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The historical and contemporary debate about the relation of Catholic schools in Scotland and the social problem of sectarianism

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Abstract
There have been claims that contemporary Catholic schools in Scotland are related to sectarianism by the Church of Scotland, academics, the secular lobby, the press and media and public figures, at various points in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These individuals and groups have all highlighted the anomaly of state funded educational institutions being allegedly related to a serious social problem - sectarianism. This article presents a close examination of these claims and argues that there is very little empirical evidence to substantiate the alleged relation between contemporary Catholic schools and sectarianism.

Keywords: faith schools, Catholic schools, Scotland, sectarianism, social problems

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Introduction

In 2013, a senior Scottish legal officer and a professor of Philosophy both publicly articulated that there is a clear relation between contemporary state-funded Catholic schools and sectarianism in Scotland. Sheriff Richard Davidson stated on the 8th of April that 'the way to tackle sectarianism was to do away with Catholic schools' (McGlone, 2013). Professor A.C. Grayling, on a visit to Scotland, is quoted as saying on the 16th of April, 'the argument against faith-based schools can be summed up in two words, Northern Ireland, or perhaps one word - Glasgow' (Dinwoodie, 2013).[1] The public statements were ultimately aimed at the 369 state-

funded Catholic schools in Scotland (SCES, 2013).[2] Both statements attracted strong criticism from representatives of the Catholic Church.

There are a number of key issues in the faith school debate in the UK that can be applied to a variety of faith schools (e.g. Church of England, Catholic, Jewish, Evangelical Christian). The key issues are: faith schools and state funding; the potential divisiveness of faith schools; faith schools and social cohesion; faith schools as sites of indoctrination/ inhibiting rational autonomy and the rights of the child (Jackson, 2004; Halstead and McLaughlin, 2005; Mason, 2005; Marples, 2006; Brighouse, 2008). In Scotland, the vast majority of faith schools are Catholic and this is reflected in the key issues in the Scottish debate: Catholic schools and state funding; the potential divisiveness of Catholic schools; Catholic schools as historical anachronism and the relation of Catholic schools to sectarianism (Kenneth, 1972; Paterson, 2000a). It is this last issue that has been raised by Sheriff Davidson and Professor Grayling, though neither of these public figures appears to have substantiated their statements with evidence. This raises questions about the evidence that is available to substantiate the relation between contemporary Catholic schools and sectarianism.

This article examines the historical and contemporary debate surrounding state-funded Catholic schools and sectarianism in Scotland. It is divided into three parts. Part one commences with a working definition of sectarianism which is reframed as a social problem that is related to religion (Harris, 2009; Alessio, 2011; Hjelm, 2011). Part two will provide a critical history of the establishment and development of Catholic schools within the broader history of the growth of the post-Reformation Catholic community which was the result of a series of waves of migration from across Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries (Irish, Italian, Polish and Lithuanian) (Miller, 1998; Ziarski-Kernberg, 2000; Pieri, 2005; Devine, 2006). The expanding Catholic community established and self-funded a small number of Catholic schools. Catholic schools became fully state funded in 1918 as a result of negotiations and national initiatives to standardize school education and provide equality of educational opportunity (Treble, 1978, 1980; Paterson, 2003). The economic recession in the 1920's-1930's prompted condemnation of the Irish Catholic immigrants and the state funding of Catholic schools was contested.

Part three explores the alleged relation between Catholic schools and sectarianism in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries framed within the three phases of the natural history of a social problem: *awareness*; *policy determination* and *reform* (Fuller & Myers, 2003). Part three also scrutinizes the Scottish government position and response to sectarianism and to Catholic schools and sectarianism and a review of: the research evidence; the contemporary views or positions of the Catholic Church; the Church of Scotland; Humanists and secularists and some of

the views expressed in the media. The article will conclude by arguing that there is very little evidence to sustain any claims that contemporary Catholic schools are related to sectarianism.

What is sectarianism?

The words sectarian and sectarianism can be understood in a number of ways. They can refer to the distinction between different groups (sects) (not necessarily religious: they can exist in politics, art, literature and science) (O'Toole, 1975). Each group (sect) is exclusive, has a distinct shared ideology, and tends to construct barriers between themselves and other groups (Wallis, 1975). The second understanding is used in a pejorative sense and refers to a more extreme form of the exclusivity of the group – distinctions harden into divisions and divisiveness, which engenders hostility between sects. In Scotland, Sectarianism refers primarily, though not exclusively, to inter-denominational hostility between Christians: Roman Catholics and Protestants and is normally used in a pejorative sense.[3] 'Roman Catholic' and 'Protestant' must be understood in the broadest sociological sense to incorporate a wide variety of interpretations of Catholic and Protestant identity, ranging from those with authority and responsibility within the denomination to the religiously observant to those with some adherence to those with the most tenuous of links.

A number of definitions and descriptions of sectarianism have been constructed that can be applied to the contemporary Scottish context (Finn, 1999, 2003; Leichty & Clegg, 2001; Bruce et al., 2004; Scottish Government, 2012). Drawing from these sources, I have developed my own working definition as follows. Sectarianism consists of intolerant beliefs and attitudes that may be translated into actions. These can be expressed in inter-personal, communal and possibly institutional ways. Sectarianism involves some exclusivist and intransigent understanding of religious beliefs and attitudes, and is typically a shared or group identity that fosters a sense of belonging. This religious identity, however, can sometimes be more of a quasi or nominal religious identity, with very loose connections to one of the main religions.[4] Sectarian groups tend to claim that their identity is founded on authentic historical roots and shared memory, roots and memory that may, however, be selective, self-serving or semi-mythical. The group is configured such that other groups that hold contrasting beliefs and attitudes can be perceived to threaten the identity and history of the group and are stigmatized as the 'others'. In a sense it is a claim for belonging and communal identity that is partly defined

by affirming an authentic identity but also partly defined by opposition to the threat of the inauthentic – the others. Sectarianism, thus, justifies the marginalization, alienation and possible demonization of the 'others'. This can lead to hostility, verbal abuse, intimidation, and even violence.

