Women and Sectarianism in Scotland: Policing Ethno-Christian relational boundaries

Sara Diane Lindores, Independent Scholar   No.3, February 2014

This briefing paper examines sectarianism and the gendered, social construction of ethno-Christian groups in Scotland. In my Masters research, exploring the silence and invisibility of different women's experiences of sectarianism, I argued that the hegemonic masculinity of sectarianism tends to frame this social issue within public, male-dominated spheres such as football. As a result, I found that these narratives seemed to have impacted the female participants' ability to articulate and accept the positionality of women in relation to this social phenomenon. This was evidenced in their apparent ambivalence, attempts to fit women into the legitimized football frame and their contradictory insistence on minimising the agency of women by portraying them either as victims or peace-makers, despite also providing evidence to the contrary. The findings also point towards the gendered role of women as loyal protectors of identity in policing, maintaining and reproducing the sectarianized boundaries of ethno-Christian groups. This was particularly evident in discussion around their roles in civil society and family and kinship relations in areas such as marriage and the education and upbringing of young people.

Therefore, in this paper, I argue that better engagement with the equally passionate behaviours of women and girls should recognise *their* agency in both challenging and reproducing sectarianized boundaries in these spheres of influence in which they are traditionally more active. This would allow new research avenues to be opened up, which would counteract the hegemonic masculinity of sectarianism in Scotland, in a bid to redress the balance of evidence to inform future, grass-root, community-led initiatives which work to write different women's standpoints into the frame when tackling the issue at a local and national level.

Background

At the heart of recent policy, practice and popular perceptions of sectarianism in Scotland, is the confusing way in which the key concepts of sectarianism, discrimination, prejudice and bigotry have been confounded and used interchangeably. (See Devine, 2000, p.261; Finn et al., 2008, p1-4; Kelly, 2005, p.10, Lindores, 2011) Although, I believe that 'sectarianism' has little meaning apart from the social contexts in which it operates, it is still important to

establish, as far as possible, a degree of 'clarity through specificity,' (Cohen and Uphoff in Cornwall, 2008, p.269) by presenting a working definition to illustrate the angle from which this research has approached the subject of sectarianism in Scotland.

The working definition recently proposed by the Scottish Government's Advisory Group, highlights the complexity of sectarianism and the myriad of ways in which it can manifest.

> 'Sectarianism in Scotland is a complex of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, actions and structures, at personal and communal levels, which originate in religious difference and can involve a negative mixing of religion with politics, sporting allegiance and national identifications. It arises from a distorted expression of identity and belonging. It is expressed in destructive patterns of relating which segregate, exclude, discriminate against or are violent towards a specified religious other with significant personal and social consequences.' (Scottish Government, 2013c, p.5)

While this definition covers the publically legitimized understandings of sectarianism, it could be enhanced by a much clearer articulation of the centrality of the politics of belonging, and the construction of ethno-religious boundaries in the identity narratives which appear to operate within relational spheres in semi-private and community life. As I discuss in the findings which follow, the most significant phenomenon appears to be how the people who belong to a 'sectarian' community or family group actually negotiate, 'sectarianize,' construct and maintain the boundaries of their own ethno-religious identity. As this paper argues, a gendered definition of sectarianism would better represent the agency of different women as they choose to act either to challenge or to reproduce the sectarianized boundaries of ethno-Christian identity.

That sectarianism is even recognised today as an issue in modern Scotland, is perhaps since the renewed interest to tackle the issue by policy-makers, educational practitioners and academics, following the public debate surrounding James MacMillan's Edinburgh Festival lecture back in August 1999. (Devine, 2000, p.7-8) Over the last 15 years in particular, there has been a fluctuating array of grass-root and third sector organisations, local and Scottish Government backed initiatives and academic research enquiries which have sprung up in response to this revived interest in solving '*Scotland's Shame*.' Some of the more high-profile responses include a four strand *Action Plan* and subsequent *Commitment Plans*, funding to tackle 'bigotry' and 'sectarianism', legislation against '*Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications',* in addition to a range of different advisory groups and research publications investigating the extent of the issue. (See Devine, 2000; Flint and Kelly, 2013; Glasgow City Council, 2003; Deuchar and Holligan, 2008; Finn et al, 2008; Scottish Executive, 2005; 2006a; 2006b;

Scottish Government, 2011a; 2011b; 2011d; 2011e; 2012; 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; Scottish Government Social Research, 2013; Scottish Parliament 2011a; 2011b)

