The trouble with sectarianism

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Each society, at each moment, elaborates a body of social problems taken to be legitimate, worthy of being debated, of being made public and sometimes officialized and, in a sense, guaranteed by the state.
Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 236)

Paradoxes and conundrums

Almost all studies of 'sectarianism' in Scotland point to a central 'paradox' or a 'conundrum' – that while there are widespread *perceptions* of a serious problem of sectarianism very few people have ever had any direct *experience* of it (Ormston, et al, 2015: 269). Sectarianism is not something that 'we' do but something that other people do to other people in other places (Rosie, 2015: 330). Metaphors abound to capture this elusive but apparently deep-seated social problem. It is compared to glass bottles (problem of perception), glass ceiling (problem of discrimination), and a glass curtain (problem of exclusion) (Ormston, et al, 2015), or, alternatively, to a Cobweb (a problem with many gaps in-between) rather than a joined-up Patchwork (a societal-wide problem) (Goodall, et al, 2015), or an iceberg where what you see above the surface is all that exists with no hidden depths of sectarianism submerged below (Bruce, 1988; Rosie, 2015). If there is, as much research demonstrates, 'a considerable perception-reality gap when it comes to public understandings of sectarianism' then the presumed threat posed to civility and public order can only present itself as 'a subtle but intractable problem' (Ormston, et al, 2015: 284).

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This paradox is compounded by a conundrum - sectarian insiders and non-sectarian outsiders appear to occupy completely different perceptual worlds. 'The public', insofar as their views are known through opinion polls or attitude surveys, categorise some practices and groups as sectarian even though the groups classified in this way typically deny that their beliefs and rituals are sectarian in nature. Since some 'find it difficult to even recognize' that their attitudes are sectarian more robust research is needed so that 'this enduring problem in Scottish life' will be more widely perceived and discussed (Goodall, et al, 2015: 293).

For instance, while Orange and Republican marches and parades create anxiety within communities participants themselves deny that their intentions are sectarian in the least (Hamilton-Smith, et al, 2015: 325). Marches, parades or 'processions' appear provocative to the 'community' and the police, especially in areas of urban marginality and community stigmatization. Yet as Hamilton-Smith et al (2015) note, anxieties about sectarian processions may be related to much deeper, underlying issues. The more deprived that an area is then the greater the perception of sectarian prejudice and tensions will be. Ormston et al (2015: 277) also found that Catholics feel more harassed than other groups the more deprived the local area is, although even in the most deprived quintile only 17 percent of respondents felt threatened by parades.

Despite these relatively low-level concerns, state authorities in Scotland nominated sectarianism as a fundamental social antagonism disfiguring the national community (Law, 2016). This was far from the opening of the process of governmental attempts to curtail sectarianism. During the 1980s through to the 2000s sectarianism had been elaborated, repeatedly and episodically, as a legitimate subject for public discourse, classification and state intervention. In

2005 a Government summit on sectarianism hailed by the Labour First Minister Jack McConnell as 'historic' led to the Scottish Executive's 2006 *Strategy on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland,* which promoted the use of Football Banning Orders (FBOs) to exclude persistent offenders from football grounds.

By 2011 this strategy appeared ineffective and insufficient to governmental authorities. Indeed, sectarian offences were under-represented in the issuing of FBOs, and even more serious sectarian and racist offences failed to result in FBOs being issued (Scottish Government Social Research, 2011: 14). It was only following sensational media coverage of a football game between 'the Old Firm' of the Glasgow clubs Celtic and Rangers, that sectarianism was nominated as an official crime. This is despite the fact that the term 'sectarianism' itself is contested, subject to multiple interpretations and cannot be defined in Scots Law. With the passing of legislation, the Scottish Government committed a budget of £9 million to address sectarianism, about which a lot is said but not enough it seems is known.

The gap between sectarian practices and sectarian perceptions is regularly compared to the well-known paradox of rising public fears of crime at a time when many forms of violent crime are actually falling. In the case of crime, popular misperceptions are routinely explained as the result of ideological constructions by 'the media' and government that stoke exaggerated moral panics (Cohen, 2011). In contrast, the role of the media and government in the construction of sectarianism has not been to the forefront of academic studies (see Kelly, 2011, for an exception). Instead, research concentrates on the supposedly decivilising aspects of bad behavior around football and parades, including contentious cultural paraphernalia – flags, songs, football colours,

marches – in an attempt to uncover the 'tacit nature of sectarian sentiment' (Goodall, et al, 2015: 297).

Sociologically speaking, the afterlife of 'sectarianism' expresses definite social and political conditions that make possible both the lived experience of sectarianism, insofar as this can be divined, and the symbolic classification of sectarianism as an outdated mode of distinction. Sectarianism valorizes symbolic distinction and separation as prohibitions against social and ideological promiscuity and contamination between established and outsider groups (Weber, 1946). As with the religious field more strictly defined, every consensus of symbolic meaning serves the simultaneous classificatory function of vision and division, inclusion and exclusion, integration and differentiation (Bourdieu, 1991). Symbolic capital that only recently sanctified a relatively privileged position in the social field, such as Protestant Unionism, can find itself devalued, despite relatively unchanged ideological content, by the valorisation of emerging and increasingly dominant forms of symbolic capital as represented by the 'civil religion' of sub-state nationalism.