The definition above expresses the view that sectarianism is a social problem that is closely related to religious (or quasi religious) beliefs, practices and identity and can lead to extreme attitudes and behaviour. The next section will explore the idea of sectarianism as a social problem that is closely related to religion.

Sectarianism as a Social Problem

On the Scottish Government website, there is statement about sectarianism and legislation on sectarianism, beginning with the following sentence:

> Sectarianism, and the anti-social, bigoted and violent behaviour it creates, has plagued the lives of too many people for too long.

The statement continues with a quote from the First Minister Alex Salmond:

> …the song tells us for Scotland to flourish then 'let us be rid of those bigots and fools who will not let Scotland, live and let live.' Our new Scotland is built on the old custom of hospitality. We offer a hand that is open to all, whether they hail from England, Ireland, Pakistan or Poland. Modern Scotland is also built on equality. We will not tolerate sectarianism as a parasite in our national game of football or anywhere else in this society. (Scottish Government, 2011)

The First minister has discussed sectarianism in other public statements that are equally strongly worded. He has described sectarianism as a 'blight' that needs to be driven out and 'excised' (Carrell, 2011), a 'problem' that is going to be eradicated (BBC News, 2011a), and a 'legacy' that the government is determined to 'wipe out' (Education Scotland, 2013a). He has stated that this is an issue with 'huge ramifications across society' and it is to be 'eliminated' from Scottish football and Scottish society (BCC news, 2011b). A spokesperson for the First Minister has stated that the Scottish parliament is determined to 'stamp out' this 'sort of behaviour once and for all' (STV news, 2011).

These public statements frame sectarianism as a serious social problem that needs to be addressed. Different terminology can be used to distinguish the seriousness of a social problem: *social evil* and *social problem*. The term *social evil* suggests

a long-term social problem that is severe and appears to be unresolvable, for example, poverty can be considered to be a social evil (Harris, 2009). The more commonly used term, *social problem*, is less extreme and can refer to social problems of varying degrees of severity, including serious social problems, while retaining a degree of optimism that some or all serious social problems can be resolved (Unwin, 2009). The wording in the statements quoted above refers to sectarianism as a severe social problem, but not a social evil, as there is optimism that it can be resolved. Let us explore the implications of the identification of sectarianism as a social problem, drawing from sociological theory and analysis, and then expand the discussion by exploring sectarianism as a social problem that is related to religion.

A social problem is described as a problem that is threatening, distressing, bad or undesirable such that some action is required to remedy the problem (Rubington & Weinberg, 2003; Alessio, 2011, p. 2). Social problems may be short-term or long-term. A social problem may, arguably, refer to one person or a few people but is more often characterized as a problem that affects a significant number of people (Alessio, 2011). It can be unclear, however, what constitutes a 'significant number' of people. Rubington and Weinberg (2003) point out that, in some situations, it may be that the situation affects a smaller number of significant people (e.g. in terms of political or economic influence) rather than a significant number of people. There are also claims that some social problems are universal – they can affect everybody, including the more socially advantaged (examples would include wide spread alcohol and drug abuse). These claims may mask the detrimental impact that the social problem has on particular groups of people who have limited financial resource or support networks to counter the effects of the social problem (Wagner, 2003).

Social problems are often complex and may have a number of causes and effects, and may require a number of remedies (Alessio, 2011). One of the challenges in studying social problems is that there can be over-emphasis on the effects of social problems rather than on the causes (though the two can be interchangeable). Fuller and Myers (2003, pp. 95-96) argue that social problems have a 'natural history' and propose that there are three phases of the natural history: *awareness*; *policy determination* and *reform*. These three phases are not mutually exclusive and can overlap. *Awareness* of the problem is raised when those affected or alarmed by the social problem draw attention to the problem. *Policy determination* refers to the discussion about action that should be taken. Fuller and Myers state that groups that are 'more official' tend to focus on the ends rather than the means. The final phase is *Reform* when legislation (where appropriate) may be formalized and public

action and reforms are enacted by interest groups such as charities and church groups.

If we return to the public statements that are quoted, or partially quoted, at the beginning of this section, we can see that sectarianism coheres with many of the features of social problems as outlined above. It is bad and undesirable – it is a 'problem', 'anti-social', a 'blight'. It is a 'parasite' on football. It is threatening – it creates 'bigoted and violent behavior'. It has affected a significant number of people, 'too many people'. It has prevailed over a long term, 'for too long' with 'huge ramifications across society'. It is antithetical to the aims of the Scottish Government and the vision of 'our new Scotland' ('hospitality'; 'equality'; welcome to all – 'a hand that is open to all'). Action is required – 'let us be rid of those bigots', it is not to be 'tolerated', it is to be 'wiped out', 'eradicated', stamped out'. Sectarianism, however, is a particular type of social problem that involves religion and it is instructive, at this point, to examine the relation between social problems and religion.

Social problems and religion

Hjelm (2011) states that religion has historically been associated with social problems, as part of the solution and/or as part of the cause or source of the social problem. We can identify several ways of viewing the relation between religion and social problems.

