Friend, Beverley Jane (2022) *Re-imagining practice: How can a community based model of anti-sectarianism, supported through faith based values, help in the development of new anti-sectarian approaches in Scottish education?* DPT thesis.

Re-imagining practice:

How can a community based model of anti-sectarianism, supported through faith based values, help in the development of new anti-sectarian approaches in Scottish education?

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate in Practical Theology

Theology and Religious Studies

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Abstract

This thesis presents an alternative model of anti-sectarianism which re-imagines and challenges traditional institutional pedagogical anti-sectarian approaches, and which can be supported through faith based values.

Through a feminist ethnographic methodology, the research shows that the current educational approaches adopted to address sectarianism are problematic through constraining contextual limitations and authoritarian framing. A new progressive model is recommended in this thesis which is able to be adapted and utilised by educational practitioners and other groups connected to the community in which anti-sectarianism takes place.

The new approach, involving a flexible route map of five immersive steps, requires a rethinking of current methods and a commitment to long term support from those practitioners invested in anti-sectarianism. The thesis shows that the new model's strength is dependent upon an ethical approach which emerged from a connected theological analysis. This approach is highly supportive of an engaged transformative anti-sectarian pursuit, framed by a duty of care that values and seeks to protect all those involved.

Acknowledgements

The Wishae Wimmin, without whom this research would not be. You invited me to become a member of your group, welcomed me into your story, and more than anything, you showed me that to listen is to grow.

Leah Robinson and Stephen McKinney, my academic supervisors who journeyed with me so much in the early stages. Your infectious passion for peace and pedagogy helped me imagine and then believe that I could join the conversation.

Heather Walton, my primary doctoral supervisor. You supported me as I tried to make sense of new theories and practice. You encouraged me to persevere when I struggled, and you constructively critiqued my work throughout. Thank you.

George, my dad, who as a mature student was liberated through emancipatory education and who in turn inspired me to embrace this for myself.

Jacqui, my mum, and Beverley and Claire, my incredible daughters of whom I am constantly in awe. You are the women who speak the deepest truth to my being. Your unstinting generosity in the love and grace you have shown helped me back to my feet more times than I could ever count. To each of you, thank you.

Alex, my best friend, my partner, and my love. We have shared over forty years of this wonderful adventure, knowing what it is to love and to feel loved. You beautiful, caring man, thank you for who you are. This thesis belongs as much to you as it does me.

Contents

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that the work has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Prologue

My first awareness of religious difference developed when I started primary school, aged five.

A friend and I had attended the local playgroup, spending our early years happily playing in each other's house or on the street where we lived. We saw each other almost every day. My childhood memories include the building excitement over the summer months before starting school, and my feelings during those first few days of term when I realised our friendship was not like my friendships with the other children on my street.

Veronica attended the Catholic School and I the non-denominational school; of course, locally it was referred to as the Protestant School. Walking to school on that first day we were, just like our schools, side by side and although at that point we were not physically separated by anything, we might as well have been. Approaching our respective entrances, we hugged, said goodbye and promised to speak through the fence at playtime. Later, when we rushed towards the dividing fence to chat, my headmaster on playground patrol scolded me for talking to children in the 'other school'. I recalled this rather unremarkable story at a conference a few years ago, and as I spoke, I realised the impact that this small but significant experience had made on my early years and beyond.

Despite the headmaster's growl, Veronica and I did manage to continue our friendship, and I smile as I recall secretly attending mass with her after dinner on Sundays. I was always a little apprehensive that the Priest might spot a non-Catholic in their midst and tell me off.

Other memories include the cancelled train trips on Old Firm days to visit my gran who lived in Drumchapel, because my mum didn't want my brothers and me to see the chanting or fighting on the train from Airdrie. We didn't call it sectarianism in those days, but we certainly knew Old Firm days could quickly spell trouble. I think, looking back, I quite enjoyed the drama of all those concerned telephone conversations between my mum and gran about whether to risk the journey or not. I remember too being thirteen and liking a boy I'd just

met at the community centre disco, and my dad asking what foot he kicked with. I knew just enough by that point to lie.

Decisions regarding which uniformed organisation a young person joined were also dictated by religion and custom. Where I lived, Protestants joined the Boys' or Girls' Brigade and Catholics joined the Scouts or Girl Guides. It was a norm. So, when I quite blatantly and rebelliously joined the Girl Guides, I was not in the least surprised to be routinely taunted by the members of the Boys Brigade each Friday night as I passed the local Church of Scotland on my way home. However, I am certainly not the hero of this story, because around the same period, I started secondary school and to show how tough I was and to fit in with the older, scarier kids, I scrawled the initials of the paramilitary groups IRA and UVF all over my shiny new biology folder. I didn't have a clue what those acronyms meant or the irony of being so ludicrously balanced in my terrorist graffiti. I simply figured it made me look a bit hard, which I thought would stand me in good stead at my secondary school. I remember later cringing in absolute mortified shame when I realised that all I'd done was make my shiny new folder look ugly.

I share these stories first to explain a little of my own personal background, but also to address a question which is so often asked of those who seek to respond to sectarianism in Scotland. One of the few certainties which seem to unite many of those living in the small local communities in the West of Scotland is the belief that everyone has an agenda, a prejudice which colours their choices and motivations. Based on the number of times I have been directly and indirectly interrogated about my own religious background and stance, it is seemingly impossible to avoid scrutiny about which side you belong to. I have learned, whether subscribing to a particular side or not, and whether it is your wish or not, in the world of sectarianism we will surely be allocated one.

Introduction

This research explores whether traditional pedagogical anti-sectarianism could be more effective if drawing upon a more community based approach, and considers too if faith based values could positively support an alternative and reflective anti-sectarian engagement which values the involvement of the community on which it is focussed.

The first part of the research will examine the critical theories of educationalists Paulo Freire and bell hooks, sociologists Michel Foucault and Sharlene Hesse-Biber, and theologians Elaine Graham, Anna Rowlands, and Chris Baker. The exploration will compare the theorists' main critical arguments with current anti-sectarian pedagogical approaches, and consider how these understandings might positively impact current educational interventions.

I will then turn my attention beyond the literature, towards the study of a local community context in which women of faith came together to seek alternative approaches to anti-sectarianism. My objective is to discern through my research in this context whether there might be practical alternative anti-sectarian models which offer the potential for change to the sphere of state-led anti-sectarianism. A comprehensive and detailed description explaining how the research question will be addressed is discussed later in this Introduction chapter, however it would be prudent to first explain the context in which this research was initially conceived.

Context

Inspiration for this research emerged from reflections on my experiences of teaching anti-sectarianism as a secondary school teacher when following completion of course units, I questioned how success was being measured, and whether practice had somehow contradicted the pedagogical theories of Freire and hooks with which I had previously aligned myself as a student teacher. Specifically, this research reflects my doubts as to whether, despite the cheerful

participation of my students, such efforts had made any significant long-term positive impact on them or their communities.

Curriculum for Excellence and Anti-Sectarianism

As a teacher of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies, it has been my professional responsibility to deliver to students the anti-sectarian requirements of the Curriculum for Excellence.[1] This is something that has not always been welcomed by colleagues who in the past have genuinely feared the consequences of 'opening the can of worms' that sectarianism often represents. Nevertheless, the Scottish Government and perhaps more importantly, 'Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education Scotland', expect nothing less from a school wishing to be considered 'an excellent school'.[2]

At its conception, the Curriculum for Excellence was described by Scottish Government as,

> Designed to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible, and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18. The term curriculum is understood to mean - everything that is planned for children and young people throughout their education, not just what happens in the classroom.[3]

It was the attribution of an apparent value to what exists for the student outside of the classroom which particularly captured my attention, as I struggled to align this definition with my own experience of working in Scottish education. During a short career break I welcomed the opportunity to reflect further on my own teaching experience and the curricular requirement to teach anti-sectarianism and the methods widely used to do so. During that period, I realised that I

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[1] "What is Curriculum for Excellence?" Education Scotland, accessed November 12, 2015, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumfor excellence/.

[2] "How Good is Our School?" Education Scotland, accessed March 13, 2017, https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf.

[3] "Policy for Scottish Education," Scottish Government, accessed April 21, 2017, https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe.

struggled to equate the much lauded and apparent flexibility of the Curriculum of Excellence with the confining realities of teaching a topic as sensitive as anti-sectarianism within a classroom setting. As I reflected, I wondered if anti-sectarianism could ever really be *taught* and whether there might be a less institutional or governmental approach which offered greater potential for change.

A Curriculum is the totality of all that is planned for young learners from their early learning experiences, school settings and beyond. This totality is planned and experienced across the four contexts of: curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, ethos and life of the school, and opportunities for personal achievement.[4]

> As part of their learner journey, all children and young people in Scotland are entitled to experience a coherent curriculum from 3 to 18, in order that they have opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to adapt, think critically and flourish in today's world.[5]

The Curriculum for Excellence specifically aims to place young learners at the heart of their education. At its centre are four capacities which reflect the lifelong nature of education and learning. These capacities recognise the need for all young learners to know themselves as individuals, to develop their relationships with others in their families and in their communities. The capacities also recognise the knowledge, skills and attributes that young people need in order to thrive in an interconnected and rapidly changing environment. The capacities aim to enable young learners to grow and develop to become democratic citizens and active shapers of the world.[6]

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[4] "Policy for Scottish Education," Scottish Government, accessed April 21, 2017, https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe.
[5] "What is Curriculum for Excellence," Scottish Government, accessed February 14 2022, https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers.
[6] Ibid.

The basic tenet of the Curriculum for Excellence is that all young learners in Scotland will be enabled to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future.[7]

The four capacities are:

1. Successful learners
2. Confident individuals
3. Responsible citizens
4. Effective contributors.

Many teachers, including myself, felt a great deal of optimism and excitement at the possibilities and opportunities presented by the new Curriculum for Excellence when it was first rolled out in Scottish secondary schools in 2009. It heralded a pedagogical chapter where the individual and community experiences of learners should be acknowledged and welcomed into their learning. As a teacher of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Education I could certainly see how this would enhance the learning experience for my own students, particularly concerning those topics which perhaps more closely resonated with students' more personal experiences. Difficulties arose when the benchmarks of the new curriculum presented 'Experiences and Outcomes'[8] which appeared to ignore the very essence of the new curriculum, that being the need for learners to know themselves as individuals, to develop their relationships with others, in their families and their communities.

The challenge for teachers was to reflect the overall and highly commendable philosophical aim of the curriculum while providing essential evidence of learners having achieved the levels expected at the appropriate stages. In most curricular areas this was achieved without much concern, however for topics as local and often as personal as sectarianism, it presented very particular

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[7] "What is Curriculum for Excellence," Scottish Government, accessed February 14 2022, https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers.
[8] Ibid.

considerations and challenges. Despite the appearance of providing learners with the necessary and informal space and time for personal, critical and conflict evaluation, it remained the case that the anti-sectarian lesson demanded a very specific response of adherence which contradicted the more fluid and positive aims of the curriculum.

The curriculum as highlighted, was designed to create a learning climate of greater flexibility in recognition of wider society, including the student's own life experiences, but I questioned whether the anti-sectarian education delivered in the classroom could ever deeply engage the students and their families. Through my reflections on my professional practice, I realised there was an absence in the classroom of Paulo Freire's 'situational reflection',[9] which assumes that the location of the learning can actually prohibit or stifle reflection. Chapter one of the thesis discusses this issue in detail. There is, Freire found, a mutual understanding between parties, that while in the school setting, students will conform to the expectations of their predetermined roles, even though this can prohibit the freedom necessary for authentic reflection.[10] It concerned me that students, and in turn their families and communities, might experience barriers preventing engagement with the sensitive and crucially important topics raised for class discussion because they were not being addressed in relation to their lived contexts.

There is also, I sensed, a further obstacle to be addressed in that anti-sectarian education begins with the presumption that anti-sectarianism, as presented as part of the curriculum in Scotland, is unquestionably morally correct.[11] Simply stated, anti-sectarian schools work is widely regarded as being wholly good and worthwhile, and yet statistics of more recently reported sectarian events suggest that perhaps another approach might be worth consideration.

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[9] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 109.
[10] Ibid.
[11] "Why Challenge Sectarianism?" Education Scotland, accessed November 12, 2015, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inclusionandequalities/equalities/challengingsectarianism/whychallengesectari_anism/index.asp.

The Scottish Government's report on Religiously Aggravated Offending 2017-2018, found that there were 642 criminal charges of religious aggravation reported in 2017-2018, which was a decrease of 5% from the 678 charges reported in 2016-17, but yet higher than the figures for the three years prior to 2016-17.[12] Although the period prior to the repeal of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Act 2012 in April 2018, clearly affects these figures, there is nevertheless a growing concern that more appropriate anti-sectarian measures should be considered in order to affect longer lasting change.

This view is supported too by the Scottish Government's continued concern and investment in evaluations of new approaches such as those put forward by their 'Collective Leadership Group' who in 2020 sought to discover whether collective leadership had potential to provide new ways of approaching the systemic problems that lead to sectarian attitudes and behaviour. Agreeing that,

> sectarianism remains a real issue that affects the lives of individuals and communities across Scotland. It is a complex and emotive issue that is not even handed – its impact is not felt in the same way across the country. Despite this complexity we continue to see people taking encouraging and effective action to bring about positive changes.[13]

The group was made up of a wide range of stakeholders, from academics and former members of the Government's Advisory Group on Tacking Sectarianism in Scotland, to individuals working in community education. While the Collective Leadership group hosted a lively public event discussing sectarianism as part of the Fire Starter Festival in February 2020, there has unfortunately been no new event or published report on their work since that time.

Despite that recent initiative, there remains little evidence to suggest there is an awareness of the need to assess anti-sectarian pedagogical methodologies,

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[12] "Religiously Aggravated Offending 2017," Scottish Government, accessed November 12, 2019, https://www.gov.scot/publications/religiously-aggravated-offending-scotland-2017-18/pages/4/.
[13] "Collective Leadership on tackling sectarianism event," Action on Sectarianism, accessed December 15, 2021, https://www.actiononsectarianism.info/news/collective-leadership-on-tackling-sectarianism-event.

and related policies in their contexts, particularly by those who are the intended recipients. This apparent exclusion of the most integral of stakeholders raises the question of whether authentic change can be possible without full involvement of the recipient community in the shaping of the intervention.

Further, I suspect that if anti-sectarian education is to connect genuinely and sensitively in a substantially more considered and impactful way then this may entail an extension of its current scope, involving community members, and challenging the rules and hierarchies of current school-based learning. I recognise this would be a difficult move to make. Undoubtedly a change of participants or context presents difficult challenges and possibly even bigger hurdles to overcome for pedagogical practice. The more fluid dynamics of community based methods would rarely include the learned acquiescence expected of school students.

Introducing the Research Participants: The Wishae Wimmin
To explore whether pedagogical anti-sectarianism could be more effective in engaging young people through drawing upon a more community owned approach, and whether faith-based values can positively support that approach, this research will explore existing literature and the contributions of the critical theorists described in the paragraphs below. As this thesis highlights throughout the chapters of Part I, if there is to be a positive advancement of discourse then it is vital that the contributions of those most closely concerned are heard. The thesis therefore presents in Part II, research findings gained from an extended period of time spent with a community anti-sectarian women's group, The Wishae Wimmin, who from 2014 to 2017, presented an alternative and more informal way of doing anti-sectarianism.

In seeking to learn from those most closely involved in community anti-sectarianism, early in 2014 I became aware of an ecumenical anti-sectarian women's group near where I lived, who had been brought together through their different religious backgrounds and affiliations. Meeting regularly in a close-knit North Lanarkshire post-industrial community with a history of sectarian conflict, the group consisted of local Wishaw women from Catholic and Protestant

backgrounds. The aim of the women's group was to learn, take courage, and confidence from new challenging relationships as they worked towards beginning much longed-for change conversations. It transpired that an important and pivotal figure in the original creation of the women's group was in fact known to me through my parents' attendance at a local Church of Scotland where she was Minister. Following several discussions with her about my own interests and research hypothesis, I was subsequently invited in February 2015 to join the group. Although unsure at that early stage if this would be the most appropriate group for my research methodology, it was clear that we shared a vision for the local area, and I was delighted and grateful to be invited to join them.

The Wishae Wimmin's group originally consisted of fifteen members who were each approached individually by friends or church leaders who suspected they might be interested in such a venture due to the nature of their faith or employment. There was a representative number from both Protestant and Catholic traditions, although little homogeneity existed in either faith group as they consisted of practising and non-practising members of different ages and experiences. Within the practising faith members of each group, for example, there were differences in how they approached and practised their beliefs. Some attended church services regularly, while others infrequently; some believed in the death and resurrection of Jesus and others did not. Of the seven Protestant members of the group, four were also members of the Orange Order.

The members of the Orange Order had been members of the women's group for almost two years when the whole group embarked on a trip to Belfast to spend a weekend with Northern Irish groups who had experience of working for peace in their communities. It was during this visit to Belfast that tensions within the women's group became most evident. Visits to the Fall's Road and Shankill areas of Belfast exposed a depth of frustration and emotion in some of the women which had not previously been witnessed at the meetings in Wishaw. As a result of these tensions, which appeared to stem from a perceived lack of understanding and respect for the women members of the Orange Order, those members subsequently left the group on their return to Scotland. It is important to note that I am unable to provide explicit details of this event because at that

time I was in the early stages of this process, prior to Ethics Application and Consent. I was present as a local woman interested in anti-sectarianism while considering and evaluating if this group would be the most appropriate for my research methodology. It is important therefore that I am mindful of that early stage and the limits of what I can responsibly share, however notwithstanding, this experience is reflected and commented upon by the remaining group members during the focus group and interviews in chapter 5.

Addressing the Research Question

The research asks, "How can a community-based model of anti-sectarianism, supported through faith-based values, help in the development of new anti-sectarian approaches in Scottish education?" The question seeks to discover if there is an effective and transformative approach which is *of* the community, owned by the community, rather than seemingly imposed *on* the community. The significant sub-question aims to discover 'How faith based values can support such engagement'. As an educational practitioner who is Christian and has worked with a rich variety of groups, I have directly experienced first-hand how faith based values can support and critically engage. Whether participants adhere to a particular faith or not, there is I found, much value in the concept of mutual participation and responsibility regarding anti-sectarianism, and a theological understanding of this offers a unique and beneficial tool for the process.

In this thesis therefore, I seek to respond to the challenges described above in recognition that there is a need for an alternative and reflective anti-sectarian approach which achieves the involvement of the community on which it is so focussed. The thesis question therefore is addressed in two parts. The first part presents an examination of the critical theories of educationalists, sociologists, and theologians relevant to this topic. The second part presents the research methods and methodology, results, analysis, and recommendations that emerge from my community-based research.

Structure of Response

In chapter one I will discuss the work of Paolo Freire and bell hooks,[14] whose educational approaches are routinely introduced to student teachers training for the Post Graduate Diploma in Education in Scotland. The critical pedagogical theorists' emphasis on praxis and participation reflection reveals and challenges current constraints experienced by those involved in educational anti-sectarian practice and exposes a disconnect between theory and practice. Freire and hooks are amongst the most widely respected and influential advocates of alternative pedagogical approaches and their pioneering work continues to offer a radical challenge to contemporary school-based education.

Chapter two discusses the work of social theorists, Michel Foucault and Sharlene Hesse-Biber, whose insights are directly relevant to my project. Foucault's discourse analysis invites an examination of the role authority plays in anti-sectarian interventions. I will consider Foucault's theory of subjugated knowledge and, in particular, his argument that political power is exercised through discursive regimes which serve to discipline the subject. I will consider, in the light of this, if there is a counter-productive element to anti-sectarian engagement. Hesse-Biber brings a feminist perspective to these considerations, again raising doubts concerning the suitability of current classroom methods, particularly as they replicate inherited gendered frameworks. Biber's analysis of standpoint epistemology and oppression, encompassing situated knowledge, identity, and participation barriers, presents a feminist approach through which effective and authentic anti-sectarian engagement might begin to be re-formed.

Chapter three considers the work of theologians Elaine Graham, Anna Rowlands, and Chris Baker, who are exploring issues that are integrally related to enabling community-based anti-sectarianism from a theological perspective. I examine the work of Graham on the possibilities of social renewal in a post secular environment and the challenges presented by alternative religious and feminist approaches. I consider Rowlands' reflections on faith institutions seeking civic

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[14] bell hooks uses lower case lettering in her name to detract from her person, or true identity as Gloria Watkins; encouraging focus on her ideas and not her persona.

dialogue and her advocacy of the common good. Finally, I explore Baker's assessment and examples of spiritual capital and human flourishing whilst pursuing the common good. If faith in some way is to offer support to community anti-sectarian engagement, then it is imperative that there is an understanding of the post secular climate and the new opportunities that this affords.

Part two of the thesis begins with chapter four, which presents the research methods and methodology employed to conduct the research to gain insight from a community group into how a community based model of anti-sectarianism, supported through faith based values, might help in the development of new anti-sectarian approaches in Scottish education. Continuing, chapter five presents the major themes and ethical considerations which emerged from The Wishae Wimmin's experiences of anti-sectarianism and obtained through the focus group, individual interviews, and reflections, and includes my own analysis of these. Part I of chapter five discusses the major themes identified from the data and subsequent analysis, while Part II of the chapter discusses two very specific ethical responsibilities to emerge. Chapter five's analysis also highlights that values drawn from theological understandings offer an important ethical scaffold for those individuals and groups involved in or facilitating such anti-sectarian initiatives.

Developing the major themes, underpinned by the ethical values discussed in chapter five, chapter six presents a new alternative model for anti-sectarian pedagogy: *Steps for a Transformative Pedagogy*. This is a fluid and flexible pedagogical model which sets out to recognise the agency and experience of every young person involved in the anti-sectarianism program; it is less intervention focused and more consciously rooted in, and connected to the local community; potentially positioning school at the centre of the community in the way in which church buildings once were. As a Christian who sees faith embodied in practice, I view such a model as close to the heart of practical theology as much as it is related to pedagogy; seeking transformation and living communication that moves between the worlds of theory and practice, a pedagogical approach framed by a duty of care that seeks both to protect and to liberate. Chapter six presents the relationship between the main theorists'

arguments, the research findings, and my recommendations. The chapter also details a practical and flexible route map for practitioners seeking to develop their own anti-sectarian pedagogical program.

Prior to chapter one's critical engagement with the educational theorists, it is first important to come to some understanding of the term most commonly employed in this thesis, that is, the contested term 'sectarianism' itself.

Defining Sectarianism

The Scottish Government's 2017 publication, *Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland: Review of Implementation*, reports on the efforts to implement recommendations by Professor Duncan Morrow and the work of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland. The recommendation below highlights the need for local communities to help define sectarianism.

> The Scottish Government continue to seek the help of communities across Scotland to craft a definition, which is easily understood, useful for analysing what is happening in local areas, and covers as far as possible the breadth of manifestations of this complex phenomenon.[15]

In 2018 the report of an independent working group chaired by Professor Duncan Morrow was published. This group had been tasked with exploring the scope to define sectarianism in Scots law and was also asked to define sectarianism within Scots Law. Coming after the repeal of the Offensive Behaviour at Football Act, it was hoped a new definition would potentially make it easier for police and prosecutors to more effectively address sectarianism in Scottish society. Despite no new definition resulted, three new legal options were however agreed, with Professor Morrow commenting,

> The continuing government support for community-based projects is evidence of genuine commitment to tackle sectarian issues where they

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[15] "Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland: review of implementation," Scottish Government, accessed February 14, 2022, https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-implementation-recommendations-advisory-group-tackling-sectarianism-scotland-report-dr/.

matter – in real lives. I look forward now to taking this opportunity to explore the options for improving the legal basis for protecting against sectarianism.[16]

The 2019 Consultation on Amending Scottish Hate Crime Legislation also produced a report: *Analysis of responses sought views on consolidating and modernising hate crime laws; new statutory aggravations; new stirring up offences, and other related issues*. A majority of respondents (59%; 311 out of 527 respondents) did not think there was a need to address and define sectarianism in hate crime legislation, while 26% said 'yes', and 15% said 'unsure'.[17]

As this research shall demonstrate, pursuing a common working definition need not be the divisive obstacle to change one that might suspect it to be. Nevertheless, it is evident that the use of the word evokes strong and opposing reactions by those who dispute its relevance to particular peoples and situations. However, whichever definition a person or group may subscribe to, there will be commonalities. To illustrate, below are three different definitions which represent popular understandings of the term sectarianism:

1. Excessive attachment to a particular sect or party, especially in religion.[18]

2. Sectarianism in Scotland is a complex of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, actions and structures, at personal and communal levels, which originate in religious difference and can involve a negative mixing of religion with politics, sporting allegiance and national identifications. It arises from a distorted expression of identity and belonging. It is expressed in destructive patterns of relating, which segregate, exclude, discriminate

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[16] "Legal definition of sectarianism," Scottish Government, accessed February 14, 2022, https://www.gov.scot/publications/final-report-working-group-defining-sectarianism-scots-law/.

[17] "Consultation on amending Scottish hate crime legislation: analysis and responses," Scottish Government, accessed February 14, 2022, https://www.gov.scot./publications/consultation-amending-scottish-hate-crime-legislation-analysis-responses/.

[18] "Sectarianism," Oxford Dictionaries, accessed May 15, 2017, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sectarianism.

against or are violent towards a specified religious other, with significant personal and social consequences.[19]

3. Narrow minded beliefs that lead to prejudice, bigotry, discrimination, malice and ill will towards members, or presumed members, of a religious denomination.[20]

Identifying and applying the commonalities and main components of the definitions above, the working definition of sectarianism which I have devised, and to which this research shall adhere is:

Sectarianism is the holding of profoundly intolerant and unjust negative attitudes and behaviours in relation to identity, which are often rooted in religious beliefs and values. It implies conflicts with individuals and groups who do not share those beliefs and values.

Defining and understanding the background, causes and expressions of sectarianism is a highly complex task. It is important however to underline that we should always exercise caution and engage in a critical examination of inherited understandings. For example, a summary timeline of the foundations of sectarianism in Scotland is illustrated below. This is adapted from an educational resource offered by a well-known anti-sectarian organisation and widely used by teachers. In isolating the religious roots of sectarianism, and avoiding other related, contumacious events, it reveals the way in which the highly complex history of sectarianism is often condensed and summarised for the anti-sectarianism classroom.[21]

1. 16th century – The Reformation.
2. Protestantism offers an alternative to Catholicism.
3. Scotland was previously a Catholic country.

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[19] "Definition of Sectarianism," Scottish Government, accessed May 15, 2017, http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/05/4296/4.
[20] "Divided City," Citizens Theatre, accessed May 15, 2017, www.citz.co.uk/take_part/divided_city/DividedCity.
[21] "History," Nil By Mouth, accessed November 15, 2015, https://nilbymouth.org/history/.

4.	Protestantism became Scotland's national religion.

5.	17th and 18th centuries - conflict between the Jacobite followers of the Catholic King James VII and the followers of non-Catholics King William and Queen Mary, who took the throne in Scotland in1688.

6.	19th century - immigration due to the Irish famine increases, particularly Catholic.

7.	Many Irish Catholics settled in the west of Scotland, in communities from Ayrshire to Glasgow's east end.

8.	Competition for employment and housing often led to conflict and discrimination between groups.

9.	Football teams, songs and banners are used to direct abuse at, or support for Protestants or Catholics.

10.	Football fans support of Northern Irish terrorist groups increases.

11.	Offensive words directed to and about Protestants and Catholics increasingly become part of a vernacular, with many seemingly unaware of how offensive the words are.

12.	Following several highly publicised sectarian attacks, the Scottish Government strategically confronts religious conflict through anti-sectarian work in schools and communities.

13.	Sectarian violence, language and attitudes persist.

Clearly this timeline, while offering an abbreviated route map of sectarianism throughout the past four centuries, presents a very partial understanding of how and why beliefs, rituals and identities are so complexly and emotionally entwined within sectarianism. Each item on this route map demands its own investigation. Each raises its own questions. Offering a historical analysis of the development of sectarianism is not the purpose of this thesis. However, it is important to acknowledge the problems inherent in the use of this and similar approaches to aid historical understandings because they limit the possibilities of interrogation and reflection by practitioners and intended recipients of the message.

Having provided an introduction in order to develop a contextual understanding and rationale for anti-sectarian pedagogy, the next chapter will look to current

anti-sectarian requirements and approaches, and then look towards the work of the critical pedagogical theorists, and ask if they point towards different ways of engaging with anti-sectarianism which might offer an alternative approach to those currently being practiced. The contributions of theorists, Paulo Freire and bell hooks, help in the developing formulation and articulation of the argument that it is necessary for pedagogy to re-visit current practice, and will focus my considerations of the potential for new anti-sectarian classroom approaches.

<center>**Part One**</center>

Chapter 1
An Exploration of Critical Pedagogy

Introduction

Anti-sectarian education has been developed to fit securely within the values and practices which currently dominate the educational system in Scotland. These approaches are critiqued in this chapter and questions raised as to whether institutional educational systems designed to maintain the status quo can ever radically challenge injustices on which their systems were built. In approaching these questions, it is important to first explore current educational anti-sectarian requirements and approaches. I shall look then to the work of pedagogical theorists and consider whether they direct us towards different ways of engaging with sectarianism which may prove fruitful in the Scottish context.

Paulo Freire and bell hooks are amongst the most widely respected and influential advocates of alternative pedagogical approaches, and their pioneering work continues to offer a radical challenge to contemporary educational practice. Indeed, as previously observed, they are routinely included in the preparation and training of student teachers, and are where, as highlighted by Margaret Ledwith, 'feminist and Freirean pedagogies converge in their fundamental assumption … that all people have a basic human right to be valued and active in their world'.[1]

It is their thinking which provides me with the initial resources needed to critique the basis upon which current educational interventions are predicated and thus to explore other modes of learning which might be more effective in

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[1] Margaret Ledwith, *Community Development: A Critical Approach* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2005), 135. (Margaret Ledwith is an academic, an acclaimed community development practitioner and coordinator of the International Collaborative Action Research Network).

bringing social change. This chapter will discuss key points in the theorists' contributions and indicate how their insights might support this research.

Current Educational Anti-Sectarian Approaches: The Requirement

Addressing controversial issues in school is nothing new, particularly in the Religious and Moral Education classroom. Abortion, homophobia, assisted suicide, and racism are just some of the highly sensitive and controversial topics which have been regularly included in the Scottish school curriculum for many years. The Curriculum for Excellence is clear that controversial issues such as these, must be taught by teachers as it lays out in a framework shaped by the four capacities: 'Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors.'[2]

There are multiple pressures on teachers to incorporate anti-sectarianism into the classroom curriculum, and this is a path laden with challenges. However, it is the duty of every Scottish Head Teacher, teachers of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies, Personal and Social Education, Pupil Support and Primary School teachers, to ensure that the anti-sectarian content within the syllabus is clearly communicated and delivered. Furthermore, as highlighted, it is emphasised in professional development contexts to teachers, the significance of the HM Inspectorate of Education Scotland publication, *How Good is Our School – The Journey to Excellence*, which states: 'Within the broad area of culture and ethos, the Journey to Excellence refers to the tackling of sectarianism as one of the features of an excellent school'.[3]

In 2014, the - then still relatively new - Curriculum for Excellence sought to respond to an increasing awareness of the need to combat sectarianism. Scotland's First Minister at the time, Alex Salmond MSP, said in a statement:

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[2] "Policy for Scottish Education," Scottish Government, accessed March 13, 2017, https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-(building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5)/What%20is%20Curriculum%20for%20Excellence).

[3] "How Good is our School?" Education Scotland, accessed March 13, 2017, https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf.

In developing rounded individuals who fulfil the four capacities of successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens, Curriculum for Excellence is itself a programme for tackling sectarianism. Our strong focus on global citizenship provides a vital tool for eradicating sectarianism in Scotland.[4]

As is evident from this statement, the intention was to put in place a combined and strategic intervention framework to address sectarianism in Scotland through education. There are now several highly prominent Government-funded charitable organisations which have developed work to support the current anti-sectarian education strategy. Indeed, the Final Report of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland – April 2015, recommended that anti-sectarian education, particularly in the form that exists in schools, must remain a priority in the continuing challenge to sectarian attitudes and actions.[5]

The expectation that anti-sectarianism would be taught in schools was uncompromising, and those educational establishments not addressing the issue were open to criticism and censure. As a teacher preparing for a forthcoming visit by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education Scotland, I was in no doubt what was expected of me. I would have allowed my professional abilities to be negatively judged had I not included evidence of anti-sectarian education in my course materials.

In *Sectarianism and state funded schooling in Scotland; A critical response to the final report of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland*, Professor Stephen McKinney, Leader of Pedagogy, Praxis and Faith at the University of Glasgow, argues for the need for greater understanding of the complexities involved in teaching about sectarianism. McKinney argues that recommendations and any related success depend on the involvement and

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[4] "Challenging Sectarianism," Education Scotland, accessed August 4, 2014, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/supportinglearners/positivelearningenvironments/inclusionande quality/challengingsectarianism/whychallengesectarianism/statement.asp.

[5] "Final Report of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland," Scottish Government, accessed December 2020. https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20160109072019/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/05/4296/13.

expertise of Education Scotland, pedagogical academics and those working in schools.

> There was, as has been stated, a very diverse group of individuals and organisations consulted and some of these are engaged in education. Education Scotland were consulted on 8 October 2012 and 29 May 2014, the Scottish Catholic Education Service was consulted on 7 March 2013 and some of the charities/organisations that engage in anti-sectarianism education: Sense over Sectarianism (8 Oct 2012; 28 March 2013; 25 June 2013), Nil by Mouth (8 Oct 2012; 7 March 2013), and Show Bigotry the Red Card (8 Oct 2012; 7 March 2013) (Interim Report, 2013; Final Report, 2015). There is no record of consultation with the Scottish Educational Research Association, representatives of a Faculty or School of Education in any of the Scottish universities, identified Education Officers, Head Teachers Associations nor any schools. It seems a little remiss not to have consulted at least some of these organisations.[6]

Indeed, the tensions and complexities are many, as Sara Lindores argues in *Women as Sectarian Agents: Looking Beyond the Football Cliché in Scotland,* contemporary Scottish conversations on sectarianism, "neglect the gendered dynamics of sectarian beliefs and practices by almost exclusively focusing on white working-class men's behaviours and actions thereby erasing women's agency in reproducing bigotry and prejudice."[7] Marginalised groups' such as women, young people, and amongst others, those with additional learning needs, have been largely absent from the anti-sectarian conversations and policy making processes.

In response to the Scottish Government's requirement to include anti-sectarianism in the curriculum, teachers have often struggled to meet the requirement in accordance with the standards expected, and have welcomed

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[6] Stephen McKinney, "Sectarianism and state funded schooling in Scotland. A critical response to the final report of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland," *Scottish Educational Review* 47, no. 2 (2015), 20-36.
[7] Sara Lindores, "Women as Sectarian Agents: Looking Beyond the Football Cliché in Scotland," *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 26, no. 1 (2019), 39-53.

anti-sectarian charitable organisations into their classrooms to assist in the teaching and delivery of this part of the teaching programme. Prominent and widely respected bodies to receive most funding and access to the classroom to support programme delivery include Nil by Mouth, Sense over Sectarianism, Show Racism the Red Card and the Citizen's Theatre. It is therefore important to provide a brief evaluation of the work of each these organisations.

Current Educational Approaches: In Practice

Nil by Mouth

Nil By Mouth is a Scottish charity which 'believe[s] a lasting solution to sectarianism lies in education,'[8], and 'firmly believe[s] education is the most important way of changing our society. To this end we plan, promote and deliver workshops, activity days and inter-school project work with pupils across Scotland.'[9] The charity was created in 1999 following the 1995 murder of Mark Scott in Glasgow as he walked past a well-known Loyalist pub on his way home from a Celtic football match. Mark was attacked and killed for no other reason than being perceived to be Catholic.

While Nil by Mouth has diversified over recent years and now includes employers and colleges in their programmes, much of their focus remains on school initiatives. In 2015/16 workshops were delivered to more than 10,000 school pupils across 21 local authorities,[10] which was a significant achievement with few employees. More recently, in 2019, Nil by Mouth worked with a little over 7,000 school pupils across 21 local authorities and continues to develop and deliver its anti-sectarian programmes to broader groups such as colleges and workplaces.

Despite impressive statistics for pupil engagement, the charity is not without its critics, particularly relating to accusations of bias from a wide range of groups, but perhaps most notably regarding the 'monopoly' status generated by the

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[8] "Nil by Mouth Charitable Trust Financial Statements from year end 31st March 2016," Nil by Mouth, accessed August 5, 2018, https://nilbymouth.org/.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

funding afforded to it by the Scottish Government. In 2018 Nil by Mouth received £95,000 of funding from Government, which accounts for 70% of its overall funding.

For example, sociologist Joe Bradley of Stirling University comments in an interview with *The Scottish Catholic Observor*,

> Support for research into 'ethno-religious' bigotry needs to be spread to some of the academics and activists who haven't received anything previously—not just those who say what the Scottish Government and media want to hear. We'll get nowhere in terms of learning and understanding if it's the same bodies, same academics, that get yet more money to say the same things: the things that actually just simply re-cycle the established 'wisdoms' about so called 'sectarianism'.[11]

Sense over Sectarianism

Sense over Sectarianism (SOS) was launched in 2001 by Glasgow City Council's Education Department. It seeks to make individuals aware of their role, through language, actions and behaviour, in determining the shape of society and to empower individuals to bring down barriers within their own lives by working towards community cohesion.[12] It is described thus by the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism on Scotland:

> Sense over Sectarianism continues to work with primary schools and teachers across Glasgow and has successfully developed resources for secondary schools which also feature as part of the Education Scotland resource. They continue to work with teachers to develop skill base and

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[11] "Call for Review into Funding," Scottish Catholic Observor, accessed January 28, 2020, http://www.sconews.co.uk/latest-edition/55192/call-for-review-into-funding-of-anti-sectarianism-initiatives/.

[12] "Sense Over Sectarianism Small Grant Fund," Fife Voluntary Action, accessed December 1, 2019, https://www.fva.org/news.asp?id=10948.

knowledge and provide long term legacy and capacity within education settings.[13]

While initially the main focus of SOS was on developing school anti-sectarian programmes and providing resources for teachers, in recent years, as funding for anti-sectarianism reduced, like Nil by Mouth, SOS has diversified. Offering financial support to other groups seeking to address sectarianism, SOS works in partnership with Nil by Mouth, Glasgow City Council, Celtic FC, Rangers FC, The Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

As in the case of Nil by Mouth, SOS are often criticised for perpetuating misguided norms relating to the causes of, and solutions to, sectarianism, and in particular for their lack of intervention on the controversial issue of denominational education.

Despite the sensitive and explosive nature of such a discussion, it is clear that while many defend the current position on schooling, there are currently also some in Scotland who seek a re-evaluation of this issue. Academics, teachers and parents have argued that the existence of Scottish Catholic schools, if not the root cause, at least contributes to sectarianism. The nature of this particular discussion is of course highly sensitive and this perhaps indicates precisely why SOS would prefer to avoid it.

Show Racism the Red Card
Show Racism the Red Card (SRTRC) is a UK wide anti-racism and anti-sectarianism charity which was established in England in 1996. Show Bigotry the Red Card is the sister campaign of Show Racism the Red Card in Scotland and seeks to educate on the dangers of sectarianism using football as a tool, with much of the work focused on school pupils.

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[13] "Sense Over Sectarianism," Scottish Government, accessed March 13, 2017, http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/03/3186/3.

Following a high profile event at Hampden Park (Scotland's national football stadium) in March 2017, which involved schools from across Scotland, Nicola Hay, the Campaign Manager for SRTRC said: 'Over 1000 young people who took part … sent a clear message to Scotland – the country they want to live in has no room for racism and sectarianism.'[14] The Scottish Qualifications Authority described the Hampden event:

> Show Racism the Red Card, the UK's premier anti-racism Charity and the Scottish Qualifications Authority have joined forces to promote our anti-racism/anti-sectarianism competition. The concept is simple, schools and colleges come up with a piece of creative work that gets across loud and clear the message that racism and sectarianism are not welcome in Scotland.[15]

In addition to their local schools' work, Show Racism the Red Card also run an annual national competition which encourages young people from schools and other educational settings to produce creative work with an original anti-racism theme, offering entrants opportunity to produce work in a wide range of media, including artwork, creative writing, film and music.

While providing young people with a space and the supportive tools to produce creative and reflective work on sectarianism, with all the constraints of an already congested curriculum, there remains limited time for students to contemplate or question the basic premise of the message, both of which conflict with the pedagogical philosophies of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Citizens Theatre

Using the book *Divided City* by Theresa Breslin,[16] the Citizens Theatre Group offer their ten-week anti-sectarian workshop courses to schools to support

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[14] "Young People Challenge Racism and Sectarianism Event," Show Racism the Red Card, accessed March 13, 2017, http://www.srtrc.org/news/2017/3/31/young-scots-gather-at-hampden-park-to-challenge-racism-and-sectarianism.

