

“SECTARIANISM” AND THE WORK PLACE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

Sectarian and sectarianism: semantics and ideology

Sectarian and sectarianism are imprecise terms. This lack of clarity contributes to some of the confusion that can attend any discussion of religious difference in Scotland. Sectarian can legitimately be used as a term to describe what, from any reasonable perspective, are positive phenomena associated with a specific sect within a particular faith tradition. For example, in a non-pejorative sense, a church choir or a church charitable concern or a church social body, such as a scout group or bible class, inevitably must be a sectarian organisation. Here the use of sectarian is intended to be a neutral description. That is, unless some critic provides evidence that these bodies behave in some aggressive manner towards others who are affiliated to other sects in the same religious tradition.

Sectarian can simply refer to a variety of differences within a particular faith tradition. In that sense all that it means is that some action or activity is allied to a particular church group or sect. Yet the term is often taken to be a pejorative reference to the activities of a certain sect. This confusion pinpoints the specific semantic difficulty in using this term.

This dual, confused, and confusing, usage of the term sectarian plays its part in the uncertainty associated with interpreting what it is meant to mean (Finn, 1999). Consequently, it would be possible for people to agree that the term is an appropriate description for an event or organisation but be using it as a common reference to some thing that they judge very differently. Much more probable is that this ambiguity in meaning simply leads frequently to further misunderstanding.

If there is this uncertainty over the meaning of sectarian, then sectarianism will be even more problematic. Discussion of sectarianism presumes some notion not only of what sectarian means, but also that there is some common understanding as to what sectarianism itself is taken to mean. Any deliberations on sectarianism, or any attempt to evaluate its effects, cannot be uninfluenced by these underlying assumptions (Liechty & Clegg, 2001).¹ Some particular concerns expressed about the inevitable looseness of interpretation have also identified the elasticity of the terms, and the often-misleading nature of their usage in both lay and academic discourses: sometimes this occurs in a nuanced manner, but it can equally be displayed in simply opposed interpretations (e.g. Miles, 1982; Finn, 1990, 2003; Brewer 1992; Kelly, 2003).

Various potential and conceptual deficiencies have been identified in how the term is used. One error can be to neglect other factors that can be subsumed by what appear superficially only religious markers, and therefore assume religious labelling to be an independent factor, and thus the driving force, in the operation of sectarianism. However, drawing on Brewer's observation that religion acts as a 'social marker', and that religion is not itself the source of community conflict, the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council (NICRC, 2003) concludes that 'the dispute ... is about allegiance ... to "Britain" and "Britishness" ... and to "Ireland" and "Irishness"'. And

that, although religion is important in these two social identities, its real function is to operate as ‘a stereotypical cue’, ensuring that religion ‘is a major apparent difference between the two communities and the difference that conveniently labels each one.’ The complexity of religious labelling means that it is too limiting to restrict the analysis of sectarianism to religion alone. Although the phenomenon in Scotland is not identical to its Northern Ireland manifestation, that same lesson still needs to be heeded. Historical explorations of Scottish sectarianism have demonstrated these associations and connections (e.g., Gallagher, 1987, Brown, 1991; Findlay, 1991).

A further problem with the term sectarianism is that its usage usually ‘... avoids any identification of causality, neglects any analysis of social and political power within Scotland and implies equal culpability for prejudice between majority and minority communities and helps retain the myth of Scotland as a democratic and egalitarian society, free from the stain of racism, Much that is claimed to be sectarianism is better described as anti-Irish racism (Finn, 1990a: pp. 5-6).’ⁱⁱ Claims of racism in relation to the Irish seem strange to those who confuse the reality of racism with the unfortunate belief that it is skin colour that provides the mark of “real” races: a consequence that only demonstrates the continuing power of racist social thinking on society. Racism refers to those processes through which some social groups are allocated inferior status and positions because of their perceived differences from some supposed superior norm, and which is usually, though not always, justified as the inevitable result of the working out of biological or racial differences. Various groups of humans have experienced racialisation in the past, and in ways that clash with present-day racist thinking about “black” and “white” differences (Roediger, 1994). Historically this process operated against the Irish, and followed the Irish diaspora throughout much of the world (e.g., Roediger, 1994; Ignatiev, 1995).

Scotland was certainly no different. Catholic Irish and their descendants were subjected to racism (e.g., Miles, 1982; Brown, 1991; Findlay, 1991) In Scotland too community antagonisms involve social identities and complex allegiances. But it is often the Irish dimension to those phenomena bundled up in the term sectarianism that proves to be especially problematical, and then misunderstood, misinterpreted, even misrepresented.

As sectarianism can also apply to conflicts in which sects of faiths other than Christianity act as communal markers, the Scottish Executive has provided some specificity in its own usage by targeting its actions on the eradication of intra-Christian conflict, effectively that between Protestant and Catholic.ⁱⁱⁱ Nonetheless, from the account of the Scottish Executive Summit on Anti-Sectarianism of 14/02/2005^{iv} there is the clear intention to tackle a much wider range of relevant manifestations of discord that are, or have been, seen to be associated with this relationship, many of which were identified in the discussions that day. That intention is confirmed by the formal inclusion in the Executive’s Anti-Sectarianism Action Plan (Scottish Executive, 2006) of the issues of parades and marches, and sport, neither of which can be defined only in relation to intra-Christian conflict. Obviously the Executive recognized that the adoption of too limited a focus would underestimate the scope of the problem and undermine its own initiatives to tackle sectarianism.

Uncertainty of meaning poses some problems and presents some interesting issues when responses to questions about sectarian and sectarianism are gathered in research

projects. Usually participants have appeared to proceed as if the terms are unproblematic. However, that may be because research methods that do not involve a personal and direct engagement with the researcher will be less likely to allow any uncertainty to appear. Nonetheless, one study, which used a variety of research methods, including techniques such as focus groups and interviews, and which should have allowed any doubts to be voiced, found that both terms were simply interpreted negatively (NFO, 2003).^v That might lead to misleading or erroneous responses.

As sectarian can also have a non-pejorative meaning, simply referring to some association with a sect of a major religious belief system, this overly simplistic understanding does point to the possibility of a potential confusion in the orientation taken by some participants when interpreting and responding to some questions. One consequence of this demonstrated neglect of the non-pejorative meaning of sectarian might be that harmless church associations can be unreflectively judged critically, and condemned because of an assumed association with sectarianism (Finn, 1999). Confusion over the potential multiple meanings of this term introduces a possible source of error when researchers attempt to interpret participants' answers.

Indeed, not every study has found sectarianism to be an immediately understood reference. The CERES (2005) study for the Scottish Executive (which led to the setting up of the Anti Sectarianism Website with Learning and Teaching in Scotland) found that the term itself could present difficulties. This research used relatively small discussion groups with young people in five different geographical settings and found that differences in location could bring about some variation in understanding the term.^{vi} In Aberdeen those taking part 'were unfamiliar with the term "sectarianism"; however the young people in Glasgow, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire and Inverness recognized the term and in all cases were able to identify that religion was a contributing factor.' Participants in Aberdeen and Edinburgh offered a suggestion that, to assist people to understand the topic, the use of "religious hatred" was a more meaningful description.

Despite the apparently problematic nature of the term for some, none of the five groups in this study failed to engage in deep discussion of the issues they judged relevant to "sectarianism" or "religious hatred", and the discussions inevitably did range over more than religion itself. But it can be no coincidence that the young people as a whole considered that one of the important tasks in combating sectarianism was to provide a definition of the phenomenon. Responses to sectarianism made by those involved in the NFO research confirmed the breadth of interpretation that can be expected. Both "sectarian" and "sectarianism" were taken to refer to 'division, bigotry and discrimination based on religion' which, in turn, is usually identified with 'conflict between Protestants and Catholics' with "historical roots in Ireland and a contemporary relevance because of the continuing events in Northern Ireland' (NFO, 2003: p. 5).

The need to tackle the Irish dimension is evident in this and other research. However, the potentially contested nature of popular accounts becomes clear in this partial description offered by the NFO report: it neglects the extent to which the 'historical roots in Ireland' were related to the nature of British-Irish relations, and some would argue that remains the case with respect to Northern Ireland. Fortunately the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 has, despite its irregular progress in Northern Ireland,

transformed the context within which such previously emotive discussions can take place (Finn, 2003). Moreover, the Council of the British Isles, the East-West dimension to the agreement, has recognized the importance of British-Irish relations and has brought about direct contacts between Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Scots should not shrink from trying to understand the consequences of the historic inter-relationships between Scotland and Ireland for Scotland.

The NFO research makes it apparent that these Irish associations do enter into respondents' deliberations on what is sectarianism. These associations are acknowledged by the Scottish Executive's inclusion of sport, particularly football, which has been an important arena for the expression of attitudes to the Irish republic and Northern Ireland, and more especially parades and marches as important themes within the Anti-Sectarianism Initiative. Yet it is important to note that the expression of loyalist, unionist, republican or nationalist views cannot summarily be judged to be offensive or sectarian: each of these political stances is capable of being expressed in a form which is not intertwined with prejudice (Finn, 2003).

However, it is evident from participants' comments in the research reports that this possibility is often not recognized – or at least not granted to a stance opposed to their own. And, to add some further complexity, the NFO (2003) research also found some confusion over “sectarianism” with some respondents immediately connecting the question with football club affiliations. Football rivalries may have no relationship to sectarianism at all, but the historicised meanings of Scottish football affiliations do mean that this aspect cannot simply be dismissed: some football club associations may be perceived as, and acted upon as if, identifiers of ethnic or religious membership (e.g., Moorhouse, 1984; Murray, 1984; Finn, 2000a; Bradley, 2004, 2006; Esplin & Walker, 2007).

Consequently, it is important to appreciate that sectarianism does not only arise in what can be categorized as direct forms, when religious beliefs or ethnic or religious affiliations are the main concerns of action: it may also emerge in indirect forms, when the more overt aspects of social identity are not fore-grounded, but they may be presented as a proxy, such as in discussions around football or the existence of Catholic schools (see discussion below). In indirect forms it is inevitably more difficult to determine the precise nature of what has taken place, and considerable care has to be taken in checking respondents' interpretations of these examples and the context in which they appeared.

This additional complexity underlines the importance of not only attempting to explore what sectarian and sectarianism mean to people, but also of seeking to understand the divergences in how these terms are understood and interpreted, and gaining some sense of the range of contexts in which they may be expressed. To these ends, it is now essential that the diverse and implicit working definitions (or notions) that people hold as to what “sectarianism” is believed to be are examined, and then subjected to some critical enquiry.

Evaluating “sectarianism” in Scotland

Personal Evaluations of Public Experiences

Recent years have seen a sudden burst of interest in the general area of sectarianism, and debate as to the present situation (e.g., Boyle & Lynch, 1998b; Devine, 2000, b; Bruce et al., 2004). Surveys of opinion have arrived at various estimates of the extent and seriousness of sectarianism. These studies have varied considerably in both their scale and the statistical sophistication of their analyses. The results, and the subsequent claims based on them, have been subject to critical scrutiny and contestation (e.g., Boyle & Lynch, 1998a,b; Bruce, 1998; McCrone & Rosie, 1998; Devine, 2000 a,b; Finn, 2000b; Rosie & McCrone, 2000; Lynch, 2000; Patterson & Iannelli, 2006; Williams & Walls, 2000; NFO, 2003; Bruce *et al.*, 2004; Conroy, 2008). In a few earlier studies there was an indication that Catholics judged sectarianism to be more of a problem than did Protestants. These results may be because Catholics are more likely to be subjected to this behaviour.

That is apparent from the analysis of the early results of the 2003 introduction of convictions for religiously aggravated crime (COPFS, 2004; Doyle 2006), which found Catholics to be disproportionately victims of attack.^{vii} These results do underline the need to evaluate the potentially different experiences and evaluations of Catholics and Protestants in investigating this phenomenon. Among the focus groups used in the NFO (2003) study were two groups that were differentiated by religious membership. Although their overall results found only small differences between Protestant and Catholic respondents, sensitivity to the importance of recognising the potentially differentiated impact of sectarianism (e.g., Finn, 2000b) does suggest that the continuation of this approach is good practice.

The NFO study, which was set in Glasgow, employed a range of questions from which the authors concluded that there was indeed a “culture of prejudice” as Finn (2000b) had suggested. One very important finding in the NFO research was, however, that the aggregated personal experience of incidents of sectarianism reported by individuals simply did not reflect the intensity or extent of the sectarianism they individually believed to have been experienced in the wider community. Potential explanations of this mismatch are for the moment speculative but media accounts are obviously one significant source of information on this, as with other, social issues (e.g., Bruce *et al.*, 2004).

Other findings are also intriguing (even worrying). A question as to whether ‘sectarianism is becoming a thing of the past’ brought disagreement from ‘around two thirds of respondents’ (NFO, 2003: p. 57). This apparent mismatch between the private individual experience and individuals’ collective public estimation of sectarianism and the refusal of many individuals to state that inter-group relations have improved deserve much closer study and investigation. Media reports may again play a part. Understanding the origins and basis for these beliefs would assist the exercise of examining the seemingly diverse meanings of sectarianism.

Typicality and Significance

Bruce *et al.* (2004) have placed great emphasis on the extent to which events, incidents or individuals judged to be exemplifying sectarianism, can be viewed as typical, rather than exotic. This distinction might offer a partial explanation for the mismatch between the perception of extensive prejudice and the limited personal experience reported in the NFO research. The question of typicality is an intriguing question, and can be highly relevant in the evaluation of the extent to which specific manifestations do have a contemporary impact. However, that does not necessarily mean that what is unusual is insignificant, only that a more careful and sensitive analysis is required of what can sometimes be a revealing case study. It is too easy, as Bruce *et al.* warn, but then sometimes illustrate, to categorise events in ways that do best serve the authors' desired account.

As Bruce has recently indicated some unease with the use of qualitative approaches, it is understandable this group now wish to employ large-scale quantitative measures and primarily redefine the question of sectarianism to that of Catholic disadvantage, and then explore if that still exists. Bruce *at al.* state that 'the only way to do that is to collect and compare evidence about the socio-economic status of large numbers of Catholics and non-Catholics' (2004: 3). One problem is that many of the reported studies are not truly large-scale samples, and that the interpretations of these results have been disputed. Another is that, even when truly pursued, this approach can only examine certain forms of the expression of prejudice (Finn, 2000b; Kelly 2005).

Employment and Schooling

Agreement that Catholics have experienced disadvantage in the past is nearly universal, but that has led some to conclude that this was the result of Catholic schooling or social-class disadvantage rather than anti-Catholic discrimination (Bruce, 2004; Bruce *et al.*, 2005). In addition some of the research on sectarianism has also explored the impact of Catholic schooling, which is often perceived to be part of the problem, leading to accusations that these schools produce "segregation" or are "divisive".^{viii} Criticism of Catholic schools on these grounds is unjustified as there is no evidence that they lead to division, bigotry, or exclusive communities (Patterson, 2000c). Instead Patterson has shown that they are staffed by teachers as liberal as those employed elsewhere in the state sector, and who are more committed to participation in civic society and liberal democracy. Moreover, the case that Catholic schools cause sectarianism cannot be sustained at a time when, despite their continuation, there is general agreement that these prejudices are now not so evident as in the past. Yet, amidst a welter of erroneous beliefs, misinterpretations and misrepresentations of their past and present, the continued existence of Catholic state schools in Scotland still arouses very strong opinions (Finn, 1999, 2000b, 2003; Conroy, 2008).

The NFO study showed that the issue of the maintenance of Catholic schools in Scotland polarised opinion between Catholics and Protestants. Again the need to create some religiously differentiated approach and analysis is revealed, if sensitive enquiry is to be ensured. In presenting the overview of the results on this issue, the NFO portrayed the basis for an unusually sophisticated public response: 'Catholic schools were not generally considered to be sectarian in themselves though in a

context in which religious division is perceived to be common, they were commonly seen as representing a tangible evidence of the divide' (NFO, 2003, p. 56).

It is also clear that Catholic schools are educationally successful. Increasingly, they are attended by pupils of other faiths and none – one indication of important historical changes in the perception of Catholics that are taking place in Scottish society. The successful work within Catholic schools has been noted for nearly thirty years now. Once differences in the socio-economic composition of the school intake were taken into account, various studies have shown that pupils attending Catholic schools performed better than pupils in other schools (e.g., Ford & Payne, 1977; McPherson & Wilms, 1987; Wilms, 1992; Patterson, 2000a).

Although this effect has been most clearly seen in the enhanced schooling achievements of working class pupils, there is also evidence of a Catholic school effect that operates regardless of social class characteristics. Associated with these positive educational outcomes, however, was the disappointing finding that 'the gains within the educational system have not been accompanied by concomitant gains in the labor market'; to be more succinct: 'the Catholic advantage in secondary school credentials did not buy them jobs' (Wilms, 1992: p. 210 & p. 208 respectively).

As a result, Catholics were more likely to be employed in manual occupations or be unemployed. Catholics were also judged to have been more commonly employed in the public than the private sector. Interpretations of findings of this nature have been contentious. Commentators have resisted the suggestion of direct discrimination in employment but have pointed towards forms of indirect discrimination that have impacted on the opportunity structure available to Catholics (e.g., Ford & Payne, 1977; Wilms, 1992).^{ix}

The more open and meritocratic recruitment procedures of the public sector partially explain why Catholics are believed in the past to have found work there more readily than in the private sector. Recognition of these constraints on employment prospects has also been suggested to contribute to successful Catholic school performance, as education has been judged by Catholics to be an important mechanism to help diminish the effects of disadvantaged participation in labour recruitment.

Research over the last thirty years has continued to show employment and health disparities between Catholic and Protestant workers, but there is certainly a closing of this gap, aided indirectly by the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation which, although not initially directed against religious discrimination,^x has stopped many general discriminatory practices. Some research findings have suggested that only older Catholic workers now reveal the effects of any inequality: some researchers put the case that the evidence now shows that, in general terms, equality between Catholic and Protestant workers may even have been attained. Caution has also been urged in the face of this optimism: not all studies do yet show such a rosy picture. And the discrepancy between older Catholic and Protestant workers may not be the historical consequences of the past, but could be an age-effect that reflects mid-career disadvantage when promotion processes operate. (For a fuller account of this debate see: Abbots, 2004, Abbots *et al.* 2004, Bruce, 1998; Bruce & Glendinning, 2003; Bruce *et al.*, 2004; Bruce *et al.*, 2005; McCrone & Rosie, 1998; Rosie &

McCrone, 2000; Patterson, 2000a, 2000b; Patterson *et al.*, 2004; Patterson & Iannelli, 2006; Walls & Williams, 2003, 2005; Williams & Walls, 2000).

The seeming reluctance in the past to envision that disadvantage could be the result of direct, rather than indirect discrimination, has been very definitely challenged. In a misunderstood, misinterpreted, and probably misrepresented (Bruce *et al.*, 2005; Walls & Williams, 2005) research study, Walls and Williams (2003) present evidence that shows the strong belief among both Catholics and Protestants that direct discrimination has been active in the labour market, and they present some limited, but clear, personal testimony from individuals who colluded in maintaining the exclusion of Catholics from specific work-forces. The extent to which direct discrimination occurred cannot be determined from the nature of the evidence presented. Nor, although at least one example came from the 1990s, is it possible to know if direct discrimination is still in operation now. Walls and Williams do observe that this is the first piece of research to follow the advice of Ford and Payne (1977), and they urge the necessity of investigating how job opportunities have arisen for employees and to explore how employers do operate their recruitment practices.