(1) Religion as a solution to social problems. Christian churches were instrumental in care for the marginalized, poor and sick in western society before the introduction of welfare states in western societies (Hjelm, 2011). This has continued in the modern world and most of the mainstream religions engage in local and international social welfare initiatives (Christian Aid, 2013; Jewish Relief Agency, 2013; Muslim Aid, 2013). Beckford (2011) argues that religion can also be used as a 'device' or a 'resource' by governments as part of the solution for social problems. The New Labour British governments, for example, have publicly validated religious and ethnic diversity and even appropriated religion and religious groups to help combat social problems (making sure they contribute to social cohesion). Beckford cites another example of politicians in America who have appropriated the language of religious leaders for political purposes. Religious leaders used the language of compassion to attack the labeling of Latin American immigrants as illegal aliens and as a social problem. This language of compassion was adopted by politicians who sought the support of the immigrant community.

(2) Religion as a social problem. Academics point to 9/11 as a contemporary

catalyst for the view that all forms of religion can be perceived as potential social problems and that religions can view other religions as social problems (Hjelm, 2011). This can lead to an association between religion, extremism and terrorism (Mowlam & Creggan, 2009). There are other ways in which religion can be perceived to be a social problem. Religion can be viewed as divisive in society because it appears to justify discrimination and sometimes persecution of specific groups: women, gays, people of other denominations or religion, or people who have no faith (Watts & Utting, 2009). Religion is considered to be anti-rational and based on fundamental principles and beliefs that cannot be supported by scientific evidence and religion can, therefore, be perceived to be an impediment to human and scientific progress (Dawkins, 2006). Religions have the opportunity to continue their influence through faith schools (many are partially or fully funded by the state) (British Humanist Association, 2013). Faith schools have been accused of being divisive, selective, exclusive, introverted and of inculcating and indoctrinating children with unverified principles and beliefs (Halstead & McLaughlin, 2005; Mason, 2005; Marples, 2006). These faith schools are perceived to contribute to religion as a social problem and are in themselves social problems.

Sectarianism in Scotland appears to cohere with a number of senses of religion as a social problem. Sectarianism, inter–denominational religious strife, is viewed by some to be based on anti-rational religious principles and beliefs. Sectarianism is divisive because sectarian attitudes can, and have, justified discrimination, persecution and even violence. There also appear to be issues about the possible divisiveness of state funded Catholic schools in Scotland as contributing to sectarianism. We now begin to have a fuller understanding of sectarianism as a social problem that is related to religion. Sectarianism needs to be understood, like all social problems, then, as complex and as having a number of causes and effects. Finn (1999) argues that the causes and effects require careful analysis. Extending this point, caution must be exercised: single causes (anti-Catholicism, anti-Protestantism, anti-Irishness and anti-immigrant) may be prominent at different periods of time but should not be understood to be the root cause otherwise the conceptualization of sectarianism may be reduced to one strand of a complex social problem. Significant emphasis placed on anti-Catholicism or anti-Protestantism reduces sectarianism to one-sided religious bigotry. Focussing on Anti-Irishness or anti-immigration similarly reduces sectarianism to single strands: a form of racism and zenophobia.[5]

Let us now look at the history of sectarianism and Catholic schools in Scotland.

History of sectarianism and Catholic schools in Scotland

The Post-Reformation Catholic community

The Reformation in Scotland in 1560 was part of the waves of Reformation that swept across Europe in the sixteenth century (Appold, 2011). This Reformation in Scotland, however, was to be quite distinctive from other parts of the UK (Fergusson, 1998). The main Protestant church to emerge was the Church of Scotland, a Presbyterian church that was heavily influenced by Calvinism (Holder, 2004; Wright, 2004). This radical form of Protestantism, calling for a return to a 'purer' form of Christianity, established an ordered church structure to ensure moral discipline and was vehemently opposed to any vestiges of Roman Catholic practice or conformity (Ryrie, 2006; Zachman, 2008). While the opposition to any manifestation of Roman Catholicism can be exaggerated and parts of the Highlands and Islands were never 'reformed', the Catholic population did diminish (estimated drop from 50,000 in 1680 to 30,000 in 1800) (Gallagher, 1987; Burnett, 1998).[6]

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, wealthy Scottish Catholics sent their children to Catholic schools in England. Other Catholics sent their children to a very small number of Catholic schools in places like Edinburgh, Glenlivet, and Aberdeen (Johnson, 1983). The origins of contemporary state-funded Catholic schools are often traced to Glasgow and the West of Scotland. The Catholic population of Glasgow grew because of migration of Scottish Catholics from the Highlands in the early 1790s and a steady flow of Irish Catholics seeking employment in the city (Gallagher, 1987; Devine, 2006). This migration necessitated the building of St Andrew's Chapel (opened 1816) for a congregation of three thousand Catholics. A few schools existed in Glasgow at this time, including a small number of schools established by the Church of Scotland and the City magistrates after 1817 (Skinnider, 1967). The Catholic community was concerned about proselytism in these schools and, supported by a prominent Protestant MP, set up the Catholic Schools Society in 1817. The Society founded a number of Catholic schools that were self-funding and by 1825 there were five schools in Glasgow and schools in Blantyre, Paisley, Greenock and Port Glasgow (Mitchell, 1998; Fitzpatrick, 2000). It should be noted that a significant number of Irish Protestants migrated to Scotland in the early to mid nineteenth century. The estimate of Irish Protestant migration ranges from 20% to 25% to 30% (Meredith, 2008). Meredith points out that there were both Presbyterians and Church of Ire-

land (Episcopalians, though they tended to be low Church) and both had strong links with the Orange Order.[7]

The growth and expansion of Catholic schooling was to be accelerated by the arrival in Scotland of large numbers of Roman Catholic Irish who were fleeing a series of famines and the associated nutritional diseases and famine fever (typhus and relapsing fever) that resulted in the death of one million people (Geary, 1995; Donnelly, 2001). This influx increased the Irish-born population of Scotland from 126,321 in 1841 to 207,367 in 1851 (an increase of 64%) (Fitzpatrick, 1995; McCaffrey, 2000). This placed pressure on medical and poor relief resources and already overcrowded building stock (O Tuathaigh, 1985). The Catholic Irish were considered to pose a threat to scant resources and were subjected to racial stereotyping as an inferior people, or race, and caricatured as weak in character, violent, intemperate and unreliable. There were smaller waves of Catholic migrants in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries from Italy, Lithuania and Poland and they all encountered hostility focused on their national-cultural origins and Catholic religious background (Miller, 1998; Ziarski-Kernberg, 2000; Pieri, 2005). However, the critical mass of Irish Catholics were perceived to be *the* threat (Devine, 2006).