[15] "Challenging Racism and Sectarianism," Scottish Qualifications Authority, accessed March 13, 2017, http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/67444.html.

[16] Theresa Breslin, *Divided City* (UK: Corgi Childrens, 2006).

teachers in delivering the anti-sectarian requirements of the curriculum. In 2011-2012, Divided City was first performed at the Citizens Theatre with young people from Glasgow secondary schools.[17]

The schools workshop programme began in 2011, and by March 2015 over 20,000 school pupils had taken part in the workshops. The project received funding from the Scottish Government's Safer Communities Tackling Sectarianism Fund and delivered the programme to primary and secondary schools in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, North and South Lanarkshire in full partnership with the local authorities. The resources used to support the teaching are freely available from the Citizens Theatre webpages and have been hugely successful in encouraging students' creative expression and participation.

While unquestionably fruitful in developing and building creativity and confidence in young people, the context of the schools' workshop programmes may also be criticised for limiting deeper exploration or perpetuating established norms, and messages relating to the causes of sectarianism; they too begin with assumptions about the problem of sectarianism and suggest solutions which are based on very little academic research. This is also an observation made by Police Scotland Safer Communities Equality and Diversity Unit, who argue that there is still yet very little agreement of what is encompassed by the term 'sectarianism,' and go on to suggest that anti-sectarian workshops delivered by Scottish charities 'treated the existence of Catholic schools as ipso facto sectarian'.[18]

Professional Practice and Reflections

My own experiences of teaching anti-sectarianism in an area of Lanarkshire with a history of sectarian attitudes and behaviours play an enormous role in the decision to undertake this research, and specifically my analysis of an eight-week unit where four classes of S2 students explored what causes sectarianism

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[17] "Divided City," Citizens Theatre, accessed December 1, 2019, www.citz.co.uk/take_part/divided_city/DividedCity.
[18] "Catholic Schools Described as Sectarian," The Times, accessed April 15, 2020, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/scotland/charity-courses-describe-even-catholic-schools-as-sectarian-cxcxhkq36.

and why it is a problem in Scotland. The end of unit task was taken from a teaching resource widely circulated throughout secondary schools in the West of Scotland, meeting the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes,[19] and edited by teachers for their own students. The project question highlighted that football teams, Celtic and Rangers in particular, are often accused of not doing enough about sectarianism, and posed the question to students, "can clubs change attitudes and if so, how they might do it?" Working in small groups, the following roles were assigned to each group.

* The chairperson of a football club
* A football player
* A journalist
* A football fan
* A visiting fan from another team
* A stadium security officer

Groups were asked to examine the role which each person could play in addressing sectarianism, scripts were written, and each person interviewed by the journalist. The role play would be filmed and there would also be a special assembly held where representatives from a supportive anti-sectarian charity would attend and award the winning group with a prize. It was a lively and generally very happy unit where most of the students enthusiastically participated in the task.

However, as a reflective practitioner who very much depends on the reflexive processes to learn and hopefully improve my professional practice, I sensed that this highly enjoyable unit was in danger of being rather more box-ticking than developing the depth of critical thinking I originally aimed for students to achieve. I recognised from class discussions that students were already very aware from their previous learning and life experiences that sectarianism is negative and anti-sectarianism positive. I could see from the responses given by

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[19] "What is Curriculum for Excellence," Scottish Government, accessed February 14 2022, https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers.

the young people that they were confident and accomplished in their understanding and explanations that sectarianism is a harmful and socially unacceptable behaviour and attitude. I detected signs of contextually informed behaviour where the young people behaved as they had learned to behave – as students aiming to please. I was also conscious, and as evidenced from the formative and summative assessments carried out, of lower levels of success in a particular element of the course objectives; specifically, cognitive conflict evaluation where students' deeper personal considerations are shared.

As I looked at my teaching experience and the support offered from anti-sectarian organisations, I found a commonality in the absence of the time and space required for ethical and effective cognitive conflict evaluation. The practicalities of contextual and time-framed constraints of traditional anti-sectarian approaches make deeply effective learning strategies very difficult to achieve. My concern is that some efforts could tread perilously close to an intervention which risks creating more problems than it seeks to address.[20]

Educational Theory
Paulo Freire

Recognised as one of the most influential educational theorists of the last century, Paulo Freire has mobilised educators across the globe to move beyond traditional classroom roles, questioning hierarchies and methods and convincing practitioners of the value of introducing the transforming power of respectful and loving engagement into their praxis.[21] Freire writes: 'Looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future.'[22]

Indeed, it may be through the lens of love that Freire's contribution can best be understood. He writes: 'When the teacher stops making a pious, sentimental,

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[20] Much later one of my students shared that he was being taken to Belfast to see the *marches* by his dad who had just been released from prison. His dad died soon after.
[21] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970), 35.
[22] Ibid.

and individualistic gesture and risks an act of love. True solidarity is found only in the plenitude of this act of love.'[23]

In developing this theme, in conversations with Myles Horton, Freire explained that when he was working in the slums of Recife, Brazil's poorest region, he was conscious that love was the door that would open relationships with those he engaged with. This was not a romanticised or naïve hope, as he understood very clearly that the people he was working alongside had deep flaws and failings, but he recognised that: 'It's necessary to believe in the people. It's necessary to laugh with the people because if we don't do that, we cannot learn from the people, and in not learning from the people we cannot teach them.'[24] Similarly, for those wishing to engage with others to address sectarianism, it is equally important to approach with an attitude of openness and a willingness to learn.

Pedagogy and Sectarianism

Whilst this radical approach underlies all his thinking, it is Freire's emancipatory theory on 'situational reflection'[25] which offers anti-sectarianism a particularly significant and beneficial insight. Situational Reflection refers to the importance in equal measure of both reflection and action and highlights the difficulty for learners and leaders in addressing sectarianism within the classroom where the expectation is that students and teachers will conform to their preordained roles and expected behaviours. If there is a lack of reflection in action, then what we are left with is what is termed 'banking' education, in which information is 'deposited' into the learners by teachers. The detailed description of the banking model presented in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* can be paraphrased:[26]

    (a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught.

    (b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.

    (c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.

    (d) The teacher talks and the students listen – meekly.

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[23] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 35.
[24] Paulo Freire and Myles Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 247.
[25] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 109.
[26] Ibid, 73.

(e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined.

(f) The teacher chooses and enforces their choice, and the students comply.

(g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher.

(h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it.

(i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with their own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.

(j) The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

Whilst the banking model may appeal to official monitoring bodies and appear to raise the standard of exam results, there are many who believe that its real effect is to ensure patterns of conforming behaviour are maintained. Social transformation requires an alternative mode of generating understanding. In relation to this, Graham, Walton and Ward state:

> In contrast to the 'banking model', where the student is merely a passive receptacle of knowledge, Freire's use of the method of Conscientisation[27] prioritised the concrete and immediate experience of the student, encourages them to reflect critically on their experience, challenge the status quo and take control of their own destiny. Starting from, concrete problems of the immediate concern, it is knowledge directed towards reversing the cycles of fatality and passivity and moving towards empowerment.[28]

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[27] Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 183.
[28] Ibid.

Conscientisation

In contrast to the banking model, a practical and useful tool for releasing those voices and stories of the community is the Conscientisation Method.[29] This is an emancipatory pedagogical process which yields the possibility of community transformation and restoration. This process looks to the silent ones, the disenfranchised and marginalised, to speak and be heard. In its first stage it engages with the community, offering the opportunity to come together and inviting them to speak from their own experiences. The second stage of this method involves developing understanding: participants are challenged to consider what their insights mean in the context of the social and political context in which they are placed. The third step reveals their concerns. The fourth stage involves action: having identified deep communal concerns the issue then becomes how can these be addressed? The process is then repeated as the next stage of a reflective cycle.[30]

Of course, the experience of speaking aloud one's story will not always be a calm reflective process. Very often stories reveal emotions such as hurt and anger, disappointment, fear. However, if we consider this highly critical reflective model and compare it with those anti-sectarian methodologies currently in use in Scottish schools, we can see how far away we currently are from a process of conscientisation. Arguably, what is practised currently is the banking model, which Freire has identified through which adults instruct young people on which attitudes they should affirm and which they should reject. Yet for transforming anti-sectarianism, a banking model of depositing moral boundaries and messages into young people might be ineffective. Perhaps an alternative approach may proffer something rather more meaningful, if not revolutionary?

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[29] David F. White and Frank Rogers, "Existentialist Theology and Religious Education" in *Theologies of Religious Education*, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1995), 195.
[30] White and Rogers, "Existentialist Theology and Religious Education," 195.

'Conflicts are the Midwife of Consciousness'[31]

Freire's pedagogical models, as outlined, offer a potentially revolutionary perspective into how sectarianism might be addressed in Scotland. This is particularly so as he describes the need for honest and deep engagement with the oppressed and their positive participation with the learning processes.

Freire argues that consciousness emerges from addressing conflicts, whether internal, external or indeed simultaneously both, and this is the challenge facing educators as they seek to transform their students' experience and their learning. Describing the dangers of regarding students as the 'empty space waiting for content',[32] Freire also warns us against the *vanguardist* leader who sees themselves as the great proprietor and dispenser of knowledge. This Marxist-influenced view of a conflict in education sheds light on the processes through which an elite dominant class, however well-intentioned, decide what the dominated class are required to know: knowledge which they regard themselves as already possessing. This critique can be sustained when examining current anti-sectarian approaches performed daily in school. In these, the agenda is always firmly set and students' reflections are carefully managed to avoid any radical challenges to the status quo.

Freire's critique of the controlling dominance of certain groups does not mean that he seeks a simple reversal of power balances but rather a new form of community. He writes that 'The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization.'[33] He conceptualises an emergence, likened to childbirth following a prolonged period of painful labour, of the oppressed and the oppressor, through which both groups become fully liberated in their humanity which is rooted in critical enquiry and honesty:

> A pedagogy which must be forged with, not for; the oppressed (whether

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[31] Freire and Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking,* 187.
[32] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 118.
[33] Ibid, 48.

individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity. This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation. And in the struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade.[34]

Freire argues for a mutual struggle for liberation,[35] which is built on an understanding that sectarianism is based on the dominance of any 'certitude which precludes other certitudes' and which 'denies doubts' or is founded on universal truths.[36]

Particularly significant for my own research is Freire's observation that it is possible for any dominant group, the 'oppressors', who accuse another group of sectarianism, to fall into the sectarian mould themselves through their own strident efforts to eradicate any trace of the opposite group's extremism. 'Both types of sectarian, treating history in an equally proprietary fashion, end up without the people – which is another way of being against them'.[37] Freire highlights that both groups can hold very distinct and reactionary attitudes and actions which prohibit genuine freedom and expression, and referring to comments once made to him by the journalist, Marcio Moreira Alves, Freire recounts: 'They both suffer from an absence of doubt'.[38] It seems that this is a path laden with potholes and Freire calls for caution.

Describing how each opposing group experiences anxiety and can 'feel threatened' if their own stance is challenged, Freire suggests the necessity of another way, a new quite radical and liberating way of engagement. He explains:

> This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into

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[34] Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*, 48.
[35] Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope,* 118.
[36] Ibid, 50.
[37] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 38.
[38] Ibid, 39.

dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed, but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side.[39]

Freire describes how the oppressed can perceive themselves to be ignorant and view their teacher as the benefactor of knowledge, suggesting that the oppressed inherently 'distrust themselves'.[40] The Scottish Curriculum for Excellence was originally designed to value and take cognisance of the life experiences of the students, but in practice this element is proving rather more challenging to incorporate within a traditional learning environment than might have been envisioned.

Etymology of Education

It should also be noted however that Freire has received criticism for his support of education as a valuable process in itself. Indeed, Esteva, Prakash and Stuchul point out that, 'Tolstoy observed that education is a conscious effort to transform someone into something. More and more that "something" is a subsystem, a creature who functions within an oppressive system.'[41] In the article, 'From A Pedagogy for Liberation to Liberation from Pedagogy', the authors argue that Freire ignored the view that education can be one of the most degrading elements of life for the oppressed, and they note his absence of critical reflection on the distinct unfairness which exists between the educated and the under-educated.[42]

Freire reflects on the conflicts presented by the influence of the etymology of education, in that what is said and done externally shapes the internal, and what is internal projects externally. Filling the empty spaces in the student with knowledge which has been decided without them, becomes of paramount

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[39] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 39.
[40] Ibid, 63.
[41] Gustavo Esteva, Madhu S. Prakash and Dana L. Stuchul, "From a Pedagogy for Liberation to Liberation from Pedagogy," accessed 20th May 20, 2017, 14, http://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEEEstevaVsFreiretable.
[42] Ibid, 1-27.

importance and priority for the dominant leader. Freire explains however that in any place of learning, the teacher is the recognised authority figure who undoubtedly has important responsibilities towards the students, yet at the same time the teacher is also required to provide the freedom for students to become themselves.

McLaren and Leonard in *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*, cite Brecht's words, 'Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it'.[43] Using another illustration, Freire cautions against practitioners seeing themselves as the potter, moulding the clay into the image and shape of the teacher; instead they should seek to be the teacher who seeks dialogue with the students, to create a climate of honesty and openness, including the teacher's own pursuit of freedom. Freire explains: 'Dialogue between teachers and students does not place them on the same footing professionally; but it does mark the democratic position between them.'[44] Freire describes 'the unacknowledged violence',[45] which exists in education's 'binary thinking',[46] and places the dominant force of the teacher against the dominated student; I believe this is the real power of Freire's argument, as I consider the ramifications for Scottish anti-sectarian education, in that he offers practitioners an emancipatory way to leave behind traditional pedagogical colonialism and so give birth to a new consciousness. The potential of this for anti-sectarian education is significant as it serves to remove existing problematic approaches and frameworks and replace them with a radical approach which seeks democracy and freedom.

'Without understanding the soul of the culture, we just invade the culture'[47]
As well as being rooted in the concrete educational context of Scotland, this research also depends on, and values greatly, the memories and stories of individuals, and the collective memories and stories of a local community. Freire

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[43] Peter McLaren and Peter Leonard, *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter* (London: Routledge, 1993), 80.
[44] Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope,* 116.
[45] McLaren and Leonard, *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*, 80.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Freire and Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking,* 131.

is particularly interested in the structured silences which exist within the repressed consciousness of communities and is adamant that liberation exists only when communal stories are allowed to be spoken and heard.[48]

Freire explains that folk memories merely hint at the potential for liberation, but once those memories are permitted to be spoken, they then become stories which provide shape and meaning through their articulation. However, it is also important to bear in mind that those memories being spoken can be restrained by an existing master narrative, or even the practitioner's imagined communities, and this can serve to further curtail what is spoken and how it is heard and understood. Nevertheless, Freire points out that by providing a structure of space and freedom for marginalised voices to speak out, a greater relationship with those individuals and communities is forged. Giroux refers to this approach as 'liberating remembrance'.[49]

The title of this section, 'Without understanding the soul of the culture, we just invade the culture', is a quotation taken from Freire's conversations with Myles Horton, which highlights the damage that can be done when community and cultural understanding has not been sought while seeking transformation. If intervention is ever to be measured as successful, then surely it must be centred around dialogue with that particular culture. I found it interesting that Freire argues that the educator must not remain silent in this process. In attempting to remain respectful of the community, the educator may feel they must be silent, but Freire explains they have no right to be silent, especially if they have intervened and expect the community not to be silent.[50]

Freire's pedagogical approach is not non-interventionist, but it is revolutionary in as much as it requires a mutuality and equality in seeking understanding. To further illustrate, Freire tells the story of an academic asking a fisherman to give the names of three leading politicians, and the fisherman being unable to

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[48] Freire and Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking,* 131.
[49] Paulo Freire and Henry A, Giroux, *Politics of Education*, trans. Donaldo Macedo (Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey, 1985), 10-25.
[50] Freire and Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking,* 142.

provide the answers. The fisherman then asks the academic to provide the names of the three different fish he picks out, and of course the academic is unable to do so. The story ends with the fisherman observing, 'Do you see? Each one with his ignorance.'[51]

An Alternative Model of Engagement
bell hooks

Black American academic, educationalist and feminist, bell hooks was inspired and influenced by the work of Paulo Freire, and she too encourages a mutuality between student and teacher; asking that those working with learners also consider themselves learners. This process, hooks argues, produces 'a community of learners together. It positions me as a learner'.[52] She argues that through positioning the self as learner, new praxis, sensitivity, awareness and epistemologies emerge through the reflective process of critical enquiry:[53]

> Reflecting on my own work in feminist theory, I find writing – theoretical talk – to be most meaningful when it invites readers to engage in critical reflection. And to engage in the practice of feminism. To me, this theory emerges from the concrete, from my efforts to make sense of everyday life experiences, from my efforts to intervene critically in my life and lives of others. This to me is what makes feminist transformation possible. Personal testimony, personal experience, is such fertile ground for the production of liberation feminist theory because it usually forms the base of our theory making.

This process of critical enquiry is often very difficult to pursue, as learners must grapple with challenging views and painful narratives, as they mature through 'intellectual development'.[54] hooks 'recognizes that it is not easy to name our pain, to theorize from that location'.[55] It is this insight which offers much,

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[51] Freire and Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking*, 150.
[52] bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (New York: Routledge,1994), 153.
[53] Ibid, 70.
[54] Ibid, 154.
[55] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 74.

particularly when reflecting on the methodologies of existing anti-sectarian approaches for students and their communities in Scotland.

Hooks' liberating pedagogical attitude of refusing to separate emotion from academic experience is resolute; to insist otherwise, she argues, is at best distorted and at worst destructive. It is certainly not conducive to genuine depth of learning or personal or community transformation. Her transgressive approach promotes a process which serves to counteract pedagogies serving to maintain societal injustices. hooks' approach seeks to empower the learner and focuses on three questions:[56]

1. What image does the location of learning have as a community?
2. How can learners participate in activities inside the location of learning?
3. How can learners' own experiences become part of the discussion to make learning and teaching meaningful?

Hooks considers the complexities involved in achieving such change, and as part of her enquiry highlights the complicity which exists in the experience of both teacher and learner; and it is specifically this complicity which demands an in-depth critical analysis of current anti-sectarian practices and contexts.

Complicit Roles and Pedagogy

Further developing her arguments, hooks reflects on her observations that everyone involved in learning has their expected roles and all parties have learned to comply and perform within those roles. Those who attempt to refuse them are often treated harshly. In the Scottish context, any student who questions the anti-sectarian lesson is regarded as a possible troublemaker; assumptions are made about their background, and their motivations are viewed with suspicion. In practice, both learners and those in authority generally comply to the roles assigned to them. hooks recalls the incident of a drunk professor and his college students' apparent inability to ask him about his behaviour as they did not want to challenge his authority or even his own self-

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[56] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 70-185.

image. Everyone behaved according to their role and without question, even the drunk professor who automatically assumed his role as teacher even though inebriated and unfit to teach.

The Possibilities of a Confessional Narrative?

Hooks argues that it is only by providing a safe space, listening to others voicing their memories, that we can become more aware of one another, and more sensitive to 'others'[57] and their narratives; in the process becoming increasingly conscious of someone else outside of the realm of self.

In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks shares a story told to her by Jane Ellen Wilson, a pseudonym of one of the writers of *Stranger in Paradise*,[58] a book revealing the social class struggles experienced by academics working in American colleges and universities. Wilson tells how:

> Only by coming to terms with my own past, my own background, and seeing that in the context of the world at large, have I begun to find my true voice and to understand that, since it is my own true voice, that no pre-cut niche exists for it; that part of the work to be done is making a place, with others, where my and our voices, can stand clear of the background noise and voice our concerns as part of a larger song.[59]

Hooks describes the importance of 'confessional narrative',[60] arguing that it goes some way to removing barriers such as class, religion and sexuality. That is not to say that it removes those elements instantly or even completely, but it confronts and challenges barriers, and dealing with challenge is ultimately, she explains, maturity. She suggests that through creating this space for her own students, including previously disenfranchised students, their previously held assumptions regarding one another's status are frequently disrupted through the

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[57] David R. Brockman, *No Longer the Same* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 36.
[58] Charles Sackrey and Jake Ryan, *Strangers in Paradise: Academics from the Working Class* (Boca Raton, Florida: United Press of America, 1995).
[59] hooks, Teaching to Transgress, 185.
[60] Ibid, 186.

sharing of their stories. Anti-sectarianism, I would suggest, has much to gain from this model.

Context and Cultural Criticism

Although highly influential, hooks is not without her critics. For example, Namulundah Florence offers a critique of hooks' transgressive approach in actively pursuing her students' self-actualisation as 'idealism in expecting to address structural injustices through schools.'[61] Florence argues that, as the school is part of the established social structure, it is unlikely to act successfully in producing societal change. The pluralism which may be developed in educational policy to recognise diverse communities and individuals' experiences, for example the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, may instate a level of consciousness within the individual student regarding cultural differences, but this will do little to remove intolerance in the community.

Joel Spring similarly argues that the 'reliance on schools as tools for social transformation'[62] is a deeply flawed idea as schools are simply not equipped to revolutionise the social structure and community of which they are part. Kevin Harris further observes:

> No State would consciously and deliberately foster a universal compulsory institution that openly challenged its dominant value, belief, and knowledge systems; or set up and/or sanction an institution likely to produce the kind of future citizens who might overthrow the very State that formed or socialized them.[63]

I find in hooks' work a recognition of these difficulties and criticisms, and she challenges those practitioners involved in seeking transformation to persist in this work. hooks discovered through her own practice of transgressing boundaries that her students did respond positively to the strategic mix of

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[61] Namulundah Florence, *bell hooks' Engage Pedagogy: A Transgressive Education for Critical Pedagogy* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1998), 137.
[62] Namulundah Florence, *bell hooks' Engage Pedagogy,* 136.
[63] Kevin Harris, "Educating for Citizenship," in *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education,* ed. Wendy Kohli (New York: Routledge, 1995), 219.

theory and practice involving cultural criticism. They connected those theories which had been realised and expounded in the classroom to their communities and lives beyond the institution with a new critical awareness of their surroundings and the worlds they inhabited.

Supporting the possibilities of a combined approach such as this are Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, who argue:

> Cultural studies combine theory and practice in order to affirm and demonstrate new language, rupturing disciplinary boundaries, decentering authority, and rewriting the institutional and discursive borderlands in which politics becomes a condition for reasserting the relationship between agency, power, and struggle.[64]

Hooks argues that society never really seeks critical thinking, because critical thinking inevitably breaks barriers and crosses boundaries. These boundaries serve to maintain a society invested in oppression. In her work, *Outlaw Culture*[65] she discusses this topic with Marie-France Alderman, and there hooks shares her observation that society is, 'fundamentally anti-intellectual, anti-critical thinking'.[66] This is a somewhat incendiary view of society which might also open up a critical debate with the perspectives of Florence, Spring and Harris.

This chapter has developed a deeper understanding of current educational anti-sectarian practices. Through an evaluation of the significant contributions of pedagogical theorists Freire and hooks, it has questioned whether they point us towards different ways of engaging with anti-sectarianism which could prove beneficial. The theorists encourage questions concerning the contextual constraints involved in current educational approaches, and highlight a need for greater flexibility, transparency and reflection from all parties involved, particularly from those who hold most power. The explorations in this chapter

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[64] Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, *Between Borders; Politics and the Pedagogy of Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2014), xi, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315021539.
[65] bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 44.
[66] Ibid.

reveal that while it is not theoretically impossible for anti-sectarianism to be effectively addressed by the classroom teacher, it is evident that current approaches require re-evaluation. Freire and hooks advocate for a more egalitarian approach to education, highlighting a disconnect between practitioners' theory and practice, and challenging uncritical acceptance of current anti-sectarian pedagogy.

I shall now explore further what this entails in practice and whether a transformative approach can be adopted within the school system itself. In order to do so the following chapter identifies the relationship which exists between power and resistance and presents a broader feminist analysis of social theory encompassing situated knowledge, identity and barriers to participation. All of these, I will show, must be considered relevant in evaluating the current approaches and emancipatory outcomes involved in anti-sectarianism educational practice.

Chapter 2
Social Theory and Intervention

Introduction

Having examined the complex relationship between pedagogical approaches and meaningful student engagement, chapter two considers Michel Foucault's radical critique of institutional power and its ability to create change. The chapter examines the implications of these discussions for social research and considers the challenges this particular theoretical thinking represents for current anti-sectarian methodologies, most specifically for the communities in which these methodologies are intended to influence.

Section 1 explores Foucault's theories on subjugated knowledge and in particular his argument that political power is exercised through knowledge, which serves to discipline the subject. This, he argues, increases resistance and produces a transformative discourse which creates new political possibilities. Although radical, Foucault's theory on institutional power's role in shaping discourse and narrative is a valuable framework for reflecting on the effectiveness of current anti-sectarian approaches, and this process may help in a creative design of new ideas. The first section also considers Pierre Bourdieu's critique of Foucault's theories, and it too offers further insight into institutional power's role in the legitimising of knowledge. Indeed, Foucault's social theory and his approach to research are visible throughout the thesis as theory informed, challenged and inspired decisions directly related to the research methods and analysis.

The second section of chapter two will specifically explore too the 'gendering' of knowledge, looking particularly to Sharlene Hesse-Biber's analysis of standpoint epistemology and oppression, encompassing situated knowledge, identity and participation barriers. This section of chapter two will also be supported by a broader feminist critique of social theory, while considering specific examples of inequality, including race and education. This presents an additional lens on the unique intersectional barriers specifically encountered by women, and through this, introduces some of the layers of discrimination and

barriers which women encounter while attempting to engage with current Scottish anti-sectarianism approaches.

Michel Foucault

Arguably, one of the most significant achievements of influential French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault, was his identification and interrogation of the relationship between knowledge and power[1], and how they serve both to discipline and increase resistance in the subject. Foucault's emphasis on subjugated knowledge, that is, the knowledge formed by those who are marginalised within dominant social discourses, is particularly useful to this project as it provides an interrogative and radical theoretical lens through which to view Scottish anti-sectarian initiatives. Furthermore, Foucault's analysis of knowledge as power offers this research a radical perspective from which to observe and analyse the current methods employed to address sectarianism in Scotland. I shall argue that Foucault's work on power and subjugated knowledge sheds light on the struggles and resistance which exist within the broader field of anti-sectarian practice and prompts deeper reflection on the need for alternative or transformed approaches.

Subjugated Knowledge and Resistance

Foucault's ground-breaking *Archaeology of Knowledge*,[2] rejected the structuralist, phenomenological understanding that knowledge is somehow constructed in the consciousness of subjects and insisted rather that it is the product of a powerful mix of historical and institutionally empowered influences and constraints. Foucault argued that power and knowledge are not separate entities, but rather, they function relationally because, 'nothing can exist as an element of knowledge if it does not possess the effects of coercion' and also, 'nothing can function as a mechanism of power if it is not deployed according to

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[1] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 24.
[2] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: The World of Man* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

procedures, instruments, means, and objectives which can be validated in more or less coherent systems of knowledge'.[3]

Arguing that authority produces knowledge,[4] Foucault explains that recognition of this relationship between power and knowledge, as intertwined social constructions, is a crucial imperative for the social researcher. However, the two terms are not identical to the other, nor are their relations as simple as it may first appear. The key insight here comes from Foucault's perspective on the production of knowledge. It is to the construction - the production - of knowledge by power that we must attend.

> You have to understand that when I read - and I know it has been attributed to me - the thesis 'Knowledge is power', or 'Power is knowledge', I begin to laugh, since studying their relation is precisely my problem. If they were identical, I would not have to study them and I would be spared a lot of fatigue as a result. The very fact that I pose the question of their relation proves clearly that I do not identify them.[5]

Foucault's analysis of the relationship between knowledge and power is developed through his work. In *The History of Sexuality*,[6] he illustrates how this relationship functions by examining how 'sex' was constructed and came to be accepted as a moral category which required strict managing. In one of the examples given by Foucault, we see how power and knowledge are inextricably linked:

> Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered. It was in the nature of a public potential; it called for management procedures; it had to be taken charge of by analytical discourses. In the eighteenth century, sex became a 'police' matter - in the full and strict

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[3] Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?," in *The Politics of Truth: Michel Foucault,* ed. Sylvere Lotringer (New York: Semiotext. 1997), 23-82.
[4] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* 1, 24.
[5] Lawrence D. Kritzman, *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and other Writings 1977-1984* (London: Routledge,1988), 43.
[6] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* 1, 24.

sense given the term at the time: not the repression of disorder, but an ordered maximization of collective and individual forces.[7]

Developing his thinking further through detailed analyses of specific discourses, such as those concerning sex and madness,[8] Foucault identified that where power is exercised, there too struggle and resistance are located. Conversely, where resistance is found, then there we will find evidence of repression and disciplining; for there has to have first been a discursive regime which provoked resistance.[9] That there must first be an element of constraint from which resistance emerges, is illustrated by Foucault through his analysis of the mechanisms through which sexuality is socially constructed, ordered and disciplined.[10]

A local and current example of the relationship between power, struggle and resistance can be seen in the Scottish Government's discussions and amendments to the 'Hate Crime Bill', which received royal assent in April 2021. Many religious organisations united in protest to combine their energies and resist the inclusion of terms within the new Bill which appeared to threaten freedom of expression. It was particularly feared that this would result in loss of the right to express views within the privacy of an individual's home or private gathering. Following widespread publicity and support for exemptions from other groups and well-known individuals, the proposed inclusion of the prohibitive phrases were subsequently removed.[11]

Subjugated Knowledges

In further development of his theory, Foucault turned his attention to the knowledge generated by marginalised groups. Jardine McNicol states, Foucault

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[7] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1, 24.
[8] Michel Foucault's inaugural lecture titled *The Order of Discourse* at Collège de France, 2nd December 1970 offered a detailed description of how historic discourse controls knowledge, enquiry and protest. Foucault argues that dominant discourses serve authority, and exist to prohibit growth and resistance.
[9] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, The Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1998), 95.
[10] Michel Foucault's inaugural lecture titled The Order of Discourse at Collège de France, 2nd December 1970.
[11] "Responses to Hate Crime Bill," Scottish Government, accessed January 23, 2021, https://www.gov.scot/news/response-to-hate-crime-bill-report/.

'identified knowledgeable people (inmates in prison, patients in mental hospitals, etc.) whose voices we refuse to listen to even though we want to understand them.'[12] These groups, these voices, communicate what he terms 'subjugated knowledges'.[13] Jose Medina explains that, 'what Foucault calls subjugated knowledges are forms of experiencing and remembering that are pushed to the margins and rendered unqualified and unworthy of epistemic respect by prevailing and hegemonic discourses'.[14]

Foucault's understanding of subjugated knowledges is particularly interesting when reflecting on the potential of those at the margins of the community who might have the power to transform their communities if only they achieved a voice, but are currently silenced by subjection to a dominant culture and excluded from legitimised and dominant discourses. Here it is possible to see parallels with anti-sectarianism discourses currently at work in Scotland, in which it has been difficult to locate the voices of those most integral to this work: those from communities most impacted by the issue. This is not to say that their views are not sought, but that there appears to be a caution or a silencing which results from an interventionist framework shaped by authority. This is an issue which is explored later in this thesis.

Foucault's work implies that it is the duty of the researcher to seek out and attend to unarticulated understandings, experiences and memories, and recover subjugated knowledges. This perspective is reinforced by Medina, who points out:

> Scholars and activists aiming to produce insurrectionary interventions could not get their critical activity off the ground if they did not draw on past and ongoing contestations, and the lived experiences and memories

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[12] Gail McNicol Jardine, *Foucault & Education* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005), 21.
[13] Ibid.
[14] "A Foucaultian Espistemology of Resistance," Vanderbilt University, accessed June 15, 2017, 11, https://as.vanderbilt.edu/philosophy/people/facultyfiles/medina-toward_a_foucaultian_epistemology_of_resistance.

of those whose marginalized lives have become the silent scars of forgotten struggles.[15]

So, in a similar way to Freire and hooks, Foucault argues that in order to understand the epistemological inheritances of marginalised people with opposing views, backgrounds, and experiences, the practitioner pursuing community emancipation must adopt a revolutionary and political approach to their enquiry.[16] This of course may often entail for the researcher, *biting the hand that feeds them*, including those who provide institutional support or funding for their studies; perhaps revealing the way social power is reinforced through the practices of these same institutions and systems. Although challenging, Foucault argues that this highly radical approach is the only way that the most longed for honest and difficult conversations and subsequent social transformations can emerge.

What is interesting for my research is that this particular approach, together with Foucault's understanding of subjugated knowledge, is also supported by the work of John Flint, who explored, through the lens of Foucault's theory on governmentality,[17] how Scottish sectarianism had become such a focus for government interventions. Flint examined how government had constructed a social narrative concerning how sectarianism should be perceived, which subsequently, and successfully, deeply penetrated the social consciousness. His work encourages a deeper exploration of sectarianism and anti-sectarianism through the lived experiences of marginalised communities. Flint challenges me as practitioner to question if an alternative engagement with anti-sectarianism could exist, which is produced out of the subjected knowledge of a particular community, and which is not simply another institutional intervention from above. He writes:

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[15] "A Foucaultian Espistemology of Resistance," Vanderbilt University, accessed June 15, 2017, 11, https://as.vanderbilt.edu/philosophy/people/facultyfiles/medina-toward_a_foucaultian_epistemology_of_resistance.
[16] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1.
[17] Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) 87-104. Foucauldian term used to describe the techniques and systems adopted by governments to delineate boundaries and processes.

> The rationales of governance are revealed through policy narratives that construct social problems, identify their causes and ascribe responsibilities and actions for their resolution. These policy narratives establish 'official' memories of histories and specific interpretations of events that generate particular accounts and understandings of a social problem, whilst simultaneously ignoring or silencing alternative understandings; and thereby enhancing the legitimacy of governance actions.[18]

To reemphasise, Flint's engagement with Foucault's theory on governmentality is so significant for this research because it questions and challenges current institutional practices and anti-sectarian methodologies built upon narratives legitimised and managed by powerful state bodies.

Intervention and Resistance

To develop my thinking on this theme, I also turn to Foucault's theory of biopolitics;[19] a term used to refer to the control of the population's physical choices and cognitive understandings through public intervention and private self-regulation.

Through this theory, Foucault analysed a governing authority's interest and power over the individual. In *The History of Sexuality,* he illustrates through historical examples, the mechanisms in place for the management and policing of sex and shows how the legitimising of the moral framework surrounding sex disempowered and 'criminalised' the human body.[20] Foucault noted significantly that bio-politics is a discipline which, 'tries to rule a multiplicity of men to the

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[18] John Flint, Governing Sectarianism in Scotland, *Scottish Affairs,* no. 63 (Spring 2008): 123.
[19] Thomas Lemke, *Bio-Politics An Advanced Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 34. Lemke explains the Foucault's Bio-Politics is an, "historical rupture in political thinking and practice that is characterized by a re-articulation of sovereign power. Second, Foucault assigns to bio-political mechanisms a central role in the rise of modern racism. A third meaning of the concept refers to a distinctive art of government that historically emerges with liberal forms of social regulation and individual self-governance."
[20] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* 1.

extent that their multiplicity can and must be dissolved into individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used and … punished'.[21]

In a response to the technological changes over the previous century, Foucault extended this theory to explore a 'governance relationship', which I believe helpfully further elucidates my analysis of how communities might engage with anti-sectarianism. Observing how power/knowledge and resistance interact when elements of society are subject to governing interventions, Foucault argues that these interventions are primarily undertaken with the purpose of maintaining and rationalising authority. This understanding provokes practitioners and stakeholders to radically re-examine, with a 'hermeneutics of suspicion',[22] the accepted and normalised anti-sectarian mechanisms currently in place in Scotland; a context in which the question until now has not been, 'should authority intervene?', but how?

Foucault's argument is that an intervention of a governing authority will invariably present difficulties for any model designed to transform or emancipate a community.[23] Foucault argues that intervention produces anger and resistance because it seeks to reinforce an already doubtful historical episteme.[24] The episteme, for Foucault is, 'the stable ensemble of unspoken rules that governs knowledge, which is itself susceptible to historical breaks'.[25] The episteme concerned with sectarianism and anti-sectarianism frames authority's interventions, which are primarily concerned with maintaining good social order but which often lead to suspicion and resistance.

Foucault's thinking on this topic is invaluable because it requires me to identify and confront the unspoken rules and normative ideologies and behaviours linked

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[21] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (Great Britain: Penguin, 1976), 242.
[22] Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 27. Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion, "Hermeneutics seems to me to be animated by this double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigor, vow of obedience."
[23] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2005).
[24] Ibid.
[25] "The Order of Things: Discussed by Mark G.E. Kelly," *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, accessed July 17, 2017 http://www.iep.utm.edu/foucault/.

to both sectarianism and anti-sectarianism. Foucault's challenge to intervention processes also possesses wider relevance for our understanding of international issues relating to religion and sectarianism, enabling us to identify how historical maintenance of various discourses powerfully shape and manage individual identity and communal life. An example of such powerful investment in creating and maintaining identity and communal life with particular relevance to sectarianism is Northern Ireland, where the interventions of authority served to safeguard historical understandings of the issues involved, and yet arguably served too the resistance that authority evoked.

Genealogical Knowledge and Suspicion

This exploration is developed further through Foucault's theory of the genealogy of knowledge.

> Michel Foucault's genealogical analyses challenge traditional practices of history, philosophical assumptions and established conceptions of knowledge, truth and power. Genealogy displaces the primacy of the subject found in conventional history and targets discourse, reason, rationality and certainty.[26]

Foucault's genealogical perspective offers an historical understanding of knowledge production and power, describing how knowledge arises in very particular historical contexts as opposed to being derived from historical and universal truths. His theoretical framework on genealogy is important for this particular study because it seeks to identify when an historical and cultural context, and a regulating discourse, became inextricably bound together. It offers the opportunity for an analysis of power/knowledge and its relationship with the current anti-sectarian discourse and practices, which are widely accepted and rarely openly challenged. As historian, Paul Veyne states, Foucault was 'eager to peel away a few certainties and show that what has not always

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[26] "Genealogy: by Una Crowley," International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography, accessed May 18, 2019, www.maynoothuniversity.ie/3024/1/UC_Genealogy.

been, might well not be and is simply the product of a few flukes and a precarious history.'[27]

This questioning of normative social and political certainties is supported by Thomas Lemke who suggests:

> theoretical strength of the concept of governmentality consists of the fact that it construes neo-liberalism not just as ideological rhetoric, as a political-economic reality or as a practical anti-humanism, but above all as a political project that endeavors to create a social reality that it suggests already exists.[28]

Foucault's aim was to identify a means of analysis which would 'break down identities, revealing them as masks – or many intersecting systems which dominate one another and not some single idea struggling for its self-realization'.[29] His method of discourse analysis questions the institutional organisation of knowledge, which structures and controls the collective understanding and acceptance of knowledge, as fact.[30] For deep and authentic community engagement, Foucault's analysis is vital to the process of enquiry through which emancipation is genuinely sought. But this is a highly complex and challenging process of enquiry which demands commitment to every variable stage. Indeed, Foucault identified three 'memorialization'[31] functions of history which elucidate the constituents integral to any transformative enquiry. To explain, the recording of an event places that event into society, and the placing of that event into society makes the event and the memory of it even stronger; consequently shaping, curtailing and binding individuals to an event of which they have played little or no part.

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[27] Paul Veynes, *Foucault His Thought, His Character* (Cambridge: Polity Books, 2010), 118.
[28] Thomas Lemke, *Foucault, Governmentality and Critique* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 13. (Lemke refers to the significance of the state's role in the construction and legitimising of society normatives and knowledge).
[29] Chris Horrocks and Zoran Jevtic, *Introducing Foucault* (New York: Icon Books, 1997), 98.
[30] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: The World of Man* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).
[31] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (Great Britain: Penguin, 1997), 67.

In the Scottish context, there is an understanding of sectarianism in Scotland which has been recorded, absorbed and used to curtail and bind, yet fails to bring the unity it apparently seeks to achieve.

A Responsibility to Interrogate Knowledge

The post-structuralist approach to knowledge and power represented by Foucault is invaluable in its contribution to understanding the difficulties in initiating the much sought-after change conversations focused on addressing sectarianism in Scotland. In contrast to the dominant structural theorists of the day, such as Saussure, who argued that the underlying structures of a society provided its meaning, Foucault's post-structural analysis found that, 'reality is in a constant process of construction' and that there is no 'view from nowhere'.[32]

An interrogation of accepted social understandings requires immersion into a process of unpicking threads which have created a tapestry woven from materials manufactured in other social contexts and other epochs. Foucault's approach directly challenges the accepted anti-sectarian values and methodologies currently espoused across Scotland, where great efforts are made to impose an narrative claimed to be normative onto what are complex social constructions. Through the Foucauldian lens employed in this research, communities are revealed as struggling to find their place in the conversation, despite their frustrations and awareness of injustice.

While there may be attempts within an educational institution to engage in genuine reflection and the interrogation of knowledge, it is clear that the limitations and constraints within traditional learning and teaching settings are likely to prohibit freedom, rather than provide it, and it is this freedom, Foucault would argue, which is fundamental in questioning these episteme.[33]

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[32] Margaret Walshaw, *Working with Foucault in Education* (The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2007), 5.
[33] For Foucault, episteme is the discourse and ideas which contribute to the creation of what is understood to be knowledge.