This chapter attempts to situate the moral panic around sectarianism in wider relations of social power. A civilising offensive is mobilised by the legitimate sources of symbolic nomination to regulate and discipline de-civilised outsiders. This is experienced differently as resentment and *ressentiment*, depending on where groups are distributed in social space. On the one hand, the sources of legitimate symbolic power experience *ressentiment* as a chronic maladaptation of outsider groups to the civilising canopy of the national habitus. On the other hand, the de-civilised sources of illegitimate symbolic power experience resentment as relatively short-lived losses of control associated with football rivalries. Indeed, fierce sporting rivalries may provide a controlled example of how collective effervescence and cathartic

release may help to lower the threat to group integrity posed by other groups and foster greater symbolic equality in a game of more or less evenly-matched sides (Elias, 2008: 231).

Dominant and dominated sectarianism

With little evidence of public disorder or inter-communal violence, the social power of media and political nomination classify football, flags, songs, parades and marches as contentious, provocative and a grave sectarian threat to the social fabric. Such powers of nomination and classification rest on the accumulated force of a centralised apparatus able to separate legitimate from illegitimate forms of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2014: 273).

Naming processes are always prescriptive and descriptive, bringing into the field of perception what it asserts already exists objectively in any case. Processes of legitimate nomination, such as that concerning sectarianism, often reify and enclose groups as self-contained phenomenon with little connection to wider processes of nation and state formation. As Bourdieu (1991: 122) argued, 'All social destinies, positive or negative, by concentration or stigma, are equally *fatal* – by which I mean mortal – because they enclose those whom they characterise within the limits that are assigned to them and that they are made to recognise'. By enclosing groups into determinate categories of legitimate-civilised and illegitimate-decivilised, authorised nomination reifies the symbolic conditions for a double-bind cycle of de-civilised sectarian violence.

Against the prevailing academic consensus that sectarianism was only ever a marginal problem and that football provides a safety valve for social tensions, Tom Gallagher (1987: 1) warned in the 1980s that football rivalry acts as an incubator of religio-political bigotry that threatens to expose the fragile nature

of the civilising process: 'The enmity and hysteria sometimes on display at Old Firm matches can serve as a timely reminder of just how thin the crust of civilisation is'. Indeed, football-related sectarianism expresses what is repressed routinely. As such, pleasure can be taken from group transgressions, forever threatening a return of the repressed. As Billig (2002: 185) argued about bigotry more generally:

> What is socially forbidden can become an object of desire and pleasure. If there are taboos on the expression of bigotry in contemporary society, outward prejudice may take the form of a forbidden pleasure. Bigotry, then, becomes a temptation.

This was evident when the transformation of moral values in the 1960s and since coincided with the escalation of state and paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland. Sections of the Rangers' support succumbed to the sectarian temptation, taking pleasure in virulent anti-Catholic denigration and indulged in a culture of alcohol-fuelled fan violence leading to major crowd disorders throughout the late 1960s to the 1980s. Scotland remains one of the few countries where public declarations of Irish heritage, such as St Patrick's Day, the anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, or the flying of the Irish tricolour on a public building, can result in intimidation and threats from small groups of Loyalist fundamentalists.

Yet the sectarianism of the dominated waxes and wanes in emotional intensity, physical threat and ideological rancour. By the 1980s anti-Catholic bigotry was already in slow decline. This centrifugal process has been assisted by the development of a national habitus in Scotland that has shed much of the Unionist ideological legacy. The more insecure that an established group like Protestant Unionism feels the more that they tend to be unrelenting and dogmatic about the inferiority of the outsider group and the

supreme value of the established group (Elias, 2008: 230). Conversely, the more secure that a group feels of its own value the more that they can afford to adopt a more detached and accommodating relationship to outsiders.

Although sectarianism is often treated as if it represented an unchanging symbolic monolithic, it operated as a mode of justification in different ways at different times and places. On one side, the 'dominant sectarianism' of the dominant classes in Scotland asserted their right to dominate through the ideological privileges conferred by sectarian exclusions and superiority over groups classified as 'Irish Roman Catholic'. On the other side, the 'dominated sectarianism' of the dominated classes tended, as Bourdieu (1991: 19) notes of the religious field more generally, 'to impose on the dominated a recognition of the legitimacy of the domination and of the symbolic modes of expression of this domination (that is, the lifestyle and religiosity of the dominant classes)'. The same symbolic content of sectarianism therefore must perform different functions if it is to mediate quite distinct, even contrary social conditions.

What is classified from above as 'sectarian' refers to beliefs and practices that once functioned as symbolic justification for reproducing unequal relations of power between supposedly cohesive 'communities'. Yet the material and ideological sources of sectarianism in nineteenth century Scotland has been continually modified as a mode of justification as the social structure itself changed historically. Its residue functions today as an unwanted reminder of the accumulated history in the development of the national habitus in Scotland.

Moral indignation and sectarianism

In 2011 the legitimate forms of symbolic domination in the political field in Scotland – journalists, police, politicians, academics – converged at a single point: something needed to be done about sectarianism. This concentration of symbolic power produced a self-sustaining escalation process of symbolic amplification often associated with moral panics (Cohen, 2011). Even before the controversial Old Firm game took place in early March 2011 the Scottish Police Federation had called for a ban on the fixture. On the day after the game Strathclyde Police Chief Stephen House called on the First Minister Alex Salmond and the Scottish government to organise a Summit between the police, the Scottish Football Association and the Old Firm to address violent disorder at and around the Glasgow football rivalry. Football-related disorder was debated in the Scottish Parliament. In the end, a six-point plan was agreed at the Summit to control the fixture. This was envisaged by the SNP First Minister Alex Salmond as 'not the end of a process but very much the beginning of a series of actions'. Legislation was hastily enacted in 2012, the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act, specifically targeting football rivalries as the source of decivilised attitudes, symbols and conduct afflicting Scottish society. Subsequently, academic research was commissioned and experts appointed to provide the legitimate authority of scholarly capital for the new regime of punishment and reform.