The Education (Scotland) Act 1918

School education became compulsory for all children aged five to thirteen under the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act (Anderson, 2013). The government was anxious to ensure some equity in the quality of the education provided in the wide range of schools in Scotland (this varied enormously before the Act), and the Act was an attempt to standardize school education across the country (Anderson, 1997). The Act was only partly successful as the Catholic and Episcopal Churches refused to relinquish the voluntary status of their schools because they were not convinced they would be able to retain distinctive religious instruction and approval of teaching staff. In the succeeding decades, the Catholic schools founded and run by the religious orders and congregations were recognized as the best Catholic schools and received favorable reports from inspectors (O'Hagan, 2006; Kehoe, 2010). Many of the other Catholic schools, however, struggled to maintain the quality of the educational experience for the children and faced many barriers: constant fund-raising; poor building stock, inadequate resources; irregular attendance by the children; low salaries for teachers and a very high ratio of teacher to pupils (as high as one to sixty in 1911) (Kenneth, 1972; Treble, 1978).

The Education (Scotland) Act 1918 offered the Catholic schools the opportunity to sell or lease their schools to the education authority (who were bound to accept) and to be fully incorporated into the national system (Education (Scotland) Act 1918, 18.1; Strong, 1919). The Act also allowed the Catholic schools to retain their approval of teachers and distinctive religious instruction (18.3. ii, iii). The Catholic teachers would be paid according to the same salary scale as other teachers (18.3. i). The church could still establish schools, but where just cause for a new school could be established, the authority could be asked to build the new school (18.8). The 1918 Act had a number of key aims: the rationalization and simplification of educational administration; the incorporation of the voluntary schools (Catholic and Episcopalian); the creation of a framework for the expansion of secondary education and standardization of quality in school education (Fitzpatrick, 1986; Paterson, 2003). Under the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act, the Catholic Church transferred many of the schools to the local authorities, though questions about leasing or selling of Catholic schools and the responsibility for building new Catholic schools were only resolved by the complete financial integration of Catholic schools in 1928 (Treble, 1980). This was to prove highly beneficial for the Catholic Church in the long term, especially in the expansion of secondary education in the post World War II period (Anderson, 1995).

Sectarianism and Catholic schools in the 1920s and 1930s

The influx of the Irish Roman Catholics, the growth of the Catholic community and the rapid development of Catholic schools in the nineteenth century posed a threat to the concepts of a national Protestant identity and the national Presbyterian Church, both already weakened by division and schism in Presbyterianism in the mid nineteenth century, most notably by the creation of the Free Church in 1843 (Cheyne, 1999; Brown, 2000).[8] One response to this threat was the vigorous attempts by the Scottish Presbyterian Home Missions to proselytize the Irish Catholics, especially in the city slums – attempts that were strongly resented (Brown, 1991). Another more invidious response was to emerge later in the early 1920's at a time of economic crisis. In 1923, the Church of Scotland, influenced by a report on *Irish immigration and the Education Act of 1918*, mounted a national campaign, led by the Church and Nation Committee, to marginalize and reduce the Irish Roman Catholic population in Scotland (Report of the Committee on "Irish Immigration", 1923; Brown, 2000). The Irish Catholics were accused of discriminatory recruitment in employment (favouring their co-nationals) and of never hesitating to seek charitable relief (Report of the Committee on "Irish Immigra-

tion", 1923). Brown (1991) argues that this campaign was probably more racist than sectarian (the underlying 'scientific racism' conceived the Irish as a separate, lesser race). The report did not target Scottish Roman Catholics (who had the right to call Scotland their country), nor the Orange population (of the same race and faith of the Scottish people) (Report of Committee on "Irish Immigration", 1923). The ultimate aim was no longer conversion and assimilation of the Irish Roman Catholics into the Scottish race, but rather to defend and safeguard the 'homogeneity' of Scottish (predominantly Protestant) people through the repatriation of the majority of the Irish Catholic population (Report of Committee on "Irish Immigration", 1923; Brown, 1991).

One of the salient features of the 1923 Report was the discussion of school education for Catholic children. The Report claims that the (Catholic) Church would not allow the Catholic children 'to attend Protestant secondary schools'. The report identified Roman Catholic schools as 'denominational schools for the children of an alien race' that were a financial burden on the taxpayer and the country at a time of economic crisis. The separate schools were also considered to be part of the self-segregation of the Catholic community - a segregation that had the potential to develop into race antagonism (Report of the Committee on "Irish Immigration", 1923).

The Church and Nation Committee set up two sub-committees: (a) on Irish Immigration and (b) on the Education (Scotland) Act 1918. The two sub-committees were charged with pressing the concerns of the Church of Scotland about the Irish menace and the 'injustice' of the 1918 Act (Report of the Committee on "Irish Immigration", 1923). The Report of the sub-Committee on "Irish Immigration" (1924) sought a government commission to inquire into the 'Irish' question and take action to 'protect and preserve Scottish nationality and civilization'. The Report of the sub-committee on the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 (1924) called for the Act to be revised and altered to remove the privileges accorded to denominational schools: selling or leasing building stock to the local authority; approval of teachers and denominational religious instruction.