Certainly this issue is worth exploring: if recent research suggesting that disadvantage for young Catholic workers has now come to a halt is correct, then there should be no reported meaningful differences in the experiences of young workers in relation to recruitment and employment practices. Wise counsel from Kelly (2005) advises that, even if labour force equality has been attained, subtler measures and approaches are now necessary to investigate if sectarianism still exists on other levels.

Expressions of Prejudice

Kelly's advice is in accord with Finn's (2000) argument that there remains a 'culture of prejudice' around the phenomena of sectarianism in Scotland. He argued the obligation, if this specific form of prejudice was to be studied in all of its complexity, to examine different levels of its possible expression. From the pioneering work of Allport (1954/1979) these different expressions can be seen to range in increasing severity from the expression of prejudice in talk, to avoidance or exclusion, and then discrimination (employment, housing, recreation etc), followed by physical attack (violence or its threat) before culminating in 'extermination' (the systematic use of violence to bring about deaths). Allport did not intend that these should be treated as if they were points on a linear scale, but he did expect that increased activity at lower levels made it more probable that others would undertake more severe expressions of prejudicial actions. Consequently no forms of prejudice, regardless of their level of expression, can be met with complacency.

From this brief outline, it can be seen that discrimination in employment is only one of the potential forms by which prejudice can be expressed. To focus on it to the exclusion of all others misrepresents the complexity of prejudice: it is also unhelpful in exploring the possibility of anti-Protestant prejudice which, though less structurally significant as a force than anti-Catholic prejudice, remains a matter to be tackled sensitively and appropriately (Finn, 2003), and a prejudice which has recently been found still to be an active presence in Scottish society (NFO, 2003).

Sensitive and subtle exploration of the nature and type of expression of sectarianism that has been experienced is required – and that cannot, at least initially, be achieved through large-scale surveys. Instead, that requires an active engagement with respondents.

Methodological Approach and Critical Issues to Explore

Because the topics to be explored were complex and sensitive it was important that participants could personally and directly engage with the researchers. Ideally one-to-one interviews would have been used for much more of this study, but this technique was too costly to be used as extensively as was desirable. Instead focus groups allowed some of these issues to be approached in an appropriate manner, and provided extensive data for analysis.

Meanings of sectarian and sectarianism

Participants' descriptions and conceptions of these terms were explored. The nature of the different formulations by individuals was examined.^{xi} The LTS website, devised on the basis of the CERES research, distinguishes, as has Finn (e.g. 1987, 1990, 1999, 200a,b & 2003) between anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant prejudices and relates the former to its entanglement with anti-Irish racism. Participants were given the opportunity to demonstrate if they did disentangle these different aspects of what is termed "sectarianism", what relationship they saw to other forms of prejudice and discrimination, and if there was any identification of sectarianism with the issue of anti-Irish racism (e.g., Bradley, 2004; Brown, 1991; Findlay, 1991; Kelly, 2003; Miles, 1982). It is also necessary to examine how sectarianism can be expressed at different levels to help understand in what way this phenomenon still exerts an influence on Scottish society. An inter-related question was in what ways, if any, would interpretations of sectarianism be contested between participants.

Work and Employment Manifestations

The study set out to examine what young workers judged sectarianism to be, how they had experienced its effects in the work place, and in what forms they believed it had occurred. Had they experienced sectarianism during recruitment processes, and if so, in what ways was the case? Did it have any effect on the career choices that participants had made?

The different (and subtler) levels of expression of sectarianism in relation to work-force experiences were investigated, along with the context in which these matters arose. Sectarianism was examined in terms of both direct and indirect forms of expression. These included its relationship to football or in discussions that touch on the existence of Catholic schools. How did it occur in these more indirect forms, and what was the effect? In these forms was there any specific message about how responsibility for sectarianism in Scottish society was being allocated? If so, then how was this received and interpreted.

Some attention was also paid to young workers' beliefs about change and progress in sectarianism, and on what basis these evaluations are made.

Education and Training

Education is not the key to the eradication of sectarianism, or indeed any form of societal prejudice, but it is an important element in achieving progress (Finn, 2003). The Scottish Executive has helped commence curriculum development work for schools and further education colleges. However, what education in these areas have young workers experienced? Had there been any work-based education in this area? An initial investigation of these questions was pursued within this study.

And what are the experiences of those similarly aged young people who are in full-time education as students? In particular, how are student teachers prepared so that they are equipped to undertake anti-sectarianism work in the specific work place that is a school? And, especially given the way in which this issue often arises in relation to the existence of Catholic schools, what do those students pursuing teacher-training courses learn about this sector? As many in this group have to find work to help finance their progress through their qualifications, they are also a source of information about potential prejudice and discrimination in the work place.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Background to this research.

The origins of this study lay in the concerns summed up in a resolution passed at the 2005 STUC Congress (Amended Resolution No. 65 Sectarianism in the Workplace). This was a wide-ranging motion that recognized the variety of ways in which sectarianism could be expressed in Scottish society and could, as a result, impact on workplaces. STUC Youth had been prominent in initiating this action by the STUC, part of which was to gain support from the Scottish Government to conduct the study. As a result, funding of the order of £16,000 (+VAT) was provided for a small-scale study. Following initial discussion with the STUC, it was decided that the primary focus should be on the experiences of “sectarianism” among young workers in Scotland, up to around twenty six years of age, and that the topics of education and training should be specifically included. (The passage of Resolution No. 92 Sectarianism at the 2006 STUC Congress drew further attention to this dimension.) To complete the overview, however, it also made sense to gain from older Scottish union officials information on how they had encountered and understood sectarianism in Scotland.

In these circumstances, and given the financial constraints on the study, the STUC wished to approve and arrange the formation of focus groups made up of young Scottish workers. Despite various strenuous efforts that were made by the STUC and the focus group researchers, the establishment of focus groups proved much more difficult than had been envisaged. Yet these problems were the result of understandable, if unexpected, reasons. It became evident that some workers were reluctant to discuss sectarianism in the presence of fellow workers, which made the formation of focus groups difficult. That unwillingness was made apparent in one east of Scotland location. Despite a number of workers having agreed with a union official that they would participate in a focus group, only one individual worker did appear. Then, in companies in which union officials judged that the workers would be willing, employers were loath to have this matter discussed. Despite confidentiality and company and individual anonymity being assured, there was a specific worry that, by participating in this study, an employer could in some way be seen to be associated with this problem.

One example does present the potential complications that the request was perceived to pose. Union officials proposed one company that in the past had been judged to have problems with sectarianism, but which, as a result of the efforts of both employer and unions, was now believed to have much reduced these difficulties. However, after expressing an initial willingness, the firm eventually refused researchers access to workers precisely because of unease over how hosting part of this study would be seen. Fears included the possibility that these discussions, or the possible return of past perceptions and implied associations, would undo the good work that the employer and the unions had achieved.

Research of this nature requires informed consent from participating parties for it to meet the required ethical criteria for the conduct of investigations with fellow humans. No pressure was brought to bear on any individuals who declined, regardless of the reason or reasons provided. Nor can - nor should - any blame be allocated to

individuals or organisations that decided that they did not wish to become involved with this study: they had no responsibility to do so. In a sense these early problems can be presented as being a preliminary, indicative finding: they provided an illustration of the sensitivity that still surrounds this matter, and its investigation, in contemporary Scotland.

Moreover, this sensitivity also made much more complicated any attempt to create Catholic and Protestant focus groups. From discussions with those organisations that were willing to assist in obtaining focus groups, strong reservations were raised about any internal attempt to create focus groups along religious lines. Eventually it was agreed with the STUC that this would have to be done outside of any trade union or employer mechanisms.

Focus Groups.

Recruitment is an important matter in the composition of focus groups. Use of a specialist recruitment agency is ideal, but that requires additional financial outlay. Nor was it possible to offer any payments to potential discussants, so this study was dependent on volunteers. Although not the most common practice in creating focus groups, it can be especially advantageous when dealing with a specifically targeted population group that it is the client group that recruits participants (Greenbaum, 2000). As in part of the study participants were expected to meet the age criteria, have a trade union background, and work experience, it was highly appropriate to accept the involvement of the STUC in this matter. Despite the problems identified above, this help from the STUC and affiliated organisations was invaluable in ensuring that an appropriate spread of focus groups could be obtained.

Eventually six focus groups were created. Participants were advised about the nature of the study and signed a consent form before hand. An additional form also sought information on some specific background characteristics of each anonymous individual. One work place group was formed with the help of the unions and the employer at one location in the east of Scotland. Two further groups of young workers were formed with the assistance of STUC allied organisations. Another group was based on post-graduate university students who had rich and varied work experiences to reflect upon, and who were completing a one-year vocational qualification, and which included a few more mature students so that their perspective on the issue could be gained.

The difficulties associated with the creation of focus groups composed of Catholics and Protestants was largely overcome by seeking volunteers from students who were weeks from the conclusion of a four-year undergraduate degree in Primary Education. We are grateful for the openness of the Faculties of Education at Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities in assisting with this research. Both university courses recruit students from a variety of religious or non-religious backgrounds. That fact is misunderstood in relation to the Glasgow University courses.^{xiii}

The Glasgow University Faculty has as one of its functions the provision of teachers for Catholic schools. Preparation of children for the various Church sacraments is an important aim of Catholic primary schools. Training and qualification for this form of religious education is included within the main curriculum of the Glasgow University

degree course. For this reason, this specific course, which prepares teacher for work in primary education, contains a very large proportion of Catholic students. Nonetheless, the intake to this course is not exclusively Catholic, despite many perceptions, perhaps prejudices, to the contrary.

Catholic students can qualify as teachers in other teacher education institutions but, if they wish to teach in Catholic schools, they then need to do an additional qualification to meet the educational criteria set to teach religious education in Catholic primary schools. (This educational requirement is in addition to being able to meet the criteria for approval set by the Church authorities.) Unsurprisingly those intending to teach in Catholic primary schools demonstrate a marked preference to study on the Glasgow University course, as it offers the additional educational qualification as part of the same degree programme.

Using these two individual university degree courses as the recruitment base, it was possible to create a Catholic focus group and a focus group that was intended to be Protestant, and was recruited on that basis. Intriguingly, three of the seven members in this latter group, on their forms then described themselves as having had no religious upbringing. (It is possible that some respondents in all groups used this question to refer to either their past or their present religious affiliations.)

Both the literature, and the earlier focus groups that had already taken place by then, had identified the existence of Catholic schools to be a topic of importance, and as a specific work place that was often brought up in discussions of sectarianism. Consequently these two groups also offered valuable insights into the perceptions, experience and understanding of this matter in Scotland. As is now inevitable among the student population, a wide variety of part-time and full-time vacation employments had also been experienced. Therefore these groups were also able to discuss sectarianism in relation to the many forms of employment that they had collectively experienced. As there was also an imbalance in gender representation in the focus groups, it was decided that these two focus groups, formed from the predominantly female intake on B.Ed. degree courses, should be all female.

Advice on the employment and purpose of focus groups is varied, and debate takes place on some aspects of how they should be constituted and conducted. Although well established as an important social science method, its use continues to evolve (e.g., Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Greenbaum, 2000; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Krueger, 2000; Littosselliti, 2003; Millward, 2000). Use of more than five to ten groups, the specific figure varies according to different analysts, is argued to lead to unnecessary repetition, resulting in the production of superfluous data. Six groups were used in this study, but that number was justified to ensure that the spread of necessarily differently constituted focus groups was obtained (Morgan, 1998). All discussions were held in locations that suited the participants, and in which it could be expected that they would be comfortable.

Opinion on the most appropriate group size to facilitate discussion varies according to a variety of factors, but between six to twelve participants is usually presented as being appropriate for groups exploring a high involvement topic such as this one, and as especially important in attempting to answer why people understand something in a

particular way. When tight control of recruitment cannot be achieved, it is usual to compensate for failures to attend by over-recruiting to around 20% (Millward, 2000). However, as recruitment was not in the power of the researchers, and because of the early difficulties that had occurred in recruiting participants, it was decided to request focus groups of 14 to 16 participants, and then proceed with slightly larger numbers, if that was what was made available to the researchers. What mattered most was that the size of the group did not become so large and so unstructured that the discussion was no longer focussed. It is precisely for these reasons that Greenbaum argues that thirty people is simply too many for the exchange to be described as a focus group.

Focus group discussions usually last between one to two hours. The length of the sessions was determined by the time that participants were able to volunteer. Researchers requested ninety minutes, but it was possible to cover the topics in an hour. The actual timing of these groups was determined by the needs of the participants. All continued for at least an hour. Discussions were audio taped and later transcribed. The data was then subjected to a qualitative content analysis to understand how participants understood the meaning of sectarianism, and how they had experienced it, in relation to work and education.

Discussion in each group was expected to focus on a number of pre-determined topics. The moderator first gave a brief introduction to the purpose, nature and confidentiality of the study. Discussion, when directed by moderators, always proceeded from general themes to specifics. The first topic was deceptively simple: participants were asked what sectarianism was judged to be. They were then requested to report their own experiences of sectarianism; asked to evaluate how much of a problem it was in Scotland; invited to describe if, or how, it impacted on the work-place; asked what was, or should be, done about it in work places; invited to report whether it had any influence on career choice, education or training, and if religion or religious bias was associated with employment opportunities; and finally requested to indicate if, and how, stereotypes were associated with religious affiliation. Topics were raised, in this order, in open-ended questions by the moderators, if they had not been, as was sometimes the case, spontaneously introduced by group members.

Two individuals acted as moderators to facilitate discussion in the focus groups. It was intended that both would be seen to be detached from the concerns raised in discussions of sectarianism in Scotland. One was a young woman in her late thirties with a Turkish Australian background. The other was a mature English man in his sixties. Neither had names that might inevitably lead to any Christian sectarian ethno-religious typing. Both had considerable previous experience in conducting focus groups, had good communication skills, and took an approach that was friendly and good humoured, but seriously interested in the relevant issues. Both adopted an attitude to the groups that was basically that of an open and inquiring, if partially informed, questioner, an approximation to what Krueger (1998: 46) has termed the 'enlightened novice'.

Both participated in the first two focus groups. This was to ensure some consistency of approach for the other sessions. In addition, there was some uncertainty as to how big these groups might turn out to be. Only with one was there a problem. The focus group had been arranged to take place at a conference and it had been timetabled to

occur at a time in the programme that was set aside for various workshops. When it proved impossible to offer one scheduled workshop, organisers invited the disappointed would-be contributors to join other sessions. That led to the numbers wishing to participate in the focus group growing to twenty-two people. The presence of two moderators meant that this number was still manageable. Their dual presence made it easier to manage this number of participants, and most importantly, ensured that this group acted as coherent whole, and was clearly able to function as a focus group. That was evident by the group maintaining its attention and concentrating on the topics under discussion. Two later focus groups in other locations had the readily managed sizes of sixteen and thirteen members. Numbers participating in the remaining three groups all fell within the ideal range of seven to ten members. Apart from the first two groups, only one moderator worked with the other groups.

Focus Group Participants

Individuals who contributed to the study were asked to complete a consent form. On an additional form were also questions that requested details of age, religious upbringing, gender, occupation, and whether an individual was a union member or not. Although the vast majority did so, not every participant completed all or some parts of this second form. For those who did give information on their age, participants had a mean age of 23.4 years. The range for almost all participants who did so was from 19 to 26 years but despite the request for most focus groups that members be no more than 26 years old, two reported in different groups that they were 37 & 42 years old. A few reported no age at all: in the one group that included participants older than 26 years, a handful were aged in their thirties and forties, but no precise information was provided. This presence of slightly older individuals however posed no problems for the groups. Moderators reported no distortion in any of the focus groups because of any participant who might have been older than 26 years of age.

The gender balance of the focus groups was 47% male & 53% female: the use of the all-female B.Ed groups meant that an approximate gender balance was achieved.

Self-reporting religious affiliation may have been sensitive for some. Rounded figures of respondents religious upbringing gives: 35% Catholic; 38% Protestant; 20% atheist or no religion; 3% a non-Christian religion; and 5% who left this self-description blank.

Figures for union membership yielded 77% union members, with 11% not being members, and 12% leaving this item blank. Some of these last two responses were a consequence of an absence, perhaps a perceived absence, of unions from the respondents' work places. When this factor was taken into account, union membership among participants was 91%, with 2% blank, and 7% not being in a trade union.

Interviews with Trade Union Officials

Through the STUC and its associated trade unions, it was possible to arrange interviews with eight trade union officials who were willing to contribute to the study. Again confidentiality and anonymity was assured. Using one to one interviews made

it possible to probe more, and to gain more specific information across a range of unionised settings than would be gathered using a focus group (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Interviews allowed the more detailed and longer experience of trade union officers, allied to their deeper knowledge of a variety of places of employment to be reported. This different sample also provided a method of cross-checking the generality of the accounts produced within the focus groups and, thus, they also offered a means to check the interpretations generated from them (Breakwell, 2000). Equally important was that this methodological approach with these participants created a situation that ensured much greater anonymity and confidentiality, both for themselves and the work places they wished to discuss, and thus allowed them to be more open about their experiences.

The female moderator carried out each semi-structured interview, again using open-ended questions and the same topic-list as had guided the focus group discussion, with the trade unionists. Four interviews took place in the west of Scotland, and four in east and northeast Scotland. All interviews were audio-taped before being transcribed. Trade union officials interviewed ranged in age from 26 to 60, with a mean age of 41.9 years. Three identified their religious upbringing as being Catholic, with the other five having been brought up within one of the Protestant churches.

Tackling Sectarianism in Teacher Education Institutions in Scotland.

Given the various pressures on staff in these institutions, a short evaluation document was distributed to each of the seven universities that provide traditional routes of entry in teaching in Scotland. (The special circumstances of the Open University meant that it was not included.) Institutions were asked if sectarianism/anti-sectarianism was tackled within the course. If not, why it was omitted. An estimate of the number of taught hours in relation to the whole course was requested, followed by the judgment as to whether this was sufficient. A topic checklist was intended to provide something flexible enough to gain a broad, if relatively crude, snapshot of the nature of the work carried out on Sectarianism/anti-Sectarianism in the various courses. That was followed by an open-ended question asking if any other topics were tackled under this theme, and if so what were they. Finally the institutions were invited to make any other comments or observations.

Different courses, even different modules within a course, experience marked variations in pressure points in the academic year. Consequently it was decided not to provide a specific return by date for the document. Instead, as it was a very precisely defined sample set, in an effort to maximise returns the procedure followed was to persist with a number of reminders and prompts, before eventually providing, after approximately four months, a final date for return. Finally, those TEI's, which had made no return, were sent a pro-forma requesting that they confirm a Nil Return. To ensure that there was no identification of this research with staff in one TEI, one which itself was being asked to respond, all correspondence was issued through the STUC research office.