However, until recently there had been little recognition of the hegemonic masculinity of sectarianism and the lack of gendered analysis of its impact and the way in which it might be reproduced across generations. In this respect, work by Goodall and Malloch (2013), *Engender* (2013) and *Glasgow Women's Library* are all a step in the right direction. Similar to my research approach, the work of these respective projects also seeks to 'promote and understand women' while working to 'challenge intra-Christian sectarianism in Scotland.' However, apart from this small group of initiatives, it would seem that there is still a narrow mainstream approach which considers 'women' as an equalities strand to add-on to the margin of the debate either as 'victims of football or alcohol-related violence,' rather than agents with an equal stake in challenging and reproducing the issue across a wide spectrum of political spaces including civil society and family and kinship relations. (See Scottish Government, 2013c, p66-67; Engender, 2013; Goodall and Malloch, 2013; Lindores, 2011)

Before presenting my findings, I will provide a brief overview of the policy and research literature which have informed this enquiry and its associated field of anti-sectarian community development practice.

Literature Review

The other half of the story: femininity, relational spheres and sectarianism

In many ways, this research enquiry seeks to tell 'the other half of the story' presented in the study by Deuchar and Holligan (2008) which focused on masculinity, territoriality and sectarianism. They reported that:

> '[...] there was evidence to suggest that young people were subject to a form of bonding social capital which put pressure on them to conform to certain cultural expectations, which were defined by narrow views of masculinity and sexuality.' (p.17)

From this they remarked that girls, therefore, seemed 'less informed' about religious divides. (p.10) Given the 'taken-for-granted' hegemonic narrative which associates sectarianism, territorialism and football-related bigotry, it is not surprising that it remained unchallenged by the young participants in a way that could have widened the focus to include the girls experience of the religious divide as it impacted upon *the*ir lives. Deuchar and Holligan do not seem to have sufficiently engaged with girls and young women and therefore to say that they are 'less informed,' is a claim which they are not able to make based on the evidence they have collected.

Comparing this to a similar study by McGrellis (2005), who looked at *'Gender, Identity and Territory in Northern Irish Youth Transitions,'* sheds an interesting light on the Scottish context. Although set in Northern Ireland, this study looked at the narratives of young people on space and territory to understand the way in which they are *gender specific*. In relation to young men, McGrellis (2005) discovered that this macho youth culture in Northern Ireland also stressed the importance of the young men as leaders, defenders and protectors of their communities. Those young men who were seen to pose a threat by not remaining loyal to their community or by adopting an alternative identity, which did not conform to the expected strong male culture, would often become the victims of attack. (p.524) However, in relation to *young women*, McGrellis (2005) found evidence to suggest that they were able to socialise in other areas which were off-limits for their male counterparts. They flouted the authority of the local male guardians of their territory, and had made themselves much stronger and more energised young women. (p.525) There are many obvious parallels with this investigation into sectarianism, gender and youth culture in Belfast and the research into sectarianism, territoriality and youth in Glasgow. However, the difference is that McGrellis (2005) attends more equally to the differences in the experiences of both young men and young women in relation to sectarianized identity and territory, rather than implying that the experiences of certain groups of young men are the model for all young people irrespective of their gender, ethno-religious affiliation or social class.

Women: where are they all?

The invisibility of women in relation to sectarianism also extends to mainstream quantitative work which, while undoubtedly providing some indication of the decline in systematic and material discrimination on the grounds of religion, fails to attend to the assumptions and categories which pose a number of analytical issues; particularly for those who experience discrimination across multiple and intersecting axes of inequality.

In their book *Sectarianism in Scotland*, Bruce and al. (2004) claim that there is no 'hard evidence' to suggest that Catholics in Scotland were discriminated against in the past and that modern day assertions about the existence of sectarianism are therefore exaggerated and founded on inaccurate anecdotes from a 'bygone age'. (See Devine, 2000, p.99; Bruce et al, 2004; Bruce, 2000; Rosie and McCrone, 2000; Rosie, 2004) Setting aside the objections to their conclusions by others in the field, it is important to consider the methods of data analysis used to back up these widely accepted claims as they impact on marginalised and minority groups. (For further discussion see Kelly, 2005; Scottish Government Social Research 2013, p.19)

Bruce et al. (2004) claimed that overall, there is little evidence of discrimination on religious grounds in accessing a political career, gaining 'some form of