Foucault argued that there is no objectivity in traditional educational processes; indeed this would be an illusory pursuit as there are no shared universal truths, no consensus about what it is we know or even who we are as human subjects.[34]

> Foucault wants to keep open the negative space of what the individual is not, of what we cannot say the individual is, to preserve the space of a certain negativity that refuses all positivity, all identification, for that is always in the end a historical trap.[35]

It is this which highlights the responsibility to interrogate the accepted and normative pedagogical practices and messages observed in current attempts at transformative education in Scotland. Indeed, while Education Scotland offers a great many anti-sectarian teaching resources for teachers to use, it remains a concern that processes and methods are framed by a narrative which assumes student and parental cooperation in a context which offers little option for either involvement or resistance.[36] To revisit, question and reconstruct practice with this understanding in mind, can in Foucault's terms only offer progress.

As I have shown, Foucault places the concept of objective universal knowledge under the microscope and argues, that these understandings are always politically charged human constructs which are inherently contestable. There is not one singular or universal truth to which all subscribe because social reality is constantly changing. What was truth once, Foucault argues, will not be truth for all or for long as social systems evolve and adjust to personal, social, climatic and geographical experiences. There is a situatedness to knowledge which demands recognition, and this presents profound difficulties for any programme or set of beliefs which seek to legitimate themselves through time:

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[34] Walshaw, *Working with Foucault in Education*, 5.

[35] John D. Caputo, On Not Knowing Who We Are: Madness, Hermeneutics and the Night of Truth in Foucault, in *Michel Foucault and Theology* ed. James Bernauer and Jeremy Carrette (England: Ashgate, 2004), 128.

[36] "Tackling Sectarianism", Scottish Government, accessed April 20, 2018, https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/Tackling%20sectarianism:%20An%20overview%20of%20resources.

Archaeology takes discourses as its object of study, investigating the way discourses are ordered. As a methodological approach, archaeology offers a means of analysing 'truth games' by looking at history and uncovering the rules of construction of social facts and discourses, or the rules of discursive systems.[37]

Foucault argues, however, that it is crucial to question what passes as universal truth or knowledge, to historicise these, because this process of questioning enables the challenges which follow. Investigations into how particular sets of universal truths became so legitimised present enormous challenges for anti-sectarian practices in Scotland, such as questioning the necessity to 'tackle sectarianism'[38] instead of perhaps finding a less aggressively framed approach.

In March 2018, the Scottish Government Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs said in a statement issued to announce new funding:

Sectarianism must be tackled with the same conviction as every other hate crime. Since 2012 we have delivered an unprecedented range of activities to tackle the issue across Scotland, which have made a significant impact.[39]

The curiosity of framing anti-sectarianism in such a forceful way, while instructing young people on the need to eradicate hate is unmistakably paradoxical. Questioning the history and construction of knowledges which surround Scottish anti-sectarianism methods, while also reflecting on how 'tackling sectarianism' became part of human agency, could offer communities and practitioners a revolutionary and liberating alternative for authentic engagement.

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[37] Walshaw, *Working with Foucault in Education*, 9.
[38] "Tackling Sectarianism: Reviews of Evidence", Scottish Government, accessed October 2014, http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/6197.
[39] "Tackling Sectarianism: Funding Announcement", Scottish Government, accessed May 23, 2018, https://news.gov.scot/news/tackling-sectarianism-4.

Foucault of course is not without his critics. One of the most influential of these is Jürgen Habermas, who describes Foucault's knowledge and power theory as 'utterly unsociological'.[40] While Habermas accepts, and even to an extent values, Foucault's historical analyses of prison and institutions for people suffering mental illness, he vehemently argues that Foucault's theory of power fails to provide a clear and convincing description of social order. Accusing Foucault of, 'levelling the role of culture and politics to the immediate application of violence, and social life to a series of occasions for power to be exercised over bodies',[41] Habermas does not accept Foucault's employment of power as an effective 'critical tool',[42]and argues that there exists,

> Communicative action 'with its interlacing of the performative attitudes of speakers and hearers' focuses heavily on values, norms, and the experience of mutual understanding.[43]

While Habermas's critique is persuasive, I must partially disagree, because contrary to his view, I find Foucault's approach extremely convincing, particularly his work on the relationship between knowledge and resistance, as I discovered in my research.

I agree with Habermas however, that we must not throw the baby out with the bath water. State supported anti-sectarianism is not necessarily always unhelpful or counterproductive and it is arguably important that civic authorities enter deeply into public conversations on this topic and communicate an anti-sectarian ethos.[44] However, I did find Foucault's perspective helpful in understanding the cycle through which governmental intervention increased both obedience and resistance, resulting in a continuing struggle. This mechanism is described more fully in the research findings and analysis chapter.

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[40] Jonathan Simon, Between Power and Knowledge: Habermas, Foucault, and the Future of Legal Studies, *Law & Society Review Vol. 28,* no. 4. (1994): 953.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Jonathan Simon (citing Habermas), Between Power and Knowledge: Habermas, Foucault, and the Future of Legal Studies, *Law & Society Review Vol. 28,* no. 4. (1994, 99): 953.
[44] See Chapters six, seven and Conclusion for future practice.

In the wider context, it should also be noted that, as argued by Flyvjberg,

> Habermas and Foucault are not simply opposites of each other; they are
> each other's shadows in their efforts to both understand and limit
> rationalization and the misuse of power.[45]

Particularly valuable to this study, and as Woermann suggests, Foucault's most important contribution is his, 'unveiling the power relations and disciplinary practices that we have come to view as normal in our practices, including our educational practices'.[46]

What are the Implications for Social Research?

Pierre Bourdieu

Following Foucault's death in 1984, the social theorist Pierre Bourdieu reflected upon his friend's work and the challenges that Foucault presented to theorists and reformers. Bourdieu affirmed that intellectual inquiry must be committed to the reality of the situation and to those who dwell within it. Revealing what can be possible for those who seek an antidote to intellectual and political imperialism, Bourdieu wrote,

> Foucault not only 'rejected the grand airs of the great moral conscience'
> but also found them a 'favourite object of laughter'. This was a
> repudiation of the universal intellectual in terms of both politics and
> intellectualism. The specific intellectual rejected lofty rhetoric of truth
> and justice for the contingent realities of situated struggles ... But
> crucially this was done while sustaining commitment, pushing against the
> boundaries of received wisdom. The specific intellectual remains

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[45] Bent Flyvjberg, "The Challenges for Democracy in the 21st Century, Paper for the Political Studies Association's 50th Annual Conference," *London School of Economics and Political Science* (April 10-13 2000): 2.
[46] Minka Woermann, "Interpreting Foucault: An evaluation of a Foucauldian critique of education," *South African Journal of Education* 32, no. 1 (2012): 114.

orientated towards the universal, while always remaining embedded within the specific.[47]

Bourdieu's critical analysis of the relationship between state and society deepens my research through providing a framework in which to consider the potential for conflict between specific groups, and particularly the potential for resistance regarding anti-sectarian pedagogies and research. Bourdieu points us to Thomas Bernhard's description of this dynamic within the field of education.

> School is the state school where young people are turned into state persons and thus into nothing other than henchmen of the state. Walking to school, I was walking into the state and, since the state destroys people, into the institution for the destruction of people ... The state forced me, like everyone else, into myself, and made me compliant towards it, the state, and turned me into a state person, regulated and registered and trained and finished and perverted and dejected like everyone else. When we see people, we only see state people, the state servants, as we quite rightly say, who serve the state all their lives and thus serve unnature all their lives.[48]

While Bourdieu acknowledges the verbosity surrounding Bernhard's statement, he also undeniably defends the overarching theory that the state will decide who we become, and reinforces the view that, 'When it comes to the state, one never doubts enough'.[49]

While perhaps it is not entirely surprising to find Bourdieu espousing this view, it is interesting that he also includes the social theorist in his critique. Bourdieu explains that social science has been part of the problem from the outset; serving to construct and support the structure, role and authority of the state. Bourdieu urges a deep historic enquiry, which questions the notion of the

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[47] "A tribute by Bourdieu following the death of his friend Foucault in 1984," Sociological Imagination, accessed June 16, 2017, http://sociologicalimagination.org/archives/19275.
[48] Thomas Bernhard, *The Old Masters* (London: Quartet Books, 1989), 27.
[49] Pierre Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," *Sociological Theory 12*, no. 1 (March 1994): 1-18.

theorist's autonomous role which, he warns, must be distinct from the state if it is to present theories and concepts liberated from bureaucracy and interference. He also urges reformers and practitioners to identify those, 'unconscious ties with the state', in order to attempt to separate their concepts from the accusations that they are little more than 'problem'[50] solvers for the state.

Bourdieu's analysis is challenging and presents a dilemma for anti-sectarian education as it is understood and experienced in its current form. Theorists and reformers involved in any transformative pursuit like anti-sectarianism are duty bound to examine their historic relationships with power, knowledge and methodologies through which knowledge is generated. However, transformation is never straightforward, and Bourdieu acknowledges the practical difficulties in challenging and understanding historic knowledge when seeking engagement and societal actualisation.

> History attests that the social sciences can increase their independence from the pressures of social demand - which is a major precondition of their progress towards scientificity only by increasing their reliance upon the state. And thus they run the risk of losing their autonomy *from* the state, unless they are prepared to use *against* the state the (relative) freedom that it grants them.[51]

A State Designed Transformation?

What is radical about Bourdieu's critique is the emphasis on the requirement of the reformer to be prepared to use the freedoms allowed by the state, to critique the state; that is, to seek not only to challenge and transform community but also to challenge and transform the state. Bourdieu invites practitioners to consider his social theory of domination that, 'Every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by

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[50] Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," 1-18.
[51] Ibid, 4.

concealing the power relations which are the basis for its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those powers'.[52]

Contextually, Bourdieu's argument could suggest that the philosophical and political messages which focus on addressing the problems surrounding sectarianism in Scotland are currently transmitted via a range of communication mechanisms which appear to legitimise and normalise anti-sectarian ideas which have arguably failed to make a significant and positive impact. The interactions between power and society are rarely interrogated by recipients or theorists, because those mechanisms which have been constructed to appear 'legitimate',[53] are often very effective in concealing this power. Consequently, a comparative analysis of Bourdieu's critical theory and Scottish anti-sectarianism confirm a necessity for greater enquiry into current approaches, demonstrating and reinforcing the imperative of the reformer to be embedded in the reality of the situation and investigation.

Bourdieu recognises that while the state can be presented as 'inevitable and legitimate',[54] there is a point where individuals and communities will resist, and he argues this is why practitioners bear a responsibility to, 'continually analyse the 'stories' told by governments and their agents'.[55] It is only then, he argues, that the possibilities of emancipation are truly revealed.

Questioning Inherited Knowledge

A useful case study through which to consider the importance of questioning apparently inevitable and legitimate knowledge and interventions is to look to the research conducted in 2008 by social scientists Deuchar and Holligan.[56] Their study sought to measure the extent and significance of sectarianism in Scotland, and relied heavily on Bourdieu's theory of social capital. This explores how

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[52] Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London : Sage Publications, 1977), xv.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Jen Web, Tony Schirato and Geoff Danahr, *Understanding Bourdieu* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 103.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ross Deuchar and Chris Holligan, *Territoriality and Sectarianism in Glasgow: A Qualitative Study*, Report of a Study Funded by the British Academy (University of Strathclyde & University of the West of Scotland, 2008).

individuals' and communities' profitable outcomes and opportunities are determined by their interactions and preferences; it argues that those interactions and preferences are often shaped by economics and class positioning; i.e. the social capital available to them.[57] Applying Bourdieu's social capital indicators as a lens to analyse participants responses, Deuchar and Holligan specifically sought to discover if there was evidence of wider sectarian links with territorial gang culture. While the research identified that participants were not maximising their social capital potential, it struggled to identify the extent of the participants' relationship with sectarianism.

Interestingly, and particularly important for this section, the research process itself could be challenged as it appears to depend in part on a framework created by a web of assumptions regarding the perceived value of participants' and researchers' own cultural capital and inherited knowledge. The research question, designed to discover the extent to which gang culture and territoriality contribute to sectarianism, together with social capital indicators adopted from previous research to analyse responses, prompts closer inspection through the lens of Bourdieu's argument on scientific autonomy from the state.

Bourdieu's analysis of social science, that it has often been part of the problem, withstands rigorous examination when considering research carried out by sociologists Deuchar and Holligan.[58] Their study, which presents its findings in a language of institutional authority, negatively frames the absence of anti-sectarianism in participants' schools. There appears, in their study, to have been an automatic acceptance, a propagation of the dominant understanding, that addressing sectarianism through the classroom will be effective in reducing sectarian behaviour outside of the classroom.

The language and tone communicate clearly that the teachers of the study's participants are apparently unhelpful in actively supporting the state's anti-sectarian strategy. This observation suggests that the report is laying part of the

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[57] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1984).
[58] Deuchar and Holligan, *Territoriality and Sectarianism in Glasgow: A Qualitative Study.*

responsibility for the continuing problems caused by sectarianism, at the teacher's door, 'Indeed, none of the youth participants were able to name any input they had had from teachers at school.'[59] This displays an absence of doubt on the part of the researchers concerned and an unquestioning acceptance of their own processes and premise, which devalues both participants and the subject.

It should be noted too that Deuchar and Holligan also point out, having recommended that teachers need to increase their anti-sectarian work in the classroom, that 'this study was a small-scale one and therefore no generalisations can therefore be made in relation to urban youth culture and the impact of sectarianism in the west of Scotland.'[60] Their work however carries much weight and is used by many in governing roles and practitioners to support the number of anti-sectarian strategies involving the traditional classroom setting.

Section Two
Inequality, Transformation, and Power

In section one, I examined the relationship between knowledge and power, and considered the way in which knowledge disciplines the subject, while reflecting on the resistance which can emerge from the subjugated knowledges of disciplined subjects and marginalised communities.

To build further upon this, and to consider most specifically the experiences of women who seek to address sectarianism, I now turn to explore how the additional complexity of gender and inequality further prohibit deep engagement with institutional authority and power structures, even within movements and processes seeking transformation and emancipation.

It is important to highlight at this point that many feminist scholars argue that Foucault's work did little to engage with women's oppression. Indeed, feminist

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[59] Deuchar and Holligan, *Territoriality and Sectarianism in Glasgow: A Qualitative Study.*
[60] Ibid.

philosopher, Jana Sawacki refers specifically to the prevalence of 'male privilege and androcentrism' in Foucault's work.[61] She identifies a binary at work which ignores the differences in bodies and disciplines, and yet, she simultaneously acknowledges that his 'interrogations intersect with those of radical feminism';[62] both identifying the physical being as a site of immense power. However, while Foucault's work may be justifiably critiqued as 'male-centred', Kate Soper observes too, that,

> where Foucault and feminist thinking most obviously come together is in their emphasis on the culturally constructed, rather than naturally dictated, quality of 'sexuality' and its norms and codes of behaviour.[63]

Soper adds that Foucault did much to lay 'the groundwork for current feminist denunciations,'[64] particularly in Volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality*.[65]

I agree that Foucault's work did very little to engage directly with women's oppression, but his interrogations of the body as a site of power, when applied to feminist thinking, reveal much for this research, particularly with reference to women's limited and constrained involvement with anti-sectarianism. To develop my thinking on this issue further, it is insightful to draw upon the work of feminist thinker and sociologist, Sharlene Hesse-Biber. Her work explores how women's distinctive experiences determine their opportunities and life choices and how these are shaped by male power through centuries of socially constructed discourses and practices.

Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Gendered Knowledge

Hesse-Biber offers a transformative perspective specifically focussed upon the subjugated knowledge of women. She draws on feminist re-evaluations of situated knowledge[66] and stresses their significance for feminist social research.

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[61] Sawacki, *Disciplining Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 102.
[62] Lauren Rabinovitz, "Oppositional Discourse," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association 25*, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 86-92.
[63] Caroline Ramazanoglu, *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 31.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1.

Feminist standpoint epistemology is rooted in the shared Marxist and
Hegelian idea that an individual's material and lived experience
structures his or her social environment. For example, the worker/slave
must comprehend both his, or her own world and that of the master's in
order to survive. By placing value on victims of oppression, feminist
standpoint epistemology follows the feminist tradition of bringing in
voices of the silenced and/or oppressed to mainstream dialogue.[67]

It is essential, Hesse-Biber argues, that practitioners seeking to improve the
situation of the oppressed ensure that the process of critical inquiry on which
their work depends, begins with the oppressed themselves, because they hold a
distinct and different awareness and situated view of the world from those who
are not oppressed.

Thus, for feminist standpoint theorists, women's oppressed position
within society is precisely what allows women to harbour rich insights into
society as a whole. Because they are structurally oppressed in relation to
the dominant group (men), women have access to a more enhanced and
more nuanced understanding of social reality than men.[68]

Furthermore, to highlight the extent of the oppression which exists, it is also
important to recognise (as many feminist theorists argue) that there remains a
persistent othering of feminist epistemology within social research. As Phyllis
Rooney observes,

Though feminist epistemology has been in place for a quarter century,
it still remains marginalized, if not invisible, in 'mainstream'
epistemology. An implicit, if not explicit, assumption that feminist
epistemology is not epistemology 'proper' regularly underwrites this
marginalization. The construction of feminist work as 'other' to

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[66] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of
Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies 14*, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 575-599.
[67] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer* (California: Sage Publications,
2014), 6.
[68] Ibid, 7.

epistemology 'proper' reflects the legacy of a philosophical history of sexism and racism more than it reflects a uniform coherent project or area of inquiry that has been in place under the rubric 'epistemology.[69]

Knowledge Ignored

Hesse-Biber highlights the need to interrogate the basis on which decisions are reached regarding who the oppressed may be and which experiences are deemed important or relevant enough to be included within a particular study, and of course the researcher's own experience cannot be separated from this process.

Indeed, Patricia Hill Collins observes, 'It is only by exploring the intricate mix of difference that we can truly understand a given individual's lived experience'.[70] Hill Collins describes an 'outside within'[71] theory, which offers practitioners important insight and understanding into individuals who 'border space between groups'.[72] She observed, when examining the intersection between black women's race and gender, that black women are required to 'navigate the rules of the privileged white world while always being aware of their marginalization in terms of race and gender'.[73] It is engaging with this 'intricate mix of difference'[74] which is the key to a researcher understanding both their own and another's experience.

For Hesse-Biber and others, it is evident that for all women there is no 'privileged standpoint',[75] as all have experienced the formative and daily reality of oppression to varying degrees within a world where the language and social structures are male-centred. She advocates an informed research approach

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[69] Phyllis Rooney, "The Marginalization of Feminist Epistemology and What That Reveals About Espistemology 'Proper'," in *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science: Power in Knowledge*, ed. H.E. Grasswick (The Netherlands: Springer, 2011), 3-24.
[70] Hesse-Biber, *Feminist Research Practice*, 7.
[71] Marjorie L. Devault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis," in *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser (England: Oxford University Press, 2004), 92.
[72] Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Worlds Black Women and the Search for Justice* (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 5.
[73] Hesse-Biber, *Feminist Research Practice*, 7.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Devault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis," 92.

which acknowledges the plurality of oppressions and consequently the multiple standpoints which exist and argues that this approach must be reflected in any critical inquiry undertaken. Standpoint epistemology must not leave itself susceptible to accusations of reducing women's perspectives to a single viewpoint which fails to recognise the multiplicities of experiences and knowledge which women possess, for example concerning religion, sexual orientation, class and race.[76]

The Language of the Oppressed

Hesse-Biber's observations of an absence of female epistemological privilege, as a consequence of inherited structures,[77] and her insistence upon the variety of female experiences and standpoints, is further enriched by her engagement with Marjorie L. Devault's feminist postmodernist approach to research. Hesse-Biber adopts Devault's perspective which affirms the responsibilities of the researcher as a 'co-creator of meaning' in the research context.[78] This being the case a researcher

> Must stay on his or her toes and listen intently to what the interviewee has to say, for the researcher must be prepared to drop his or her agenda and follow the pace of the interview.[79]

Devault also alerts researchers to the problems within language that can result in researchers not quite getting the *full story* when they attempt to attend to women's narratives.[80] This tension, she argues, presents a common barrier when endeavouring to attend to women's expressions of their experiences and views. Women's accounts are rooted in a diversity of social and cultural experiences because women simply do not share one single homogenous experience of oppression. Furthermore, Devault argues there is an intrinsically man-made

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[76] Devault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis," 92

[77] Hesse-Biber, *Feminist Research Practice,* 7.

[78] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia L. Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (California: Sage Publications, 2006), 132.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Devault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis," 227.

element of language;[81] language, in its very essence is man-made and therefore magnifies privileged 'male experiences'.[82]

However, more than this, Devault finds that because there is an 'insufficiency' of language appropriate for women's concerns, women often attempt to communicate without words, seeking to use expressions that have been shaped by a mutuality of experience.[83] However, this mutuality may be illusory. She explains that the heterogeneous complexities of women's oppression are innumerable and to attempt to simplify the plurality of their experience is a futile pursuit. Intersectionality is the necessary recognition that women possess a multiplicity of 'layered identities … and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege'[84].

Exploring this immeasurable range of presentations of women's experience and knowledge, Nicola Slee discusses Sandra Harding's advice to practitioners and researchers, to consider how to seek engagement with this complexity:

> There will be many different feminist versions of 'reality', for there are many different realities in which women live, but they should all be regarded as producing more complete, less distorting, and less perverse understandings than can a science in alliance with ruling-class masculine activity.[85]

Hesse-Biber comments:

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[81] Devault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis," 227.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Marjorie L. Devault, "Language and Stories in Motion," in *Women Voicing Resistance: Discursive and Narrative Explorations*, ed. Suzanne McKenzie-Mohr and Michelle N. Lafrance (London: Routledge, 2014), Chapter 2.
[84] Maggi Savin-Baden and Claire Howell Major, *New Approaches to Qualitative Research Wisdom and Uncertainty* (London: Routledge, 2010), 38.
[85] Nicola Slee, 2003, *Faith and Feminism: An Introduction to Christian Feminist Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 9.

> Feminist researchers are taking heed of postcolonial feminist cautions, using their methods and their researcher positionality to complicate and interrogate their efforts.[86]

Hesse-Biber, assessing Devault's analytical approach regarding the historic and climatic reality of women's language, notes that this requires the feminist researcher to construct a framework which interrogates the four major components of research enquiry including, 'topic, listening, editing, and writing'.[87] Challenging hierarchical influences on women's knowledge requires an approach which, Hesse-Biber argues, is attentive to the inequalities and differences which exist in women's realities and it demands a commitment from the researcher to 'political activism and social justice.'[88]

Through this lens, it then becomes clear that The Advisory Group on *Tackling* Sectarianism in Scotland,[89] which consisted of academics working in the field of social and theological research, is gendered in its adoption of a traditionally masculine sporting metaphor to express its identity and purpose. While Scottish women's football has undoubtedly become in recent years increasingly popular and successful, there is still a long way to go before it has parity with the male game. Currently in Scotland there are 20 professional women's football teams who regularly play their matches at training grounds, while male professional football is represented by 42 teams playing in stadia. Furthermore, *Tackling* brings to mind images of struggle and aggression, which implicitly positions sectarianism as rather more of a male problem requiring 'masculine' forms of response. Indeed, the naming of the Advisory Group in this way signposted a dialogue which was culturally and historically shaped by maleness and thus functioning to exclude women rather than invite them.

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[86] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser, *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 216.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid, 3.
[89] "Final report of the Advisory Group for Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland," Scottish Government, accessed July 3, 2017, https://beta.gov.scot/news/tackling-sectarianism/.

To consider further the influences and complexities of intersectional variations involved in the experiences of women, and the requirement of the researcher to attend to these, it is useful to analyse two specific examples of inequality identified in studies conducted by Hesse-Biber. The studies illustrate the apparent ease at which inherited myths are absorbed into institutional and societal consciousness. Academics and practitioners, Hesse-Biber argues, are as much a part of this mythology as anyone else, and they have a responsibility to engage with situated knowledges and include them.

> Conceptualizing women as a starting point for research not only validates their knowledge and includes them in a process from which they have long been excluded, but also attempts to upend the power relations that are reproduced in traditional, positivistic, scientific research.[90]

It very quickly became clear to me while researching and questioning women and the matrix of inequality, particularly in situations of conflict such as sectarianism, that different forms of discrimination – intersectionality - exist. Kimberle Crenshaw explains,

> Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things.[91]

This view is illustrated too by Eilish Rooney who in her paper, 'Women's Equality in Northern Ireland's Transition: Intersectionality in Theory and Place', found, 'that gender plays a key role in conflict discourse, disadvantaging women in

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[90] Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, 14.
[91] "Intersectionality: by Kimberle Crenshaw," Columbia University, accessed November 3, 2017, http://www.law.columbia.edu/pt-br/news/2017/06/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality.

particular ways,'[92] she too signposts Kimberle Crenshaw's comments on intersectionality:

> The struggle over which differences matter and which do not is neither an abstract nor an insignificant debate among women. Indeed, these conflicts are about more than difference as such; they raise critical issues of power.[93]

Developing this enquiry further, Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) in their work on Women and Sectarianism argue that 'feminism must include an analysis of race if it hopes to express the aspirations of non-white women',[94] and they too argue that sectarian bigotry intersects with transphobia, homophobia, misogyny, and racism. Indeed, the GWL found that,

> Sectarianism can be understood as an 'intersectional' problem in the sense that it is not only a matter of 'white men behaving badly'. Sectarian attitudes and behaviours also affect, in various complex ways, other groups with protected characteristics and indeed, the population at large.[95]

Through the case studies below we glimpse the profound difficulties experienced by women who exist with the multiple burdens of inequalities. The first case study is helpful in illustrating the complexities of intersectionality; specifically, the double burden of oppression which Hesse-Biber found exists for black women. It demonstrates the types of barriers faced by those who are deemed not to

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[92] Eilish Rooney, "Institutionalising Intersectionality: Comparative Analyses," at *Women's Equality in Northern Ireland's Transition: Intersectionality in Theory and Place* (Lisbon: ECPR Workshop Lisbon 14-19th April 2009).

[93] Ibid. (citing in Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in *Feminist Frontiers*, eds Laurel Richardson, Verta A. Taylor and Nancy Whittier (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 405–412).

[94] "Mainstreaming Anti-Sectarianism in Equalities," West of Scotland Regional Equality Council, accessed August 20, 2017, http://wsrec.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Mainstreaming-Anti-Sectarianism-in-Equalities-Toolkit-Final.pdf.

[95] "Mainstreaming Anti-Sectarianism in Equalities," West of Scotland Regional Equality Council, accessed August 20, 2017, http://wsrec.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Mainstreaming-Anti-Sectarianism-in-Equalities-Toolkit-Final.pdf.

'fit'; outsiders whose opportunities are determined by narratives of white and male supremacy, as revealed in Case Study 2.

Case Study 1

Exploring the concept of a 'feminist struggle'[96] in *The Black Woman Worker: A Minority Group Perspective on Women at Work*,[97] Hesse-Biber draws attention to an assumption that racial stereotyping is the biggest problem facing black women.

There is, she finds, a belief that when black women have gained the same opportunities and status as white women, only then shall there be equality. However, Hesse-Biber argues that black women experience the double burden of being both black and female, and while endeavours may be attempted to address inequalities based on race, gender discrimination persists:

> Certainly it is necessary for minority women to have the necessary education and training, but as many well-qualified women can attest, credentials are not necessarily enough. And certainly, there has been progress, but real progress will come only when sexism and racism are confronted simultaneously, and educational and employment opportunities now available to white men become equally available to everyone.[98]

Case Study 2

Hesse-Biber's *Male and Female Students' Perceptions of Their Academic Environment and Future Career Plans: Implications for Higher Education*,[99] sought to uncover if there existed ways which were more effective in preparing male students for future careers than their female counterparts.

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[96] Joey Sprague and Mark Zimmerman, "Overcoming dualisms: A Feminist Agenda for Sociological Methodology," *Theory on Gender/Feminism on Theory* 72, no. 1 (1993): 266.
[97] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, "The Black Woman Worker: A Minority Group Perspective on Women at Work," *A Scholarly Journal on Black Women* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 30.
[98] Hesse-Biber, "The Black Woman Worker: A Minority Group Perspective on Women at Work," 30.
[99] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, "Male and Female Students' Perceptions of Their Academic Environment and Future Career Plans: Implications for Higher Education," *Human Relations* 38, no. 2 (1985): 91-105

It appeared there were inequalities between the male and female experience of the academy and the opportunities it offered. While female students were clearly as interested and engaged, if not more so than male students, there was an apparent reluctance on their part to be vocal, to give voice to questions or initiate discussions with teaching staff. Hesse-Biber found that most female students had grown up in homes which fostered traditional male-female roles and as, 'a result of prior-sex role socialization, women have created 'internal' barriers to success'.[100] She suggested that women are far more likely than men to silence their own voices, and link their academic or professional success to good luck rather than the results of their own hard work and skill.

This case study highlights that where deep engagement is sought, there must exist a crucial requirement to seek out women's voices. This is particularly important for this research. In 2014, Engender Scotland[101] were commissioned to carry out a participatory analysis with the women in their networks, to deepen the understanding of women and sectarianism. This research was undertaken in response to a recognition that:

> There is little gendered analysis of the issues that result in sectarianism that might lead to reflections and responses with regard to the role of patriarchal hegemonic structures (such as religious bodies (churches, lodges), football clubs, and faith based schools) in the development of toxic masculinities.[102]

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[100] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, "Male and Female Students' Perceptions of Their Academic Environment and Future Career Plans: Implications for Higher Education," *Human Relations* 38, no. 2 (1985): 91-105

[101] Engender Scotland is a gender equality organisation who have for more than 20 years worked across Scotland on feminist policy, advocacy, and activism.

[102] "Women and Sectarianism," Engender Scotland, accessed June 12, 2017, https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Women-and-sectarianism-in-Scotland---March-2014.

Engender Scotland concluded that 'Women are both affected by and have agency in sectarianism but are cautious about engaging with the issue',[103] suggesting that the female voice remains to be fully heard.

Reflection: What are the Implications for Social Research?

Hesse-Biber's work in Case Study 1[104] and Case Study 2,[105] highlights the requirement that the social researcher be committed to a political task; that of seeking emancipation and social justice. The traditional androcentric nature of social science enquiry omitted the experiences of women; Hesse-Biber concluded that, it 'assumed that whatever was found to be true for men would be true for women'.[106] Positivist surveys, which in many cases casually excluded women, were commonplace; data was not differentiated according to gender and therefore revealed little about women's experience. The studies from Engender Scotland and the Glasgow Women's Library show women's experiences of anti-sectarianism have been under-researched and that sectarianism continues to be framed within a traditional male narrative.

What is also interesting about Hesse-Biber's suggestion that the social researcher must be committed to a political task, and her focus on discrimination and privilege, is that she identifies that by simply constructing the question, the researcher has been immediately placed in the position of authority; seemingly knowing not only that there is a problem to be solved, but already implicitly conceptualising how that problem should be solved.[107]

Evaluating and comparing traditional mainstream positivist approaches with the postmodern feminist empiricists, Hesse-Biber determines that the feminist researcher must seek to develop knowledge, in contrast to the positivist who

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[103] "Women and Sectarianism," Engender Scotland, accessed June 12, 2017, https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Women-and-sectarianism-in-Scotland---March-2014.
[104] Hesse-Biber, "The Black Woman Worker: A Minority Group Perspective on Women at Work," 30.
[105] Hesse-Biber, "Male and Female Students' Perceptions of Their Academic Environment and Future Career Plans: Implications for Higher Education," 91-105.
[106] Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, 3.
[107] Ibid.

seeks knowledge in a rather more 'narrow self-contained way'.[108] Feminist empiricism actively and politically challenges androcentric normativity; it explicitly links theory with methods, and as illustrated by Sprague and Zimmerman, 'Feminist research is connected to feminist struggle'.[109]

A Political Undertaking

This chapter has highlighted Foucault questioning of the power relations that lie behind interventionist approaches, and his theory that political power exercised through knowledge serves to discipline the subject and therefore increase resistance, raising significant concerns for anti-sectarianism. The chapter also considers the implications of Sharlene Hesse-Biber's analysis of standpoint epistemology and oppression, encompassing situated knowledge, identity and highly complex, multi-factored barriers to participation. The chapter examined the implications of these arguments for social researchers, and considered the challenge this theoretical thinking represents for current anti-sectarian methodologies. Highlighting too that the subject voices - for this research this is the recipients of anti-sectarian messaging - must not be overlooked if their participation is genuinely sought. Sharlene Hesse-Biber's analysis of participation barriers challenges anti-sectarian practitioners to seek out marginalised voices.

Chapter three develops the epistemological basis of my research further through turning to theological research and praxis and considers the work of theologians Elaine Graham on Social Renewal, Anna Rowlands on The Common Good, and Chris Baker on Human Flourishing. The chapter will analyse the theologians' contributions to thinking on community-based transformation pointing ways forward to a rich community engagement with anti-sectarianism. The chapter also considers the validity and effectiveness of current institutional practices through a theological lens and argues that a theological faith based approach may become a significant element in supporting community driven anti-sectarian pedagogy.

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[108] Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, 13.
[109] Sprague and Zimmerman, "Overcoming dualisms: A Feminist Agenda for Sociological Methodology," 266.

Chapter 3

Theological Approaches for Transformation

Introduction

Through my critique of educational and social theory in chapters one and two, I have shown that there is reason to re-evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of current anti-sectarian education practices, and I have highlighted the importance of considering whether state-produced discourses are liberating or, indeed, oppressive.

As a teacher in pursuit of new and different ways of engaging with anti-sectarian education, my explorations in the previous chapters have also led me to seek alternative approaches which are not handed down from on high but rooted in the lives of people and communities. As a person of faith, it is important to me not only to think beyond state sponsored programmes, but also to enquire into what role theological thinking, churches, church based community groups, and believing people can play in community transformation including the opposing of sectarianism.

In order to deepen my critical exploration of these themes I shall, therefore, seek in this chapter to engage with the work of a number of British practical theologians whose work is specifically concerned with the contribution community faith based initiatives might make in public life. I am particularly concerned to explore what they consider it might be possible to achieve at local level and what roles women might play in community-based justice seeking actions.

I look first at the work of Elaine Graham, a leading practical theologian whose work has focussed upon the transformative potential of Christian practice.[1] In particular, her research interrogates two important areas of concern for me. These are:

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[1] Elaine Graham, *Transforming Practice Practical Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2002).

a) The potential of the current 'post secular' context for reconceiving relations between secular and faith based spheres with the possibility for more creative relations between these than in the past.

b) Her understanding of apologetics as practice (action for transformation) with particular emphasis on local engagement and the contribution of women.

I shall then explore the contribution of Anna Rowlands, a former PhD student of Elaine Graham, who has done extensive work developing a concept of the Common Good. Rowlands' work acknowledges the problematic relations between religious and secular institutions in the past - but has positive vision for the future in terms of local transformative action.

Finally, I shall look to Chris Baker, of the William Temple Foundation, and his notion of spiritual capital and what it contributes to our understanding of the potential contribution that can be made by groups of women working at local level motivated by faith to seek change.

Through this critical engagement with theological approaches to community transformation, the chapter will conclude by considering the impact these may have on faith and civic groups seeking to develop anti-sectarian practice in Scotland today.

Elaine Graham: A Post Secular Culture?

Elaine Graham has engaged with issues surrounding the place of faith of contemporary culture throughout her career.[2] Her recent work (2013) presents the view that contemporary post-secularism presents many challenges, but also generates exciting possibilities for religious communities entering the public sphere.

Graham considers the potential of a theological/religious currency in a context where the pluralistic mix of the secular and the spiritual have become

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[2] Graham, *Transforming Practice Practical Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*.

interwoven. She searches for new and appropriate forms of public theology which truly understand the new space in which they seek to communicate. A model of public theology, Graham suggests, is needed that seeks to,

> Generate informed understandings of the theological and religious dimensions of public issues. A priority has to be that it is accessible and comprehensible to those beyond the community of faith, and unfamiliar with theology, in the interests of public accountability and the integrity of the public realm itself.[3]

In her work, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, Graham contests traditional theories which argue that as society becomes increasingly multi-layered and complex, it becomes ever more secular.[4] She observes that 'existing conceptual frameworks',[5] which are examined later, designed to support this view no longer fit our current context. She questions assumptions that society will become less interested in religion and faith as modernity erodes belief, arguing that on the contrary, as society is changing both politically and culturally, it is increasingly interested in spiritual ideas, conflicts and diversity. Graham reflects,

> Some of this is to do with global socio-cultural dynamics, with a growing politicization of faith and its re-emergence as a shaper of cultural, sociological and economic processes.[6]

Furthermore, Graham argues that issues relating to identity, diversity and faith have undoubtedly re-penetrated the cultural consciousness as controversies concerning religious affiliations and political power have become commonplace in our understanding of international crises. We are also more conscious of the religious elements in local community-based practice and the need for inter-communal dialogue:

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[3] Elaine Graham, "The Unquiet Frontier," *Political Theology* 16, no. 1 (2015): 44.
[4] Elaine Graham argues that, "our everyday experience may no longer fit comfortably into existing conceptual frameworks" and multi-layered and complex should not automatically reduce nor negate faith and spirituality simply because they don't fit the dominant frameworks. (Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (London: SCM Press, 2013), 12).
[5] Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (London: SCM Press, 2013), 12.
[6] Ibid, 71.

How, given all the predictions regarding the ultimate demise of religion, has religious belief and practice made such a dramatic return to the public stage? Accounts of secularization, decline, and marginalization in relation to the public position of religion in Western society failed to account for the continued vitality and relevance of religion in the global public square.[7]

The validity of this argument will be illustrated below and is of specific interest to my own research on anti-sectarianism, especially where religion and identity seem so deeply and complexly interwoven with social conflict. Graham argues that the fundamentally heterogeneous nature of modern society (in relation particularly to spirituality and religion) supports the analysis that what we now inhabit is indeed the post secular society as described and is one which requires a more effective and appropriate response to anti-sectarianism and which recognises the complexities and rewards of inter-communal dialogue.

Graham then explores how theological and religious praxis might positively pervade this post secular environment.[8] Offering an consideration of the possibilities offered by the current cultural context, referred to as a 'liminal space';[9] an in-between space which is no longer secular, Graham suggests that this is the challenging place in which people of faith must live out their faith.[10]

Practice Based Dialogue in a New Space

Because religion is recognised as gaining in contemporary significance, this of course does not entail a return to the past. Highlighting the tensions this analysis of Western society reveals, Graham directs us to Habermas' reflection on the religious affiliations in the United States post World War II. Habermas understands manifestations of religious expression not simply as the remnants of

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[7] Elaine Graham, *Apologetics without Apology: Speaking of God in a World Troubled by Religion* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017), 2.
[8] Following a resurgence, particularly since 9/11, of religious political activity, Jürgen Habermas argues that secular society cannot any longer ignore the existence of religious political thought and its influences. (Jurgen Habermas, "Notes on Post Secular Society," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2008): 17-29).
[9] Graham, "The Unquiet Frontier," 34.
[10] Ibid.

former cultural practices but believes they may represent new forms of contemporary social intervention. For example, he suggests, 'The religious Right is not traditionalist. Precisely because it unleashes spontaneous energy for religious revivalism, it causes such irritation among its secular opponents.'[11] The religious Right, Habermas observes, frequently engages in practices and discursive action that contradict its own perceived identity as traditionalist. This results in a collision of innovative faith practices with traditional self-understandings which increase the post-secular tension Graham describes.

The impact of these tensions is felt in the public articulation of religious values and metaphysical truth claims. Not only are there likely to be conflicts between those who hold strongly to conflicting religious positions but also those who seek to engage respectfully in the public sphere with those whose views they do not share. Indeed, Habermas further elucidates:

> Post-metaphysical thought is prepared to learn from religion while remaining strictly agnostic. It insists on the difference between certainties of faith and validity claims that can be publicly criticized; but it refrains from the rationalist temptation that it can itself decide which part of the religious doctrines is rational and which part is not. Now, this ambivalent attitude to religion expresses a similar epistemic attitude which secular citizens must adopt, if they are to be able and willing to learn something from religious contributions to public debates - provided it turns out to be something that can also be spelled out in a generally accessible language.[12]

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[11] Jurgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Sphere," University of Sandiego, accessed July 12, 2017, 2, https://www.sandiego.edu/pdf/pdf_library/habermaslecture031105_c939cceb2ab087bdfc6df291ec0fc3fa.

[12] Ibid, 20.

Theological Praxis: impact on anti-sectarianism?

Particularly important for my research, and what resonates most about Graham's analysis of Habermas' post-metaphysical theory, is the suggestion that there are also signs of increasing collective consciousness of resistance to normative frameworks and interventions within it.[13] This increasing consciousness of resistance, a consequence of injustice and suffering, could, I suggest, be regarded as a powerful resource; a currency with which to negotiate the pathway to emancipation through struggle and discursive transformation (see chapter two). This increasing consciousness - the consequence of injustice and collective suffering - can be found in Scotland, where the recipients of state-led anti-sectarian initiatives are increasingly aware that they are rarely consulted on related policies, legislation and programmes.