Such concentrations of symbolic domination demonstrate that a simple opposition between the devolved state and Scottish civil society is untenable. Instead, as Bourdieu (2014: 36) argues, there is 'a continuous distribution of access to the collective, public, material or symbolic resources with which the term "state" is associated with'. One of the functions of the symbolic continuum is to perform the alchemy of transforming particular interests into universal disinterest. In this case, the classification and punishment of

subjects as sectarian must appear as an act of universal disinterest, in the name of the public good, above all particular points in social space.

Performing the alchemy of disinterested punishment is a central feature of what sociologists and philosophers have called '*ressentiment*'. *Ressentiment* can be distinguished from the English word 'resentment'. Resentment refers to a transitory emotional response to symbolic insult, offence, humiliation, and frustration in a situation of social interaction (Meltzer and Musolf, 2002). By outwardly displaying resentful displeasure resentment is an active form of retaliation, as in fierce sports rivalries, at least for a time until the emotional injury passes, in football rivalries typically in the hours after the end of the contest. *Ressentiment*, on the other hand, refers to a generalised, long drawn out and passive desire for retribution against a perceived, often abstract moral injury to the social body that resists redress. Revenge in such cases is constantly postponed since it is checked or restrained on a more or less permanent basis by external social constraints, leading to a feeling of powerlessness that can only be addressed by imaginary or symbolic violence.

Nietzsche (1996) attributed the social sources of *ressentiment* to the sublimated emotions of 'slave morality' found in Judeo-Christianity and socialism. Unable to strike at the oppressor, Nietzsche argued, the slave morality transformed objective powerlessness into subjective strength by valorising humility, patience, empathy, restraint and mercy. Nietzsche's anthropological speculations were given some sociological foundation by Max Scheler (1972) and Svend Ranulf (1964). In contrast to Nietzsche, Scheler (1972: 50) located *ressentiment* processes within the structure of a society where 'equal rights (political and otherwise) or formal social equality, publicly recognised, go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, property and education'. An unrelieved tension between formal equality and power

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inequalities characterises the devalued position felt by the dominated fractions of the dominant class. Such tensions may be released through illusory valuations and 'an urge to scold' that is both attracted to and repelled by the denigrated object. 'In *ressentiment* one condemns what one secretly craves; in rebellion one condemns the craving itself' (Merton, 1968: 210). Yet the repressed always manages to return to the field of perception of the *ressentiment* attitude, whose re-appearance discloses 'a silent, unadmitted "reproach"' (Scheler, 1972: 76). Only an inversion of values, turning pleasure into restraint and punishment into reform, delivers *ressentiment* from the desire for an impossible revenge. 'When the reversal of values comes to dominate accepted morality and is invested with the power of the ruling ethos, it is transmitted by tradition, suggestion and education to those that are endowed with the seemingly devalued qualities' (Scheler, 1972: 77).

Ranulf (1964) further argues that *ressentiment* restructures what are specifically middle class dispositions and perceptions. A disposition for moral indignation and disinterested punishment, Ranulf argues, exists for middle class groups compelled to exercise a high degree of self-control and outward restraint in contrast to outsider groups relieved of the same need to constantly sublimate the emotions. Outsider groups that enjoy the freedom to transgress the symbolic order invite the 'repressed desires' of a hostile middle class compelled to serve. Only those aspects of middle class experience are selected that justify imposing the *ressentiment* pattern of feeling onto the world as a disinterested form of punishment.

Moral indignation is 'the emotion behind the disinterested tendency to inflict punishment', a pattern of punishment that has no direct benefit or gratification for the moraliser (Ranulf, 1964: 1). Official *ressentiment* over sectarianism is strikingly evident in the moral indignation displayed by

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politicians, police, jurists and journalists, even academics. Such groups exercise the monopoly power of nomination and classification that separates legitimate from illegitimate forms of symbolic capital as part of what might be termed 'a civilizing offensive'.

As we have already seen, it is not difficult to come across the moral indignation of journalists, senior police officers and politicians. Even disinterested legal opinion is required to give expression to *ressentiment*. Moral indignation finds support for its transvaluation of values in a vague and elastic conception of offensiveness. As the Lord Advocate's (2012) guidelines on the Offensive Behaviour at Football And Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act note, the offence refers to behaviour motivated by religious or other hatred, including behaviour that any '*reasonable person* would be likely to find offensive' or could incite public disorder. As Ranulf argued, the disinterested right to punish depends on moral indignation of an injured but reasonable person or group offended by symbolic violence. In this case, disinterested punishment relies on the the judgement of a police officer as 'the reasonable person' present at the time of the offence. Here the context needs to be perceived as 'threatening' or 'offensive' and songs and chants interpreted as motivated by hatred on racial, religious, cultural or social grounds, or by hatred of a group, support for terrorist organizations, or the mocking or celebration of 'the loss of life or serious injury'.

Within the symbolic continuum, the least dominated fraction exercise more autonomy than more dominated fractions, enabling politicians to draw selectively on the rigorous findings of scholarly research produced to inform criminal justice policies. Government-funded research into sectarianism has amply demonstrated the absence of bounded sectarian communities or the

religious basis of sectarianism, yet politicians and media persist in mobilizing such discredited formulae.

As part of the dominant fraction of the governing class, the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, Paul Wheelhouse, claimed in his foreword to the Scottish Government 2015 report on the effectiveness of the Offensive Behaviour at Football And Threatening Communications Act that it is 'a step on Scotland's journey to building a better nation':

> singing, chanting and shouting of racial and sectarian comments acts as a way of normalizing derogatory attitudes and souring relationships or inflaming existing, strained relationships within or between Scotland's communities … [The Act] was designed to send out a clear message to those who let their passion and pride become violent and offensive (Scottish Government, 2015: 3).