qualification' or having a more equal socio-economic status between the two denominations especially for the younger generations. (Bruce et al, 2004, p.69-81) However, drawing such conclusions by analysing the denominational representation of the well-educated elite who are able to run for a political position is unlikely to be representative of barriers faced by working class communities in Scotland. Similarly, drawing conclusions on access to educational opportunities by claiming the success of Catholic schools based on the number of pupils with 'some sort of qualification', ignores the reality of the *grade* and *level* of qualification which, particularly for young people, needs to be increasingly higher in order to gain access to even the most low paid jobs. (Bruce et al, 2004, p.72) Moreover, claiming that socio-economic status is more equal for the younger generation of Protestant and Catholic cohort when the 'social grade of the chief income earner in the household' was used to 'infer' the social grade of the respondent also poses problems (Bruce et al, 2004, p.178). Given the rate of youth unemployment which, for the period September to November 2010, stood at 18.1% with one in five recent graduates out of work in Scotland, the number of young people who are the chief earners of a household is likely to be very low. Therefore, similar to working class people, young people who experience discrimination on account of their religion are also not accurately represented in this study. (ONS, 2011, p.17; Scottish Parliament, 2011d, p.6) Finally, and most importantly in relation to this study, if we look at women in Scotland only 58% of whom work full-time compared to 89% of men, the gender pay gap is 11.9%; widening to 33.6% based on women's mostly part-time status. (Motherwell, S, 2010, p.1) Therefore, once again, inferring the social grade by the chief earner is also less likely to accurately represent women in this study. What happens in these studies to the representation of someone who is not just young but also Catholic, female *and* working class?

Rather than announcing the end of discrimination and rejoicing that our minority and oppressed groups are so indistinguishable from the 'mainstream', should we not be asking 'where are they all?' Where are the stories, history and culture of millions of lives? Why are the working class, young people and women 'not altogether present' in this framing of sectarianism in Scotland? There are many parallels in O'Hagan's concerns for the invisibility, silence and treatment of the Catholic minority in Scotland and that of women. O'Hagan's 'sense' of being 'not altogether present' is an argument that is also central to the ethic and ethos behind the consideration of women and their relationship to sectarianism in this study. (O'Hagan, 2000, pp.24-p.25)

Women: the victims and peace-makers?

One of the most recent and controversial examples of the exclusion of women, from consideration in mainstream and high-profile understandings of sectarianism, was noted by the *Equality and Human Rights Commission* (EHRC) in response to the *Equality Impact Assessment* (EQIA) carried out

prior to the implementation of the new *Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012*. (EHRC 2011, Scottish Government, 2011e; Scottish Parliament 2011a; 2011b) Just shortly after forming their majority government, as a result of the 2011 elections, the SNP's first attempt to legislate on sectarianism arrived in the form of this controversial Bill which was debated in parliament in June 2011. (Scottish Parliament, 2011a) At the time, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) drew attention to the way in which the SNP appeared to be treating sectarianism as an exclusively football-related issue which, while it 'tackles this specific concern,' acts to exclude the experience of sectarianism as it impacts on certain groups who tend to be less associated with the football environment. (EHRC, 2011, p.1) This exclusion is particularly well reflected in the way that the Bill draws its provision to include all of the 'protected characteristics' except for a consideration of gender as set out in s.149 of the general duty of the Equality Act (2010). (See Scottish Parliament, 2011a, p.2) As the EHRC highlights, if the Bill is going to 'cast the net so wide' as to cover every other protected characteristic then we 'would like to understand why the decision was taken to exclude gender from this offence.' (EHRC, 2011, p.4)

When the EQIA was later published at the end of June 2011, the Scottish Government claimed that gender had not been included because,

> 'According to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) men are more likely to be both the victims and the perpetrators of violent crime (...) We know that abusive sectarian attitudes are more likely to be displayed by men than women, and that football clubs are male dominated. Men are also more likely to be the victims of sectarian violence, disorder and abuse.' (Scottish Government, 2011e, p.13)

It is important to acknowledge that the evidence provided in arguing the case for the differential treatment of gender in this Bill was a recognition of the way in which 'violent crime' impacts disproportionately on men, rather than an attempt to exclude women per se. However, it is the almost exclusive focus on sectarianism in football and the connections with the manifest violent crime perceived to be associated with sectarianism, which have served to distort the wider social reality of this phenomenon as it impacts on women. (EHRC, 2011, p.1) Women are not an add-on equality strand to be considered at the margins of the debate on sectarianism, their different voices need to be mainstreamed into the re-thinking and re-framing of this social issue in Scotland as it affects different men and women in different ways and in the different spheres of social life in which they operate.