The Church of Scotland consistently failed to attract Government support for the campaign and was criticized by the Scottish newspapers in the late 1920s (Lynch, 1992; Devine, 2006). Undeterred, the Church of Scotland established the 'Church Interests Committee' in 1931, charged with advancing the anti-Catholic and anti-Irish cause. One of the aims of the 'Church Interests Committee' was to increase the calls for the repeal of the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 (Brown, 1991). This was strongly denounced at the time by Brogan, the Catholic commentator, who praised the 'justice' and egalitarian nature of the 1918 Act (Brogan, 1935). The continued absence of government support and anxieties about the

growth of National Socialism in Germany in the mid 1930s led to calls within the Church of Scotland for the end of the campaign, including the end of the attacks on the Education (Scotland) Act 1918. The aims of the campaign were discredited by perceived association with radical anti-Catholic bodies such as the Orange and Protestant Party and Alexander Ratcliffe's Scottish Protestant League and, crucially, with the militant and, at times, violent anti-Catholic protests orchestrated by bodies such as the Protestant Action Society (led by John Cormack) in 1935 (Bruce et al., 2004). In the wake of this public unrest, the Church of Scotland dissolved the 'Church Interests Committee' in 1937. There was an attempt to revive the basic tenets of the campaign in 1938, effectively ending with the beginning of the Second World War, and a final futile effort in 1952 (Brown, 1991, 2000).

This ill-judged campaign attempted to stereotype Irish Roman Catholics as alien immigrants draining Scottish resources and as scapegoats for the economic depression. To return to the working definition of sectarianism, this is sectarianism that is expressed in an institutional way. The Irish Catholics were perceived to 'threaten the identity and history of the group' (Church of Scotland and national Presbyterian identity) and were stigmatized as others. The campaign was also part of a move by conservative Churchmen to unite the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church and strengthen the national position of Scottish Presbyterianism (Brown, 1991; Bruce et al., 2004). Five pertinent issues emerge from the campaign. First, there appears to be a pattern of upsurges in sectarianism during economic recession (e.g. the 1920s/1930s and the 1980s) (Brown, 1997). Second, the government failed to support the anti-Irish campaign. Third, the government also failed to support the calls to revise and amend, or even repeal, the Education (Scotland) Act 1918. Fourth, the campaign is one of the most significant aspects of the history of both the Irish Catholics and of sectarianism in Scotland, but may represent a peak in anti-Catholicism and anti-Irishness (Brown, 1997).[9] Fifth, as McCready (2000) points out, while there may be a history of sectarian tension in Scotland, sectarian violence has been much less prevalent. When sectarian violence does occur it tends to be widely publicized (Currie, 2011).

Post-Second World War developments

Significant changes occurred in the post-Second World War era. The Church of Scotland retained some influence in moral, political and social debates, but the concept of a Protestant national identity had been considerably diminished (Lynch, 1998, 2002). Lynch (2002) argues further that the Scottish Reformation no longer captures popular imagination as an important marker, or national 'icon', of

Scottish identity. It has been replaced in the late twentieth century by other national 'icons' such as Wallace and Bruce. The Main Christian churches (Church of Scotland and Catholic) declined in the mid to late 20th century but developed strong relationships with each other through the ecumenical movement (Brown, 2000). The ecumenical movement in Scotland was originally focussed on reuniting Presbyterianism. Once this had been (mostly) achieved in 1929, the movement expanded in the 1930s to include the Episcopal Church and in the 1950s/1960s to initiate 'conversations' with the Catholic Church (Brown, 1997). The rise of ecumenism would eventually end any official public support for anti-Catholicism or sectarian views by the Church of Scotland.

The rapid expansion of Catholic secondary education in the post war period (previously mentioned) was prompted by a population boom, major relocation to new towns or newly developed areas and the move towards comprehensive education in the mid 1950s (Darragh, 1978; Fitzpatrick, 1986). Ironically, this highlighted the continued struggle for the Catholic Church to recruit qualified Catholic teachers, though this would be eased by the late 1970s (Cuttance, 1988). Fitzpatrick (1986) comments that this shortage exacerbated the increased criticism of the social divisiveness of the separate Catholic schools and accusations that religious education in the Catholic schools was a form of indoctrination. The expansion of secondary schooling and a dramatic increase in the number of Catholics entering Higher Education was also to affect the social construction of the Catholic community. Up to this point, there had been an underlying assumption that the Catholic Church had been galvanized by the interconnected effects of discrimination and the experience of poverty shared by most of its members (Brown, 1997). This assumption was now to be challenged by the number of Catholics entering the professions and the emergence of a Catholic middle class (Fitzpatrick, 1999). Fitzpatrick (2003) suggests that social division evolved in the Catholic community and a 'common culture' has been lost.

The Church of Scotland revived the discussion about denominational schools in the early 1970's (Douglas, 1985). The Education Committee of the General Assembly opposed the continued existence of segregated schools and proposed a national integrated system (Report of the Department of Education, 1972). Douglas, one of the instigators of the revived discussion, outlines five important arguments for the cessation of state funding for Catholic schools (1985).[10] The arguments presented by Douglas are interesting and merit engagement, but the discussion will be limited to the first and third arguments as they are directly focused on Catholic schools and sectarianism.[11]

The first argument is that the state should not sanction educational privileges to any religious denomination that essentially subsidizes sectarian beliefs and prac-

tices. This first argument appears to revisit the argument of the Church and Nation Committee in the 1920's. If Douglas is using the word sectarian in the pejorative sense, then, he is stating that there is an association between Catholic schools and sectarianism, and that the government is funding sectarian beliefs and practices in Catholic schools and, therefore, supporting sectarianism - effectively funding the continuation of a severe social problem.[12] This argument is problematic because Douglas provides no evidence of this association; the argument rests on an assumption that the association exists. If Douglas is using the word sectarian in the sense of a sect or division of Christianity, then, the word *sectarian* could be more accurately substituted by *denominational*. The substitution means the sentence reads as follows: the state should not sanction educational privileges to any religious denomination that essentially subsidizes *denominational* beliefs and practices. In other words, the government should not privilege any denominational group in state-funded school education. The removal of sectarianism from the argument presents a stronger case as it disassociates the argument from the putative association between Catholic schools and sectarianism and argues that the state should not subsidize religious beliefs and practices.