Here the danger to Scotland as a civilized nation is one of (legitimate) sporting passions getting out of control and inciting widespread social disorder and physical violence. While there is evidence of episodic drink-fuelled, physical violence associated with football rivalries, its relatively rare occurrence compels moral indignation into a fascination with symbolic violence.

Symbolic violence is a problem for disinterested punishment, the Minister claims, because it risks escalating conflict between Scotland's 'communities', supposedly already under strain. Here, as elsewhere, 'community' functions as a magical word, implying self-contained, discrete boundaries between rival groups that endanger the overriding unity of the national community. Disinterested punishment is therefore necessary to avenge unnecessary offence to disinterested reasonableness.

Finally, moral indignation conflates racism with sectarianism in a charged semantic slippage. Since racism is officially illegitimate, the coupling extends the elastic semantics of sectarianism. This includes outlawing symbolic support for 'terrorists' and political anti-state violence, which has no necessary relationship to racism. A further claim is made for the transvaluation of values that turns punishment into reform. Here it is claimed that the Act has had a 'positive impact' and made 'real improvements', even though the academic evaluation of the effectiveness of the Act was much more circumspect and noted the difficulty of disentangling secular trends towards self-restraint from any specific improvement arising from the implementation of the legislation.

Sectarianism therefore becomes an all-encompassing term that includes any political, religious or cultural symbols or conduct that may be found offensive from the point of view of disinterested, self-restrained servants of the public. Academics share the moral indignation of governmental authority, indeed praise it where it furthers the needs of scholarship. As one government-funded study argued, a clear need was identified for 'nuanced scholarship that assists the Scottish Government ambitions of eradicating sectarianism in Scottish society. We note also the positive benefits of the recent Scottish Government programme of publicly-funded research' (Goodall, et al, 2015: 302).

Without increased public discourse around sectarianism academics warn that the negative impact on individuals 'may be more severe' (Goodall, et al: 2015: 299). Public policy and criminal justice approaches to sectarianism need to be 'informed by an accurate understanding of the attitudes of the Scottish public as a whole, as well as those of key sub-sections of society' (Ormston, et al,

2015: 268). Similarly, and despite the paltry evidence of sectarian practices beyond low-level disruptive and derogatory conduct, a leading expert on sectarianism mobilises the *ressentiment* conviction that there needs to be 'a sea-change in attitudes on what is and what is not acceptable in everyday Scottish life' (Rosie, 2015: 334). In such cases, the normative stipulations of disinterested academic research run the risk of functioning as an echo chamber to legitimate political and media demands for a civilizing offensive.

A further example of moral indignation emerges from the restrained discursive style adopted by the Scottish Government's Advisory Group of academic experts. Sectarianism is defined by the government experts in the catch-all terms of religion, nationalism, politics and football:

> 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. (Advisory Group, 2013: 3.9, emphasis added)

For disinterested nomination sectarianism is the 'distorted' and 'destructive' expression of hostile relations in a violent segregation of 'them' and 'us'. This cannot be reduced to anti-Catholic or anti-Irish discrimination alone since the Catholic or Irish 'us' may feel 'destructive' enmity to the Protestant or British 'them'. By enshrining an equality of group prejudice each side is able to claim to be victims of sectarianism in the face of real or imagined humiliation by an

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apparently more privileged outsider group. In the process, power imbalances are overlooked. For instance, despite an extremely unequal public presence of Loyalist marches (773) compared to Republican ones (41) in 2012 (Hamilton-Smith et al, 2015: 310), both were seen as problems of equal magnitude and lumped together under the common nomination 'sectarian'. Research also reports a higher, though not by a great deal, incidence of perceived anti-Catholic prejudice and discrimination than anti-Protestant prejudice in Scotland (Ormston, et al, 2015).

Such prejudice as exists tends to register as a more general cultural feeling than taking a more concrete form like employment discrimination or harassment. A spectrum of sectarian attitudes can be plotted on both sides of the divide from 'hard-bitter' to 'soft-banter' on an ascending scale of prejudice, bigotry and hatred, making the classification of behavior as sectarian dependent on the context of communication regardless of historical and ideological content. Therefore, despite its historical roots in anti-Irish Catholic hostility and discrimination, sectarianism in this definition persists in Scotland as an equality of group hatred requiring disinterested punishment. No distinction need be made between the historically formed position of a formerly dominated outsider group and a formerly dominant established group. Disinterested experts appear indifferent to the ideological meaning of symbols, only that they give illegitimate offence to the national habitus.

The uses of sectarianism

A governmental nexus of legitimate nomination and classification imposes moral indignation and disinterested reform and punishment on devalued 'sectarian' symbols and subjects. Illegitimate physical and symbolic violence are bundled together by governmental authorities as part of what has been termed a civilising offensive. The idea of a civilising *offensive* is indebted to

Norbert Elias' (2012) theory of civilising *processes*. As public space is pacified by the state monopoly of violence and taxation, personal and inter-personal life becomes more interdependent, less violent, more restrained and predictable within an unplanned and *long-term* process. With the loosening obligations of family and occupational bonds group relations increasingly take on the character of voluntary forms of association rather than an inescapable fate. This gives rise to a more self-conscious, less emotionally-charged and less spontaneous form of social habitus.