CHAPTER 3

FOCUS GROUPS: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

In the focus groups, participants' discussions ranged across various issues and moved between the workplace and the wider society. Their discussions reflected a point that they clearly recognized, and which some individuals articulated, which was that the working environment cannot be detached from the wider society. Consequently respondents gave wide-ranging responses that were not limited to employment; sometimes that was even the case when the overt topic under discussion was, or should have been, work-related.

Understandings of Sectarian and Sectarianism

There was considerable lack of clarity over what was the meaning of sectarian or sectarianism. Supposed meanings and explanations were offered simultaneously. There was confusion over its nature, manifestation, expression, extent, and location(s) in Scotland. The use of proxies for religion was clear. Football affiliations were still strongly judged to be a marker for religion and ethnicity in Scotland. That was despite recognition that support for Celtic was not (and had not been) limited to Catholics, which was demonstrated by the comments in some groups about family and friends' football attachments. And that strong marker was still retained, despite a lesser acceptance that there was no longer so compelling an equation of Protestantism with Rangers supporters: indeed a few references were made to Catholics who were Rangers fans. Some points were also made about similar associations with the football clubs in Edinburgh. Catholic schools served as another strong proxy, again despite an awareness that they were open to pupils from all, or no, religious backgrounds; and even though there was some degree of understanding that mixed intakes were now characteristic of the majority of catholic schools in Scotland. Often discussions occurred which relied on an exchange of views without any obvious convergence on agreement.

A short extract from one group interchange illustrates the nature and sporadic range of issues thrown up in discussion:

(Group 6)

Moderator: "... What would you guys say sectarianism is? Give me a definition of sectarianism."

Person A: "It's conflict of sorts, divisions between religious groups."

Moderator: "What sort of religious groups?"

Person A: "In Scotland between Christians: Protestants and Catholics."

Person B: "Yeah but it's more than that: it's about tribalism; between Celtic and Rangers. Football plays a huge part. That's when you see it most. On the streets in what people wear. They are telling everyone else where they stand. They are saying, "I'm a Celtic fan or a Rangers fan."

Person A: "Or I'm a Catholic or I'm a Protestant."

Person C: "It doesn't matter where you go in the world, you will see Celtic tops. I was in Spain and I saw a whole family of Celtic tops!"

Person D: "It's not always the football, that's just the surface. I know lots of people who are not Catholics who support Celtic."

Person E: “It’s not just about football. That’s what you see on the street but it’s about religion mainly. It’s about not respecting other peoples’ religions and their histories and their beliefs. It’s not about football. You don’t see it in England. You don’t see...”

Person D: “ Yes, you do! You see it in Liverpool. There is an Orange march that passes through the middle of Liverpool. My family are originally from Ireland and they have been living in Liverpool for a long time and they know about it.”

Person F: “Well I’m from England as well, and I’ve never seen it. You never hear about it or know what it means in England.”

As this example indicates, a range of possibly relevant illustrations is provided. Points of substance become lost in the focus on details of disagreement. Thus the seeming agreement between D and E on the substantial point that the relationship with football is secondary, as its roots are more important, is lost in what becomes a disagreement between them about a comparison with England, which then leads to a switch of the spotlight, and an apparent dispute, involving D and F, over the existence of Orange parades in England. In these exchanges, various accounts are offered, which mix, perhaps more accurately - confuse, attempts at definition or explanation with supposed illustrations.

Some proposed explanations were effectively another attempted description. In the process, the invocation of some customary formulaic verbal expressions could have dubious overtones. The suggestion made that “it’s more than that: it’s about tribalism” offers no additional explanatory power. Instead, without further expansion and clarification, this intended to be superior explanation runs the risk of relying upon a xenophobic, arguably racist, frame of reference to provide another value-laden account. In the exchanges in the groups there were phases in which there were free-wheeling discussions, and individuals mixed uncertainty about specific issues with certainty of opinion.

For some, as can be seen in aspects of the above extract, difference itself was the essence of the problem. In the same group, this thesis was strongly expressed, when a new participant raised the issue of the provision of dual schooling.

Person G: “... The kids from the same area grew up believing two different things and two different religions.”

Moderator: “Why is that sectarian?”

Person G: “What the schools?”

Moderator: “You said growing up believing in different religions is sectarian?”

Person G: “Well if you’re told that you’re different ‘cause you’re a Catholic then you’re going to think all your life that you’re different from Protestants.”

Confusion over pejorative and non-pejorative meanings of ‘sectarian’ is apparent in this account, and this confusion reverberated through the discussions: handling human social difference in different guises posed problems for too many participants.

As the earlier extract indicates, associations with football and parades were common, as were the links with Ireland, history, culture and tradition. Rich debate surrounded the precise nature of the religious dimension. Some argued that, because of the decline in religious attendance, it was no longer about religion. Others suggested that it had never been really been about religion, but instead it had been about power,

status and influence in Scottish society. Some blamed the churches, while others blamed the absence of ‘true Christianity’ for the problems.

Inevitably the existence of Catholic schools was raised in discussing sectarianism. Some vociferous denunciations were made of this part of Scottish state schooling. The range of associations raised displayed something of the complexity of sectarianism and its interpretations. Requests to explain or interpret sectarianism sometimes yielded comments vaguely reminiscent of someone responding to a Rorschach Ink-Blot.

Sectarianism: a very strange kettle of fish.

Unexpected perceptions of what was sectarian or sectarianism were reported, which then took surprising turns in discussion, and truly illuminated some of the range of difficulties that attend the issue. The following exchange with young active union members offers an intriguing example. The topic of fish on Friday menus was first introduced early on in the discussion, when the group was responding to the request to explore the meaning of sectarian and sectarianism:

(Group 2, Sequence 187)

Person I: “Can I throw in a question here? We are in a college in the West of Scotland and our college has fish every Friday and I see that as a subtle form of sectarianism. I just wondered if I could get some comments?”

Person A: “I don’t even know what that is?”

Moderator 2: “Can I just say, we are going to come to behaviour in the questions. Do you mind hanging on to it and if we forget, tell us?”

This participant did then wait until this part of the discussion was completed, but immediately re-introduced the topic when the moderator next asked about the seriousness of sectarianism in Scotland:

(Group 2, Sequence 412)

Moderator 1: “... do you think it’s (i.e. sectarianism) a problem in Scotland?”

Person I: “In my college in the west of Scotland, it’s a huge problem.”

Moderator: “In what way?”

Person I: “As I said to personnel, I’m trying to say to the board of management, having a canteen where they serve fish on a Friday is a subtle form of sectarianism and they laughed at me - they laughed at me because they couldn’t see it.”

Moderator 2: “Could you explain that for anyone who doesn’t understand that either?”

Person I: “It’s a Catholic tradition to have fish on a Friday.”

Moderator 2: “I was brought up in a wee non-denominational school and fish on a Friday was always thought of as a dietary thing – have fish once a week. But, I don’t know – I’m prepared to accept there is that history to it.”

Person I: “In our College it’s called Catholic steak.”

Moderator 2: “Could we get back to that one?”

Person I: “In our college it’s called Catholic steak and all I’m trying to say to them is that I accept that might be a religious thing, but maybe we could have fish other days so that it doesn’t have this label.”

Person R: “Surely it’s only Catholic steak, fish on a Friday, if you make it that. At the end of the day it’s simply fish, it’s food.”

Person I: “I think it has undertones though.”

Undoubtedly this was perceived by this student representative to be a serious issue in this particular educational workplace, sufficiently so that it was persisted with, despite the claimed amusement of the college management, and persisted with as an issue within this focus group. Yet it also highlights differences in perspective that seriously hinder problems of definition. Many misunderstandings and misinterpretations lie at the core of this objection: as does prejudice itself. This protest that the provision of Friday fish was ‘subtle sectarianism’ cannot be reduced to explanations dependent on ignorance or fear on the part of the objector. The real complaint is that it is judged to be a *Catholic* practice, and that is sufficient, according to this participant, to lead students, who do not belong to that faith, to object to its availability on Fridays. An attempt to improve knowledge about this custom would in itself be a good thing, but it cannot be expected that further understanding would, by itself, counter this perceived grievance, which is entwined in anti-Catholic prejudice.

To gain a good understanding of even this one specific social practice is to range across a variety of aspects of culture, history, and religion (e.g., Fagan, 2006). Furthermore, for those who wish to protest against specific societal customs that can be associated with Catholic practices, there are many more for them to be concerned about (Foley, 2006). Eating fish on Fridays is merely one tradition that undoubtedly does have a strong association with (Roman) Catholicism. Yet, to attempt a necessarily overly simplified summary of this situation, this variant of Catholicism was not the only Christian sect to abstain from eating meat on Fridays. Moreover, eating fish on Fridays was not the religious requirement. Abstaining from eating meat was, as this was intended as a gesture of sacrifice to remember the believed Friday crucifixion of Christ. For Catholics it was obligatory every Friday of the year. Within Anglicanism, it was more commonly an ideal, not an obligation. Nonetheless, support for the convention within the established Church in England, and from other Protestant sects, ensured that the tradition remained a powerful influence on British society. In the 1960s, the Friday abstention from meat eating was diminished for Catholics by their bishops in most national jurisdictions: since then, in many areas abstention from meat on Fridays scarcely remains a requirement. Some groups of bishops have retained the practice for every Lenten Friday: in Scotland for more than twenty-five years all that has remained for Catholics is a dietary obligation to avoid meat on Good Friday. Scottish Catholics do not require the provision of fish on Fridays – at least not on religious grounds.

Another impetus for Friday fish eating came from concern about the need to ensure balanced weekly diets, particularly for school children. That led to governmental desire, especially marked in the immediate post-World War II period of reconstruction, and during the slow removal of rationing, to ensure that fish was provided one day-a-week in schools and various other institutional settings. Resolution of this health concern merged with the tradition of Friday abstinence. Now that most school or college canteens offer choice, rather than one sole meal, in the daily menu provided, there is certainly a good case to be made for the availability of fish on more than one day a week. That is especially true when the Food Standards Agency advocates fish to be eaten at least twice a week, and observes that fish is now eaten less often than in the 1950s (Food Standards Agency, n.d.).

However, it was not support for this healthy dietary principle that was the substance of the issue raised. Instead what was seen to be an attempt to accommodate Catholics, by making what was believed to be a provision for their dietary requirements, was presented as a “huge problem” that involved “subtle sectarianism” directed against others. Nor was there any stated recognition that describing fish as “Catholic meat” was a derogatory reference, one that was indicative of an internal, and self-proclaimed dominant, student culture that was itself a problem, and one that needed to be challenged. Instead, the stated need was to dissociate fish from its presumed Catholic connection, and halt this act of assumed “subtle sectarianism” against the majority of the student-body. Given the wider context of the provision of fish on Fridays, perhaps to appease these complainants Friday fish should be re-branded as “dietary steak”, a description which might be more appropriate, but one which would miss the fundamental point: which is that the original complaint depended on prejudicial beliefs.

Clearly this specific concern, at least as presented in this focus group, could not truly be judged a “huge problem”. Nor, as it is has been analysed here, does it merit being termed a serious problem from this alternative perspective. That does not mean that it can simply be dismissed. This intrusion into what many would perceive to be social trivia is a demonstration of the stubborn vigour of sectarianism. The example illuminates some of the peculiar ways that this thinking can powerfully shape interpretations and understandings of Scottish life. Too often the perception of religious difference does not lead to its acceptance, let alone to any sense of celebration. Instead, the detection of a supposed religious difference becomes a prejudicial prism through which many social activities can be claimed to be divisive. As this example also illustrates, prejudicial mind-sets have the power to turn the reality of prejudice on its head.

This apparently trivial example teaches some serious lessons. And in some respects it is not truly trivial: it is worrying to contemplate the application of this particular prejudicial framework to genuine institutional efforts to accommodate the real dietary needs of various communities in Scotland’s work places. And, this example underlines again the complexity of sectarianism, with its array of taken-for-granted meanings and associations, and the way in which the term itself is neither neutral, nor value-free. On the contrary, as this example shows, what sectarianism means is not only unclear, but is strongly contested, sometimes such that reality is inverted.

Contestation, Polarisation & “Banter”

Unsurprisingly, given the omnifarious meanings of sectarianism (Finn, 2003), there was a lack of clarity in discussions in the focus groups. Despite this obstacle there was convergence on there having been progress on those issues crudely termed sectarianism. Positive change had been especially evident recently because it was now being openly discussed and policies, even if it was to transpire that little was known of them, had been formed to tackle it. But there was also general agreement that it remained a serious matter. But the lack of a consensual sense of what was sectarianism was striking, and the fact that it could be highly contested, had profound effects on – and in important ways impeded – its discussion.

Confusion, denial, even some moments of self-contradiction, which merely added to the contested nature of its significance, were apparent in a focus group set in a large engineering complex located in the east of Scotland.

(Group 1)

Moderator: "The first question we want to ask you is, what would you folks say sectarianism is? Can you give me a definition of sectarianism?"

Person A: "What like fighting between Papes and Protestants?"

Person B: "Jokes and words people use against someone 'cause of their religion."

Person C: "It's a west coast thing, you don't get it much up here."

Moderator: "Like what? It's Okay. We won't be offended; have you any examples?"

Person A: "What like Tattie munchers?"

Moderator: "Any others?"

Person A: "Fenian, blue nose for Protestants; um... orange bastard as well."

Person C: "Have you seen the loos?"

Moderator: "What do you mean?"

Person C: "There's tons of stuff on the toilet walls."

Moderator: "Like what?"

Person A: "Jokes and stuff."

Moderator: "What sort of jokes? Can you give me examples?"

Person A: "Stuff about football; can't remember... just stuff like, jokey stuff; like, if Celtic win there'd be something up about tattie munchers."

Moderator: "What do people think? Is jokey stuff sectarian?"

Person C: "No; not really. It's just a bit of fun."

Person D: "It's just a bit of ribbing; nothing serious."

Person B: "Well you might not think its offensive, but others might."

Person C: "Oh, come on."

Person B: "Just 'cause you think its funny, doesn't mean it is."

This exchange, with dominant text and resistant sub-text, set the stage for this discussion group. The dominant theme was that sectarianism was located elsewhere, in the west of Scotland, and especially in Glasgow. It was associated with the provision of Catholic schools in these areas. When another discussant countered that there were also some Catholic schools locally, Person D, in what seemed an attempt to strike an assertive, oppositional, pose, replied: "Well there are plenty of Orange lodges here. I know, 'cause my da's in one."

Persons A, C & D consistently denied any real presence of sectarianism in their own workplace, although there was an acceptance that it could seem to appear through football related comments. When Person C judged that this was 'only a bit of fun', Person B again disputed this interpretation, complaining about its common frequency and that "Most of the time it's not even funny". One of the moderators then returned the discussion to the question of the nature of the graffiti in the toilets, and whether it was sectarian or offensive. The responses were telling.

Person C: "It's always been there. It's not like you went to the toilet for the first time and you saw it, then it could be a shock but when you see it all the time it doesn't affect you."

Moderator: "How come?"

Person D: "'Cause it's always been there; you get used to it."

Person A: “It’s not like it’s telling people to go and beat some-one up or anything: jeez!”

For these workers such comments, whether in verbal exchanges or written on toilet walls, were simply an every-day feature of the workplace which those who worked there simply had to get used to. Both moderators attended this session, and both judged that there was a strong-minded effort to direct the discussion by Persons A, C & D, which was usually followed by a couple of other participants. This attempt to determine the direction of the discussion initially met some resistance from Person B, and was later contested more strongly by two other workers, F and I. This pair accepted that there had been progress in society, and in this specific workplace, which was one that had in the past been seen to be a work force with a strong Protestant identity, and to a lesser extent was still perceived in this same way. One Catholic worker had been advised by a schoolteacher to hide his crucifix when applying to work there, ‘as they might not take me on’. Intriguingly only one of the ten workers had identified themselves as Catholic on the information form. Among those leaving this question blank, another revealed himself to be a Catholic during this discussion. So there were various indications during this discussion that, although there had been progress, there was still some way to go.

Later, when discussing ‘sectarianism in the workplace’, one of these workers, Person I, put this progress in what he judged to be its proper context, when he reflected on these earlier exchanges in the group, and explained that the failure of other workers to recognize that some words were offensive showed that there was “still a problem” to be resolved there. Yet Person D was soon again to dismiss out of hand the possibility that any of them had experienced sectarianism in that work place.

As the discussion progressed, the distance between the different stances became more evident. Person I gave the view that many terms he judged to be anti-Catholic were associated with the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland. In a geographical area often seen to have a tradition of Army recruitment, this was met with comments about the effect in that area of IRA activities against British soldiers, especially on the emotions, and even sometimes actions, of participants’ parents. Soon after this exchange, Person I went on to state that he would not have joined the British Army “because of what it historically has done to the Irish, my family is of Irish descent. Also I don’t agree with the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.” Which led Person D to accept that the Army was “pretty much still Protestant” but that this was now changing, and led another discussant, Person E, to address again IRA actions: this time the targeting of a local Catholic soldier when he was in Northern Ireland. As the failure to agree became more apparent, oppositional posturing took place more often. Person B claimed that: “There are jobs where being a mason helps. It used to anyway,” which led Person D to observe categorically, and in a knowing manner, that: “It always helps being a mason.” When Person F observed that the police had traditionally been seen to be Protestant, Person C responded that, “The blue line is called blue for a reason.”

It was clear that in this workplace open discussion of these issues was highly unusual. There was instead a history of what was passed off as humorous comment that accompanied a dominant perception of what was normal, and acceptable. Running in parallel was a sub-dominant, standpoint that saw things differently, and perceived injustice in the prevailing state of affairs. Criticism of the dominant value-system

emerged in the presentation of this perspective, and adherents to the dominant interpretation of normality expressed their irritation at this contrary viewpoint. As the discussion evolved, so did the depth of the disagreement and the polarisation. Despite the signs of oppositional stances hardening, as recognition of the contested nature of sectarianism between them became ever more unavoidable, these exchanges still took place in a controlled, if sometimes clearly exasperated, manner. It requires little imagination, however, to contemplate how, in the absence of two moderators and this formalised social setting, such a wide-ranging discussion that eventually led to exchanges about roles of the British Army and the I.R.A., and on the merits or otherwise of Freemasonry, could have very different outcomes.

In that sense, this group discussion demonstrated some of the problematical issues associated with sectarianism, shows some of the unsatisfactory ways in which sectarianism is dealt with, and hints at how it is usually managed in Scottish society. Uncertainties as to what sectarianism is, added to the failure to know how to respond to human difference, which becomes confused with some inevitable assumption that it equates with social division, ensure an even greater uncertainty as to how to act. It is unsurprising then that many Scots have made efforts to sidestep the issue, which has been further complicated by a strangely ambivalent attitude to sectarianism (see Devine, 2000b). As was evident in the majority viewpoint of the focus group, this can lead to the judgment that this is just the way that things are. All of these factors explain the long-standing failure until very recently to combat it. Despite the recent strong expressions of political will to tackle sectarianism that have been made in the 21st century, which were definitely welcomed by the participants in all groups, and in spite of their strong opinion that it continued to be a serious problem, some of this ambivalence remained among participants.