Case Study: A Collective Struggle

An example of resistance, and one which resulted in a change to the law in Scotland, was the campaign to repeal the 'Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012'. This Act was repealed in 2018,[14] largely due to a lengthy legal and political process which was initially organised by football fans and civil liberties campaigners who felt the Act sought to criminalise law abiding fans found chanting particular songs about their opponents, involving content deemed to be sectarian. There was considerable opposition to the Act, especially relating to the subjective nature of the judgements made concerning football songs. It was also argued by opponents of the new law that the prohibition of singing harmed the lawful expression of collective identity. It was argued that rather than prioritising hatred and discrimination, the singing was a uniting and positive expression which intended no harm to anyone. Galvanising support through a highly effective use of social media, the collective of opponents argued that the Act was:

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[13] Jurgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Sphere," University of Sandiego, accessed July 12, 2017, 20, https://www.sandiego.edu/pdf/pdf_library/habermaslecture031105_c939cceb2ab087bdfc6df291ec0fc3fa.

[14] "Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Act 2018,' UK Government, accessed July 7, 2018, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/7/enacted.

Fundamentally illiberal, unnecessarily restricts freedom of expression and more importantly has achieved nothing other than to criminalise otherwise law-abiding citizens and discriminate against football supporters in an unwarranted and unjustifiable way.[15]

The injustice the Act's opponents identified was of enormous importance and significance in motivating resistance and seeking repeal.[16] Of course it is important to emphasise and underline that use of racist or sectarian language cannot be supported; however, what we see from this particular experience is that there is a need for another, less hasty and authoritarian approach and one which is owned by the community itself rather than imposed upon it. A different model does not need to render invalid existing laws regarding criminal behaviour, but instead would seek to reduce the occurrence of those sectarian acts.

Challenging Existing Frameworks

While Graham insists that society is becoming ever more aware of emancipatory concerns surrounding issues of communal and personal injustice,[17] she argues that secular feminism in particular, has suffered from an antipathy towards religion that has prevented recognition of the significance it holds, particularly in the lives of many women.

However, there is hope, Graham explains, and referring explicitly to a gendered critique of post-secular emancipatory possibilities, she suggests,

[Although], religion in the lives of women has been scandalously overlooked and under-theorized within secular feminist thought, so something like the post-secular may actually create new space to think of

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[15] "Repeal the Act Petition," Change.Org, accessed December 11, 2018, https://www.change.org/p/the-scottish-government-repeal-the-offensive-behaviour-at-football-threatening-communications-scotland-act-2012.
[16] "Act Repealed," Common Space, accessed August 15, 2018, https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/12525/its-all-over-offensive-behaviour-football-act-repealed.
[17] Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 74.

ways in which both religion and secularity are evident in relation to women's participation in the public realm.[18]

Graham upholds and applauds the desire for faith-based participation in post-secular discourse and cautions against the use of inherited traditional or normative principles within a prescribed framework. In relation to this, Graham issues a new challenge to consider if, 'our conceptual frameworks are fit for purpose.'[19] She further reminds practitioners, particularly those involved in community work, that 'notions of selfhood, virtue knowledge and agency have all been constructed within a patriarchal culture'.[20]

Graham highlights a need for social theorists to be alert for evidence of hegemonic oppression, power structures and membership of elites wherever public theology is generated. Continuing, she argues that traditional oppressive approaches serve only to further propagate a master ideology and reinforce its ethics and practices which keep minorities without a voice. Feminism shaped by the Enlightenment, she argues, has been framed within a 'secularist agenda',[21] and this has alarmingly resulted in the removal of feminist theological voices from wider feminist debates concerning injustice.

Graham's words of caution regarding anti-religious normative and conceptual frameworks of feminism is echoed by sociologists of religion, Dawn Llewellyn and Marta Trzebiatowska, who in their article, *Secular and Religious Feminisms: A Future of Disconnection?*, observe:

> If our feminist future maintains a mission to locally empower women, then it is not sufficient for feminism to consider or impose a secular language of gender analysis onto the lives of women whose values are framed by religion. Instead, secular feminism must learn the language of

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[18] Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 74.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Graham, *Transforming Practice Practical Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*, 95.
[21] Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 100.

religious women globally through engagement and dialogue to begin to account for women in relation to her many identities and experiences.

Practice as Proclamation

While arguing for the construction of a faith supported discourse which offers hope and transformative possibilities, Graham is highly pragmatic, and she acknowledges the enormous challenge which this presents in a society which is often suspicious and fearful of any hint of religiously motivated intervention. She questions, 'How can the voice of faith be mediated into an increasingly febrile and contested public square?'[22] Perhaps much of the challenge lies, particularly for faith-based anti-sectarianism, with a requirement to distance new forms of apologetic engagement from the traditional apologetic, which was so focussed on doctrinal defence while also promoting and increasing religious membership.

Graham's approach, crucially, is not concerned with proselytising in any sense. Her argument is for a new apologetics as practice, concrete actions for transformation, with emphasis on local engagement and particularly, the participation of women. She seeks to identify an apologetic which is occupied with the relevance of the immediate concern, and which engages in a dialogue focused on revealing a common good, which she argues exists within our communities and all who inhabit them. Supportive of this view, Stephen Pattison observes:

> If theological work is worth doing at all, it should be intelligible and helpful to people beyond theology and the church as well as those within. God is not confined to the church. Theology should be a public undertaking in pursuit of the common good.[23]

However, motives of engagements will of course always come under scrutiny, therefore practitioners engaged in theological praxis of this model are urged to interrogate themselves and their ultimate aim: rethinking 'the terms on which

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[22] Graham, *Apologetics without Apology*, 5.
[23] Zoe Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

religion returns to the public square',[24] and exploring if there are new ways to authentically and honestly engage that are, 'not coterminous with the state or even the hegemony of Christendom'.[25]

Despite pressures to retreat into the background, Graham argues that if 'religious reasoning'[26] gave in to those who seek to exclude its voice and stepped back from public interests and discourse, it would lead to the 'impoverishment of all, leading to the diminution of notions of the common good.'[27] I will return to examine the important concept of the common good later in this chapter. Criticisms of a faith dialogue, which inarguably has at its roots, theologies, practices and beliefs that appear inextricably bound with centuries of polarising traditions, are commonplace. Graham reveals the liberating mediating possibilities of a, 'shared discourse',[28] which is a discourse based on a framework of integrity and a respect of difference, and one which I find, embodies creativity, dignity, and care. Signposting a route map which offers possibilities for meaningful engagement, Graham describes, 'an alternative trajectory, based on narrative, imagination, and the cultivation of shared spaces of dialogue'.[29] This engagement has, I suspect, much to offer anti-sectarian initiatives which have struggled to produce deep and long-lasting change.

As a teacher, working within the traditional schema has often felt like performing a series of delicate manoeuvres in the middle of an assault course. I find Graham's approach to be highly persuasive, seeking to develop a safe and practical space for embarking on the most challenging and difficult discussions with those who might otherwise never agree to sit across the table from one another. Her approach invites consideration, that this sharing of space, this public commitment and undertaking of dialogue, removes theology from the confines of religious buildings, and allows it to become substantially more

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[24] Graham, *Apologetics without Apology,* 70.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid, 130.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid, 120.
[29] Ibid, 122.

practical in its desire to meet people in their current context, whatever that may be.

Anna Rowlands:
Secular and Theological Engagement for the Common Good

Anna Rowlands holds the St Hilda Chair in Catholic Social Thought and Practice at the University of Durham, and is Chair of the National Centre for Catholic Social Thought and Practice. As stated, she is a former doctoral student of Graham's and their work shares many similar concerns. Her particular contribution is focussed upon seeking to encourage Christians to engage in transformative efforts for social justice based on understandings of the Common Good. Like Graham, she understands there is hostility towards and suspicion of religious contributions in the current context. This is often based upon critical secular understandings of the culturally divisive nature of religious belief and fear of the 'violence' of religious dogmatism; a criticism examined later in this section.

Rowlands is quite aware that a great deal of conscientizing and educative work will be required if faith practitioners are to engage effectively with political challenges from an authentically theological perspective.[30] However, her own commitment to working closely with a range of social justice organisations offers a concrete example of what can be achieved by people of faith joining with others to seek cultural transformation.

Seeking the Common Good

Although Rowlands constantly challenges the Church to become more deeply engaged in the political sphere, she also celebrates the many positive examples to be found in the United Kingdom, where faith-based and secular groups have worked together successfully to achieve transformative and empowering processes and outcomes for communities. She is particularly concerned to deepen and renew understandings of the Common Good which, she believes,

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[30] Anna Rowlands, "Teaching Political Theology as Ministerial Formation," *Political Theology* 13, no. 6 (2012): 71.

might undergird these initiatives. In her keynote address at the inaugural 'Together for the Common Good Conference (2013),'[31] Rowlands set out before delegates her own foundational and guiding principles as to what such a 'good' might entail. She began by crediting Aristotle as the probable originator of the concept of the Common Good,[32] in his description of society:

> Political society is an association of people who live and work together for the sake of living a good life. This good life for all, which is the inherent end or goal of political society, and which good rulers strive to bring about, is the 'common good.[33]

Since Aristotle's initial pronouncements there has been enormous debate as to how this concept might be actualised in practice. From a faith perspective, Rowlands traces its growing significance within Catholic Social Teaching beginning with Pope Leo XIII's articulation of two Christian principles deemed essential for a fair and just social order: a) human dignity and the concept of the common good, with specific attention paid to the poor, and b) the stewardship of resources for all. Rowlands interrogates these concepts and argues they have contemporary relevance in our current cultural context at both macro and community level. She explains that it is increasingly necessary to cultivate a discourse of the Common Good if divided communities are to resist fragmentation and pursue transformative visions. Her words are worth quoting at length:

> The first reason we need the language of the Common Good is that it seeks to be a way of speaking and acting that unites rather than divides. It is in its origins and essence a language of relationship.

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[31] The theological and social action organisation at which Rowlands was speaking, 'Together for the Common Good,' was created to build upon the work of Archbishop Derek Worlock and Bishop David Sheppard and many other Church leaders in Liverpool who worked together, across great differences and alongside diverse communities, to build bridges throughout an extremely difficult period for the city of Liverpool from the 1970s to 1990s.
[32] Donald Morrison, "The Common Good," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. Marguerite Deslauriers and Pierre Destrée (England: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[33] Ibid,176.

We are surrounded by divisive language and social practices of many kinds: the language of the market, of political interests, even some of the language around rights and justice can become competitive and acquisitive. Very much of the political language that has been shaping our public conversations in austere times has been divisive rather than unitive: the deserving versus the undeserving poor, strivers versus skivers. This kind of language comes to dominate our public spaces and fails to nurture our imagination, it fails to provide any nutrients for a life lived together.

The second reason we need the language and practice of the common good is connected to the first – the common good speaks of human value rather than human function. It therefore provides a necessary challenge to all forms of public and private action which seek to reduce the human body and human relations to functions and interests, to costs and benefits.[34]

The sentiments articulated by Rowlands here have been adopted by 'Together for the Common Good' as the basis for its work. The organisation stresses that it is in everyday and local interactions between people, lived encounters and conversations, that the concept becomes transformative:

The Common Good is the shared life of a society in which everyone can flourish … enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate. We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility according to our calling and ability.

The 'good' is 'common' because it can only be created together in relationship, it cannot be achieved by individuals isolated from each other.

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[34] "The Common Good: Keynote by Anna Rowlands," Together for the Common Good Conference 2013, accessed July 18, 2018, http://togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/events/t4cg-conference-2013.html.

Because the Common Good is something we do, we describe it as the practice of the Common Good. It always starts with conversation.[35]

However, Maximilian Jaede argues,

There is considerable disagreement as to what the common good consists of and how it should be realised. Different political theorists advance competing views on the roles and relative importance of universal principles of justice and human rights, communal ways of life, sources of collective identity, active citizenship, public deliberation, and the conflictual nature of politics.[36]

In consideration of Jaede's observations concerning the level of disagreement in defining the Common Good, it is important that there is ongoing conversation which explores how it is possible to pursue a Common Good alongside others who believe in very different goods.

It is with this awareness that I exercise caution whilst offering a compiled list of collated key themes drawn from the foundational thoughts of Aristotle, reshaped and developed within Christian theological discourse as articulated by Rowlands, and owned by justice-seeking initiatives such as 'Together for the Common Good'. From these I offer the following trajectory as one broad-based Christian understanding of the concept of the Common Good that may speak to the challenges of sectarianism in Scotland. Others may offer an alternative list of principles to support human flourishing, and these could be equally as valid. This is a conversation cycle of the Common Good which might reveal a measure of commonality with others. We may not agree about very much, and we may not agree what normative principles of a Common Good or flourishing look like, but if seeking a society where everyone does flourish, those with different political

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[35] "Common Good Thinking," The Together for the Common Good Organisation, accessed October 13, 2018, http://www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/who-we-are/common-good-thinking.html.

[36] Maximilian Jaede, "The Concept of the Common Good," Political Settlements, accessed March 11, 2022, https://www.politicalsettlements.org/publications-database/the-concept-of-the-common-good/

or religious views are urged by Rowlands and others to consider meeting to talk, to sit across from each other and negotiate. There is no prerequisite or desire to agree on everything, but through a search for commonalities there may emerge relationships and even perhaps a shared resistance to those forces that drive people apart. The conversation itself may help uncover the fundamental issues that often lie hidden. The Common Good seeks to begin a cycle of conversation about flourishing rather than end it and through this, offer potential which could edge us forward.

Normative Principles: The Challenge for Anti-Sectarianism

I have therefore composed the following list which offers a useful trajectory for an understanding of the concept of the Common Good that might speak to the challenges of sectarianism in Scotland today.

1. Live and work together to achieve
2. A good life
3. Where rulers and citizens seek
4. Unity rather than division
5. Through a language of relationship
6. Which speaks of human value
7. Resulting in human flourishing.

An important cautionary point to remember with the creation of a thematic list, is that general principles might not speak to concrete local contexts. Jaede[37] argues that the practitioner must be aware of the dangers inherent in attempting to apply normative principles in complex situations, and suggests that we must not prescribe normative principles without taking into account the realities of social and political life, while scholars who highlight the limits of normative theorising could end up endorsing problematic practices, which may be viewed as being part of the good of a given community.[38] This is simply one understanding of the Common Good which could be used as part of a

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[37] Jaede's work on international relations and political theory offers a critique of the challenges presented by discussions relating to The Common Good.
[38] Jaede, "The Concept of the Common Good,".

conversation cycle, which may reveal a measure of commonality with others who are interested in addressing sectarianism.

The caution advised, however, when working with normative principles, particularly when 'what is good for one may not be good for another' is a healthy challenge to anti-sectarian practitioners currently working across Scotland. For while anti-sectarian programmes and practitioners work hard to instil a greater sense of community justice, many facilitated community dialogues may also find themselves falling victim to 'normative theorising',[39] where limitations and parameters threaten individual and communal development and growth. For example, it may feel less disruptive to local behaviours if practitioners adopt or mirror dominant attitudes or approaches.

The challenge for anti-sectarianism may lie in the essential yet highly sensitive requirement to acknowledge the context of a community's own normative views and behaviours; again, an approach laden with difficulties. However, the clear benefits of an honest and mutual conversation about core values and beliefs held by different groups as a means of moving towards authentic dialogue and individual or communal action in pursuit of the Common Good should not be underestimated, if we are to create a space where all have opportunity to flourish. Sectarianism is often deeply rooted in a profoundly held sense of identity, and addressing it entails complex and emotional encounters in which many loud and competing voices are straining to be heard. It can be uncomfortable, and the temptation to shield oneself behind whichever prescribed normative principles[40] are most dominant is understandable, yet arguably counter-productive.

The Challenge: Political Engagement
Highlighting ecclesial failures to address the challenges of political involvement, Rowlands reflects on Parreau-Saussine's analysis of Catholic political theology's

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[39] Jaede, "The Concept of the Common Good,".
[40] "Concept of the Common Good," Political Settlements Organisation, accessed September 27, 2018, http://www.politicalsettlements.org/publications-database/the-concept-of-the-common-good/.

responses to the challenges presented by the often fractious interactions with secular conversation partners. There is a tendency that instead of venturing out to meet the other, we retreat into secure territory:

> The tendency of Catholic political theology when feeling threatened to represent a retreat into a narrow appeal to divine law, forgetful of the place of natural and human law as dynamic, participatory theological forms.[41]

However, such responses also take place within secular institutions which may withdraw from engagement with faith-based organisations because of distrust and lack of understanding. Speaking to The General Assembly to the Church of Scotland in 2018, where the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon was present, the departing Moderator, The Very Reverend Dr Derek Browning, challenged the tendency to withdraw from conversation with religious bodies on issues relating to the Common Good:

> It is beyond wearying to be given the impression that parts of civic Scotland find it difficult to work with us because they 'don't do God.' It's not simply about 'doing God – it's about 'doing humanity'.

> We don't demand participation from a place of privilege. We demand to share in the privilege of serving others alongside national and local government and other NGOs, and not be excluded because faith is part of our profile.

> The Church is happy enough to do God, but for goodness sake take us seriously when we ask to work in partnership in our nation and offer to

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[41] Anna Rowlands, "Teaching Political Theology as Ministerial Formation," *Political Theology* 13, no. 6 (2012): 715.

play our part in helping the vulnerable, the forgotten and the poor of our land.[42]

The desire for a better mutual relationship, articulated by Browning, is explored further by Rowlands who responds to Simon Critchley's call in *Faith of the Faithless,*[43] for 'a refashioning of a political theology shaped by Rousseau, rooted in a 'civil profession of faith' as the basis for the relation of politics, law and religion.[44] Rowlands confronts Critchley's notion of a universal philosophical and theological self-interest which seems to exist at the expense of the vulnerable. In contrast, she affirms the hopes of secular and religious groups actively seeking community involvement and argues that, despite despairing at the often futile attempts at seeking the Common Good, we must not abandon our political vision: 'we cannot give in to a view of politics as only ever a dirty, squalid business. Politics is necessary because of both the best and worst of that which we are capable'.[45]

Many challenges arise however, when Church and State appear to disagree on which issues they are entitled to engage with and comment upon. I sense that Rowlands does not simply rush to dismiss Critchley's view of Church State engagement. She instead directly addresses the suspicions which resonate for so many, urging an approach which learns from these suspicions, and more particularly for anti-sectarianism, asks faith groups not to seek the guarantees, processes and rewards which they may have pursued thus far:

> Yet, what remains intact in Critchley's account is the predictable modern narrative of religious violence, a deep suspicion of the corporate religious body and consequently a cry of deception. Institutional and doctrinal religion ruins its own promise: the hope of a theological anthropology,

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[42] "Doing Humanity," Church of Scotland, accessed October 5, 2018, http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2018/church_must_be_allowed_to_play_a_full_part_in_supporting_the_vulnerable.
[43] Simon Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology* (London: Verso, 2012).
[44] Rowlands, "Teaching Political Theology as Ministerial Formation," 704-716.
[45] Anna Rowlands, "Keynote Address," *Together for the Common Good Conference* (London: Kings College London, 2014).

which opens for us the wide horizon of eschatological creativity, moves in its systematic form to trade in this open space for the cheap grace of security, guarantees and rewards.[46]

Furthermore, reflecting on Rowlands' argument that political engagement is necessary, even when it reveals the very best and the very worst of us, it is useful to welcome too the contributions of political theorist, William E. Connolly to the discussion. While not a person of faith, Connolly is convinced that a healthy and participatory democracy requires the contribution of religious persons and ideas. He suggests that much is risked if the polyphony of voices in the arena diminish, and he too urges attention be given to the necessity for dialogue and debate:[47]

> It seems to me that an overt metaphysical/religious pluralism in public life provides one key to forging a positive ethos of engagement out of the multidimensional plurality of contemporary life. In such a culture participants are called upon neither to leave their metaphysical baggage at home when they participate in various publics nor to adopt an overarching faith acknowledged by all parties who strive to promote the common good.[48]

Echoing the views of Rowlands, David Fergusson, then Professor of Divinity, at the University of Edinburgh, notes, 'even though politics, society and the Church have all undergone dramatic changes in the course of five centuries' and the 'ties of Church and state have been partly severed',[49] it remains the case that the civic cannot be completely separate from the sphere of faith, however much we seek to do so. This is because the very nature of being human leads us to seek cohesion; an understanding of human existence, which the secular alone

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[46] Rowlands, "Teaching Political Theology as Ministerial Formation," 705.
[47] William E. Connolly and Bradley J. Macdonald, "Confronting the Anthropocene and Contesting Neoliberalism: An Interview with William E. Connolly," *New Political Science* 37, no. 2 (2015): 259-275.
[48] William E. Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota press, 1999), 185.
[49] David Fergusson, *Church, State and Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 192.

cannot provide. Espousing Rowlands' argument for political and theological discourse, Fergusson concurs:

> Our social systems cannot be entirely autonomous since questions about values, standards, and the nature of human persons are all inevitably embedded within the assumptions that inform practices, policies and decisions. Faith communities that continue to offer meaning, vision and an account of human well-being will provide a necessary contribution not only to their own adherents, but also to wider public debates about how we should organise our common life.[50]

Despite the compelling force of the views expressed above, it is important at this point to also acknowledge that there are those who would caution against religious groups placing too great a significance on political involvement. New Testament scholar, John M. G. Barclay, offers a thoughtful critique of Rowlands' approach. Barclay suggests that Epistle writer St Paul's attitude to government and the power of Rome, was neither to focus on nor resist it, but to simply deny its vast significance.[51]

Barclay argues that St. Paul's approach to Rome was in fact 'not to oppose or upstage it, but to relegate it to the rank of a dependent and derivative entity'.[52] Consequently, Barclay suggests, 'We thus reach the paradoxical conclusion that St. Paul's theology is political precisely in rendering the Roman Empire theologically insignificant.'[53] While this view appears to turn the argument for greater religious involvement in civil matters somewhat on its head, it may also be worth considering that Barclay's observations also offer a degree of release, to the Church, from the continuous struggle to be heard, whilst assigning too much power to those who govern.

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[50] Fergusson, *Church, State and Civil Society*, 192.
[51] John Barclay, *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363-387.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid, 387.

Reflecting further on Barclay's argument, which at first appears to directly challenge Rowlands view on faith and civic discourse, he is not I suspect suggesting there was an absence of political interest or even engagement. Instead, Barclay argues that St. Paul was urging for a reframing of the political and theological climate, and in fact, for a rather more confident positioning of the Church as an authority.[54]

Furthermore, Reverend Dr Derek Browning's comments, quoted earlier, regarding the Church of Scotland's struggle to build working relationships with government, may indicate that the Church's limited resources and energies, so often focussed on relational struggles with civic authorities, might be more usefully focussed elsewhere. I cannot help but question whether the Church might better deploy its limited energies where they are needed by the most vulnerable and at local community level.[55]

Despite these considerations through my engagement with the work of Rowlands, I have come to believe that the Common Good is a concept concerned with human value rather than human function, and in particular, it challenges me to identify the existence of normative frameworks and theorising, which limit or prohibit genuine growth. It is important for practitioners and researchers to rigorously interrogate inherited knowledge and processes, both within faith communities and civic life. Particularly for my research, I take these insights and reflect on my own praxis and relationships with others, and return to these questions/themes in the analysis and recommendations chapters.

Chris Baker: Human Flourishing

Chris Baker, of the William Temple Foundation and Goldsmiths University, has spent his career developing the work of the Foundation in supporting marginalised communities and theologically reflecting upon their religious and cultural resources. His work has generated important insights into the positive

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54 Barclay, Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews, 383-384.
55 "Doing Humanity," Church of Scotland, accessed October 5, 2018,
http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2018/church_must_be_allowed_to_play_a_full_part_in_supporting_the_vulnerable.

contribution faith-based groups might make to the Common Good through nurturing and developing personal and group strengths and building communal resilience.

In a 2013 paper to the Public Policy Exchange forum on Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion, entitled 'The post-secular public square, spiritual capital and a progressive politics of hope',[56] Baker discusses the benefits of civic and faith based cooperation and understanding through the recognition and value of what he refers to as 'spiritual capital'.[57] The research on which this intervention is based was carried out by Baker in 2003,[58] and looked at the engagement of churches in and around a Manchester neighbourhood undergoing a process of urban regeneration.

Baker's study reveals a complex relationship forged between civic and faith bodies who were both seeking community renewal. It also highlights some of the 'elephant in the room' aspects of these relationships.

I have chosen to include Baker's own description of the context and challenges below in full because it illustrates very effectively the challenge that many faith organisations encounter when working with secular bodies:

> These churches were often the final civil institutions left in areas of high deprivation. We were interested (not only) in what they were doing – opening their premises to the poor, running credit unions, complementary health schemes, school mentoring programmes, youth work etc. We found that whilst secular agencies were very happy to accept the physical contributions of these churches, they were unwilling or uncomfortable engaging with the reasons why these material contributions were being

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[56] Chris Baker. *The post secular public square, spiritual capital and a progressive politics of hope.* Paper given at the Public Policy Exchange Forum on Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion – Strengthening Partnership Working between Local Authorities and Voluntary and Faith Groups, (6th June 2013): 3.
[57] Ibid.
[58] This refers to the research project, *Regenerating Communities – A theological and strategic critique,* (2002-2005) conducted for the Church Urban Fund. Research findings are documented in: Chris Baker, *The Hybrid Church in the City – Third Space Thinking* (London: SCM Press, 2009).

offered. The churches we spoke to said they felt let down and confused – that they were being asked to leave something essential about themselves outside the metaphorical door. We suggested this policy was unfair but also counterproductive.

We said that as a contribution to social capital (which all governments agree is important) faith groups provide both religious and spiritual capital. Religious capital is 'the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups'. Spiritual capital meanwhile 'energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis of faith'. Religious capital is the 'what': i.e. the concrete actions and resources that faith communities contribute. The 'why' is spiritual capital: i.e. the motivating basis of faith, belief and values that shapes these concrete actions. To get the best value from working with faith groups we proposed, you need to work with not only the religious capital, but the spiritual capital as well.[59]

Baker's study offers Scottish community initiatives focused on anti-sectarianism, and more particularly those supported by faith groups, a realistic perspective on building and negotiating relationships with governing and community bodies, and individuals who seek flourishing communities. Often, projects which are participating most in the lives of the community are driven by local churches and faith leaders; indeed, from one single church, projects can range from food banks, holiday clubs, lunch clubs for the elderly, and toddler groups; groups which clearly provide an invaluable space and support to a wide variety of people in the community, whose lives would undoubtedly be adversely affected without them. Significantly, many of those groups, while originally initiated by church leaders, are often handed over to, or 'equity shared' with non-church members.

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[59] Chris Baker and Jonathan Miles-Watson, "Exploring Secular Spiritual Capital; An Engagement in Religious and Secular Dialogue for a Common Future," *International Journal of Public Theology* 2, no. 4 (2008): 442-464.

Yet Baker observes there is so much more which could be gained for the whole community if only *spiritual capital* as well as religious capital was explored and valued. Religious capital, Baker outlines, is the practical and civic provision of these groups and the work they offer. However, *spiritual capital* taps into the very hope and motivation for their work.[60] This type of capital is not something which is merely confined to religious believers alone, he argues, but refers to an inherent and deeper hope and moral identity of all in the community, regardless of personal faith or religion. Baker asks:

> Do we dare suggest that religion as well as meeting public policy targets has a wider role to play in helping to shape a more progressive politics of hope? Do we dare trust our fellow citizens enough to do this – whether they define themselves as faith-based, secular or humanist.[61]

I would venture that any definition of spiritual capital must acknowledge the value of faith, not to denigrate secular understandings, but as a witness to the importance or presence of something powerful and transformative; hope experienced, and yet unseen. Baker's approach may appear to be a messy business, creating an unholy alliance between Church and community built upon nothing more than a mutual hope for human flourishing, but I find his advocacy of, 'a new bottom up process in which local solutions to universal challenges need to be discussed, implemented and then reflected on',[62] persuasive. It may offer Scottish communities seeking peace and transformation a radical yet strategic vehicle for their hopes.

'The Concern with Human Flourishing'

As stated, Baker's approach to community transformation is persuasive. Despite the challenges and difficulties, it remains important that human flourishing, a

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[60] Chris Baker and Jonathan Miles-Watson, "Exploring Secular Spiritual Capital; An Engagement in Religious and Secular Dialogue for a Common Future," *International Journal of Public Theology* 2, no. 4 (2008): 442-464.

[61] Chris Baker, *The post secular public square, spiritual capital and a progressive politics of hope*, Public Policy Exchange Forum on Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion – Strengthening Partnership Working between Local Authorities and Voluntary and Faith Groups, (6th June 2013): 5.

[62] Ibid, 6.

consequence of seeking the Common Good, is consciously and actively pursued in an effort to present a practical framework for both faith and secular practitioners participating in collective community dialogue, and in particular, peacebuilding such as anti-sectarianism.

Building on Baker's approach, feminist theologian, Patricia Santos, explores what it means to truly flourish. Observing the positive and relational aspect of flourishing, she describes:

> Flourishing can never be individualistic or experienced in isolation. It is always in relation to others in its concern for the wellbeing of all persons and the cosmos. It calls for a renewed theological imagination that is innovative and interdisciplinary taking into consideration the multicultural, multi-religious and multilinguistic contexts of our world.[63]

Miroslav Volf observes that, 'concern with human flourishing':

> is at the heart of the great faiths, including Christianity. True, you cannot always tell that from the way faiths are practiced. When surveying their history, it seems on occasion as if their goal were simply to dispatch people out of this world and into the next.[64]

Volf highlights that 'concern with human flourishing',[65] is the chief objective of all main religions, and yet argues that this concern somehow gets lost in a preoccupation with the survival and mechanics of maintaining religious identity.

This chapter has explored the contributions of the theologians Graham, Rowlands and Baker with the intention of forming a groundwork for understanding how such approaches might be embodied in faith supported community anti-sectarianism. The chapter examines Graham's argument that

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[63] Patricia H. Santos, "That All May Enjoy Abundant Life: A Theological Vision of Flourishing from the Margins," *Feminist Theology* 25, no. 3 (2017): 225-227.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

issues relating to identity, diversity and faith have become in recent years, much more prominent in the cultural consciousness. Before attempting to meet people where they are, and for inter-communal dialogue to be actively and fairly pursued, inherited master ideologies must now be revealed, Graham argues. Challenging civic and faith communities to become more united in decision making and initiatives addressing sectarianism in partnership at local levels, Rowlands' work on the Common Good highlights that there is no reason why seeking social transformation should be pursued in isolation by any of these groups. Particularly significant too are Baker's detailed case studies, where he shares the negotiations involved in complicated and frequently controversial local community pursuits which undoubtedly have much to offer anti-sectarian pedagogy and the involvement of various diverse groups.

The chapter also helped develop a deeper understanding of the potential of an alternative anti-sectarian approach which works in partnership with community, faith, and civic groups, and has highlighted some of the tensions as well as the more positive possibilities which could lie in store. Through this exploration, the chapter revealed that underpinning the theologians' contributions is a deep respect for the embodied struggle of the local community, a foundational approach on which local anti-sectarianism may flourish.

My next step in this research project is to test out 'on the ground' the ideas I have been exploring theoretically in these opening chapters. I shall attempt to do so through ethnographical research with a small, local anti-sectarian women's group based in Wishaw, North Lanarkshire. I hope to discover if an alternative model of anti-sectarian engagement can be identified which can be owned by, and is directly at local community level, and which embodies hopeful potential for peace and transformation.

Part Two

Chapter 4
Methodology and Methods

Introduction

In the first two chapters of this thesis, I began to explore how critical educational, social and cultural theory encourages me to explore different ways of conceiving anti-sectarian action for transformation beyond the models of Government and institutional led interventions which are currently dominant within the Scottish context.

In chapter three I interrogated the work of three leading practical theologians as I continued my quest to discern alternative possibilities that might be productive from a faith-based perspective. In my engagement with this theological thinking, I was also particularly concerned to highlight ways in which community-based or women-led initiatives were understood to be significant.

I now turn my attention beyond the literature towards the study of a local community context in which women of faith came together to seek alternative approaches to anti-sectarianism. I am hoping to discern through my research in this context whether there might be practical alternative anti-sectarian models which offer the potential for positive change to the sphere of state-led governance.

This chapter will begin this process first by examining the ways in which anti-sectarianism has been researched in the past. I shall then construct my own methodological approach that seeks to be deeply attentive to the women from whom I seek to learn and responsive to the insights they might offer for my own developing practice.

Identifying the Problem

There is an enormous amount of published research material available which focuses on sectarianism in Scottish society and which appears to justify the need for an increase in anti-sectarian education and funding. Often, research resourced by the Scottish Government in this area has relied heavily upon quantitative methodologies. These are undoubtedly important in some cases, for example, as demonstrated by a recent study carried out by Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, Edinburgh University and the University of Leicester which asked '*Does equality legislation reduce intergroup differences? Religious affiliation, socio-economic status and mortality in Scotland and Northern Ireland: a cohort study of 400,000 people*'.[1] The study found that Catholic men living in Scotland are 14 per cent more likely to die between the ages of 25 and 74 than their Protestant counterparts. Studies such as this are insightful and valuable when considering equality legislation and government budgetary decisions, which clearly have a powerful impact on life chances and mortality.

However, it is important to acknowledge that much of the research has focussed upon concerns that can be quantified in predetermined categories and has neglected the particularities of context and experience which are difficult to access through traditional quantitative instruments. Yet such data might be of great value in challenging deeply ingrained perceptions concerning sectarianism through the introduction of new insights and perspectives. In fact, my review of existing research found that it contained very limited in-depth qualitative data, particularly on direct community involvement or dialogue with anti-sectarianism. It was also lacking a focus on the role of women or faith-based perspectives. Indeed, what I found seemed far from the heart of people's lived experience. Similarly, very little work had been undertaken on critiquing the existing categories through which the 'problem' of sectarianism is defined.

Furthermore, much of the quantitative research in the field has tended to approach both sectarianism and anti-sectarianism through a male-centred

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[1] "Mortality and Religious Affiliation," Queen's University Belfast, accessed May 12, 2019, https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/files/125650231/scotland_vs_ni_religion_PURE.

perspective. This 'malestream',[2] approach (in both research design and data generation) has meant that the less frequently articulated and under-researched perspectives of women have not been attended to in public debates. Discussion has tended to focus on the relationship between sectarianism and gang culture, crime statistics, or most particularly, links with football: all topics associated with masculine culture.[3]

As a teacher who regularly researched articles and reports for course development purposes, I found the data produced through this malestream quantitative approach frustratingly unhelpful in a pedagogical context. Simply put, there is an absence of rich data which reveals the relationship between state-led anti-sectarianism and the members, particularly the female members, of the Scottish communities it seeks to transform.

Seeking a Solution

While not denying the value of some quantitative studies, I decided to use qualitative methods in my research as it is the most effective approach to produce rich data in a manner which also accords with my worldview,[4] as described in previous chapters, and which allows marginalised perspectives to be heard.

Through this qualitative approach, my research interprets the behaviours, knowledge and symbols within an anti-sectarian women's group, and searches for meaning in a 'natural setting'.[5] It is hoped that through immersion in the 'natural setting', this research will serve to empower Scottish communities who share similar community features involving religion and culture. Swinton's definition is particularly appropriate for the location of my own research focus:

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[2] Maria Mies, (cited in Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli-Klein, *Theories of Women's Studies* (London: Routledge, London,1983), 117-140).

[3] "Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland," Scottish Government, accessed November 10, 2015, http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00424891.pdf.

[4] I do not include this term here to mean simply my own opinion, but to demonstrate my understanding of the nature of the relationships between people, political and religious commitments.

[5] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), 45.

Qualitative research involves the utilization of a variety of methods and approaches which enable the researcher to explore the social world in an attempt to access and understand the unique ways that individuals and communities inhabit it.[6]

A qualitative methodology offers an invaluable toolbox to practitioners and researchers like me, who seek to establish new social and cultural community development. Silverman and Paterson explain:

One of the primary advantages of qualitative research is that it makes the data analysis and research results more accessible to a broad spectrum of individuals and groups in society. As a result, this method is a democratic and empowering approach to data collection and analysis.[7]

Often, a concern raised regarding qualitative research concerns the question of objectivity. However, it is important to note that even when a research method is quantitative, we cannot assume it to be objective because quite simply people are unable to approach or analyse data without employing subjective judgments.[8] Indeed, perhaps objectivity should be viewed as an illusory pursuit since all researchers are active participants in their research projects through whatever method they are pursued. However, my commitment to the continual awareness of my own subjectivity formed an essential part of the research process.

Beyond Objectivity

Denzin and Lincoln highlight the challenge within social research of a 'crisis of representation' which occurred in the mid 1980's when it was increasingly recognised how active researchers were in constructing the reality they sought to describe. This crisis cautions us towards scepticism concerning researchers'

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[6] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), 29.

[7] Robert Mark Silverman and Kelly L. Patterson, *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 2.

[8] Sandra Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is "Strong Objectivity"?" in *Feminist Epistemologies: Thinking Gender*, eds. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993).

findings based on the traditional understanding of reality, as has been transparently graspable through empirical means. If, as discussed, there really is no 'objective truth', then the researcher must find a new way to reflect on and present the data.[9]

In the earlier stages of my research, when reviewing methodology literature, I spent some considerable time grappling with the issue of objectivity because I was so aware that anyone in Scotland working in the field of anti-sectarianism will be interrogated as to their own particular religious stance.[10] Donna Haraway was helpful in this, describing how 'only partial perspectives promise objective vision'.[11] By this she meant that everything that we understand to be knowledge only exists from our individual positional perspectives.

I similarly found that in my research the richest data emerged when a kaleidoscope of partial perspectives was shared by women of differing outlooks and varying contexts of situated knowledge; it was only then that those difficult 'change-making' conversations really began. I similarly came to realise the important understandings of sectarianism and anti-sectarianism that had been formed by those whose voices lacked institutional recognition, the perspective from 'below'. However, trying to access such subjugated knowledge is not a straightforward process. As Donna Haraway writes:

> To see from below is neither easily learned nor unproblematic, even if 'we' 'naturally' inhabit the great underground terrain of subjugated knowledges. … The standpoints of the subjugated are not 'innocent' positions. On the contrary, they are preferred because in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge … The subjugated have a decent chance to be on to the god trick and all its dazzling and, therefore, blinding illuminations. 'Subjugated' standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise

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[9] N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher Using Our Selves in Research* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004), 83.
[10] This is often the first thing that people seek to establish when hearing of my research.
[11] Donna Haraway in *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, eds. Carole Ruth McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 394.

more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world.[12]

Haraway urges the researcher to 'not give in to the myths of vision',[13] suggesting, 'that view of infinite vision is an illusion, a god trick'.[14]

> We seek not the knowledges of phallogocentrism (nostalgia for the presence of the one true Word) and disembodied vision. We seek those ruled by partial sight and limited voice – not partiality for its own sake but, rather, for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible.[15]

Haraway is adamant that to gain the privilege of a partial vision and reap the harvest which this offers requires more than a self-critical awareness; instead it demands an approach framed by feminist politics and epistemologies which focus on factors such as location and positioning.[16]

Research Question

When I first began this research project, my focus was upon discovering how engaged anti-sectarianism education and action was with its targeted communities, especially as I had noted how little theological research had been carried out in this context. Practical theology seemed to me to be the most effective discipline for engaging with a research project such as this, which involves an issue as sensitive and explosive as sectarianism. As a Christian practitioner, I agreed with Volf and Bass, who argue,

> The relation between beliefs and practices amounts to the claim that Christian beliefs do not express 'pure knowledge' but are intended to guide the Christian practices by situating the practitioner within the

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[12] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (Autumn,1988): 575-599.
[13] Haraway in *Feminist Theory Reader*, 394.
[14] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges", 582.
[15] Haraway in *Feminist Theory Reader*, 394.
[16] Ibid.

overarching narrative of God's dealings with humanity and by offering an account of his or her constitution as an agent.[17]

In identifying a need to locate something rather more positive and progressive than a statistical political enquiry into the strengths and weaknesses of anti-sectarianism's engagement with community, my question was not, 'How are anti-sectarian initiatives engaging the communities they seek to influence?', but rather it soon developed to become, 'How can we learn from community based anti-sectarian initiatives?' By placing community first, the research question positioned community in the primary and most prominent role.

By shifting emphasis and placing community at the forefront of my concerns, my research sought to learn directly from the community with which I was engaged. It was hoped that participants involved in the study would deepen understandings and signpost a positive and progressive approach which could lead to the development of more effective future anti-sectarian pedagogical policy decisions.

