimately for our own salvation.

The spiritual mission of the SMG is further demonstrated in the protection of human dignity. Cecilia, senior policy adviser at the CBCEW and involved with SMG from its inception, said:

That concept that we have as Catholics for the respect for the dignity of the human person underpins the work that we do … in Catholic Social Teaching, we are our brothers’ keeper, that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, that every human being has a right, they have dignity and that dignity needs support. So if the Church says this that they need to restore the dignity of these people, the Church needs to act … you have to embrace whatever channels to bring people back to the dignity. (personal communication, October 30, 2019)

Cecilia comments that the dignity of the human person is the foundational idea from which the Church calls itself into action. She states that Catholic action acts out human dignity because of the belief that each human is united in being made in the image and likeness of God. Matt also reflects sentiments of the SMG aligned with the theological principle of the dignity of the human person, saying:
I think, I think the Gospel message is very much around love for the vulnerable and the weak. I mean, I think it’s the mission … for me, it’s always been about being the hands and feet of Jesus in any way that you can really. So it’s not a doctrinal thing … it’s actually who Jesus is. And that’s the core really. (personal communication, October 24, 2019)

In referencing the Gospel message being of love for ‘the vulnerable and the weak’, Matt reflects the theology of the dignity of the human person. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that ‘the divine image is present in every man. It shines forth in the communion of persons, in the likeness of the unity of the divine persons among themselves’ (CCC, 1997, para. 1702). The principle of the dignity of the human person is a reflection of the imago Dei. Similar to Groody (2009) grounding a theology of migration on imago Dei, the mission of the SMG in relaying their anti-slavery message also reflects a theology grounded on the imago Dei. This understanding is distinct for the Christian actor fighting modern slavery since, while others would also focus on respect for the victim, the Christian actor is receptive to Divine graces. Leary accepts that while there exist similarities between secular and religious values in desiring to end human trafficking, because its very existence offends human dignity (2015, p. 10), she argues that the language of religion regarding the inherent dignity of persons created in the likeness of God meshes with the concept of the inherent value of human beings because they are human (Leary, 2015, p. 3). The dignity of the human person articulated by Cecilia and Matt illustrates the spiritual mission of the SMG as one placing the imago Dei at its core.

Beyond the three identified theological tenets expressed by the SMG, prayer also plays a role in the mission of the SMG. A number of those involved in running the SMG highlighted the influence of prayer on their work. Matt, former police chief and now adviser to the SMG, stressed the notion of adding prayer to the fight against modern slavery. He said:

I think the prayer side of it, as a Christian myself, you don’t just do, you pray—is spiritually very, very important… yeah you know… for a whole range of reasons. It’s who we are, isn’t it? The prayers that go into this are as important as the doing. (Matt, personal communication, October 24, 2019)

Cecilia reinforced the notion of the importance of prayer, remarking that:

If you believe you can do nothing about trafficking, think again because the least you can do is to pray. To pray for the victims, pray for those who support the work, pray for the perpetrators because prayer changes situations. We should never underestimate the power of prayer. (personal communication, October 30, 2019)
Both Matt and Cecilia identify prayer as important and powerful. The power of prayer to change situations can be considered important to the mission of the SMG. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of prayer as God’s gift, as covenant and as communion (CCC, 1997, paras. 2559–2565). Prayer as covenant speaks to the heart as ‘the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant’ (CCC, 1997, para. 2563). Prayer as communion is understood as:

- The living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit … prayer is Christian insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ’s love. (CCC, 1997, para. 2565)

Prayer has a direct relation to the Divine. The Catechism defining prayer as an encounter and relationship with God highlights why Matt and Cecilia place such importance on and see power in prayer. Further, Tan, highlighting the importance of prayer on religion and politics, argues that ‘prayer is in and of itself inherently political in nature’ (2014, p. 367) and suggests that the person at prayer also has agency in prayer (Tan, 2014, p. 378). That Matt and Cecilia insinuate that they pray illustrates their agency in the anti-slavery actions of the SMG. Prayer can be considered as part of a Divinely inspired spiritual mission of the group.

Diez (2017), along with Ryngaert (2011) and Chong and Troy (2011), as stipulated in the introduction of this section, all suggest the Church holds a spiritual sovereignty or spiritual mission to their action. The exploration of the notion of spiritual mission in SMG data confirms such a premise. By the SMG advocating justice through forgiveness, the dignity of the human person as the imago Dei, and experienced through prayer highlights a spiritual mission aligned to English School solidarist notions but, significantly, one that is derived from and driven by a God. Diez (2017), Ryngaert (2011) and Chong and Troy (2011) do not argue contrary to this point; however, they are less explicit about the fact that the spiritual mission of the Catholic Church is contingent upon God as the source of that spiritual mission. Removing the language of transcendence risks ‘spiritual’ being treated as something unrelated to a Deity, or as immanent rather than transcendent. To consider the spiritual mission of Catholic actors, continuously inspired by a Deity, would be a better way to proceed.

An alternative reading to the notion of ‘spiritual sovereignty’ as a motivational tool to SMG action, and beyond strictly the theology of the SMG, is instead SMG action based on an ethical and humane imperative. This alternative approach has a fundamental Christian
character but not exclusively so. When asked of the motivations of the SMG, David responded:

Well, the child-abuse is obviously, and I hope, has played a part. It doesn’t absolve anybody the responsibility to tackle that within its own terms but it should, I hope, and it has made us more aware, sensitive, determined to combat different forms of vulnerability and exploitation because a person, well we are all vulnerable in different ways, but a young person - take for example who is vulnerable to trafficking is likely to be vulnerable to whole host of other forms of exploitation, sexual, radicalisation–so recognising huge systemic failings, sins committed in the whole … the failure with the whole child abuse … it has been a motivation and should be a motivation.

(personal communication, November 8, 2019)

The child sex abuse scandals within the Catholic Church in England and Wales and the need to address all forms of exploitation and vulnerabilities as a result of it, has inputted into the motivations of the SMG. Therefore, whilst still solidarist attributes, this alternative reading presents SMG motivations possessing broader ethical considerations attached to present realities moreover than Divine inspiration.

Overall, the theological tenets present in the actions and motivations of the SMG indicate the preference of the Catholic Church for a solidarist conception of international society. This position, I have argued, is based on interventionist, preventative, and collaborative SMG action and motivation. It is grounded in a spiritual mission ordered to the Divine will evident in this case study through justice by forgiveness, human dignity as the imago Dei, and embedded in prayer.

**Conclusion**

In the current chapter, three Catholic theological principles were identified in the anti-slavery motivations and actions of the SMG. Section 4.1 outlined the evidence for these theological principles—dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice—examined through conciliar teachings of the Catholic Church. These three expressions of theology are characteristics of the SMG, but their ability to enable Catholic agency needed further IR analysis. I investigated the impact of SMG theology on two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective: religious customs underpinning international society and the position of the Catholic Church in the pluralist versus solidarist debates. Section 4.2 explored the notion of the common good as the foundation of international society using the arguments outlined by Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000). Theological principles inherent to the SMG support the common good as a worthy framework to underpin international society, albeit
stressing theology as the essence of such a framework. In its underpinning of international society, I argued that a common good framework enabled Catholic agency through universal yet constrained measures in SMG operations, and derived from a Deity in its mission as a vehicle between Divine and temporal spheres. Section 4.3 investigated the pluralist versus solidarist debates in the English School from the perspective of the Catholic Church through analysis of the theological principles inherent to SMG motivations and actions. The SMG adheres to the claims of Diez that the ideals of the Catholic Church match that of a solidarist international society. The theology grounding SMG operations highlighted solidarist qualities of interventionism, preventative action, and collaboration. The theology behind the SMG’s motivations favoured a spiritual mission with a Divine mandate attributed through forgiveness, dignity of the human person, and prayer. Therefore, Catholic agency is universal and interventionist in its operations, is directed by a Deity and is inspired by a Divine mission in its motivations. The next chapter applies the same research questions using an identical methodology to aspects of hierarchy present in the SMG.
Chapter Five—Hierarchy

*Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity.*

Pope Francis

The ‘hierarchy’ category in the ‘thick’ religion framework theorised by Hassner prompts the questions: ‘How is the religious movement organized, socially and politically? Who rules and makes decisions? How are these individuals chosen and ranked?’ (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). Appropriating such questions for the present research study, the current chapter analyses the hierarchical structures present within the SMG. Subsequently, it uses that analysis to further understand dimensions of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. Section 5.1 outlines structures of the Catholic hierarchy in the SMG that hold a simultaneous vertical and horizontal integration. This integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure has a distinct impact on the anti-slavery action of the SMG. I analyse this structure via two avenues of Catholic agency present in English School thought: (a) religious practices drawing actors in international society together, and (b) the position of the Catholic Church in pluralism versus solidarism English School debates. Section 5.2 assesses the hierarchical structures of the SMG in drawing actors in international society together through the flow of religious dialogue. Section 5.3 investigates the hierarchical structures of the transnational coalition in analysing the SMG as fitting both a pluralist notion of international society as a ‘diplomat’ and possessing solidarist ‘diplomatic’ qualities. The key questions asked in the present chapter, which mirror the two interrelated main research questions of the thesis, are: (i) *How does the category of ‘hierarchy’ in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group?* (ii) *What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective?* I argue that a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of hierarchy in the SMG illustrates this Catholic actor as possessing a complementarily integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure. Bringing that analysis into English School discussions on Catholic agency, I suggest that being both vertically and horizontally structured enables the Catholic actor to draw actors in international society together through its religious dialogue and be both pluralist and solidarist in its ‘diplomatic’ practices.
5.1 Hierarchy: ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Santa Marta Group

The category of ‘hierarchy’, or ‘religious organization’ as Hassner (2014, p. 7) also defines it, questions how religious movements are organised politically and socially and explores the individuals who lead them (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). When editing a volume on religion in the military, Hassner applies his ‘thick’ religion approach. On ‘hierarchy’, Hassner asks how religion affects military organisations and what role religious leaders play in the lives of soldiers (2014, p. 8). Hierarchy from a Catholic perspective draws on multiple layers within Catholic hierarchical structures. Ryall describes the Vatican as most fitting of ‘a modified oligarchic-bureaucratic model’ (1998, p. 24). Elsewhere, he speaks of organised Catholicism constituting a ‘uniquely wide range of groups within its structures, ranging from the smallest level of sub-parochial units through to missionary religious orders, such as Jesuits, that can claim to be prototypes of globalization’ (Ryall, 2001, p. 41).

Appropriating ‘thick’ religion questions on hierarchy in light of the SMG, this chapter bases its analysis upon asking the following questions: How is the Santa Marta Group organised? How is Catholic hierarchy reflected in the functioning of the Santa Marta Group? In answering these questions, I argue throughout this chapter that the Catholic hierarchy in the SMG has a complementarily integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure.

The vertical hierarchical structure of the SMG has two ends. At one end stands the leadership of Cardinal Vincent Nichols as president of the SMG along with SMG board members. At the other end of the hierarchy lies parish priests, ethnic chaplains, religious sisters, and Catholic lay networks, all of whom work at a grassroots level within communities. This vertical hierarchy evident in the SMG matches the Catholic Church hierarchy more broadly. Powers speaks of this, stating that the Roman Catholic Church has a hierarchical structure with ‘clearly defined leaders and institutions at all levels of a pyramidal structure and clear lines of teaching and organisational authority (though it is quite decentralised in its operations)’ (2010, p. 330). While the structure of the SMG matches the pyramidal structure of the Catholic Church, analysing the hierarchy of the SMG also suggests points of disjuncture within its pyramidal structure. For example, as I will explore in the sections to come, not all messages from Catholic leadership were directly followed by all bishops, ideas were initiated by lay Catholics instead of Catholic leadership, and tensions existed within the hierarchical pyramid.

Beyond vertical hierarchical structures, the SMG also evidences horizontal hierarchical structures existent in the Catholic Church. It is horizontal in two ways: firstly, the reach of the Catholic Church is global (operating worldwide within numerous countries) and
secondly, its collaboration between members is transnational (operating across national boundaries). James commented on the horizontal hierarchy present in the SMG, stating:

I think the greatest strength of Santa Marta frankly literally is with the Church’s global structure you end up having eyes, ears and capabilities in source, transit and destination countries. So as far as trafficking is concerned you’ve got that full gambit really. (personal communication, November 7, 2019)

James alludes to both the global and transnational capacities of the SMG. The global and transnational aspects of the reach of the Catholic Church is well documented in IR discourse (Vallier, 1971; Tarlton, 2012; Hertzke, 2016). Vallier speaks of the various global components of the Catholic Church—‘religious orders, monastic families, secular institutes, missionary societies or apostolic movements’—but emphasises their formal and integrated link with the pope and the Holy See (1971, pp. 480–481). Tarlton speaks of the global reach of the Catholic Church via the Catholic clergy around the world and emphasises the local communities (2012, p. 15). The SMG shows its horizontal hierarchy by incorporating numerous Catholic actors from different countries into the alliance and showcasing transnational activities between Catholic actors. Between 2014 and 2018, 60 Catholic actors from approximately 43 different countries or transnational organisations were involved in the SMG (see Appendix B-1). Transnational activities between Catholic actors include the SMG secretariat collaborating with the Catholic Church in Bangladesh and Myanmar, religious orders such as Talitha Kum and the Adoritrices, and collaborations with the Catholic University of Mary Immaculate College in Ireland and Catholic international development charities such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).

A key insight of this chapter is that the vertical and horizontal trajectories of Catholic hierarchy present in the SMG are not in opposition to one another but rather function simultaneously and act in unison. David, director of the SMG, articulates that the vertical and horizontal hierarchy of the Catholic Church evidenced by the SMG brings:

Extent … in that it is present in most countries of the world … Horizontally and vertically it crosses across most strata—from the village to the academy generally—so there’s a breadth and a depth to that experience which is, I don’t want to say unique, but highly distinctive at the very least. And that brings with it, I think, a perspective about universality, integration, and a holistic perspective at its best which is very distinctive and very, very helpful to understanding a problem like this which fundamentally can only be understood transnationally. (personal communication, November 8, 2019)
David emphasises the extent of the Catholic Church’s influence is based on its organisational structure as one stretching from those in leadership to those involved at the grassroots (i.e., vertical hierarchy), and transnationally embracing the majority of countries and the ‘extent’ that the Church reaches (i.e., horizontal hierarchy). This idea mirrors the discussions presented by Powers, who analyses Catholic peacebuilding. He argues that the vertical and horizontal integration evident in Catholic hierarchical structures is vital to the maintenance of a balance between deeply embedded ties to national, ethnic, and cultural identities attached to the influence of religion in a specific context and significantly cosmopolitan or universal elements giving religion moral authority and transnational reach (Powers, 2010, p. 331). Petito and Thomas further articulate this argument. They speak of the structure of the Catholic Church as ‘unique among the great worldwide religious organizations for its vertical universal structure converging to Rome’ (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 47). Thus, both Petito and Thomas and Powers agree that the Catholic Church brings an integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure in its involvement in international affairs. This hierarchical structure is evidenced in the hierarchical structures of the SMG.

In this section, Section 5.1, a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of SMG hierarchy illustrated the vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures of the SMG. The vertical and horizontal integration of hierarchical structures present in the SMG is a distinctive character of a Catholic actor in the anti-slavery field. This distinct characteristic evaluated by a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework requires further IR analysis to investigate the ability of these attributes to enable influence by Catholic actors in international affairs. The English School is deployed as the most robust theoretical approach to better understand Catholic agency based on its established and growing discourse on Catholicism, which contains arguments on the exercise of Catholic agency in international society. To analyse the influence of SMG hierarchy, I now engage two avenues of Catholic agency from an English School perspective: (a) religious practices drawing actors in international society together and (b) the position of the Catholic Church in a pluralist or solidarist conception of international society.

The remainder of this chapter draws upon the ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of SMG hierarchy and applies it to these two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. Within each aspect, I have drawn attention to a particular discussion among the select English School voices that form an English School conversation on Catholic agency. Concerning the first aspect of Catholic agency, I engage discussions about religious dialogue drawing together actors in international society as articulated by Petito and Thomas (2015) and McLaren and Stahl (2020). On the preference of the Catholic Church in English School
debates on a pluralist or solidarist conception of international society, I draw on conversations on ‘diplomacy’ and ‘diplomatic’ practices as articulated by Barbato (2013), Troy (2008, 2012) and Diez (2017). In the following sections, I argue the simultaneous vertical and horizontal hierarchical integration of the SMG suggests, in English School theoretical terms, religious dialogue drawing actors in international society together and Catholic ‘diplomacy’ possessing both pluralist and solidarist characteristics.

5.2 Religious Dialogue Drawing Actors in International Society Together

An aspect of Catholic agency outlined in select voices of English School thought explores how religious practices draw together actors in international society (Thomas, 2000, 2001; Pabst, 2012, 2016; McLaren & Stahl, 2020). Within such English School discussions, religious dialogue among Catholic hierarchy is one particular contribution I have identified and will draw on extensively in this section. English School discussions on religious dialogue are evident both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, Petito and Thomas (2015) speak of religious non-state actors generating and constructing new knowledge from faith actors on the ground. It must be noted that Petito and Thomas (2015) do not explicitly refer to English School theory in their article. However, the article holds elements implicitly associated with English School thinking and is aligned with other works of Thomas, where he explicitly engages English School thought (Thomas, 2000, 2001, 2013). Horizontally, McLaren and Stahl (2020) speak of interreligious dialogue creating a common religious conversation that underpins international society. Their focus is not on an international society based on one particular religious tradition but rather the commonality of being religious (McLaren & Stahl, 2020). Using these two discussions on religious dialogue to shape discourse on Catholic agency from an English School perspective, the key question asked in this section is: *What does the vertical and horizontal integration of the Santa Marta Group show us about religious dialogue in the Catholic Church drawing together actors in international society?* I investigate the hierarchical structures of the SMG—its distinct and simultaneous vertical and horizontal integration—to analyse its contribution to both these discussions on religious dialogue. Through this, I argue in the section below that the vertical and horizontal integration of the Catholic Church is a distinct attribute in enabling religious dialogue to draw together actors in international society and is a formidable structure favourable to fighting criminal networks orchestrating crimes of modern slavery.

5.2.1 Religious Dialogue in Vertical Hierarchy

From a vertical hierarchy perspective, Petito and Thomas (2015) speak of religious non-state actors generating and constructing new knowledge from grassroots action. Their
argument alludes to the importance of religious dialogue flowing from the bottom to the top of the Catholic hierarchy. Petito and Thomas warn against seeing religious non-state actors as merely ‘moral cheerleaders’, defined as ‘prophets, advocates, or activists for ideas, ethics, morality, and norms in foreign affairs and in foreign aid or international development assistance’ (2015, pp. 43–44). They argue that seen as just ‘moral cheerleaders’, the role of religious non-state actors is reduced to: ‘(1) helping to alleviate suffering and (2) bringing ethics, moral values, human rights, etc., into debates on international affairs’ (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 44). They stress that such a limited perspective justifies the concern that if ‘you bring religion into foreign policy, foreign policy gets confused with social work’ (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 43). Instead, Petito and Thomas suggest that religious non-state actors have a particular use in constructing and generating new knowledge from the ground up. They state that it is at the ‘bottom’ and not the ‘top’ of society that knowledge about IR—the functioning of political, social and economic systems and foreign policy—is constructed. The bottom of society refers to the poor and the marginalised, often referred to in Catholicism as ‘the preferential option of the poor’ (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 44). Petito and Thomas specifically argue that this category is ‘the preferential place for epistemology, for discovering what knowledge is, how it is constructed, and in whose interests it is constructed in international relations’ (2015, p. 44). Epistemology (i.e., generation of knowledge) is formed by those on the ground and at the peripheries. This argument holds true for religious actors working in local communities and lay Catholics working at the periphery of societal groups. Utilised in this way, religious dialogue flows from the bottom to the top of society. Petito and Thomas also acknowledge the flow of religious dialogue from the top to the bottom of a vertical hierarchy. They argue that Catholic actors ‘link in a unique way those that are top-down, centralized, and hierarchical with those that are bottom-up and grassroots’ (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 49). While acknowledging dialogue in both ways in a vertical hierarchy, they focus their arguments on dialogue from the bottom to the top of society.

The vertical hierarchical structures of the SMG support the claims made by Petito and Thomas that knowledge is constructed within the periphery and the notion that religious dialogue flows ‘down-up’. Additionally, the SMG evidence in an equal capacity the common perception of the Catholic Church as a pyramidal structure whereby knowledge, and thus religious dialogue, flows ‘up-down’. Therefore, SMG data evidence that religious dialogue in the Catholic Church flows vertically both ‘up-down’ and ‘down-up’. In doing so, this section concurs with the theorising of Petito and Thomas. However, it also deepens their thinking by recognising the dual direction of religious dialogue in the Catholic Church. Further, I suggest
the flow of religious dialogue is not always smooth. An identified point of disjuncture was principally a devolved structure present in the ‘up-down’ dialogue in the SMG. Nonetheless, religious dialogue being able to flow in both directions in the vertical hierarchy of the SMG makes a distinct contribution to the drawing together of actors in international society.