A related judgment, which also does indicate obstacles to understanding and combating sectarianism, can be noted in an odd assessment by the academic Bill Murray (1988, p. 175), who wrote: ‘... however much we may dislike it, anti-Catholicism is part of Scotland’s history and can be understood in those terms. Racism is odious and foreign to all that Scotland stands for.’ Confusion and error build upon one another in this account. There is the failure to recognize that racism and sectarianism have been one and the same, and that they reinforce one another: the use of ‘foreign’ hints at an underlying xenophobic notion of racism that denies that Scots could ever be in its hold. Overall it shows a misunderstanding of the complexity of racism and, as he makes clear elsewhere in his argument, it relies on a naïve view of “race” as a “black and white” phenomenon (Dimeo & Finn, 2002; Finn, 2000a). However, this overly simplistic understanding of racism, that enshrines a belief in its ease of identification, when contrasted with the complexity of sectarianism, and allied to some acceptance, albeit if variously disliked, of the role of sectarianism in Scottish social life, makes it much easier to engage in rhetorical attack on racism, while being much more equivocal about the latter societal prejudice.

In one of the other focus groups (**Group 2**), a participant made very similar errors to Murray in his understanding of racism and sectarianism, as he also presented too optimistic a view of the opposition to racism in Scotland. But the purpose of his comparison was more positive. He wished to identify the unacceptable disparity in how each was treated, and he strove to encapsulate in words how this ambivalence about sectarianism, verging on a quasi-acceptance of some its aspects, did lead to a

failure by individuals to act. In doing so he offered an insightful summary of how sectarianism, in its more sanitized, less serious (and, thus, quasi-accepted) forms, had become part of the fabric of Scottish social life:

“I think that sectarianism as opposed to racism is more widely tolerated in Scotland. And I think when we encounter it – I’ve worked in big trucks and things – and when it happens you feel you shouldn’t say anything, because everyone accepts the sort of vocabulary of it, as if it’s not a big deal. And you learn to accept it as something that is the done thing between particular groups, particularly in the west of Scotland. And generally we seem to say you should just ignore it - when it’s not that serious; and we tend not to deal with the root causes of the problem because of that.”

Imperfect as this statement is, it does provide an intriguing insight into ways in which sectarianism has been down-played, and becomes something that just happens, that should be accepted, and is a form of societal prejudice that, unless observed in one of its most objectionable forms, is best ignored.

As many comments in the work-based focus group indicated, sometimes indirectly, that remains commonly accepted advice. Open discussion has been limited, and used to be avoided (Devine, 2000b),^{xiii} and still remains difficult for some to engage in. Indirect devices, such as supposed jokes and graffiti, are employed to present world-views, which can range across a variety of themes, including football, politics and history, and they can also be used to abuse others. These approaches appear to have underpinned social normality in the location of this group. When avoidance was not possible, as it eventually was not in the focus group, then, as the exchanges show, the stances are maintained, but many of the possible effects of these different, and in some particulars, simply opposed, perspectives can *usually* be sidestepped, a form of management that occurs in everyday life. But still that leaves open the prospect of failure, and breakdown, in less well socially managed circumstances, and the potential for more demonstrative clashes in the form of much more aggressive verbal abuse, in extreme cases even physical actions.^{xiv}

Although “jokes” or “banter” were invoked in discussions of verbal exchanges, there was uncertainty as to whether they should be accepted, and, if so, then where the line should be drawn in determining what was appropriate, and what was not. Many, but not all participants, did accept that some was genuinely intended in fun. Context was judged to be the main determinant but that is an imprecise notion, which presents the potential for possible problems resulting from different judgments of appropriateness. More worrying was the extent to which some workers felt they had no option but to accept what was passed off as “banter”: in various work-places this normality is unchallengeable, and if wearing, or even worse, for those on the end of it, they had to adjust, and live with it.

Dealing with work place sectarianism

Handling what could be claimed to be banter raised difficulties in all groups. Person H, from **Group 6**, judged that much depended on the circumstances, but that any resistance to unwelcome humour or comments could be worse than futile: objections could lead to more serious discriminatory actions. A worker in the building trade, and who was “in the minority” in his work, he discussed football-linked comments: “I know, where I work, if I told them to stop telling jokes or making fun about my

football team, I'd get told to leave. ... you've got to be thick-skinned about it and not take it seriously. Just laugh it off and that: no big deal." Later he returned to this issue of jokes and banter, but now specifically when discussing sectarianism in the work-place. He explained further: "well you always get a ribbin' when your team loses. It's best not to complain, 'cause if you were to complain you probably won't be getting the overtime. Put it that way. So you have to learn not to be sensitive."

The matter emerged again in this group when participants were asked about how they would respond to incidents of sectarianism in their work place. An employee with a football club complained that some fellow staff had passed anti-Protestant comments but that, although he found this to be offensive, he was "not going to stand up" against it. A short exchange occurred over whether he should, as Person B suggested, "Stand up and say it's wrong" or, as Person C advised, try to clarify precisely what was intended when the comments were made by having "a quiet word" with his fellow workers himself. Person H then concluded this part of the discussion when he counselled:

"You won't get anywhere in some places by talking about it. It would make it worse. I wouldn't say anything at my work place. It's been going on too long. It's how they are."

In a different discussion (**Group 3**), one participant commented that:

"You can speak up, but it depends how far it's rooted into the organisation. For instance, where I worked, the general manager of the retail unit was involved in it, so you can only go so far. Certainly, for a big huge company there were absolutely no policies for it whatsoever. They had policies on bullying. They had policies on racism, etc, but they had nothing on sectarianism."

The perception of some that verbal expressions that could be presented by their initiators as banter had to be accepted or, if they did not, then worse would follow, is worrying. The concern of others that management was implicated, and even that they could lose the chance of overtime, presents some indication of the seriousness of these matters. It is impossible to judge the accuracy of these perceptions. Certainly these beliefs impacted on the participants: they were sure this was their working reality. The judgment that little could be done, common among many, reveals the extent to which these places of employment present unacceptable working environments which, as the recent joint report of the Confederation of British Industry and the Trade Union Congress (2008) - also backed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission - demonstrates, could be open to legal challenge under present employment law. But, although groups 1, 2 & 6 were composed of young trade unionists, with groups 2 & 6 being union activists, seeking the assistance of their union as an option in addressing their concerns was very scarcely suggested. Instead, the resolution of these matters was commonly seen to be a problem to be dealt with by individual workers by themselves.

Scotland & Ireland: Cultures of abuse and understanding

Along with this focus on the individual, there was an appreciation of how context and sensitivity did impact on the production and consumption of supposed banter. That could also lead to some dubious conclusions. In the continuation of the discussion of jokes (**Group 6**), person B explained his view that:

“Sometimes it’s just a way of letting off steam and sometimes it’s the way that some people say the jokes. I know jokes that can be offensive if you tell them in a certain way. And others that are just funny. I can tell them to a friend and it won’t be offensive but I wouldn’t then go and say it to a Catholic.”

As will become apparent later, the use of apparently mutually opposed categories here *may* be revealing. The partial recognition that there is some motivational force underlying some so-called jokes is important. Much more significant, however, is the belief that offensive jokes can be shared among friends in private – as long as they are not relayed to Catholics. This participant was consistent on this point.

He introduced the case of Donald Findlay as an example of anti-Catholic sentiment not being restricted to the Scottish working class. In 1999, the Fife born and raised Donald Findlay Q.C., then the deputy chairman of Rangers, Rector of St. Andrews University, and a leading Scottish Conservative, led Rangers players from their own private function to another private club function for supporters in the Ibrox Stadium complex. Both functions were to celebrate victory over Celtic that day to win one of Scottish football’s main domestic competitions, the Scottish Cup: the trophy was taken from the players’ gathering to the nearby supporters’ function. There Findlay led the assembly in a series of what many then termed traditional club songs. In one song, the Billy Boys, those present sung about being up to their “knees in Fenian blood”. The performance was secretly filmed by a supporter and became a major story in the media, and not just in Scotland. As a result of the controversy, Findlay soon after resigned from his club position. Findlay featured in the discussion in other focus groups (2 & 4). In one (**group 2**) his actions and their impact was addressed for a different reason. This person spoke about the murder of Mark Scott, a young Celtic fan, returning home after a match, and chosen as one among many possibilities by another young man, whose family had loyalist paramilitary connections; this event and Findlay’s actions, were identified as being “where it (the debate on sectarianism) all kicked off a few years ago” (see Finn, 2000a).

By 2006 another influence on this debate, and another force for change, had emerged. Following some incidents of fan misbehaviour, allied to the identification of offensive songs being sung by some Rangers fans at competitive matches organised by the European Union of Football Associations (EUFA), that body took action against Ranger Football Club. The club was fined, and the singing of the Billy Boys was specifically banned. Rangers had to make public announcements to that effect. More serious sanctions were threatened by EUFA in the event of any further breaches. Rangers has made very clear its opposition to this song, strongly discouraged fans from singing it, and has taken action against those who have continued to do so. Increasingly since then it has been acknowledged that singing the Billy Boys is unacceptable.

Given this background, the example of Findlay was presented in a contradictory manner. Predictably it was employed to argue that these prejudices could not be simply limited to the Scottish working class: these prejudices existed elsewhere, but were usually expressed privately: “... I’m sure they are too polite to say anything in public.” However, despite the by then strong campaign of condemnation of the song, the Billy Boys, Findlay’s behaviour was then increasingly excused, because this singing had taken place at a private party:

Person B: “Yes the song was offensive, but they shouldn’t have taped it. It was a private party. I don’t see a problem with people getting together to celebrate their culture. As long as it’s in their time, and away from people who would find it possibly offensive, that’s okay. They are not hurting anyone.

Moderator: It’s not what is being said, it’s the context?

Person B: “They have a culture which they should be allowed to celebrate like anyone else. But how would you have known if someone had not taped it? You wouldn’t, and the big hoo-ha wouldn’t have happened.”

But among the victorious Rangers players attending that night were those whose religion would usually make them suitable targets for the description of Fenian. Even if that had not been the case, the argument that the collective expression of offensive comments directed against others, and which have been found to be publicly unacceptable, becomes acceptable because it is a private social event, cannot be sustained. Indeed, this is a dangerous line of argument to pursue: it legitimates the maintenance and rehearsal of prejudicial views as long as their expression takes place among those who have self-categorised themselves as being like-minded. Nonetheless, this participant has identified another complexity that does require to be appreciated, which is that different cultures in the one society must be allowed expression. However, celebration of one culture does not legitimise, and should not be confused with, the denigration of another, or of others.

Further complications can also be addressed here. A few understood that the term Fenian related historically to the development in the nineteenth century of Fenianism, and the struggle for Irish independence. That movement then was not closely tied to membership of any religious denomination, whether that was Catholic, Protestant, or Dissenter. Participants who expressed this awareness judged the word “Fenian” to be a potentially positive name, rather than an abusive term, and one that, if directed at them, merely revealed the poor understanding of the would-be abuser. One discussant (**Group 2**) said,

“... to me that wouldn’t be an insult, because I would be classed as an Irish lawyer or an Irish poet; that shows that that party is both ignorant and stupid ... It’s showing the stupidity or ignorance of the oppressor rather than the person they are oppressing.”

Although it is correct that Fenian need not necessarily be judged to be an abusive word, there can be little uncertainty about its usage when used in tandem with “bastard”. Nor can there be any doubt when it is a central refrain in the Billy Boys song, in which is sung “...we’re up to our knees in Fenian blood, surrender or you’ll die...” That much-invoked sense of context makes it crystal-clear that the intention is one of abuse. Unlike the word “black”, reclaimed as a proud and honourable self-category by black peoples, Fenian has not undergone that process of successful ideological contestation. But even if it had, it would still remain unacceptable, just as is the case with the misuse of “black”, when used in conjunction with some every-day term of abuse.

This example, and that of the earlier example of the complaint about Friday fish-eating, offer an illustration of the much deeper level of comprehension of relevant

issues that is required. Discussions threw up various examples of prejudicial certainty in the absence of real understanding. Admissions of ignorance, or more often of limited knowledge, concerning specific things were not uncommon. Elsewhere in the exchanges, these same discussants could still be assertive about other aspects that they believed they knew about. Admissions of prejudice were noticeably absent. Prejudice may often be dismissed as ignorance or stupidity, but appears as insight and awareness to its possessor, who can then often be highly resistant to adopt a changed viewpoint (as is evident in some of the extracts previously presented). That is one reason why the meaning of sectarian and sectarianism is so contested.

Education does have a part to play in effecting change, but only as one strategy among others (Finn, 2003). Repeatedly the discussions exposed inadequate knowledge and understanding about the culture and history of both the island of Ireland and Scotland, and how they are, and have been, intertwined in various ways. Greater comprehension would aid the development of mutual understanding, and support people to clarify their thinking about the similarities and differences between them, and about the historical conflicts and convergences that have taken place between the communities from which they come. That was too often lacking in relation to many of the topics that toppled in and out of the various discussions. These problems underpinned the difficulties some had with the issue of verbal abuse. Often these include off-hand comments that incorporate terms that are offensive because of their reliance on some cultural or historical reference. This is a potential source of conflict in the work place.

The discussions of verbal abuse, and its relationship with banter and humour, do indicate the complexities, even difficulties here. Education again has some part to play, but the first step is to create work places in which all employees can feel equally valued and supported. Inevitably there will be a few grey areas as to what sorts of comments are acceptable, but the attainment of broad and sensible guidelines between employers and trade unions can be achieved. The present problem is that this topic is often not recognized as being important but, as the extracts show, it is an issue that matters, and one that workers, for a variety of perceived reasons, feel disempowered from tackling. The usually understated expressions of unease show the importance of ensuring that work environments do allow all employees to feel valued, accepted, and comfortable in their relationships with each other and their employers. Some comments also showed the recognition that conflict at this level could have consequences that led to more serious manifestations. So this cannot be taken lightly or dismissed. Nor was this the only area of work place apprehension identified in the discussions.

Discrimination in employment

Fear of worse forms of discriminatory action did influence some in their decision not to resist supposed banter directed against them. Various reports were made about other forms of discrimination connected with the work place. A number commented on prejudice that they believed was directed against them because of the how they were identified. These reports came from employment experiences in which there was a marked imbalance in the religious affiliations of the work force. In one discussion (**Group 3**) two students complained about the prejudice they had experienced in the past in workforces that were predominantly Catholic. One mature student commented

on work experiences ‘many years ago’ and expressed how the other workers were ‘very bitter’. Again, as with the more recent accounts from employees in the directly opposite situation, the suggested personal solution to this situation was that “you’ve got to keep your mouth shut and get on with your job, and don’t get involved in any way.”

Both students alleged that favouritism had been displayed on the basis of religious affiliations: the younger stated that this prevented non-Catholics from being promoted, but almost immediately contradicted this same accusation:

“I worked for a multi-billion pound company in Glasgow. And it was deep-rooted sectarianism in the workplace where people who weren’t of a particular religion did not get promoted in the company, and I used to be a manager in the company and I left – through other reasons, not just that, because - I would say partly that as well – because you couldn’t get on unless you were of the Catholic persuasion; because it was deep-rooted in a particular source. And, as such, they had certain dates on padlocks that related to their religion – that’s how far it had gone – and that’s a multi-billion pound company. So it does happen – in Glasgow certainly. It’s still quite deep-rooted, but in certain senses it is an underhanded issue – seen to be underneath so that people can’t see it.”

That this discussant was employed as a manager contradicts the main accusation that promotion was impossible for those who were not ‘of the Catholic persuasion’. However the rest of the account does provide the basis for a persuasive argument that the dominant ethos of this work place environment was one that would make some employees, as was the case with this person, feel uncomfortable: that alone makes these practices unacceptable. The most telling factor in this contribution is the use of coded padlocks that would be judged aligned with the preferences of the majority of the workforce. It seems unlikely that the codes were based upon specifically religious references; most of these would presumably need to be common to all western Christian communions. Much more likely is that those staff with sufficient power or influence used dates or letters tied to important events in Irish history or that of Celtic Football Club to create the lock codes. These may be believed easy to remember but they appear a deliberate imposition to those with different affiliations. Work places that operate in this manner cannot be seen to have created a working environment that employees will consider to be fair and open to all.

Stronger evidence of the existence of work place favouritism comes from those who have gained from it, rather than those who believed it was the reason why they lost out. One Catholic student (**Group 5**) reported the benefits she subsequently gained when, at the interview, her soon to be boss had learned that they had both attended the same Catholic school:

“I worked in that place for four years and it was very clear that she favoured me over other people, and she would give me more important jobs. And it was only myself and another girl who were the only Catholic people who worked in the whole store, and you could tell straight away. She would automatically do things for me and this other girl. I got days off that I had asked for, that I couldn’t get, and stuff like that. It became really apparent.”

In various discussions the view was expressed that some employers discriminated against applicants who attended Catholic schools. Indeed it was a discussion of this

sort that had led this Catholic to describe her very different experience, and to explain that she had been “on the luckier side of it”. But it was accepted in this Catholic group that this disadvantage had operated against their co-religionists in the past, and there was a view that, despite acknowledgment of definite progress, it might even now be happening in contemporary Scotland.

Prejudice in recruitment was still believed by many to exist. Now it was believed to happen but do so much less often. Just as with other effects of sectarianism, its impact on employee recruitment was judged to have become subtler, and more underground. A few participants advised that monitoring should take place. One wished scrutiny of the workforce at all levels in the five top companies in all major Scottish population centres. Job applications, it was complained, would go no further once it was learned that the candidate had attended a Catholic school. No evidence was presented in support of these claims. So again it is more convincing when it is someone who has gained from this discriminatory process that presents the report of its actual occurrence.

This was Person B (**group 2**) who had defended the expression of anti-Catholic prejudices when done in private, and who also had appeared to differentiate between his friends and Catholics. He explained that he had experienced discrimination:

“... at work. a few years ago in Edinburgh. I was asked what school I went to and fortunately it was the right one.”

This participant was convinced that his employers had excluded Catholics from employment, and from the workforce that he had then joined. He presented a fuller explanation of the process, which he placed in the year 2001:

“Well, there are some work places that will only come to Protestant schools to recruit trainees, and won’t go to the Catholic school. They don’t need to ask you what school you went to. But I was sick that day, and I went to the work place to ask about a career in the finance sector and that’s when they asked me what school I went to. No, sorry! It was on the application, and I had left it blank, and at the interview they asked me.

Moderator: “Where was that?”

Person B: “That was about six years ago in Edinburgh, and let’s just say it was in finance.”

There was a belief among the participants that in some sectors of the economy jobs were less open to Catholic recruitment. Banks were identified as one area in which this was true. Certainly the existence of that tradition in the financial sector in Scotland has been previously reported (Gallagher, 1987) and, as the participant above confirmed, was still in operation very recently in at least one company. The public sector was seen by some as favouring Catholics, but others, and this may reflect different perceptions by those based in different localities, judged there to be a bias against Catholics in this sector. Apart from the use of school names to label applicants, there was a suggestion that personal names and residential neighbourhood were still used by some in an attempt to tell an individual’s religion.