In this context the research question, as it continued to develop, became, 'What can we learn from community-based anti-sectarian initiatives that challenges current educational programmes?' Relating the question to my own practice completed a hermeneutical loop as I sought to discover if an informal, non-authoritarian approach which is integrally formed out *of* the community itself can be articulated and, if so, what I could learn from this. The sub-question, 'How can faith based values support this?', seeks to explore if faith can support and indeed offer hope to that engagement. As Swinton highlights, 'Practical Theology takes human experience seriously',[18] in harmony with Bonhoeffer who argues, 'Christian life is the participation in the encounter of Christ with the world'.[19]

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[17] Dorothy C. Bass and Miroslav Volf, *Practicing Theology Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Cambridge: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 225.
[18] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 7.
[19] Cited in Eric Stoddart, *Advancing Practical Theology: Critical Discipleship for Disturbing Times* (London: SCM Press, 2014), 131.

From my teaching experience I had detected increasing frustration from students, parents and staff regarding anti-sectarian rhetoric and practices, specifically about a lack of communal involvement in policies designed by a school's governing bodies, which were often advised by charitable organisations. I suspected that a practical and theological model of dialogue could offer up possibilities for a radical engagement; dialogue with and by the 'others' which might move the conversation forward, develop it. Indeed, it is this which Don Browning describes as a 'hermeneutical model of practical theology that has grasped the attention'.[20]

Also grasping at my attention, and directly experienced in my own, and I suspect many other colleagues' teaching practice, was Freire's (and Denzin's) understanding of intervention which provided me with an invaluable reflective tool throughout the process and encouraged me to hope for change:

> Hope is ethical. Hope is moral. Hope is peaceful and nonviolent. Hope seeks the truth of life's sufferings. Hope gives meaning to the struggles to change the world. Hope is grounded in concrete performative practices, in struggles and interventions that espouse the sacred values of love, care, community, trust and well-being. Hope, as a form of pedagogy, confronts and interrogates cynicism, the belief that change is not possible, or is too costly. Hope works from rage to love. It articulates a progressive politics that rejects 'conservative, neoliberal postmodernity'. Hope rejects terrorism. Hope rejects the claim that peace comes at any cost.[21]

What Do I Mean by Community?

Before introducing the context of my research, which entails a descriptive account of the participants and the local community in which it takes place, it is important to first explain the definition of community which I employ for the

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[20] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology, Descriptive and Strategic* Proposals (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 15.
[21] Norman K. Denzin, "Performing (Auto) Ethnography Politically," *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 25, no. 3, (2003): 263; referring to Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York, Continuum, 1999, 9, 10.

purpose of my study.

Very typically, community is understood as referring to any group sharing something in common.[22] This may include a postcode, but it can also include overlapping interests and features, such as religious affiliations, sporting allegiances, employment, or educational interests, and is often applied to describe a positive sense of belonging. Sociologist, Gerard Delanty explains further,

> Community, which derives from the Latin word com (with or together) and unus (the number one or singularity), is a widely used term in popular and academic discourse, but it is also contested. But so, too, are most, if not all, concepts in social science. Despite its contestation, the idea of community is related to the search for belonging in the insecure conditions of modern society. Its enduring appeal is undoubtedly due to the desire for belonging, sharing and place.[23]

Defining or describing community involves understanding it in any number of ways, using a broad range of criteria, and this can help build an understanding of the culture, concerns and relationships which exist within it.[24] For example, understandings of community today are very different than was the case perhaps even just twenty years ago. Responding to technological communication advancements, community has in that period fragmented, and yet at the same time presented opportunities for developing new communal relationships through social mediums such as Twitter and Instagram. For Delanty, this picture of a new communication community is centred on a sense of belonging and sharing, and as Delanty argues, even presents the possibility of becoming a powerful voice of political opposition.[25]

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[22] "Community: a definition," Kansas University, accessed March 3, 2015, http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/describe-the-community/main.
[23] Gerard Delanty, *Community* (London: Routledge, 2018), 2.
[24] "Community: a definition".
[25] Delanty, *Community*, 2.

A good example of this occurred in Scotland recently, as seen from a successful online social media campaign to reroute Orange Order marches away from Catholic churches in Glasgow.[26] This has been a major cause of upset for many years as Orange Order associated bands ritually marched by Catholic churches drumming and playing flutes a little louder than their usual practice. It deliberately antagonised churchgoers and occasionally resulted in verbal and physical attacks. As Delaney would argue, the online campaign to change this practice was as a result of a *communication community* formed through political opposition to such religious marches. Therefore, community takes on many forms and can be incredibly positive experiences or indeed rather less so.

For this particular research however, my working understanding of what defines community takes cognisance of several variables – geography, religion and gender – which for my thesis means the shared reality of being a self-identifying Catholic or Protestant woman living in an area which regularly experiences sectarianism, and consequently, anti-sectarianism. It is important to underline that this understanding of community may directly challenge the rather warmer and traditional beliefs of what constitutes community. However, all of the women in this research were brought together and as such created a community composed of the criteria outlined.

The Wishae Wimmin

Endeavouring to discover 'What can we learn from community based anti-sectarian initiatives that challenge current educational programmes?' and 'How can faith based values support this?', I spent regular and extended time over a two year period with an ecumenical anti-sectarian women's group who had, in 2014, been brought together through their different religious backgrounds and affiliations in order to learn from one another and share stories of their various religious and cultural experiences.

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[26] *Call it Out* is a pressure group campaigning against anti-Catholic bigotry and racism in Scotland, using social media to build awareness and support.

The group consisted of local Wishaw women from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. Their open and frequently articulated hope for the group was to learn, take courage, and confidence from these new relationships as they worked towards beginning much longed for change conversations in their communities. The ultimate aim of the women's group was peace and transformation for themselves, their families, and neighbourhoods, in a close-knit North Lanarkshire post-industrial community with a history of sectarian conflict.

Through my earlier preliminary research reviewing academic literature, government reports, funding allocations and voluntary sector involvements, I had become aware of the existence of this women's group close to where I live. The women's group, amongst several other local small community groups around Lanarkshire which were meeting at that time, had indirectly received funding through Faith in Community Scotland, and Tackling Sectarianism Together, from 2012 to 2015. The funding originated from the Scottish Government's Tackling Sectarianism Fund, and the project worked alongside the Conforti Institute and Place for Hope, specifically to bring about community-based dialogue on sectarianism. The Conforti Institute is an educational initiative of the Xaverian Missionaries based in Coatbridge which offers training and access to resources, and Place for Hope exists to equip people and faith communities who seek to navigate change and conflict.[27]

It quickly transpired that a local Church of Scotland Minister, who was an important and pivotal figure in the original creation of the women's group, was known to me through my parents' attendance at the Church where she was Minister at that time. Following several discussions with her about my research enquiry, I was subsequently invited to join the group in February 2015.

The group named themselves 'The Wishae Wimmin' and met in the Made4U in ML2 community hub in the Cambusnethan area of Wishaw. Made4U in ML2 is a

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[27] "Addressing Conflict: Resources," A Place for Hope, accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.placeforhope.org.uk/resources/view/conforti-institute.

community-based project that came out of a shared concern to put Christian faith into action in the local North Lanarkshire areas of Cambusnethan, Newmains, Wishaw and Craigneuk. The project seeks to make a positive difference in local people's lives and was originally set up in response to the sudden deaths of several young people aged 16-24 over a six week period in 2000.[28] They had lived within 400m of each other and their deaths had a profound and devastating effect on the town as people struggled to make sense of what had happened.

The Made4U project community building was considered an appropriate location for an anti-sectarian group to meet due to its ecumenical nature. It was supported by several local churches in Wishaw, including Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist congregations.

The group of women met every month, from 2014 to 2017, in a relaxed but semi-formal setting. At its peak, there were around 15 women from a rich variety of Catholic and Protestant faith and non-faith backgrounds, sitting around a table laden with food, discussing difference, religious identity and sectarianism. The women represented a wide range of social and educational backgrounds and opportunities, and their meetings were guided by a female facilitator who did not live in North Lanarkshire and was appointed by the Conforti Institute. The facilitator was present to provide the meetings with a degree of shape and direction, and to ensure appropriate use of funding. The format of every meeting followed a similar pattern of enjoying the food and general chat while everyone arrived, sharing and discussing personal or wider issues relating to sectarianism (this was always by far the lengthiest part of the evening), reflections, and finally planning or agreeing topics for future meetings. Despite my own initial feelings of trepidation, as I had sensed a degree of caution from the women about my presence there, the group were interested in my research and offered their support as they favourably viewed its potential for change in

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[28] The deaths of the young people were sudden and linked to suicide, conflict and social inequality.

the area.

Wishaw: Locality Profile

With a population of 58,343,[29] the Craigneuk area of Wishaw has the lowest local life expectancy: 64 for men and 71 for women. This is approximately 10 years under the national life expectancies for Scotland as a whole. However, for most localities in Wishaw, life expectancy is currently 72 years for men and 77 for women, which is around 4 years less than the national expectancy. Wishaw's A&E attendance rate has increased by around 12% over the last five years, and although it is broadly similar to the North Lanarkshire rate, it is well above the national rate, and the figures for early deaths are a further indication of health inequality. All-cause mortality among Wishaw 15-44 year olds in 2016 was 424 per 100,000 of the population, where the number for North Lanarkshire as a whole was 127, and for Scotland this was 105. Alcohol admission to hospital in 2016 was 1,510 per 100,000 of the population whereas for Scotland it was 680. Finally, 36% of people living in Wishaw have no educational qualifications, which is 10% higher than their North Lanarkshire neighbours living fifteen miles away in Cumbernauld. This profile reveals Wishaw is a setting where health, poverty and educational inequalities are highly significant features and an enormous cause of concern for those who live there.

A Strategic Approach

Reflexivity

Deconstructing the social construct that is research analysis requires deep reflexivity involving an understanding of the inherited viewpoints and myth of one's own objectivity. However, reflexivity is not a simple nor scientific process and is, as pointed out by Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 'best shaped by a fluid, negotiated view of positional space.'[30]

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[29] "Population Statistics," North Lanarkshire Council, accessed October 3, 2020, https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/8881.

[30] Maggi Savin-Baden and Claire Major Howell, *New Approaches to Qualitative Research: Wisdom and Uncertainty* (London: Routledge, 2010), 17.

A reflexive discipline is one which seeks participants stories to impact and shape analysis, while self-reflection acknowledges my experiences; that I too am shaped by contexts and people. Bennett, Graham, Pattison and Walton explain:

> Reflexivity is the term used to describe an epistemological stance 'beyond reflection'. However, whilst reflexivity digs deeper and travels further than reflection it is important not to think of reflection and reflexivity as a binary or oppositional pairing. The two belong together in a fragile but unbroken continuum. Indeed, '[c]ritically reflective practice is underpinned by reflexivity'.[31]

In my own reflexive journey, I have particularly identified with Bennett, Graham, Pattison and Walton's description of the liminal state often experienced during the research process where the researcher, not quite treading water or lost exactly, yet in entering into the unknown, also suspends their previous reality while seeking to interpret meanings which will ultimately leave an indelible mark on their worldview. Indeed, after two years with the women's group, I can testify that my own experience, resonates with the description of Bennett et al.:

> However, what we have found most difficult to prepare our research students to expect is the heightened intensity of feeling and the fascination that they will encounter as they enter this stage of the research journey. In sometimes small but often quite significant ways the vivid encounters of the liminal phase provoke lasting changes in the researcher.[32]

Christian Scharen states, 'Reflexivity is of paramount significance as a way to guard against violating those from whom we seek to learn.'[33] Experiences colour or shape decisions or outcomes, not just prior to analysing data, but those initial

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[31] Zoe Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 43.
[32] Ibid, 49.
[33] Christian Scharen and Aana Marie Vigen, *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2011), 20.

stages of deciding and selecting participants, interview methods, setting, interview questions and analysis.

Drawing on Foucault, Kim Etherington describes how:

> Knowledge is intimately connected to power and can sometimes be used to oppress, especially when knowledge is withheld. Feminist research approaches (and there are many) and their emphasis on equality, challenged researchers to make transparent the values and beliefs that lay behind their interpretations, lower the barrier between researcher and researched, and allow both sides to be seen and understood for who they were and what influenced them.[34]

Seeking a reflexive discipline also required me as researcher to lose the 'passive voice' of the third person and become visible in my research.[35] While this was deeply challenging for me it also created a more egalitarian climate for this work. I am clearly not an objective observer but an active participant in what has been a shared journey.

Research Decisions

A researcher's own personal worldview will inevitably shape their research strategy, argue Bennett, Graham, Pattison and Walton. They reference Nicole Mockler's work which usefully demonstrates how the perspective of the researcher is influential at every stage of the research journey (see the diagram below).[36]

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[34] Kim Etherington, *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Ourselves in Research* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004), 27.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 139.
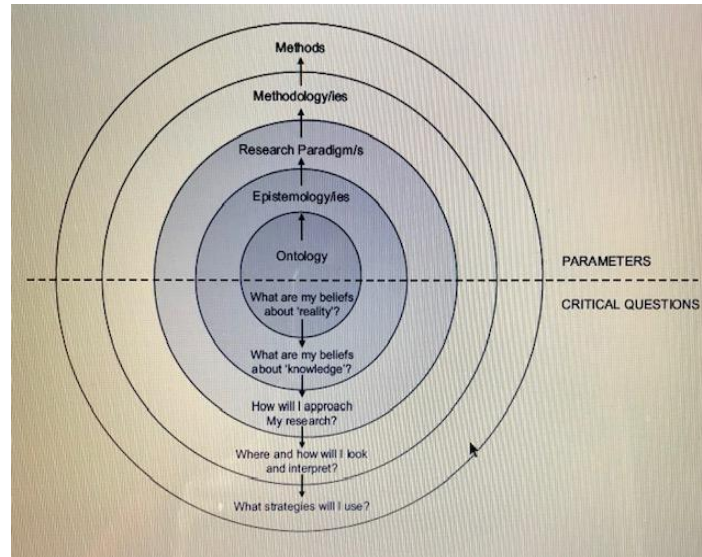
Elements of Research Design[37]

Providing a useful and supportive framework on which to make methodological decisions, Mockler's image of concentric circles contributed to the construction of this study. Mockler advocates use of an important route-map of issues to be considered at different stages in the research process: what are my beliefs about reality, what are my beliefs about knowledge, how will I approach my research, where and how will I interpret, and what strategies will I use? Taking Mockler's criteria on-board, I found her argument, that researchers are shaping their research at every stage, ensured that my own research decisions were both owned and critically interrogated before, during and after the process.

Methodology

A Feminist Ethnographic Approach

Methodology could be described as referring to the 'research home',[38] the researcher's metaphorical mothership where a contextual framework guides and shapes the research design and decisions. The 'research home' is where the critiques are made, and the frameworks decided upon. As Grierson and Brearley state,

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[37] Nicole Mockler, "Being me: In search of authenticity," in *Creative Spaces for Qualitative Researching,* eds. J. Higgs et al. (Rotterdam and Boston: Sense Publishers. 2011), 159–168.
[38] Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 143.

Methodology is ... the organizing system through which researchers make use and sense of data and ideas, engage critically with theories and literature, reflect on material practices and actions, ask questions and seek answers to weave research in a cohesive and systematic way.[39]

I decided to use an ethnographic methodology for my research because it is 'the cornerstone of qualitative methods',[40] seeking to foster a deeply interactive form of engagement between researcher and participants while presenting a continual challenge to remain reflexive.

According to John D Brewer, a sociologist working in the field of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland:

Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'field' by methods of data collection which captures their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also in the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally.[41]

Furthermore, according to Denzin,

Ethnographic texts are the primary texts given for the interpretive, ethnographic project. These texts are always dialogical – the site at which the voices of the other, alongside the voices of the author, come alive and interact with one another [42]

Therefore, addressing my earlier observations that women are very often silent or absent from anti-sectarian research enquiry, I had very purposely selected to

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[39] Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 143.
[40] Robert Mark Silverman and Kelly L. Patterson, *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 6.
[41] John D. Brewer, *Ethnography* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2005), 6.
[42] Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1997), xiii.

engage with a women's group in order to gain in-depth female understandings, especially about seemingly normative positions which assume sectarianism is a man's domain. I recognised that women's voices were marginalised in this arena and I sought to discover if they might offer alternative perspectives and ways forward.

By placing myself quite literally at the heart of a womens' community-based group focussed on addressing local sectarian conflict and exploring solutions, a feminist ethnographic model of research enquiry was shaped in which I assumed the position of learner rather than that of expert. I was receiving insights from a community of women and gaining understanding into how they engage with anti-sectarianism. In so doing I was identifying my work as an example of feminist ethnography because as Hesse-Biber and Leavy highlight:

> There are a range of feminist approaches to ethnography depending on the particular disciplinary perspective, theoretical stance, and political goals of any given feminist ethnographer. What unites these approaches is a deep commitment to understanding the issues and concerns of women from their perspective and being especially attentive to activities and the 'goings on' of women in the research setting. The work of early feminist ethnography did much to unearth the 'invisible' aspects of women's roles in the ethnographic setting.[43]

While the members of the women's group were cautiously accepting of my presence at the meetings, I frequently experienced feelings of doubt about whether I was quite meriting my place at the table. Reflecting, I occasionally detected a clash, a jarring, between my role as researcher and my place as a group member. I had, I acknowledged, been invited into the group primarily as researcher and not as a local woman with an interest in addressing community issues concerning sectarianism, as the others had. I also came into the group almost a year after its conception and this undoubtedly presented challenges. I realised relationships with the other members of the group were shaped by their

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[43] Hesse-Biber and Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, 237.

view of me, as someone who joined '*to do research*'. The tension I carefully held throughout my research was that I was also a local woman, who was also deeply interested in the problems of sectarianism on my own doorstep, and in that role, I too wanted a seat at the table.

As an ethnographic researcher, I found journaling, discussed in detail later, to be of enormous value, not only in recording notes on discussions but also as an outlet to express my own feelings of insecurity and frustration. That initial sense I had experienced of being not quite good enough for the group did slowly diminish over the two year period, as relationships of trust and familiarity grew into friendship. However, concerns about barriers and power and acceptance were never very far from mind, because ultimately, I was carrying out research and therefore I had a duty to be continually mindful in assessing the moral and ethical implications of my presence in the group.

Sociologist Beverley Skeggs highlights how ethnographic feminist research is concerned to acknowledge and, if possible, mitigate the power relationships between researcher and participants.[44] She argues that in these researcher-researched relationships, care must be given to avoid them becoming manipulative and hierarchical. While ethnography aims to be considerate and respectful towards participants, it does remain that social demographic differences can create hierarchical relationships, and this underlines why reflexivity was such a crucial element of my research process.

Despite my own limitations I believe my ethnographic methodology enabled me to get to the heart of the situation and learn from the women's descriptions of their own experiences of sectarianism and anti-sectarianism. Entering into the group's *web of meaning,*[45] over time, I built collaborative partnerships with the participants through a multi-layered approach of empathetic listening and observation, journaling, focus groups and one to one semi-structured interviews,

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[44] Beverley Skeggs, "Situating the Production of Feminist Ethnography," in *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*, eds. Mary Maynard and June Purvis (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 1994), 72-92.
[45] 'Web of Meaning' is a term often attributed to anthropologist Clifford Geertz when describing ethnography.

as a researcher committed to a continual process of reflection to ensure that the women were not swayed nor intimidated by the research process.

Entering into the group's web of meaning, I found Patton's rigorous and structured process involving a heuristic model of research particularly helpful. This process follows a pathway of, 'immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis':[46]

> Heuristic inquiry is a process that begins with a question or a problem which the research seeks to illuminate or answer … The heuristic process is autobiographic, yet with virtually every question that matters personally there is also a social – and perhaps universal – significance.[47]

Paton's structured five step heuristic approach presents a route-map which recognises and addresses the frequent criticisms of subjective reflection and offered a structured and practical method for processing notes from the women's group meetings.

1. Immersion: Immersing oneself into the very life of the project.
2. Incubation: deeply reflexive of experiences and producing new thoughts.
3. Illumination: thoughts leading to insightful and clear meanings.
4. Explication: meanings become more concrete understandings.
5. Creative Synthesis: holistically, everything comes together.[48]

My approach of feminist ethnography was crucial when hearing and recording women's experiences. This non-genderblind research approach sought to understand and re-tell the women's own stories as they remembered them, because it is their voices which will offer greatest insight into their lives:

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[46] Tim Sensing (citing Michael Quinn Patton), *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock,2011), 181.
[47] Kim Etherington, *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Ourselves in Research* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004), 109.
[48] Sensing (citing Michael Quinn Patton), *Qualitative Research,* 181.

Women have major roles to play in the social order but are not represented as social actors. They are 'objects' not subjects of their own actions in their own culture.[49]

Standpoint epistemology, which is an important aspect of feminist epistemology values contextual understandings of cultural issues. It emphasises that where you stand determines what you see. Honouring this approach, my research sought to note individual experiences, knowledges and expertise of the women in the group concerning the structural and social elements of their experience of anti-sectarian strategies and initiatives. I placed these personal understandings alongside collective forms of knowledge and asked throughout the research process, *how is it that they, and I, know this*? My constructivist paradigm highlighted the way in which knowledge claimed comes from social experience, social or cultural norms or assumptions; it highlighted the significance of the relationship between one person's truth and knowledge, and the truth and knowledge of the other members of the group.[50]

My feminist enquiry also alerted me to evidence of double colonialism through which the women's knowledge, experience and views were shaped not only by local patriarchy but also by a paternalistic political hierarchy, revealing a 'matrix of domination'.[51] This matrix creates a reality for women as it gives shapes and meaning to every aspect of their existence. As Hesse-Biber highlights,

> Feminist standpoint epistemology borrows from the Marxist and Hegelian idea that individuals' daily activities or material and lived experiences structure their understanding of the social world.[52]

Intersectionality, where participants have 'layered identities and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege', revealed both the common

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[49] Paul Atkinson, *The Ethnographic Imagination: Textual Constructions of Reality* (London: Routledge, 1990), 144.
[50] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research Theory and Praxis* (London: Sage Publications, 2011), 11.
[51] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 221-238.
[52] Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research Theory and Praxis*, 11.

and individual themes of intertwining.[53] For example, one of the women in the group argued she did not believe sectarianism to be a problem in the local community and felt the whole issue had been completely exaggerated, but she had however also experienced sectarianism through anti-unionist graffiti on her own doorstep.[54] I was curious about where and how her reality had been constructed that she denied this was sectarian, and of course, I questioned how I interpreted this too. It was later, that I began to understand a little more of how layered identities played such a significant role in determining the presentation of our experiences.

Encountering experience and knowledge, it is particularly important to note that, as Sandra Harding explains:

> There will be many different feminist versions of 'reality', for there are many different realities in which women live, but they should all be regarded as producing more complete, less distorting, and less perverse understandings than can a science in alliance with ruling-class masculine activity.[55]

The challenge of course was that there was a variety of knowledge and beliefs to interpret and all were, and remain, valid. John Swinton explains,

> The meaning and definition of reality is therefore flexible, and open to negotiation depending on circumstances, perception, knowledge, power structures and so forth.[56]

Denzin highlights that it is not actually possible for the ethnographer to understand fully their participants because they cannot separate themselves and

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[53] Savin-Baden and Major Howell, *New Approaches to Qualitative Research,* 38.
[54] The participant acknowledged that others believed it was sectarianism, however she argued this was not a sectarian act.
[55] Nicola Slee (citing Sandra Harding), *Faith and Feminism: An Introduction to Christian Feminist Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd,2003), 9.
[56] John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2016), 36.

their own experiences and 'assumptions' from the study.[57] However as Stewart, Gapp and Harwood suggest, negotiation processes are a key factor in achieving valuable insights, and those understandings can be supported by a crystallisation approach.

> Crystallization centers on understanding the research and researcher position to intimately view the process with an openness that allows discoveries to unfold that would otherwise be lost. The call for this uptake of boundary spanning through crystallization moves through and along the qualitative continuum in the quest for deeper and richer understanding to advance social construction.[58]

Crystallisation is not without its critics, and perhaps not just from those still seeking objective truths. There is an argument that there is an inevitable trade-off between breadth and depth,[59] as researchers invariably have to make choices about focus. However, it is interesting to note, as Silverman and Paterson describe:

> Pragmatically, the use of multiple methods also satisfies the expectations of multiple audiences of a study.[60]

Richardson's creative analytic practices signalled an enormous shift from traditional research analysis, and her metaphor of crystallisation describes precisely why her approach is so important, especially for this research:

> I propose that the central imagery for 'validity' for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather the central imagery is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance

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[57] John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2016), 167.

[58] H. Stewart, R. Gapp and I. Harwood, "Exploring the Alchemy of Qualitative Management Research: Seeking Trustworthiness, Credibility and Rigor Through Crystallization," *The Qualitative Report 22, no.* 1 (2017): 1-19.

[59] Laura L. Ellingson, *Engaging Crystallization in Qualitative Research: an Introduction* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 17.

[60] Silverman and Patterson, *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development*, 104.

with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous ... In postmodernist mixed-genre texts, we have moved from plain geometry to light theory, where light can be both waves and particles. Crystallisation, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of 'validity' (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallisation provides us with a deepened complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic.[61]

It could be tempting to *bury* the things we do not fully understand or are too uncomfortable with, but then we lose part of the story.

My Methods

Methods are 'the varieties of tools and techniques used to generate data;[62] the disciplined strategies used to capture data and analyse its significance. As John Swinton describes,

> Methods are specific techniques that are used for data collection and analysis. They comprise a series of clearly defined, disciplined and systematic procedures that the researcher uses to accomplish a particular task. Interviews, sampling procedures, thematic development, coding and recognized techniques and approaches to the construction of the research question would be examples of qualitative research methods.[63]

Presenting the methods selected for this research, this section of the chapter also describes the difficulties which emerged as I employed them, and how these were addressed.

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[61] Laurel Richardson, "Poetics, Dramatics, and Transgressive Validity: The Case of the Skipped Line," *The Sociological Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (November 1993): 706.
[62] Silverman and Patterson Kelly, *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development*, 104.
[63] Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*.

Participant Observation – Notetaking

Observation notetaking, which I adopted, usually takes the form of shorthand points and abbreviations made immediately and expanded upon later. While some commentators might view observation notetaking as simply reflections with little or no real value,[64] here I found Patton's heuristic model of research, described earlier, to be particularly useful.[65] In adopting an immersive approach for my research, I was careful not to evoke in the group discomfort or unease about expressing their views while I was making notes, especially as I was conscious that initially, on joining the group, I had sensed my presence was viewed with suspicion. Prior to commencing the project, I had openly shared my questions and plan with the women, including notetaking. I was aware that my chosen methods should not overtly or adversely interrupt the flow of discussion, raise barriers or create fear, and so I sought to be as sensitive as possible in my use of notetaking. Simply, I was mindful that my research should not become the group's primary focus.

There was frequently a sense of fragility in the group, and I often felt that my presence depended on their acceptance of me. Over time however, I came to understand that any newcomer to the group was viewed with a little suspicion. Indeed, I reflected that I too was suspicious of new people to the group, and would seek to understand their interest and motivations. Sectarianism and discussions surrounding it evoke strong emotions, painful memories, and very often the disclosure of deeply sensitive or confidential matters. This was something as a group that we were very aware and protective of, and for me it had significant ethical implications, which I address later in this chapter.

Journaling

Journaling provided an ideal place for reflections as connections with texts and themes emerged which helped develop new or deeper understandings. I found journaling demanded a highly disciplined approach which involved a commitment to regular writing and reflection. Indeed, as new thoughts and

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[64] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 181.
[65] Ibid.

ideas developed, it was essential that changes were recognised and noted. Journaling provided me with a place to record in a variety of creative ways, emotions, memories or questions.

Very much a 'research journal',[66] 'diverse forms of data',[67] were included such as creative interpretations and expressions, poetry, narrative reflections, clippings of articles, music or art.[68] Often, after a challenging group meeting, I would return home and found calm through particular genres of music, such as a piano piece by Craig Armstrong or the lyrical poetry of Stevie Nicks. These periods provided an opportunity for reflection, and often healing. My journal entries were almost always made soon after meetings and usually included details of my thoughts and observations, describing the events of the evening, often including quotes which I thought particularly important. When journaling I resisted the temptation to edit or organise my journal notes into more cohesive or elaborate pieces of writing. The journal yielded a great deal more information without this form of control as it preserved not only what had been written down but how it had been written, what made greatest impact at the time and in what order notes and impressions were recorded.[69] The practice of journaling worked well for my research as it enabled me to record events shortly after they occurred and relieved some of my anxieties concerning participants being nervous or being '*put off*' by intrusive note taking during highly sensitive discussions.

My journal records also reveal a great deal about the group's general dynamic, including occasional disputes between members and my feelings and reflections at the time. I was particularly sensitive and concerned about the power dynamics that were operative in our meetings. My journal reflects how information and ideas were responded to and what perspectives were aired at, often volatile, proceedings.

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[66] Heather Walton, *Writing Methods in Theological* Reflection (London: SCM Press, 2014), 49.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Helen Cameron et al., *Studying Local Churches: a Handbook* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 32.
[69] Ann Gray, *Research Practice for Cultural Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 88.

What was also valuable in my journal were my theological reflections, as I considered the often complicated relationship between what was happening in the group and my own faith. There were periods of spiritual struggle when I sought God in the midst of a particular difficult time for the group, and myself. This often also required me to reach towards new forms of theological understanding, stretching into the work of Elaine Graham or Anna Rowlands. However, there were also many times when theological reflection was less unsettling, and became a safe place to sit and be still while seeking healing.

Small Focus Group

A small focus group, when used in social research, usually entails staged discussions of particular points or questions usually posed by the researcher as interviewer. Because of their communal nature they are useful in revealing the negotiations involved in the development of personal understanding and group consensus.[70] However, from a research perspective, difficulties can occur due to an element of 'self-policing' which often takes place, where participants limit their responses, given the relatively public nature of the group.

My focus group was intended to enrich my research by providing opportunity for discussion of a range of very specific topics and ideas directly related to my enquiry. It entailed a structured discussion involving six women and it focused on a number of particular points or questions directly relating to sectarianism. The group was small enough to ensure everyone had opportunity to contribute and yet also big and varied enough to ensure a range of views were represented. The group progressed through a sequential discussion of a set of questions - the nature of which had been forwarded to participants in an information email prior to the meeting. On the evening of the focus group, questions were posed by me which revealed much about the negotiations involved in gaining individual understanding and group consensus.[71] It was surprisingly and relatively straightforward, no one appeared nervous or hesitant, and although the format

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[70] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 206.
[71] Ibid.

of the evening was very similar to the usual women's group meetings, everyone had opportunity to be heard.

Very helpful for devising the structure of the evening was Eric Stoddart's description of a focus group which he had created to discuss the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum.[72] This had been a hugely sensitive and potentially volatile subject to discuss at the time. In the run up to the Independence Referendum, the Scottish population were discovering just how strongly they felt about the issue of independence and often struggled with their own and their neighbour's expression of their differing political viewpoints.

Bringing together a small group of people of a variety of ages and genders from Church of Scotland and Scottish Episcopal backgrounds, Stoddart had provided them in advance with an outline of Groome's model, set out below. He asked the group to bring with them any biblical texts which they felt connected them to the subject of Scottish Independence. His format was:

1. Naming what is happening
2. Critical reflection on what is happening
3. Theological reflections
4. Conversation to connect the appropriate story to the participants stories
5. Responses.

The women's community group was seeking clarity and social justice in anti-sectarian engagement, and this I found qualified Groome's model for my own focus group. Groome's model was simple to adapt for use in my research as it too involved an equally highly contentious and emotive subject.

I concurred too with Stoddart's assessment of this five-step model of practical theological reflection:

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[72] Eric Stoddart, *Advancing Practical Theology Critical Discipleship for Disturbing Times* (London: SCM Press, 2014), 31.

Placing the biblical engagement after the personal and social analysis frees the group to a considerable extent from the tramlines of constraining exegesis.[73]

Following Stoddart's example, participants were invited to bring with them, in preparation for the focus group, a biblical passage, or creative piece which they felt connected them to anti-sectarianism. This was the most unusual aspect of the focus group for participants. They were extremely familiar with the location and also with the types of questions being posed, but the group were not in the habit of theologically or creatively reflecting in this way at the end of a meeting.

This new form of engagement formed a particularly important and valuable part of the evening, as can be seen in the next chapter. It felt like a precious or sacred moment when each woman shared, without interruption, her personal sense of what connected her to the group and its vision. Groome's model, albeit amended slightly, provided quiet space and opportunity for each to share something deeply personal which revealed, perhaps more than anything else, their motivations, hopes and fears as they sought transformation.

Individual Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews provide opportunity for the interviewer to engage and connect more deeply with respondents on a one to one level, and while they may often be difficult to arrange, they enable the researcher to enter into the conversation through interviewing reflexively.[74]

Following the focus group, the benefit of meeting with participants individually was specifically to a) reflect on the focus group itself, but also, b) to ask similar questions in a very different setting where there would be an even greater sense of '*being heard*', which provided space and opportunity for each to reflect deeply and offer a little more insight, free of the group's personalities and social restrictions.

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[73] Stoddart, *Advancing Practical Theology Critical Discipleship for Disturbing Times*, 31.
[74] Etherington, *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher*, 77.

While the focus group had taken place in the community hub already used by the women for their regular meetings, and on a date already scheduled in diaries, I was conscious of a need that there be an element of flexibility regarding location and dates for the individual interviews as it was important to remain mindful and respectful of participants 'everyday struggles'[75] with time, family and travel considerations. It was also during these interviews that participants shared deeper and more insightful reflections than at the focus group, and these are shared in the following data analysis chapter.

Ellis and Berger explain that it is,

> More than tactics to encourage the respondent to open up; rather, the researcher often feels a reciprocal desire to disclose, given the intimacy of the details being shared by the interviewee.[76]

The nature of the power dynamic of the interview is an element of the process which also underlines the importance of reflexivity. I, as interviewer, am in a position of power and the interviewee becomes dependent on the interviewer to present them and their views with care and sensitivity. There is a great deal of vulnerability on the part of the interviewee and this demands recognition and respect from a reflexive interviewer.

Empathetic listening such as this, while challenging, can enhance the process and comfortably situate feminist and theological ethics within the 'everyday struggles'[77] of the interviewee. Indeed, this is the appealing fluidity of feminist research methodology, as Hesse-Biber and Leckenby explain, 'much of feminist research design is marked by an openness to the shifting contexts and fluid intentions of the research questions'.[78]

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[75] Scharen and Vigen, *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*, 99.
[76] Kim Etherington, (citing C. Ellis and L. Berger, 2003), *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher Using Ourselves in Research* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004), 77.
[77] Scharen and Vigen, *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*, 99.
[78] Hesse-Biber, *Handbook of Feminist Research Theory and Praxis*, 16.

The individual interviews followed some weeks after the focus group, and were loosely structured, 60-minute engagements in a range of settings and dates to suit participants. It was an informal approach which provided an invaluable opportunity for me to connect in a more personal way with respondents individually. Most of the meetings took place in the evenings, and topics and questions followed a similar structure to the focus group, thereby serving as a reminder of what had been discussed previously and providing opportunity to elaborate or to change a response.

The challenges encountered during these meetings were varied. For some it was a simple case of me negotiating Google Maps to find the location, for another it involved a participant's childcare during the discussion, and for this particular meeting a flexible timeframe, and sense of humour were essential. Several participants embraced the opportunity to expand their responses, and in the privacy of those meetings they frequently felt secure in offering more controversial points of view than at the focus group as highlighted in the next chapter.

Ethics

This section presents consideration of the general and specific ethical issues raised by this research project. Further information can also be found in the following appendices:

- Appendix 1 Ethics Approval granted by the University's Ethics Committee
- Appendix 2 Consent form
- Appendix 3 Ethical checklist[79]

Throughout the research process I was continually mindful of the fact that, 'good research ethics – researching well, for the well-being of all – demands

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[79] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Second Edition (California: Sage, 2010), 83.

space, time and a willingness to listen to and engage with hard questions from a variety of different quarters.'[80]

From the initial stages of deciding how to frame my research question through to selecting methods and design, I adhered to the University of Glasgow's Review Board and the Arts and Humanities Research Council standard regarding an ethical framework for evaluating the general principles of research ethics,[81]

1. Intellectual property rights of all those involved in the research, including both research staff and research subjects.
2. Confidentiality of information provided by research subjects, and anonymity of respondents.
3. Transparency to both staff and subjects as to the purpose, methods, and possible uses of the research, and any risks involved.
4. Legal restrictions upon access to or the use of research resources and data.
5. Arrangements for the publication of research results, including issues of co-authorship, independence and impartiality of judgement, authentication of findings and acknowledgement.

In addition, my utilisation of Michael Patton's qualitative research checklist was particularly useful in guiding my decisions regarding the ethical and appropriate use of methods for my research, and this involved the following considerations: explaining purpose, promises and reciprocity, risk assessment, confidentiality, informed consent, data access and ownership, interviewer mental health, and data collection boundaries. (Appendix 3).[82]

I also found Tim Sensing's four general principles of care,[83] regarding safeguarding, invaluable as I designed my methods and analysis.

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[80] Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 176.
[81] "Ethics Procedures," University of Glasgow, accessed January 12, 2016, http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/ethics/ethicsapplicationprocedures/.
[82] Hesse-Biber and Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, 83.
[83] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 33.

1. Respect for persons: protection of people from any threat to their vulnerability.
2. Beneficence: minimise risks and maximise benefits for participants.
3. Justice: commitment to the researched that they will benefit from knowledge gained.
4. Respect for communities: obligation to respect the community and its values.

These principles of care provided me with a practical checklist which I utilised continually throughout the research process to critically review my safeguarding of the participants and of my enquiry.

Specific Ethical Concerns

I was extremely conscious that discussions involving sectarianism evoke strong reactions from many quarters; it is an emotive and contentious subject, often related to violence, especially in the area of Lanarkshire where my research was carried out. On first meeting, I would not have immediately regarded the participants as a particularly vulnerable group; outwardly they appeared so confidently vocal and strong. However, it remains the case that by placing themselves at the centre of a women's group addressing sectarianism in a community which has experienced sectarian conflict, and participating in my research, made them vulnerable.

However, I found that committing myself to a continual ethical review, including Sensing's model, proved an essential safeguarding element for these very particular ethical considerations. The participants' informed consent had placed them in sensitive and dangerous positions with those in the community not seeking such change, and I was alert to any threat to their safety.

Prior to commencement of the study, members of the women's group, who were very aware of potential hostilities from other members of the community, had already verbally agreed on their duty of care to one another, and that the identities behind any stories, anecdotal or otherwise, would be kept within the group. To ensure this was also the case for my research, and directly addressing

concerns regarding participant safety, all research data, including recordings, have been safeguarded in a locked cabinet, and all participants anonymised. This was a commitment made during preliminary discussions and prior to requesting participants' consent as it was immediately clear that confidentiality, and personal and group safety were of paramount concern.

Important too, were Kim Etherington's insights which offer a valuable note of caution that when undertaking feminist research, it can be tempting to portray participants as victims or heroes according to our own hypothesis, prejudices and experiences. It is, she states, highly important that the researcher is mindful that everyone is both hero and downtrodden and a disciplined strive for balance throughout the study needs to be consciously maintained.[84] This feminist understanding of care ethics is echoed too by Hammerlsy and Traianou, who in discussing ethical care principles, highlight the problematic stereotype of woman as nurturer, and support too Etherington's argument for continual reflexivity and balance:

> Some suggest that feminine values of care are themselves symptoms of subordination and dependency … There have also been criticisms of the ethics of care as a form of essentialism: by grounding ethics in the relationship between mother and child 'caring comes to be perceived as an innate characteristic of women and therefore a natural determinant of women's social possibilities and roles'. It reinforces common stereotypes of the 'good woman' who would 'sacrifice' herself for the benefit of those in her care.[85]

Consciously holding such tensions in mind, I worked against removing agency from participants, but also at the same time being mindful of my responsibility to create a safe research space.

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[84] Kim Etherington, *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher Using Ourselves in Research* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004).
[85] Martyn Hammersley and Anna Traianou, "An Alternative Ethics? Justice and Care as Guiding Principles for Qualitative Research," *Sociological Research Online* 19, no. 24 (Aug 2014).

Ethical concerns of trust and safety, specifically regarding the representation of the analysed data was also of enormous concern as I reflected on the reality that my perspective might differ from participants own view of themselves. Indeed,

> A researcher may genuinely hold one perspective which has its own integrity and validity, but this may be very different from that of others whose experience and data is used in the research.[86]

To help alleviate this concern, my feminist ethical framework served to ensure that ongoing discussions took place with participants throughout the process and mutual understandings evolved and developed over time. To ensure accountability and rigour in my research processes, I included a feedback loop which entailed a post focus group email detailing the main emerging outcomes with opportunity for feedback and comments, in writing and in person, during interviews and at meetings.

In practice this involved initially explaining to participants at a group meeting prior to commencing the research and asking for consent, that their feedback would be both sought and welcomed. It was essential to take this time explaining that participants comments would be accurately and sensitively included only with their full consent. This included any group or individual discussions taking place beyond the focus group and interviews which would also help form reflections. It was underlined that they were active participants giving shape to the research and not simply subjects to be studied.