The final point I'd like to consider is the way in which, on the occasions when the standpoints of women *have* been included in the high profile discussion on sectarianism in Scotland, they have been positioned either as the 'victims', in the case of the extension of football banning orders to cover domestic abuse

(Scottish Parliament, 2011c), or as 'peace-makers' 'behind the scenes' of the male-dominated world of football (see Goodall and Malloch, 2013). I argue that, in order to counteract this, we need to emphasize the agency of different women in challenging and indeed reproducing sectarianized boundaries in the political spheres of civil society, and family and kinship relations in which they are arguably more influential and active. (See Sales, 1997, p.1-6; Rooney, 2006)

Findings

In June 2011 I conducted six, two-hour, semi-structured interviews with a range of female professionals and activists with experience in anti-sectarian practice. Two of the women identified with Catholic ethno-religious backgrounds and four were brought up with a Protestant ethno-religious identity, although as their narratives testify, it appears to be more complex than this simple dichotomy would lead us to believe. Given the small number of women with experience in issue-based work in this field, I took a purposive sample from those working and living within the central belt of Scotland. Using snowball techniques a small group of female professionals, who were available within the research timeframe, were recruited to begin to explore the different standpoints of women in relation to sectarianism in Scotland. Although the sample size was small, there were women who lived, worked and were brought up across a large geographical area; ranging from Edinburgh and the Lothian's, to Falkirk, Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. I intentionally selected an all-female group due to the research concern for the historic invisibility and silence of different women's relationships to sectarianism in the high-profile research, policy and public discussions. Similarly, a professional group of women were selected due to the interesting dynamic of their positionality which challenged the traditional divide between the 'public male' 'private female' critiques employed in feminist social and political science. (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p.5) All of the interviews focused on the meanings and definitions of sectarianism of importance for women's lives across two main themes. Firstly, the influence of upbringing, family and kinship relations and secondly, the agency of women in both challenging and reproducing sectarianism in their personal and professional lives.

Recognising that all knowledge is socially situated, and as such there is no single 'truth' in the way that a social issue such as sectarianism is manifested or experienced; the perspectives of these different women is not intended to be representative of all women in Scotland. Instead, it seeks to contribute towards a 'framework of multiple realities,' based on the experiences of the women who participated, as they are shaped by the social categories which characterise each individual's standpoint. (See Thomas, 2010, p.78; Ackerly and True, 2010, p.26; Harding 1996; Harding 2004) It is important to remember that these 'women' are different ages, from different ethno-Christian and socio-

economic backgrounds and with connections to a range of different geographical locations across Scotland.

Each participant in the study has been given a pseudonym to protect their identity. The following summary of their profession, ethno-religious affiliation and their area of residence, workplace or birth, allows the reader to better trace, interpret and contextualise the women's narratives throughout the analysis and discussion which follows.

- Laura is a team leader engaging young people with a criminal background and was brought up in a 'very Orange household' in the West of Scotland.

- Clare is a student who coordinates a youth project with 'at risk' young people in South Lanarkshire. She expresses an 'allegiance' to the Catholic community but explains that the 'other side' of her family are Protestant.

- Anne works as a project leader in education work with young people. She lives and was brought up in Glasgow and has memories of watching the orange walk with her parents and grandparents. She explains that she is 'not someone for whom her faith is important.'

- Christine is an academic in educational research. She is based in Edinburgh and was brought up by her mother in a 'Methodist Protestant background'.

- Dianne works as an adult educator with various disadvantaged women across Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. She was brought up by her Mother as a practising Catholic and attended a Catholic school. As an adult, she now identifies 'more with the catholic community than the religion'.

- Hannah is an officer in youth work services in Edinburgh. She was brought up and lives in North Lanarkshire. She was christened in the Church of Scotland but now describes herself as a 'Humanist with a Christian faith but not as institutionally religious'.

Sectarianization and the construction of ethno-religious boundaries

While each of the women emphasised different aspects of sectarianism they all seemed to share an understanding that simply labelling it as a religious difference or conflict between Protestants and Catholics does not fully capture

the complexity of the issue. Christine pointed out the irony that while sectarianism in Scotland was 'religious as opposed to political' those who were seen to manifest 'sectarian violence or views' were not actually considered to be 'religious people' and that it was merely used to, 'galvanise groups under the green or orange flag.'

Dianne aptly articulated the religious irony of sectarianism, explaining that her own identity sat more with the 'Catholic community' than the religious element of Catholicism.

> 'As my experience of sectarianism increased, my identification with the Catholic community also increased, particularly those who were critical of Catholic oppression. There was comfort being in the company of those who saw the world as I did.'

Clearly for these women sectarianism has less to do with religion than the process of constructing a communal identity and sharing in this real or imagined experience of social life as separate from that of the opposing group. Therefore, it could be argued that it has little meaning as a concept apart from the social contexts in which it operates and would perhaps be better defined as an *ethno-religious* issue. This also fits with the definitions of sectarianism which emphasize 'ethnic differentiation' and the construction of two 'social identities' in which religion merely operates to ensure a 'major difference between the two communities' which can be 'conveniently labelled.' (Brewer, 1992; Flint and Kelly, 2013, p.4; NICRC, 2003 in Finn et al., 2008, p.3)

In this respect, looking towards race theory to consider the parallels between racism and sectarianism could provide enhanced theoretical clarity going forward. (Kelly, 2003; Brewer, 1992) For example, in her discussion of Irish identities, Feldman (2006) claims that the social process of 'race-making' articulates the salience of the reproduction and application of the social negotiations inherent in the narratives of identities, the processes of 'racializing' and the construction of the boundaries of ethnic groups. Connecting this back to the findings from these women's narratives of sectarianism in Scotland; the most significant phenomenon is how the people who are actually part of a sectarian community or family actually negotiate, 'sectarianize', construct and maintain the boundaries of their own ethno-religious group identities. (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Feldman, 2006, p.103, Lindores, 2011)

The hegemonic masculinity of sectarianism: an un-critiqued 'common sense'?