A number of discussants believed that the hand of freemasonry was used to shake any system of fair appointments. References to the supposed role of freemasonry in employment discrimination were made. Manipulation of employment prospects to favour fellow freemasons, and exclude Catholics, has been reported by some

freemasons, and a similar implication was alluded to in at least one group (as was reported above). Leading Scottish masons have insisted that this is a misuse of the organisation. One Provincial Grand Master identified the existence of a barrier to the promotion of Catholics in the company in which he had worked in a professional capacity. He knew that this discrimination had not been carried out by masons. Instead it had been “strong Protestants” who had acted to ensure that Catholics would gain no positions of influence within the company (Finn, 1994). Evidently freemasonry is easy to blame, as many discussants showed, even when real evidence of that organisation being involved in the alleged process of discrimination is absent.

Education: Prejudice, Discrimination and Catholic schools

One special type of work place featured prominently in discussions. The topic of Catholic schools proved to be an emotional issue. A number of discussants identified Catholic schools closely with the creation of sectarianism, and presented their case in a manner that was tantamount to blaming Catholics and Catholic schools for sectarianism in Scotland. The certainty associated with this debate existed despite the imprecision of the language in which it was conducted. A false opposition was set up between state and Catholic schools, despite the Catholic schools under discussion also being state schools. Both non-denominational and Protestant were used as terms to describe the most numerous grouping of schools in the state sector. Frequently this switching in usage led to an agreement that the term non-denominational should really be used. Yet there was an acceptance that non-denominational schools in general remained associated with Protestantism, and often retained links to Protestant churches. Intriguingly, in the focus group composed of Catholic students, Protestant was not used as the precise descriptor of the non-denominational sector. Instead, because of the direction being taken within that discussion at the time, an approving statement was made that non-denominational schools were “still Christian though”, which then resulted in the subsequent agreement that “most of them are Christian.”

One argument was that Catholic schools led to segregation in society, and yet most discussants, certainly among the student populations, were aware that these schools were open to all pupils, and that it was the case that pupils of other religions, and none, did attend them. Linguistic inexactitude was again obvious. On occasion the argument against the existence of Catholic schools was expressed in more neutral terms, with a condemnation of the segregated schooling system, and its supposed effects. Intriguingly, despite this insistence, critics did not admit to having become prejudiced as a result of their own schooling experience. Probably the closest to such an admission (**Group 2**) came in the following statement:

“The school system which I work in is where I see the most sectarianism in this country. And I think as long we have a separate school system we are always going to have that - and that goes for pupils and staff. I come from a fairly small town and if you went to the Catholic school – I didn’t meet them until I went to university, because they live in a different area of town, went to a different primary school, different secondary school, and we weren’t together until we got to university. And I think that keeping society so segregated just breeds resentment.”

Many discussants certainly did express resentment against Catholic schools, and against Glasgow University. Often those working or studying in education identified work place discrimination closely with Catholic schools, and with Glasgow

University: the courses most closely associated with the supply of Catholic teachers for the Catholic sector of state education in Scotland are based in that institution, and this led to the erroneous claim that it operated a policy that excluded students who were not Catholic. Teachers and student teachers were especially vociferous in making these arguments. A limited understanding of Catholic schools was presented in the discussion based on students (**Group 3**), including some who had been employed in a range of previous jobs, and who were now finishing their secondary teaching qualification: most, with one apologetic exception, expressed criticism of the Catholic school sector and especially the wrongly supposed to be exclusive student recruitment policy of Glasgow University. The focus group (**Group 4**) that relied on students almost at the end of their final year of a Primary B.Ed degree and qualification did relay some understanding and sympathy towards this sector and its origins. Some appreciated the logic that, “if you are going to have a Catholic school”, this necessarily had consequences for staff recruitment, and this issue was discussed in the context of faith schools, which had been a topic of discussion in their course very recently.

Despite this more sympathetic disposition there remained a strong belief within this group that Catholics “need to move with the times and start integrating schools...” That allocation of responsibility was a little at odds with the exchange initiated by the moderator’s question about the schools that they had experienced.

Moderator: “Would you consider them Protestant or non-denominational?”

Person A: “Protestant probably.”

Person B: “I think it has just filtered down through generations.”

An earlier discussant had, when faith schools were mentioned, again touched on the problem many have when faced with difference, and had argued how the provision of distinct schools or different groups had the effect of “labelling us all more.” So despite the more gentle criticism of Catholic schools that was offered in this discussion, these schools were still seen to be a problem, and a cause of division and sectarianism in Scottish society.

From this group there was again strong criticism of Glasgow University and its student recruitment policy, which was judged to exclude all but Catholics from its teacher training courses, but to disguise this by offering interviews. The prospect of Catholics being able to apply for employment in the non-denominational sector was also raised. Emotions evidently were aroused by the prospect of this competition. Commonly the size of the Catholic school sector was substantially overestimated. One person stated that:

“... my best friend, she is Catholic and the whole family, I love them all dearly, and I did think about not becoming a teacher because I was worried that I would resent, not them, but Catholics, because they have twice the job opportunities that we do, because in teaching, they can teach in both... “

A considerable overestimation of minority numbers has been taken to be an indication that an individual possess a prejudice against that social group. In this instance it is probable that this comment about “twice the job opportunities” is a repetition of a commonly heard rhetorical claim that dramatically enlarges the provision of Catholic schools. In 2007, out of 2168 state primary schools, 331 were Catholic. Of the 378 state secondary schools, 55 were Catholic, and 5 of the 183 special educational needs schools were Catholic (SCES, 2007, Scottish Government, 2007). Only around 15%

of state primary and secondary schools are Catholic denominational schools. That does offer these students a small number of additional schools that they are eligible to work in. Yet the Catholic students made it clear that they were pursuing their choice of course because they were committed to becoming a teacher in a Catholic school. For those truly committed to that career path, there are then less appointments and promotions available to them.

Another argument was also put forward:

“When we say things like ‘Catholic teachers are going to get to teach in our schools: it’s not fair’, it’s not because of their religious background. It’s more because they have been trained in a specific way... It’s not because they are Catholic they shouldn’t be teaching in that school, it’s because of the way they are trained, we don’t think they are quite qualified...”

This is an intriguing claim, and the use of “our” possibly revealing, but the course offered at Glasgow University has to prepare students to satisfy the national requirements demanded of all qualifying teachers, plus those stipulated for employment in Catholic schools. Again the responses indicated another area of prejudice and limited understanding in relation to Catholic schools: this time about the nature of the relevant qualifying courses to teach in these schools.

The Catholic students (**Group 5**) were aware that there were students at Glasgow University doing teacher-education courses, including classmates on the B.Ed degree, who were not Catholic. But they were aware of some of the views held elsewhere. The belief that Catholic schools caused sectarianism, and thus the belief others held that, because they intended pursuing careers in Catholic schools, they would be to blame for its continuation, was a source of genuine puzzlement and distress. One extended and emotive response makes this sense of anguish almost tangible:

Just the fact that a lot of people claim that sectarianism begins with Catholic schools, which it blatantly doesn’t, because Catholic schools have been around a lot longer than sectarianism ever has. But Catholic schools often bear the brunt of – you are the reason for sectarianism! It’s just ridiculous, because it aggravates Catholics, who haven’t done anything wrong. Catholics go to Catholic schools because they want to learn about their religion. And I think it aggravates Catholic people and people in Catholic schools because they are thinking – well – why are we getting the blame for sectarianism when there so many other factors that relate to it. Sectarianism begins at home, not in schools.”

On both sides there were recollections of antagonism between pupils attending Catholic and non-denominational schools. Name-calling had been common in the past. A few recalled stone throwing between pupils from different schools. None reported that these actions still continued, but nobody knew if this was because this behaviour no longer occurred. As these students had completed four years of school placements without becoming aware of any behaviour of this nature, it seems possible to conclude that any similar deplorable behaviour today is highly unusual. That does not mean that problems do not remain. Catholic schools especially have taken on iconic community status within Scotland (Finn, 2000b). The danger now is that ill-informed discussion will appear a symbolic extension of name-calling and stone throwing. Indeed, some discussions about Catholic schools perfectly illustrated the final part of the recent summary provided by Alex Salmond (2008: 117) that: “For far

too long the attitude of some has been at best, grudging acceptance of Catholic education, and at worst, outright hostility.”

Student teachers were aware of some of the recent anti-sectarianism approaches that took place in schools but, with one exception, there was no identification of any modules, or courses, or training that they had themselves experienced either to educate themselves, or to help others in education combat sectarianism. The only exception was one Catholic student (**Group 5**), who did identify an educational experience to counter sectarianism. Even then it seemed to have been tackled indirectly: “... it was more historically; looking at both sides of it, and really how ridiculous it has become.”

Work-based anti-sectarianism training

No participants from any other work places acknowledged that they had been offered education or training in anti-sectarianism. Nor did there seem to be any known company policies that operated to protect employees at work from harassment or discrimination in this area. It was assumed that it would probably be covered by existing anti-discrimination policies. Some participants did believe that the issue might have recently been name-checked in already existing policy documentation. If so, there had been no worthwhile educational effort to mark the change, and no staff development had been provided to accompany any such addition. As a result, any additions of this nature that actually have taken place can only be judged to be tokenistic.

Violence

No reports were made of work place violence because of sectarianism. Some did report experiences of extremely aggressive behaviour and actual violence in other settings. Many of these expressions of prejudice were reported in connection with football matches, or in association with pubs, which could be linked to different football clubs, or in one case around an Irish pub. It was not possible to determine how many evocations of physical attacks were personally observed as opposed to being derived from media sources. Some undoubtedly were drawn from personal experience. Not all seemed to merit being described as sectarian. Following a series of criticisms of the Orange Order in the group of composed of Protestant/non-Catholic students (**Group 4**), one tried to present some sense of balance:

“Then you have the other side as well. I worked in a pub and there was a lot of traditional Irish songs, and there was a Celtic bus and there were lots of fights, although there weren’t any Rangers supporters. But there just was a lot of in-fighting; just different ideas triggered it all off.”

The clearest report of any personally experienced violence came from a participant in a different group (**Group 3**). He had attempted to cross over the road when there was, he stated, a “big gap” between groups in an Orange Order Parade. Instead he found himself being “wrestled to the ground by the police” which, as he explained, was probably to his own advantage “because their own stewards looked a little less restrained and professional”. Because of his attempted crossing he was abused as a “Fenian bastard” by a parading Orangeman. As he ‘was a card-carrying member of

the Church of Scotland”, he had found this comment to be “a little bit presumptuous”, and the experience “changed my attitude” to “Orange marches”.

Among the Catholic student group the parades themselves were seen to be worrying events. They judged Orange demonstrations to be directed against them. The behaviour of bandsmen outside Catholic churches, and the anti-Catholic abuse they stated they had experienced from those accompanying Orange processions, ensured that an anti-Catholic message had been directly and clearly conveyed. One student reported on an occasion the previous week-end when her thirteen-year old brother, wearing his Celtic top, was playing football in the family’s garden. An Orange parade passed by, and he was verbally abused, subjected to anti-Catholic comments, and physically threatened by a group of young men, wearing Rangers tops, who were following the end of the procession.

She believed that they had scared her young brother. He had said nothing in return. Her father had tried telling the abusers to back off. However they had only stopped once the police, who had been trailing them, intervened, and put some in to the back of an accompanying police car. This student was grateful for the police action, but she wondered why it was this case that this highly aggressive group of young men had earlier been allowed to abuse passers-by in the street. Only after they had threatened her young brother had the police then acted, so she assumed there to be had legal reasons for the earlier inactivity. Nonetheless, she and others in this group also expressed some sympathy for the Orange Order because of the damage done to its reputation by groups such as this, but they believed that the Order could do much more to distance itself from their camp followers. A few went so far as to express actual fear of Orange parades, and one, when young, had been explicitly warned by her parents to stay clear of these events.

The Orange Order found little overt support in any of the other groups. For many it did seem to have become too closely associated with aggressive posturing and violence. (It was precisely in the guise of aggressive posturing that it was introduced into the discussion in the work place based focus group.) Some of this judgment of the Order was based on personal experience: much was undoubtedly filtered through the media. Protestant students were at least as strong in their comments on the Orange Order as Catholics. They also judged Orange Parades to be ‘intimidating’ and ‘aggressive’. One met with agreement when she expressed disquiet about the perceived favourable treatment their processions were granted (**Group 4**):

“I think the fact that you can’t walk through them: all traffic has got to stop to let them through, so it kind of gives them a status that no other individuals can pass and walk through ... there is that kind of hidden agenda about them.”

Complexities of Sectarianism: the Political, the Inter-Personal & Mediated Perceptions.

Participants in the focus groups did state sectarianism to be a problem in Scotland, but it was defined and described in different ways. No real conceptual explanation was offered. References were made to the role of the Royal Family, the British State, and the relationship with Ireland, and some of these aspects, among others, must have been intended when references were made to history and culture. Nonetheless, the focus was usually on the responsibility of the individual, and not on the social

dimension of this, or other forms of, societal prejudice. Comparisons were made with other forms of prejudice and discrimination. These included homophobia and anti-English prejudice, because they, like religion, were judged not to be visible. Although a few made some associations with racism, for most sectarianism was seen as being different.

Worryingly that was because they were influenced by the common racist framework of thought, in which it is assumed that “races” do come colour coded, and that “race” is real, and visible. This failure to consider the socially constructed nature of “race”, on which the all too real reality of racism depends, was taken to mean that the supposedly invisible difference of religion could not have operated in a similar manner, or have been entangled in a belief system that presented the Irish as a different, and inferior “race, made more easily detectable by their religious affiliation (Brown, 1991; Findlay, 1991; Finn, 1987; 1990, 2000a,b; Miles, 1982). As with the earlier examples, that led to the conceptual oversimplification of racism, and the conceptual uncertainty surrounding sectarianism. But there was general agreement that “sectarianism” was about considerably more than religion.

That did not mean that religion by itself could not still present difficulties in personal relationships. Many participants still reported problems that had arisen in their personal lives as a result of what they judged to be sectarianism, especially in the development of personal and intimate relationships. Past divisions in families over religion had sometimes remained, and even deepened with the passage of time. Reports were made of present-day difficulties posed by relationships between couples with different religious beliefs, or some times religious beliefs and none. A few criticisms were made of priests and ministers who insisted on doctrinal purity in the face of genuine human predicaments, but some limited understanding of the clergymen’s own situation did seem to appear briefly in this discussion.

Even these very special and personal relationships can have an impact on employee inter-relationships. The work place simply cannot be detached from the wider society. One discussant identified how her marriage had disturbing work place repercussions for her. Close colleagues judged to be friends had refused to attend her wedding ceremony in a Catholic church.

Questions about stereotypes led to many relying on caricatures to make their response. A number of descriptions relied on “hard” male, working class football supporters, adorned in their club colours. Many of the comments made in the discussions, however, indicated the extent to which stereotypical thinking informed their accounts. Some explicit references were made to the media as the basis for some view or other that was then expressed. More often it was the obvious, if implicit, source from which a response had been derived.

One discussant (**Group 2**) critically discussed the role of the media as an important source of information and misinformation in this debate, and significantly identified media stereotypes to be a central core of the problem. Having moved to Scotland after being brought up elsewhere, he observed that “one of the biggest stereotypes I notice” is that sectarianism is always presented as being perpetrated by “thugs”. His comment was borne out by some portrayals in the group discussions, especially when asked to discuss stereotypes, but the focus group talks did show sufficient recognition that

sectarianism was much more complex and complicated than this crude reduction. That was exactly this observer's main point about sectarianism:
"it's so spread out throughout society... It's not about the football thugs or anyone. It's about the nice gentleman on the street and the nice woman three doors down and what their perceptions are of one another."

As he suggested, the role of the media is an important one. There is a question to be addressed as to how well the media does help Scotland come to a much better understanding of those phenomena that can be lumped under the term "sectarianism". But the problem of media representations is not just restricted to how sectarianism comes to be identified with specific sections of the community, and what is omitted. Similar questions can be asked about how the media deals with sectarianism in relation to its structuring within society, and in terms of its relationship with various institutions and organisations. Again there is inadequate knowledge about what is included and what is omitted, and there is also doubt as to how appropriately it does represent various organisations and their role when it does try to confront this issue.

CHAPTER 4

INTERVIEWS WITH TRADE UNION OFFICIALS: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Interviewees provided a rich range of responses that again inevitably interlinked the wider society with the impact of sectarianism on work place. However, for the purpose of this report, attention centres on how the responses from these older and more experienced workers related to the themes raised in the focus groups.

The interviews with these officials provided some substantiation of the accounts advanced by the younger workers in the focus groups. An older official identified how difficult it had been for Catholics to obtain employment in engineering jobs on Clydeside. His own career had begun in a Protestant-only engineering works. At that time, as a young man, he had not considered that this was unfair or unjust. A number of employers had operated in a similar manner, but he was not aware of any work place that had discriminated against Protestants. In some works Catholics had not been disbarred, but once employed they had no, or very limited, prospects of promotion. These practices had begun to end around thirty years ago, but some of these attitudes still remained, even if they were now “underground”.

Although the older interviewees noted substantial progress, nearly all of them judged sectarianism still to be a serious problem. There seemed to be a slight difference in emphasis between these older officials and younger workers. In the responses of the younger participants there was a hint, no more than that, that those who had not lived through these changes, were now more impatient to see further improvement. Nonetheless, even among these older union officials, a number hedged their bets on just how deep was the progress that had been made: suggestions were made that, although there had been positive changes, sectarianism now operated more subtly than in the past. One union official was more optimistic. Only some low level manifestations remained, as so he considered that it was no longer much of a problem in Scottish society. As a result, he believed that it should not be a high priority for attention, but that did not mean that its remaining ramifications should, or could, be ignored, and then neglected.

The other officials identified work place problems in much of Scotland. Problems had been experienced with sectarianism in the west of Scotland, in Edinburgh, central Scotland, Dundee and Aberdeen. One suggested that there were differences, though not absolute, in how problems emerged in different regions in Scotland. For example, in the west it was more often intertwined with football, but in the east, and in southern Scotland, there was a more overt link to a sense of Protestant dominance. A female official commented that the gender issue was misunderstood. Women could be much more subtle, and be among the worst perpetrators of sectarianism.

Very recent acts of direct employment discrimination against Catholics were reported. Again one example was in the finance sector. The other was a department within a public sector work place. The senior line manager of this section would not employ Catholics and also insisted on holding all office social events in the local Masonic lodge. In both examples, attendance at a Catholic school was used as the marker for exclusion. More complicated patterns were reported in the building trade in which

could be found what were effectively Protestant and Catholic firms. It was believed that this division was now diminishing, but that it had in the past been an important influence when competing for contracts. It was argued, that in some companies, religion even now played a part in limiting promotion prospects: restrictions on Catholic advancement were again reported in a few other areas of work. As these actions took place at managerial levels it was very clear to the officials reporting these events, that discrimination was not just some working class, or shop-floor activity. One official did suggest that discrimination had been especially entrenched in some firms that had a strong tradition of recruitment for promotion from within the company.