The third argument is that the segregation of children into different schools 'tends to perpetuate the less admirable features of sectarianism in our society'. In the third argument, Douglas seems to use the word sectarianism in the sense of a sect but, by using 'the less admirable features', is also referring to the pejorative sense of sectarianism). Again, Douglas fails to provide any evidence for this argument.

Contemporary Catholic schools in Scotland and sectarianism

Awareness

The issue of sectarianism was to be highlighted in the late twentieth century by the riots between Celtic and Rangers fans in the 1980s, the murder of Celtic fans Mark Scott in 1995, and Thomas McFadden in 1999 and the widely publicized Donald Findlay incident in 1999 (Gallagher, 2013).[13] It was further highlighted by the speech on 'Scotland's shame' delivered by the Scottish musician, James MacMillan at the Edinburgh International Festival in August 1999 (Brown, 1987; Devine, 2000). MacMillan argued that Scotland had changed for the better, but a deep-rooted anti-Catholicism remained in Scottish Society (MacMillan, 2000). He

also argued that there was a campaign against Catholic schools, with the Scottish media playing a leading role. The lecture received significant media and academic attention – MacMillan's views attracted misrepresentation, dismissal and even condemnation, but also critical engagement and strong support (Finn, 2000). The key issue for this study is that MacMillan initiated the first phase of the natural history of a social problem, *awareness*, though, in this case, more probably a re-awakening of awareness of sectarianism. Macmillan's speech suggested that sectarianism has affected both a significant number of people and people who are significant. He also pointed to a campaign against Catholic schools, alleged to be connected to the social problem of sectarianism, and discussed by the media as a social problem *per se*.

This campaign against Catholic schools was conducted within a shifting educational and socio-cultural context. First, the late twentieth century brought a consolidation of the position of Catholic schools: Catholic religious education was incorporated into a major national curricular development, *5-14*, in 1994 (and later in *Curriculum for Excellence* in 2004) (Education Scotland, 2013b; SOED/CECS, 1994). Second, during this period, the Catholic Church in Scotland became increasingly concerned by the threat posed to Catholic Christianity and Catholic schools by secular society (Conference Report, 1993). Bodies campaigning for the separation of religion and state target partially or fully state funded faith schools as an unacceptable accommodation between the state and organized religion. The National Secular Society is opposed to all forms of publicly funded faith schooling on the grounds that the state is contributing to the faith development of young people and faith schools segregate pupils on religious grounds (National Secular Society 2013). The British Humanist Association is similarly opposed to faith schools that they consider to privilege religious groups and discriminate against others (British Humanist Association, 2013). Third, the Church of Scotland Department of Education revised and updated the 1972 statement on Catholic schools in their report to the General assembly of 1999 (Report of the Department of Education, 1999). This reaffirmed the opposition to segregation of schools on religious grounds and their preference for 'progressive integration' in school education. The Department of Education claimed support from 21 presbyteries, some Kirk Sessions and six members of the Education Committee. Perhaps more tellingly, the EIS was the only public body consulted that supported this position - and supported integration only with the consent of the Roman Catholic community.[14] The report included this statement:

> Separate schooling, while not necessarily causing sectarian attitudes, and indeed there is no real evidence to show that denominational schools, in themselves, lead

> to prejudicial attitudes, may nevertheless help reinforce the prejudice and stereotypes which are passed on by society. (Report of the Department of Education, 1999, 2.4.2.)

The Church and Nation Committee were instructed in 2001 to carry out a study into the adverse effects of sectarianism within Scottish Society. The 2002 report included a contrite admission of culpability and regret for the 1920's campaign against the Irish immigrants (Report of the Committee on Church and Nation, 2002; Kelly, 2003). This would also have the effect of marginalizing the public support and expressions of sectarianism to more secular sources. The original campaign, however, had two aims and two sub-committees – the second was the repeal of the 1918 Education Act. The focus of the 2002 report is almost exclusively focused on sectarianism with school education featured in only one paragraph (6.2). This paragraph is ambivalent and replicates the statement quoted above from 1999, acknowledging that this statement itself has been perceived as sectarian, but stating that they will 'reflect upon its significance'.

Policy Determination

Increased hostility between some elements of the support for Celtic and Rangers prompted the Scottish First Minister, Jack McConnell to move to the next stage of the natural history of a social problem: *policy determination*. Mr. McConnell convened a Summit on Sectarianism on February 14, 2005 (BBC news, 2005). The summit was attended by representatives from football clubs and supporter organizations, anti-sectarianism charities, local authorities, the Church of Scotland, the Catholic church, the Orange Order, the media, educational and youth organizations and the police (Scottish Executive, 2005). The *Record of the Summit* (Scottish Executive, 2005) reports on the four themes that were identified as key in 'tackling bigoted sectarian attitudes and behaviours'. These themes were: interfaith work; education; sport and marches and parades. The section on interfaith work praises 'the good working relationships' between the denominations and acknowledges the 'important role' they play in the lives of individuals and the wider community. Examples of cooperation were to be highlighted and the churches were encouraged to continue working together including the production of a joint statement on religious freedom. There is no explicit or implicit suggestion that religion is perceived as a social problem in this document. Rather, the Churches and ecumenical cooperation, cohering with the first way of viewing the relation between religion and social problems, are resources that are being used as part of the solution

of the social problem. This is reinforced in the *Action Plan on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2006a), which explicitly states that ... 'churches are important vehicles for tackling sectarianism in communities'.