In view of the ethical considerations, it was important that modes of access to me were clearly made available so that any additions and concerns could be safely shared, and this included ensuring everyone had my phone number and email address. From the initial stage of setting how significant the feedback loop would be for the research, it was again included in the consent form which all participants signed and returned to me. Prior to beginning the focus group, it was restated that I should be contacted either by email or telephone if anyone

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[86] Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 176.

had anything additional that they would like to follow up and discuss. Immediately following the focus group and several weeks before meeting again, I sent an email to participants in order to share the main outcomes from the focus group to allow opportunity for their full consideration and feedback, before we met individually for the semi-formal interviews. None wished to add to these, and arrangements were made to meet individually. When meeting for the individual interviews, each participant was asked to elaborate and comment on the focus group outcomes, and while none requested removal of their comments, most elaborated and added to their previous comments which were then included for later coding and analysis. Following the individual meetings, I again shared my initial findings with participants verbally, and invited further feedback. While none was given, I followed this up with an additional invitation to speak again if any wished as it was vital that all participants were completely secure and comfortable for their contributions to be included.

This process is an essential element of feminist research, because as researcher I am not *the expert* going to sort people out and tell them how to improve their lives. I was simply seeking to establish 'who can know what about whom, by what means and to what purpose'.[87] The feedback loop allowed a relationship of trust to grow between the participants and me - essential in ethnography – as I asked for the participants' thoughts and responses, even if it involved subsequent additions or amendments. This was an invaluable tool involving negotiation and openness, so important because:

> We are the ones to publish others' accounts and gain materially from them, robust and multidimensional accountability is absolutely essential.[88]

Most specifically, the issue of informed consent, including the feedback loop, was pivotal in building foundations of trust and openness while ensuring ongoing equitable relationships. As described below:

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[87] Ann Gray, *Research Practice for Cultural Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 34.
[88] Scharen and Vigen, *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*, 21.

A major principle underlying many of the ethical policies which have historically grown up around the issue of how to treat research subjects has been the use of 'informed consent,' the right of subjects to decide anonymously whether they will be involved in a research endeavor.[89]

My informed consent letter to participants had provided them with detailed information about the research project and informed them of how I was committed to mitigating any risks to their wellbeing. I ensured that participants were made aware that their agreement to participate was completely voluntary and that they were free to opt out at any point in the process. I was also clear on how the data would be used and for what purpose, assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity, and that any identifying data would remain private throughout project and afterwards too, remaining in a secured cabinet.

As discussed, participants had been made aware of the research question and my role as researcher even before they met me, as this had been one of the main reasons I had been invited to join the group, and therefore their informed consent was something which was discussed from those very early initial stages. However, it is important to note, and as argued by Hesse-Biber and Leavy,[90] it can be difficult for the qualitative researcher to provide total disclosure and subsequently gain full consent, because much of what is being undertaken is often discovery and generating new insight.[91] This is why continual discussions with participants and the feedback loop were so integral to the process.

While participants had access to me through my research email address and at the monthly group meetings, the individual semi-structured interviews which followed the focus group had provided each participant with an extended opportunity to add to or remove some of their previous contributions to the discussion. It transpired that none wished to remove themselves or their

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[89] Hesse-Biber and Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, 98.
[90] Ibid, 67.
[91] Ibid.

contributions from the research, but as highlighted, most did expand on their responses and this further information is included in the study.

Validity

Validity is often, as Ann Gray describes, 'taken to refer to the accuracy of the picture presented of the subject and the context of the study'.[92] Plummer highlights, however, that it is quite impossible for the researcher to completely remove any bias, and it is wiser to acknowledge that the researcher is also part of this world and in the claims that are made.[93]

Indeed, and particularly for my research, I found that validity depended very much on the quality of my reflexivity, and the provision of sufficient information on location and context, including culture, economic, sexual, religious and historical. Validity and a commitment to integrity through reflexivity, information and transparency, is underlined too by Bennett, Graham, Pattison and Walton, who comment:

> acknowledging that research does involve some uncertainty, even risk, and that contingencies need to be anticipated and managed, is not an admission of failure but a commitment to act responsibly.[94]

I had been concerned about the possibility of validity working on a premise of normativity and assumption, and the danger that validity could depend too strongly on a framework constructed within a particular dominant culture. I found however, that reflexivity provided my research with the essential mechanisms to acknowledge or avoid, where possible, the misinterpretation of meaning.

Sociologist Laurel Richardson is particularly helpful in her challenge of traditional understandings of validity, and describes the researcher as,

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[92] Ann Gray, *Research Practice for Cultural Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 71.
[93] Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life 2: An Invitation to a Critical Humanism* (London: Sage Publications, 2001).
[94] Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 166.

'embodied, reflexive, self-consciously partial'.[95] She argues that through an acknowledgement and value of bias, 'space is left for others to speak, for tension and differences to be acknowledged, celebrated, rather than buried alive'.[96] I found this to be true of my own research where the complexities and tensions in the group revealed much more about what was really going on.

This chapter has described how, through constructing my own methodological approach, I was able to be deeply attentive to a marginalised anti-sectarian group from whom I sought to learn and be responsive to the insights they might offer my own pedagogical anti-sectarian practice. The chapter also details how I was deeply immersed in a women's group for two years in order to explore whether there might be practical alternative anti-sectarian models which offer potential for positive change outside the sphere of the more traditional state-led governance, particularly in schools. Having provided a comprehensive account of my methodology and methods, and the challenges encountered in the process, the following chapter will focus on the results which the research data generated, and the subsequent themes and analysis to emerge.

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[95] Laurel Richardson, "Poetics, Dramatics, and Transgressive Validity: The Case of the Skipped Line," *The Sociological Quarterly 34*, no. 4 (November 1993): 706.
[96] Ibid.

Chapter 5

Results:

Data and Analysis

Introduction

In response to the research question 'what can we learn from community based anti-sectarian approaches that challenges current educational programmes, and how can faith related values support this?', the following results demonstrate the depth and richness of engagement which is possible when communities or marginalised groups are facilitated and supported in leading their own interventions.

This chapter presents the major themes and core values which emerged from the data generated by my research, alongside the specific contributions that participants made in discussion of each issue. It also includes my own reflective analysis of each topic.

Part I discusses the five themes identified from the data, of which the first three are closely linked, as can be seen in the occasional overlaps of meaning which lie within them. Part II of the chapter discusses two very specific ethical responsibilities identified, demonstrating that values drawn from theological understandings might be of immense value for those involved in facilitating pedagogical anti-sectarian initiatives. Indeed, it is my opinion that such additional ethical awareness may prove integral for the creation of the challenging, caring and supportive pedagogical approaches I am seeking to develop.

It is important to emphasise at this point that while the women's group, so integral to this research, eventually disbanded due to a variety of challenging circumstances, this does not reduce the value or significance of the insights the women generated during their time together. Indeed, I am suggesting that participants themselves articulated a framework which could be offered as a

flexible model for others to learn from both in community and educational settings.

The chapter refers to Appendices 4-6:

- Appendix 4 Summation of Research Methods
- Appendix 5 Focus Group: Extracts from Transcript
- Appendix 6 Table showing themes and motifs identified and related data

Following the granting of ethical approval from the University of Glasgow, I embarked upon my ethnographic research. As stated, participants were members of an anti-sectarian women's community group made up of practising and non-practising Catholic and Protestant women. For the purpose of this research, and to ensure their safety, the identities of all those taking part have been anonymised and are referred to using single letter: see Appendix 6. Where comments are followed by more than one initial, this indicates where other respondents echoed the sentiment.

Part I
A Thematic Analysis

In generating a thematic analysis of my research data, I followed Richard E. Boyatzis' sequential process:

i. Sensing themes: that is, recognizing the codable moment;[1]

ii. Doing it reliably: that is recognizing the codable moment and encoding it consistently;

iii. Developing codes from the initial sensing of a theme;

iv. Interpreting the information and themes in the context of a theory or conceptual framework: that is, contributing to the development of knowledge.[2]

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[1] Richard E. Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development* (California: Sage Publications, 1998), 11.
[2] Ibid.

From the process of data analysis, looking for similarities and overlaps in participants' responses, and following Boyatzis' process above, five major themes gradually emerged from the women's group conversations. These are:

1. Searching for the Meaning of Sectarianism: The exploration of a definition and the pursuit of a consensus concerning that definition, was both an initial and abiding concern for all participants. This theme refers to and includes examples of the women's personal and corporate search for an understanding of what sectarianism means for them and for others.

2. Listening to Others: This emerged as an empowering part of the process whereby women affirmed the significance of being able to express opinions and share in dialogue. This listening process took the group beyond the perfunctory search for agreed definitions. The theme reveals participants genuine and deep desire for communication with those of opposite beliefs and values, and also acknowledgement of the difficulties that this presented.

3. Soft Approaches: As a community seeking to drive their own initiatives, reflection on current anti-sectarian interventions was an inevitable part of the enquiry and discussion process. While generally supportive of externally driven anti-sectarian approaches, this theme reveals the often uneasy relationship participants experience with institutional initiatives.

4. Naming Values: As relationships and trust within the group grew, and discussions and reflections deepened, there was an increased effort to try to make sense of individual and collective purposes. A more fragile and vulnerable element, this theme highlights participants struggles to understand and value theirs and others' beliefs, and it reveals the many challenges encountered as they sought transformation.

5. Identifying Marginalised Voices: As they recognised their own insights and what they could offer the anti-sectarian discourse, this theme highlights participants' awareness of their unique position, as a marginalised group with all the possibilities and challenges that they hold in the community. This theme

reveals the very particular and personal difficulties each experienced as they approached a traditionally male-owned issue.

Findings and Analysis

This section examines participants' responses in greater detail and considers what may be understood from their contributions and subsequent themes. It should be noted that the data specifically selected for inclusion in this section is due to its frequency of occurrence and relevance to the particular theme. Refer to the Thematic Table in Appendix 6 for the full and comprehensive list of all generated data and themes.

Theme 1: Search for Meaning

Prior to and during this research, a great deal of time was spent by the women's group in communal and personal reflection as they sought to define what sectarianism really meant for them. Participants highlighted throughout the group's monthly meetings, the focus group and interviews, that while there are many definitions available to draw upon, there appears to be none which spoke to every experience or upon which all could agree.

'It's messy and it can't be tidied away into a box' (A)
This recurring pattern of searching for meaning often appeared to frustrate the women. The data shows that preferred definitions are often closely connected to where an individual's experience is located. However, in response to recognition of this apparent frustration, one of the women suggested, 'perhaps agreeing on a single definition is less important than the personal journey to explore meaning' (C). The process of enquiry into seeking agreed definitions generated a perpetual cycle of searching for core meanings; it was a major and significant theme to emerge from the research.

> H: I think we all should be working towards some common goal regardless of religion. But after two years we still have not identified what sectarianism is. What are we fighting, because at the moment we can't take it forward until we define it. That's not to say that the two years is wasted, it's not, because we can still work forward to finding out what

that definition is. For me it's so difficult. This ruins my head. When I go home at night, B says to me, 'I don't get why you go there. What is it that makes you go?' It gets me thinking. It's peeling it apart and see what's going to open up. But in the west of Scotland, there are so many variations, it is such an individual experience that is very difficult to grasp and to know what exactly what it is I'm tackling.

The role that the continuous quest for understanding played within the group is particularly interesting. The frequent and seemingly endless lengthy reflections on meaning, it transpired, provided opportunities for the group to consider the wider causes and discourses around the topic of sectarianism, and did not shut down conversations as perhaps one quickly agreed definition might have threatened to. The search for meaning served as a valuable tool which invited deeper thought and consideration of one another's opinion – which in itself, is highly anti-sectarian work. There may indeed be working definitions agreed by many different groups, however it is important to recognise that not all will subscribe to them.

The data also shows that for some of the participants, there was a suspicion that sectarianism, identified as an issue requiring attention, is a convenient political or social construct, as it was asked, 'Who does it serve to divide and destroy communities?' (C). This was a view espoused widely in the group. Several voiced the opinion that sectarianism often operates as a constructed form of political 'separation' imposed upon them (A,C,J2).

A particular observation was made in reference to the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum in which the Orange Order supported the 'No' campaign and, it was widely perceived by several of the women, *most* Catholics supported 'Yes'. According to participants, the Scottish Independence Referendum campaign was an extremely difficult and challenging time for them, as explorations around the table were frequently heated between the Protestant and Catholic women, as one participant later observed,

> M: people really struggle with the fear of losing their identity.

Several women felt that through a lack of deep understanding of how sectarianism is manifest within communities, legislation may have merely served to drive the problem even deeper underground. It had become in recent years, several women argued, much more 'covert' (J2), following an increase in anti-sectarian initiatives.

Of sectarian behaviour, participants frequently questioned, 'Where do they come from?' (H) and, 'What's feeding it in them?' (H). Furthermore, it was observed during the focus group that, 'people have become very adept at hiding it' (J,J2,A); 'the smarter people know when and where they can sing rebel songs' (J2,H).

Sectarianism was also identified by the group, however, as something often linked to more directly personal experiences of alcohol related behaviours. One participant refers to, 'the pub – especially on old firm days – rebel songs sung by people who would never usually sing them' (J2). Recalling, 'that nurses from the hospital and those from mixed marriages' would sing, 'up the 'RA' on some occasions (J2).

It was suggested by one Catholic participant that a former leader of the Catholic Church in Glasgow, often during Sunday morning Mass, 'stoked the fire to restate identity' (A), when poking fun at Rangers. An observation of this type of behaviour was again highlighted when one of the women recalls a Mass attended by the group on a visit to Belfast, when the priest appeared to suggest that, Muslims have stolen fasting from Catholics. Indeed, this was followed by C's suggestion that, 'Islamophobia is uniting Catholics and Protestants' (C). This comment perhaps signals a sectarian intersection which takes the search for a definition much deeper into the realm of identity.

For the participants some degree of clarity did emerge from their discussions on how society responds to difference. Several members of the group highlighted that in the West of Scotland, certainly in their experience, sectarianism is often and quite simply understood to be a, 'hatred of Catholic or Protestants' (J,J2,C).

Reflection

The difficulty participants faced in searching for one agreed definition of sectarianism was surprisingly, highly productive. While they had fallen into a habit of berating themselves for failing to produce a single definition of sectarianism on which all agreed, and it quickly became apparent that this was unlikely to ever happen, it did not deter participants from searching. On first impressions it seemed a very straightforward question to pose, and yet at the group meetings it quickly emerged as a highly complex and frustratingly subjective topic. The continual pattern of searching for meaning at meetings, while frequently frustrating for the women, led to a process of enquiry and discussion which invited a wide range of expressions and experiences to be shared. It was a question which could be responded to in any manner of ways, such as quoting the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland definition, to the sharing of deeply personal experiences. It was clear that as a conversation starter, the search for meaning allowed everyone present to enter in. As one woman observed following another conversation about the lack of agreement on a single definition, 'perhaps agreeing on a single definition is less important than the personal journey to explore meaning' (C). This was an important comment which was made by C towards the end of the group's existence, that the conversation itself had been of far more importance to them than a single statement on the meaning of sectarianism.

Theme 2: Listening to Others

The data shows that all of the participants agreed that dialogue with those of opposing views was essential for any community seeking healing or transformation. The group considered at some length an alternative approach to a legislative or authoritative shutting down of sectarian language, and they instead wished to engage directly with protagonists themselves; those individuals initiating sectarian behaviours. The women recognised the need for anti-sectarian policy but found some approaches to be counterproductive and heavy handed. Referring to their own transformation as individuals, albeit perhaps not as 'Damascan' as they'd initially hoped for or expected, participants

also reflected on their 'own bias' (H,J,C,J2) which they had only identified through their dialogue within the group.

An example provided of deep and personal change was when two of the women who are Catholic, without prompting from me or any other group member, recalled how their own, 'view on Catholic schools changed' since joining the group three years earlier. As they weighed up the benefits of Catholic schooling against what they now perceived as the greater benefit of integration and equality, they observed,

> J: I think there's a bigger question, do the Government help perpetuate this by having two schools? When we were all kids, we played with whoever was in the street, but that was only until you were five years of age and went to school and then you realised there was a difference.

> C: My children have got that just now in our street. When we moved into the street we're in, she went to a non-denominational nursery, and the children she'd played with from the nursery stopped coming to my door when she started school at St Brendan's.

> J2: I'm not sure if it's just because of the school but this is helping breed it in us and them. When I first started this group I think I would have been appalled at hearing somebody say get rid of separate schools. I think as a Catholic primary school teacher I would have been appalled. But the more we've discussed things and the more I thought about it the more I can see the sense in there not being Catholic primary schools. I think RME can still be delivered and there still can be children going out of certain classes. I think it could still work because that small part of the week when some kids go there and some over there, that's what happens in the class anyway. And then there isn't an 'us and them'. I always thought I was quite open minded but I was quite fixed in my ideas about Catholic schools. But now I do think they should have multi denominational schools rather that non-denominational.

The participants' change of opinion regarding their children's education was followed by their wish that all parents might be consulted by Government on whether separate schools should continue in their present form.

The group were critical however of shared campuses and observed,

> J: Do you think joint campuses have been a social experiment? (ALL: YES) Because in a lot of cases I don't think they're working.

> J2: Depending on how much the head teachers are willing to engage they are not joint campuses. There's no pressure on them to have joint activities in fact all they have to do is negotiate the space.

> C: I think it makes the situation even worse. Because they go in the same building but then they ones go in that door and they ones go in there. There's a division. A very visible division. But I 100% agree. Before this group I believed in Catholic schools, but not anymore.

Among comments made throughout the study in support of the importance of dialogue, one of the Protestant women observed that, 'in the beginning it felt that the women's group was an experiment, a game, a social experiment' (J). This comment highlighted precisely how sensitive and difficult it can be in overcoming fears and suspicions when attempting to embark on such an initiative.

Participants also said however that they felt as though they were, 'chosen people – selected to be part of this' (J,J2,C) offering an alternative perception and revealing the more general initial feelings of optimism within the group which first occurred when they were invited to become part of it. Yet this highlights too, that they were perceived as objects of intervention.

'Sadness when the women from the Orange Order left.' (J,J2,C,M,H,A)
This reflective comment, or similar sentiments, were expressed by all participants at varying points during the research period. It refers historically, to

a moment when some original group members, who were also part of the Orange Order, decided to leave the women's group following a group visit to Belfast. The purpose of the visit had been to learn from the experiences from other women and community groups who had lived in communities of Belfast's sectarian divide. However, the visit highlighted precisely just how difficult this kind of dialogue can be when there is either a reluctance, fear or inability to engage with those of a different view.

> C: I also didn't think sectarianism really existed any more, until we went to Ireland. And saw grown women behave in the worst ways. I was horrified.[3]

> H: For me that's exactly who you need sitting around the table. You need compassion and understanding, but they should be there. It wasn't comparable. The difference between both are night and day. It was derogatory the attacks made on the Catholic Church but it's not our job to defend something that size. There was a feeling 'we don't like the Catholic Church'. Well it's not my job to defend the Catholic Church. I think they came from a place of misplaced faith and we were asking them to come too far, much further than us.

One participant observed, 'People are scared to unpick this because their whole identity will unravel' (A).

It is particularly important at this point to consider that context may have played an important part in this episode, for the event referred to above took place when the women members of the Orange Order were literally placed, to reflect on sectarianism, in the geographical area of Ireland where they located many of their worldviews.

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[3] C is referring to the women who later left the women's group and who were also members of the Orange Order.

Another participant reflected, 'maybe we asked them to come too far' (H) in their wish to meet them halfway. She questioned if it was less of a journey for the Catholic women and the other Protestant women not affiliated to the Orange Order. For the participants however, reflections on this event further highlighted their own wish for interdenominational community-based dialogue and their belief that no progress could be made without it.

To highlight the importance of engaging wider community members, and more specifically 'the family' (J2), one of the women, a primary school teacher, described an incident involving sectarian language in the classroom and commented, 'he didnae lick it aff the flare.' (J2).

J2 argued strongly for a need to connect directly with parents and caregivers; most specifically with those who hold the power within the home as she believed this is from where most attitudes and beliefs stemmed. The conversation developed further as C then shared her own experience.

> C: I was doing a home visit, it was a 2 year old boy who was there, and there were problems with his speech, and I was there to support mum and invite her along to parenting group. The little boy was saying, 'A caur in a gerage', car in a garage, and because of his problems I was struggling to understand him, and his mum explained it was a car in a garage. I was saying you're a good boy and he said, 'Look look', and behind the chair he took out a pole that had red white and blue tape round about it with a ball on the top, it was obviously hand made, and as clear as a bell, he threw it up and said, 'Fuck the Pope'. He was only little, and that was very clear but anything else he said I couldn't make out, but he could swear and … I said oh right, and who taught you that and his mum said, 'Oh sorry that's just us.' So it's happening somewhere. But where is it happening?

Discussing the effectiveness of anti-sectarian community initiatives such as schools and youth work, while most participants were supportive of these projects, the overriding agreement among the group was, 'let it be real' (A).

This indicated a level of suspicion about the motivation for, and effectiveness of, the initiative in question. Indeed, the discussion underlined the group's belief that long lasting change is only possible if the engagement is connected, committed and humble, and families invited and involved.

Reflection

The 'Listening to Others' theme resonates with echoes of Freire's and Horton's suggestion that, 'Without understanding the soul of the culture, we just invade the culture'.[4]

Throughout the research, participants desire to engage and talk with people in the local community who held opposing or sectarian views was hugely important, indeed groundbreaking, in that it was an alternative vision of anti-sectarianism which did not sit neatly within the Government's anti-sectarian framework. Indeed participants frequently threatened to cease coming to the women's group if there were no plans for them to directly engage with the local area. The data shows however that the difficulty was in the planning and facilitating of this type of engagement, especially once the funded facilitator withdrew following the trip to Belfast. The type of community engagement they desired required their commitment and accountability, and would not remove agency from them. The group often espoused the sentiments articulated in Freire and Horton's observations, yet they clearly struggled without the supportive structure required to enable such community dialogue to happen. The women's frustrations regarding this seemingly impossible situation were palpable, and discussions were frequently heated. This is a reminder of Foucault's analysis[5] which shows that where power is exercised, struggle and resistance are found, and where struggle and resistance are found, then there too will be evidence of historic obedience.

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[4] Freire and Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking,*131.
[5] Michel Foucault's inaugural lecture titled *The Order of Discourse* at Collège de France, 2nd December 1970 offered a detailed description of how historic discourse controls knowledge, enquiry and protest. Foucault argues that dominant discourses serve authority, and exist to prohibit growth and resistance.

Therefore, from this we can see that from historic obedience, struggle emerges.[6] The group recognised a need for the externally driven support and management, and yet they struggled with the consequences and limitations of such a support. There was a desire to reach outwards beyond the group and connect with the community, building new relationships and experiencing transformation, but the structures and planning involved in such initiatives required much more than they were able to contribute.

Theme 3: Soft Approaches

While there was agreement within the group that there needs to be some level of Scottish Government interest in, and support for anti-sectarian work, which has the ultimate aim of reducing sectarian incidents and attitudes, participants expressed concerns about interventions designed and managed by external top-down authorities. Views were expressed that Government funded interventions can sometimes *appear* to address sectarian issues while serving to maintain divides and narrow the choices for those seeking solutions. It was suggested that some, 'initiatives seem to be very prescriptive, outcome driven' (C), and, 'outcome driven initiatives are not as effective as home and community' (J2,C). These comments support previous conversations where participants argued that for anti-sectarian initiatives to be successful, they depended on relationship building and new locally driven ways of approaching the issue. The women were supportive and really enjoyed a local school's anti-sectarian drama production, which was financed as part of the Scottish Government's £9 million of funding to support work to address sectarianism and deliver anti-sectarian education in schools, workplaces and communities. However, there was also agreement around the table that following these events, life always reverts 'back to normal' (C) soon after. The suggestion was also made that due to the increase in public awareness regarding the unacceptable nature of sectarianism, the main protagonists have consequently become much more covert and selective about where they exercise their behaviours:

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[6] Michel Foucault's inaugural lecture titled *The Order of Discourse* at Collège de France, 2nd December 1970.

> Sectarianism has been driven underground (J2,C,H)
>
> The smarter people know when and where they can sing rebel songs (J2,H)

There was universal agreement in the group that, 'anti-sectarianism … must reflect the community' (C,H,J2) in which it is practised if it is to be successful, and it was argued that current approaches were inadequate in connecting with or engaging those particular groups and individuals responsible for sectarian views and behaviours.

> H: I think it's really difficult. We engage every day with anti-sectarianism. J2 engages with mixed climbing, watching football, the Cross Keys, and that's someone who is an intelligent woman surrounded by lots of people who are varying degrees of wonderful and it happens because it's the norm, and at the moment because we don't name it there is no real challenge because I don't really think anybody understands what it is that we're up against.

Participants, during discussions regarding intervention strategies, observed that altering legislation and increasing societal intolerance of sectarian language had served to drive it even deeper into the homes, pubs and clubs of those sharing similar outlooks, making it more difficult, not easier, to engage with. Reflecting on anti-sectarian interventionist approaches thus far, participants commented,

> Difficult to really allow contemplation and encourage thinking. (C)
>
> Wishae Wimmin is more about shared understanding – organic. (C,J2)

It was particularly interesting that group members always quickly countered these reflections, seemingly all too aware of the criticism their own approach might receive, that empathy does not equate to agreement. The data shows that they were simply convinced of the need to talk, or even just share space with those holding sectarian beliefs. This however throws light on a nervousness or difficulty in voicing a desire to interrogate, review or change the established anti-sectarian approach.

'Tells racist joke to show how reflection can change language'

This was a journal entry in response to a joke one of the participants, C, shared in order to demonstrate how people can reflect and move forward or change even the most offensive of deeply held views and attitudes. C explained that, on first hearing the joke, she had laughed, and then much later reflected, and was horrified that she had done so. Although the words were offensive, C's sincerity in sharing something so obviously difficult for her, was impactful. It was obvious there was a personal cost to her in telling this story.

Another participant, explaining that any reflective process such as this must be for all, insisted, 'it should be everyone – mutual' (H). Referring to her own sharing of a passage from Roald Dahl's Matilda, during the focus group, she observed, 'We've all been ugly' (H).

'Icons are contemplative and connect to deeper values.' (A) Participants were 'evangelical' in their view that their anti-sectarian approach would be more effective when it was outwardly visible, and they continuously explored ways in which it could become so, commenting, 'we need to become structured but not prescriptive' (C).

The data shows that several members of the group were extremely doubtful about the success of current interventions, suggesting that perhaps 'less is more' (J2). One participant commented, 'I love all the schools drama work but they only impact for a short time' (J2). She questioned the efficiency of the traditional approaches and asked, 'who is being challenged?' (J2), suggesting a danger of creating or being seen to create a colonial attitude of othering, and failing to engage those who perhaps might benefit most.

The group were consistently vocal about the dangers of categorising or othering anyone, despite the frequency with which they themselves did so. However, participants were consistent in their wish to connect with the local community in a much more equal and sensitive way than the area was perhaps familiar with. They were consistent in their agreement that, 'community dialogue is the way forward'. (C,J2)

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One participant explained, 'We use the tree as our symbol because there are no limitations on perceptions and reflections' and, 'the effects can transform a person' (A).

I termed the approach the women favoured 'soft' because participants actively sought to be involved, to be visible, to challenge and yet also to meet others halfway without aggressive confrontation in order to inspire contemplation and change. Indeed, one of the women visualised such a nurturing and respectful process and described it as, 'being exposed to signs that make us wonder' (A).

Reflection

Bourdieu highlighted that while the state is presented as 'inevitable and legitimate',[7] there is a point where people resist initiatives they do not own, and this is precisely why those involved in anti-sectarianism bear a social and moral responsibility to, 'analyse the 'stories' told by governments and their agents'.[8]

The theme of Soft Approaches underlines Bourdieu's observation that there is a point where people will resist interventions because they do not own them, and yet this theme is also framed with possibility, that transformation may be possible through alternative ways of engaging. The women were cautious about intervention initiatives which, they argued, never seemed to make any real positive difference. They sensed they had a particular mandate and believed that as women in the local community they were no less qualified than anyone else to embark on anti-sectarian action. This in itself is still intervention, but perhaps it is less othering or 'colonial' than that which currently dominates the conversation.

The women's group, in their pursuit of transformation, undoubtedly experienced challenges, many of them painful. However, those challenges hinted at positive outcomes for those who remained committed to the group's objective of seeing

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[7] Jen Web, Tony Schirato and Geoff Danahr, *Understanding Bourdieu* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 103.
[8] Ibid.

their own local community changed. When they shared racist jokes and the stories of their own bias, or when they were nonplussed when the women from the Orange Order left the group and the painful mournful reflections following that event, even then, despite all of the difficult conversations, there remained a sense that they had hit on something more engaged and honest than that which had gone before.

Theme 4: Naming Values

Several participants highlighted that it was essential for them that the women's group existed within a framework of faith and love. 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you', (J2,C,J,H), was quoted several times in the individual interviews. Participants demonstrated an empathetic approach which perhaps more than any other, highlights the significant difference in the group's attitude to anti-sectarianism, compared with other approaches regarded as being rather more instructive or even punitive.

> J: And for me the bottom line of my faith and always will be is love. I know God loves me to bits. God loves me with an everlasting love and I think so often people just don't know that. They have the vision of a punitive God, which maybe comes from their parents, their grandparents, their school, and the power of love is just so incredible. And we're called to love God and to love others as we love ourselves.

'Jesus is my role model', (J). J believes, 'there is a thawing afoot', and observes, 'God at work' in the community. She recounted that through her direct dialogue with the local Orange Order, involving a local community initiative, she had seen progress made as the band taking part in the Orange Parade offered to play a hymn when marching past the chapel. However, in response to J's story, another participant argued that, 'they'll just take their shite elsewhere' (H).

Despite many differing views, the women resolutely held on to the hope that things can improve through increasing empathetic engagements, framed by genuine care, regardless of how personally uncomfortable or challenging those

engagements might be for them. When asked specifically how faith could help support them in their pursuit of community transformation, they responded:

> J: You all know mine, I wear mine. It's this, 'Evil prevails when good men do nothing.' It's about having the courage to stand up and I think it goes hand in hand with the 'Do unto others what you will have done to you.' That is how I feel in life. It goes through so many religions, it's that 'what goes around comes around.' If you put out positive energy, positive energy comes back. This quote is close to me, but as a child and young adult it can be hard to say I don't agree with that. That's really difficult and I just think empowering our kids to believe they can, they've got a voice, they can affect change too.

> C: We can, in education I think we silence children voices. H was talking about a couple of instances, when we came in, about things that go on which are wrong. I think there's evil out there and we don't know where it comes from or what is the evil?

> H: Or people not even understanding that what they're doing is evil. You don't know and you've not been challenged so…

> C: But it's that whole one man's terrorism is another man's freedom fighter.

> H: So I think whatever the situation, you need to go into trying to understand the other person's point of view and perspective.

> C: But I think about Kant's philosophy, if something is wrong, it's wrong. What we do is spend so much time skirting around it all, but no, I got a lot of that in Ireland, no, murder is murder. If it's wrong once, it's wrong. Killing is wrong. It's wrong to take someone else's life. It's wrong.

> H: That's your wrong, it's no mine.

There was a surprising and almost meditative moment during the focus group when, asked if they would like to share a bible verse or a piece of prose which they felt connected them to the group, H read the following passage,

> H: 'If a person has ugly thoughts it begins to show on their face, and when that person has ugly thoughts every day of every week in every year the face gets uglier and uglier until it gets so ugly that you can hardly bear to look at it. A person who has good thoughts can never be ugly. You can have a wonky nose and a crooked mouth and a double chin and stick out teeth, but if you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely.'

This extract from Roald Dahl's book Matilda, shared by H, a non-practising Catholic, may at first appear to be little more than a reading from a popular children's book. However, as H read the passage, it became something much deeper and stirring as through Dahl's words, she described those values which most connected her to the group's transformative objective. There was a vulnerability shared which touched every person around the table.

H described how, 'there are shades of green', and the group echoed the sentiment, 'we all have something prejudiced' within us (J2,H,J,C). It was a moment of personal reflection.

Participants agreed that while they did not view themselves to be quite as prejudiced as others in the local community, they were products of an environment which sometimes felt as though it was steeped in sectarianism and as such they understood that they inevitably bore some characteristics, 'you become that which is attributed to you' (A). During the focus group, when considering if faith commitments could help support anti-sectarianism, one participant responded that although, 'there were divisions in the early Church too' (J), it was clear that, 'parables are a good example of how stories can change you'.

Indeed, the data shows that sectarianism challenged the women's faith on extremely personal and unexpected levels. In one of the individual interviews, J tells of how the, 'men and women from the Orange Order march to the church after their meetings', and openly ridicule those of a different religion while in church, and it is all masked as banter. J notes that the minister tries to address this, as he preaches diversity and tolerance, but he does not directly challenge their behaviour. Bringing such openly displayed prejudice with them into the church clearly upsets J and, she says, also distresses other members of the congregation. The congregation, she continues, believes that Jesus is delighted that the men and women from the Orange Order are there, but they are at a loss as to what to do in order to be both welcoming and yet challenging of behaviours which cause offence. The congregation is conscious that these individuals are also their friends and neighbours, and while, 'their faith is an important solid base for something quite revolutionary', J struggles with this contentious and sensitive situation. She ends with the comment, 'religion teaches us we are equal and no one is above God', which perhaps neutralises the situation for her, and offers a meditative respite which gives her strength to continue.

Highlighting participants' desire to be authentic and connected to those around them, the following statements were particularly significant during the focus group's exploration of faith and its potential for supporting anti-sectarianism. 'You can live a Christian life but disconnect from the community' (J2,A), and, 'lots profess faith but merely follow a pattern and there's no real reflection' (J,J2). The group were consistently evangelical in their desire to 'bin the judgments and help the poor' (H,C,J2,J), with A adding that faith, 'gives a solid base for something that is for and not against'.

Reflection

Theological reflection was perhaps the starkest of all in its power to interrupt and alter the atmosphere and tone in the room. While the group were usually extremely vocal, often competing to be heard, it was when they were asked to share something much more personal and meditative which they felt connected them to the group, that the room quietened and people listened.

There was a tangible sense of vulnerability when everyone was given time and space to share something entirely different and completely unchecked prior to the focus group meeting. Despite the sense of strangeness or awkwardness attached to this section of the evening, it provided a time for each to reveal something deeply personal and valuable, and the care that this evoked from the others listening was palpable. This is not to say that it was not an uncomfortable feeling, for this was suddenly a very different group. However, it hinted at what was possible when each person was asked to reflect on their more personal and unique sense of what it is to be a woman in this place through a creative theological lens.

While participants demonstrated respect for the various colours and flavours of one another's beliefs, it is perhaps the group's empathetic approach to anti-sectarianism – an approach which they genuinely sought to be framed by love and care – which perhaps highlighted most the difference in the group's methods compared to the rather more institutional and prescriptive strategies of civic agencies.

I am immediately reminded of Elaine Graham's question, 'how can the voice of faith be mediated into an increasingly febrile and contested public square?'[9] Yet despite the difficulties presented by the public square, and as discussed in chapter 3, Graham offers a theological model which locates an apologetic most relevant to the moment and which is very much focused on revealing a common good. This provides a context and a coherence to the group's intuitions that faith can contribute something to anti-sectarianism which is meaningful and connected. Indeed, while participants do not refer specifically to the common good, they do echo the sentiments of Bennet, Graham, Pattison and Walton, 'God is not confined to the church. Theology should be a public undertaking in pursuit of the common good.[10]

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[9] Graham, *Apologetics without Apology,* 5.
[10] Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology.*

In the data we see that the women's group recognised that just by the very nature of being a person on this earth, each is seeking a cohesion which the secular cannot provide, and it is this more than anything, which gives them hope that they can help effect change in even the most hostile member of the local community.[11] As one participant, a Catholic Nun commented, when reflecting on how faith can help where other approaches have struggled to make an impact; because faith, 'Brings it into the consciousness and helps you let go'. (A)

Theme 5: Identifying Marginalised Voices

Participants recognised the unique potential they as women possess, as they sought to address sectarianism in their families and community; 'we must be the catalyst for change' (C,J,J2). Simultaneously however, they were equally aware of the very particular difficulties this presents precisely because they are women who live in North Lanarkshire.

> H: There is still the gender imbalance in the more traditional home where what the man says goes. Like dad says, 'Don't say that in front of your mum', so mum disnae get to hear half of it because you've not to swear in front of your mum, you've not to disrespect your mum, you've not to let your mum know about things because she's just a woman and she'll no get it, and aw naw you don't talk about fighting in front of your mum, don't drink too much in front of your mum and don't do this because you've to protect that poor wee flower from everything that's going on. So I think while we have a greater voice, I still think that within a traditional family there is a perpetuating of keeping the woman safe from all this.

As can be seen from the response above, participants had an acute awareness of the centuries of female subjugation which perhaps is most visible through power structures, language and relationships. The group were interested in exploring these 'epistemological' hangovers and how they shape their interactions with anti-sectarianism. They enjoyed the focus group discussions and asked if the

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[11] Fergusson, *Church, State and Civil Society*, 192.

group could adopt the same structure. They began working on setting out a similar programme for future explorations as they sensed cultural and historical notions of womanhood were linked to their subjugation.

They were also particularly interested in learning about the women of Northern Ireland who had been involved in the community's peacebuilding process, with one participant sharing that she, 'was inspired by the Irish women's example' (J) highlighting her own identification with the Irish women's cause. Participants recognised that Northern Irish women had managed to galvanise and empower themselves in order to shape and bring about change in communities sharing similar patriarchal and hegemonic influences, and they wanted to learn from them.

On broader issues concerning inequality, participants often commented, 'they needed to have the conversations', (H,J,J2) however there was frequently significant disagreement amongst the group as they discussed the intricacies of those conversations. Cautioning against falling into 'gender stereotypes' (M,J2); and viewing men equally as victims of discrimination and damaging narratives, a conversation ensued during the focus group evening on the topic of society's response to male and female domestic abuse, as they questioned whether women remain victims of legislative measures on equality.

> M: What worries me about the abuse side is that we're gender stereotyping here because there are a huge amount of men who are abused and I think it is exceptionally difficult for men to come out because…

> J2: I'm going to agree to disagree right there and I'm going to get slated for this. I think what's happened is yes there is a percentage of men who are abused but what I think is happening is that to be seen to be balanced the police force, the courts, everywhere, they've been told that if there is anything - anything, a domestic incident, a woman seen to be pushing her husband, that is automatically domestic abuse. I have seen it so many times when it went all the way to court and knowing fine well the

situation isn't as it seems and it's because the police and the law system as it is at the moment is to push so that it is seen to be fair and balanced.

J2 comments that despite changes to legislation in response to equality concerns, society's judicial structures and systems still discriminate against women. She angrily recounts the night many years ago when she ran from her house barefoot in the rain with her two young children to the police station because of domestic abuse. The police took her back to the house, saw her partner relaxing in front of the TV, and said, 'It's all okay now.'

Participants agreed that language, specifically that which is often adopted by government and media reporting on sectarianism is typically male and violent ie), *tackling sectarianism*. Participants shared an observation that the androcentric aggressive image of sectarianism as a male problem, through the use of football vocabulary is unmistakable. Several highlighted their view that the constant signalling of the 'maleness' of sectarianism is a significant obstacle to change (H,M,J,C).

The conversation in the focus group opened up a deeper discussion surrounding language and an apparent everyday subconscious acceptance of inequality and language.

> C: I found something that even with the Orange ladies in their own group, something that they thought of as an honorary title, I found disgusting. 'Worthy mistress.' If someone called me a worthy mistress, I'd knock them out. And the fact that this group of women found that to be an honorary title when the connotations with mistress now are certainly not opposite of master.

Reflecting on her memory of the time when the women of Orange Order left the group, one participant commented that the success of the group had become deeply compromised. She argued that they were now much too homogenous, it wasn't enough just to be women, and she stated, 'We need the staunchest

people in the group' (C,J2).[12] The following quotes from participants also reflect this opinion:

> We're all singing from the same song sheet (C)
> We need to be able to challenge one another (J2,J,M,C,H,A,)
> Extreme beliefs must be present in the group (H,J2,C)
> We can't just be a management committee (C)

While the data shows that participants believed it was essential for the women's group to reflect the 'different parts of community' (C), this was a difficult reflection because it provoked in them a sense of defeat. Many views were presented as though the remaining women had less value or possibility for success, and this was a difficult point for them to ponder, especially for the remaining Protestant women who were perhaps deemed not quite Protestant enough. However, there was another voice present; that because they are all women, 'we are not identical' (J2). It was evident however that the hurt initially experienced at the loss of the other women, had for most, manifested into frustration and anger, and they feared there was no future or hope of success.