The vertical hierarchical structure of the SMG is pyramidal in leadership; religious dialogue flows ‘up-down’, reflecting that of the Catholic Church more broadly. An evaluation of the SMG moves the thinking of Petito and Thomas to a more balanced conclusion of religious dialogue as flowing simultaneously from the top to the bottom of society and vice versa. The alliance is led by Cardinal Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and President of the CBCEW. Cardinal Nichols speaks of three key moments that encouraged him to direct mission and actions of the Catholic Church in England and Wales towards fighting modern slavery: witnessing a young English women forced into prostitution in Italy, witnessing a partnership between religious women and the London Police Force and encouraging words from Pope Francis to keep the initiative of the SMG going (Vincent Nichols, 2016b). Because of these moments, the Catholic Church in England and Wales has placed significant resources and efforts towards a Church-led campaign against modern slavery under Cardinal Nichols’ direction. The ‘up-down’ religious dialogue is evident in SMG leadership expending resources and influencing those further down the hierarchical structure. This includes developing a safe house in London, high-level international conferences, regional meetings with local police forces and church leaders, and material resources disseminated throughout all dioceses. These efforts and resources have filtered down into other dioceses, parishes, and networks in England and Wales. The actions outlined here give evidence to the ‘up-down’ dialogue in the vertical hierarchical structures of the SMG and thus presents a counterbalance to the suggestions of Petito and Thomas that religious dialogue flows from the bottom to the top of society.

However, SMG leadership enabling this ‘up-down’ flow of religious dialogue includes religious and lay Catholics. Under the leadership and direction of Cardinal Nichols, the SMG leadership includes Bishop Patrick Lynch, auxiliary of Southwark Diocese and leading the SMG in the UK; David Ryall, director of the SMG within his position as assistant general secretary at CBCEW; Cecilia Taylor-Camara, senior policy advisor to the department of international affairs at the CBCEW; Kevin Hyland OBE, the first UK IASC; and Alexander Des Forges, press secretary of Cardinal Nichols. Vallier speaks of the vertical system of authority and administration of the Catholic Church through its system of priests, bishops, and the pope (1971, p.480). In identifying the key members of the SMG leadership
above it is important to note that vertical hierarchy in the SMG includes bishops but also includes lay Catholic men and women. The idea challenges the notion that the vertical hierarchy of the Catholic Church is solely comprised of priests, bishops and the pope as suggested by Vallier (1971).

The ‘up-down’ religious dialogue evidenced in the SMG, furthermore, is far from rigid; the SMG highlights a devolved dimension to its vertical organisation. Catholic hierarchy is perceived as one where authority filters down from Catholic leadership, and all clergy and religious are obligated to follow decisions. In contrast, the experience from the SMG suggests that not all bishops and priests acted with the same zeal, following the direction of Cardinal Nichols in the anti-slavery realm. Michael vocalised the variability of each bishop taking up the call to react to modern slavery in their respective diocese. He stated that in England and Wales, ‘there’s only one or two (bishops) that have got it’ (Michael, personal communication, November 7, 2019). He further expressed how some bishops had provided safe houses, personnel, and resources, while other bishops had not responded with the same vigour (Michael, personal communication, November 7, 2019). David, assistant general secretary at CBCEW, commented that this devolution was a strength of the Church. On this, he said that the strength of the SMG lay in ‘its flexibility. That it is devolved … there isn’t a command-and-control thing. It might be nice to have it, but we don’t. And it’s rarely the case in the Church if ever’ (personal communication, November 8, 2019). Similarly, Matt suggested there is:

No real devolution of authority in a sense, what I would say is a command-and-control mechanism from the police side. So, the bishops have to be persuaded individually that this is a priority rather than them being told that this is a priority.

(personal communication, October 24, 2019)

The research suggests that while religious dialogue in Catholic hierarchy is structured to flow ‘up-down’ vertically in a pyramidal structure, there also lies a devolved nature within such hierarchical structures. This struggle to reconcile central authority with respect for pluralism makes the history and structure of the Catholic Church fascinating (Ryall, 2001, p. 55). Religious dialogue draws together actors in international society amid complexities and constraints. The devolved nature of the ‘up-down’ flow of religious dialogue adds complexity to and challenges the top-down assumptions of Petito and Thomas (2015). Thus, the Catholic Church can be understood as structured vertically but concurrently devolved in its vertical structure.
At the same time, religious dialogue in the SMG flows ‘down-up’. This idea exemplifies the arguments of Petito and Thomas (2015) that knowledge comes from the periphery of society. Vallier agrees with the assessment of Church organisation made by Petito and Thomas, stating that ‘the main trunk of the Church’s organized life extends vertically from the parish priest up to the bishop and then to the papal apex and its immediate auxiliary units’ (Vallier, 1971, pp. 480–481). At the other end of the vertical hierarchical structure of the SMG lies religious sisters, parish priests, ethnic chaplains, and other lay Catholic networks. Their collective role lies primarily in local communities witnessing first-hand accounts of modern slavery crimes, identifying criminals, and preventing atrocities. This reflects David’s description of the vertical structure of the SMG as bringing ‘penetration in that where it is present it goes deep into a society’ (personal communication, November 8, 2019). Parish priests play a significant role on the ground. A priest in a remote village, as Matt highlights, ‘is going to influence how people think so there is a small p political as well as a religious’ (personal communication, October 24, 2019). Therefore, parish priests have a more significant role than the leading of liturgy and spiritual mission of their congregation; they can directly impact preventing and promoting social concerns. Religious chaplains, who are also priests, support particular groups of society. For example, chaplains working in prisons, on ships, and amongst specific ethnic communities. The Diocese of Westminster principally coordinates chaplains for specific groups of different nationalities as they reside in the UK, for example, Lithuanian, Nigerian, Filipino, Polish and Vietnamese. These chaplains, in particular, have the potential to play a significant role as modern slavery crosses borders. Michael, former deputy director of the SMG, remarked, ‘the Church offers a route into communities that are hard to reach for the police. Like we just talked about, the Vietnamese. They will speak to the Vietnamese chaplaincy, but they won’t speak to us (the police)’ (personal communication, November 7, 2019). This highlights the role chaplains can play in knowing their communities and being trusted community members. Thus, the ‘bottom’ of the vertical pyramid of the Catholic hierarchy holds knowledge from the peripheries that can be filtered upwards and are vehicles to effect change at a grassroots level. Such an argument reflects the arguments made by Petito and Thomas (2015) of religious non-state actors as vehicles of knowledge. It evidences that they can play a role beyond humanitarian assistance. Rather, they can play a key role in helping governments construct new knowledge that affects state interests and policy goals (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 44).

The foundation of the development of the SMG gives a further specific example of how religious dialogue operates ‘down-up’, providing an empirical example to the theoretical
arguments outlined by Petito and Thomas. They draw attention to the community level, where they argue epistemology is constructed and developed to benefit those in decision making positions in society (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 44). A Justice and Peace group, a group of lay Catholics in a Catholic parish, played a significant role in the early stages of SMG development. Cecilia speaks of their input:

It [the SMG] started with a conversation between a police officer and his local Justice and Peace group, that was…Detective Inspector Kevin Hyland of UK Metropolitan Police Service and local Justice and Peace group in Ware, Hertfordshire. He shared his work at the human exploitation unit of the Metropolitan Police Services. The people were shocked but also anxious and they thought what can we do? He encouraged them—to go and share the message they heard. That will be a start. The Justice and Peace group asked Kevin to approach the Church and find out how the message could be disseminated. He thought his best avenue would be through the Bishops’ Conference. So he actually came to the Bishops’ Conference, this was in 2010 in the lead up to the Olympics. (personal communication, 30 October 2019)

The SMG was not established by the authority of Pope Francis or the Holy See. It developed more organically by encouragement from lay Catholics and was implemented by bishops in one country. Therefore, this example shows the role of Catholic lay networks to see acts of injustice occurring in society and encourage Catholic leadership (i.e., those at the top of the vertical Catholic hierarchy) to act. The account of the origins of the SMG by the CBCEW contradicts widely perceived notions of the Catholic Church as a command-and-control model via the pope and the Holy See. In this way, it gives further insight into the arguments of Petito and Thomas (2015) on the construction of knowledge from those regarded at the bottom of societal structures. Petito and Thomas argue that religious non-state actors construct knowledge to assist government officials. They say that religious non-state actors play more than the role of moral cheerleader or humanitarian aid. Rather, they are key in constructing new knowledge for the foreign ministry of a state on what is going on and how it affects its interests. This new knowledge is generated by the communication and dialogue with religious non-state actors at a grassroots level (Petito & Thomas, 2015, p. 44). Religious dialogue is evidenced as a tool by which those at the peripheries or working in communities regarded as the bottom of society can inform governmental decisions by creating new knowledge of key importance. In this example on the SMG foundation, knowledge created at the periphery within a specific local Catholic sphere by lay Catholics assisted national and international Catholic leadership. Therefore, ‘down-up’ religious
dialogue within the Catholic Church supports the argument theorised by Petito and Thomas (2015) that religious dialogue can draw together actors in society by constructing new knowledge that flows upwards.

5.2.2 Religious Dialogue in Horizontal Hierarchy

McLaren and Stahl (2020) speak of interreligious dialogue creating a common religious conversation that underpins international society from a horizontal hierarchical perspective. Their focus is not on an international society based on a common religion from one particular religious tradition but rather the commonality of being religious (McLaren & Stahl, 2020). To articulate this argument, they draw on the interreligious dialogue between the Holy See and Iran. In their case study, they speak of the visit of Cardinal Tauran attending a Christian-Islamic meeting in 2010 where he delivered a message from the pope to the Iranian President Ahmadinejad, who himself sought to strengthen ties between the Holy See and Iran (McLaren & Stahl, 2020, p. 196). Subsequent Iranian presidents have stressed the importance of cooperation between the two Abrahamic religions on common interest matters such as justice and peace in the world (McLaren & Stahl, 2020, pp. 196–197).

Whilst their example might be contested, McLaren and Stahl suggest that common religious assertions invite interreligious dialogue, which proposes religion as drawing actors in international society together. They draw on the work of Buzan but elaborate from it that religion, and particularly the multitude of religions, provides a strong foundation for building societies (McLaren & Stahl, 2020, p. 199). This is based on a belief that ‘religion not only offers a strong set of long-term and enduring goals, values, and rules; it also impacts the constitution of actors and their possibilities of interacting’ (McLaren & Stahl, 2020, p. 199). A religious foundation, more than emphasising one common religion, they argue, suffices to provide a foundation to international society. They explicitly state that while Buzan emphasised that a common religion strengthened identity, the Holy See and Iran are inherently or constitutively religious. This gives a foundation for interaction significantly in interreligious dialogue (McLaren & Stahl, 2020, p. 196). Thus, according to McLaren and Stahl (2020), interreligious dialogue based upon religion as the common denominator draws actors in international society together.

From a horizontal hierarchical perspective, the SMG offers a different but related way to engage the theorising of McLaren and Stahl (2020). There is a valid argument to be made drawing upon intrareligious dialogue moreover than interreligious dialogue. McLaren and Stahl (2020) focus on interreligious dialogue, with religion being the commonality between different faith traditions in the international realm. In contrast, my analysis of the SMG
analyses intrareligious dialogue between different transnational Catholic actors. Similarly, both address independent faith actors that operate transnationally and communicate with one another. I argue in this section that the SMG provides an example of intrareligious dialogue among Catholic independent transnational members. However, I acknowledge that while this remains true, the data also suggests that intrareligious dialogue occurs separately from the pope or the Holy See. The involvement of each transnational Catholic actor relies on individual persuasion reflecting intra-Catholic tensions.

The SMG demonstrates the intrareligious dialogue within the Catholic Church in a transnational capacity. This is possible due to the Church being ‘a worldwide network of formal and informal transnational ties, from the administrative structures based in Rome to the grassroots connections between parishes in the developed and developing worlds’ (Ferrari, 2006, pp. 43–44). Similarly, Hertzke (2016) notes the headquarters of the Catholic Church residing in the Vatican. At the same time, he describes multiple national and regional episcopal conferences, religious orders, relief and development organisations, charities, hospitals, and educational associations which are involved in politics that also exist within the Catholic Church (Hertzke, 2016, p. 39). In the SMG, Catholic actors have bilateral collaborations with equivalent Catholic actors across countries on the international stage; bishops in one country partner with bishops in another. James, digital manager at CBCEW, speaks of this structure as one whereby it is a ‘global network and the ability of very senior people to speak to other very senior people around the globe’ (personal communication, November 7, 2019). This transnational collaboration is echoed by Powers, stating that ‘horizontally, the Catholic Church functions as a transnational actor which collaborates horizontally among coreligionists around the world’ (2010, p. 330). This intrareligious transnational dialogue among the SMG relies upon its horizontal hierarchical structures. The horizontal structures in the SMG take the form of bilateral partnerships with other Catholic religious and state actors.

A specific example of a bilateral partnership in this case study is between the SMG and the Church and law enforcement in Lithuania as described in Chapter Three. This partnership has resulted in sharing knowledge and best practice, encouragement, and international visits between key personnel. A delegation of the Church and law enforcement from Lithuania led by the Lithuanian Chancellor of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Mr Stončaitis, met with Cardinal Nichols and SMG leadership in 2017 to discuss ways to share knowledge and best practice (SMG, 2017a). In June 2017, Cardinal Nichols was invited to address the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) (SMG, 2017b). He spoke of evidence of
Lithuanians being trafficked to the UK in dioceses such as Salford, East Anglia, Southwark, and Westminster. Cardinal Nichols spoke with Prime Minister Skvernelis ‘to strengthen the links with Lithuania and encourage their commitment to the struggle against human trafficking’ (SMG, 2017b). During this trip, Cardinal Nichols also met with the Lithuanian Church, in particular Archbishop Grušas, Archbishop of Vilnius (SMG, 2017b). Such an example of a bilateral partnership demonstrates the horizontal structures of the Catholic Church. In this instance, a Catholic actor in one country formed an association with an equivalent ranking Catholic actor in another country without an order from the top of the hierarchical chain. As such, an element of intrareligious dialogue along the horizontal structure of the Catholic Church is evident. Further, this bilateral partnership evidences the religious and state actors collaborating within SMG structures. Marshall draws attention to the positive impact of religious actors in the trafficking field stating, ‘in fact, it may be one of the best examples of cooperation between religious and non-religious actors in addressing a global issue’ (2010, p. 39). The intrareligious dialogue between SMG leadership (i.e., Cardinal Nichols, the Church and law enforcement in Lithuania) supports argument outlined by Marshall. It showcases the transnational capacities of horizontal hierarchical structures drawing actors in international society together.

The argument I have engaged with thus far of intrareligious dialogue based on common faith is different from the arguments articulated by McLarren and Stahl (2020). However, it evidences religious dialogue as intrareligious and transnational in the context of the Catholic Church. Analysing intrareligious dialogue in the SMG also illustrated that transnational interactions between Catholic actors occur without direction from the pope or the Holy See, and elements of tension were raised including the individual persuasion of each Catholic actor.

An element of intrareligious dialogue along the horizontal structure of Catholic hierarchy in the SMG shows that religious dialogue occurs without explicit instruction from the Head of the Catholic Church. In the above example, the SMG formed a relationship with the Lithuanian Catholic Church without instruction from the pope or Holy See. Therefore, a Catholic actor in one country formed an association with an equivalent ranking Catholic actor in another without an order from the top Catholic hierarchical leadership. Haynes speaks to this, exploring the internationalisation of Catholicism after the mid-twentieth century when the Vatican was no longer the inevitable centre (2001, p. 150). Haynes instead claims that numerous geographically dispersed centres of Catholicism emerged, which assisted the growth of many transnational Catholic networks and exchanges (2001, p. 150). Speaking of
the transnational connections, he states, ‘criss-crossing national and world regions, they often bypassed Rome’ (Haynes, 2001, p. 150). The bilateral partnership between the SMG and the Catholic Church in Lithuania can be considered an example of what Haynes refers to as a transnational Catholic network and exchange that crisscrosses regions and bypasses Rome. The significance of this is that it calls into question the pyramidal structure understanding of the Church, where authority is directed from above. Rather, exchanges and collaborations are taking place within the same level of hierarchy. Therefore, the horizontal hierarchical structures that enable intrareligious dialogue can be considered adaptable in drawing together actors in international society.

While intrareligious dialogue among horizontal hierarchical structures is evident in the SMG, it must also be underscored that not all transnational actors of the Catholic Church have involved themselves with the SMG. This suggests intra-Catholic contestations in the Catholic hierarchy. The list of Catholic actors involved in the SMG is evident in Appendix B-1. From this list, it is evident that not all bishops in the Catholic Church in each country are members of this transnational Catholic-led coalition. Numerous reasons explain this: unfamiliarity with the SMG or modern slavery, inability to participate in the coalition or representing a very small Catholic population. Nonetheless, not all bishops being involved in the SMG is evidence that the pyramidal structure of Catholic hierarchy is not authoritarian, wherein all Catholic actors follow the instructions from leadership. Rather, in this example, each Catholic Church per country needs to be individually persuaded to understand the significance of the involvement in an anti-slavery coalition. This non-conformist manner reflects that Catholic actors are monolithic yet not homogeneous. The differences among the views of the Catholic hierarchy provides lively debate in Catholic discourse. Faggioli illustrates an example of such differences within Catholic discourse. He draws explicit attention to the different dynamics between recent papacies. Faggioli talks of the understanding of the role of the Church by Pope Francis as rooted in the ‘political-economic antagonism on behalf of the working people’. He denounces this as fundamentally different to Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II. They understood the Church as a ‘cultural warrior in the moral crusades set in motion by contemporary bio-politics’ (Faggioli, 2020, pp. 48–49). This division between the papacies, according to Faggioli, gives an example of an intra-Catholic debate present in Catholic discourse. It is unlikely the reason for the engagement or non-engagement of autonomous Catholic actors in the SMG, as modern slavery is an issue all three popes mentioned have spoken out against. Still, it demonstrates the diverse views in Catholicism. Such diversity is reflected in every layer of the Catholic
hierarchy. Intrareligious dialogue between horizontal Catholic hierarchical structures has the capacity of drawing actors in international society. However, it is at the same time dependent on the cooperation of the independent actors involved and nuanced by the multitude of opinions within Catholicism. Nevertheless, despite their complexities, the horizontal structures enable intrareligious dialogue to occur, drawing together actors in international society even in a tentative but unified way.

5.2.3 Religious Dialogue in Vertical and Horizontal Hierarchy

Religious dialogue occurring simultaneously vertically and horizontally in the SMG suggests new theoretical dimensions to Catholic agency in international society. As evident above, the SMG reflects the Catholic Church as vertically and horizontally structured, enabling dialogue aligned with those structures. Petito and Thomas (2015) and McLaren and Stahl (2020), as explored above, draw on aspects of Catholic hierarchical structures in theorising elements of religious dialogue. Neither, however, draw on the simultaneously integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures of the Catholic Church. Thus, both positions are limited in their evaluations of religious dialogue as a quality drawing together actors in international society. The vertical hierarchical structures of the SMG have illustrated that religious dialogue flows both ‘up-down’ and ‘down-up’, and at times is contested and complex. The horizontal hierarchical structures of the SMG evidenced that religious dialogue occurred transnationally, even without instruction from the Head of the Catholic Church and despite depending on individual engagement and contested intra-Catholic views. The integration of the vertical and horizontal aspects of Catholic hierarchy makes a distinct contribution to religious dialogue enabled by the Catholic actor. As mentioned earlier, David stated this integrated vertical and horizontal structure was ‘highly distinctive at the very least’ (personal communication, November 8, 2019). It reinforces the argument of Powers that the vertical and horizontal integration of the Catholic Church entwines deep cultural, ethnic, and national ties with universal elements that give religion its transnational reach (2010, p. 331).

The integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchy of the Catholic Church can also be explored through CST principle of subsidiarity. The Catechism defines subsidiarity as the principle wherein

a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good (CCC, 1997, para. 1883)
Subsidiarity in this instance is evident in vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures of the SMG. The flow of religious dialogue ‘up-down’ and ‘down-up’ in vertical hierarchy as well as actors working across borders in horizontal hierarchy demonstrates subsidiarity in that all actors involved are working to coordinate their activity and effort with a view to upholding the common good which in of itself excludes notions of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Religious dialogue flowing simultaneously vertically and horizontally in the SMG, and Catholic actors, more generally, epitomises theoretical assumptions of religious practices drawing actors in international society together. The English School discourse on the Catholic Church suggests Catholic practices possess attributes to draw together actors in international society (Thomas, 2000, 2001; Pabst, 2012; McLaren & Stahl, 2020). An example of this is religious dialogue. Religious dialogue, occurring vertically and simultaneously horizontally within Catholic hierarchy, suggests the ability of the Catholic actor to exert agency in international society. This is distinct because very few actors in international society can make such an equal claim. Instead, other actors are limited by borders or are limited by their position in one section of a hierarchical structure. However, for the Catholic Church, collaborations, exchanges and dialogue go broad throughout the world (horizontal hierarchy) and deep into society and those leading society (vertical hierarchy). This ability to be simultaneously broad and deep exemplifies the theoretical English School ideas of religious practices drawing together actors in international society.