For most of the participants it was the first time that they had ever thought about the invisibility and silence surrounding different women's experiences of

sectarianism and the associated presumption of the masculinity of this social issue in Scotland.

Coming from a 'very Orange household' with a mother who was 'very involved in the social aspects of the Lodge' Laura highlights the ambivalent relationship that women appear to have with sectarianism.

'I hadn't really thought about it! (Laughs) A lot of my work has been about males... people focus heavily on football and things like that, like it's a male issue. It wasn't until you asked, I was like...ohhh *women and sectarianism*...now that's interesting!'

As Laura herself suggests, despite any potential sources of evidence to the contrary in her familial and kinship relations, the hegemonic masculinity of the sectarian narrative in Scotland appears to be so ingrained and so much of a 'focus' that the very idea of women and sectarianism seems alien.

Similar to the ambivalence of the female participants in the Goodall and Malloch (2013) study, the evidence gathered in this enquiry also seemed to support the idea that women are in a contradictory position with regard to sectarianism in Scotland. Despite having started to negotiate the unfamiliar terrain of *'women'* and sectarianism, at times using very detailed examples, at first they seemed to struggle to either articulate or accept women and girls apparent manifestations of a sectarian value base as a legitimate way of framing the issue; either trying to 'fit' them into the widely accepted football context or minimising the role that they played.

Forced to fit the football frame

Hannah, for example, had begun to reflect on the way in which women 'nurture those who are round about' them, the sectarian comments they make to each other and the way in which they 'marshal' 'supervise' and 'enable' the atmosphere and environment of the home.

'As soon as you cross the threshold of somebody's house it's their rules so you decide the music, you decide what the conversation is, you decide...Women are integral to the families that these men grew up in who were ... or are perpetuators of sectarian attitudes and values.'

Interestingly, the way in which Hannah characterises the problem is to position women as the guardians of the home while the men, who are brought up in this environment by women, are the ones she believes who are *publically* perpetuating the attitudes and values associated with sectarianism. However, as this interview dialogue continues she seems to contradict this and also returns to the dominant football narrative.

'I am actually quite appalled at that whole statement about focusing it on men, because (…) ok like use football as the example- growing numbers of young women…And in the family context women are singing along just as merrily and as happy as the men and boys are!'

In this statement Hannah is passionately arguing that women also play a role in perpetuating sectarianism but she is unable to think of an immediate example and thus attempts to place women in the public football context in order to make her case. In both examples she recognizes the importance of 'the family context' but it is not until later in the interview that she begins to explore the significance of this in greater detail.

The way in which Hannah seems to characterize the different gendered experiences of sectarianism may hint at the traditional, and arguably 'fictional', separation between the 'public male/ private female' divide in social life. (See Pateman, 1998 in Yuval-Davis, 1997, p.5) In order to make her point that women are also active in perpetuating sectarian attitudes and values, she perhaps chooses to situate women in the public context of football, not just because it is more familiar or 'rehearsed', but also because it seems to receive more legitimacy as a way of framing the manifestations of sectarianism in Scotland. Similarly, as Sales (1997) remarked when speaking about sectarianism in Northern Ireland, it could also be that where women *have* been visible they are portrayed either as 'passive victims' or 'peace-makers' uninvolved in perpetuating the divide themselves. (p.6) Perhaps this is another reason for the apparent reluctance to accept that women also appear to be agents in the sectarian narrative in Scotland.

The Victims and Peace-makers: minimizing the agency of women

In a bid to counteract the 'un-critiqued common sense reality' (Rooney, 2006 p.357) of the hegemonic masculinity of the sectarian narrative in Scotland, Goodall and Malloch (2013) also attempt to draw attention to the role of women. They highlight women 'behind the scenes' who use the temptation of good food and a warm atmosphere to encourage their men-folk to return to the house after Old Firm matches (Goodall and Malloch, 2013, p.174). However, these women are positioned as 'victims' who suffer the consequences of this 'game' in the form of intimidation and having to 'manage' the impact of their 'working class men behaving badly.' (Goodall and Malloch, 2013, p.175) In many ways, this is still framing sectarianism by attempting to fit women into the more 'legitimized' football context. Alternatively, new avenues need to also be opened up which empower different women to explore their experiences of sectarianism, in their *own* affairs, and in the spheres of influence in which they might also be *agents* who reproduce (or indeed attempt to challenge sectarianism) rather than simply looking at their socially assigned role as 'peace-makers' in the 'world of men'.