Problems could, as was reported in the focus groups, also be found in the working environment created in some firms. To gain access to one office, employees had to key in 1888, the year that Celtic played its first football match. Again the sense of the work place as an open and welcoming venue is violated. Union officials identified the use of football affiliation as being taken to be an important marker in relation to religion in many work places, and one that operated in a number of ways.

Overt bias in relation to these football affiliations was identified. One example sometime in the last decade was surprising. A very large government organisation with a substantial work force faced a demonstration that would make it very difficult for its employees to leave the site at the end of their work. That night Rangers were due to play an important match. The most senior person in the concern, who was also a Rangers season-ticket holder, allowed the workers to leave early that afternoon. The next day another large demonstration was again planned. That night Celtic had to play its equivalent match, but the same executive official refused to make similar arrangements for the work force. Fortunately, probably for all concerned, the planned demonstration did not take place that afternoon. It should be noted that the union official who reported this example was not a Celtic supporter.

Religious favouritism was reported as being displayed at some places of employment in relation to overtime opportunities – a fear that had been expressed in focus groups. An awkward situation existed in one public sector work force. After having been found guilty in the courts of harassment and discrimination against Catholic workers when in post in Northern Ireland, an individual had been transferred to the highest promoted level in a Scottish work place. Catholic workers, and especially Catholic union officials, did perceive themselves to be treated in a considerably cooler manner by this person. However, as the union official stated, there was no hard evidence of any discrimination.

Workers can also face expressions of prejudice from the public that they serve. One memorable example, took place “in the last five years” when fire-fighters attended a call-out to a fire in a well-appointed house in an area “where people have reasonable incomes”. Initially the house-owner refused to allow all personnel of the fire service to enter because he did not allow Catholics in his house. The leading fire officer in attendance, who was a Protestant, insisted that unless all of his crew were allowed to enter, no one would go in to extinguish the fire.

A number of officials identified their worry that the same prejudicial belief system of sectarianism was now evident in how some Scots thought about, and responded to

new migrants, particularly those from Eastern Europe, to Scotland. Poles were judged to be particular targets of prejudices that were racial and religious. One union officer dealing with a case in which Polish workers had been targeted noted that it was difficult to know whether it should be categorised as sectarianism or racism or perhaps both.

Disquiet was expressed about the issue of “banter” or “jokes” or “wind-ups” in the work force, but concern was again expressed about how to determine the point when this behaviour had gone too far. It was agreed that strong action should be taken when it crossed the line, but there was uncertainty as to how that could be determined, and understood. Two officials argued that the typically robust nature of working class humour meant that some care had to be taken to ensure that any intervention was helpful. Despite these notes of caution, there was agreement that this matter did require real attention. Graffiti was also identified as being a problem to be dealt with.

One official noted that there was a tendency to shy away from challenging issues, and that sectarianism was one prominent example of that neglect in the unions. Indeed, unions themselves were not seen always to have played the constructive role that they could or should have in relation to sectarianism. Instead the unions had not only just reflected the prejudice of their members, but in some localities they had come to be seen to be partisan, because they had too many interlocking relationships with organisations such as Freemasonry, and more particularly the Orange Order. The tradition of job recruitment influenced by religion had meant that some unions had been perceived to be Protestant or Catholic. Some worries about the religious affiliation of union officials had persisted.

One official had applied to become a union convener in a work place less than ten years ago. At a meeting to make the appointment, he had been asked by one of the shop-stewards whether he was a Fenian. The shop-steward expanded on his question. One convener was already in post, and as he was a Catholic, some in the work force were determined that there would not be two Catholics in these positions of union responsibility. The applicant, who was not a Catholic, answered honestly, and was appointed to the position.

The same union official, who had been successful in gaining this appointment, was worried that some areas of trade union activity could be seen to be predominantly Catholic. He also expressed his anxiety about a union convenor who had frequently worn a Celtic top when carrying out his duties, and he wondered whether that open affiliation would interfere with his ability to represent the whole work force. For this official, this style was doubly wrong, as the appropriate dress for a trade union convenor involved wearing a shirt and tie. Arguments can be made for and against the advocacy of this specific dress code, but the fundamental point about moving to some understanding about the creation of working environments acceptable to, and that are seen to be accepting of, all workers is again underlined.

Most officials had a deeper understanding of the complexity of sectarianism than was apparent in the focus groups. It was judged to be a cross-class phenomenon, not restricted to the working class, and located in the wider society. Only one invoked Catholic schools as a cause of sectarianism. Others thought that the recognition that Catholic schools were open to all had changed attitudes. However, another was

opposed to Catholic schools, not on what he judged to be the nonsensical grounds that they created sectarianism, but because he was a very strong believer that there should just be one local school that all attended, but he was puzzled as to why these aspects of Scottish education received so little condemnation in comparison with the issue of Catholic schools.

One difference that did emerge centred on the attribution of responsibility for sectarianism. There was what could be called, very loosely, a confessional divide. That is those who were Protestant, or identified because of family and cultural factors with that tradition, were more likely to argue for equal culpability: even when that sometimes seemed to conflict with the points that they had made, and the evidence they had presented. In contrast, among those who were Catholic, or had Catholic or Irish ancestry, some strong criticism of this equation was offered. It was accepted that Catholics could be prejudiced, but they strongly disputed that the history and basis of sectarianism in Scotland justified any such argument of equal culpability. One suggested that Catholics did see prejudice and discrimination more, simply because they had, and still were, if decreasingly so, more affected by it. Yet, he complained, this was then dismissed as Catholics having “a chip on the shoulder”.

Another, the only official not to judge contemporary manifestations to be a high priority for attention, nonetheless, did express strong views on what he evaluated as the false “equivalence” that too many persisted with when it came to the discussion of sectarianism. He judged this not only to be wrong but, given the history of the Catholic or Irish in Scotland, to offer the potential for a continuing source of aggravation. This participant’s point again identifies the contested nature of sectarianism. These are important issues for Scots to discuss and, ideally, resolve or, at the very least, to recognize the difference in perspectives and appreciate why this is the case.

Implicit in this discussion was that this approach of equivalence is evident in media coverage of the topic, which takes a supposedly ‘even-handed’ approach to sectarianism. There is a question to be answered as to whether the media serves Scotland well in its general handling of this issue. But, of course, the media does not exist independently of human agency: for its products it depends on workers, with various contractual arrangements, increasingly operating out of a range of different types of work place.

That uncertainty of how the media responds to sectarianism is worth bearing in mind in relation to another well made point by one official. Drawing on the broad experience of anti-discrimination work in other areas, it was observed that those organisations undertaking serious work to eradicate the problem would, because they inevitably come directly up against the phenomenon, record more evidence of that form of societal prejudice, and higher figures of its incidence. The danger then is that this information can be interpreted negatively, and they are judged, and presented, as being an organisation that is more prone to having that problem. Organisations in this position should instead be reported as positively acting to remove that form of discrimination, and the successful implementation of an anti-discrimination policy will then provide evidence of that achievement.

Some of the problems of arranging access to carry out this research included precisely these concerns about how the determination of the presence of sectarianism would be seen – and fears as to how it might be reported. As the official suggested, this danger does clearly exist, and can obstruct active interventions to tackle discrimination, including sectarianism. Given the uncertainty associated with the meaning of this term, it is even possible that these fears are greater in this area than in others. Consequently, this research underlines the need for much greater understanding of the need for openness in facing up to sectarianism, if it is to be successfully combated in Scottish work places.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND SECTARIANISM: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION.

Because such a small number of institutions do qualify students to teach, it was important to try to maximise the response. Despite the use of various prompts, two institutions made no response at all. Another, at the conclusion of the same process, formally made a 'nil return'. One institution replied to state that there was no formal attempt to deal with the issue, and that this was simply because of the insufficient course time available. But in one course in that institution, it was reported that, because of the research interests of one member of staff, sectarianism did receive some coverage in the seminars that those particular students experienced.

Merely three institutions reported that sectarianism was tackled in their course provision. Only one institution made any real attempt to quantify how much time was actually devoted to the issue, and that was in two out of the three courses that did respond. A positive gloss was put on the amount of teaching done: it was 'addressed within the 48 hours of contact' in one module on social justice. That actually meant one session that, at a maximum, included an hour lecture on the topic and a follow-up tutorial, but appears to have been an unusually large amount of discrete time made available for the topic. In another course it was part of 'a 6-hour block' that aimed to tackle all relevant issues of discrimination and inequality. This block was made up of two one-hour lectures and two two-hour seminars. In the remaining course response from this same institution it was tackled 'briefly in (a) module as part of an input on social justice which covers discrimination widely.' It was also 'covered in the history of Scottish education' but the demands on the course meant that 'many issues are only addressed in a similarly limited way.' There was also some 'discussion in Religious and Moral Education (arising ad hoc in tutorials)'. Staff active in this area added that: 'The issue of celebrating differences within a religious context is central to the Religious and Moral Education (RME) programme. Sectarianism often arises with discussion on the aims of RME in responses to student concerns.'

The second institution offered no attempt at evaluation of the amount of time devoted to the issue. One of the courses responded that it was either handled in electives or that it 'permeates courses.' An equivocal judgment was given to the question as to whether sufficient time was given over to the topic: it was judged to be adequate 'within the context of 18 weeks in Faculty. Notwithstanding, there is little doubt that greater coverage could be given either in the (course) or induction year.' The other course that responded from this institution claimed that it was impossible to provide some indication of the hours devoted to the topic as there was too much variation within the programme, and because it 'features only as an element in either RME or Educational Studies or in preparation for placement.' There was also the suggestion that, depending on the texts used in other modules, that sectarianism might be tackled in English, or possibly in History or Modern Studies.

In these responses from these two institutions, on two courses there did appear to be a distinct, if limited, focus on sectarianism. On other courses it is more difficult to make even this uncertain evaluation. Yet, in both of these institutions, despite admissions of only a restricted direct focus on sectarianism from some courses, the five courses that

responded still considered that a number of the topics in the checklist could be claimed to have been tackled.

Topics Identified As Being Tackled.

(If each course claimed that the same topic had been covered, then there would be a maximum score of 5.)

Meanings of Sectarian and Sectarianism	3
Sectarianism in Scottish society	4
Role of religion in the history of Scottish education	5
Contemporary role of religion in Scottish schools	3
Development of non-denominational schools	2
Development of denominational schools	4
Range of denominational schools in Scotland	4
Symbolic role of Catholic schools in Scotland	1
Anti-Sectarian Initiatives in society	2
Anti-Sectarian educational strategies	2
Classroom techniques to counter sectarianism	3
Links between Sectarianism and Racism and anti-Sectarianism and anti-Racism	4
International perspectives on Sectarianism and education	2

Only two course responses, one from each of these two different institutions, added additional topics that they believed were covered to this list. One offered “Faith schools” and “Sectarian incidents”; the second gave “Inclusion” as a further topic.

The limited return from all institutions makes any detailed interpretation of these specific responses more than problematic. It is probable, but not certain, that the other establishments that failed to communicate any information were in a similar position to the organization that stated that no formal teaching activity took place in this area at all. Even if a more positive outlook was taken, and these returns were assumed to be typical of all the universities (and the universal recognition of the role of religion in the *history* of Scottish education must surely be a common feature of all teacher education courses), then it is the limited attention paid to the *contemporary* resonances of religion that gives most cause for concern. Some signs of recognition of the need to tackle sectarianism are welcome, but the neglect of the much-misunderstood development of non-denominational schools is worrying, and the general avoidance of the symbolic role of Catholic schools is a real problem.

As the focus groups showed, these last two issues were especially problematic. The first question was a source of uncertainty, with the contemporary role and status of religion in non-denominational schools being both unknown, and misunderstood: a position that does reflect the inadequate general understanding of the wider population. Uncertainty did not influence responses to the second question. Instead, and again these responses reflect wider societal judgments, there were strongly contrasting robust judgments of support and condemnation, accompanied by an irritation and resentment among Protestants and others, which gave cause to upset, bewilderment and aggravation among Catholics. As a result, this issue was confirmed

to be controversial and divisive (Kelly, 2003): indeed, evidence points to this issue, rather than the provision of different schools themselves, being one especially potent source of division in Scottish society. Consequently, the symbolic role of Catholic schools, and the contemporary influence of religion and its various ramifications on education and society, is one that should be addressed within teacher education institutions.

In the additional comments provided by one course, it was stated that the questions asked were unhelpful because of the structure of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. Presumably this comment arose because most ITE courses are now conceived as being flexible, broadly thematic and interdisciplinary in approach. That should have the advantage of allowing for the teaching of holistic approaches in which students could, for example, apply the broad principles of equality and social justice to specific questions in relation to the educational process. That attainment depends upon expertise and competence being developed in relation to thinking about specific variants of inequality, and then in formulating strategies that can provide some mechanisms to remedy these injustices. However, that should not make it impossible to identify precisely how much dedicated time is spent on the specific topic as a minimum. Only two courses did attempt something along these lines. The problem is that, even here in these courses, there can be no real confidence that anything other than very limited discrete work has been done in relation to sectarianism; indeed, given the limited time that was identified, it is quite surprising just how many topics were seen to have been addressed. Much more probable is that they may have been mentioned in some form, but it is difficult to be able to sustain the argument that they have been genuinely tackled. Presumably that would depend on considerable further reading being undertaken by students that would then be subject to some assessment. No courses reported that anything along these lines had occurred.

The one remaining institution that replied positively indicated potential curriculum areas for all three qualifying courses in which relevant work was possibly carried out. Each of the three course responses also included the comment: 'Sectarianism/Anti-Sectarianism can be included within the broad content of a range of issues relevant to 'Equality in Education'. These are approached flexibly, so it is not appropriate to quote an over-prescriptive hourage for one particular issue.' No specific topics were identified because this institution wished 'to emphasise that a very wide range of issues (including those in the above table) are addressed under the broad heading of 'Equality in Education'. The implication is that even more topics are tackled than listed in the table above. However, this claim would be much more reassuring if it had been accompanied by some attempt to identify some of the topics it was believed might have been tackled by members of staff. Nor should allowing flexibility make it impossible to provide some indication of the minimum amount of time that was made available to tackle this issue within this theme. Or if that is the case, then clearly there must be the real danger that it is not tackled at all. Some specificity about the relevant discrete subject matter and related concepts involved is really required for these claims to be received with some real confidence. Effectively, this institution claimed some relevant work was being done, but was unable to demonstrate exactly what this work was.

This institution also replied that the courses dealt appropriately with sectarianism because ‘No negative concerns have been raised by course tutors or students on shortage of time for particular issues within the module.’ The absence of any specification of what is positively achieved and what items are covered is again evident. Without knowing more about what is tackled this comment is more than a little opaque: the responses of staff and students do themselves depend on their own learning, expertise, attitudes and values in relation to the treatment of discrimination and inequality.

It is difficult to present any overarching view of this attempt to gain a general overview of how sectarianism is dealt with in teacher education institutions. Two institutions provided no information. One made a formal nil return. A fourth reported that sectarianism was not formally tackled. Of the three that did report that something was done, the coverage seems at best spotty and sporadic. One clear conclusion that can be drawn is that there is a considerable need to examine in far greater detail what in fact is being done. The fear is that those who did not make reports after various attempts to gain information from them do much less than those who did testify to some relevant activity.

Despite various claims of topics covered, the focus groups composed of student teachers showed just how much does remain to be done: prejudice and inadequate knowledge were both evident in these discussions. Comments in various other focus groups demonstrated more marked responses. There was widespread misunderstanding, signs of suspicion, and sometimes even bitter resentment, around the issue of Catholic state schools. Unsurprisingly, these attitudes were strongly contested by Catholic participants. This one issue gives rise not only to especially heated discussion, but the expression of prejudicial views. That was evident among students, teachers, and members of the public. Clearly there is a need for a much better informed discussion within education. As teacher educators tend to be nearly universally recruited from teachers, it is essential that this topic be much better understood among the whole teaching community itself. That is also essential if society itself is to attain a more mature and more balanced view on this issue (Salmond, 2008).

An interesting suggestion from one course was surprise that ‘no mention is made of the Standard for Initial Teacher Education and the Standard for Full Registration which both contain benchmarks that require student teachers and teachers to provide equality of opportunity in an inclusive society and to promote respectful relationships in a school’. But this may also identify part of the problem. The standards are couched in broad terms and do not identify sectarianism as a specific issue that should be tackled. Unless teacher educators judge sectarianism to be an important issue, and one that they feel able to deal with, then there is no responsibility on them to tackle it. If it is believed that this matter should be seen to be an important element of teacher education, then an amendment to the standards, which pinpointed relevant issues with respect to sectarianism, might offer a route towards a partial solution.^{xv} Without some specific guidance, followed by assistance for staff in dealing with relevant issues, then, given the various time pressures and competing demands on what should be included as course content, it is understandable if universities have so far not made sectarianism a priority within teacher education courses.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Generalizability of results: A Caveat and a Caution

This research does not allow any quantitative assessment to be made of the problem of sectarianism in employment in Scotland. There is scope for further, better funded, research to gain further information on this point, and to gain more detailed information on its impact on the work place, but any methodologies employed must be sensitive to the complexities surrounding the interpretation of sectarianism. Although some precise numerical evaluation of the extent of sectarianism in Scottish places of employment is not possible from this research, the comparison of the views expressed in the focus groups with those judgments made by trade union officials, and derived from much wider and richer work experiences, confirms that sectarianism even now does remain a problem for workers in Scotland. Consequently, there is no reason not to act now, nor should action await further research. Indeed some suggested policy implementations would make it much easier to evaluate the extent of the problem and, by opening up the work place to scrutiny, would also have the positive benefit of reducing the opportunities to undertake discriminatory practices based on sectarianism. The cost of delay to an admittedly unknown number of workers is too great not to do so now.

Progress

Undoubtedly real progress has been made in reducing sectarianism in Scotland. The research findings, nonetheless, do show that sectarianism remains a force in Scottish society, and inevitably therefore, it also remains evident in the Scottish work place. Indeed greater sensitivity, which did hinder this research, surrounded this issue than had been expected. It is possible to make a positive interpretation of this unease. In part it reflects the growing unwillingness by many individuals in society to be judged to be under the influence of some form of prejudice. However, if scrutiny and examination are made difficult, then that opens up the possibility not only that the prejudice remains but also that it has evolved into a more subtle and disguised form (e.g., Dovidio *et al.*, 2005). That was a commonly expressed belief, or perhaps fear, among participants. This factor did mean that although generally there was agreement that improvements had taken place, this was accompanied by some uncertainty as to how deep or widespread the progress had been.

More of the older interviewees were sure that there was a real advance, but most of these participants also judged that more covert expressions of sectarianism still existed. Young workers relied on the judgments of their elders, especially family and other relatives, to make similar, if sometimes occasionally gloomier, evaluations. There were also signs of the impact of media reporting on the thinking of the respondents. Younger participants, probably because they had not lived through these changes, seemed less satisfied by these advances. Some evidence was presented that progress was uneven. A few examples of old forms of active discrimination were still reported.

Direct discrimination in the work place

It was worrying to learn that in 21st century Scotland examples of direct discrimination against Catholics could still be reported. It is also a concern that nothing was done about this in these places of employment. Trade union activists relayed these examples but they had initiated no action or complaints themselves. This is a revealing example of the way that sectarianism can become so embedded within the culture that, although these informants disapproved of it, no opposition to its practice took place. In that sense it becomes accepted; it was simply an every-day element of the social reality of those work places.