Denominational schools are explicitly mentioned once in the *Record of the Summit* (2005). The document states that 'the role of denominational and non-denominational schools was discussed' and this is succeeded by, 'schools did not teach sectarianism or intolerance; rather the reverse'. There are also two implicit references to denominational schools: one focused on bringing together pupils from 'different schools' to tackle 'misconceptions and prejudices' (joint campuses and initiatives were perceived to be helpful) and one suggesting that twinning schools would be beneficial. The *Action Plan* (2006) outlines different approaches and resources for anti-sectarian education and reiterates the benefits of twinning between denominational and non-denominational schools. This is further developed in *Building Friendships and Strengthening Communities* (Scottish Executive, 2006b). The purpose of twinning is to remove 'real or perceived barriers' and help children understand each other. The document is essentially a guide to good practice in twinning arrangements and provides examples of successful twinning projects. There are no explicit or implicit references to Catholic schools as part of a social problem or as social problems *per se* in any of these documents. This is highly significant because MacMillan identified the media association between Catholic schools and sectarianism at the *awareness* stage, but the Scottish Executive, responsible for leading the *policy determination* stage, has clearly disassociated the two in public statements and documentation.

Reform and twenty-first century views and positions on Catholic schools and sectarianism

There was a public outburst in 2006 by Sam Galbraith, a former Scottish government minister, attacking Catholic schools for being the root cause of sectarianism (Gray, 2006). This did not, however, alter the position of the Scottish Executive. A change in Executive (2007) not only continued the disassociation but also introduced a new direction. The First minister, Alex Salmond, delivering the Cardinal Winning Lecture in the University of Glasgow on the 2nd of February, 2008, 'celebrated' the quality of Catholic schools and their contribution to Scottish education and society (Salmond, 2008). This public statement of support and validation for Catholic schools attracted extensive media coverage (BBC news, 2008; Buie, 2008). Mr. Salmond made no explicit or implicit reference to sectarianism in

this speech, yet some press coverage, after initial reporting of the content of the speech, introduced the topic of sectarianism (Forrest, 2008).[15] Salmond also pursued the next stage of *reform* by introducing anti-sectarianism legislation in 2012 (Scottish Government, 2012).

The view of the Catholic Church, perhaps understandably, is that Catholic schools do not teach or foster sectarianism. In 2002, the BBC reported comments by Scottish Bishop Joseph Devine that Catholic schools are divisive and enable sectarianism and it was a price worth paying (BBC News, 2002). These need to be read within the context of his later vehement denials of any connection between Catholic schools and sectarianism (Bergin, 2011). Representatives of the Catholic Church have in recent years pointed to historical anti-Catholic bias and some have interpreted sectarian crime statistics in recent times to reconfigure the nature and focus of the contemporary debate on sectarianism to anti-Catholicism (Gourtsoyannis, 2012; Devine, 2013). This reduces sectarianism to a one-sided form of religious bigotry and discrimination. As we have seen, there is demonstrable evidence of historical anti-Catholic bias, but it is questionable that this reconfiguration of the contemporary debate is supported by evidence.

The Scottish government commissioned two Reviews of the evidence on contemporary Sectarianism in Scotland. The purpose of the first review, *Religious Discrimination and Sectarianism in Scotland: A brief Review of the Evidence (2002-2004)* was to explore the key findings of academic and research studies relating to religion, religious discrimination and sectarianism (McAspurren, 2005). The purpose of the second review, *An Examination of the Evidence on Sectarianism in Scotland*, was to establish if the perceptions of contemporary sectarianism in Scotland could be confirmed by empirical evidence (Scottish Government Social Research, 2013). The only mention of Catholic schools in the main text of the first review is in the section on education on page 15.[16] The larger part of this section discusses anti-sectarian education, but there is a short paragraph that mentions two papers, Finn (2003) and Torrance (2004), that discuss the 'positive and negative implications for society and political debates surrounding Catholic schools'. They also discuss the possibility of other denominational schools being established.

The more detailed 2103 *Review* draws heavily from a study commissioned by Glasgow City Council (GCC) in 2003 (NFO Social Research, 2003). The main findings of the GCC report were that three quarters of the respondents stated that Catholics and Protestants were affected equally by sectarianism. Many (two thirds) of the respondents believed that sectarian violence was 'very' or 'quite common' in Glasgow, though very few had experienced sectarian violence (0.7%) or even the threat of sectarian violence (0.8%). Drawing from the most recent research, figures for Scotland indicate that 56.5% of incidents of reported religiously related crime

were directed at Catholics and 29.0% at Protestants (Scottish Government, 2013). It is not clear, however, that the crimes were in fact all religiously motivated.[17] Sectarianism is most likely to appear as discrimination in the workplace, though this appears to have reduced. The review also draws on research by Holligan and Raab (2010) on the high levels of inter-denominational marriage between Catholics (especially females) and Protestants. A high number of Catholics in a 'mixed' marriage continue to practice and so a greater number of people in the west of Scotland will be engaging with practicing Catholics in their extended families. Raab and Holligan (2012, p. 17) argue that 'this would be expected to reduce sectarian discrimination and conflict'. The 2013 report calls for more research on the nature and extent of sectarianism. This is most apposite as the NFO Social Research (2003) study of Glasgow and Holligan and Raab (2010) based on information from the 2001 census require to be updated.