The conceptual development of a civilising offensive was shaped initially by Dutch sociologists to refer to self-conscious, planned and short-term reforms that aim to improve what powerful groups see as 'barbaric practices' of lower classes (Powell, 2013). As Kitty Verrips (1987: 3) put it:

> The term 'civilizing offensive' is used by Dutch sociologists and historians to refer to a wide range of phenomena, from nineteenth-century bourgeois efforts to elevate the lower classes out of their poverty and ignorance and convince them of the importance of domesticity and a life of virtue, to the oppression of popular culture in early modern times and, in general, 'the attack on behaviour presumed to be immoral or uncivilized'.

Civilising offensives are closely related to the *ressentiment* attitude produced by the unrelieved tensions of middle class restraint. In his survey of the concept, Ryan Powell (2013) argues that civilizing offensives seem to succeed in modifying group conduct and perceptions when they are pushing at an open door, that is when they function as part of a process where the pattern of relations are already moving in the desired direction, which the civilising offensive merely makes more explicit and intelligible.

With increasingly non-violent social relations and increased pressures of self-restraint *ressentiment* is also able to fester over protracted periods of time as the unreason of reasonable people. *Ressentiment* fears of sectarian violence demand recourse to the disinterested punishment of football supporters in a context where rates of non-sexual violent crime fell to their lowest level for 40 years (Scottish Government, 2015b: 19). Violent crime rates in Scotland had been increasing for a long period from the 1970s to 1980s, plateaued during the 1990s, before entering a downward trend in the early 2000s, since when it decreased sharply by around 60%. Little of the remaining violence in society is classified as sectarian, despite the semantic elasticity of the term and the perpetual cycle of media publicity, political campaigns and supportive scholarship. In the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey of 2012/13 (Scottish Government, 2014: 68), of the intimidation and harassment reported by respondents less than 5 percent was said to be motivated by 'sectarianism', and even fewer were worried about the threat of sectarianism compared to the chances of random assault or gang-related violence.

It appears that as the real risk of physical violence declines, sensitivity increases towards other, more symbolic 'crimes' requiring the disinterested punishment demanded by a renewed civilising offensive. In a Scottish context, Flint and Powell (2013) situate governmental attempts to curb sectarianism as a civilising offensive within the wider context of the 'civilising' of football spectatorship in the UK in order to address perceived crises of incivility and urban disorder within disorderly public spaces. Largely symbolic rivalries of football offer a convenient displacement activity to legitimate governmental civilizing offensives (Waiton, 2013). Civilising offensives open with moral panics shaped by a governmental media offensive

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to shift illegitimate violence, physical and symbolic, behind the scenes of social life.

Public alarm over sectarianism, insofar as it is uncovered by social attitude surveys, responds to journalistic coverage of and political comment on football rivalry rather than a simple reflection of pre-existing structural or institutional processes. Football is therefore typically seen as the main source of sectarianism, especially among younger people, with Orange Order marches a distant second as a contributing factor. Moreover, survey respondents who perceive sectarianism to be widespread put its causes down to a broader range of factors than football alone, including social media and the politics of Ireland (Ormston et al, 2015: 281-4).

Football affiliations crystallize long-run historical processes in Scotland, particularly the rivalry between the Glasgow clubs, Celtic and Rangers. One team, Celtic, is associated with a historically suspect, outsider minority religion, Roman Catholicism, and a despised foreign nationality, Irish. Glasgow Rangers, on the other hand, for a long time represented the establishment group in Scotland. As a symbol of Protestantism and Scottish Unionism Rangers refused to employ Roman Catholics, a sectarian practice that was abandoned in the 1980s. Celtic traditionally signed players of all denominations. From the 1890s, middle class directors of the club pursued sporting success at all costs. Modernizers put the club on a professional basis and established a profit-driven, private limited company, something that traditionalists saw as a betrayal of Celtic's founding community-based, charitable ideals. Modernization of the club also enabled middle class leaders of the Irish Catholic community to integrate into the wider sports, legal and business establishment in Scotland, even as they remained committed to a distinctive Glasgow Irish politics (McCallum, 2013).

'Sectarianism' became a public order matter limited to and given expression by football tribalism. Yet the tensions excited by intense club rivalries provide football with its specific function as a temporary rupture with the mundane routines and constraints of daily life. Elias and Dunning (2008) describe public rehearsals of symbolic rivalries and the oscillating tension-balance of football as a 'controlled de-controlling of emotions'. Football has a cathartic effect that permits under controlled conditions what the dull routines of everyday life forbid.

Moral indignation over football hostilities is merely one aspect of a broader governmental-media civilising offensive to legitimate welfare and criminal justice policies in the UK, with particular symbolic and material denigration reserved for sections of the dispossessed working class under conditions of urban marginality (Rodger, 2008). Media representations of poverty in Scotland wed neighbourhood decay and poor cultural taste to bestial gangs, knife crime and territorial violence in disdainful discourses about 'Neds' and urban working class areas in contrast to the civilized national habitus routinely affirmed by all reasonable people (Law and Mooney, 2011).

As such, the civilising offensive follows a general pattern of media escalation and de-intensification over time. Before the 1990s newspaper reports about 'Neds' were almost non-existent and only began to increase in frequency after 1999, spiked in the early 2000s, followed by a rather erratic decline, albeit without returning to its pre-1990s level (Law and Mooney, 2011: 118). 'Sectarianism' shares a similar pattern of media escalation and de-intensification. In his analysis of major national newspaper titles in Scotland, Waiton (2016) demonstrates that there was a gradual but limited increase in the frequency of the use of the term 'sectarianism' during the 1990s, from an

almost complete absence in 1992, peaking ten years later with the public debate about 'Scotland's shame' (almost 300 references to sectarianism), falling away again by 2009, before re-emerging with a vengeance as a heightened national discourse in 2011 (350 references).