The vertical and horizontal integration of the SMG hierarchical structure makes the SMG a formidable actor in the fight against modern slavery. This is because the organised criminal network of traffickers is itself global and local. Modern slavery is a transnational crime, where trafficking networks communicate across borders and are highly organised in leadership and deeply embedded into communities. The SMG demonstrates the attributes needed to tackle such an issue via its vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures. Leary speaks to this point, saying ‘as a crime with both global and local dimension, trafficking must be combatted with tools that are both global and local. Such tools include the world’s religions and religious organizations’ (2018, p. 52). Religious actors can match the global reach, local expertise, and organisational structures of trafficking networks (Leary, 2018, p. 56). This idea of the global and local reach of religious actors and organised criminals is further elaborated upon by Leary, who stresses that faith-based organisations are among the very few capable of being as adaptable as criminal organisations on both local and global levels (2018, p. 54). Leary (2018) emphasises the adaptable nature of religious actors.
working at the local and global levels and their ability to transcend state boundaries. Having simultaneous vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures that enable religious dialogue to flow vertically ‘up-down’ and ‘down-up’ and horizontally is an antidote to trafficking networks. As an actor with an integrated horizontal and vertical hierarchical structure, the SMG possesses the qualities of a distinct and formidable actor to address modern slavery and its organised crime networks.

The perception of power dynamics at times constrains religious dialogue. The perception holds that the anti-slavery work of women religious is unseen or given less visibility and perhaps disregarded. In contrast, the work of bishops is highlighted. Michael, former deputy director of the SMG, alludes to such perceptions as ‘the people in Rome speaking about this and that’ and the ‘resentment with women religious … people on the ground not getting the credit’ (personal communication, November 7, 2019). The perception is that bishops are regarded as those making decisions, whereas religious sisters are on the ground doing the work. While the integrated hierarchical structure is an effective mechanism against trafficking networks, free-flowing religious dialogue is constrained by real or perceived tensions within the hierarchy. Such instances can cause obstacles to its simultaneous vertical and horizontal hierarchy and problems in channels of religious dialogue. Cardinal Nichols, in particular, has strongly advocated for the recognition of the value of religious women in the anti-slavery realm. As Cardinal Nichols stated at a conference to delegates at the UN, ‘we must salute the religious women who lead on this … traumatised victims will trust religious sisters and that first step is essential’ (SMG, 2018c). Both bishops and religious sisters bring distinct qualities to the international anti-slavery fight. The bishops make decisions at a national and international level while priests, religious, and lay Catholics are grassroots actors. As Michael states, ‘you need both, but you need communication between the two’ (personal communication, November 7, 2019). While Catholic actors have a distinct simultaneous vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure leading it to be a formidable partner in the fight against modern slavery, it must also be noted that Catholic hierarchy comes with real or perceived perceptions of complex power dynamics that constrain religious dialogue. Yet, because of these tensions, as Ryall indicates, the Catholic Church is a rich example of a transnational actor since it can hold together in unity and diversity and a fragile balance (2001, pp. 55–56). Inclusive of such constraints within its simultaneously integrated vertical and horizontal structure, it is not preventative of Catholic hierarchy enabling religious dialogue to flow, illustrating the richness that theoretically Catholic agency brings to international society.
Overall, this section has highlighted through a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the hierarchy of the SMG that the Catholic actor possesses a simultaneously integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure. This distinct hierarchical structure enables the flow of religious dialogue, drawing together actors in international society. At the same time, religious dialogue can be restricted or constrained by tensions. Despite such challenges, Catholic agency—the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations—is evident in this first aspect from an English School perspective, by religious dialogue drawing together actors in international society because of an integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure. The next section brings in discussions intersecting the integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures of the SMG and the second aspect of Catholic agency from an English School perspective—the preference of the Catholic Church in English School debates between a pluralist and solidarist conception of international society.

5.3 The Santa Marta Group as Actor in Pluralism Versus Solidarism English School Debates on ‘Diplomacy’

This next section intersects the hierarchical structures of the SMG with the second identified aspect of Catholic agency from an English School perspective—the preference of the Catholic Church in English School debates between pluralist and solidarist conceptions of international society. English School scholars articulate that the Catholic Church fits both pluralist and solidarist ideas of international society (Barbato, 2013; Diez, 2017; Troy, 2012). A pluralist conception of international society is defined by a low degree of shared norms, rules, and institutions by states and international society with a framework of orderly coexistence, competition, and collective problems (Buzan, 2014, p. 89). In contrast, a solidarist conception of international society is principally concerned with ‘the justice side of the order/justice dilemma, particularly with human rights and the question of intervention’ (Buzan, 2014, p. 113). It focuses on the possibility of shared moral norms underpinning a more interventionist understanding of international order (Buzan, 2014, p. 114). The purpose of this section is to use the ‘thick’ analysis of SMG hierarchy—its distinct and simultaneous vertical and horizontal integration—to investigate the ‘diplomacy’ of the Catholic Church fitting a pluralist or solidarist international society. The words ‘diplomacy’ and ‘diplomatic’ practices are used in the present chapter in line with English School scholarship rather than broadly construed IR definitions of diplomacy. ‘Diplomacy’ is seen as a core institution where states meet in international society (Diez, 2017, p. 37). ‘Diplomacy’ is considered the link between the actor and international society (Troy, 2016, p. 3) and an expression of
agency in international society (Troy, 2016, p. 7). Thus, investigating ‘diplomacy’ in the SMG is a specific and important way to better understand preferences between pluralism and solidarism. I analyse the ‘diplomacy’ of the SMG by drawing heavily on the Holy See as a multi-layered actor (Barbato, 2013), the ideas associated with ‘diplomacy’ tied to English School understandings of solidarism and the concept of world society (Troy, 2008a, 2012; Diez, 2017), and the role of soft power and public ‘diplomacy’ as solidarist actions (Diez, 2017). The key question I ask is: What does the vertical and horizontal integration of the Santa Marta Group show us about the Catholic Church conducting pluralist or solidarist ‘diplomacy’? The SMG as ‘diplomat’ and its ‘diplomatic’ practices illustrate the Catholic Church fitting both pluralist and solidarist understandings of international society due to its vertical and horizontal hierarchy. I argue in this section the vertical and horizontal integration of the Catholic Church gives the SMG distinct attributes that enable it to be a ‘diplomat’ in a pluralist international society while conducting ‘diplomacy’ with a solidarist outlook.

### 5.3.1 The Santa Marta Group Fitting a Pluralist International Society as ‘Diplomat’

The SMG suits a pluralist conception of international society through its status as ‘diplomat’ explored through a model of multi-layered actor theorised by Barbato. He principally argued that the Catholic Church, via the Holy See, can play on several layers due to its simultaneous ‘actorness’ as a ‘diplomat’, a sovereign of a territorial state, and the leader of a transnational Church (Barbato, 2013). Barbato demonstrates the agency of the Holy See as an accepted peer in international society that conducts its ‘diplomacy’ as a result of its multi-layered ‘actorness’ as a ‘diplomat’, territorial state, and leader of a transnational Church (Barbato, 2013). Adding to this, he claims that the solidarist leanings of the Catholic Church result from the ideas and norms associated with its spiritual dimension of doing the will of God (Barbato, 2013, p. 37). Leaning more heavily on the layer of ‘diplomat’ in Barbato’s theorising, the vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures of the SMG evidence this transnational Catholic-led coalition as ‘diplomat’ in the society of states. While agreeing with the arguments of Barbato, I extend his thought to encompass other Catholic actors. The SMG as ‘diplomat’ can be seen vertically through its input in the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the SMG partnering with the Office of the UK IASC. Horizontally, the SMG as ‘diplomat’ is evident through its inclusion in the Modern Slavery Strategy of the UK (2014) and its involvement in implementing Target 8.7 to the UN SDGs.

The SMG as ‘diplomat’ in a pluralist international society is evident through its vertical hierarchy. The Catholic Church is a peer in the society of states beyond the level of
pope and the Holy See as theorised by Barbato; it is also present at other hierarchical levels, as evident in this transnational Catholic-led coalition. The SMG influenced UK Government policy in what eventually became the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015. Cecilia speaks of this:

The Church has influenced change of the law. As you are aware, the Bishops Conference contributed through the legislation. I was one of the witnesses to share our experience within the Church in supporting victims and the proposed increase in sentencing of perpetrators that was fed into the legislation...The Modern Slavery Act 2015...When the Modern Slavery Bill was going through parliament... as it developed, we recommended that the punishment for traffickers be such that it would be a deterrent and suggested life imprisonment. The sentences were too lenient for the gravity of the crime. Human trafficking ruins the lives of the victims physically and psychologically while traffickers get away with less severe penalties. You know very few people in the legal system understood the gravity of the problem then and so the sentences were lenient. We advocated for a victim-centred approach. These experiences from the grassroots were fed into policy formation. (personal communication, 30 October 2019)

Cecilia recalls the input of the SMG into the UK Modern Slavery Bill in which it argued for stricter punishments for traffickers. This example evidences the vertical hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the UK being asked by the UK Government to contribute to the policymaking process. It evidences a Catholic actor seen as a respected, political actor at a national level—in English School language, a religious actor as a peer with a state actor in international society. Therefore, not only the pope or Holy See exert agency as a peer in international society, a Catholic coalition, too, can exert agency as a peer to a state and possessor of similar ‘diplomat’ status.

Further, the ‘actorness’ of the Catholic Church on the political stage as defined by Barbato, and thus its status as a peer in a pluralist international society, is evident in the SMG partnering with a government agency: the Office of the UK IASC. As part of this collaboration, jointly organised regional meetings in Peterborough, East Anglia, were coordinated on 22 June 2016, followed by another meeting on 29 November 2016. Present at the meetings were Bishop Patrick Lynch (representing the SMG), Bishop Alan Hopes (Bishop of East Anglia), Kevin Hyland (the IASC of the UK), and other official representatives of the SMG and the Office of the IASC. Also invited to the meetings were chaplains for the Slovak, Romanian, Lithuanian, Polish, African and Portuguese communities, leading modern slavery police officers from the Norfolk, Suffolk,
Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, and Kent police forces and Catholic parish priests, sisters, and parishioners (SMG, 2016d). Of these meetings, the UK IASC, Kevin Hyland, said:

The issue of modern-day slavery is active in every community. We know that Pope Francis has made this a priority and Prime Minister Theresa May has made it a priority, so it is important that we get the communities that can actually respond to the suffering and the vulnerability. The Santa Marta Group is all about bringing the church and police leaders together. The meeting in Peterborough was about bringing these people together, talking about ideas and seeing how the Church can influence this area and work hand-in-hand with the police. (as quoted in SMG, 2016d)

Different levels of ‘actorness’ of the Catholic Church can interact and work together with the state on this combined interest (SMG, 2016d). The SMG is a vehicle for such collaboration at all levels of the vertical and hierarchical structures within the Church and of the state. Similarities in vertical and hierarchical structures follow a pyramidal structure of both Catholic and state actors. Collaboration at all vertical and hierarchical levels indicates the Catholic Church as an accepted peer in society and the SMG as ‘diplomat’ in a pluralist conception of international society. In this way, extending the theorising of Barbato (2013), Catholic actors beyond the pope and the Holy See possess pluralist characteristics through their vertical and hierarchical structures.

Horizontally, the SMG acts as ‘diplomat’ in a pluralist international society by it being formally recognised within the Modern Slavery Strategy of the UK (2014). Under the sub-heading of international cooperation and along with a photo of Pope Francis meeting the then Home Secretary Theresa May MP, the Modern Slavery Strategy of the UK states

Continuing to lead and support the Santa Marta Group, launched in April 2014 by Pope Francis, which brings together senior international law enforcement chiefs and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church to strengthen and coordinate the response to tackling modern slavery globally. London will host the next conference in December 2014, with further events planned in Spain and Ireland in 2015. (Modern Slavery Strategy, 2014, p. 41)

The inclusion of the SMG in Modern Slavery Strategy of the UK government and the ongoing support to it evidences pluralist dimensions of the SMG as the Catholic-led coalition is considered a worthy actor to be cooperating with by a state on the international political stage.
Furthermore, the SMG can be seen as a ‘diplomat’ fitting a pluralist international society in its orchestrating ability to implement Target 8.7 of the UN SDGs that called for the eradication of modern slavery and human trafficking by 2025 (UN, 2015). Target 8.7 was added to the SDGs, not exclusively, through the help of Catholic actors, including the SMG and the Holy See. Cecilia remarked:

The Santa Marta Group has been instrumental in the progress achieved through international protocols, action plans and other initiatives … particularly the Sustainable Development Goals. In April 2016, Cardinal Nichols and the Anti-Slavery Commissioner Kevin Hyland led a UK delegation to the UN for a Santa Marta summit. The visit led to the successful inclusion of the human trafficking in the Sustainable Development Goals Target 8.7. You know, it came through the efforts of trusted partners including the UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner, the Vatican and the member states who worked to develop this goal. The Church has a global reach, it has access to knowledge and huge experience that we bring to the table, and people look to the Church for examples of good practice. (personal communication, October 30, 2019).

Cecilia illustrates that the SMG as a transnational coalition of Catholic and state actors has resulted in international political legislation. This has resulted from collaborations between trusted partners and diplomatic efforts between peers in a pluralist conception of international society. David, also commenting on this event, speaks of the SMG as the vehicle used to influence the UN, driven by individuals rather than as an institution. He says:

The credit for that is personal rather than institutional which belongs to Kevin Hyland who drove it along with Sánchez Sorondo who came in and brought it before the pope and the pope endorsed it… It is quite a remarkable aspect of it, in a sense of the Santa Marta vehicle was used but that was Kevin and I think Sánchez Sorondo … if you have clarity, focus, determination, then you can change the international agenda. (personal communication, November 8, 2019).

David highlights the complexity of the source of agency in this political achievement. He suggests the implementation of Target 8.7 to the SDGs should be credited to the individuals of Kevin Hyland, Bishop Sorondo and Pope Francis. However, he does concede that the SMG had a mobilising role to play in being a vehicle in which brought these individuals together and coordinated the effort to implement Target 8.7 into the SDGs. The complexity of the source of agency is reflected in English School discourse in continued and complex debates on where agency lies in the Catholic Church. Troy suggests that agency in
the Catholic Church is multifold—lying with the pope (Troy, 2008, 2018), the Holy See (Troy, 2017, 2018) and a framework of religious principles (Troy, 2016). The example of the political achievement of Target 8.7 and questions surrounding individual and state efforts to affect such a change reflects the complexity of Catholic agency. Beyond the categories of Troy, the SMG, as well as Catholic individuals, is one of the vehicles that had some influence in the international political achievement of Target 8.7. That being the case, beyond only the pope and the Holy See, I suggest that other examples of Catholic actors can be considered equal members of international society and thus can exert agency as ‘diplomats’ in a pluralist conception of international society. This extends the arguments laid out by Barbato (2013) to include other examples of Catholic actors as ‘diplomats’ in a pluralist conception of international society beyond the pope and the Holy See, adding new breadth to English School theorising.

5.3.2 The Solidarist ‘Diplomatic’ Practices of the Santa Marta Group

While English School scholarship articulated, and I have argued above, that Catholic actors fit a pluralist international society in its status as ‘diplomat’, English School scholarship also illustrates the ‘diplomatic’ practices of Catholic actors as solidarist (Troy, 2008a, 2012; Diez, 2017). The following chapter, on iconography, emphasises the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church. However, here the focus is on practices of Catholic action via ‘diplomatic’ engagements. This section explores select arguments of Troy and Diez, notably ‘diplomacy’ tied to English School understandings of solidarism and a concept of world society, to investigate the ‘diplomatic’ practices of the SMG via its vertical and horizontal hierarchy. The argument articulated is that existing English School understandings of ‘diplomacy’ can present solidarist attributes, and this can be evidenced by the solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices of the SMG.

Buzan speaks of diplomacy as a core pluralist attribute concerning communication between states (2014, p. 149). However, drawing on the work of Hall, he concludes that diplomacy is a weakening institution evolving in a way that shifts it from being a pluralist institution and instead into one that incorporates room for non-state actors and solidarist issues (Buzan, 2014, p. 150). The idea of diplomacy, traditionally conceived as a pluralist attribute, leaning towards solidarism is particularly evident in English School scholarship on the Catholic Church. Troy draws on Sharp to characterise English School understandings of ‘diplomacy’ as a system that incorporates the virtues of charity and self-restraint, which enables good relations with those considered outside of one’s society or community of shared understandings, rules, and outlook (Sharp, as cited in Troy, 2008b, p. 226). This definition
provides an example of a solidarist dimension of ‘diplomacy’ in English School theorising to which Buzan and Hall allude. According to Troy, the Catholic Church mirrors this understanding of ‘diplomacy’ as solidarist through its concept of solidarity. Troy argues that the Catholic idea of solidarity—a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good—can be seen within the ‘English School theory in its controversial but nevertheless important concept of world society and basis of solidarism with a tendency towards cosmopolitanism in its ethical commitments’ (Troy, 2008a, p. 70). This intersection, Troy argues, views humanity as one and the task of ‘diplomacy’ to be for the immanent solidarity of interests and values into reality (Troy, 2008a, p. 70). Troy draws parallels between English School notions of ‘diplomacy’ with its solidarist attributes and solidarity in the Catholic Church through the concepts of world society and cosmopolitan and ethical bases of solidarism. Diez (2017) also asserts that the Catholic Church, namely the Holy See, uses solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices of soft power, public ‘diplomacy’ and a ‘diplomacy’ of peace. Diez argues that traditional understandings of diplomacy, as an institution of international society, has changed to one whereby it is intertwined with the solidarisation of international society (2017, p. 34). He argues that the solidarising of international society has resulted in the increased relevance of non-state actors such as Catholic actors and their role in a conception of world society in English School discussions (Diez, 2017).

Both Troy and Diez draw attention to debates between a solidarist international society and the concept of world society in English School theory. The lines between the two are contested in English School theory. A solidarist international society would be one in which all units are equal in domestic laws and recognition of duty in humanitarian intervention, and open to admitting institutions other than states (Buzan, 2014, p. 125). Whereas world society suggests an inclusive mixture of states, groups, transnational entities, and individuals all sharing some key values and legal standing with one another (Buzan, 2014, p. 125). This section explores select arguments of Troy and Diez, principally their shared entanglement of solidarist ‘diplomacy’ in international society with the English School concept of world society, through investigating the ‘diplomatic’ practices of the SMG via its vertical and horizontal hierarchy. I argue that vertically the SMG evidence solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices via soft power ‘diplomacy’ at both ends of its vertical hierarchy. Horizontally, the solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices of the SMG are evident in the forming of trusted partnerships between religious and state actors. These ‘diplomatic’ practices evidence English School understandings of solidarism and discussions of a solidarist international society but do not bridge over to ideas more aligned to a conception of world society.
The vertical hierarchical structure of the SMG demonstrates its solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices by both the top and bottom of the vertical hierarchy having the ability to motivate others. Influencing others into action can be considered solidarist as it adopts interventionist approach—interventionism being a solidarist quality. The purpose of the SMG was not to be a grassroots actor but instead, one that led from the top motivating those on the ground. Matt, who was first involved with the SMG as a former police chief and then as adviser to the SMG, describes the SMG as a ‘movement … that exists to inspire creative people to do things rather than actually being about the Church’s collective influence in a sense’ (personal communication, October 24, 2019). This so-called movement exerts ‘diplomacy’, which in turn results in a form of Catholic agency, by inspiring others to act. James stated:

I never saw ours as a grassroots … you know, we’re going to go into a bar, see someone young and vulnerable that’s clearly in a bit of danger and might be exploited by a trafficker and go and rescue her. I’d love to think we could do that, but I suppose the better and more productive way is to think we might empower other people to do that. (personal communication, November 7, 2019).

SMG members, those in key leadership positions as well as those working at a grassroots level in both religious and state capacities, exert ‘diplomacy’ by empowering and inspiring others to act against the crime of modern slavery. This ability to motivate others as an example of agency is evident, as I will explore, from both the top and the bottom of its vertical hierarchical structures.