Reflecting on this aspect of their relationship with one another, it was suggested by one participant that a particularly lively and challenging aspect of the original group dynamic had been because the women from the Orange Order were, 'poorly educated' (_), compared to the 'highly educated Catholic women' (_). The Catholic women and the other Protestant women were deemed 'more open minded than the Orange women' (_),which meant once the women from the Orange Order left, so too did the excitement and challenge.[13] These comments provide a particularly valuable insight into how the women perceived themselves and one another. While they identified themselves, quite

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[12] As highlighted, previous group members who were also members of the Orange Order left the group following a visit to Belfast to meet with community leaders working on reconciliation. They felt there had been a lack of respect or understanding for them from some members of the group and the group facilitator.
[13] Initials have been removed from these comments to add additional protection for the participants.

homogenously, as marginalised voices in the wider anti-sectarianism arena, within the group however there was evidence of a further stratification which highlights an intersectionality involving education and opportunity. This suggests that the departure from the group of the members of the Orange Order is a rather more complex web than the generally accepted explanation of a disagreement with the group facilitator on a trip to Belfast. From the participant's comments above, it is very possible that they felt further marginalised and disrespected.

Other women however viewed the situation differently from the participants quoted above. While they too mourned the loss of the women from the Orange Order and felt deeply saddened at the change of dynamic within the group, they also suggested that all of the Catholic and Protestant women who remained 'brought something different' (M,H), which, with the right support and direction, could help them take the discussion further into the local community.

All these views are important and demonstrate the ongoing sensitivities in many of the conversations. The sociodemographic othering, the attempts to blame a lack of educational opportunity on some of the women, all of this conflicted with the group's previously espoused egalitarian feminist values and emphasised the enormous challenge for even the most seemingly thoughtful and equal venture.

'Being harnessed – using what we have and who we are.' (A)

It was also particularly significant to note that the existence of the women's group was perceived by many of the participants to be at the mercy of men, who were in control of the group and allocation of the small amount of funding they received from the Scottish Government. One participant spoke of, 'being harnessed' suggesting a lack of control over their activities, however strong the women or ground-breaking their plans might be. Funding, as explained in the previous chapter, was administered by a representative body on behalf of the Church of Scotland and The Conforti Institute, who received money from the Government's £9 million investment into anti-sectarianism.

Indeed, it was a highly uncomfortable evening when male representatives from the funding bodies appeared at a women's group meeting one evening to audit the progress and success of the group. As everyone sat around the table, each woman was expected in turn to explain to the men present how they felt about the group; describing what they had achieved and why they sought to continue. The most common response to these questions was, 'to meet and try to do something' (M,J), and it was clear that the women were nervous of the outcome. One of the women commented to me later, during a semi-structured interview, that she, 'hoped the group would go it alone' (J2), suggesting hopefully that they need, 'virtually nothing' (J2) to be able to meet together and pursue their transformative objective.

Reflection

The complexities of the intersectional variations involved in the experiences of the women and evident in this theme are unmistakable. Despite attempts to challenge hierarchical influences on knowledge, the terrain the women's group had to travel was laden with landmines.

One hopeful element within the theme was a consciousness of their unique situations as women, individually and collectively, who were seeking to address sectarianism in their local community. Despite the challenges, ie) there is no 'privileged standpoint',[14] the energy for anti-sectarianism that they as women possessed was that they did not have a predetermined conceptualised image of how the problem should be solved, other than wanting to connect with the local community. For it was only through meeting as a group of women, and all that this entailed, that they could unpick the threads and organically design what they wished to come next. However, they encountered a very particular set of difficulties which only they, as a group of Catholic and Protestant women living where they live, could experience. The group struggled enormously with frustration, and perhaps, justifiably so.

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[14] Marjorie L. Devault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis," in *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research,* eds. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser (England: Oxford University Press, 2004), 92.

There was considerable frustration at not feeling free or able to engage directly with the local community because there was an element of control which was retained by funders and facilitators. Reflecting, I wondered if men would have been expected to demand such little control over their direction and future if it had been a men's group. It was perhaps inevitable that following some three years of meeting together in a small hall to discuss sectarianism, that they would want to take it from the local community hub where they regularly met and into their neighbourhoods. There was also frustration that the group felt they could be disbanded at any point, and this decision was beyond their control.

Learning from a community-based initiative such as the Wishae Wimmin, and reflecting on the challenge to current anti-sectarian educational programmes on how collaboration and commitment might be achieved through pedagogy, the five main thematic outcomes above signpost a possible alternative approach.

While sectarianism and sectarian behaviour still exist in the North Lanarkshire area of Wishaw, the research suggests that the women were successful in moving the dial a little. By first saying yes to an initiative such as an anti-sectarian women's group, they demonstrated unity through their willingness to raise their heads above the parapet even when they knew that not all reactions from those around them would be positive. From this group we learn that no change can emerge without building relationships with those of a different worldview or belief, and this kind of relationship building requires hope, honesty and forgiveness. The women demonstrated that the process demands a safe space to share as it involves confronting elements of themselves and their communities which perhaps have not experienced such scrutiny before. The women showed that through hearing different voices it was possible to find the commonalities and differing views and experiences which were every bit as valued as their own, and they revealed the trauma involved when these were challenged. We also learn from the women that wishing to re-organise such a group as a cooperative where everyone shares in responsibility and where survival is wholly incumbent upon them, requires a willingness to seek assistance and organise.

Although the DNA of the Wishae Wimmin is undoubtedly embedded within the themes, they platform the invaluable views of a marginalised group within society which helps open the process up to other groups such as young people; another group familiar with following instruction rather than leading. With organisation and assistance, the women's group model of engagement could be applied in other settings, and the overriding value of this is immeasurable because it seeks to meet the immediate concerns of those most closely involved.

We can observe from this study, the possibilities of a flexible approach where group and theme will be inextricably linked. The group, whoever they may be, can own the initiative and it is they who are most equipped to produce their objectives. The themes which emerged from this research provide a catalyst for a framework where the flexible and fluid aspect of it will challenge traditional interventions so commonly workshopped and time-framed, and offers much to learn from for those interested in anti-sectarian approaches. Derived from the experiences of the Wishae Wimmin, the next chapter presents an engaged and flexible pedagogical route-map which, if successfully utilised, could be the embodiment of each group who use it and not the other way around: the plan exists for the group, the group does not exist for the plan.

Thematic Findings: Challenging Pedagogy

Learning from this community-based initiative, and reflecting on the challenge to current anti-sectarian educational programmes on how such collaboration and commitment might be achieved through pedagogy, the thematic results signpost an alternative process.

As demonstrated, much is to be learned from each of the themes themselves, and despite the messy demise of the women's group, from the themes there remains a great deal on which to build upon. Although the DNA of the Wishae Wimmin is undoubtedly embedded within these particular themes, they also reflect the invaluable views of a marginalised group within society. This opens up the process to other groups such as young people, another group who usually follow instruction rather than leading the intervention. From a level of engagement with the women's group that I as a classroom teacher could once

only dream of, we see emerging from this research the possibilities of a flexible framework where group and theme are inextricably linked. The group own the initiative and it is they who produce the objectives and concerns. With work and consultation the anti-sectarian women's group approach could be applied in various other settings, and the overriding value of these themes is immeasurable because they meet the immediate concerns of those involved, and provide a catalyst for further discussion and relationship building; the fluid flexible aspect of them is perhaps the greatest challenge to traditional interventions so commonly workshopped and time framed with an expiration date.

The analysis and reflections above are intrinsically connected to the next section, which reveals two prominent characteristics also to emerge from the data. Moving forward and reflecting particularly on some of the specific challenges participants experienced, these two important elements are examined specifically through a theological lens in order to assess the potential of faith or values related pedagogical support. For anyone seeking to embark on pedagogical anti-sectarianism with a renewed approach to integrity and care, the following section shows that engagement with these specific human concerns is likely to be extremely important.

Part II
A Theological Perspective:
Transformation and Care

Never try to ignore or talk away someone's perception. Instead, try to understand where it is rooted! [15]

When the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland identified in 2013 that there needed to be a more informal, less authoritarian approach in addressing sectarianism,[16] a study was commissioned which sought a deeper understanding of public perceptions and experiences of

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[15] John Paul Lederach, *Conflict Transformation* (New York: Good Books, 2003), 58.
[16] "Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers," Scottish Government, accessed August 13, 2014, https://digital.nls.uk/pubs/scotgov/2014/9781784121525.pdf.

sectarianism. The 2015 report was in response to an apparent discursive deficit;[17] an acknowledgment that the voices of the communities had not been heard sufficiently to piece together a picture of what sectarianism really meant to those assumed to be living amongst it.

Despite the significant investment into anti-sectarian initiatives, there remained a lack of understanding of what sectarianism really meant to those communities concerned. Participants involved in the report were selected by researchers who visited local groups in an attempt to make contact with those who were engaged in the social life of the community, and who could introduce others with a variety of life experiences and backgrounds. The report findings, published spring 2015, states at Point 50:

> Stories of sectarian experiences were sometimes slow to emerge. Participants who related stories that they regarded as serious tended to do so at a late point in the interview, often with much hesitation and rushing through the key details - and what was particularly striking was that in a couple of cases the person did not even recall a very serious incident until well into the interview.[18]

The stories shared by those involved in this research, while occasionally shared very quickly during meetings or perhaps not quite heard by the other participants in the way the sharer intended, were for the women, clearly important and vulnerable steps in a long transformative process.

This section considers two specific concerns to emerge from the sharing of stories; 'Relational Hurt', and, 'When *Others* Hope'. These concerns were identified through codable moments,[19] and deeply embedded in the data themes and frequently visible throughout the research process. The first of these characteristics is the prevalence of 'Relational Hurt' which occurs within the

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[17] "Measuring Perceptions and Experience of Sectarianism," Scottish Government, accessed October, 2015, http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/9920/2.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information,* 11.

context of sectarianism. This raises a theological challenge to name and engage with woundedness and pain revealed through anti-sectarian education rather than seeking to avoid or overcome it. The second I have entitled 'When *Others* Hope' and this expresses the theological challenge to value and exercise great care for the power and fragility of hope. The section demonstrates that theological reflections on these emotional characteristics result in insights that are significant beyond the theological realm and which might provide wisdom to those seeking a more connected anti-sectarianism.

A theological values-based understanding of pain and hope supports the suggestion that practitioners should be mindful that these deepest of human characteristics exist and are very likely to be exposed through anti-sectarian programmes. The section demonstrates that theological based values acknowledge and are able to respond to pain and hope in a way which current approaches are struggling to do. Pain and hope are often revealed through deep reflection which is involved in anti-sectarianism, and a theological understanding of these could help equip practitioners to acknowledge and more sensitively respond.

It was Don Browning's development of Paul Tillich's model of critical correlation,[20] which showed that practical theology can engage even more intimately with humanity, and in doing so offer a valuable model based on respect and care for the human condition; particularly when seeking to engage with 'others' who may hold different views and values.[21] Browning's concern for the human experience, and his understanding of a 'bifocal perspective'[22] reveal a belief that practical theology is not just limited to Christian enterprise or experience, but is an alternative way to engage with an increasingly diverse world. If the Church is to engage with society with any effectiveness then it is

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[20] Bernard M. Loomer, "Tillich's Theology of Correlation," *The Journal of Religion* 36, no. 3 (July 1956): 150-156. Paul Tillich's approach offered society an alternative methodology to engage with current context which allows the weary in. It is perhaps at its most effective when found in the wider community; addressing issues previously regarded as part of pastoral care, involving social, political and economic concerns experienced by society every day.
[21] David R. Brockman, *No Longer the Same* (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 36.
[22] Stephen Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2000, 95.

essential, Browning argues, that 'bifocal perspectives'[23] are fully applied. I was therefore very conscious to avoid temptation to reduce the highly complex characteristics of Relational Hurt, and When *Others* Hope, into neat theological boxes, but to instead acknowledge the messiness within them.[24]

1. Relational Hurt

It is often through storytelling that realisation of the universal participation in the creation of hurt emerges. In claiming this as a theologically significant moment I draw upon the insight of William Bausch, who argues that all stories are in fact religious whether the storyteller is aware of this or not, or even whether the language used is religious or not.[25] Bausch offers a perspective that stories can reveal the deep-rooted ultimate questions feared most; the universal questions which humanity has wrestled with since the very conception of time, such as life, death, love, and hate.

When H shared her reading from Dahl's Matilda during the focus group, it was unquestionably a deeply reflective and religious moment, and very clearly received as one, as the atmosphere quietened and everyone just for that moment stopped to listen. H's sharing of Dahl's story revealed a deep truth that all participants are affected in some way by the hurt that our shared participation in oppressive systems generates. As Terry Veling argues,[26] there can be no growth or movement towards peace without first accepting the truth that each of us inflict at least some pain upon others. Indeed, H's sharing of Dahl's story echoed a sentiment which was frequently expressed throughout the research process, that each one of us possess a propensity for the extremities of love and hate. 'Shades of green' and 'we've all been ugly' (H), observations succinctly made in a summation of the complexity of the human situation. It is perhaps these comments, more than any other, which highlight a need for an anti-sectarian approach which recognises, cares for, and values the

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[23] Stephen Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2000, 95.
[24] Katherine Turpin, "The Complexity of Local Knowledge," in *Conundrums in Practical Theology, ed* (Mercer Joyce Ann Mercer, and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Boston: Brill, 2016), 272.
[25] William Bausch, *Storytelling: Imagination and Faith*, (Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1986) 1-176.
[26] Terry A. Veling, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"* (New York: Orbis, 2005), 153.

vulnerabilities encased in this truth. Veling comments that even though we may resist acceptance of this, for it is really not how we wish to view ourselves, we can all be the cause of pain to others:[27]

> Words are never neutral. They carry the power to build up or to tear down. When I love, I am speaking the word 'love'. When I hate, I am speaking the word 'hate'. We are all the time, 'speaking our lives into the world'. We are all the time saying who we are, announcing what we believe, and living what we do in the words we choose to speak.[28]

When J2 shared her own story of domestic abuse, to illustrate the inequalities of the judicial system, she defended her right not to accede to M's suggestion that men are equally victimised. This discussion quickly became an important detour in the evening's planned proceedings and served as a moment to reflect on the seemingly endless and exhausting struggle experienced by women in their search for safe and equitable loving relationships.

It was also a moment for everyone present to consider their own personal experiences of hurt; experiences which prompted many of the women to share their own stories.

> C: And he (partner) spoke about someone who was in a men's group, who on my first meeting with him said 'Get that Fenian slut out of ma face'.

Noting a connection between participants, loved ones and the emotional pain experienced in close relationships, was a recurring event in the research process. The women often used their stories to illustrate moments when they had been affected by the actions of someone close who had acted towards them in way which was now regarded by them as sectarian. The wounds often felt overlooked at these times, as intimate painful memories were hurriedly shared. It often seemed to me that narratives had to be spoken quickly before the moment or

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[27] Veling, *Practical Theology "On Earth as It Is in Heaven"*, 153.
[28] Ibid.

opportunity had passed. However, mostly these stories were immediately met with nods of acknowledgment and a sense of collective understanding.

The story below illustrates a common acceptance or inevitability involved in many of the experiences discussed in the group. The story itself is not an uncommon tale, and I too have my own similar story to tell. Indeed, most participants responded by sharing their own or a family member's account of non-attendees at a wedding due to religious difference.

> C: My grandpa didn't go to my mum and dad's wedding, he went to the reception but wouldn't go to the wedding because my dad had married a Catholic in a Catholic church and my grandpa would not recognise that. As a result because my grandpa wouldn't go, my gran and Aunt Jean wouldn't go either. My grandpa really liked my mum and my mum had said at the time that her dad said to my grandpa, 'If it had been the other way about I wouldn't have went into the church'. He totally got it.

This was obviously a painful event for those involved in this story, and yet it is impossible not to also observe a negation of the self and a significant degree of complicity within it, which undoubtedly would have caused much deeper hurt at the time. It underlines that a deeply personal and complex historical issue like sectarianism pleads for an approach which recognises and attempts to understand the deeply personal and intertwined threads of love, relationships, and religious identity.

The wedding narrative invites closer consideration of the active roles of the women involved, who on all accounts followed the lead of the older patriarch. Linda Woodhead pinpoints the dangers when relational hurt becomes acceptable, inevitable, or unseen. Woodhead cautions,

> For if suffering and love are too closely identified then women have no moral option but to submit passively – indeed willingly – to the abuse, the beatings, the sexual assaults with which they are so often threatened.

They have no right to expect happiness or self-fulfilment and must gladly accept the oppression they have always known.[29]

While Woodhead's example refers to more profoundly abusive relationships, it prompts a consideration of the argument that there is at work here too in the wedding story, an invisible passive acceptance of things or situations, as they have always been and as set by others. It is however even more complex and challenging, as the data shows that negotiating anti-sectarianism entails troubling and highly complex relationships with family and close friends. The data shows that several of the women had experience of sectarian conflict often within close loving relationships involving former partners, parents, and close friends. Seeking to challenge their behaviour would not have been without some risk to the relationship.

> C: The man I'd been going out with at the time, had my 2 children with, took me to football. While there, loads of people were shouting at the opposing teams, 'Away ya tarrier Bs'. I asked him what a tarrier was and he said, 'You're one'. I said, 'Is it a Catholic?' and he said 'Yes, you're a tarrier, because all they're good enough for is to tar the roads'.

> J2: We were climbing and found a set of keys. People were asking others if they were looking for a set of keys, and a sheik eventually came up and said to my friend J, 'Oh thanks very much they're mine.' The sheik says, 'I've got a hotel at Loch Lomond', and says, 'You and your wife – looking at me!!! – and your family are more than welcome to come up and have a meal on us, thanks very much.' So as J walked away he turned around and said knowing how to press my buttons, 'If I'd effin known it was a black guy I'd have thrown them away.' Not meaning it but that is just the kind of things he says. So I say, 'You know what's going to happen to you, one of your daughters is going grow up and marry a black man and the other is going to grow up and marry a Catholic.' He used to be in the Orange

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[29] Linda Woodhead, "Feminism and Christian Ethics," in *Women's Voices*, ed. Teresa Elwes (London: Marshall Pickering, 1992), 70.

Lodge. He was in the bands and they got barred out of Ireland. But he can openly says he puts all that shite behind him. He can see it for what it was. And the statement was, 'Over my dead body, I would rather a black man walked into my house than a Catholic. I'll never have my daughter marry a Catholic.'

During the focus group, participants pointed out that in many of those around them, they saw 'no real awareness of the deep self and own beliefs and feelings' (M,A,J,C). They suggested that seeking to question a loved one's allegiances or memberships, particularly of specific social groups where membership depended on whether you were Catholic or Protestant, could risk asking too much of them at that point. To decide against this course of action does not equate with simple negation of responsibility, for it would be a decision based on a weighing of consequences and a complex set of variables within the relationship, involving security, acceptance, and love. It could be a difficult and potentially life-changing road to negotiate.

Acknowledging Pain

The complexity and trauma involved in identifying and continuing to live with the wounds of Relational Hurt such as those illustrated above, is a difficulty discussed by Graham, Walton and Ward in *Theological Reflection: Methods*.[30] Citing Shelly Rambo, they highlight the 'extravagant claims made by theologians from all traditions for the healing and redemptive qualities of storytelling';[31] the authors comment that the creative process of narrative theology, 'does not serve only to console us with reassuring stories but to awaken and disturb us'.[32]

During the focus group participants were asked to share a passage or biblical verse which connected them to the group and its aims. I chose this process to facilitate a method of theological reflection which sought to encourage and unlock the women's creativity in order to help construct meaning from those

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[30] Elaine Graham and Heather Walton, (citing Shelly Rambo, 2010) *Theological Reflections: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2019), 52-77.
[31] Ibid, 73.
[32] Ibid.

experiences they so regularly shared. Their notable quiet response that evening highlighted for me that there might be, for some, an uncertainty about where to place these memories and related hurts once revisited. Indeed, as Rambo insists, the revisiting of traumatic events, such as those shared, risks a degree of perpetuation of the hurt to themselves, and to others. Graham et al. highlight Rambo's view that this may cause:

> Further wounding and disruption to people and communities. Trauma thus returns and remains: 'The challenge is to account for what remains – to provide a discourse of remaining that can speak to life in the aftermath and to the shattering of familiar frameworks by which persons and communities have orientated themselves in the world'.[33]

Graham et al. note Rambo's caution against haste in attempts to reduce or try to force the healing of hurts in order to fit in with a spiritual narrative or to introduce a new chapter in someone's life. In this she offers insight for an anti-sectarian process which seeks a deeper connected engagement with immediate – and past – hurt. Rambo's suggestion that we remain with the hurt is a relatable and practical approach which dispenses with the temptation to impose expectation or promises onto the wounded. Her approach avoids '*tomorrowing*' the pain but instead it proposes that we need to sit a while longer with those who are tired or wounded.[34] This is an engagement which brings with it varying levels of comfort and discomfort, however despite the challenges this presents, I find there is an authenticity within Rambo's approach which penetrates any thought one might have of tidying hurt into neat boxes.

Furthermore, Graham et al. also highlight that through Rambo's theological lens, pain is revealed as an element of human concern which is set deeply within

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[33] Elaine Graham and Heather Walton, (citing Shelly Rambo, 2010) *Theological Reflections: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2019), 71.

[34] Rambo's suggestion echoes Jesus's instructions to the disciples, (Mark 6:31), 'Come away to a deserted place … and rest awhile'. Rambo's emphasis is on the necessity for body and soul to, 'rest awhile'; healing and rest cannot be hurried.

existing relational frameworks.[35] Specific exploration of participants' frameworks highlight a tension caused by the gravitational pull of hope, the bond of complex relationships and the practical difficulties that a change proposition presents. There is a connection between participants' personal reflections and negotiations within relationships suspicious or obstructive of the transformation desired. Rambo's theologically based values acknowledge this complexity and respond to it in a way which does not seek to ignore or tidy the pain away, but instead seeks to sit with the pain awhile. She slows the process down, and in doing this, asks practitioners to pause their expectations and timelines. It is significant, as highlighted in the previous chapter, that following the focus group, participants asked if future meetings might be spent discussing potential conflicts and other feminist epistemological concerns. There was a tangible sense for everyone around the table that evening, that as an anti-sectarian ecumenical women's group working to bring about change, we might be on to something in acknowledging complex concerns, while safeguarded by a group approach framed by trust and understanding.

2. When *Others* Hope

Analysing the data, it became apparent that despite the various character traits and vast experiences within the women's group, there was a strong sense of unity in their search for transformation, which appeared bonded by their hope for something different. This shared hope for change, identified through their conversations over the years, was especially visible during the focus group when participants were asked to share a passage, reflection, or poem which they felt connected them to the group's aims.

> J: 'Evil prevails when good men do nothing.' It's about having the courage to stand up and I think it goes hand in hand with the 'Do unto others what you will have done to you.' That is how I feel in life. It goes through so many religions, it's that 'what goes around comes around.' If you put out positive energy, positive energy comes back.

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[35] Elaine Graham and Heather Walton, (citing Shelly Rambo, 2010) *Theological Reflections: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2019), 73.

J2: I feel myself deliberately seeking out the arsehole. I just try and wear them down until they're taking it in! Because I think fundamentally, I think we are all seeking the same thing, company, we are all human and that's what humans need. We are all looking for love.

M: We're called to love God and to love others as we love ourselves.

I was surprised and journaled at the time that there felt a particular sense of quiet reverence during this section of the evening and given that the women in the group frequently competed to be heard, this was a markedly different atmosphere. Reflections of this kind on their personal reasons for their involvement in the group was an important and rare opportunity for a community group consisting of people who really only became acquainted through their membership of that group. The difference in atmosphere suggested that provision of space and care in recognition of the importance and fragility of hope might be important elements for such rich and vulnerable reflection. It also suggested that this kind of space could provide something else; the opportunity to share something which was unprepared, perhaps those stories ignored or hidden away.

It is also important to note that while participants shared their more intimate personal hopes during the focus group, they consistently throughout the research shared their much broader hopes for change and transformation. These hopes were frequently voiced and powerfully used to steer the group in particular directions regarding objectives and building community relationships. Illustrated below are just a small example of the statements frequently made, demonstrating participants' motivations and their hopes for change:

We need to have the conversations. (H,J,J2)
We must be the catalyst for change. (C,J,J2)
The belief that things can improve. (J,J2,C,H,M,A)

One aspect of hope, which for some participants was very personal, was their wish for the relationship between sectarianism and friendships to be explored. 'I don't want my kids to know what sectarianism is or for it to even be an issue', commented C on more than one occasion. This sentiment was supported by the other women. C tells a story of how her daughters' friendships with the other children in their street changed when they started the local Catholic school, while the other children attended the local non-denominational school. As described in Part I of this chapter, she and J2 both hoped that parents might one day be consulted on the issue of separate schools, not because they did not agree with Catholic input into their children's education, but because of the narrowing of relationships while they were of school age. They hoped that their children's friendships would be expanded again once at college or university, but the loss of friends of different faiths and none once they started primary school troubled them.

As demonstrated, the group's existence was completely dependent upon the women's hopes, and this served as a powerful force for their drive for local and personal change, albeit not always outwardly or clearly visible to others. Although the group eventually disbanded in 2017, the process that took them to that point was a deeply life affecting and reflective period which involved relationship building and numerous empowering opportunities in which to share their hopes and be heard.

Hope Valued

For the participants, despite the absence of a clearly mapped out strategic plan for achieving community and personal transformation, if nothing else there was clearly until the end, the existence of hope.

> C: I think there are some things as an individual, group and country we cannot change, but things that can be changed, well I think we're stronger as a group to make the changes.

Through actively and very purposely joining a group of others seeking to challenge and disturb the norms of anti-sectarianism so that they might together

discuss difference and their hopes for the local community, participants gained new and often painful understandings of themselves and their neighbours. Through discussion they identified and challenged patriarchal androcentric inheritances, often linked to sectarianism, but grew weary, increasingly aware and frustrated that hope had not borne the fruit longed for. The data shows that this frustration caused varying levels of anger, and eventually hopes dissolved. They struggled to see a future for themselves in the group following realisation that they were unable to fulfil the kind of community-based anti-sectarian engagements initially hoped for, and after three years, the final meeting of the Wishae Wimmin was held on 21st June 2017. It is of course important to emphasise that it is highly improbable that any of the new understandings gained would have been possible without the existence and conversations of this group, and in this the group gives hope to others.

German Protestant Theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, argues that in order to realise hopes for change, there is often a need to disturb accepted norms. This resonates strongly with the ethos and approach of the women's group for this is precisely what they sought to do. The data shows it was conscientised by every participant. Indeed, this approach was strongly advocated at varying points, resonating strongly with Moltmann's argument.

> That it makes the Christian Church a constant disturbance in human society, seeking as the latter does to stabilize itself into a 'continuing city'. It makes the Church the source of continual new impulses towards the realization of righteousness, freedom and humanity here in the light of the promised future that is to come.[36]

In her work, *Hope in the Holler: A Womanist Theology*, A. Elaine Brown Crawford describes the resolutely complex hope of African American women who experienced a matrix of domination through slavery, violence and oppression;

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[36] "Disturbing Accepted Norms: Jürgen Moltmann," Religion Online, accessed August 13, 2019, 11, http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/relsearchd.dll/showchapter?chapter_id=1888.

and she tells too that despite the risks, of the refusal to silence their hope. She explains,

> The theological construct that moves these women beyond endurance to survival and, ultimately, toward the transformation of oppressive circumstances. Hope is the bridge from oppression to liberation that facilitates full humanity and fosters an undaunted passion for life.[37]

Considering Brown's work, Katie Ernst suggests that,

> Complex hope demands a simultaneous recognition of both the individual and society. When a person breaks the silence of internal or external suffering by speaking out into the darkness, they are demanding to be seen and heard. It is a recognition of the self, dignity and humanity.[38]

Chris Baker, reflecting on 'Building a Politics of Hope' (2015), a conference which explored the impact of faith-based leadership in local communities hoping to see change,[39] illustrates specifically the potential of faith supported community approaches; that the Church who embraces the role as an agent, who seeks to understand and frame the importance of complex hope, offers significant transformational possibilities. However, it is important to note that sectarianism also presents very specific difficulties for this approach. A practising member of a local church and hopeful for her own community's transformation, J2 struggled to see how faith or local faith groups could help, as she commented, 'Faith can be unhelpful I think in addressing it'. Without negating the hope for change, this simply highlights the conflation that sectarianism has with religion and religious identity, as for many the involvement of faith groups or churches in anti-sectarianism can seem like an

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[37] A. E. Crawford, *Hope in the Holler: A Womanist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 12.

[38] Katie Ernst, "Terror of Hope: The Integration of Attachment Theory and Womanist Theology," *Pastoral Psychology* 66, (2017): 201–212.

[39] Chris Baker, "Transformational Possibilities Explored," Politic of Hope Event 2015, accessed August 230, 2019, https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/politics-of-hope-event-reflection-chris-baker/.

additional obstacle.

However, faith organisations and practitioners who place value on Moltmann's, Brown's, or Baker's, theological understandings of hope, viewing a 'constant disturbance in human society' not as an aggressive or anarchic act, but a radical act of commitment and love, can offer something to the communities they inhabit.[40] Baker's example underlines what can be possible when local faith organisations dare to, as Moltmann urges, challenge and disturb.[41]

> Al Barrett (vicar) pointed out that his parish was full of those 'others' so roundly condemned by certain sections of the media and establishment politicians: immigrants, Muslims, single parents and unemployed youth. It was a community used to being 'done to' – labelled as dysfunctional and in need of 'expert' intervention and surveillance.
>
> The church community perceived the need to change the narrative of those living in the community as a first step to creating a new sense of hope and transformation. This it did conducting one to one conversations and 'hearing into speech' the issues and aspirations of the local community. This led to the production of a theatre and culture space and the opening of a new community hub called Open Door which operates according to the principle of the five Ps: place; people; presence; provision and participation.[42]

Baker argues that through faith supported dialogue initiatives, there is strong evidence that,

> new practices of hope and ethical citizenship are feeding back up into the political and institutional chains of command, thus forcing institutions like local authorities and churches for example, to rethink their priorities and

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[40] "Disturbing Accepted Norms: Jürgen Moltmann," Religion Online, accessed August 13, 2019, 11, http://www.religion-online.org/cgi-bin/relsearchd.dll/showchapter?chapter_id=1888.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Baker, "Transformational Possibilities Explored".

make them more responsive and effective for those on the ground.[43]

This section underlines that a theological values-based connectedness to the immediate concern offers insight and scaffold to the most fragile engagement. Before educational practitioners open an anti-sectarian Pandora's box, it is important that the two concerns of Relational Hurt and When *Others* Hope are acknowledged, valued and included in the duty of care. Through a theological lens, these concerns reveal the deeply complex, often painful and challenging nature of an engaged anti-sectarianism which is dependent on personal reflection. While it may be tempting to cry out for an ending of the traditional and beckon in the new, the real challenge of course, as Baker may also argue, is finding a way to bring the various different approaches to the table; searching for ways in which they can work together, if not always harmoniously then like pieces of flint, resolute in determination to ignite something new.

This chapter has examined and reflected upon the contributions of the participants involved in this research and has presented the major themes to emerge from the data generated, followed by a reflective analysis of each of the themes. The chapter has also identified and examined two important elements, through a theological lens, in order to assess the potential of faith or a values related support for anti-sectarian pedagogy. Learning from the data analysis, extrapolating and conceptualising its potential for shaping future anti-sectarian initiatives, the following chapter reflects specifically on what the research brings to transformative pedagogy and recommends an alternative approach for future anti-sectarian engagement.

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[43] Baker, "Transformational Possibilities Explored".

Chapter 6

Steps for a Transformative Pedagogy

Introduction

Through this research I have sought to discover if I could encounter a model of anti-sectarianism which could challenge and help re-shape traditional institutional pedagogical approaches. I have also sought to discover whether such new approaches might be supported through faith based values.

As already discussed, in my professional practice as a teacher of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Education, I found that my students were seemingly enthusiastic and engaged when learning about anti-sectarianism. However, I was also aware that the anti-sectarian lessons, though creative were still very much 'lessons' in the traditional sense: lessons which delivered a moral message and expected adherence to this within the familiar constraints of the classroom. I questioned if existing classroom frameworks were adequate to support other less formal methods which might be adopted to address the issue of sectarianism and set out to establish what could be gained for pedagogy from an alternative approach which could potentially involve the reimagining of practice. My search for an alternative model of engagement was provoked by the desire to discover whether anti-sectarian education could become a less institutionally managed process which positively impacts upon pedagogy and particularly my own professional practice.

That these early questionings became a research project was due to the opportunity for further reflection on my professional practice while 'off the teaching treadmill'. I spent a year in Western Australia with my husband whose job had taken us there. After arriving, it transpired that finding work in a school would be difficult for me. Australian non-denominational public schools do not include Religious Education in the curriculum and, as non Catholic, I did not meet the criteria for employment in Catholic schools. Although I found work in Public Relations and Marketing, my previous occupation, I also discovered I had the rare and unexpected gift of time in which to reflect at depth, and that is

where this thesis had its beginnings. Had I not been gifted with this period in Australia I doubt if my reflections as a practitioner would have resulted in this research. It is important for me to state this, in support of my many teaching colleagues who work harder and longer than many other professionals, and for whom the concept of a year out to reflect on praxis is the stuff of dreams.

My intuition was that for anti-sectarian pedagogical work to be better engaged and effective, it had to entail taking a different approach. This would be one which prioritised the agency of every young person involved and was less 'intervention' focused and rooted more in the community context, particularly of those whose attitudes it was seeking to change. As a Christian, and one who sees faith embodied in practice (see chapter three), I view such change as an issue as close to the heart of practical theology as much as it is related to pedagogy. It seeks transformation and living communication that moves between the worlds of theory and practice, framed by a duty of care that seeks to protect and liberate. Of course, my own experience and necessary pragmatism tells me to be measured in my expectations of change. While I think this is good advice, I cannot help but also think that if I am to ask my students to consider, and to conceptualise, their hopes and visions, then perhaps it is only right that I do so too.

From Theory to Recommendation

Bell hooks' pedagogical approach reveals that while it is not impossible for anti-sectarianism to be addressed by the teacher within the traditional classroom setting, her methods suggest that current approaches require re-evaluation. As discussed in chapter One, hooks's approach seeks to empower the learner and focuses primarily on three questions:[1]

1. What image does the location of learning have as a community?
2. How can learners participate in activities inside the location of learning?
3. How can learners own experiences become part of the discussion to make learning and teaching meaningful?

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[1] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 70-185.

The current contextual difficulty with educational anti-sectarianism highlights an absence of space where sectarianism can be explored, as set out above, by learners and teachers without expectation, fear or caution of judgment. hooks suggests that through creating a space for her own students, including a significant number of disenfranchised students, previously held assumptions regarding one another were frequently disrupted through the sharing of their stories. Anti-sectarian education has much to gain from her approach.

Indeed, the alternative approach offered in this thesis would in practice offer a release from constraining benchmarks, and for some, even contexts all too familiar to teachers. Instead, due to the involvement and negotiations of the wider community in the crucial planning stages, the approach becomes much more fluid and equitable in its response to the young people, and consequently suffer less from the constraints of workshopped and time-framed programmes.

Reflecting further on the integrity of current interventions, it was Foucault's view on power exercised through knowledge, that was particularly important to note. That in serving to discipline the subject, it also, as a consequence increases resistance, which for anti-sectarian pedagogy is problematic.[2] As part of my evaluation of current approaches, I found Foucault's examination of the power that is inherent in interventions useful because it challenges teachers to consider the concerns and limitations of what it is that we seek to achieve in teaching anti-sectarianism. Through this process of examination, a heightened consciousness emerges of the essential need to recognise and respond to participants agency.

Building relationships with individuals involved in the anti-sectarian initiative is a primary objective for an alternative approach, most particularly those voices rarely heard. Feminist theorists such as hooks and Hesse-Biber lay bare the

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[2] "A Foucaultian Espistemology of Resistance," Vanderbilt University, accessed June 15, 2017, 11, https://as.vanderbilt.edu/philosophy/people/facultyfiles/medinatoward_a_foucaultian_epistemology_of_resistance.

consequences of a lack of equity in institutional engagements. This can be seen particularly in Hesse-Biber's work on participation barriers and intersectionality, and the need to identify and empower those groups and individuals most silenced. The introductory chapter observes how most anti-sectarian approaches owned by authority are traditionally male-centred which have often reduced non-adult males to little more than a supporting role in the discussion, and this exclusion has significant implications regarding the integrity of that engagement.

The groups rarely heard in the anti-sectarian discussion include, but are not limited to, women, young people, non-white racial groups, LGBTQ+, those with additional learning needs, and the elderly. The list is extensive. Graham argues that traditional methods often adopted to engage communities have frequently served to re-enforce ideologies and practices which exclude the voices of large sections of the community, consisting of diverse yet minority groups. Graham also argues that master ideologies really need to be explored in order to enable authentic inter-communal dialogue. This challenges teaching practitioners actively to examine traditional educational methods and seek out the minority voices as part of their anti-sectarian planning.

Graham suggests that in a post-secular climate, there has been an increase in the awareness of the religious elements within communities and consequently there is now recognition of the need for greater dialogue between secular and faith groups.[3] As part of her work on The Common Good, Rowlands too points to the frequently difficult relations between religious groups and secular institutions. She argues for Graham's vision of local transformative action involving groups and individuals of all faiths and none; that there is no reason why seeking social transformation should be pursued in isolation by either of these groups. Revealing a theological approach based on a commitment for human concern and social justice, Baker shares his experiences of working with faith and secular groups where the negotiations enabled the careful navigation forwards in highly complex community initiatives. Baker's work supports the call for a new model of anti-sectarian education which looks to the local complex

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[3] Graham, *Apologetics without Apology.*

and diverse community of faith believers and none, for meaningful solutions to local concerns. Perhaps this is the most integral element for a new engaged anti-sectarian pedagogical process; that wider school and diverse community dialogue in the initial planning stage and beyond, is required in order to enable a broader community stakeholder venture and not merely another authority intervention.

Transformative Pedagogy

For an anti-sectarian initiative seeking to connect with and represent the community with which it seeks to engage, the data directs us to an alternative and highly adaptable route map of five steps which are appropriate and sufficiently flexible that they can be adopted to fit the needs of a variety of groups. Minimising, to an extent, the problematic impact of outsider intervention, which often appears to alienate the particular groups to which it is applied, the data indicates that new ways of engagement with sectarianism are possible through a different approach. This is highly significant for pedagogy where compliance is often all that is measurable and yet effectiveness is compromised by adult and teacher led interventions that have little real impact on students' lives. I discovered the limitations of this in my own teaching practice, as discussed above, following the congratulations from my senior managers on the anti-sectarian programme with the second year students which attracted praise and positive coverage from external groups. I realised that while the young people had without doubt enjoyed the activities undertaken, it was rather more difficult to ascertain how deep their engagement with the issues had been. Importantly, and within the current confines and my responsibly for my pupils' wellbeing, I questioned if this was simply as deep as the engagement should go *because* of those limitations.

In contrast, my research project has alerted me to the fact that through a living engagement with the community within the anti-sectarian initiative, transformative progress can be made through the considered and conscious participation of those the issue most concerns. Rather than being defined as passive recipients of a moral intervention from above, those involved could take the lead, developing and sharing a collective autonomy with facilitating and

mindful support. Were this model to be transferred into pedagogical contexts, the young people themselves would be responsible for the formation, activity and future development of the approach to sectarianism. For the enabler of such a process in a school context, this demands and offers almost as much in equal measure, as my research data shows that involvement in the shaping of the initiative offers ownership to those most important to the initiative, and whilst proffering hope, it also demands sensitivity and care. This approach is not about 'being done to' nor is it a 'top down' method of anti-sectarianism, but is a complete immersion of participants in a transformative pursuit in which they shape and determine the objectives. The model below illustrates how the research data and findings connect with praxis, and most significantly it shows the steps and values involved for pedagogy through the transformative process.
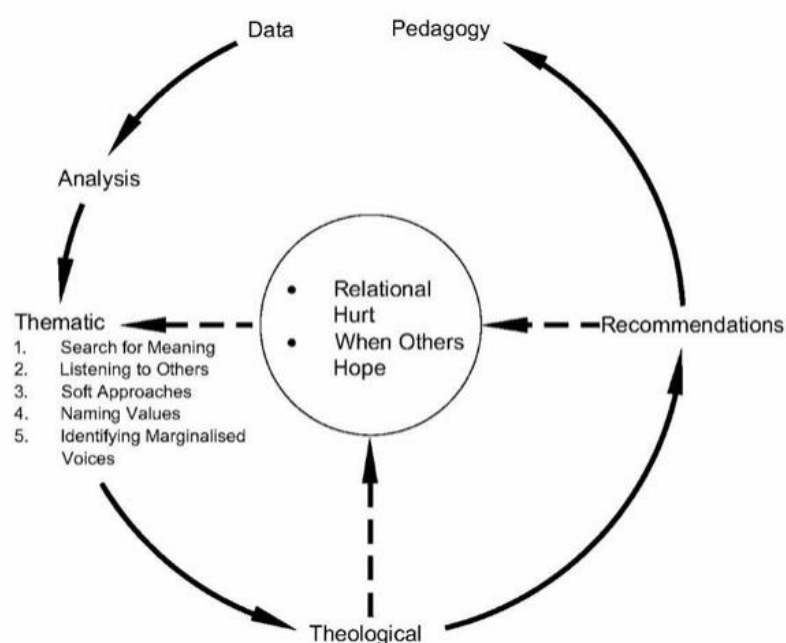
The model above illustrates the five thematic steps I identified through coding my research data. It shows too that significant insights were being articulated by the women which, following theological analysis, represent two core ethical responsibilities. The findings reveal an integral interdependency of each of the five steps, shown in the model, as well as upon the ethos of care which is found in the ethical responsibilities at the core, and it is this unique relationship

between step and ethics which forms the foundation for this anti-sectarian pedagogical approach.