With the cyclical emergence of sectarianism as simultaneously a media, legal and political narrative, fears of an urban underclass of gangs and Neds were overlaid with the resurrection of another time-honoured bogeyman: the fear of wider quasi-religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Scotland. Yet much research demonstrates a weak or non-existent relationship between religious belief and structural discrimination in Scotland. Moreover, religious observance and church attendance are in terminal decline. Data show that young people are less and less religious than previous generations, resulting in a calamitous decline in Church of Scotland attendance since 1999 from 35% to 18% (2013) – 'nothing short of a collapse amongst all but the oldest category' (Rosie, 2015: 338).

Despite the chasm between religious practice and sectarian relationships they continue to be treated as synonymous or inter-related categories that rise and fall together. Religion is now often seen as a matter of the private beliefs of individuals rather than a shared ethos structuring an entire way of life for the community. Protestantism had of course been central to the development of the national habitus in Scotland – from the Protestant Unionism of the Reformation in 1560, the Union of the Crowns of 1603, and the Union of Parliaments if 1707. While the process of British state formation preserved the position of the Kirk, since the 1970s the established power advantage conferred by Protestant Unionism has dissolved in the acid of a specifically secular Scottish national habitus.

Traditionally, sectarianism referred to exclusionary relations between relatively coherent social groups defined by religion and ethnicity (Weber, 1946). Such dense moral cohesion of self-regulating sectarian groups no longer characterises contemporary Scotland. More than 80 percent of Catholics claim one or more close Protestant friends while 76 percent of Protestants claim close Catholic friends. Only a tiny percent from each category do not know anyone from the other group (Ormston, et al, 2015: 279-80). Social proximity also results in a stronger perception among non-Catholics that Catholics are more likely to experience direct forms of discrimination. The material and moral universe that once gave meaning to sectarianism as a practice to maintain group 'purity' against outsider contamination has all but disappeared in Scotland. Long-run processes of secularization have weakened the moral authority of religious sects and churches as markers of group cohesion. As a result, intra-Christian religious antagonism is nowhere as virulent or widespread as it was once assumed to be.

A slow accumulation of economic, cultural and social capital prepared the conditions for the colonization of middle class professions by upwardly-mobile sons and daughters of Catholic manual workers (Paterson, 2000). As Boyle (2011: 213) argues 'there is a significant body of evidence that the Irish Catholic community has enjoyed an intergenerational rise to prominence, wealth, and economic parity. In many respects, many migrants and descendents have risen to form part of a confident and assertive Irish Catholic middle-class community in Scotland'. Publicly-funded Catholic schools appear to have played a key role in mitigating occupational exclusion, particularly since the 1960s as employment in Scotland increasingly relied on credentials rather than less formal familial or associational structures. The social alchemy of turning socio-economic dispossession into one of cultural

possession is ambiguously experienced as one of social integration and group difference within the national habitus.

While much of the research on life chances for Catholics show that Scotland has become increasingly meritocratic over the past half century, they are still more likely than their Protestant counterparts to live in deprived areas, to rent their homes, to suffer poorer health, to be the victims of crime, and to experience imprisonment, and exhibit significantly lower than average mental and physical wellbeing. Around 60% of Roman Catholics live in Glasgow and Clyde valley area, which also contains 70% of the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland. Partly, this is explicable in terms of the legacy of the historic multiple disadvantages and discrimination towards Irish Catholic descendants from nineteenth century waves of immigration to the erosion of the industrial base and the rise of the welfare state after 1945.

What this points to is a change in the power-balance between previously dominant and dominated groups in a situation of increasingly fluid group boundaries (Elias and Scotston, 2008). Roman Catholics in Scotland were viewed as a suspect community by the established Protestant group through the construction of negative images of the Roman Catholic church or the paramilitary politics of Irish republicanism, as well as all sorts of imagined barbarous group practices such as idleness, ignorance, criminality, alcoholism, promiscuity, and so on. Immigrants excluded in such ways from the we-relation of the established national group may look to the state as a survival unit for protection and shelter. In the case of Catholics in Scotland, the right to publicly-funded denominational schools was granted by the Education Act of 1918, in the process helping consolidate the we-feeling of group difference, not only as a bulwark against collective inferiority but also as a mechanism of social integration into the wider British state-society (Finn,

2003), a process consolidated a generation later with the setting up of the welfare state.

On the other hand, the long-established social habitus of Protestant Unionism no longer maps effortlessly to the post-imperial national habitus of modern Scotland. Identifying with the trappings of an imperialist British ruling class and the Orange Order meant that even poor Protestants could feel themselves emotionally superior to Catholics in Scotland. Protestant workers may therefore have felt 'compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage', as W.E.B. du Bois (1992: 700) said of poor whites in the South, while Catholics were despised as social inferiors. However, the sectarian separation between established Protestants and Catholic outsiders in nineteenth and twentieth century Scotland was never as absolute, systematic or murderous as the inter-racial system in the US. The prospects for a rigid sectarian divide akin to the deadly racist divide between poor whites and poor blacks in the southern states of the US was tempered by complex social inter-dependencies and struggles for working class solidarity in the industrial centres of Scotland.

Changing power balances in context

It is insufficient to plot an ascending continuum between all forms of antagonistic established-outsider relations as the eternal underlying conditions that make mass violence possible. Instead, it is necessary to locate the power ratio between groups within the specific character of the state formation process, conditions of crisis, and the national habitus. In its most extreme forms, feelings of group humiliation, decline, and victimhood can in conditions of state crisis give rise to mass redemptive violence and fascist movements (Paxton, 2005). An essential precondition for mass violence is a thoroughgoing process of ideological compartmentalization of social, spatial, institutional and psychological group isolation and dis-identification (de

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Swaan, 2015). Alongside this, the state formation process plays a vital role in the escalation of violence. So while all states contain political, ethnic or religious categories that do not fit seamlessly into the dominant self-images of the nation, they only lead to mass violence in conditions where the state monopoly of violence is suspended or becomes instrumental in turning dormant identifications into deadly 'killing compartments'.