Anxiety about the consequences of initiating action may be another factor at work here, even when faced with these dramatic displays of employment discrimination; perhaps that is especially true when such overt examples become apparent. Fear of suffering worse abuse meant that many reported their reluctance to be seen to oppose much lesser forms of work place discrimination. Moreover, it is especially difficult to oppose practices that so many others are perceived to have accepted or are at least seen to comply with. It takes courage to object if individuals believe that to do so may place their own career prospects in jeopardy. If to be a Catholic was enough to disqualify someone from employment, then to be someone who publicly proclaimed this to be an injustice that should not be allowed might also lead to profoundly negative career repercussions. Consequently it is important to do more than simply attempt to create the moral climate that will help people come forward to identify and then tackle work place injustice: it is also critical to ensure the necessary legislation and legal support to ensure that whistleblowers, regardless of their own religious beliefs or none, are not themselves then penalized.

Attendance at a Catholic school was the main mechanism used to disqualify candidates from employment. A strong prejudice has to be at the bottom of this discrimination against Catholics: it simply disqualifies all from that school even the opportunity to become a potential employee. Moreover, because this strategy simply discriminates against all who attend Catholic schools, which in most Catholic schools nowadays will include those of other faiths and none, it now has the effect of also excluding from employment those presumably viewed as being tainted by association, because of their enrolment in Catholic state schools. As a result, applicants who are not Catholics may experience a form of direct discrimination purely because of their school associations. Anti-discrimination policies need to be able to deal with these forms of direct discrimination based on indirect forms of sectarianism, to ensure that those who are not Catholic, but discriminated against as if they were, are also protected.

These examples also demonstrate the need to ensure that those who speak out are not themselves the subject of mistreatment. Victimization of those who consciously demonstrate solidarity with the Catholic^{xvi} targets of prejudicial policies and actions is made all the more probable in organisations, or sections of organisations, that operate in this manner. Anti-discrimination legislation now customarily recognises that legal protection does need to be extended to those who may be victimised for opposing discrimination whether that is directed specifically against them or against others. Similar safeguards are needed in the area of sectarianism.

The role of religion in the appointment of a trade union convener was more complicated, but the process was still discriminatory: the decision to appoint was not being made on the basis of competence to fulfil the duties of the post. If the best candidate had been deemed a 'Fenian', then that would have been sufficient to argue against his appointment. Clearly all sorts of employers do need to examine and reflect on how their recruitment practices operate.

Football support was often stated to have been used as another proxy for religion. On this basis there could be discrimination in providing overtime opportunities, but it was also reported that these decisions could be made purely because of religion. Various forms of petty work place discrimination were mentioned. Again this could be linked to football affiliations. That was seen to some effect in the organisation that had refused to make the same provision for Celtic supporters that had been granted to Rangers fans to ensure that they would be able to attend an equivalent match. These, and other examples, were surprisingly strong forms of discrimination to have been reported within recent years.

Nonetheless, despite evidence that some feared that being a Catholic might hinder employment with some business concerns, nobody reported that this had then influenced them not to apply for a job they had truly wanted. Only in relation to Catholic schools, or teacher training, did this claim appear. In the case of complaints associated with entry to teacher training, the respondents had misunderstood the recruitment to courses at Glasgow University. For those who objected to the religious restrictions to employment in Catholic state schools, certainly none then made it apparent that they had failed to obtain the employment they really wished by not having commenced a career teaching in Catholic state schools.

Clearly, despite progress, it cannot be assumed that discrimination associated with religion, or what is seen to be its associated characteristics, has completely ended in employment in Scotland. These examples cannot be argued to have been typical experiences for participants, but they do provide grounds for serious concern that in a few work places various forms of blatant discrimination do still remain in force.

A few discussants did suggest the need for some form of monitoring of sectarianism in employment recruitment. If the reported examples are indeed atypical, then it could be argued that this approach would be unnecessarily cumbersome. A counter argument is that the only way to be sure (and indeed be able to reassure) that forms of this discrimination are now of little force in Scottish society is by undertaking monitoring exercises. The evidence obtained would be valuable. And, if little evidence was demonstrated, then the need to continue with recruitment monitoring could be re-examined. But, that would not dispense with the need to monitor incidents of other forms of sectarianism in the work place, which would assist in moving towards its eradication, as this required openness would make apparent presently hidden discriminatory practices and policies.

Clarifying the meaning of sectarianism

However, as the evidence shows, tackling sectarianism is a problematic issue. Difficulties aplenty surround the meaning and interpretation of both sectarian and sectarianism. Sometimes, as noted, it appears directly, sometimes in an indirect

association, in the guise of football affiliation or schooling histories. When this vagueness is added to the fact that its presence, nature and manifestation can all be subject to contestation, then the potential for further uncertainty, confusion, disagreement and discord are magnified.

Some clarity, however, would be gained if different aspects of the phenomena presently categorised under sectarianism were identified and, when necessary, examined independently. Greater precision would emerge if questions concerning both anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant prejudice and discrimination were distinguished when that is appropriate. Similarly, the related, but still identifiable question of anti-Irish prejudice can also be separated out when necessary. This last aspect does seem to need some dedicated exploration and treatment.

But of course these suggestions may themselves be subject to contestation. The Irish question, to present the issue in a neutral if imprecise form, has been a heated one in Scotland. Analyses that identify the involvement of anti-Irish prejudice, presented as a form of racism (e.g., Hickman & Walters, 1997), are hotly contested. Sometimes, as the findings here show, that is on grounds that rely upon racist assumptions for this differentiation. What this demonstrates is that the calm but critical examination of this particular example offers an ideal strategy to challenge racism. A willingness to grapple with this issue would offer a real opportunity to engage with, and then combat, racism in all of its forms (Finn, 2003).

Policy development: “banter”, graffiti and work place cultures

Sectarianism is a strongly contested concept: this contestation extends to the illustrations used and to details of accounts proffered. Indeed, markedly different accounts can be offered about the same events, incidents, or even as to how a shared work place should be judged. That can, as became increasingly evident in the work place focus group, lead to polarisation, posturing, and a determined effort to define the reality of the shared work place in a manner that disregards others, and their views. In this discussion, as in others, there arose the typical, if perplexing, concern about what some termed banter, but others can judge to be a form of verbal prejudice directed at them. Again it was the work place group that most vividly demonstrated how this can also become a contested topic. Yet, as the vast majority of participants agreed, as did all union officials, even those most urging caution in this area, expressions of prejudice can take place under the guise of banter or humour, and it does require attention. By this device verbal abuse of another, or others, can be disguised or deflected, and then more opprobrium can be heaped upon the target by blaming them for their lack of a sense of humour.

Perhaps what was most worrying about these discussions is that most participants felt powerless in the face of such an experience. Seldom was it thought that it would be appropriate to request that action be taken to deal with the matter. The fear was that would simply make the situation worse. Involving union officials was seldom spontaneously suggested. That was despite this being a group of participants who were, in comparison with the general population, highly unionised, and who had worked mainly in unionised employments. A different sample of workers from non-unionised work places might have provided an even gloomier portrait of the situation. Workers were unaware of specific rights or mechanisms to deal with sectarianism but,

when pressed, there was a general assumption that it *must* be covered under some company or trade union policy. Precise policies do need to be developed that are known, understood and have the support of both trades unions and the employers. Clear guidelines and guidance are needed if the culture of sectarianism associated with work places is to be thwarted. Banter and ‘jokes’, difficult as these issues are, would need to be included in any policy.

Some of these problems have already been faced up to in Northern Ireland. Dickson, Hargie & Nelson (2002) initially advised that ‘employees should appreciate that ‘banter’ and inappropriate ‘black humour’ can be construed as provocation and cause offence.’ In this first report banter was treated as a problem. However, in a subsequent report, Hargie, Dickson & O’Donnell (2006) explained that workers judged banter and sectarianism to be different phenomena. From what workers said, the authors concluded that banter was ‘a way of dealing with difference in a non-serious, non-confrontational fashion, while developing and testing relationships’. Now banter was seen to be part of a bottom-up process through which workers regulated anti-sectarian behaviour. Indeed it was an informal approach that assisted the more formal top-down process of regulation, which was management-led.

Nonetheless, despite this change in orientation, there still remained in the Hargie *et al.* (2006) report some concerns about banter, and the use of the format of jokes to wound others. But these examples of what could perhaps be described as malign banter are then either re-defined by workers, and subsequently by the authors, as not being proper banter, or are described as banter having gone wrong. The shift in emphasis between the two reports is not totally convincing but, to be positive, it may indicate that the development of clear policies and guidelines in general have created more work place climates in which some joking, presumably what they and workers would judge to be ‘real banter’, can be appropriate.

Yet the counter examples provided by this research offer evidence that inappropriate joking or banter that goes ‘too far’ still takes place. So is it truly ‘a way of dealing with difference in a non-serious, non-confrontational fashion, while developing and testing relationships’? Answers to this question depend on the extent to which this approach can really deal with difference, and in what ways then are relationships truly developed by this approach? Perhaps even more intriguing is, especially in this context, what it means to say that banter is a means by which relationships are tested, but that this occurs in a ‘non-serious, non-confrontational fashion’?

It has long been recognized that one of the problems in Northern Ireland is that considerable effort is put into determining what ethno-political grouping an individual belongs to so that this difference, which in reality dominates the inter-personal exchange, can then be conversationally circumvented (e.g., Burton, 1979; Cairns, 1982; Goldring 1989; Beattie, 1992). As a result, religious differences appeared to be ignored, despite impacting directly on how people did structure their conversations with others from a different community, so that an agreeable, polite and superficially friendly meeting ensued. Real progress does require that discussion of difference can take place. As a result, it might be the case that Hargie and his colleagues are correct to welcome in Northern Ireland what appears to be a specific type of banter as a mechanism that potentially does begin to allow its inhabitants to address and explore religious and related differences.

Scotland and Northern Ireland are not equivalent: Scotland should be further advanced, but the work-based discussion group provides little support for the argument that these differences are necessarily discussed with greater sensitivity and maturity. Elements of other discussion groups also showed negative aspects, but there were undoubtedly positive signs too. Moreover, unlike the research from Northern Irish workplaces (Dickson *et al.*, 2002; Hargie, *et al.*, 2006), Scottish workers neither reported violence directed against them nor deliberate damage to their property. Scotland and Northern Ireland are not the same, but that does not mean that Scotland cannot learn from experiences there, and then adapt the lessons to the Scottish setting.

The difference between the two locations should mean that the issue of banter can be dealt with more directly in Scotland. That does not mean that banter itself should be eliminated. Unease about supposed humour and banter was common, but there was also unease about any clumsy intervention: a view particularly expressed by some of the union officials who saw vigorous and robust joking and jesting as a central part of working class culture. Consequently, the task is to ensure that these sorts of exchanges are humorous for all, and not occasions when a target group, or representatives of that group, become the butt of others' so-called humour.

An important difference between Northern Ireland and Scotland is that there, for obvious reasons, the issue of sectarianism in the work place has already been treated seriously, with policies established to tackle it. Possibly, as a result, workers there have been helped to become more aware of the sensitivities involved, and of the need to be much more careful about what they do say,^{xvii} meaning that, as Hargie *et al.* suggest, it is the genuine exchange of *good-natured* humour that now predominantly takes place, and that this is progressively more what workers mean when they use the label banter. If that is what has occurred, and again it must be borne in mind that there is evidence in the report that not all exchanges are so positive, then the progress is because the issue of sectarianism has been raised within work places, leading to banter being re-conceptualized as humorous exchanges that must meet the test of mutual acceptance. And it is that sense of mutuality that holds the key to what is acceptable.

To be acceptable as humour, sympathy, empathy and support must be present. So-called humour and banter posed problems for young Scottish workers precisely when these qualities were absent, and when instead it was used to slight, to snub, even to reject others, or their strongly felt associations. Making even these apparently marked distinctions will not always be easy, but it is essential if one form of verbal prejudice is to be eliminated. Context, as some participants stated, is important, but so is the content and the intent. A big step forward is the understanding that no one section of the workforce has the power, either by force of numbers or some other form of illegitimate authority, to impose on other workers a definition of what is acceptable humour, when that they are the topic of a supposed joke. Effectively what is needed is a determined effort to reshape and refine what is acceptable, and thus redefine what is banter.

But if policies on sectarianism in the work place are to be effective, the work force must be involved in their discussion, formulation and implementation. If a policy is to be successful, then it is the employees who will largely make that the case. Hargie *et*

al. (2006: 21) describe some ways in which the work force must be involved in the solution, and provide a good account of the work place culture that needs to be created:

“Employees play an important role in regulating anti-sectarian conduct within the workplace: this should be acknowledged and understood by employers. Employers cannot ‘force’ good community relations within the workplace: employees cannot be told to ‘like’ someone. However, employees should appreciate the role expected of them in the workplace and the necessity to respect difference.”

The creation of these possibilities depends on joint action between trades unions and employers: and again it is necessary that the workers, not simply their trade union representatives, be actively engaged in these processes themselves. The Northern Irish experience shows that it is important that employers and unions do genuinely work together. Clarity in the expectations of good behaviour by employees is needed, as is an unambiguous understanding of the possible consequences if workers do not adhere to these expectations.

Misplaced so-called humour reflects the culture of a work place. Elimination of sectarianism requires action on various levels. For example, the issue of graffiti that expressed sectarianism was inevitably also a problem in Northern Ireland, and has been tackled there. In Scotland employers should have a duty to remove graffiti speedily, and that means that it has to be clear that it is unacceptable, with a comprehensible statement of how it will be dealt with if it occurs. Other examples of what can seem to be a culture of work place prejudice also need to be dealt with. For example, the use of codes on locks or various pieces of equipment should certainly be chosen with ease of memory in mind, but not also with the aim of irritating others who have to use them. The aim should be to ensure that Scottish work places are secure and safe locations in which all workers feel valued and supported, and in which their various social identities can be accepted.

That would differ from the sense of work place neutrality that has been sought in Northern Ireland. The exclusion of flags and emblems, including sporting ones, and religious identifiers, has been accompanied by the determined attempt to exclude exchanges about religion, politics and contested events that would be part of the normal currency of social exchange in work places elsewhere.^{xviii} Again the differences between Scotland and Northern Ireland should mean that this approach is not required. Yet, in case it turns out that some places of work in Scotland do need to start off in this manner, which one would hope will not be the case, this strategy should not be immediately rejected, but retained as a fall-back position for any worst case scenario. Local discussions between employers and trades unions and workforces should determine the ideal strategy to follow in specific settings. Differences between Scotland and Northern Ireland justify this much greater flexibility of approach: perceived differences between various Scottish areas will also mean that some further flexibility is required. However, it is important to note that union officials did not claim sectarianism to be a phenomenon that was observed in only certain localities. And, despite the claims of a faction in the work place based focus group that it was not to be found there, the exchanges in that group did show a different reality.

Yet it is important to recall that sectarianism is indeed a very strange kettle of fish.^{xix} It can, as this example demonstrated, raise its head in unexpected ways, which can then become, sometimes as a result, often highly contested issues. Unpredictable forms of sectarianism do need to be expected by those developing and implementing policies. Sectarianism can contaminate the serious and the relatively trivial in social life. But because something is trivial does not mean that the emotions aroused can be treated lightly. Nor should the fact that a particular issue is trivial distract attention from the need to recognize that the underlying prejudicial principle, on which it depends, does itself remain a serious problem. Accusations of sectarianism in relation to the provision of fish on Fridays reveal a prejudicial framework that is not at all trivial for those workers who do have dietary requirements that work places should try to accommodate. Prejudices embedded in sectarianism will prove sufficiently flexible to be adaptable.

The underlying structure of prejudice and discrimination that underpins sectarianism can be extended to other groups in Scotland: that sets another problem to be tackled. Confirmation that this did need consideration was presented. A worrying report came from those union officials who were now beginning to see how the framework of sectarianism could be adapted to apply to Polish and other East European workers in Scotland. In this example the interplay between specific forms of racism and sectarianism was again evident. Supposed banter and prejudice passed off as humour offer another flexible method to discriminate against other groups in Scotland. These provide further grounds to state that doing nothing is not an option. Indeed, tackling the thorny issue of banter in relation to sectarianism offers the opportunity to attend in the same manner to those unacceptable forms of expression directed against other groups, and then passed off as jokes.

None of this is to underestimate the complexity brought to sectarianism by the strong forms of contestation that are, as this evidence shows, associated with it. Any successful approach will need to recognize this complexity and openly accept the strongly contested nature of many issues and topics that are linked to sectarianism. That means that it will be necessary to adopt a strategy that acknowledges strongly held differences in opinion and offers an appreciation and understanding of different, sometimes opposed, perspectives. This orientation will not lead to some speedy resolution of matters, but a greater understanding of the precise nature of the disagreement, and why it has emerged, could help develop a more dispassionate debate on what are too often emotively divisive issues. Assumptions of equivalent responsibility for sectarianism and the marked contestation surrounding Catholic state schools are especially pertinent examples that require to be tackled in the wider society, but have ramifications for all work places.

Formal education

Teacher education institutions (TEI) are work places with a special role in relation to this second example. More could be done to combat sectarianism. More knowledge on what they truly do is needed. If schools are meant to play a part, then teachers must be properly prepared. The returns indicate a very limited response so far from these institutions. Comments indicating problems over course content selection because of pressure of time are accurate, and understandable. But if there was sufficient will then that difficulty could be overcome: certainly that would be the case if there was a

strong expression of political will that these matters should be tackled. The present Standards for Initial Teacher Education do include various expectations that could, and perhaps probably should, be interpreted as including sectarianism. The available evidence does not give any reassurance that this is the case. And even if more was being done, the highly contested nature of sectarianism means even more uncertainty as to what actually would then be taught. Some precise guidance that anti-sectarianism, accompanied by some indication of relevant topics and issues to be tackled, is to be included in teacher education courses is needed to make the requirement clear, if indeed it is to be one. In addition, teachers in all sectors do require adequate and appropriate preparation for this task.

Teaching this issue in higher education in particular is not an easy one: it is understandable why some would avoid it. In one of the few references to what happens when it is tackled in higher education, Jacobs (2006: 349) comments that ‘In Scotland, conflicts or heated discussions around the Catholic/Protestant sectarian divide occurred.’ Some staff development will be needed to ensure that TEI lecturers and tutors are adequately prepared. Unless the most awkward issues are simply avoided, the considerable contestation in the classroom described by Jacobs can be expected. That, as was evident from the focus group discussions, is especially true when discussing the specific case of Catholic schools (Conroy, 2008). Yet, rather than being presented as divisive, which the research evidence shows is a false accusation (Patterson, 2000c), the establishment of Catholic state schools can be held up as being a very early example of a state showing support for pluralism and countering discrimination (Finn, 2000), and this addition to the state system of schooling can be seen as the move towards a closer working relationship between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the British State (O’Hagen & Davies, 2007). These alternative perspectives on Catholic state schools are neglected in the dominant negative standpoint on their presence identified by Salmond (2008): again that perspective has profound implications when extended to other Scottish community groups who may desire other state-funded faith schools (Finn, 2003; see also Halstead & McLaughlin, 2005; Gardner *et al.*, 2005).