The vertical hierarchical structure of the SMG demonstrates solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices by both the top of the vertical hierarchy influencing through soft power and public diplomacy as Diez (2017) theorises. Diez argues that the solidarisation of international society has allowed Catholic actors to utilise its ‘soft power and public diplomacy instruments to greater effect to influence an increasingly transnational public debate’ (2017, p. 32). Soft power ‘diplomacy’ to influence is evident internally within the vertical hierarchy of the Church via the encouragement of Pope Francis. Firstly, despite no formal leadership in the SMG, members of the SMG are responsible to the pope suggesting that he ‘himself is the chief agent of the Church’s diplomacy’ (Troy, 2018, p. 8). During the papal audience at the 2016 SMG conference, Pope Francis was handed a report outlining the progress of the SMG. Cardinal Nichols, at that conference, thanked Pope Francis for his ‘forceful and personal commitment’ to the SMG (SMG, 2016d). The giving of such a report of progress and the thanks given to Pope Francis demonstrates that this coalition, despite not being directly
commissioned by the Pope or the Holy See, remains to a certain extent responsible to the Pontiff. The ability of a pope to influence shows ‘the power of his papacy lies in a charism of moral persuasion capable of being translated into political effectiveness’ (Weigel, 2001, p. 18). Further, the effect of the soft power ‘diplomacy’ of Pope Francis is evident in the remarks made by Cecilia:

To have a pope who is genuinely interested, and whose influence is actually paving the way for us, I think is very profound. I believe he has contributed hugely … of course to lead from the front is really encouraging and Pope Francis has brought so many people together on this issue. (personal communication, October 30, 2019)

Cecilia comments on the agency of Pope Francis as encouraging those working for the Church in fighting this social issue. This example indicates the dynamics of soft power ‘diplomacy’ between the pope and actors within the Catholic Church. It results in broadening the scope of the claims of Diez on solidarist Holy See ‘diplomacy’, to include attributes of soft power ‘diplomacy’ within internal structures of the Catholic Church.

At the other end of the vertical hierarchy of the SMG, those on the ground evidence solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices. Troy speaks of the ‘diplomacy’ of the Catholic Church as akin to ‘soft power’ in terms of persuasion by non-military means and empowering a world society through the use of cooperation instead of a balance of power in international relations (Troy, 2008a, p. 68). Ideas of cooperation and persuasion are also evident by grassroots Catholic actors in the SMG. Michael spoke about the impact the presence of Catholic nuns brought to police raids. Answering why nuns are brought into police raids, he said:

Because people may well speak to the nun. And you know, your nun is for life so your sex worker or your car wash person might not want to speak to anybody today but tomorrow they might decide that actually they want to go speak to somebody. Do they go and speak to the local bobby? Walk into the local police station? No, but they might walk into the local Church and say the time is now right for me to speak. So I don’t think…it’s not just about the immediacy of the raid or the visit, it’s a longer term thing. (Michael, personal communication, November 7, 2019)

Religious nuns are often known, trusted, and are a constant presence ‘for life’ in their local communities. As Harrelson notes based on her analysis of religious actors in the anti-trafficking realm, religious actors continue to press forward even in the midst of adversity (2010, p. 9). Nuns have the potential to empower victims to speak of their crimes and can identify potential criminal activity on the ground. The commitment of nuns, or equally other religious grassroot actors, hold a deep sense of legitimacy around the world as motivated by
‘long-standing traditions of benevolence and a desire to help the helpless’ (Harrelson, 2010, p. 9). Nuns working with police evidence cooperation in ‘diplomacy’, and ideas associated with soft power persuasion by the nun to the victim evidence solidarist attributes of ‘diplomacy’. Like the top of the vertical hierarchy and the presence of internal soft power ‘diplomacy’, the bottom of the vertical hierarchy evidence ‘diplomatic’ qualities of solidarity through ideas of cooperation and soft power persuasion.

Horizontally, the solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices of the SMG are evident in the forming of trusted partnerships between religious and state actors. Actively pursuing trusted partnerships is a ‘diplomatic’ tool used by the SMG. This reflects the arguments of Troy and Diez entangling a Catholic understanding of solidarity with the English School concept of world society. However, I argue that SMG data suggests a solidarist international society moreover than conceptions of world society in English School theorising. Horizontal structures of the Catholic Church are utilised by the SMG to form trusted partnerships and networks. Trust is considered an often-stated advantage of faith organisations in comparison to secular organisations (Tomalin, 2012, p. 698). Trusted partnerships and networks are illustrated through the shared knowledge and best practice at the five international SMG conferences. Cardinal Nichols, on numerous occasions, has mentioned the need of trusted relationships between those fighting modern slavery. He says:

But the trust we are trying to build is not only with these victims. If we are to help them and defeat this appalling trade, then we have to be constantly building trust among ourselves, not just at this gathering, but in our day-to-day operations. (Vincent Nichols, 2016c)

David furthers this comment saying, ‘I think the cardinal emphasises the importance of building trust. Because by building trust with unlikely partners then that offers a way of creating real action’ (personal communication, November 8, 2019). Partnerships as a result of horizontal hierarchy, both global and transnational, underpinned by trust are a strongly encouraged model by the SMG. Encouraging trusted partnerships, with its inclination to collaboration and interventionism, shows a ‘diplomatic’ tool of the SMG that has solidarist qualities. It is particularly solidarist in that it encourages dialogue between multiple actors. This active encouragement of dialogue in a society comprising of states, religious actors and other societal actors assume qualities akin to a world society. However, despite the encouragement of collaboration, communication, and the forming of partnerships in the SMG it is all in the context of a system inclusive of only a specific set of actors, rather than a society for all. Therefore, solidarist practices are constrained by pluralist conceptions of
international society, which prevents the tipping of the balance towards a world society as theorised by Troy (2008).

5.3.3 Vertical and Horizontal Hierarchy Makes Effective ‘Diplomacy’

Troy (2018) and McLarren and Stahl (2020) both assert that Catholic actors, specifically the Holy See as their example, operate as ‘hybrid’ actors with regard to ‘diplomacy’ (Troy, 2018; McLarren & Stahl, 2020). Troy explores Holy See diplomacy as a hybrid mode of agency comprising ‘four dimensions based on the religious and political modes of agency and substantialist and relational conceptualizations of international politics. HS diplomacy cumulates at the intersection of all four dimensions’ (2018, p. 4). McLaren and Stahl argue that the hybrid character of the Holy See is defined as ‘international and transnational, diplomatic and public, political and religious’ (McLarren & Stahl, 2020, p. 198). Their arguments align in asserting Holy See ‘diplomacy’ as both religious and political. Similar arguments are articulated in broader academic discourse on religion and politics beyond English School theory such as Hancock (2019) illustrating the complex interplay between elements of the religious and the political in faith-based action. Hibbard also speaks into the conversation between the religious and the political in arguing that ‘the prevalence of religion in modern political life is very much intertwined with the discourse and politics of the nation-state’ (2010, p. 19). He emphasises the interaction between these two phenomena, specifically the way in which religion informs and is informed by differing visions of modernity (Hibbard, 2010, p. 19). Holding true to the arguments of Troy (2018) and McLaren and Stahl (2020), the SMG with regard to ‘diplomacy’ would occupy both a religious and political diplomatic role in international society.

I suggest the hierarchy of the SMG applied to English School debates between a pluralist and solidarist conception of international society adds an alternative perspective. This goes beyond the dichotomy of religious and political established by the definition of ‘hybrid’ actors, even if nuanced by emphases on the complexities to the definition. It is the integration of the vertical and horizontal aspects of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church that makes a distinct contribution to ‘diplomacy’ of the SMG holding both pluralist and solidarist characteristics within a conception of international society. Buzan argues that the pluralism versus solidarism debate in the English School ‘is not about either/or but about how to blend and mix the two qualities. Order/justice and pluralism/solidarism have yin/yang qualities in which each is a necessary presence in the other’ (2014, p. 84). Thus, there are overlaps and complementarity between both pluralist and solidarist understandings of international society. Elsewhere, Troy alludes to Catholic actors holding both characteristics. He says that the
Catholic Church fits a model of a pluralistic world society in which it acknowledges the lasting importance of the state and the growing influence of transnational issues (Troy, 2012, p. 101). He goes on to say that the Catholic Church fits this model because the Holy See as a state is embedded into a world of states at the same time as engaging itself comprehensively in active ‘diplomacy’ in favour of multilateralism and international law (Troy, 2012, p. 101). Analysing the ‘diplomacy’ of the SMG agrees that an actor can attribute both pluralist and solidarist characteristics. The SMG is evidently embedded into the diplomatic world of states through it being a transnational coalition of religious and state actors. Thus, it can be considered a peer in a pluralist conception of international society. At the same time, it conducts its ‘diplomacy’ through solidarist practices of soft power ‘diplomacy’ and creating trusted partnerships. This gives example to the arguments outlined by Buzan that ‘pluralism and solidarism are not zero-sum positions but interlinked sides in an ongoing debate about the moral construction of international order’ (2014, p. 113). Analysing the vertical and horizontal structures of Catholic hierarchy present in the SMG suggest Catholic ‘diplomacy’ as pluralist and solidarist.

Tying together notions of a ‘diplomat’ as a peer in a pluralist society of states and solidarist in ‘diplomatic’ practices, the spiritual mission of the Catholic actor is the underlying factor. As Harrelson argues on religious actors in the anti-trafficking field, spiritual motivation enables a greater willingness to sacrifice for a cause because their participation is as a result of a bigger picture attached with eternal value (2010, p. 9). Views of Catholic actors as hybrid actors—as religious and political—are limited in understanding the source of Catholic action. Catholic actors understood as first and foremost at service of the will of God and in service of the common good to all people of good will, as Barbato (2013) argues, enables a better understanding of both its pluralist and solidarist characteristics. The argument from Powers in relation to peacebuilding is instructive. Powers states that any analysis of religious peacebuilding must go beyond a functionalist approach emphasising political efficacy by incorporating the larger issues of religious identity and mission (2010, p. 324). This mission can be explained as the ‘evangelizing impulse’ of the Catholic Church that has ‘left an enduring and dynamic legacy for the transmission of influence’ (Ryall, 2001, p. 41). Therefore, while the SMG as diplomat fits a pluralistic understanding of international society as it vertically and horizontally acts as a peer in a society of states and the SMG evidence solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices based on soft power and trusted partnerships, it should be understood that the ‘Church carries out its secular activities in the service of its ecclesial mission’ (Ferrari, 2006, p. 48). Starting from this
premise, the mission of the SMG is a more accurate way of understanding the nature of a Catholic actor and thus its agency in international society.

Overall, Section 5.3 demonstrated the position of the SMG in the pluralist versus solidarist debates of international society by investigating elements of ‘diplomacy’, as conceived by English School scholars, in the SMG. I have suggested that the Catholic actor holds both pluralist qualities as ‘diplomat’ and solidarist characteristics in ‘diplomatic’ practices. It is a ‘diplomat’ in a pluralist international society as it is considered a peer to other member states on a national (vertical) and international (horizontal) political stage. It is solidarist in how it conducts ‘diplomacy’ as the leaders and grassroots actors motivate others, as well as forming trusted relationships across state lines. I suggest, most significantly, that it is because of its vertical and horizontal structure that allows the Catholic actor to bring a distinct nature to its status as ‘diplomat’ and how it conducts ‘diplomacy’. This evaluation adds complexity to discussions of religious actors as merely hybrid actors that are both religious and political. A better approach to understanding Catholic agency is through the actor fitting a solidarist and pluralist international society because of an integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structure and understanding the paramount place of the spiritual mission of the Catholic Church to its action.

Conclusion

The current chapter applied a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis to the hierarchy of the SMG. Subsequently, I applied that analysis to aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. Responding to the first interrelated research question on a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis, the SMG evidence Catholic hierarchy holding both vertical and horizontal structures, and that this integration occurs simultaneously for the Catholic actor. Holding true to that argument and responding to the second interrelated research question, the chapter explored the impact of this analysis upon two aspects of Catholic agency in English School discourse: (a) religious ideas and customs underpinning international society; and (b) the position of the Catholic Church in pluralism versus solidarism debates in English School theorising. Section 5.2 explored how the vertical and horizontal integration of the SMG impacted the flow of religious dialogue giving example to theoretical claims of religious practices drawing actors in international society together, primarily through English School frameworks of Petito and Thomas (2015) and McLarren and Stahl (2020). I argued that the vertical and horizontal integration of the Catholic Church affirms English School notions of religious attributes drawing actors in international society together through the potential of religious dialogue to flow in numerous axils of society, inclusive of constrained perceptions.
This integration, I believe, gives the Catholic actor a distinct structure to fight equally integrated and organised human trafficking networks. Section 5.3 addressed the impact of vertical and horizontal hierarchical integration of the SMG on the position of the Catholic Church as conducting pluralist and solidarist ‘diplomacy’. Definitions of ‘diplomacy’ are refined within the boundaries of English School theorising, acknowledging the extensive IR discourse on state diplomacy. This Catholic actor holds both pluralist qualities as ‘diplomat’ and solidarist characteristics in ‘diplomatic’ practices. It is a ‘diplomat’ as it is considered a peer to other states in a pluralist international society, and it is solidarist in how it conducts soft power ‘diplomacy’ and forms trusted partnerships. Beyond seeing Catholic actors as hybrid actors, Catholic agency is better understood as pluralist and solidarist because of the integrated vertical and horizontal hierarchical structures, and one that encompasses the spiritual mission of the Catholic Church. Being both vertically and horizontally structured enables the Catholic actor, in English School theoretical assumptions, to draw actors in international society together through its religious dialogue and be both pluralist and solidarist in its ‘diplomatic’ practices. The next chapter will turn to look at examples of ‘iconography’ present in Catholic actors. I will apply the same methodological framework of firstly a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of ‘iconography’ in the SMG, and secondly, apply that analysis to the two aspects of Catholic agency.
Chapter Six—Iconography

If I were to meet the slave-traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and Religious today ... The Lord has loved me so much: we must love everyone ... we must be compassionate.

Saint Josephine Bakhita

The category of ‘iconography’ within a ‘thick’ religion framework constructed by Hassner inquires how religious movements use symbols, myths, words, or sounds to convey their ideas and how believers treat such icons (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). Aligned with the methodological framework of the last two chapters, the present chapter analyses icons, as defined by Hassner, in the SMG by repurposing and applying a ‘thick’ religion framework. The analysis resulting from a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework will then be applied to two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. Section 6.1 outlines two primary examples of iconography evidenced in the anti-slavery work of the SMG: (a) the Catholic Tradition of saints via the imitation and intercession of St Josephine Bakhita, and (b) symbols of a bishop’s crosier and a gesture of the pope clasping hands with a survivor. These two examples of SMG iconography—saints and symbols—are subsequently analysed via two avenues of Catholic agency from an English School perspective: (a) religious customs underpinning international society, and (b) pluralist versus solidarist conceptions of international society. Section 6.2 evaluates religious customs associated with saints and symbols that integrate individual, national, and global levels of society. Section 6.3 assesses the foundations of a solidarist preference of Catholic actors via investigating the engagement of saints and symbols by the SMG. Reflecting the two interrelated main research questions of the thesis, the key questions of the present chapter are: (i) How does the category of ‘iconography’ in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group? (ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective? I argue that saints and symbols, with their associated religious customs, can unite individual, national, and global aspects of society, indicating religion as tool to underpin international society. Further, SMG iconography exhibit English School solidarist ideas through the virtues modelled by saints and symbols representing solidarist gestures. I argue throughout this chapter that the agency of saints and symbols by the SMG, which imbue sacred characteristics to their work, is constructive of Catholic agency in international society being grounded in the sacred.
6.1 Iconography: ‘Thick’ Catholicism Framework Applied to the Santa Marta Group

Iconography is the third category in Hassner’s ‘thick’ religion framework (2011, p. 49). Examples of iconography communicate the ideas of a religious actor via symbols, myths, words, or sounds (Hassner, 2011, p. 49). Icons from a Catholic perspective draw upon ‘rhetoric and symbols that have been imbued with meaning over the course of centuries’ (Ferrari, 2006, p. 46). Ferrari presents some examples of highly ritualised Catholic icons such as liturgical colours, the Stations of the Cross, the Sacred Heart, bread and wine, and Jesus as the Lamb of God (2006, p. 46). Limiting the understanding of icons to the definition provided by Hassner, I identified two primary examples of iconography present in the anti-slavery work and resources of the SMG: (a) the Catholic Tradition of saints particularly St Josephine Bakhita, and (b) symbols of a bishop’s crosier in the SMG logo and an image of a gesture of the hands of the pope clasping hands with a survivor of modern slavery in SMG material. In a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework applied to the SMG, I inquire in the current section: How does the Santa Marta Group engage Catholic symbols, myths, images, words, or sounds to convey its anti-slavery ideas? How are these accounts of iconography treated? I argue in the present section that the SMG engages saints and symbols; saints as intercessors and models of faith connecting temporal and spiritual realms, and symbols relaying clerical positions as representatives of God on Earth. Both examples of iconography I suggest imbue sacred meanings connected with a Deity, a trinitarian God, that ground the anti-slavery action of the SMG.

Saints can be understood as those chosen after death by God to be elevated to higher regard because God desires that they continue to play an important spiritual and pastoral role for the sake of the whole Mystical Body (Molinari, 1978, p. 294). In other words, the Catholic Church believes that through the process of canonisation, saints are given by God to be ‘models and intercessors’ to the Church on Earth (CCC, 1997, para. 828). Gribble speaks of saints as models describing them as ‘those men and women who have gone before us, marked by the sign of faith, and have been recognised as martyrs or people of heroic virtue, stand as models for people of faith today’ (2011, p. 18). Saints are, therefore, examples of holiness and virtue for those on Earth to imitate. As intercessors, saints mediate the spiritual and temporal realms acting out favours for God, or as St Thérèse of Lisieux described it as spending time in heaven doing good upon the Earth (CCC, 1997, para. 956). Saints are considered really present on Earth as sacred figures coming down from heaven acting on behalf of humans; instruments between Earth and heaven (Orsi, 2004, p. 40). The Catholic
Tradition of saints is an example of iconography, based on the definition of Hassner because as models of faith, the lives of saints are recorded through words and myths, and as intercessors, they relay sacred presence.

The primary engagement with the Catholic Tradition of saints in the SMG is the adoption of St Josephine Bakhita, an officially canonised saint recognised by the Catholic Church and the patron saint of survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking. As a model of faith and intercessor, the SMG operationalises the role of St Bakhita to assist in their anti-slavery action. Narratives of the life of St Bakhita feature on numerous SMG resources (SMG, 2015; and see Appendix D-1, Appendix D-2, Appendix D-7). These resources give biographical information—St Bakhita was born in 1869 in Sudan and, at the age of seven, she was kidnapped by slave traders, and over the next eight years, was re-sold five times (see Appendix D-7). She bore 144 physical scars throughout her life due to slavery and was named ‘Bakhita’, meaning fortunate, after forgetting her birth name due to her traumatic experiences (SMG, 2015). In 1882 her suffering was alleviated after being sold to the Italian Consol. It was in this family that she received kindness, respect, peace, and joy and in this experience that she discovered love and, most importantly, the source of love—God (SMG, 2015). In 1890, St Bakhita was baptised into the Catholic Church, and in 1896, she took her vows in the Congregation of the Canossian Sisters (see Appendix D-7). St Bakhita was canonised on 1 October 2000 by St Pope John Paul II and is annually celebrated on her feast day on 8 February. In the work of the SMG, the life of St Bakhita is promoted as a model of faith for society today and her intercession is sought by the Catholic-led coalition to end injustices of modern slavery in the temporal realm.

Symbols are another example of iconography in ‘thick’ Catholicism. The Catholic Church has a deep and rich tradition of symbolism that is centuries old, some of which holds worldwide recognition (Ferrari, 2006, p. 47). The Catholic Church teaches that:

In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God. God speaks to man through the visible creation. The material cosmos is so presented to man’s intelligence that he can read there traces of its Creator. (CCC, 1997, paras. 1146–1147)

Catholic Tradition teaches that through physical signs and symbols, believers can understand a deeper transcendental meaning through earthly reminders of the sacred.
I identified two primary symbols present in SMG resources. Firstly, the symbol of a bishop’s crosier featured prominently in the SMG logo (see Appendix D-3). A bishop’s crosier is a staff or crook with a curved top carried by bishops in the Catholic Church. It is bestowed upon them during their ordination as bishop, along with the ring and the Book of the Gospels (Wood, 2016, p. 9). A bishop’s crosier is a known symbol by Catholic faithful and thus carries substantive symbolic weight. It symbolises the connection to Christ as the Good Shepherd who protects His flock. The symbol of a bishop’s crosier has been incorporated into the SMG logo, thus becoming the key branding image of the SMG.

Secondly, a gesture of the pope clasping the hands of a survivor of modern slavery is used as a prominent image by the SMG (see Appendix D-4). The image was taken at the first SMG conference held in the Vatican in April 2014. It captures a moment during the conference when Pope Francis personally met with survivors of modern slavery who shared their testimony with conference attendees. The gesture has become a symbol of the SMG featuring on numerous SMG promotional resources, including the SMG poster (see Appendix D-5), SMG prayer card (see Appendix D-1), and the 2018 SMG International Conference summary (SMG, 2018).