While the steps explain the function and value of each stage within the initiative, the data shows that these steps must be framed within an ethos which reflects a deep understanding of relational pain and the fragility and power of hope. For pedagogical practice in particular, this interdependency highlights and prioritises a highly specific ethical duty of care for those involved, beyond that which currently exists.[4] It highlights that the decision to address sectarianism within education is, in itself, a moral undertaking which demands a level of commitment beyond recording objective and outcome requirements which sit within the Curriculum for Excellence. While teaching professionals already have a duty of care for young people, this is a very exacting requirement for those who seek to facilitate such an anti-sectarian undertaking, and to overlook this leaves the process and its participants without a very particular and essential ethical scaffold.

The recommended stages to emerge from the data analysis in chapter five, are each further conceptualised below, providing insight into how they can be adapted to enable a transformative pedagogy. The steps allow for the fact that age, gender and context will inevitably vary from group to group, and there is scope for them to be followed in entirety or partially, according to the individual group's choice and requirements. However a group may choose to apply these steps, they form a broad basis for possible future anti-sectarian approaches which are both context related and appropriately transferable.

Recommendations for a Transformative Pedagogy:

i. **Searching for shared meaning through story and experience.**
    For developing a transformational pedagogy, the search for meaning offers an effective model for the sharing of experiences and personal narratives which have the potential to humanise a perceived opposition through mutual understanding of life events. There does not need to be

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[4] The General Teaching Council Scotland's Code of Professionalism and Conduct.

agreement on definitions of sectarianism for this to be effective. Indeed, pursuit of that goal should be actively avoided for this is not the purpose of the search; there is no right or wrong answer. Every story shared is a potential step towards growth and relationship. The data indicates that the pursuit of relational meanings and the sharing of diverse understanding of sectarianism became a catalyst for the hearing of different stories, an essential requirement for an anti-sectarian intervention.

This is a highly adaptable pedagogical step which should be revisited many times. Instead of being frustratingly assumed to be 'going around in circles', it should be viewed, particularly for educational practice as an essential and highly valuable tool to encourage deeper reflection. As a teacher, I find this a wholly appropriate and adaptable method for the first step of introducing the concept of sectarianism as it provides unlimited opportunity to explore meaning both as a larger group and individually. Exploring meaning provides opportunity for young people to share their stories, talk to family members, listening and spending time reflecting on different views. It allows those who wish, to use a variety of creative methods as they explore, and most importantly, because it is not limited or restricted to a single session or date, it liberates those who can become too focused on striving for universal agreement on one deceptively unifying definition. This step in practice is the embodiment of living with difference and disagreement, and for those teachers invested in anti-sectarian pedagogical practice, this is invaluable.

ii. **Listening and speaking to others.**
    This is a particularly important step as the research shows that the 'engagement with others' aspect energised research participants, as it was the one activity which they all most hoped for; this was an alternative vision for anti-sectarianism in their community. Not sitting neatly within an anti-sectarian framework put in place by external facilitators or funders, this was arguably the ultimate goal for group members.

In the school context, introducing the listening and speaking step challenges pedagogical practice perhaps more than any other as it asks the school group to welcome other members of the community in to engage with the group. Because of this particular requirement, I would propose careful consideration of the context of the initiative. For example, if the school building is to be the preferred location then perhaps it can be introduced as an after-school meeting where a more relaxed informal approach can be more easily achieved using one of the larger staff rooms or even a more creative setting such as an art or music room. Conversations in the beginning will focus on meaning very much as described in the step above, but over time, as relationships grow, so too will conversations where new and old stories are shared and reflected upon. This is a place where new unexpected trusting relationships and understandings can develop as each person discovers new common threads and experiences with those of different views and backgrounds. The key objective of this step for the young people and those supporting them, is learning to listen to others who are perceived to be different.

Teachers, or those steering the initial recommendations for pedagogical anti-sectarianism will inevitably be involved in communicating their vision to the school and its wider communities. It will be their aim to ignite interest and hope in senior managers, young people, their parents and carers, and beyond. Therefore, it is important for practitioners to note, and as this research shows, hope dependent on goals which may ultimately prove unachievable, must be carefully respected and its fragility not ignored.

iii. **Soft approaches.**

Cautious of institutional intervention initiatives, research participants argued that these never seemed to make any real long-lasting positive change. The data shows there was a suspicion of packaged, time-restricted programmes. However, and this is where there are pedagogical insights, participants were conscious that they had a particular mandate to drive their own initiative. This is in itself of course an intervention, but

it is softer and less othering than that which currently dominates, as it seeks to empower members of the community in shaping and leading their own initiative.

While this recommendation sits very comfortably within the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence, which are, 1) Successful learners, 2) Confident individuals, 3) Responsible citizens, 4) Effective contributors,[5] it is unquestionably demanding in its requirement for the lighter touch approach from the facilitator, and revision of traditional institutional structures and methods would also be required to enable young people to shape and drive their own anti-sectarian approach. Despite the values and principles which lie behind a Curriculum for Excellence implying that there should be support for such an engaged lighter touch model, for schools which still largely operate in accordance with traditional educational models, this is indeed challenging.

However, for young people and their teachers this is potentially the most liberating part of the process; seeking to empower young people in their engagement and care for their community and leading their own soft forms of intervention. In practice, this step requires a number of interested pupils and others to come together as a core planning group to begin to consider the purpose and aims of their new group. The group, initially supported and facilitated by a staff member, would aim to confidently function within a collective leadership style as they explore and share their experiences. Together they would discuss sectarianism, perhaps arrange to meet with other school and community groups, and might conceptualise and plan how to generate new community conversations. In essence, this step requires a lighter approach to intervention in its initial formation, and building on that modelling, it asks

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[5] "Curriculum for Excellence," Scottish Government, accessed January 11, 2021, https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5/what-is-curriculum-for-excellence.

the members of the group to consider how they might model and live that approach out, beyond the group and into the community.

iv. **Naming values to sustain peace-making.**

The endeavour to recognise and engage with one another's values and hopes, is no small undertaking and demands a sensitive and thoughtful approach. The earlier considerations in chapter three of Chris Baker's work on spiritual capital highlighted that values based groups working alongside non-religious bodies generated powerful and transformative relationships which recognised and responded to the presence of those things held close and unseen within the community, such as identity, hope and fear.[6]

For pedagogical practice this level of group engagement emerges from an extended time where the group's relationships have developed through regular meeting and the sharing of their stories and hopes for the community. In this step, group enablers would ask the young people and others to share something personal, perhaps a song, verse or artwork, which they feel connects them to the group. For young people this is an enriching part of the process as it provides opportunity for them to creatively express their connections and feelings about issues related to the group and sectarianism. It offers a vehicle in which to tell their story or process thoughts, in a way which is not dependent on a verbal ability to make sense of or describe complex feelings, but instead select their own forms of communication. For the young person involved, this process helps develop a new awareness of theirs and each other's values and beliefs, and through sharing personal thoughts and hopes, group members enter into a new place where a desire for authenticity and understanding become even more conscientised.

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[6] Chris Baker, *The post-secular public square, spiritual capital and a progressive politics of hope*, Public Policy Exchange Forum on Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion – Strengthening Partnership Working between Local Authorities and Voluntary and Faith Groups, (6th June 2013): 6.

This is a mature and developed stage of the process, and is dependent on growth and it cannot, and should not be expected to occur, or moved on from, too quickly. This stage supports the argument that practitioners of more time limited anti-sectarian interventions, and who also seek this kind of dialogue, should be encouraged to reassess their programmes and attend to them with a refreshed approach to duty of care, because such dialogue deserves a sensitive and thoughtful approach.

v. **Identifying marginalised voices and finding ways to listen to them.** The benefits of identifying and seeking the involvement and knowledges of marginalised groups, in the conception of an anti-sectarian initiative where they are the intended recipients, cannot be overstated, and unlike current pedagogical approaches, these groups do not have a predetermined programme on how the problem should be solved.

A new pedagogical approach would specifically seek to involve those voices missing most from the discussion, and for anti-sectarian education, research shows that this is often the young people themselves. In the context of education, the group would initially be supported by a staff member, who would take a step back and encourage the young people to lead cooperatively. Through conversations with teaching colleagues and members of local schools and faith groups, a variety of individuals would be identified and invited to come along and find out more about the new initiative. The group would seek to be populated by representatives of the school and local people, who would over time invite and welcome other marginal voices to join their initiative. The welcoming in of new people, who bring with them new challenges, understandings and values, undoubtedly represents the life and growth for any anti-sectarian group.

The key objective of this step is to specifically include marginal voices in the discussion and to develop an awareness of the continued need to do so. As with step ii., and on a practical level to help reduce anxieties, this step also involves taking the anti-sectarianism out of the regular timetable whenever possible, removing familiar contextual surroundings,

barriers and expectations, and moving into a new space and time where current constraints are significantly less problematic; particularly for those individuals less comfortable with the typical classroom setting.

Drawing together the main arguments of the literature chapters and the data analysis, this chapter recommends an alternative anti-sectarian approach which is both possible and practical for pedagogy. Involving five steps which are supported by two very specific ethical responsibilities, the proposed model offers those invested in seeking out solutions to sectarianism, new opportunities for meaningful, caring, and contextually relevant engagement for transformation. This is a fresh and creative approach which looks to the local community, most particularly young people, for solutions.

The chapter demonstrates that the pedagogical approach I recommend is a highly flexible route which enables groups to shape and add to it as they require. It is resolute in its requirement that replicating a 'top down' method of anti-sectarianism must be avoided at all costs yet is dependent upon the support and full involvement of practitioners. In practice this approach asks a great deal of the teacher responsible for introducing it, as they must commit to being mindful in seeking to empower others to own and lead, while modelling the ethos of care for those involved. Despite the demand for such mindful commitment to the process, this is an emancipatory approach which offers potential for local pedagogical practice to become deeply invested in the transformation process.

Conclusion

Introduction

This research has sought to discover if an alternative model of anti-sectarianism could challenge and enable the reimagining of traditional institutional pedagogical approaches. It has also asked whether this process might be supported through faith based values.

Following a thematic analysis of the research data I have argued that alternative non-traditional, progressive methods do exist and these are able to be adapted and utilised by educational practitioners and other groups committed to anti-sectarianism. Such a new approach, involving a highly flexible route map of five steps, is particularly dependent upon two prominent ethical responsibilities which emerged from a theological approach to the data analysis.

Reflections on the Research Process

My original reflections upon and subsequent discomfort with pedagogical anti-sectarian methods drew me to Freire and hooks, pedagogical theorists I had been introduced to some years earlier during my time as a student teacher. Indeed, both theorists are regularly included in the teaching diploma syllabus for new graduate teachers. Through this earlier engagement with the theorists, and as a reflective practitioner, I realised there were reasons why I felt so ill at ease, finding little sense of satisfaction despite having delivered seemingly successful anti-sectarian lessons. Freire's and hooks' advocacy for a just and more egalitarian approach to education undoubtedly offered me a degree of vindication and greater confidence in my pursuit of alternative and creative solutions to pedagogical anti-sectarian approaches.

It was then important to first consider current anti-sectarian methods, as shown in chapter one, and critique how harmoniously these sit within the educational philosophies of Freire and hooks. There was a disconnection I discovered, between theory and practice which confirmed my suspicions of an ill fit, and led me to question how the theorists would approach controversial issues such as

sectarianism through their pedagogy. The results of this exploration revealed that while it was not theoretically impossible for anti-sectarianism to be effectively addressed by the teacher, current approaches required some change. There is an absence of space in schools, I found, where sectarianism and related forms of 'othering' can be safely discussed without judgment, and where vulnerable exploration and expression might mature without fear of labelling or censure. A new model asks much of the imagination in visualising how this new space might emerge in practice, but what became clear is that it involves viewing wider community dialogue as an integral part of the transformative and solution seeking process. It also entails a redesign of the current 'tidier' approach to anti-sectarian education, which problematically often appears to present itself as a package to be delivered and uncritically accepted.

As it developed, my quest was framed too by the arguments of the social theorist, Michel Foucault, who prompted me to question the power relations that lie by behind interventionist approaches. Foucault challenges me to reassess the legitimacy and limitations of what it is that I seek to do as a teacher *teaching* anti-sectarianism. It is hoped that a consciousness of the relationship between power and discourse will provide support and guidance in offering students safer, more liberating methods which allows them to reflect and discuss their views and relationships with sectarianism in a way which fully recognises their agency. Reflecting on the integrity of current interventions, Foucault's thinking on subjugated knowledge focused my thoughts on his argument that political power exercised through knowledge serves to discipline the subject, and consequently increases resistance.[1] The data shows that this resistance existed for the members of the women's group. The data also shows evidence of the consequences of Foucault's theory on institutional power's role in shaping discourse, but also proved to be an important dialogical framework for assessing the true effectiveness of anti-sectarian approaches. Pierre Bourdieu's insights into the role institutional power plays in the legitimising of knowledge, such as

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[1] "A Foucaultian Espistemology of Resistance," Vanderbilt University, accessed June 15, 2017, 11, https://as.vanderbilt.edu/philosophy/people/facultyfiles/medinatoward_a_foucaultian_epistemology_of_resistance.

anti-sectarianism, supported my view that we cannot afford to ignore, indeed we must address, the tension between authority, message and recipient. If I really want to address sectarianism in a just and informed way, then it is imperative that these variables are connected within an equitable and progressive framework.

It became clear to me that relationship building with *recipients* of the anti-sectarian message is crucial, particularly those voices rarely heard or acknowledged on the issue of anti-sectarianism. Through my engagement with feminist social theorists, I identified the consequences of the apparent lack of equity or involvement in the shaping of these interventions. Despite a great deal of academic research into sectarianism carried out with male participants, and some too with young people, there was an absence of academic research with one particular group which for me, highlighted a void and suggested disinterest or an expectation of quiet acquiescence. Sharlene Hesse-Biber's analysis of standpoint epistemology and participation barriers propelled me to seek out marginalised voices, and on sectarianism, the most silenced belong to women. The data shows that current anti-sectarian approaches owned by authority are male-centred, creating obstacles which have served to exclude women from participating in the discussion. Exclusion of such an important part of the community has wider implications for other members of that community, including children. Engaging with Hesse-Biber's work, most particularly on the marginalisation of women, my interrogation of structural and gendered obstacles within anti-sectarian initiatives has been oxygenised. I now argue that recipient voices cannot be ignored or overlooked if life changing conversations are being genuinely sought. Realistic in my assessment of the limitations of current methods, structures and powers, my visional outcome is the absorption of these learnings into my professional duty of care for students in a way which is both practical and creative.

Most connected to my observation and concern at a lack of engagement with particular groups intended to benefit from anti-sectarianism, were the critical arguments of theologian, Elaine Graham. Graham suggests that issues relating to identity, diversity and faith have become in recent years more prominent in the

cultural consciousness as religious affiliations and power garnered more attention though a number of political and international crises. These have resulted in an increase in the awareness of the religious elements within our local communities and highlighted a need for dialogue between secular and faith based groups.[2] Graham observes that traditional approaches have served to further propagate master ideologies and reinforce ethics and practices which have functioned to keep minorities without a voice. I resonated with this assessment completely, observing it in much of the anti-sectarian lesson plans I was so familiar with, where the focus was on football or anti-social behaviour of young males. I recognised that for transformation to become a possibility there is an inevitable requirement for master ideologies to be revealed in order to enable inter-communal dialogue to be actively and fairly pursued.

Graham's advocacy for apologetics as practice was expanded further by Anna Rowlands' work on the concept of the Common Good, and her critique of the often problematic historic relations between religious and secular institutions. Rowlands fervently maintains Graham's positive vision for the future in terms of local transformative action involving individuals of all faiths and none, working closely with a range of social justice and civic organisations seeking social change. Rowlands sees no reason why seeking social transformation should be pursued in isolation by either of these groups. Acknowledging a shared objective for transformation as a binding moment in pursuit of the Common Good is an important step which would undoubtedly support many of the civic and faith groups individually seeking to address sectarianism. This has unquestionably impacted my professional relationships. I identified the root cause of my hesitancy to approach senior managers with suggestions and recommendations as a fear of being dismissed as being not quite secular enough for teaching in a non-denominational school, where non educational religious contact is mostly restricted to religious festivals and trauma events.

Theologian Chris Baker's work with both faith and secular groups also reveals practical and specific insight into what might be possible for anti-sectarian

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[2] Graham, *Apologetics without Apology.*

education. Through Baker's detailed case studies, he shares the negotiations involved in complicated and often controversial local community pursuits, and he reveals the prospect of human flourishing which can result through transformative and willing participation. It is not an easy task, but Baker's is a theological approach based on a firm commitment to human concern and social justice and which outlines a flexible route map dependent on relationship building; a foundational criteria also found in the Wishae Wimmin's group.

Through Baker's negotiations, I began to identify relationships, albeit slight but in existence, between education and local faith groups within my own community where I both lived and worked, and I began to visualise how an alternative anti-sectarian education model which is connected to the community might look in practice.

It was important therefore to examine ways in which anti-sectarianism had been researched in the past before moving beyond the literature and towards the study of a local community context in which women of faith backgrounds had come together to seek alternative approaches to anti-sectarianism. Constructing my own methodological approach, I was deeply attentive to the women's group from whom I sought to learn and be responsive to the insights they might offer my own developing practice. This was a profoundly important stage of the research process in which I was fully immersed in the women's group for two years. Exploring whether there might be practical alternative anti-sectarian pedagogical models which offer potential for positive change outside the sphere of state-led governance, the data revealed that there does exist non-traditional, progressive methods which can be utilised by others.

The research bears out that another approach is possible for pedagogy, and that approach involves five steps supported by two very specific ethical responsibilities. It offers those invested in seeking out solutions to sectarianism new opportunities for meaningful, caring, and contextually relevant engagement for transformation. This is a new model which looks to the local community, and particularly young people, for those solutions. I am however also acutely conscious at this juncture of my own words expressed earlier in this thesis:

While it may be tempting to cry out for an ending of the traditional and beckon in the new, the real challenge of course is finding a way to bring the various different approaches to the table; searching for ways in which they can work together, if not always harmoniously then like pieces of flint, resolute in determination to ignite something new.

The most challenging limitation of this new approach is unquestionably the necessity to find a way to work within existing educational structures. While this thesis does not argue for the removal of human rights or peacebuilding messaging from the curriculum, as demonstrated, institutional anti-sectarianism struggles to achieve deep engagement and measurable outcomes, due mostly to constraining contexts. It is my hope that the limitations of context and structure prove to be positive starting points for a new conversation, and that this thesis will inspire others who work within anti-sectarianism in exploring how this model may be adapted to fit.

Reflecting on the strengths of this model for my own professional teaching practice, it is clear to me that this is an alternative anti-sectarian approach which I can adapt and utilise within a teaching context. Indeed, each group - each school - will find their own way of applying these learnings as the process encourages a flexible application. Requiring a philosophical commitment to a non-partisan emancipatory process which questions current methods, I find it offers practical and ethical contributions for change which do not remove or centralise the issue, but respectfully looks to the community for help in seeking solutions.

The effect of this research however, and my extensive engagement with the participants goes far beyond locating an alternative pedagogical solution to anti-sectarianism. From the educational philosophies of Freire and hooks, the unequivocal challenges presented by Foucault, with non-genderblind, non-marginalised blind contributions of Hesse-Biber, and with the socially and emotionally connected theological arguments of Graham, Rowlands and Baker,

all of these, as described in the section above have brought significant and eradicable change to me personally, and in turn to my practice.

Future Work

In order to engage further with the implications of anti-sectarianism and related educational policy, particularly relating to learners, it would be worthwhile for a future work to explore more widely the relationship between young people and the broader moral interventions which take place within the school context. As this research progressed it became clear to me that in some way this thesis is a preparatory work which would benefit from such a large broad-based investigation. It has become common place to increasingly hear suggestions that a range of moral issues must be addressed in schools. The list of moral issues demanding curriculum inclusion is seemingly endless. A larger study would seek to understand the motivations and efficacy of such an approach.

The proposed work would benefit enormously from the involvement and participation of local authorities in exploring the ethics, risks and benefits of such interventions. Future research studies should also include input not only from young people, but also from their parents and carers, and would assist in decisions relating to policy development of future moral, and less traditional educational focussed programmes designed to guide learners' choices and influence their behaviours.

Appendices

Appendix 1   Ethics Approval

Appendix 2   Consent Form

Appendix 3   Ethical Checklist

Appendix 4   Research Methods: A Summation

Appendix 5   Focus Group: An extract from the transcript

Appendix 6   Data Table

Appendix 1

Dear Beverley

Ethics Application 100150157: Ethics Approval

Ethical approval is given for your research. Please note that an end of project report is required by the Ethics Committee. A brief report should be provided within one month of the completion of the research, giving details of any ethical issues which have arisen (a copy of the report to the funder, or a paragraph or two will usually be sufficient). This is a condition of approval and in line with the committee's need to monitor research. Further, it is your responsibility to inform, as appropriate, your supervisor, advisor or funding body of the outcome of your Ethics application. You should also indicate successful receipt of ethics clearance on the acknowledgements page of the approved project.

In addition, any unforeseen events which might affect the ethical conduct of the research, or which might provide grounds for discontinuing the study, must be reported immediately in writing to the Ethics Committee. The Committee will examine the circumstances and advise you of its decision, which may include referral of the matter to the central University Ethics Committee or a requirement that the research be terminated.

Information on the College of Arts Ethics policy and procedures is at http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/ethics.

Yours sincerely

Iain

Dr Iain Banks

College of Arts Ethics Officer
School of Humanities/An Sgoil Daonnachdan
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University of Glasgow
Appendix 2

Charity No. SC004401

CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA
University of Glasgow, College of Arts Research Ethics Committee

I understand that _____Beverley
Friend_____
(name of researcher)

is collecting data in the form of ____observation, taped interviews,
journaling_____

for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

My research question, 'How Does a Scottish Community Engage with Anti-Sectarianism?' seeks to discover if sectarianism can be challenged locally and what the impact of this challenge is. My sub question asks, 'How do faith commitments influence anti-sectarian practice and actions'

   Summary:

   1. The research question is:

      How Does a Scottish Community Engage with Anti-Sectarianism?
      And
      How do faith commitments influence that Engagement?

   2. The North Lanarkshire anti-sectarian women's group *Wishy Women Seeking Faith, Hope and Clarity* will be asked to engage with the questions stated above in creative and informal settings both alongside and outwith normal group meetings.

   3. To answer the research questions, the research will involve:

      i.   Observation
      ii.   Journaling
      iii.   Focus Group
      iv.   Semi-structured interviews

   4. Before submission of the thesis, participants will be invited to feedback any comments regarding the analysis of the data. The data may also be used in further publications by the researcher

   5. Final Thesis will be circulated to the following:

Supervisor, examiners, Glasgow University Library. In addition it will be offered to Wishy Women Seeking Faith, Hope and Clarity, Scottish Government, the Church of Scotland and Faith in Community Scotland.

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The research material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times for a period of ten years.
- The material will be destroyed ten years after completion of the research project.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed by the contributor:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿   Date:

Researcher's name and email contact: **Beverley Friend**

Supervisor's name and email contact: **Professor Heather Walton**
                                              Heather.Walton@Glasgow.ac.uk

Department address: University of Glasgow, School of Critical Studies, University Avenue, Glasgow, G12 8QQ

Appendix 3

Patton's Ethical Checklist

(Adapted from Hesse-Biber Sharlene Nagy, Leavy Patricia, *The Practice of Qualitative Research; Second Edition* (California, 2011), 83.

Explaining purpose: *How will you explain the purpose of the evaluation and methods to be used in ways that are accurate and understandable?*

- Following providing details in person to prospective participants, emails were then sent to all giving information regarding the research question, methods, purpose, safety and confidentiality.

Promises and reciprocity: What's in it for the interviewee?

- Prior to commencement of this study, participants were already invested in examining how sectarianism might be better addressed in their local area, therefore this research is something they are supportive of as it is hoped it will contribute in some way to opening up new avenues in their quest for positive change.

Risk assessment: In what ways, if any, will conducting the interview put people at risk? How will you describe these potential risks to interviewees? How will you handle them if they arise?

- There are safety concerns regarding any enquiry into sectarianism, and as an anti-sectarian women's group whose members live in the area of the research focus, there are undoubtedly measures which must be put in place to ensure the safety of all participants. These measures will adopt a feminist approach to research and will include: an opt out system and a feedback loop to ensure all have a voice.
- Meeting places are public and supervisors are informed of these appointments prior to them taking place.

Confidentiality: What are reasonable promises of confidentiality that can be fully honoured?

- Anonymity and confidentiality and data is securely stored and locked for the duration and following conclusion of the project.

Informed consent*: What kind of informed consent, if any, is necessary for mutual protection?*

- University of Glasgow ethical approval applied for and granted.
- Information emails and consent forms sent to participants' individually.
- Participants invited to email me with any questions.

Data access and ownership*: Who will have access to the data? For what purposes?*

- Data will be made available to all participants.
- University of Glasgow Library will store the data (thesis) for viewing.
- The data (thesis) will be made available to government bodies, and other interested parties.

Interviewer mental health*: How will you and other interviewers likely be affected by conducting the interviews?*

- Much of the content shared is likely to be sensitive, and very personal for some, therefore it is essential that reflective Journal entries and regular meetings with supervisors are fully utilised.

Data collection boundaries*: How hard will you push for data?*

- As this research involves an existing anti-sectarian women's group, of which I am invited to become part of for this ethnographic research study, there is little likelihood of having to push hard for data as volunteers are actively interested participants'.

Appendix 4

Research Methods: A Summation

To discover how a Scottish community can help re-imagine anti-sectarian pedagogy, and how faith based values can inform that engagement, the following methods were used:

Observation and Journaling

The women's group met at least once a month. I regularly journaled following these meetings, including following the focus group and individual semi-structured interviews. I included in my journal space for reflexive thinking to further develop observations.

Focus Group

6 women were invited to join the focus group. This was a mixed group of Catholic and Protestant, practising and non-practicing women of differing ages and backgrounds. The focus group took approximately 90 minutes and was held in the usual meeting place of the women's anti-sectarianism group. The focus group title presented to participants for discussion was, 'Describe how sectarianism and anti-sectarianism have impacted you.'

I adapted and used the focus group model presented below:

1. Name experience
2. Critical reflection
3. Theological reflection
4. Conversation to connect biblical story to participants' stories
5. Responses

Participants were provided with the topic for consideration in advance of the meeting and were asked to bring any biblical text, poem or piece of prose which they felt connected them to the subject of sectarianism and anti-sectarianism.

Four separate signposting topics were used throughout the focus group. These were:

1. What are your experiences of sectarianism or anti-sectarianism?
2. In what ways have your experiences of sectarianism influenced or affected you, your life? (And link this if you can to your decision to join the group)
3. Do you think gender has a part to play in this? (We're a women's group, so do you think women have a unique contribution to make?)
4. How do you think faith can support and inform the main objectives of anti-sectarianism?

Individual semi-structured Interviews

The individual semi-structured interviews were held approximately 4 weeks after the focus group to allow for a period of reflection on the topics discussed and the standpoints or difficulties presented during the focus group or emerging since. The semi structured interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes each, were highly reflexive and provided space for participants to discuss the focus group and feedback any additional points that they wished.

Core topics included in the interviews were:

1. What challenges have you experienced in addressing sectarianism as a woman living in North Lanarkshire?

2. What does the women's group mean to you?

3. Explain why you think it is important that Christians are involved and how might this affect change?

Appendix 5

Focus Group extract (21ˢᵗ September 2016). A sample of participants' responses when asked to share their experiences of sectarianism.

J2: My nephew at school, there's a joint campus Catholic and non-denominational, and as kids do they get into fights and arguments about us and them, and they do it within their friendship groups, but they got into a bit of something with the older boys from the other school. They've got a joint playground, and mostly loads of the kids play together, get on well together, but then you always get some who'll cause trouble. But there was one lad who was calling him a wee Fenian B. Both schools took action from the incident, had parents in and said we can't allow this kind of language, but the fact is they children didnae lick that aff the flair. They've heard that language somewhere, so that language is still getting banded about, on both sides, it's still getting used. What I think is happening is that it's more underground, it's being kept within their circles. Where it used to be quite acceptable to say ya Orange B or ya Fenian B, not acceptable but more common place, whereas now it's more – whispers – it's because they're a…. or don't listen to them they're just a wee Orange….

J2: It's happening in the pubs, still. It's still very much. The old firm game, I always go and sit and watch the old firm game in my brother's house and its mixed company and it is banter because these are people we all went about with for years and years, but there was a point where it was never mixed company it was very much you go and watch yours and we'll go with ours. There was a point, they'll all openly admit they weren't able to sit in a room together and watch it because if it went one way or another it would be banter then it becomes arguments and fighting, but they're older now and became wiser. So we all watch it in my brother's usually and then we'll go out to the Cross Keys which is a predominantly Catholic pub and a lot of the time it's the only time you'd only see half the people you've known for years. And again predominantly Catholics but there will be other people there too, and its rebel tunes and everybody's singing and I just refuse to sing, always have done, songs about things that happened in 1916 in Ireland that's got nothing to do with me and I

don't particularly want to hate anybody or hope anybody dies and I don't want to go down and pretend I'm cocking a gun, but it's still happening. And these are people I'm looking at and thinking I see you at Mass and I know you're a nurse down in the hospital or I know your husband is a Protestant but it still happens but in acceptable circles.

J: Do you think it was ever a faith thing? I don't think it was ever a faith thing. I don't think in our lifetime it has been. When sectarianism became a word or a concept, I don't think it was ever a faith thing by that point because people who genuinely practices their faith would never have been involved in that kind of language.

J2: You identify with a faith because in Scotland because you have to. You're one or the other. There's no in-between. In Scotland you're not given a choice. You are either going to a Catholic school or you go to a non-denominational school and you are therefore identified with a faith.

C: I find it really interesting the things I've heard about refugees and immigration and the differences said in a mixed group here.

J2: If they're asylum seekers or refugees they still need to pick whether they go to a Protestant or Catholic school usually decided by their nationality. You find very few Polish children in a non-denominational school.

H: They might be practising Catholics.

J2: Yes but they are again automatically segregated. The minute you enter education at primary level you are automatically segregated from – us and them. Whether you are a Catholic at a non-denominational school or vice versa, you will be viewed as one or the other based on the school you attend.

M: I wonder if it's to do with identity and belonging because there's something about people – it's better now than it used to be – being part of discreet communities where they really didn't know one another's culture and

background and it happened to be Catholic and Protestant. If we were to call them Martian and Jupiter would it be the same thing? Because the history has grown up to have Catholic and Protestant, so what do we mean by sectarianism? Are we talking about a purely we're against them or is it something different and is it just Catholic and Protestant?

J: I think there's a bigger question, do the Government help perpetuate this by having two schools? When we were all kids, we played with whoever was in the street, but that was only until you were five years of age and went to school and then you realised there was a difference.

C: My children have got that just now in our street. When we moved into the street we're in, she went to a non-denominational nursery, and the children she'd played with from the nursery stopped coming to my door when she started school at St Brendan's.

J2: I'm not sure if it's just because of the school but this is helping breed it in us and them. When I first started in this group I think I would have been appalled at hearing somebody say get rid of separate schools. I think as a Catholic primary school teacher I would have been appalled. But the more we've discussed things and the more I thought about it the more I can see the sense in there not being Catholic primary schools. I think RME can still be delivered and there still can be children going out of certain classes. I think it could still work because that small part of the week when some kids go there and some over there, that's what happens in the class anyway. And then there isn't an 'us and them'. I always thought I was quite open minded but I was quite fixed in my ideas about Catholic schools. But now I do think they should have multi denominational schools rather that non-denominational.

Appendix 6 Themes and Ethical Indicators

Ethical Indicators: Relational Hurt **(RH)** and When Others Hope **(WOH)**

Data without quotation marks denote a shared sentiment.

1. Searching for Meaning	2. Listening to Others	3. Soft Approaches	4. Naming Values	5. Identifying Marginalised Voices
'Any unease in society reveals it' (A) 'Endemic in all societies' (A) Intolerance of differences (J,C,J2,M,H,A) **(RH)** It's deeply personal (J,C,J2) **(RH)** Church/denominational prejudices (J,C,J2,H) 'He wouldn't go to the wedding because my gran married a Catholic' (J,C) **(RH)** Education - separate schools teaches kids they are different/separate (J,C,J2) Separation (A,C,J2) **(RH)** Power -'Boil it down, it's white nationalism'	'In the beginning it felt that the group was an experiment, a game, a social experiment' (J) Chosen people – selected to be part of this (J,C,J2) **(WOH)** 'I was inspired to join by Irish women example' (J) **(WOH)** Awareness of fragility of the group (J,J2,C,H,A,M) **(RH)** 'People are scared to unpick this because their whole identity will unravel' (A) **(RH)** 'Let it be real' (A) **(WOH)** See the person not their religion (J,J2,C) 'That we don't fold' (A) **(WOH)**	'This is sincere' (J) **(WOH)** 'Less is more' (J2) 'Intervention is always worrying' (A) **(RH)** 'Listening skills are important' (J) **(WOH)** Being visible in the community (A,C,J2) **(WOH)** 'Icons are contemplative and connect to deeper values' (A) 'We use the tree as our symbol' (A) 'There are no limitations on perceptions and reflections' (A) 'The effects can transform a person' (A) **(WOH)** 'Being exposed to	'Jesus is my role model' (J) Do unto other as you would have them do unto you (J2,C,J,H) **(RH)** 'There were divisions in the early church too' (J) **(RH)** One church (M,J,C,J2) 'I used to secretly meet grandpa to go to the chapel with him, I never told the women that' (J) **(RH)** Catholicism is embedded in home life (A,J2,C) Has football become a new religion? (H,J2) Unity (J,M,J2,C) **(WOH)** 'Parables are a good example of how stories can change you' (J)	'Yes it can definitely challenge the desensitising of people' (C) **(WOH)** We need to have the conversations (H,J,J2) **(WOH) (RH)** Problem is when group does not reflect the community (C,J2) **(RH)** 'We're all singing from the same song sheet' (C) 'It is not diverse enough' (C) **(WOH)** We need staunchest people in the group (C,J2) **(WOH)** 'We are highly educated Catholic women' (C) 'They are poorly educated Orange women – that was an

(C) 'If you're not like us you're not with us' (C) **(RH)** 'Islamophobia is uniting Catholics and Protestants' (C) Politics, money, power (A,C,J,M,H,J2) 'M brought sectarian men into the group when she left' (A) **(RH)** 'It's messy and it can't be tidied away into a box' (A) Hatred of Catholic or Protestants (J,J2,C) It's not just football (A,J2,C,J,M,H) Orange Order / Hibs (A,J,H,C) More obvious in football but not as visual as before (M,C,J,J2) People have become very adept at hiding it (J,J2,A) **(RH)** Local leaders – religious	'The natural thing is to fold in view of the changes' (A) They don't work because the priest doesn't want them to work (A,C,J2) 'I don't want my children to know what sectarianism is or for it to even be an issue'(C) **(RH) (WOH)** Doing something to change it (J2,C,J) 'No matter how small' (J) **(WOH)** Opened my/our eyes (C,J2,H) **(RH)** Reflected on my/our own bias (H,J,C,J2) 'My view on catholic schools has changed' (J2,C) Sadness when the women from the Orange Order left (J,J2,C,M,H,A) **(RH)** 'It's not just a	signs that make us wonder' (A) Other practices may be more outcome driven (C,A,J) 'Other initiatives seem to be very prescriptive, outcome driven' (C) WW is more about shared understanding – organic (C,J2) **(WOH)** 'The more prescriptive projects teach for an outcome' (C) 'Difficult to really allow contemplation and encourage thinking' (C) 'Who is being challenged?' (J2) 'It should be everyone – mutual' (J2) **(WOH)** 'How much good does it do if the home isn't teaching it too' (J2) Outcome driven initiatives are not as	'There are shades of green' (H) We all have something prejudiced (J2,H,J,C) **(RH)** 'Church has become the official Orange church in the area' (J) **(RH)** 'They march to church after meetings' (J) 'They openly ridicule in church those of different religion' (J) **(RH)** 'Not challenged' (J) 'Gives a solid base for something that is for and not against' (A) **(WOH)** 'Powerful influence particularly on a difficult day' (A) **(WOH)** 'Brings into the consciousness and helps you let it go' (A) **(WOH)** You become that which is attributed to you (A) **(RH)**	issue' (C) Extreme beliefs must be present in the group (C,H,J2) 'We can't just be a management committee' (C) **(RH)** Question people on integrated schools (C,J2) Challenge but also campaign for integration and separate RE lessons (C,J2) 'We also need to hold the clergy to account – the priest accusing Muslims of stealing fasting from the Catholics!' (C) We must be the catalyst for change (C,J,J2) **(WOH)** We need to be able to challenge one another (C,J2,J,M,H,A) **(RH) (WOH)**

(A,C,J2) 'The priest' (A) 'Bishop Devine' (A) 'Stoked fire to restate identity' (A) Maleness (H,M,J,C) 'There is relationship between power and sectarianism' (A) Poverty (A,J2,J,C) Mental health (A,C) **(RH)** 'Low self esteem' (M) 'People really struggle with the fear of losing their identity' (M) **(RH)** No real awareness of the deep self and own beliefs and feelings (M,A,J,C) **(RH)** Young children (C,J2,J) 'Where are they?' (H,) 'Where do they come from?' (H) 'What's feeding it in them?' (H) 'Where are the songs played?' (H)	religious phenomenon but it's our past and we bring that with us' (A) **(RH)** 'There is a belief that catholic schools are better – behaviour - but maybe we shouldn't have separate schools' (J2,C)	effective as home and community (J2,C) Community dialogue is way forward (C,J2) **(WOH)** 'We need to become structured but not prescriptive' (C) **(WOH)** Tells racist joke to show how reflection can change language (C) Anti-sectarianism group must reflect the community (C,H,J2) **(WOH)** 'I love all the schools drama work but they only impact for short time' (J2)	Bin the judgments and help the poor (H,C,J2,J) **(WOH)** 'And I'll ask them, how do you feel right now – not think' (A) 'Faith beliefs need to be nurtured' (A) You can live a Christian life but disconnect with the community (J2,A) 'Men have slower faith development than women' (A) 'When you put your head above the parapet you put yourself in the line of fire' (A) **(RH)** 'Faith is a basis for resolve' (A) 'People use the bible as a tool' (J) 'Religion teaches us we are equal and no one is above God' (J) **(RH) (WOH)** The belief that things can improve	The Catholic women were more open minded than the Orange women (C,J2,J) 'I hope so' (A) **(WOH)** 'I actually think there are very diverse friendships in the group' (J2) Everyone brings something different (M,H) We represent different points of view and parts of the community (M,J,J2) 'We are not identical' (J2) 'When the orange women left, the challenge left' (C) **(RH)** Finding a way forward (C,J2,A,H,M) 'Being harnessed – using what we have and who we are' (A) **(RH) (WOH)** 'Getting a forum' (J) 'Getting into a space

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'Where are these things being taught?' (H) 'What are the benefits?' (H) 'What is poverty?' (J) 'Twigs together are stronger' (C) **(WOH)** 'Who does it serve to divide and destroy communities?' (C) **(RH)** Children's language (J2,J,C) Primary school (J,J2,C) Us and them (J2,A,C) 'Pub – esp on old firm days – rebel songs sung by people who would never usually sing them' (J2) 'Up the RA! they sing' (J2) Alcohol fuelled (J2,C,M) A focus for friendships (M,J2,C) **(RH)** Passion (H,J2) Covert (C,J2,J) Comments and			(J,J2,C,H,M,A) **(WOH)** 'I am what I am not' (H) 'Power and superiority' (H) **(RH)** 'The majority of those with real faith do not partake' (J2) Lots profess faith but merely follow a pattern and there's no real reflection (J,J2) 'It either the Chapel and Hibs' (J2) 'Or the Church and Orange Order' (J2) 'Faith can be unhelpful I think in addressing it' (J2) But community dialogue is more helpful (J2,C,H) **(WOH)** 'There's a thawing afoot' (J) **(WOH)** 'God is at work here' (J) **(WOH)** 'If we were really a grown up Scotland we wouldn't have different	first before it affects others' (C) **(WOH)** Continuing to meet and try to do something (M,J) **(WOH)**

innuendos masked as banter (J2,J,H) **(RH)** Sectarianism has been driven underground (J2,C,H) **(RH)** The smarter people know when and where they can sing rebel songs (J2,H)			faith schools' (J2) 'Jesus' example - speaking to all colours – green and blue' (J) Imagining the impossible into being (J,C) **(WOH)** 'Orange band playing hymn outside chapel' (J) 'But they'll just take their shite elsewhere' (H) 'Matthew 7 1-7' (C) **(RH) (WOH)**	

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