Interestingly, even after articulating a multitude of different manifestations of sectarianism, particularly in the spheres of civil society, family and kinship relations, some of the women in this study still seemed reluctant to accept this as valid way of talking about the potential role that women and girls might play in perpetuating or reproducing *sectarianized* boundaries between ethno-religious groups.

Laura, in particular, appeared to feel that sometimes women or girls did not necessarily understand or express sectarianism as 'passionately' as their male counterparts. She shared an experience working with a group of young Catholic girls from Lanarkshire on a cross- community project to a Protestant area in Northern Ireland. She explained that the girls had worn 'bright' 'skinny jeans' one pair of 'green', one 'white' and one 'gold' and were skating round the ice-rink side-by-side, laughing before she realised what they were doing and called them off the ice. In a further incident another group of the girls had bought 'tricolour' badges and pinned them to their purses, apparently causing a group of local boys to throw stones at the mini-bus as they left the fast-food restaurant. Laura appeared to minimise this incident explaining that she felt that the Catholic girls didn't understand the impact that their actions would have.

There are arguably parallels with Laura's reluctance to recognise the detailed behaviour of these girls and the study carried out by Deuchar and Holligan (2008) which argued that girls seemed 'less informed' about religious divides (p.10) In her example, Laura also appeared to minimise the importance or validity of linking girls to a sectarian value-base when she claimed that they were not 'as passionate about it' as boys and that they 'didn'ae understand sectarianism' as well as their male peers. The crucial point to note with regard to this statement that girls are less 'passionate' or 'less informed' about sectarianism, is that this idea of 'passion' seems to sit alongside the hegemonic framing of sectarianism as a male-dominated, *football-related* passion. It could be that Deuchar and Holligan (2008) along with Laura are talking about women and girls in relation to sectarianism whilst still trying to fit them into the football frame, minimising the legitimacy and importance of the arguably *passionate* behaviours of different women and girls in the manner and contexts in which they might occur.

Family and kinship relations in ethno-religious groups

The women also discussed the pivotal role played by female community or family members in attempting to control other women's choices in marriage and the upbringing of children. This recurring theme was consistently revealed across all six of the women's narratives and seemed to point towards a sense of prescribed relationship rules, particularly as the personal relationships in question became more long-term. Although quantitative research approaches such as that by Holligan and Raab (2010) suggest that the high proportion of

intra-Christian marriages in Scotland might contribute to the erosion of sectarian divisions in Scotland, the evidence gathered in this enquiry highlights the need for more in-depth qualitative approaches that actually investigate the lived experiences of those who *do* inter-marry, the impact that this has on their familial and kinship relations and equally the experience of those who turned down or would *not* choose to marry someone of the opposite ethno-religious group. Clare draws our attention to this need when she explains that,

> 'More so now that we are older people from our school who are engaged or married or going to be married to somebody within a Catholic school there is massive politics. And actually the venom in some of the comments is unbelievable from both sides…'

This idea of the increasing conflict and resistance as relationships developed was echoed in the other women's narratives. Laura explained how at the start of her relationship with a Catholic man he was 'willing' and 'able' to come to a community function in the local Orange Hall. Now married, there appears to be a degree of complexity surrounding this couple's decisions particularly since they had children.

> 'I've a wee girl and I'm thinking I'm no sending her to a Catholic school (laughs) and I'm thinking...why am I saying that I'm no sending her to a Catholic school? And I don't have a reason! I'm no a Catholic so I don't follow the Catholic religion, so that'd be my excuse for saying that...but if that was the nearest and best school I'd still have to struggle in my mind because I'm worried about what my Mum's gonna say!'

These narratives seemed to point towards the way in which the women's choices were politicised by other female family members. Their relational choices seemed to involve more 'venom' and 'fuss' when a longer term commitment such as a marriage or partnership was involved. The women also shared examples of verbal forms of pressure in 'heated conversations' and 'massive politics' over their 'power to choose' a partner of the opposite ethno-religious group. Clare also commented on the way in which language was used in these contexts,

> '…the language isn't educated or rational, it's rude and sectarian and it turns into language you would hear at a football match, it does resort to that. It is the same culture it is just that we women are not watching people kick a ball about. The way women feel about it- it is sectarian language they are using and it is sectarian feelings they are having too.'

Christine, also explained how she felt that her choice of marriage partner had been restricted even though her Mother had never explicitly voiced this.