Sometimes the issue of Catholic state schools is criticised from a position that is presented as being secular. Intriguingly, this stance and some associated positions are more commonly now being challenged, not only because they do not, as is sometimes claimed, occupy some neutral ground, but also because they represent an anti-pluralist force pushing homogeneity. Modood (2007) fears the damage that can be done to meaningful multiculturalism from fundamentalist secularists as much as that by fundamentalist religious believers. McGrath (2004: 278) comments in a similar vein that: “The atheist agenda, once seen as a positive force for progress, is now seen as disrespectful towards cultural diversity.” In a similar way, Grace (2002: 240) quotes Cox that: “If freedom once required a secular critique of religion, it can also require a religious critique of the secular.” He then concludes: “The very existence of Catholic schools and indeed of all faith-based schools constitutes part of the religious critique of the secular, without which both culture and freedom would be diminished.”

There is not, though some desperately seek it, some way of avoiding the value-loaded debate on this issue. There is not a neutral position, as all do depend on some value system. Much explanation of the associated issues and of the beliefs associated with these highly contested positions is required. Discussion of the symbolic role of

Catholic state schools for the Catholic community is essential, especially if greater understanding is to arise as to how this matter comes to be seen as an attack on the Catholic community in Scotland. That will not end debate. There will still remain different stances on state provision of faith schools and the role of parental choice within the state schooling system. Progress will have been achieved when this debate no longer focuses almost exclusively, if not obsessively, on the issue of Catholic state schools, and when it begins to be conducted in a much more measured manner.

Role of the media

In this, as in other issues, the media is an inevitable source of information but also a starting place for misinformation and prejudice. Apart from direct personal experience, and what is filtered through family and friends, the media in all of its forms provides a substantial input into what people come to believe about sectarianism. More often that was implicit, rather than explicit, in what participants said in relation to aspects of sectarianism that had not been part of their own personal experience or directly relayed to them through others in their extended social life. The media does have an important influence on how, and on what, people think about sectarianism.

Some research into how the media defines, and then how it handles, sectarianism in Scotland is, therefore, long overdue. Progress in combating prejudice will be much speedier if some greater understanding and knowledge of the processes that operate, especially in relation to the creation of daily news agenda, in these very specific work places can be achieved. That might make it possible to ensure that the media is enlisted in the effort to tackle Scotland's sectarianism. There is a need for much more openness, and open discussion of sectarianism (Lynch, 2000). Clearly the media has an important role to play here. However, it will also require some assistance, perhaps guidance, if it is to go beyond the reproduction of dominant beliefs and attitudes about sectarianism, and play a constructive part in helping begin a more informed debate about sectarianism in Scotland. There may be scope for discussions between the Scottish Government, the Scottish media, and organisations such as Ofcom and the Press Complaints Council, to develop some guidelines in this area.

Denial and progress: identifying problems to solve in order to combat sectarianism

One important omission in much of the discussion that has accompanied the story of Donald Findlay and the singing of the "Billy Boys" is that this song, viewed as a traditional Rangers song, was judged for so long to be acceptable by so many. Findlay was not engaging in some practice that had then been universally condemned. However, the performance took place during a time of marked societal change in Scotland, in which this event brought even more attention to bear on the specific issue of sectarianism (Devine, 2000b). As the talk in the focus groups showed, Findlay became something of a lightning rod for this stormy debate. Sadly for him subsequent discussions have often been personalised, becoming a debate that concentrates on "his" actions, with the episode being seen to be about Findlay, which was, and is, to miss the point. Instead, it needs to be made clear that what he did was part of a collective routine: his actions were taken in concert with similarly minded others.

This whole event showed how this was simply an acceptable part of social life for a significant section of Scottish society. In many respects it was similar to supposed banter. The absence of any meaningful criticism by those who would be seen by them to be significant others, confirmed many in the belief that it was their right to sing the “Billy Boys”. It did not matter if those against whom it was directed viewed it to be hurtful and malicious, it was still taken-for-granted that they simply had to put up with these taunts. Little or no attention was paid to the feelings and judgments of those against whom it was directed. It was not until the actions that were taken by UEFA that condemnation of singing the “Billy Boys” became meaningful, and much more widespread within Scottish society. Threats of further punitive action at first produced reluctant compliance, before there was a more resigned conformity and now, arguably, a reluctant acknowledgment that it is an unacceptable and inappropriate song.

This specific episode indicates in miniature how the process of change in combating sectarianism has involved processes of denial, reinterpretation and then action. So far this process appears to have become a general rule in the effort to identify and then challenge this form of societal prejudice. Indeed, this does dovetail with some participants’ observations that one of the real problems with sectarianism is that some of its materializations have become almost an accepted part of the structure of Scottish social life. That was especially seen to be the case with various expressions that, because they were judged to be at low or no levels of seriousness, had just become part of the background scenery to contemporary Scottish social reality. Part of the problem of sectarianism in Scotland is this failure to acknowledge when it is a problem, which is particularly evident when its presence is in what can be claimed to be a lesser form; that difficulty is then made worse by the denial that some contemporary variants of what are in fact long-standing prejudicial beliefs also constitute part of the problem – not part of the solution. Yet this simply serves to underline the complexity and the contested nature of sectarianism.

Notwithstanding these complexities, nor the complications and probable controversies that will ensue, tackling sectarianism in the Scottish work place should no longer be avoided. These findings do show something of its range of manifestations and its varied influences on Scottish society and thus, as a result, on places of employment; some of which have an additional responsibility to make sure that they are combating rather than reinforcing sectarianism.

As this research has shown, sectarianism in Scotland exists in forms that range from the relatively trivial to the relatively serious. Allport (1954/1979) and subsequent researchers (Dovidio *et al.*, 2005) have shown how the existence of prejudice at a lower, more trivial, level of expression makes manifestations at higher, more serious, levels of expression more probable. Although increasingly rare in its most heinous forms, sectarianism is still expressed in a variety of levels of behaviour in Scotland and, as a result, does impact in a number of ways on Scottish work places. Fortunately progress has been made, but there remains further to go. This research offers support from the participants for that continuation. Even though this research found various difficulties, complications and complexities associated with sectarianism, there was no overt opposition to the broad aim of combating sectarianism; although, depending on the direction taken, the contested nature of what is meant by sectarianism does mean that more than a few objections could be expressed at a later date. Despite the

various difficulties identified, and those unpredictable ones that cannot be specified but can still be expected to arise, there now can be no excuse for failing to proceed to develop and implement policies to combat sectarianism in Scottish places of employment.

7.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Meanings of sectarian and sectarianism

Considerable uncertainty surrounds these terms and their use. Confusion between pejorative and non-pejorative usage was evident. This meant that simple differences, which were linked to religion, could be perceived to be sectarian in a derogatory sense, and thus be presented as a cause or a consequence of sectarianism.

Direct & indirect forms of sectarianism

Sectarianism was inevitably discussed directly in relation to religious adherence. Other experiences of sectarianism identified were better described as being indirect, and they were raised in relation to football clubs, Catholic schools, or some other perceived indicator of religious affiliation. In keeping with the lack of clarity surrounding the meaning of sectarianism, some judgments could occasionally be surprising.

Confusion, contestation & polarisation

Uncertainty of interpretation could lead to the same phenomenon being described as an example of sectarianism by some, but as a cause, or a symptom, or a symbol, or a form of cultural expression by others.

Considerable contestation of what sectarianism is, or about how, or if, it influenced participants, was common in discussions. Marked polarisation could occur during focus group discussion.

Commonly participants primarily presented the problem as being between Protestants and Catholics, but considerable discussion around this issue led to the identification of associations with Ireland, and the inter-relationships between Britain and Ireland, to be relevant factors. Positions taken in relation to these factors could be strongly contrasting.

Clarifying the meaning of sectarianism

To advance a better understanding of sectarianism, and in order to tackle its different manifestations, it is necessary to recognize that it most commonly exhibited three different aspects. These are anti-Catholic prejudice and discrimination; anti-Protestant prejudice and discrimination; and anti-Irish prejudice and discrimination that historically took the form of anti-Irish racism. This last aspect is much misunderstood, sometimes as a result of the power of more dominant contemporary variants of racism itself. Nonetheless, its identification should allow the opportunity for educational work around the issue of racism.

Moreover, in tackling sectarianism, the opportunity should be taken to address other forms of prejudice and discrimination that may also impact on places of employment.

“Religion” and different perspectives

Processes of polarisation and contestation were influenced by some conspicuous differences in the perspectives taken by Catholics, or those of Catholic/Irish ancestry, and those by Protestants, or of Protestant family history, or sometimes no-religious background. There are strongly contrasting views on the origins of sectarianism and especially on what one described as the notion of equivalence in culpability between the two.

Expressions of sectarianism

Almost no direct personal experience of the violent expression of sectarianism was reported. Details were provided about the operation of some forms of direct discrimination. Most personal contact with sectarianism referred to various variants of its verbal expression.

Discrimination in the work place

Although judged now to be an unusual event, testimony was given to recent direct discrimination to exclude Catholics from employment.

More disquiet was expressed about direct and indirect forms of discrimination against employees that were based on sectarianism. Reports ranged across fears about promotion prospects, through concerns about overtime opportunities, to the identification of various patterns of favouritism that worked to the advantage of co-religionists.

Problems were identified with the culture of work places. These included the use of lock codes that were identified, probably indirectly, with religious affiliations, graffiti that expressed sectarianism, but the most common concern was with what could be termed banter by the perpetrator but was judged to be sectarianism by its target. One problem with sectarianism on this level was that it was judged by some to be something about which little or nothing could be done.

Policies to counter discrimination

It is a real concern that nothing was done about the clear examples of direct discrimination, but it is also worrying that workers reported a sense of powerlessness about what was seen to be an every-day social reality of embedded, low-level background sectarianism. No clear awareness existed about any policies that could assist in these circumstances.

Policies that protect workers and empower them to act are required. To be effective they need to be clear, explain how complaints should be made, and, once a problem is reported, identify who should act, and how. A plain statement of the expected behaviour by the work force and of potential penalties for breaches of this code is also required. Both the trades unions and management need to work jointly in initiating

this change. Successful policies will have involved the work force in their development and implementation. That is important as they depend on the action and support of workers for their meaningful operation.

Care will have to be taken in dealing with the thorny issue of what is banter. The key to progress here is that it becomes accepted that humorous exchanges must be mutually acceptable. No one, and no faction, has the power to impose on others what is acceptable humour when it is directed at them.

The aim must be to create an ethos within places of employment in which workers feel valued and supported, and in which a diversity of social identities can be accepted and feel safe in their expression, as long as that is not at the expense of others.

Anti-sectarianism and anti-discrimination policies

Trade union officials observed that the framework of sectarianism had already proved adaptable enough to target East Europeans and other workers. They stated that this re-orientation could prove to be a growing problem. This expansion highlights the need to ensure that anti-sectarianism actions are (and are seen to be) interrelated with other forms of anti-discrimination policies, and that each form can be used educationally to reinforce the message of the other.

Formal education

Although more knowledge is needed on what teacher education institutions do, it is clear that more could be done to help combat sectarianism. If schools are meant to play a part, then teachers must be properly prepared to educate pupils in this area. That means that they also need a better education themselves.

One issue that was frequently raised, and which was especially prominent among those in the education sector, was the supposedly negative effect of Catholic state schools. Yet there is no evidence that the education offered by Catholic state schools has any divisive effects. In spite of this being the case, there can be little doubt that the existence of these state schools gives rise to a polarised and divisive debate. Effectively these schools, and consequently the Catholic community, are blamed for sectarianism in Scottish society: a stance that causes considerable upset and aggravation among Catholics.

A much better understanding is needed about the complexities of sectarianism, the historical and contemporary role of religion in Scottish schooling, the symbolic role of Catholic state schools, and techniques to help combat sectarianism. Teacher education courses need to be adapted to include all of these matters.

Role of the media

From participants' comments it was obvious that the media played an important part in providing information and interpretations about sectarianism. Research into how the media defines and then reports sectarianism in Scotland is now necessary.

Through discussions with the Scottish Government, the media could play a constructive role in helping bring about a more informed debate about sectarianism in Scotland.

Support for action against sectarianism

There was broad support for efforts to combat sectarianism. Confusion over its meaning, and the various forms of contestation associated with it, do offer problems that need to be overcome. Nevertheless, workers do need to be protected from sectarianism and given the means to overcome any discrimination in employment they experience as a result of it.

8.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Understanding and clarifying sectarianism:

1. Clarity of meaning is required to tackle sectarianism. Consequently it should be broken down into its three main strands: anti-Catholic prejudice, anti-Protestant prejudice, and anti-Irish racism.
2. Recognition of anti-Irish racism as a dimension should be used to make connections to other work-based anti-discriminatory policies, especially those on “Race”.

B. Tackling work place discrimination:

1. Consideration should be given to monitoring sectarianism in relation to employee recruitment, even if that monitoring is established only for a limited exploratory period.
2. It should be a legal requirement that employers monitor reported incidents of sectarianism in their workforces. This should include examples of direct discrimination in recruitment in specific sectors of the organisation, whether B.1 is still in operation or not.
3. Clear anti-sectarianism policies must be developed and then implemented in Scottish places of employment.
4. These policies must include the necessity of tackling both direct and indirect forms of discrimination.
5. Employers and trades unions need to work together to be successful in these developments.
6. Work forces should be actively involved in these developments so that all employees understand the relevant issues and concerns much better than is presently the case.
7. Although it is a difficult issue, clear guidance is required on banter, or to be more accurate, on the need to eliminate the passing off of prejudice as banter or in the guise of what is claimed to be humour.
8. Other elements also contribute to the social climate of a work place, and these need attention too. For example, employers need to have clear and effective procedures to remove immediately offensive graffiti: employees need to know how to instigate this process.
9. Guidelines need to be clearly stated, with advice on how sectarianism should be reported, on the mechanisms of inquiry that will be used, and on the range of penalties that can be applied.
10. Safeguards need to be provided for those making a complaint.
11. An environment needs to be created in which all employees see it as their duty to fellow workers to report any form of sectarianism, and support those who become the targets of this societal prejudice at their place of employment.
12. These recommendations can, and should, be interconnected with other anti-discrimination policies. However, they should not become, or be seen, simply as add-ons. As with all policies in this area, there is the need for discussion, education and training if positive change is to be brought about.

C. Improving teacher education:

1. Clearer guidance on how sectarianism should be tackled in teacher education programmes needs to be given to teacher education institutions. (One option may be to be more prescriptive and offer more detailed advice in the Standards for Initial Teacher Education.)
2. Teachers need to have a much better understanding of Catholic schools and of their symbolic role in Scottish society; they also should know more about the development of non-denominational schools and the position of religion within them; it is also important that they are better prepared to tackle sectarianism in the work place, whether that is exhibited by pupils or by other members of staff.

D. Role of the Media:

1. Research should be funded to understand better how the media does report and frame sectarianism in Scotland, and how it has done so in the past.
2. To ensure that the media can play a positive part, the Scottish Government should seek some preliminary talks with the media in Scotland, and consider working with Ofcom and the Press Council with the aim of producing some notes of guidance in this matter.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ Liechty & Clegg (2001) offer a fascinating exploration of the levels and complexities of “sectarianism” in the context of Ireland.

ⁱⁱ Because “race” is another confused concept, with many believing it to be an objective categorisation of humans according to variations in skin-colour, mention of anti-Irish racism can lead to perplexity. However, racism refers to the range of social processes and practices by which groups have been racialized. The historical experience of the Irish in various countries has been one of the central elements in probing the taken-for-granted nature of “whiteness” in relation to racism: see, for example, Roediger, 1994 and Ignatiev, 1995. For accounts of the racialization of the Irish see in Scotland, see, for example, Brown, 1991 and Findlay, 1991.

ⁱⁱⁱ There is even a problem with designation here. Ian Paisley would claim that he is Catholic but that he is opposed to Roman Catholicism. Those baptised in the Church headed by the pope judge the qualifier Roman to misrepresent the nature of their Church. Rather than engage with the theological niceties surrounding the term Catholic, or Protestant, they will be used here in their everyday popular interpretations.

^{iv} See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/04/2193329/33324>

^v The emphasis in subsequent phases of the study (after the work with sounding board members) was more on how “sectarianism” was understood, which would then be bound to influence subsequent probes relating to “sectarian”. But it is probable that the NFO study does truly demonstrate that the neglect of the non-pejorative meaning of “sectarian” may lead to harmless church association being uncritically judged negatively.

^{vi} The small sample size may mean that this variation reflects sampling differences rather than geographical differences.

^{vii} Interpretations based on crime statistics do need to be taken with some care. All depends on what has been reported by the public in the first place. Then there are a variety of factors that determine what action is taken, what is proceeded with, and as a result what finally does end up in the criminal statistics.

^{viii} A helpful exploration of the question as to whether faith schools in general are divisive is provided by Halstead & McLaughlin, 2005.

^{ix} These everyday processes and unconsidered practices are described as ‘institutionalised racism’ when they act against the employment prospects of racialized minorities.

^x Since 2004 the Scottish Executive has acted to extend legislation to tackle discrimination on the basis of religion.

^{xi} It will be important to detect if individuals do have some consistent and coherently organised concept on which an account of sectarianism can be presented or if people operate more on the basis of a list of examples of what they would describe to be sectarianism.

^{xii} I am indebted to Professor R. Davies, formerly Head of the Department of Religious Education, Glasgow University, for the considerable information and advice he has provided to help clarify the understanding of student recruitment practice, and the nature and provision of the teacher education courses offered by Glasgow University.

^{xiii} Because there could be undesirable outcomes to these discussions, various public houses with a mixed clientele used to bar discussions of politics, religion, and party songs. There were associations of sorts between all three of these categories.

^{xiv} It is good to be able to state that these participants made no reports of violence in the work place. Sadly that cannot yet be reported across Scottish society.

^{xv} A case can be made, which is one to which we would subscribe, that a number of issues and topics concerning anti-discrimination work require some specification. Indeed, in what would be a hotly contested debate, a strong argument could be made that insufficient attention is still paid to this broad area in teacher education courses.

^{xvi} In these examples the targets were Catholic. Obviously policies and legislation have to ensure that these safeguards apply to all who may be discriminated against on religious grounds.

^{xvii} As was evident in one of the focus groups reported above, there remains the danger that what is known to be unacceptable in the presence of others is still seen to be acceptable in their absence. The counter argument is that if it is recognised to be offensive to others, then why should it be thought acceptable to make jokes about it behind their back?

^{xviii} Hargie *et al.* (2006) observe that acceptable banter and humour do in fact frequently breach this work place code.

^{xix} Informally two other work places have been reported as having had some difficulties over the provision of fish on Fridays within the last ten to fifteen years. At one organisation that had removed a long tradition of not recruiting Catholics to its staff, the staff in one of the company's dining rooms objected to serving fish on Fridays. In another work place a section of diners consistently and ostentatiously refused to contemplate eating the fish made available on Fridays.