A further example of iconography I identified in the SMG was that of biblical stories. Biblical stories featured only twice in the data. Firstly, an interviewee highlighted the parable of the Good Samaritan as embodying their personal reason for being involved in the SMG (David, personal communication, 8 November 2019). Secondly, Archbishop Auza, the then Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN and member of the SMG, likened the hard work ethic and practical role of the SMG to that of St Martha illustrated through the biblical account of Jesus visiting the house of Mary and Martha (Auza, 2018). Biblical stories played a minor role in the SMG; no one biblical story was invoked by the SMG in a foundational way to highlight their anti-slavery work. Therefore, while biblical stories are an example of iconography, their significance is less important, as they were not operationalised substantively by the SMG.

A ‘thick’ Catholicism framework is helpful in identifying discrete attributes of iconography evident in the SMG. Pati writes that within the anti-trafficking movement, religions of all faiths greatly contribute to combating human trafficking based on four types of activities: education and awareness, advocacy, training and technical assistance, and identification, rescue, and assistance to survivors (2014, p. 12). Saint and symbols, as examples of icons in the anti-slavery work and resources of the SMG, can be added to Pati’s list of assets religious actors bring to the anti-slavery sphere. Significantly, saints and
symbols are physical reminders of the Divine expressed in the imbuing of sacred meanings connected with the Deity. Bain adds to these discussions suggesting that the language and imagery of theology are not disappearing with the onset of secular rationality (2020, p. 21). He says, ‘surviving theological patterns are not necessarily remnants, in a vestigial sense, of a vanished past’ (Bain, 2020, p. 22). Saints and symbols with their sacred meanings connected to a Deity can be seen as part of this language, and imagery of theology still very much present in temporary society.

Saints are models and intercessors connecting temporal and spiritual realms, and symbols relay the sacredness beheld to clerical positions as representatives of God on Earth. The action and ideas that stem from these religious icons suggest the notion that there is something distinct about religion (Sheikh, 2012, p. 371). To understand the extent to which the agency of icons enables a Catholic actor to influence requires deeper IR analysis. The next section employs aspects inherent in English School theory to better understand Catholic agency. The English School is an effective way that Catholic agency can be further evaluated due to its established discourse on Catholicism and conversations around Catholic agency. The agency of icons evidenced in the SMG analysed by a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis will now be investigated by two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective: (a) religious customs underpinning international society, and (b) pluralist versus solidarist understandings of international society. In doing so, I uniquely integrate ‘thick’ religion theorising by Hassner into English School discussions. In Section 6.2, I draw heavily on the thoughts of Pabst that religious customs, inclusive of examples of iconography through intercessory prayer and the symbolism embedded in a bishop’s crosier, underpin international society through the integrating of individuals into a global community and nations into a global polity (Pabst, 2012, p. 1016). I argue it is the imbuenment of the sacred that enables the integration of different levels of society. In Section 6.3, I investigate the preference of the Catholic Church in pluralism versus solidarism English School debates via an analysis of saints and symbols. SMG iconography illustrate the solidarist preferences of the Catholic Church through the virtues as a framework that embodies solidarism and evidencing characteristics of a solidarist international society, not a world society.

6.2 Religious Customs Underpinning International Society

The first aspect of Catholic agency in English School discussions explores how religious ideas and customs underpin international society (Thomas, 2000, 2001; Pabst, 2012, 2016; McLaren & Stahl, 2020). One particular thought within this body of literature,
articulated by Pabst and of most importance to the current section, is that religious customs underpin international society by integrating different levels of society. Pabst asserts that:

Among the ideas and practices that unite societies nationally and internationally, the flow of religion and religiously framed cultural customs is what most of all integrates individuals into a global community and nations into a global polity. (Pabst, 2012, p. 1016)

It is religious customs, according to Pabst, that underpin international society by integrating different levels of society. I suggest broadly construed ‘religiously framed cultural customs’ include attributes beheld in examples of iconography. Elements inherent in and associated with saints and symbols illustrate religious customs. The key question of this section is: What do saints and symbols in the Santa Marta Group show us about religious customs in the Catholic Church underpinning international society? Religious customs associated with the intercession of St Bakhita and the symbol of a bishop’s crosier demonstrate the argument outlined by Pabst (2012) that the individual is united into a global community and nation into a global polity. In this way, saints and symbols can draw together different levels of international society. I argue throughout this section, furthering the theoretical ideas illustrated by Pabst (2012), that it is the sacred qualities of religious customs that most significantly enable integration. Thus, elements of the sacred are foundational to Catholic agency underpinning international society.

6.2.1 Saints

The intercession of St Bakhita employed by the SMG illustrates the argument outlined by Pabst (2012) that the flow of religion or religious customs integrate the individual into a global community and nation into a global society. Intercessory prayer is a prayer that specifically asks for a saint to petition God to act in the world. I argue that the sacredness attached to intercessory prayer enables the integration of individual, national, and global. Thus, elements of the sacred are core to assumptions of Catholic agency underpinning international society. As intercessors, saints ‘contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth’ (CCC, 1997, para. 2683). Saints are patrons or advocates in celestial perfection, interceding for those Church members still in a state of pilgrimage on Earth (de Gaál, 2018; p. 10). Leone sees saints are mediators between a supernatural grace and a natural context, between divine and human agency (2010, p. 532). The invocation of St Bakhita evident in SMG resources manifests in religious customs such as prayer cards and the Prayer of the Faithful.
Firstly, the intercession of St Bakhita is illustrated in the praying of the prayer featured on a prayer card produced by the SMG (see Appendix D-1). The Catholic faithful is asking St Bakhita to assist in actions on Earth from her state of holiness in heaven. Prayer cards are thus a religious custom that holds within it the idea of intercessory prayer. The St Bakhita prayer card is an example of an embodiment of religious devotion. Prayer cards with images of saints are often used by the Catholic faithful as expressions of devotion. Such manifestations are recognised by the Catholic Church as popular devotions among the faithful as expressions of piety surrounding the sacramental life of the Church (CCC, 1997, para. 1674). Other popular devotions include ‘the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals, etc.’ (CCC, 1997, para. 1674). Prayer cards as expressions of devotion are an example of a religious custom Pabst alludes to. Leone speaks of saints as visual media through images presenting models of spiritual perfection (2010, p. 5). Visual representations of Catholic spirituality, such as the image of St Bakhita on the SMG prayer card, holds a didactic purpose as a simulacrum of transmission. They evoke the cognitive, pragmatic, emotional, and aesthetic reactions of believers as a simulacrum of reception (Leone, 2010, p. 16). Beyond the image, the prayer card invites believers into expressions of popular devotion in the Catholic Church, reciting the words ‘St Josephine Bakhita, Pray for Us’. This phrasing features in other SMG material, including a bookmark (see Appendix D-7) and an image of the patron saint profile on the SMG website (SMG, 2021h). It is in these words that the believer is asking for the intercession of St Bakhita. The prayer card is available to download through the SMG website in English and Spanish and has been distributed to parishes, schools, and other Catholic networks within the 22 Catholic dioceses of England and Wales.

Secondly, intercessory prayer is evident in the prayers written by the SMG for the feast day Mass of St Bakhita on 8 February. Examples of these prayers can be seen in the SMG resources (see Appendix D-2). The Prayer of the Faithful, also called the Universal Prayer, are a collection of prayers read by a reader during the liturgy of the Mass. The Prayer of the Faithful is a petition to God for the ‘holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world’ (USCCB, 2002, para. 69). These prayers of intercession written by the SMG for the Bakhita Mass speak to the theme of modern slavery and human trafficking. The example of these prayers in the resources (see Appendix D-2) is intended for the pope, Church leaders, those fighting against crimes of modern slavery, victims of slavery, and those who have escaped. In the context of St Bakhita Feast Day, the prayers are lifted into her
intercession. The Prayer of the Faithful are thus a religious custom that incorporates intercessory prayer. Each prayer requires a communal response by the congregation. Significantly, these prayers are outward-looking, intended for others and universal in that they speak to the whole of salvation.

Both examples of intercessory prayer illustrate the theoretical ideas of Pabst that the flow of religion or religiously framed customs integrate an individual into a global community and nation into a global polity (2012, p. 1016). The intercession of St Bakhita resultant from the SMG prayer card illustrates integrating an individual into a global community via communication between the temporal and spiritual realms. In reciting the prayer on the SMG prayer card, an individual turns to and calls upon saints in their hour of need to ask for their assistance (Orsi, 2004). Saints, as human beings in heaven, give ‘glory, contemplating in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is’ (CCC, 1997, para. 954). They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us on Earth through the one mediator between God and men who is Jesus Christ (CCC, 1997, para. 956). This role of intercessor enables saints to communicate with individuals in the temporal realm and take those requests into a global community in the spiritual realm. Therefore, through prayer cards as an example of a religious custom, intercessory prayer integrates the individual to the global by uniting spiritual and temporal realms mediated by saints.

The intercession of St Bakhita invoked in the Prayer of the Faithful written by the SMG illustrates integrating the nation into the global polity. The Prayer of the Faithful, written for all celebrations of Bakhita Mass on 8 February within England and Wales, evidence the idea of unification of the Catholic Church. I acknowledge that not all parishes had a specific Bakhita Mass or used these resources. Nevertheless, the act of individual parishes taking part in reciting these prayers and this done by parishes in a nation on the feast of St Bakhita, enables a national modality to their use. As a nation then, the recitation of these prayers is lifted into the global community of the Church on a temporal level and up to heaven on a spiritual level. Furthermore, St Bakhita is a saint in the universal Church calendar, and not someone celebrated by a particular national Church or localised community; all parishes thus are obliged to remember the feast of St Bakhita and her patronage of slaves, modern and pre-modern. The ability of saints to unite different levels of society can be seen in Leone’s work: ‘saints are represented as those whose mediation strives to bring about not only unity (the unity of the converts’ spiritual identity, for instance) but unification too (the unification of the Catholic Church)’ (2010, p. 535). In this way,
individual, national, and global are united under the umbrella of the Prayer of the Faithful said in celebration of the St Bakhita feast.

As demonstrated, the St Bakhita prayer card and the Prayer of the Faithful in a St Bakhita feast day Mass give example to the theoretical ideas of Pabst that a flow of religion and religious customs can integrate individuals to a global community and nations into a global polity. I argue that it is the sacredness attached to these religious customs that enables integration. St Bakhita has a dual sacral agency. Firstly, the agency of St Bakhita is independent based on the sacred understanding of the saint as a living personage. Intercessory prayer is a quality of the sacred because saints are really present on Earth as sacred instruments between earth and heaven (Orsi, 2004). Similarly, Johnson argues that the invocation of saints is an expression of Catholic mentality and ‘a manifestation of one fundamental Christian way of being in the world’ (1987, p. 34). Both Orsi and Johnson believe saints are really present to and in the world. Saints can be considered examples of transcendental agents who intervene in earthly spaces. St Bakhita, through her intercession, intervenes from the heavenly and spiritual domain upon earthly matters.

Secondly, the agency of St Bakhita lies in the effect of the relationship between the saint and the actor, the SMG, and its mission. Kratochvíl and Hovorková speak of the divisions between ‘the spiritual, heavenly sphere with its transcendental actors and the earthly space’ (2017, p. 88). They note that transcendental agents may intervene in secular matters. However, they stress that while this remains true, secular authorities and religious communities are also present in the earthly space to tackle injustices. Kratochvíl and Hovorková speak of such religious actors as secondary agents following God's lead or relying on Divine Providence (2017, p. 88). The SMG can be theorised as a secondary agent; a religious actor acting as a vehicle on Earth to fight injustices following God's lead. Adding to the theorising of Kratochvíl and Hovorková, I also suggest that earthly religious actors can embrace and draw transcendental agents into their earthly work. In this instance, the agency of St Bakhita is drawn into the resources and mission of the SMG. In engaging the sacred through the real presence of saints in their work via the intercession of St Bakhita, the SMG brings sacral elements into its mission of fighting modern slavery injustices in the world. Fighting modern slavery, therefore for the Catholic actor, becomes a matter to be fought spiritually and materially on Earth. It highlights the distinctiveness of the dual sacral agency of saints as a living personage interacting between earthly and heavenly realms and the effect of their relationship with Catholic actors on Earth.
In contrast, saints are also theorised by Orsi as instruments of power. Orsi argues that ‘saints are never innocent, nor are the effect of their presence singular’ (2005, p. 4). Rather, saints as holy figures get caught up and implicated in struggles on Earth by those siding with those who have power or those who do not (Orsi, 2005, p. 4). Bain contributes here, alluding to the fact that saints might be used by human agents exposed to the whims of power (2020, p. 24). In this regard, human agents of the Church, including those involved with the SMG, can theoretically use saints to gain power. However, as Bain also asserts, God is absolutely good (2020, p. 24). Therefore, saints as agents of good are utilised by God for good. Alternatively, to saints as humans in heaven, saints are understood by Gudeman as ‘preeminently symbols … which stand for or represent other things, such as moods, groups, objects, or activities’ (1976, p. 709).

I argue it is because of the sacredness of God that integrates different societal levels that underpin international society because His desire is an integrated, united world. The real presence of saints in society comes from glorifying God, who alone acts out His grace on Earth. Saints are ‘the work of God, not the Church’ (Gribble, 2011, p. 4). While saints are really present in the world and come from God, it is solely God that enables change in the world. De Gaál states, ‘the intercessory prayers of Mary and the saints do not add to the saving works of Christ. Rather, Mary and the saints are witnesses to the action of grace transforming human nature back to its original end. Venerating them aims at God’s glory (John 12:26)’ (2018, p. 13). Bain adds to these discussions in drawing on Newton’s natural philosophy. He argues that the will of God is supreme and that God can and does periodically contravene the laws of nature (Bain, 2020, p. 22). Superseding these arguments to the present discussion on iconography, saints are agents of God intervening in the world. Saints, through their dual sacral agency either independently or through the effect of their relationship on secondary agents, brings a connection to the trinitarian God that desires the integration of society. God does not desire isolated levels of the individual, the national, or the global, but rather a universal world under Christ. Therefore, I suggest an overlooked aspect for Catholic customs integrating levels of society which underpin international society (which ties into Pabst’s metaphysical push of English School theory) is because Catholic action comes from a transcendent source. Catholic agency, thus—the ability of Catholic actors to influence—is grounded in elements of the sacred steering its action.

6.2.2 Symbols

Similarly to saints, symbols used by the SMG also demonstrate that religious customs integrate individuals into a global community and nations into a global polity (Pabst, 2012, p.
A primary symbol used by the SMG is a bishop’s crosier. This symbol is incorporated into the SMG logo and positioned next to or on top of the name ‘Santa Marta Group’ (see Appendix D-3). The SMG adopted this symbol into its logo, drawing from the crest of the CBCEW. James, who designed the logo, speaks of its development. Of the CBCEW crest, he says:

On the one hand, you have a crosier, a bishop’s crosier, like a shepherd’s crook type-of-thing, and on the other hand, you have the cross—Christ—you know, again, the reason why we do these things. (James, personal communication, November 7, 2019)

The SMG adopted a bishop’s crosier as its principal symbol representing the staff of a shepherd. This reinforces the notion of the bishop as a shepherd guiding the flock. James articulates the image of a bishop’s crosier symbolises the idea of the bishop as shepherd and notions of care, protection, and guidance. James says:

I think the symbolism of the care [sic] is the most important thing. And the shepherds crook for me was that nice—we’ll look after you—it’s not overly bashing you over the head with the religious side of things—but it is care, and accompaniment and that everyone counts in that sense. (personal communication, November 7, 2019)

The symbol of a bishop’s crosier was designed into the SMG logo to highlight the role of bishops as shepherds. Like a shepherd who carries a crook to assist him in his duties of herding animals, a bishop has a crosier to symbolise his role as shepherding the flock. It calls to mind, for those familiar with Christianity, parables in the Gospels such as the Parable of the Lost Sheep which speaks of a shepherd leaving his flock of 99 sheep to find the one lost sheep, relaying that to the care of the Father (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7). In the context of the anti-slavery work of the SMG, the symbol intends to represent the bishop as a shepherd caring for victims of modern slavery and desiring their protection and guiding them to safety. As the parable suggests, it is about the bishop searching for each individual victim. A crosier as a symbol of bishop also presents understandings of Catholic hierarchy. It evokes ideas of the legitimacy and authority of the position of bishop in the Catholic Church as discussed in Chapter Five. It is the symbolism of bishop as shepherd that I want to discuss in this section. I suggest it gives example to the English School theoretical idea of Pabst (2012) that religious customs integrate individual, national, and global levels of society.

The symbolism behind a bishop’s crosier communicates, firstly, the idea of an individual being united into a global community. The SMG employs this symbolism to convey its purpose is to protect, care, and guide to safety the individual victims of modern
slavery and human trafficking – the lost sheep. A bishop is a key representative of the Catholic Church as he is among the leaders in the Catholic hierarchy. During his ordination, a bishop is given the Book of the Gospels, the ring, the mitre and the crosier ‘as the sign of his apostolic mission to proclaim the Word of God, of his fidelity to the Church, the bride of Christ, and his office as shepherd of the Lord’s flock’ (CCC, 1997, para. 1574). The crosier is used by bishops in the Catholic Church as the symbolic reference of a ‘shepherd to the flock’, following the metaphor of Christ as the Good Shepherd. Wood speaks of bishops as shepherds via the three-fold role of clergy as priest, prophet, and king/shepherd (2016, p. 13). She says that as the priest, the clergy preside at Mass and through ministering the sacraments; as the prophet, the clergy preaches the Word of God; and as the king or shepherd, the clergy builds up the community through pastoral leadership (Wood, 2016, p. 13). Therefore, as shepherds, bishops take on a role as pastoral leaders who guide and protect the people of God. In the context of the SMG, the bishop takes on the responsibility to protect all victims of these atrocities: caring for each and guiding all to safety. In this way, the individual is a member of the whole, and each and every individual is worthy of protection. James speaks of the symbolism of the bishop’s crosier:

Number 1 says bishop, number 2 says shepherd, finding … everyone in the flock is important, I will guide you, I will see you through the bad rough weather and give you safe haven was the crook, the crosier—so my feeling was that it said bishop, but it also said more importantly shepherd. You know, going out and getting the very last person and making sure they are safe. (personal communication, November 7, 2019)

In stating the role of shepherd is to go out to protect the very last sheep, James suggests the role of the bishop to protect the individual among their responsibility for protecting their community, those in their diocese, as a whole. If all bishops demonstrate this in their diocese, and all bishops are united under the leadership of the pope and God, then the individual is integrated into the global community. In this way, the crosier illustrates the ideas articulated by Pabst on religious customs integrating the individual to the global.

A bishop’s crosier in the SMG logo also resonates with the idea of a nation integrating into a global polity. This symbol is the dominant branding image of the SMG. It features on most SMG material, including the SMG website, documents, letters, posters, and leaflets. For example, the symbol appears prominently on the front cover of the SMG Progress Report 2016 booklet (see Appendix D-5), which was developed for the SMG 2016 International Conference. The Progress Report booklet contains 30 reports from SMG members from 22 countries. Therefore, it is a collection of action from religious and secular
actors from numerous nations, all jointly fighting modern slavery and human trafficking. In placing a bishop’s crosier on the front cover of the report, the symbol takes on additional meaning. In employing a bishop’s crosier as the symbol of this international coalition of religious and secular actors, the symbolism of shepherdship (the notion of shepherds to God’s flock) is transferred onto the entirety of the actor and implied as manifesting its action. Thus, the SMG, as an alliance of bishops and police chiefs from multiple nations fighting modern slavery and human trafficking, protects and cares for the individual. This gives example to Jakelić’s claim that religious actors are themselves responsible for how they enact their traditions and beliefs, and in some instances aspire toward peace and help shape the culture of deep pluralism’ (Jakelić, 2020, p. 101). The religious meaning that once was solely attached to a bishop’s crosier as the shepherd is now conveyed onto a body that is religious and secular—and international. Nations are therefore integrated into a global polity, illustrating the discussions articulated by Pabst (2012).

As I have demonstrated, the symbol illustrates the notion of religious customs integrating individual, national, and global levels of society. I argue significantly that the sacredness beheld in such a symbol enables integration. A bishop’s crosier is a religious symbol containing sacred meaning. In evoking understandings of Christ as the Good Shepherd transmitted to the bishop who takes vows to embody Christ on Earth, it brings sacred meanings to the anti-slavery action of this Catholic-led actor. Similarly, in their analysis of Pope Francis’ celebration of a penitential Mass on the island of Lampedusa during the 2015 refugee crisis, Rees and Rawson (2018) draw attention to the symbolism of wooden wrecks turned into objects such as an altar, chalice, and ambo. They argue that the ‘sacral nomenclature unique to the conceptual and liturgical resources of the Catholic tradition’ are necessary to understand Pope Francis’ critique of dehumanisation (Rees and Rawson, 2018, p.183). The bishop’s crosier, similarly, cannot be separated from its sacral meanings within Catholicism; the bishop is shepherd to God’s flock, caring for and accompanying each individual. This sacral meaning is thus indispensable to the understanding of the SMG. The agency of the symbol lies in relaying onto the Catholic actor sacral notions attached to clerical positions as embodied representatives of Christ on Earth in persona Christi.