Moreover, the decivilising process depended on the permissive conditions of struggles for the state monopoly of violence. *Ressentiment* against European Jewry found its murderous expression in the Holocaust of Nazi mass killing and extermination camps only after Jews were constructed as complete outsiders defiling the purity of the national *Kultur*. In this case the dispersed means of violence of the failed Weimar state was replaced by the concentrated mobilisation of the means of violence by the Nazi state (Elias, 2013). The physical annihilation of outsider ethnic and national groups took place in particular 'enclaves of atrocity' where the target group could be isolated and concentrated and all self-restraint suspended as the killers underwent what de Swaan (2015: 125) calls 'a regression in the service of the regime'.

In the US, as Elias (2008: 215) notes, the state formation process placed significant means of violence under the control of a sub-group of the population, the white citizenry, and, except for wartime emergencies, systematically excluded another sub-group, the black citizenry, from a defensive share in the means of violence. One sub-group exercised life and death power over the other sub-group. To demonstrate the nature of the extreme power imbalance, Elias (2008) used Lee Harper's novel *To Kill A Mockingbird* as a local case study of 1930s Alabama. Although the black character Tom Robinson accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell, is patently innocent the white mob is nevertheless required to kill him. In their

eyes Robinson is guilty of symbolically offending white privilege: 'the killing of a black man suspected of a sexual crime against a white woman was closely connected o with the loss of value felt by white men if they were unable to avenge the crime, real or imagined, by killing the person whom they held responsible for the deed' (Elias, 2008: 227).

Although the Robinson family represented the highest stratum of the black community while the Ewells were at the bottom of the white community, the social distance between them loomed like an abyss into which a black man could fall at any time. There was not even a pretence that the law would even-handedly treat as a crime the murder of a black man since that would injure the self-worth of the established group and threaten to uncover the arbitrariness of symbolic privilege.

Nor was the sectarian operation in Scotland as punitive, degrading, violent and systematic as the Penal Laws imposed on Ireland by the British state. Theodore Allen (2012) contends that the invention of 'whiteness' can be traced to the Protestant ascendency in post-1689 Ireland, a judgement already corroborated in 1792 by Edmund Burke. Burke called the systematic exclusion of Catholics from the privileges of state an 'unparalleled code of oppression … manifestly the effects of national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people' (Burke, 1792: 341). Burke was concerned that failures of British statecraft in Ireland, while subjugating the Catholic majority of the 'plebian class' under the 'exclusive power' of the Protestant minority, exercised 'daily and hourly, an insulting and vexatious superiority' in a 'state of humiliating vassalage (often inverting the nature of things and relations)' (1792: 334).

By creating a sectarian form of Protestant rule, Britain therefore deprived itself of Catholics who might become members of the Irish landowning class

and mobilise the authority of property to restrain the mass of dispossessed Catholics from violent resistance, as threatened by the Protestant-led United Irishmen. Instead, Burke (1792: 332) worried that Ireland was 'divided into two distinct bodies, without common interest, sympathy or connexion; one of which bodies was to possess *all* the franchises, *all* the property, *all* the education: The others were to be drawers of water and cutters of turf for them'. By using excessive violence over a long period to enforce Catholic oppression, Burke concluded, British rule had itself created the conditions for 'a mob' to emerge that would resist the humiliation of dispossession using violent means 'without temper, measure, or foresight'. When it finally came, the republican rebellion of 1798 was put down with savage state repression amidst civil war atrocities, while the British rulers manipulated a sectarian counter-revolution of the recently-formed Orange Order to divide Loyalist Protestants from Republican Presbyterians (Smyth, 2000).

The increased integration into a national habitus of Catholics in Scotland may be more usefully compared to the situation of the Protestant minority in the Republic of Ireland. Protestants in the twenty-six counties were transformed from a formerly powerful established group into an outsider group in the midst of the vast Catholic majority. In this case, a former outsider group became the established national group: 'To this day, in the Republic, both the minority Protestant community and the majority Catholic community are very conscious of the Protestants' former status as a powerful established group' (Mennell, et al, 2000: 76). As they exchanged positions, however, both sides absorbed attributes of the other group. Protestants became increasingly restrained about any lingering sense of moral superiority and even adopted some of the negative perceptions of the Protestant ascendancy long felt by Catholics, in part as cultural guilt for the past oppression of the majority by their ancestors.

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While bourgeois Protestants continue to enjoy economic power they suffered a grievous loss of social and political power as outsiders to the new power elite of the Irish state. A profound sense of ambivalence is experienced by the small Protestant minority seeking a public role in a state conditioned for much of its history by the influence of the Catholic church. As Protestants decline numerically and proportionately as 'mixed marriages' become more prevalent, community reproduction through endogamy becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. On the other hand, Catholics have become far more self-critical of their own church and cultivate some of the civilising restraints exemplified by the Protestant minority.