'My mother would have been quite horrified if I had married a Catholic. It was better to marry someone who was not religious than to marry a Catholic.'

In addition, the women also revealed that pressure, expectations, attitudes and behavior would not be confined to the choice of partner, but might also extend to choices over where the ceremony would take place if they had decided to proceed with the marriage. Dianne explained how her Catholic Mother had expressed her disapproval when she and her Protestant partner had decided against holding the ceremony in a Chapel. Laura also described how certain family members' feelings were so strongly against mixed relationships that they had actually refused to attend Chapel ceremonies. She also discussed the behavior of other female family members when they had talked about or showed them the photographs of her cousins wedding ceremony which had been held in a Chapel.

Perhaps the use of sectarian language or the manifestation of sectarian feelings is to ensure conformity and to pressurize other female's to respect the prescribed relationship rules, codes for socialization or the upbringing of their children. As Clare pointed out they do not 'have to stab each other in order for this to be an issue,' the politics involved in these relational choices are worthy of consideration in their own right in terms of how they might potentially contribute towards perpetuating sectarianism in Scotland. Once again, the women's narratives seem to align with Brewer's discussion of ethnic differentiation whereby processes of 'socialization, boundary maintenance and social closure' are used to continually reproduce sectarianism from generation to generation by re-invoking the markers. (Brewer, 1992, p.357)

Socialisation and upbringing within ethno-religious groups

This idea of the importance of upbringing and socialisation was also explored by the women some of whom, now as adults, admitted that they might still occasionally struggle to reconcile the values with which they were brought up and how this 'culture' had affected them without them even realizing. It is, as Anne explained, so 'part and parcel' of the 'fabric 'of society that you did not always recognize its presence until later in life. Christine described this 'subliminal' influence of her Mother's views on her upbringing stating that, 'it is shocking if you think about it … knowing your own parents think like that'.

'I was brought up by my mother in a Methodist Protestant background and I remember being brought up to think, at least subliminally, that Catholics were like the devils! They had idolatry and figurines and we Protestants didn't have to do that and therefore they were not as good.'

In a similar situation Laura also wrestled throughout the interview with whether or not her Mum's influential role and involvement in the Orange Lodge was 'just a social club' or if it could perhaps at times be connected to a wider culture,

ideology or sectarian value-base. She then joked about the fact that it was not until later in her adult life that she began to realize the views that she may have been exposed to, having been brought up in this 'very orange household'. Later she admitted that,

> 'It is very easy to take on they views unless you actually question your own views and even now I constantly try to question what I think about things 'cos it's like indoctrination half the time!'

Clare also shared this experience of the 'in-built' nature of sectarianism and the way in which you could be socialized into this way of thinking without realizing.

> 'I think Rangers fans are kind of 'Nedier', and I know even when I am saying that, I must have had that in my head from being a wee girl. It's how my understanding has been constructed.'

Again, after reflection, Clare also recognized how it is easy to be 'buying into' this culture of sectarianism. Similar to Laura she admits that she 'must just have a wee allegiance to some side.'

Given this evidence and the research by Action for Children, which found that 44% of young people believed that the sectarian views they hold are as a direct result of how they were *brought up,* the need for further investigating family and kinship relations in semi-private and community spheres is more clearly articulated. (Action for Children, 2011a, p. 1-2; 2011b, p.8)

Women and the policing of relational boundaries

These different examples create a picture of the subliminal ways in which sectarianism could perhaps be reproduced in Scotland. The narratives that the women shared also seemed to point towards the role of women in policing the boundaries of relationships within civil society and family and kinship relations. Those who had crossed the socially-defined boundaries of ethno-religious identity appeared to be pressurised to reconsider their choices or, at least, to bring the next generation of children up in line with their own ethnic groups' values. The interviews also revealed examples whereby women had perhaps felt rejected by the community they had left behind or, in other cases, from the new ethno-religious family group which they had joined through marriage.

Hannah highlighted an example of the 'sacrifices' that women in mixed marriages might have to make, in order to ensure the best interests of their children as part of their new community. She explained that women in her family had,

> '…converted from Protestant to Catholic because they have made that oath to have their children brought up in the Catholic faith and so to (…)

enable and facilitate their children's faith, because of course their Dad couldn't take them to the Chapel (laughs)…they converted!'

In this illustration it is the women who are depicted as feeling the need to make sacrifices in the relationship in order to ensure that their new married family values are upheld and that they can participate fully in their new community. In a related example Christine described how women may feel the need to have their mixed relationships, 'in private, in a way that has actually meant they have had to give up one side of the family or both sides.' Dianne also voiced her take on this,

> 'I see women in these circumstances being the messengers so we have to talk to women to get women to think… "Well what is it you're actually passing on?"'