Adding to Pabst’s thinking, I suggest the integration of different levels of society as a result of the agency of this icon is ultimately an action from God. God desires the protection of all His flock; through the role of the bishop as shepherd the Church hopes to fulfil this role. Barbato states that ‘the spiritual dimension of God’s will is the bottom line of the Church’s conception of itself and of its service to the people as the constitutive force of social
rules and conduct’ (2013, p. 37). The SMG’s understanding of itself, therefore, is in service of the people of God. Shepherdship is about the care, protection, and accompaniment of each and every human being as a valued individual made in the image and likeness of God. Shepherdship is an attribute of this idea of a Church for all because God desires the unity of His people.

Overall, the intercession of saints through the prayer card, the Prayer of the Faithful and the symbol of a bishop’s crosier in the SMG logo provide examples of Pabst’s notion that religious customs integrate individuals into a global community and nations into a global polity (Pabst, 2012, p. 1016). I suggest that the sacred qualities attached to the intercession of saints and the symbolism behind the bishop’s crosier enable integration. Saints are really present on Earth from heaven, but they reflect God as the source of sacredness. A bishop’s crosier brings ideas of shepherdship and the sacred notion bishops representing the Good Shepherd on Earth. The agency of these icons reveals that Catholic action, to some extent, is driven by a transcendent source that desires integrated levels of society and international society held together. Therefore, Catholic agency—the ability of Catholic actors to influence—is grounded in elements of the sacred steering its action. The next section draws together the examples of SMG iconography and the second aspect of Catholic agency from an English School perspective—the preference of the Catholic Church in English School debates between a pluralist and solidarist conception of international society.

6.3 A Preference for Solidarism over Pluralism

The second aspect of Catholic agency from an English School perspective entails a discussion over the preference of the Catholic Church in debates between a pluralist or solidarist conception of international society. English School scholars acknowledge the overlap between a solidarist international society and core beliefs in Catholicism (Barbato, 2013; Diez, 2017; Troy, 2008a, 2012). Troy emphasises the solidarist notions of the Catholic Church, notably of a conception of peace, which include human rights, development, solidarity, and world order (2008a, p. 71). He regards peace as the key denominator of the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church. Differing a little, Diez relays the solidarist leanings of the Church to that of a solidarising international society through the language of norms. He states that core norms in a Christian worldview—human rights, development, environmentalism, and peace—all sit well in a normative change in the solidarisation of international society (Diez, 2017, p. 36). Alternatively, Barbato emphasises the solidarist perspective of the Church based upon its universal outlook. He stresses that from the internal ideational setting of the Holy See, a solidarist perspective is evident and based on speaking to
all mankind on Earth because the gospels are intended for everyone (Barbato, 2013, pp. 33–34). All three scholars acknowledge that ideas of the Catholic Church match those of a solidarist understanding of international society. However, the basis of such a perspective differs between peace, norms, and a universal outlook. In the present section, I focus on the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church and the basis of that position.

I contribute to the conversations above by offering additional insight into how understandings of solidarity understood by CST connect with English School notions of solidarism and offer an additional foundation of the Church's preference. I draw particularly on the argument articulated by Troy (2012) on ‘solidarity’ in the Catholic Church matching English School ideals of cosmopolitanism and the concept of world society. The key question this section asks is: *What do saints and symbols present in the Santa Marta Group show about the preference of the Catholic Church in pluralism versus solidarism English School debates, and the basis for that solidarist outlook?* I argue throughout this section that the agency of saints and symbols in the work of the SMG demonstrate English School theoretical notions of solidarism through saints as models of virtue and a gesture symbolising solidarity. The teachings of virtues suggest a likeness towards English School cosmopolitan solidarism notions and the gesture of solidarity indicates a world society conception. Further, my argument is that the solidarist action of the SMG in the anti-slavery realm is grounded in sacred foundations that come from a transcendent source. Thus, Catholic agency—the potential or actual ability of the Catholic actor to influence international relations—has a solidarist outlook that is grounded in sacred foundations.

It must also be briefly noted herein that, as argued previously in Chapter Five, the position of the Church as actor can also be theorised as fitting a pluralist international society and its diplomatic practices as solidarist. Further, not all Catholic Church ideas neatly fit pluralist or solidarist English School definitions. Norms on issues like abortion or marriage have become more contested and thus marginalised in the broader international society (Diez, 2017, p. 32). Over such topics, the pope becomes ‘merely one actor among many who try to influence the public debate and can do so from a particularly prominent position as an actor in international and world society’ (Diez, 2017, p. 37). Therefore, while modern slavery and human trafficking, the subject of this thesis, fit English School solidarist notions, other issues the Church acts on are more complex in their placement along English School lines.

6.3.1 Saints

The virtues of St Bakhita illustrated by the SMG confirms the preference of the Church towards solidarism. Broadly speaking, St Bakhita is the patron saint of survivors of
modern slavery and human trafficking. It is a cause that fits a solidarist perspective in the English School as it incorporates human rights, peace, and justice ideas. In this way, the arguments presented by Barbato (2013), Troy (2008a, 2012), and Diez (2017) of the solidarist preference of the Church overlapping with that of solidarist ideas in the English School are accurate. Beyond this, I suggest that a particular way that demonstrates the Catholic Church’s preference for solidarism is via the SMG emphasising the teaching of the Catholic Church on virtues. Devotion to the saints ‘consists, in part, of imitation of their virtues’ (Gudeman, 1976, p. 711). Gentry (2020) speaks of the virtues of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’. It is ‘faith that leads us to hope, all resolved in ‘the greatest of these’: God’s eternal love. Without this infinite interconnectivity, Christianity and Christians get nowhere in making change in this world’ (Gentry, 2020, p. 374). Beyond theological virtues, Shortall (2010, 2011) draws on humility, powerlessness, and passive piety as attributes of Brother André in her analysis of the effects of his canonisation in Québec on the politico-religious legacy in shaping current debates. I suggest, in the present section, that the virtues in Catholicism are a means by which Catholic actors can embody or demonstrate English School solidarism. In this instance, the SMG embodies English School solidarism by engaging the model of St Bakhita and the ways that she emphasises the virtues of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’. Such virtues hold solidarist qualities as they are associated with English School notions of cosmopolitan solidarism. This argument, developed below, offers new insight into the existing discourse on the solidarist ideals of the Catholic Church matching an English School notion of solidarism. Further, it demonstrates that sacred foundations are intertwined to their solidarist foundations, as virtues reflect the holiness of God. Therefore, I argue throughout this section that Catholic agency possesses a solidarist outlook that is grounded in sacred foundations.

Troy suggests that one example of English School understandings of solidarism matching that of a solidarist perspective of the Church lies in the interconnectedness between English School ideas of cosmopolitanism and religion. It is the idea of cosmopolitan solidarism that I suggest bears some resemblance with Catholic actors via the example of the SMG displaying solidarist qualities through the Catholic virtues modelled in the life of St Bakhita. Troy speaks of three major intersections between a cosmopolitan approach in English School theory and religion in international relations. Firstly, Troy discusses the notion of cosmopolitanism as a small but global elite, including a religious elite, that works towards the greater good (2012, p. 97). Secondly, he draws on the Christian roots of cosmopolitanism as recorded in Ephesians 2: 18–20: ‘Through Christ we have access by one spirit to the Father. You are no longer stranger and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the
saints, and members of the household of God’ (Troy, 2012, p. 97). Thirdly, Troy illustrates that cosmopolitanism is closely related to English School notions of solidarism through a shared understanding of the worldwide community of human beings (2012, p. 97). Adding to this third point specifically, Buzan describes the notion of cosmopolitan solidarism as ‘a disposition to give moral primacy to “the great society of humankind”, and to hold universal, natural law, moral values as equal to or higher than the positive international law made by states’ (2014, p. 118). In this way, a universal community of humankind is emphasised, whereby moral values and natural laws stand equal to the positivist laws of a state. Buzan illustrates that the impetus for cosmopolitan solidarism is for the community of humankind to act as a moral referee against which to judge the purpose of states and their behaviour (2014, p. 118). Linklater is seen as holding a strong cosmopolitan solidarist perspective. Buzan sums up the essence of Linklater’s arguments as ‘the recovery of a greater sense of “humanity as a whole” is most likely to be achieved by making the meaning of citizenship more cosmopolitan’ (Buzan, 2014, p. 128).

I suggest there is an evident overlap between the SMG emphasising Catholic teachings on virtues through St Bakhita modelling the virtues of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’ and understandings of cosmopolitanism solidarism. A virtue is:

A habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends towards the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions. (CCC, 1997, para. 1803)

Virtues in a Catholic understanding relate to the pursuit of the good—the good for all humanity. More specifically, the virtues of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’ are considered in Catholicism as the three theological virtues. The theological virtues are:

The foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. They are infused by God into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being. There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. (CCC, 1997, para. 1813)

‘Faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’ (often referred to as charity based on the Latin caritas) are considered the theological virtues and infused by God into the soul.

The virtues are a tool by which the SMG embodies solidarism. The virtues evident in the model of St Bakhita match understandings of cosmopolitan solidarism in the English
School. This evidences a preference of Catholic actors towards a solidarist conception of international society. The virtues embodied by St Bakhita include that of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’. Cecilia describes the life of St Bakhita as:

One of pain and anguish, of love and forgiveness, and really that’s the model that we use, that’s what underpins the work we do. In suffering, you can experience the love of God, and in experiencing the love of God, you have the capacity to forgive … which as human beings we find very hard to do. St Bakhita’s life and her example becomes a model for victim support, they experience love and care and they in turn can look back, forgive the hurt and the pain and move on. (personal communication, October 30, 2019)

Cecilia speaks of ‘love’ as a key virtue modelled by St Bakhita as an attribute worthy of imitation by current victims of modern slavery and a model for organisations working with victims. The virtue of ‘love’, Cecilia claims, comes only from experiencing the love of God, in turn enabling forgiveness. In a similar vein, David spoke of the life of St Bakhita as a ‘story of hope as well as salvation’ (personal communication, 8 November 2019). Here, ‘hope’ is deemed as the virtue St Bakhita modelled. This idea is echoed by Pope Benedict XVI in his papal encyclical Spe Salvi, where he highlighted the life of St Bakhita as an example of the Catholic virtue of ‘hope’. Recalling her conversion, he states:

She was known and loved and she was awaited … now she had ‘hope’—no longer simply the modest hope of finding masters who would be less cruel, but the great hope: ‘I am definitively loved and whatever happens to me—I am awaited by this Love. And so my life is good’. Through the knowledge of this hope she was ‘redeemed’, no longer a slave, but a free child of God. (Benedict XVI, 2007, Section 3)

Both the virtues of ‘hope’ and ‘love’ are discussed in the context of St Bakhita growing in her ‘faith’ with God. When Pope Benedict speaks of St Bakhita as a model of ‘hope’, he states that she is ‘the example of a saint of our time can to some degree help us understand what it means to have a real encounter with this God for the first time’ (Benedict XVI, 2007, para 3). Thus, the Catholic virtues of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’ are modelled by St Bakhita. In this way, the SMG can emphasise Catholic teaching on the virtues.

The virtues modelled by St Bakhita are illustrated by the SMG in the resources produced to celebrate her feast day on 8 February. A saint’s feast day is a day to commemorate that person’s life; it is celebrating a life of holiness and remembering the virtues they modelled as an imitation to follow. On the celebration of this feast day in 2018,
the SMG produced a Bakhita Day resource pack (see Appendix D-2) that included prayers of intercession, social media resources, and practical information such as signs to identify a potential victim of modern slavery (SMG, 2018f). These resources are intended for dioceses, parishes, schools, small groups, and individuals. Notwithstanding other applications of such a resource pack, such as a tool of raising awareness of the crimes of modern slavery, it is through this resource pack that I argue that the SMG can communicate the virtues of St Bakhita in their work. In recalling her life story in this resource pack, it explains how she is a survivor of modern slavery and in so doing, had a conversion to Christianity and later became a religious sister. The resource pack specifically states, in explaining her actions once she became a religious sister:

When she was on door duty, she would gently lay her hands on the heads of the children who attended the nearby school and caress them. Her voice was pleasing to the little ones, comforting to the poor and suffering. She was a source of encouragement to many and her constant smile won people’s hearts (SMG, 2018f).

In speaking of tenderness and comfort that St Bakhita showed children from a nearby school, it expresses St Bakhita modelling the virtue of ‘love’—the love of neighbour. Gentry draws on ‘love’ as a guiding principle to navigate international politics—Christians living in a relationship with God are engaged in the world because love strengthens and enables them to speak out against injustices (2019, pp. 33–34). As a source of encouragement and a constant smile, the virtue of ‘hope’ is echoed in this account of St Bakhita. This is all within the context of St Bakhita as a slave and a person without faith, experiencing an encounter with God and becoming a religious sister. This evidences the virtue of ‘faith’. The example of St Bakhita illustrating the connectivity of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’ suggests a model for others to follow. This is not just a story—it has an active part in communicating aspects of holiness. Therefore, this shows SMG communicating Catholic virtues through the model of St Bakhita in their resources. For Leone, saints are ‘among the most formidable communication media of Catholicism’ (2010, p. 1). The main argument in his book is that ‘saints are important in Catholicism because it is through saints and their representations that the Catholic idea of spiritual achievement can be signified, communicated, and transformed into a practice of life’ (Leone, 2010, p. 2). Here it is through the representation of saints via the framework of virtues that illustrates Catholic spiritual achievement, which can be modelled into a practice of life.

I suggest parallels between Catholic virtues of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’ and English School notions of cosmopolitan solidarism, albeit with a limitation. As mentioned earlier,
cosmopolitan solidarism treats the universal community of human beings as a whole and encompasses a moral primacy to the community of humankind (Troy, 2012; Buzan, 2014). A Catholic understanding of virtues intersects with this understanding of cosmopolitan solidarism; both treat the universality of humankind as a whole. Therefore, the virtues I suggest are a tool or framework that a Catholic actor can employ to demonstrate solidarist preferences. However, the differences between a cosmopolitan solidarism approach in the English School and a Catholic understanding of virtues must also be acknowledged. Cosmopolitan solidarism, despite its inclination towards moral values and natural law, does not specifically make claims of a transcendental source that is strongly emphasised in virtues. Thus, cosmopolitan solidarism is a framework that enables a connection between the Catholic Church and solidarism but is limited too. This limitation speaks to the argument I now make—the basis of a solidarist preference of the Catholic Church resides in notions attached to the sacred. That being said, and beyond the scope of the current example, I acknowledge that the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, inherent in pre-Christian thinking brought into Catholic theology, might better integrate English School cosmopolitan solidarism and a Catholic understanding of solidity.

The virtues expressed by St Bakhita, reflective of English School solidarism ideals, are sourced from the holiness of God and thus are intertwined with notions of the sacred. Thus, the sacred, in part, forms the foundation of the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church. Virtues are not just attributes or characteristics of a person. Rather, in Catholicism, ‘the goal of a virtuous life is to become like God’ (CCC, 1997, para. 1803). The life of St Bakhita, in addition to being an intercessor as outlined in Section 6.2, is also an example of virtue—particularly those of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’. The story of St Bakhita is worthy of imitation not only because it recounts a survivor of modern slavery. More significantly, it is a real example of holiness and virtue (de Gaál, 2018, p. 10) that reflect the Divine. It is this connection to the Divine that makes the witness of a life of a saint distinct from other accounts of other human life. With saints as models of the virtues, and virtues reflecting the sacred, elements of the sacred must in part form the basis of the solidarist preference of the Catholic Church. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, along with peace, norm, and universal claims articulated by Troy (2008a, 2012), Diez (2017), and Barbato (2013) respectively, notions surrounding the sacred also ground the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church. This holding true, I argue that an overlooked aspect of Catholic action is that it comes from a transcendent source. Therefore, virtues of saints presented by Catholic actors match English
School solidarist understandings and imbue sacred notions, thus suggesting Catholic agency as grounded upon notions of the sacred.

6.3.2 Symbols

English School scholars discuss the similarity between English School notions of solidarism and the solidarist perspective of the Catholic Church. Troy speaks of internationalism, interdependence, and globalisation in English School solidarism that match perspectives of the Catholic Church (2012, pp. 133–134). Another similarity exists between English School notions of solidarism and the Catholic theological principle of ‘solidarity’. Troy argues that Catholic understandings of solidarity as a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good is evident in the English School concept of ‘world society and basis of solidarism with a tendency towards cosmopolitanism in its ethical commitments’ (2008a, p. 70). Having discussed the connection between solidarism and cosmopolitism in the previous section, here I discuss English School understandings of solidarism entangled with the notion of world society. The concept of world society in English School theory ‘is often described and discussed in close relationship with the solidarist position within the solidarist-pluralist debate’ (Troy, 2012, p. 96). This invites the idea that solidarist collaborations between actors encourage the conception of world society. The current section explores aspects of this claim. I suggest the theological principle of ‘solidarity’, illustrated by the symbols present in the SMG, encourages ideas of a world society based on collaboration between religious and state actors. An example of such a symbol is the image of a pope clasping hands with a survivor of modern slavery (see Appendix D-4). This gesture becomes an example of something sacred being drawn into the SMG action highlighting Catholic agency with God at its source and therefore grounded upon notions of the sacred.

The gesture of a pope clasping hands with a survivor of modern slavery in Appendix D-4 communicates solidarist concepts of the SMG anti-slavery work. James, responsible for using the image on SMG material, agreed that the image showed ‘Catholic theological concepts of custodianship, and care, and protection—and accompaniment—which is a big word and an important word’ (personal communication, November 7, 2019). Further, he said:

It was such an all-encompassing moment as to what, that rehabilitation, that we care about you, we want to look out for you, it is right to look after you—and that is what the heart of the Santa Marta’s work is and should be. So that image for me worked very well. And that sort-of idea of having the care and custodianship, just filtering throughout. (James, personal communication, November 7, 2019)
The physical gesture of the pope clasping hands with a survivor of modern slavery represents symbolically the entirety of the Catholic Church as offering care, custodianship, and protection to victims of modern slavery; characteristics fitting of the Catholic theological principle of ‘solidarity’. As stated in Chapter Four, St Pope John Paul II describes ‘solidarity’ as ‘a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all’ (John Paul II, Sollicitudo rei Socialis, 1987, no. 38). This echoes Johnson’s claim that God did not gather people as individuals. Rather, ‘a communion, the ekklesia of God [where] one’s own person and deeds have an inescapable impact on those nearest, and ultimately on all. No one is or can be a solitary player; for better or worse, everyone depends on everyone else’ (Johnson, 1987, p. 39). Using this image as a symbol, the SMG assumes notions surrounding the Catholic theological understanding of ‘solidarity’ into their anti-slavery action.

This gesture of solidarity has become a symbol of the SMG. It is featured on numerous SMG promotional resources, including on the back of the SMG prayer card (see Appendix D-1) which lists characteristics to identify a victim of human trafficking, and on the 2018 SMG International Conference summary (SMG, 2018b). It also features prominently on the SMG poster titled ‘How can I help a victim of human trafficking?’ (see Appendix D-5). The image is used as a backdrop to the SMG poster which highlights important information: (a) phone numbers—the Modern Slavery Helpline number of the UK and UK emergency number, and (b) websites—the Modern Slavery Helpline website and the SMG website. The symbolism of solidarity in the image behind the SMG poster reinforces the solidarity written in the poster’s text between Catholic and police (religious and secular) actors. In this way, I suggest the SMG poster evidences English School solidarist ideals of a world society matched with solidarist attributes of the Catholic Church. The collaborative effort evidenced in the SMG poster shows an intertwining of multiple actors united in a joint fight against human trafficking. The SMG poster combines attributes of the individual, the religious, and the state. Combining these multiple actors highlights characteristics akin to a world society. Speaking of the notion of world society, Vincent says, ‘international society might admit institutions other than states as bearers of rights and duties in it, recognising to that extent their equality and welcoming them into what would then have become a world society’ (1978, p. 37). Buzan speaks of a world society as defined by an inclusive mixture of ‘states, groups, transnational entities and individuals, all sharing some key values and having legal standing in relations to each other’ (2014, p. 125). The poster incorporating individual,
religious, and state actors is conducive of English School solidarism via an example of a world society.