Clearly, the situation of the formerly dominant Protestant minority under the Irish state represents an inverse example to the formerly dominated Catholic minority in Scotland. More closer to the established-outsider relations in Scotland perhaps are the processes examined by Elias and Scotson (2008) by which two groups that resembled each other in almost all respects – white, working class, English, Christian –were nevertheless still divided into hostile groups on the arbitrary basis of how long they had lived in the area. Social images of other groups are formed by 'an optical illusion' , Elias argues:

> the images which the 'established', which powerful sections of a society have of themselves and communicate to others, tends to be modelled on 'the minority of the best'; it inclines towards idealisation. The image of 'outsiders', of groups who have in relation to the established relatively little power, tends to be modelled on 'the minority of the worst', it inclines towards denigration. (Elias and Scotston, 2008: 7)

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A sense of superiority is defended all the more vehemently the longer it has been established as an inter-generational tradition using 'almost everywhere the same weapons, among them humiliating gossip, stigmatising beliefs about the whole group modelled on observations of its worst section, degrading code words and, as far as possible, exclusion from all chances of power' (Elias and Scotston, 2008: 158).

In the case of a long, drawn-out group decline, however, temporary triumphs and a certain continuity in collective rituals, for instance around sport, parades or religion, allow the reality of the changing power-balance to be obscured or denied, despite the dwindling social stock of the group. This is not a linear process but a dynamic and uneven one. In the long-run the personal and group habitus is reformed by uneven and independent developments of locality, work, religion, family, education, politics, and nation. In such ways irrational bigotry has been compelled to recognise and trail the emerging but obdurate realities of modern Scottish society. Fantasy we-images – expressed as triumphalist chants by Rangers fans in the manner of 'We are the People' and 'Simply the Best' – merely heighten the seething but temporary resentments of football rivalries.

On the other hand, the *ressentiment* expressed by official moral indignation for disinterested punishment is functionally reproduced by the established professional middle class in Scotland. Not only the fans but the club itself misrecognises its own changed position in the cultural field as a dominated institution, as when club resentments led to the banning of a BBC journalist for alleged biased reporting, inviting a boycott of the club's ground in retaliation by the BBC, a more dominant institution. On the other hand, the declining institutional power of newspapers in west central Scotland finds it more difficult to protect the professional autonomy of journalists. In early

2016, the respected journalist Graham Spiers resigned from *The Herald* while columnist Angela Haggerty was fired from the *Sunday Herald* after the club complained to the newspaper management about the legality of reports of continuing bigotry among Rangers fans. Supported by the National Union of Journalists Haggerty was reinstated weeks later. Haggerty had been subject to what was described as a four-year long online campaign of anti-Irish racism after editing a book charting Ranger's financial woes, leading to a conviction for religiously aggravated breach of the peace (*Sunday Herald*, 12 January 2014).

Wide variations in social distance and emotional intensity between established and outsider groups permitted by the state formation process indicates some of the difficulties associated with uniformly applying a 'wages of whiteness' approach from its original context to another one where it is has, at best, limited explanatory value. It also highlights the analytical value of the dynamic nature of the established-outsider model developed by Elias to account for the arbitrary valuations of group power imbalances at particular stages in the state formation process.

Wither sectarianism?

A linear model of escalating violence that informs so much of the justification for criminalising offensive conduct at football matches does not bear scrutiny. It is not the case that what Hannah Arendt called the 'banality of evil' festers at football grounds in Scotland among anonymous nobodies ever ready to engage in sectarian violence. Alongside Northern Ireland, Scotland is one of the few nations where the term 'sectarianism' is officially nominated as a fundamental social problem. Yet unlike Northern Ireland, Scotland has not experienced systematic discrimination against the democratic, civil and social rights of a minority religion or nationality, their forced territorial segregation,

the formation of paramilitary groups, and decades of anti-state and sectarian violence. Despite the absence of systematic inter-communal segregation, however, public concern about 'sectarianism' has not faded away as might be expected but has instead become a leading political, legal and academic discourse (Law, 2016).

Given the gap between the limited experience and widespread perceptions of 'sectarianism', the term itself does not merely describe some pre-existing phenomenon (Kelly, 2011). Legitimate processes of nomination and classification by governmental authority help to construct what it aims to punish and reform. Institutional and legal measures were introduced to target sectarianism as a failure to adapt to the civilising national habitus. 'Sectarianism' carries an emotional and ideological charge that labels some social relations as irrational and 'mindless' implying that others are civilised and 'mindful' or reasonable. Populist terminology like 'sectarianism' needs to be submitted to the critical analysis of long-run changes in social relations between groups, including the interest in disinterest of governmental power to name, classify and punish.

Rather than reify groups as things in themselves a more adequate sociological approach concentrates on the changing power dynamics of social relations. A shift in the power-balance has occurred such that any continuing sense of polar opposition between singular Protestant and Catholic 'communities' as the cultural basis of sectarianism fails to register the reality of long-run sociological processes, the role of governmental nomination, and the moral indignation of disinterested, self-restrained middle class professionals. When a phenomenon such as sectarianism is nominated officially as a 'problem' and neither governmental regulation nor self-regulation are perceived to be able to exercise control or restraint over recalcitrant subjects, a sociology of

ressentiment compels the state to assume external powers to address the situation. The legitimate nomination of illegitimate names requires the force of a moral indignation that operates under the guise of disinterested punishment.

Uncovering the social sources of sectarianism therefore depends on establishing the relational processes of symbolic communication that constructs sectarianism as a phenomena that so alarms 'the public'. Unfortunately, the focus has been less on media, legal and political constructions and omissions of sectarianism as moral indignation demanding disinterested punishment. Instead, the central focus has been on the decivilised outsiders of male working class football fans and the threat that they present to the symbolic and physical integrity of 'the community'. In this sense, sectarianism has been described as a 'social anxiety' that arises from the disjuncture between general perception and individual experience (Rosie, 2015: 330). However, sociology needs to identify the changing power dynamic that names and classifies the unfounded perceptions of the public and understand the social and political function of moral indignation.

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