Although Dianne, as a Catholic woman who had married a Protestant, challenged the norms by proceeding with her marriage decision she talked of the resistance she had faced from female members of her family. She recognized that not all women would necessarily be prepared to make those kinds of sacrifices or feel strong enough to resist familial pressure. When she spoke of how the women who tried to restrict your choices were the same women who themselves felt unable to break out of the expectations that were placed upon them by others, she gave an interesting insight into the issue. If we simply look at statistics of how many people in Scotland are in a mixed relationship we are not investigating the 'venom' 'politics' and 'sacrifices' that this may have entailed whether or not they decided to proceed with the marriage.

Again this idea of the women as messengers upholding, maintaining and policing ethnic boundaries is reiterated by Dianne later in the interview.

> 'Traditionally the woman is seen to be loyal, seen to be holding up everything. So when you're holding everything up you can't let it go because then everything just falls. So you've got that pressure to keep holding, and you feel a responsibility - and then if you've got kids... because of the structure for men and women… women are the ones who are going to be experiencing the pressure. They've got this whole responsibility to hold up a whole community's needs.'

She went on to explain that within sectarian communities women are 'restricted from leaving that identity' because if they do other women will then express their feelings of 'letting the side down.' If you then tried to challenge this by speaking out against it the other women would worry because, '…if you do that, that gives 'outside' an excuse to sort of... to attack you, so it's like if you're showing weakness they'll attack it.'

This picture of women as the loyal guardians of each ethnic group's identity and their role in protecting, maintaining and reproducing these boundaries is explored by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) in their discussion of 'racialized boundaries'. They claim that,

> 'The boundary of the ethnic is often dependant on gender and there is a reliance on gender attributes for specifying ethnic identity; much of ethnic culture is organized around rules relating to sexuality, marriage and the family. A true member will perform these roles properly.' (p.113)

This idea of a 'true member' links with Dianne's claim that women in a sectarian community are 'seen to be loyal' and have a pressure or responsibility which is bestowed upon them to 'hold' things up, particularly if they have children.

This socially constructed and feminized role also seems to fit with the women's narratives in terms of the pressure they were said to exert on other women in order to ensure conformity with the prescribed relationship rules. Again, it also links to the way in which Dianne described women as 'messengers' who pass on the markers of their respective ethnic identity to their children through, at times, 'subliminal' socialization processes.

This leads me to the key question that has resulted from this study: could it be that women can be both 'reproducers of the boundaries' of ethno-Christian groups in Scotland and the messengers and 'transmitters' of this sectarianized culture? (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992, p.115)

Conclusion

The central argument underpinning the conclusions which follow is the need to address the neglected 'other half' of the sectarian narrative in Scotland. As I argued, the hidden and apparently feminized role of policing relational spaces, as proposed in the analysis above, can be contrasted with the 'strong male culture' which traditionally receives greater public and political attention in discussions surrounding sectarianism. Deuchar and Holligan's evidence illustrates the social and cultural expectations placed on young men to conform to 'narrow views of masculinity and sexuality,' and to police the territorial spaces in which sectarianism is used as a 'flashpoint' to galvanize groups.(See Deuchar and Holligan, 2008; McGrellis, 2005). However, as these research findings suggest, if men are expected to police the *territorial* boundaries of ethno-Christian groups in Scotland, then 'the other half of the story,' that has been hidden, seems to require women to police the relational boundaries of these sectarianized ethno-religious identities; particularly in civil society and family and kinship relations in areas such as marriage and the education and upbringing of young people.

In summary, the hegemonic masculinity of sectarianism tends to frame this social issue within public and male-dominated spheres such as football. Yet, as these findings suggest, these dominant narratives seem to have impacted women's ability to both articulate and accept their positionality in relation to this social phenomenon. This apparent ambivalence is highlighted in their attempts to fit women into the legitimized football frame and their contradictory insistence on minimizing the agency of women, despite sharing evidence to the contrary, on their gendered role as loyal protectors and transmitters of identity in policing, maintaining and reproducing the sectarianized boundaries of ethno-Christian groups. As a result, it could be argued that mainstream framing of sectarianism which portrays women solely as victims, or within their socially assigned role as 'peace-makers' in the 'world of men,' seriously distorts public knowledge and understanding of women's agency in both challenging and indeed reproducing sectarianized boundaries across generations in the spheres of influence in which they are more active. In order to redress this apparent imbalance in opposition to the hegemonic masculinity of the sectarian narrative in Scotland, it is vital that future research avenues are gendered in order to re-define and reframe sectarianism in light of the inclusion of different women's standpoints to inform grass-root, community-led initiatives which work to tackle the issue at a local and national level.

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