The gesture of solidarity, evident in this image and poster, demonstrates SMG action as grounded in sacred notions. The symbol is sacred because it evokes theological principles: solidarity is a theological principle in the Catholic Church. As presented previously in Chapter Four, the Catholic theological principle of ‘solidarity’ is a ‘willingness to give oneself for the good of one's neighbour, beyond any individual or particular interest’ (Catholic Church, 2004, para. 194). The social teaching of the Church begins with a presumption that ‘we are a human family. As such, we are entrusted to one another’s care … Solidarity presumes a mutual interdependence among the members of the human family’ (O’Neil & Black, 2003, p. 255). Ultimately, God is the source of the theological principle of solidarity. Gelder speaks of the heart of solidarity being in the life of Jesus ‘because it is through the incarnation that God is in a very real way in solidarity with humanity and that we are in solidarity with God’ (Gelder, n.d.). She furthers that through the historical reality of the Jesus as human that lifts solidarity from O’Neil and Black’s idea of a ‘human family’ into ‘something altogether more mystical and powerful’ (Gelder, n.d.). Further, she illustrates that the solidarity understood by the assumption of the imago Dei becomes ‘an act of communion with God; an action in which we transmit and reflect the love with which God loves both the person who is object of the action and with which we love God’ (Gelder, n.d.). Therefore, through the incarnation and the principle of being made in the image and likeness of God, solidarity is intrinsically tied to God as its source. This holding true, I argue that an overlooked aspect of Catholic action is that it comes from a transcendent source. SMG iconography shows that their action is grounded in sacred roots that stem from an understanding of God. Therefore, the solidarist action of the Catholic actor, which matches that of English School solidarist understandings, imbue sacred notions. This suggests that Catholic agency is grounded upon notions of the sacred.

Overall, the agency of saints and symbols in the SMG illustrate the solidarist preference of the Catholic Church. The solidarist outlook of the Church matches that of English School understandings of solidarism through English School notions of cosmopolitan solidarism and a world society approach. Further, beyond notions of peace, norms, and universality, the solidarist perspective of the Church is based upon sacred qualities. The virtues of saints reflect the sacred, which is to be like God. Solidarity as a theological principle brings elements of the sacred through an understanding of God being the author of solidarity through the incarnation and idea of imago Dei. Therefore, I suggest that SMG
action, which reflects English School solidarism ideals, is grounded in sacred foundations that come from a transcendent source.

**Conclusion**

This chapter illustrated examples of iconography, as theorised by Hassner, drawing on two principal icons evidenced in the anti-slavery activity of the SMG. Section 6.1 outlined *saints* (the imitation and intercession of St Josephine Bakhita) and *symbols* (a bishop’s crosier and an image of Pope Francis clasping hands with a survivor of modern slavery) as the two dominant instances of iconography in the SMG. Deepening the investigation on Catholic agency, this analysis was subsequently applied to two understandings of Catholic agency in the English School: religious customs underpinning international society and the solidarist preference of the Catholic Church in the pluralist versus solidarist debates in the English School. Section 6.2 explored the notion that religious customs integrate individuals into a global community and the nation into a global polity (Pabst, 2012, p. 1016). I suggested that intercession of St Bakhita through the SMG prayer card and the Prayer of the Faithful at the St Bakhita feast day Mass, as well as the symbol of a bishop’s crosier reflecting shepherdship, illustrate the English School theoretical claims of Pabst (2012). However, I argued that integrating these different levels of individual, national, and global society is due to aspects attached to sacredness. Section 6.3 explored saints and symbols as examples of the solidarist perspective of the Church. Catholic teachings on virtue illustrated through St Bakhita as a model of the virtues of ‘faith’, ‘hope’, and ‘love’ and the theological symbolism of solidarity in the gesture of the pope’s hands clasping that of a survivor, give example to the solidarist outlook of the Church matching English School notions of cosmopolitan solidarism and a world society. Virtues and solidarity, however, illustrate sacred foundations. Therefore, sacred religious customs integrating individuals, nations, and a global community and sacred foundations of SMG solidarist perspectives are due to an understanding of God as the source of the sacredness. Thus, Catholic agency in international society is grounded in the sacred.
Chapter Seven—Conclusion

Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.

St Catherine of Siena

This chapter draws the thesis to its conclusions. The chapter summarises the research project and advocates its findings. It critically evaluates the process and suggests avenues for future research. Section 7.1 summarises the thesis alongside recalling its main research questions. Section 7.2 presents the findings of the current thesis via its two main interrelated research questions and four original contributions to knowledge. It specifically advocates the value of empirical IR analysis of the SMG, the originality in operationalising ‘thick’ religion, the distinct contribution of intersecting Hassner into English School discussions on Catholic agency, and the insight gained to English School discourse on the Catholic Church. Following the key findings and contributions of the research project, Section 7.3 states some limitations of the study. Section 7.4 details the operational implications of the thesis findings to spheres of academia, the world of politics, and the SMG and the Catholic Church. Section 7.5 suggests avenues for future research.

7.1 Summary of the Research Project

The present research project examined a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition named the Santa Marta Group, an anti-slavery initiative founded by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. As a coalition, the SMG involved approximately 128 partner organisations, the majority of which were Catholic or state actors. I investigated the initial stages of the SMG using a qualitative mixed-methods approach, which comprised a desk review followed by five key informant interviews. To analyse data collected on the SMG, I repurposed a framework titled ‘thick’ religion theorised by Hassner (2011). ‘Thick’ religion was applied to the Catholic Church as a religious actor in IR as the categories—theology, hierarchy, iconography, ceremony, belief/knowledge—are inherent within Catholicism. Adapting the framework to the present research study, I constructed the concept of ‘thick’ Catholicism. However, ‘thick’ Catholicism within this thesis is not a just a transfer of the categories that comprise ‘thick’ religion. Rather, the repurposing of ‘thick’ Catholicism is resultant from how Catholicism manifests in the SMG. Catholicism manifests in the SMG primarily in the ‘thick’ categories of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’. The categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ were intentionally subverted into the other categories because Hassner stipulated that these two categories reflected the individual believer rather than a religious actor. Therefore, the way in which individual believers act and
their individual beliefs were analysed in the context of the SMG as an institution via the three categories of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’.

A ‘thick’ Catholicism framework was valuable in illuminating characteristics inherent to a Catholic actor. It enabled an analysis of multiple aspects of the SMG mission, operations, and resources. However, English School theory was required as a robust way to understand the influence of those characteristics in Catholic action. I drew on English School discourse on the Catholic Church to better understand Catholic agency because it provided a theoretical framing to incorporate religious and state actors, included religious language at its foundation and because an established and growing contemporary discourse on the Catholic Church existed. Drawing specifically on this identified discourse, a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG was applied to two identified aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. These two aspects were: (a) religious ideas, customs, and practices underpinning international society; and (b) the preference of the Catholic Church in English School debates between a pluralist and solidarist understanding of international society. Select English School scholarship was explored: Thomas (2000, 2001, 2005, 2013), Troy (2008, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2018), Chong and Troy (2011), Pabst (2012, 2016), Barbato (2013), Diez (2017), and McLarren and Stahl (2020). In this way, the thesis repurposed and operationalised ‘thick’ religion as its methodological framework and applied it to English School theorising on Catholic agency.

The thesis had two interrelated questions as its main research focus:

(i) How does a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework help analyse the Santa Marta Group?
(ii) What contribution does this approach make to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective?

The three content chapters in the present thesis—Chapter Four on theology, Chapter Five on hierarchy, Chapter Six on iconography—addressed these research questions in an explicit manner. Each chapter was split into three sections, with the first section addressing the first research question and the second and third sections addressing the second research question.

7.2 Key Findings and Contributions

The two main interrelated research questions asked how a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework analysed the SMG and what contribution that approach made to understanding Catholic agency from an English School perspective. The project contributed four new insights and original contributions to knowledge in answering these two interrelated research questions. The key findings and contributions of the present study are:
7.2.1 Key Finding (1): Empirical IR analysis of the Santa Marta Group

The current thesis provided original and empirical data on the SMG. Appendix B-1 lists the SMG actors that have been present in at least one SMG international conference between 2014 and 2018. This database of SMG actors is original data on the SMG as no other academic or grey literature provides such substantial information. Appendix B-2 lists data from the SMG’s activity between 2014 and 2018. The data listed here, along with the basic definitions and links given, illustrate the activity, resources, and motivational aspects of the SMG. Appendix B-3 is a timeline of major SMG events, including conferences, meetings, and other key activity dates. These three sources of empirical data on the SMG are original, and thus a valuable source of information for the SMG itself and those wishing to study it.

Further, the present thesis has uniquely defined the SMG using IR terminology as a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition of Catholic, state, and civil society actors working together to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking. Such a definition adds to existing definitions of the SMG defined by itself as ‘an alliance of international police chiefs and bishops from around the world working together with civil society’ (SMG, 2021c). The definition provided by this study increases the depth of understanding of the SMG for itself and in academic discourse.

Beyond a definition and empirical data on the SMG, the present study provides an IR analysis of the SMG. Pati alludes to secular-religious cooperation happening on a micro-level with good results, yet higher levels of cooperation are modest (2014, p. 19). This thesis has offered, in its analysis of the SMG, an example of a high level of cooperation between religious and secular actors. The current project provides an IR analysis of the SMG through analysing the mission, operations, and resources of the SMG through operationalising ‘thick’ religion. To date, this framework of ‘thick’ religion has not been applied to any current Catholic actor. The framework was valuable in enabling a multi-layered analysis of a Catholic actor using discrete elements. The distinct categories of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’ distilled new insight on the SMG. Theology detailed the theological principles—dignity of the human person, solidarity, and justice—present behind the motivations and actions of the SMG. It clarified SMG motivations, revealed the meaning behind its operations, and enabled an understanding of their raison d’être. Hierarchy illustrated the integrated vertical and horizontal nature of SMG hierarchy as mirrored in wider hierarchical structures of the Catholic Church. It showed the operational effectiveness of SMG hierarchical structures while also revealing the complexities such a structure presented. Iconography explained the symbols, myths, and words expressed by the SMG. The
meaning behind saints and symbols as examples of iconography revealed other dimensions of Catholic agency. These three discrete elements of the SMG revealed via a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis are essential in showing the multi-layered nature of Catholic actors that would otherwise have been considered the same.

7.2.2 Key Finding (2): Distinctive operationalisation of ‘thick’ religion

The present study repurposed ‘thick’ religion as theorised by Hassner (2011) in an original and distinct manner. The ‘thick’ religion framework was presented by Hassner as a holistic mechanism to understand religious actors, suggesting that all categories were relevant and important. Repurposing the framework to reflect how Catholicism was born out in the SMG, resulted in the substantial theorising of three of the five ‘thick’ religion categories, namely ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’. The categories of ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ were intentionally subsumed and adapted into these first three categories. Hassner stipulates that ‘ceremony’ inquires how believers of the religious movement act out ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’, while ‘belief/knowledge’ reveals what members of the religious community believe in (2011, p. 49). Therefore, both categories focus on the beliefs of the religious individuals rather than the organisational or institutional aspect of the religious actor. The present thesis focused on the SMG as an institutional actor within national and international settings. However, constitutive elements of both ‘ceremony’ and ‘belief/knowledge’ were analysed. The interviews detailed how the individuals working in the SMG expressed their theology, understood hierarchy within the SMG, and described iconography that the SMG employed. Further still, the interviews outlined the individual Catholic beliefs of the key informants of the SMG. Both these individual aspects were subsumed into the analysis of theology, hierarchy, and iconography. In repurposing ‘thick’ religion in this way, I suggest that the framework is limited if seen as inflexible but valuable if it is adaptable in analysing different Catholic actors depending on how Catholicism manifests in it.

‘Thick’ Catholicism categories are not fixed or stagnant as perhaps initially anticipated. The framework is most valuable when the categories are not collapsing in on themselves but are malleable enough to incorporate different elements. Elements of SMG data could be interpreted and analysed using more than one category in a ‘thick’ Catholicism framework. For example, the agency of St Bakhita in the work of the SMG suited a theological dimension via a Catholic understanding of sainthood. At the same time, it was analysed as an example of iconography. The ‘diplomatic’ attributes of SMG hierarchy could be analysed through the hierarchical structures of the Catholic Church and qualities of
Catholic ‘diplomacy’ aligned with aspects of Catholic theology. Moreover, the role of bishops visually illustrated in SMG iconography is descriptive of Catholic hierarchy. These examples evidence numerous overlaps in analysing SMG data using ‘thick’ Catholicism categories. In identifying these overlapping qualities, I do not want to take away from the necessity of the framework nor contradict its value in illustrating the discrete elements the framework provides. If a framework offered no individual elements, multiple attributes of a Catholic actor would not be identified. However, the ‘thick’ Catholicism categories have a porous boundary to which is of benefit to any analysis of a Catholic actor.

7.2.3 Key Finding (3): New method intersecting ‘thick’ religion into English School Theory

The investigation of the SMG through a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis, which in turn is intersected with English School discourse on Catholicism, is a significant contribution of the current research project. This unique method forges empirical and applied research into theoretical discussions. There is no prima facie connection between ‘thick’ religion as theorised by Hassner and the English School. This thesis builds on the allusion of a natural fit between ‘thick’ religion and English School theory, as highlighted in a footnote by Troy (2016). In a substantive manner, therefore, despite no prima facie connection, the thesis adds to this reference in its operationalisation of ‘thick’ religion applied to and intersected with English School theorising. Therefore, a new contribution to knowledge is achieved in grafting together Hassner and English School theory. The benefit each brought to the other will now be explored.

A ‘thick’ religion analysis provides English School theory with a comprehensive yet discrete way to investigate Catholic actors. Currently, there is no established framework to analyse Catholic actors in the English School and no evaluation of whether all attributes constitutive of the actor have been considered. Without a ‘thick’ religion framework, English School analysis would have evaluated the two aspects of Catholic agency using all the data on the SMG without any structure or prior analysis. That is to say, the SMG data in Appendix B-2 would have been employed on each aspect of Catholic agency. In contrast, a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the SMG data, before its application in English School theory, enables the multiple layers of the Catholic actor to be identified, drawn out and highlighted. Due to this, a more impactful analysis of Catholic agency from the perspective of the English School is enabled. Both aspects of Catholic agency can draw upon the multiple elements attributed to Catholic actors to enhance knowledge of this applied research upon theoretical discussions.
English School theory adds considerable depth to a ‘thick’ religion analysis. A ‘thick’ religion framework provides a comprehensive yet discrete way to understand elements of Catholic action. Still, it is limited in its ability to decipher resultant agency. English School theory on the Catholic Church provides a robust mechanism to better understand Catholic agency via an established and growing contemporary discourse that highlights two aspects. These two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective, which are substantially engaged in the current thesis, add depth to the ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis of the Catholic actor, which would otherwise provide a comprehensive investigation of Catholic actors but a shallow analysis of Catholic agency.

Further, putting English School theory into conversation with ‘thick’ religion has provided new insight to the categories of first avenue ‘thick’ religion and second avenue ‘thick’ religion as originally theorised by Hassner (2011) and outlined in Chapter Two. First avenue ‘thick’ religion, according to Hassner, illustrates core concepts and themes in IR theory by investigating their religious foundations. First avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism would identify Catholic roots to core IR theoretical concepts. Second avenue ‘thick’ religion, according to Hassner, intersects religious concepts and attributes of faith with current issues in international affairs. Repurposing this, second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism weaves together elements of Catholicism with a current international concern in world politics. Hassner presents these avenues as separate and provides examples of each. I mirror these in Chapter Two on the discourse on Catholicism in IR. However, the present thesis does not fit exclusively in either avenue but rather fits conceptualisations of both avenues at the same time and offers a different approach. It is aligned to first avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism by further exploring the religious foundations of English School theory and its integration of Catholic concepts into contemporary English School theory. It also illustrates second avenue ‘thick’ Catholicism by intersecting Catholic concepts and attributes with current modern slavery and human trafficking phenomena in international affairs. Therefore, the current thesis demonstrates elements of both first and second ‘thick’ Catholicism. In aligning with both avenues, the thesis suggests that both avenues are flexible yet neither restricted nor mutually exclusive.

7.2.4 Key Finding (4): Original application of the English School

The present thesis yields original knowledge to the English School discourse on Catholicism. Empirical evidence of a case study, via a ‘thick’ religion methodology, is introduced to English School theoretical discussions in the current thesis. Current English School theorising, especially its discourse on the Catholic Church, has limited empirical
evidence or case study driven studies. Applying SMG data to theoretical conversations in the present study enlightens English School theoretical analysis with applied research. The insight from this thesis, thus far, adds new depths to English School discourse on Catholicism. As I explore below, the research project provided new insight into two aspects of Catholic agency from an English School perspective. It firstly contributes new knowledge to discussions of religious ideas and practices underpinning international society. Secondly, it advances discussions on the preference of the Catholic Church in English School pluralist or solidarist assumptions of international society.

The first aspect of Catholic agency from the English School perspective—religious ideas and practices underpinning international society—found the following findings. On theology, religious ideas can underpin international society through a common good framework suggested by Pabst (2012) and Thomas (2000, 2001). The operations aligned with the common good were seen as universal but constrained, and the mission directed by and toward a Deity. SMG hierarchy advanced English School theoretical claims articulated by Petito and Thomas (2015) and McLaren and Stahl (2020). The vertical and horizontal hierarchical integration evidenced in the SMG illustrated English School claims of religious customs and practices (i.e., religious dialogue) capable of drawing together international society. On iconography, religious customs associated with the intercession of St Bakhita and the symbol of a bishop’s crosier evidenced the individual’s ability to be united into a global community and the nation into a global polity theorised by Pabst (2012). Furthering this argument, the sacred qualities of religious customs, as foundational to Catholic agency underpinning international society, most significantly enabled integration.

The second aspect of Catholic agency from the English School perspective—discussions on the preference of the Catholic Church in English School pluralist or solidarist conceptions of international society—demonstrated these conclusions. On theology, SMG data spoke to English School theoretical analysis articulated primarily by Diez (2017). SMG theological tenets supported a preference towards English School solidarist notions, as argued by Diez, due to their operations and motivations reflecting interventionism, preventative action, and collaboration but one in which collaboration occurred between state and non-state actors in international society and guided by a Divine mission. SMG hierarchy evidenced the pluralist ‘diplomat’ qualities theorised by Barbato (2013) and the solidarist ‘diplomatic’ practices articulated by Troy (2008a, 2012) and Diez (2017). Its vertical and horizontal hierarchy enabled it to be a ‘diplomat’ in a pluralist international society while conducting ‘diplomacy’ with a solidarist outlook. Drawing on the work of Troy (2012), but also on Diez
(2017) and Barbato (2013), SMG iconography of saints and symbols illustrated a solidarist basis through the virtues modelled by saints and symbols representing solidarist gestures. Their solidarist ideals are grounded, I suggest, in sacred foundations.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

It is important to note some limitations associated with this research. Whilst not an exhaustive list, I acknowledge three limitations associated with analysis of a single case study, the ‘thick’ religion framework, and the application of the English School.

(i) The thesis investigated a sole case study, the SMG, and in particular the initial stages of the coalition. In using a single case study, the research is limited as an authoritative analysis of Catholic actors in IR more generally. It is not the intention of this thesis to portray the SMG as representative of the Catholic Church as a whole but rather provide a specific in-depth analysis of one particular Catholic actor as an example to dimensions of Catholic agency. More specifically, the research is limited as a definitive exploration of Catholic actors in anti-slavery action. However, mapping all contemporary Catholic initiatives to combat modern slavery would lend itself to a descriptive and not analytical study. Throughout the research project, suggestions of additional case studies were discussed, most notably the #EndSlavery initiative and the Talitha Kum network. However, after advice from academics and reviewers of my initial research proposal and seeing the extent of data available on the SMG, it was an intentional and conscious decision to analyse one case study only.

(ii) For a research project of this size, a narrowed scope was necessary. To analyse how Catholic agency functions in a controlled way, I chose to focus principally on the actions of the initial stages of the SMG by the CBCEW. SMG data was restricted to the timeframe of April 2014–May 2018. A narrowed scope allowed for a detailed and microanalysis of Catholic agency. While a current initiative presents the challenge that insufficient time has passed to adequately enable analysis, a current case study allows for empirical data on an under-researched organisation representative of a significant initial period of the SMG. It helps understand a current phenomenon in IR. Future research can build on the data in this thesis to analyse more contemporary SMG activity, including other anti-slavery actors involved in the coalition and their future actions.

(iii) A comprehensive analysis of Catholic agency was limited to Catholic agency within English School discourse, and in particular two aspects of Catholic agency. The two avenues of Catholic agency represent the ends of the spectrum of English School
theorising—one addresses notions discussed by English School founding fathers, and the other analyses a more contemporary discussion. These two avenues interact with one another via a sense of commonality and social action (Thomas, 2000, p. 833). Thomas argues that the first aspect emphasises a sense of commonality emerging from a common religion, culture, or civilisation underlying international society. In contrast, the second aspect explains it as an outcome of social action by developing common practices or institutions of international society (Thomas, 2000, p. 833). Catholic agency beyond these two aspects were not analysed, and analysis was restricted to the English School. Future research can apply a ‘thick’ religion analysis to alternative dimensions of Catholic agency within the English School or to other IR theories.

7.4 Operational Implications of Research Findings

The current study will be of benefit to three broad spheres: academia, world of politics, and the SMG and the Catholic Church. My researcher positionality as a scholar–practitioner and an insider researcher is helpful in this regard. As a scholar–practitioner, this research study is impactful for academia under the auspices of ‘scholar’ and to the world of politics as ‘practitioner’. As an insider researcher, it enables this research to impact the in-group I am associated with—the SMG and the Catholic Church. This section draws on the operational implications of the research project to these fields.

Firstly, the current thesis brings new knowledge to academic discourse. The research is primarily aimed at scholars of religion in the IR discipline. This is intentionally where the research is situated in the academic realm. To religion scholars in IR, the research project provides an empirical study of an under-theorised religious actor and applies a framework to understand religious actors. In addition, I suggest scholars in or associated with the theoretical approach of the English School more broadly would be interested in this thesis. Catholicism remains a small discourse in English School theorising. The study contributes to that discourse, providing it with a broader understanding of Catholic agency in international society. Beyond that, while the thesis situates itself solely in the academic discipline of IR, the research project also bears positive repercussions for religion scholars and, more specifically, scholars interested in the Catholic Church from the wider social sciences.

Secondly, I suggest the current thesis is of use to the world of politics to better understand the agency of Catholic actors. Political actors on the international stage, mirroring ideas of actors in international society, do not necessarily see the value in the contribution of religious actors. As Pati correctly states
religion should be invited to the table as an active partner, and also be asked to assemble all of it intellectual, spiritual and human resources, locally and globally, to lead communities to become aware of the existence of, and to understand the repulsiveness of human trafficking (2014, p. 19).

The present study brings new insight to political actors of the potential and actual influence that Catholic actors bring to the international sphere. International organisations on the political stage can better understand the theology, hierarchy, and iconography of the Catholic Church through a ‘thick’ Catholicism analysis. The influence that emerges from each ‘thick’ category gives political actors knowledge of how they can interact with religious actors better. Better engagement could result in political results in areas of common interest.

Thirdly, the research project is of use to the SMG and the Catholic Church. A social scientific analysis of a Catholic actor can help the Catholic actor know its mission, structures, and resources, and areas of improvement or further development. The empirical data and the analysis of the coalition bring new insight to the SMG itself. For the SMG, the study clarifies a definition of itself as a transnational Catholic-initiated and led coalition. The list of independent and autonomous actors present at least one SMG international conference (see Appendix B-1) provides the SMG with data that has not previously existed. The SMG data list (see Appendix B-2) provides the SMG with an account of their activity that helps track progress. In drawing on the discrete elements of ‘theology’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘iconography’, the SMG is better equipped to understand its qualities and the influence these have (and can have) in international affairs. For the wider Catholic Church and associated actors, the research brings new insight into Catholic actors’ ability in international affairs—their reach, influence, and motivations.

7.5 Future Research

Having summarised the research project, discussed the key findings and their subsequent operational implications, I conclude this thesis with suggestions of avenues for future research.

Future research can build on the empirical research gathered here to conduct other studies on the SMG within IR or the wider social science field. A different actor within the SMG coalition could be analysed in future research. The present study focused on the CBCEW as a Catholic actor and the first point of consideration as the actor that developed the SMG. Future research can analyse, for example, the SMG alliance in Lithuania, the SMG national collaborations in Argentina, or the SMG project in Nigeria. Beyond the role of a Bishops’ Conference, future research can analyse lay Catholics involved in the SMG, or state
actors or civil society actors in the coalition. At the time of writing, the SMG is developing from a transnational coalition into a global charity. Therefore, the present study is significant as it records the first phase of the SMG. Without the current study, the initial stages of SMG development and its actions and motivations would not have been recorded. However, future research on the SMG can build on the data gathered in the present project, extending it to include new developments of the SMG and beyond. Further still, the SMG data gathered in the present study could be analysed using an alternative framework such as the taxonomy of five major concepts of religion by Woodhead (2011) or through the five categories for faith-based organisations theorised by Clarke (2006).

Alternatively, a ‘thick’ religion framework can be applied to other Catholic or religious actors in international affairs. The SMG was vital but relative to the current thesis. Just as I have applied the framework to the SMG, future researchers could apply the method to different Catholic actors in the anti-slavery field (e.g., Talitha Kum or the #EndSlavery campaign) or Catholic actors on a different issue (e.g., Caritas Internationalis on international development, Aid to the Church in Need on Christian persecution and oppression). Equally, the framework could be replicated to other international religious actors such as Islamic Relief Worldwide, American Jewish World Service, Tearfund or other religious actors in the anti-slavery realm such as The Clewer Initiative.

Future research can intersect an applied ‘thick’ religion analysis of a religious actor with other aspects of English School theory or an alternative theoretical approach. The ‘thick’ religion analysis provides a holistic yet discrete understanding of a religious actor. This analysis can then be applied to other areas of interest in the English School. For example, the exploration of norms from an English School perspective, the idea of a world society in English School discourse, or the distinctions between the three ‘Rs’ theorised by Wight compared to theorising by Bull. Beyond an English School analysis, a ‘thick’ religion analysis could be applied to aspects in other IR theories such as Christian Realism, religious actors as non-governmental actors in Neoliberalism and through norms in Constructivism. In this way, religion can be seen as finding a place in numerous IR theories.

The thesis has made significant contributions to knowledge in its analysis of the SMG, its application of ‘thick’ religion on a Catholic actor, its intersection of ‘thick’ religion into English School theory, and its contribution to the discourse on Catholic agency within English School theory. The suggested avenues of future research, I hope, build on the present research study on Catholic agency in international society.
References


Deneulin, S. (2013). Christianity and international development. In M. Clarke (Ed.), Handbook of research on development and religion (pp. 51-65).


Gelder, A. (n.d.). *Solidarity*.
https://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/themes/solidarity/explanation/


https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2014.900815


https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/humtrafconf2/19


https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203818633


https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315643922


https://doi.org/10.1080/20566093.2017.1393172


https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2017.1392167


https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2018.1433583


https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2010.528970


https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/series/FP.html

https://doi.org/10.1017/S026021051200040X


https://tif.ssrc.org/2018/02/02/praying-with-ones-legs-again/


Pabillo, B. S. (2013). The Church’s vision in the fight against human trafficking and modern day slavery. *Journal of Loyola School of Theology, 27*(1), 1–9.


The Path to Peace Foundation. (n.d.). *Recipients of the path to peace award.*
https://thepathtopeacefoundation.org/contents/events/events-562e2790158de6.07085800.php


https://rmellon.nd.edu/assets/101872/religion_and_international_relations_report.pdf


Tomalin, E. (2012). Thinking about faith-based organisations in development: where have we got to and what next? *Development in Practice, 22*(5-6), 689-703.


[https://indicators.report/targets/8-7/](https://indicators.report/targets/8-7/)

[https://www.usccb.org/topics/anti-trafficking-program](https://www.usccb.org/topics/anti-trafficking-program)


Vincent Nichols. (2016a, 7 April). *Address to the special conference held at the UN on the combatting of human trafficking and modern slavery* [Speech].


## Appendices

### Appendix A-1: Typology of 17 types of modern slavery offences in the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour Exploitation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Victims exploited for multiple purposes in isolated environments</td>
<td>Victims who are often highly vulnerable are exploited for labour in multiple ways in isolated rural locations. Victims live on offenders’ property in squalid conditions, are subject to repeated abuse and are very rarely paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Victims work for offenders</td>
<td>Victims are forced to work directly for offenders in businesses or sites that they own or control (some offenders may be gangmasters). The main method of exploitation is not paying or illegally underpaying victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Victims work for someone other than offenders</td>
<td>Victims are employed in a legitimate and often low-skilled job, with legal working conditions, by an employer unrelated to the offenders. Most of all wages are taken by offenders often through control of the victims’ bank accounts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Servitude</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Exploited by partner</td>
<td>Victims are forced to undertake household chores for their partner and often their partner’s relatives. If married, the marriage may have been arranged or forced and the servitude often occurs alongside domestic abuse and sexual exploitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exploited by relatives</td>
<td>Victims live with and exploited for household chores and childcare by family members, usually extended family. Many victims are children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exploiters not related to victims</td>
<td>Victims live with offenders who are often strangers. Victims are forced to undertake household chores and are mostly confined to the house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Exploitation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Child sexual exploitation – group exploitation</td>
<td>Children are sexually exploited by groups of offenders. This is usually for personal gratification, but sometimes the exploitation involves forced sex work in fixed or changing locations and will include characteristics of types 9 and 10. Offenders frequently transport victims to different locations to abuse them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Child sexual exploitation – single exploiter</td>
<td>Similar to type 7, often involves the grooming of children and transporting them for the purposes of sexual exploitation, although the offending is carried out by one individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Forced sex work in changing location</td>
<td>Victims are trafficking and exploited in established locations set up specifically for sex work. This can include brothels or rooms in legitimate business premises (e.g. massage parlour).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Forced sex work in changing location</td>
<td>Victims are forced into sex work where the location of exploitation frequently changes. Locations include streets, clients’ residence, hotels or ‘pop-up’ brothels in short-term rented property. Victims are frequently advertised online.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. **Trafficking for personal gratification**

Victims are trafficked to residential sites controlled by offenders and sexually exploited for the offenders’ own gratification. Some victims may be confined to the site for a long period of time.

**Criminal exploitation**

12. **Forced gang-related criminality**

Victims are forced to undertake gang related criminal activities, most commonly relating to drug networks. Victims are often children who are forced by gangs to transport drugs and money to and from urban areas to suburban areas and market and coastal towns.

13. **Forced labour in illegal activities**

Victims are forced to provide labour to offenders for illegal purposes. The most common example is victims forced to cultivate cannabis in private residences.

14. **Forced acquisitive crime**

Victims are forced by offenders to carry out acquisitive crimes such as shoplifting and pickpocketing. Offenders may provide food and accommodation to victims but rarely pay them.

15. **Forced begging**

Victims are transported by offenders to locations to beg on the streets for money, which is then taken by offenders. Victims are often children or vulnerable adults.

16. **Trafficking for forced sham marriage**

Traffickers transport EU national victims to the UK and sell these victims to an exploiter in a one-off transaction. Exploiters marry victims to gain immigration advantages and often sexually abuse them.

17. **Financial fraud (including benefit fraud)**

Victims are exploited financially; most commonly their identity documents are taken and used to claim benefits. This type often occurs alongside other types.

(Cooper et al., 2017)

**Appendix A-2: Definition of Human Trafficking**

The definition of human trafficking comes from the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children:

(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

(SMG, 2015d)

Appendix B-1: SMG actors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholic Actor</th>
<th>State Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoratices, Spain</td>
<td>An Garda Síochána, Republic of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostleship of the Sea</td>
<td>Albanian State Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdiocese of Atlanta, USA</td>
<td>Albanian Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdiocese of Benin City, Nigeria</td>
<td>Argentine Federal Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdiocese of Madrid, Spain</td>
<td>Argentine Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand</td>
<td>Australian Federal Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Catholic Bishops Conference</td>
<td>Brazilian Federal Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishops’ Conference of France</td>
<td>British Embassy to the Holy See</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFOD, UK</td>
<td>Bulgarian Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops</td>
<td>Canadian Federal Policing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Bangladesh</td>
<td>Canadian Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Bo, Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Embassy of Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Internationalis</td>
<td>Embassy of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Myanmar, Good Shepherd Sisters</td>
<td>Embassy of Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Nigeria</td>
<td>Embassy of Republic of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Westminster, UK</td>
<td>Embassy of Republic of Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas, Spain</td>
<td>Embassy of Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas, Thailand</td>
<td>Embassy of the Slovak Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Bishops Conference of Slovakia</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Bishops’ Conference Bangladesh</td>
<td>French Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales</td>
<td>Gangmasters Licensing Authority, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Myanmar</td>
<td>German Federal Criminal Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria</td>
<td>Ghana Police Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Scotland</td>
<td>Greece National Rapporteur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese of Abuja, Nigeria</td>
<td>Hellenic Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese of Cuautitlán, Mexico</td>
<td>Homeland Security Investigations, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese of Ferns, Ireland</td>
<td>Hungarian National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese of Malindi, Kenya</td>
<td>India Police Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese of Uromi, Nigeria</td>
<td>Irish Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal Commission for Migrants &amp; Refugees, Vatican</td>
<td>Italian State Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal Commission for Migrants, Refugees and Displaced Persons, Mozambique</td>
<td>Lithuanian Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metropolitan Police Service, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mexican Federal Police Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal Actor (Intergovernmental Organisation, Nongovernmental Organisation, Religious Actor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Fund to End Slavery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Centre for Migration Policy Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Center for Transnational Crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church of England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal Actor (Intergovernmental Organisation, Nongovernmental Organisation, Religious Actor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rapporteur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Crime Agency, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand High Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Force of Slovak Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Service of Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese Judicial Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Thai Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Police force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Federal Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taipei representative office in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippine National Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Embassy to the Holy See</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B-2: SMG Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMG Data</th>
<th>Description and Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **African Regional SMG Conferences** | Regional SMG conferences in Africa.  
| **Argentinian Partnership** | Bi-lateral partnership between the SMG and law enforcements and Church in Argentina.  
| **Bakhita Day Resources** | Resources produced by the SMG on the feast of St Josephine Bakhita. See Appendix D-2.  
| **Bakhita House** | Bakhita House is a safe house in London for rescued female survivors of modern slavery developed as part of the wider anti-slavery project of the Catholic Church in England.  
| **East Anglia collaboration** | National SMG meetings.  
Tackling Modern Day Slavery in the East of England: [https://santamartagroup.com/tackling-modern-day-slavery-east-england/](https://santamartagroup.com/tackling-modern-day-slavery-east-england/) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundations of the SMG</strong></td>
<td>[interview data] The role of the Justice and Peace groups in the development of the SMG. About: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/about-santa-marta-group/">https://santamartagroup.com/about-santa-marta-group/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helpline Poster</strong></td>
<td>A poster developed by the SMG indicating helpline numbers and websites for suspected modern slavery crimes. See Appendix D-5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image of Pope’s hands clasping a survivor of modern slavery</strong></td>
<td>An image of Pope Francis clasping hands with a survivor of modern slavery taken at the SMG International Conference 2014. The image is subsequently used in multiple SMG resources. See Appendix D-4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lithuanian partnership</strong></td>
<td>A bi-lateral partnership between the SMG and the Church and law enforcement in Lithuania. Partnership in action: Lithuania and the UK: <a href="http://santamartagroup.com/partnership-action-lithuania-uk/">http://santamartagroup.com/partnership-action-lithuania-uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Network of ethnic chaplains</strong></td>
<td>[interview data] The Diocese of Westminster coordinate ethnic chaplains in the UK to minister to particular groups of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Path to Peace award</strong></td>
<td>The SMG received the Path to Peace award in 2018. The annual Path to Peace Award is bestowed upon an individual or group recognising the development of peace in the national and international arenas. Building trust to fight human trafficking: Santa Marta Group in New York: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/building-trust-to-fight-human-trafficking-santa-marta-group-in-new-york/">https://santamartagroup.com/building-trust-to-fight-human-trafficking-santa-marta-group-in-new-york/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Path to Peace Award: <a href="https://thepathtopeacefoundation.org/contents/events/5ef231a033bdf.php">https://thepathtopeacefoundation.org/contents/events/5ef231a033bdf.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pope Francis’ endorsement</strong></td>
<td>Cardinal thanks Pope for “forceful and personal endorsement” of SMG’s commitment to end modern slavery: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/cardinal-thanks-pope-forceful-personal-endorsement-smgs-commitment-end-modern-slavery/">https://santamartagroup.com/cardinal-thanks-pope-forceful-personal-endorsement-smgs-commitment-end-modern-slavery/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pope Francis on trafficking: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/pope-on-trafficking/">https://santamartagroup.com/pope-on-trafficking/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pope Francis at SMG conference 2018: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/940-2/">https://santamartagroup.com/940-2/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pope Francis at UN: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/pope-to-un/">https://santamartagroup.com/pope-to-un/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDGs Target 8.7</strong></td>
<td>Modern slavery included in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (Target 8.7) Cardinal to UN: effective international cooperation essential to eliminate human trafficking by 2030: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/cardinal-to-un/">https://santamartagroup.com/cardinal-to-un/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMG Declaration</td>
<td>At the 2014 SMG International Conference, police chiefs and Catholic bishops made a declaration of commitment in the fight to bring an end to human trafficking and domestic slavery: <a href="http://santamartagroup.com/declaration/">http://santamartagroup.com/declaration/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMG input into the UK Modern Slavery Act</td>
<td>[Interview data] The SMG gave evidence to the UK government during the proposals of a UK Modern Slavery Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMG Logo</td>
<td>See Appendix D-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMG Nigeria project (GrowEdo)</strong></td>
<td>The SMG project in Nigeria – GrowEdo: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/partners/nigeria-benin-project-grow-edo/">https://santamartagroup.com/partners/nigeria-benin-project-grow-edo/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMG submission to the Australian Modern Slavery Act enquiry</strong></td>
<td>The SMG submitted a paper to the Australian Parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade – an inquiry into Modern Slavery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>St Josephine Bakhita</strong></td>
<td>Patron Saint: <a href="https://santamartagroup.com/santa-marta/">https://santamartagroup.com/santa-marta/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The role of women religious</strong></td>
<td>[interview data] The role of religious women in the fight against trafficking as SMG members and in the setting up of the SMG.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix B-3: Timeline of SMG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>The development of the ‘Bakhita Initiative’ with its three elements: Bakhita Institute into Human Slavery, Caritas Bakhita House, Santa Marta Group 9-10 April 2014 – First SMG Conference – the Vatican. Delegates signed, in the presence of Pope Francis, a Declaration of Commitment in the fight to bring an end to human trafficking. Pope Francis at the event called “Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity”. 5-6 December 2014 – Second SMG Conference – London, England. Police chiefs and Catholic Church representatives from across the world alongside UK Home Office ministers met to further develop strategies to combat human trafficking to keep the welfare of the trafficked victim at the heart of law enforcement. The conference showcased and built on the joint police and church initiative in London that has been running for the past three years; a collaboration that is to be copied and adapted around the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>30-31 October 2015 – Third SMG Conference – Madrid, Spain. The conference was opened by Queen Sofia of Spain and delegates received a message of blessing and encouragement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>26-27 October 2016 – Fourth SMG Conference – the Vatican. A wide group of delegates from around the world shared their experiences fighting this serious cross-border organised crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>8-9 February 2018 – Fifth SMG Conference – the Vatican. The conference focused on human trafficking and modern slavery in different geographical regions and the activities undertaken to combat it. Kevin Hyland steps down as UK IASC. SMG receives the Path to Peace award.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C-1: HREC Approval Letter

19 November 2018

Associate Professor John Rees & Ms Marianne Rozario
Institute for Ethics & Society
The University of Notre Dame Australia
P.O Box 944
Broadway NSW 2007

Dear John and Marianne,

Reference Number: 018138S
Project title: "An 'International Society' analysis of Catholic actors influencing anti-slavery political outcomes at state and international levels."

Your response to the conditions imposed by the University of Notre Dame Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has been reviewed in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, updated 2018). I am pleased to advise that ethics approval has been granted for this proposed study.

Other researchers identified as working on this project are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School/Centre</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Rosemary Hancock</td>
<td>Institute for Ethics &amp; Society</td>
<td>Co-Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All research projects are approved subject to standard conditions of approval. Please read the attached document for details of these conditions.

On behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee, I wish you well with your study.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Natalie Giles
Research Ethics Officer
Research Office

Cc: Dr Christine de Melo, SRC Chair, School of Arts & Sciences Sydney
Appendix C-2: Interview Questions

1. What motivated the CBCEW to be involved with anti-slavery work? How did the idea of the SMG come about?
2. What do you believe is the Catholic Church’s position on modern slavery and human trafficking? Are there any particular Catholic beliefs, doctrine, or theology that modern slavery goes against?
3. How does the SMG best act out such beliefs? How does the SMG best convey a Catholic understanding against modern slavery? (Through symbols, imagery, liturgy, prayer, etc.)
4. In the anti-slavery realm, how has the CBCEW through their initiative of the SMG been able to exert influence in the international realm?
5. What is unique about Catholic involvement in the anti-slavery realm (compared to anti-slavery NGOs, government agencies, other religious actors, etc.)? What can the Catholic Church bring to the fight against modern slavery that no one else can?
Appendix D-1: SMG Prayer Card

Appendix D-2: SMG Resource Pack
Appendix D-3: SMG Logo

Appendix D-4: SMG Symbol

Appendix D-5: SMG Poster