There are five references to Catholic schools in the 2013 *Review*. On page nine, commenting on the GCC study, most respondents pointed to the Rangers/Celtic rivalry as the main factor that sustains the sectarian divide. Other factors that were viewed as lesser were Orange and Catholic marches and separate Catholic schools. The focus groups in the GCC study stated that Catholic schools were 'not generally considered sectarian in themselves', but it was felt that they 'represented tangible evidence' of the commonly perceived religious division (2003). The survey they used proved inconclusive as participants were evenly divided on whether Catholic schools caused 'intolerance to other traditions'. There was more agreement that education (as opposed to schooling) was one of the keys to tackling sectarianism. It is noted in footnote 31 on page 17 that Catholic schools as a specific workplace was a topic of importance in the report by Finn et al. (2008). There is a reference to Walls and Williams (2003, p. 644) on page 17: one Catholic claimed to have a job offer withdrawn in 1979 because it was discovered that he was a Catholic. Finn et al. (2008) (page 18 of the review) provide a counter example. A young Catholic student benefitted from favouritism in the workplace because her boss had attended the same Catholic school. The final mention is on speculation by Paterson (2000b) that the rise in social status for young Catholic men and women was a result of state funding for Catholic schools in 1918 and the introduction of comprehensive education after 1965. He does not dismiss the possibility that employment discrimination against Catholics had also eased.

These two *Reviews* (2005, 2013) were not examples of new conceptual or empirical research commissioned by the government – they were reviews of the extant research. Neither of the two reviews claimed to be completely systematic and there are some notable omissions, though none of these includes any evidence to associate contemporary Catholic schools with sectarianism (Foster et al., 2008,

2011). Further, the 2013 *Review* relies heavily on older research, though arguably there is no comparable research that is more contemporary. These caveats notwithstanding, the two reviews demonstrate very little research evidence that Catholic schools and sectarianism are connected. This may, of course, mean that this area has been insufficiently researched.

The statements made by Sheriff Davidson and by Professor Grayling that are quoted at the beginning of this article can now be revisited: Sherriff Davidson's statement, 'the way to tackle sectarianism was to do away with Catholic schools', and Professor Grayling's statement, 'the argument against faith-based schools can be summed up in two words – Northern Ireland, or perhaps one word - Glasgow'. Sheriff Davidson has a reputation for making controversial decisions and making statements that have been interpreted as racist, sexist and now sectarian (Cramb, 2004; Ross, 2009; McGlone, 2013). Professor Grayling is one of the vice presidents of the British Humanist Association and opposed to faith schools (Grayling, 2013). The statements by Sheriff Davidson and Professor Grayling are not supported by publicly disseminated government statements (or publications) on sectarianism, nor are they supported by any substantial research. Their comments have appealed to a lingering public perception that has strong roots in the historical opposition to the 1918 Education Act, the historical campaign and position of the Church of Scotland, the pressure from the Secular Society and Humanist Association and the frequent associations between Catholic schools and sectarianism by the press and media. The Church of Scotland has acknowledged regret for the campaign against the Irish menace, but not for the second part of the campaign and the work of the sub-committee on the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 that was later revived by the Education Committee in the 1970's. The paragraph from the 1999 report that was replicated in the 2002 report was further replicated in appendix 1 of the 2012 report on sectarianism from the Church and Society Council (the whole 2002 of the report was reproduced) (Church and Society Council, 2012). The Church of Scotland may have continuing objections to Catholic schools that can be justified philosophically, educationally and in sociological terms, but it seems misplaced to continue to replicate an assertion that, by their own admission, is not based on real evidence. Their assertion can itself be interpreted as 'reaffirming the prejudice and stereotypes which are passed on by society'.

Concluding Remarks

A number of key and original findings have emerged in this article. This article

has argued that sectarianism can be identified as a serious contemporary social problem and tracked through the three phases of its natural history in the contemporary era. This is a serious social problem that is complex and is related to religion but, as a social problem rather than a social evil, there is optimism that this can be resolved, though maybe in the long term rather than in the short term. This article has demonstrated that the Church of Scotland has rescinded the first aim of the 1920's/1930's 'racially' motived campaign, but has not rescinded the second aim and, crucially, aspects of this aim remain expressed in unsubstantiated statements that can distort perceptions of Catholic schools. The article has also demonstrated that there is a limited amount of social science research evidence on the topic of contemporary sectarianism and there is very little research evidence to substantiate a contemporary relation between Catholic schools and sectarianism. This challenges any proposed relation, or association between Catholic schools and sectarianism that is claimed to exist by public figures, academics, the press and media, secular campaigners and by the Church of Scotland.

Notes

[1] There is no scope in this paper to draw out a comparison between Catholic schools and sectarianism in Scotland and the seemingly parallel situation in Northern Ireland (Gallagher, 1998, Richardson, 2008). It may be useful to note that there are close comparisons in rationale, mission and function of the Catholic schools, but marked differences in governance, historical funding and position in the state education system (CCMS, 2013; Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education, 2013; SCES, 2013). There are marked differences in the history and impact of sectarianism between Scotland and Northern Ireland, especially in the extent of civil unrest that beset Northern Ireland during the 'Troubles' (Gallagher, 2013).

[2] There are 53 secondary schools, 313 primary schools and 3 ASN (Additional Support Needs) schools. The total pupil enrolment is around 120,000. The latest figures indicate that there are 671, 218 school pupils overall in Scotland. There are 2,080 primary schools, 368 secondary schools and 149 local authority special schools Scottish Government, 2013).

[3] The report on Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland 2012-2013 provides evidence of an increase in the percentage of charges that referred to Islam (up to 11.6%) and Judaism (up to 3.9%) (Scottish Government, 2013).

[4] Normally viewed as the following six world faiths: Buddhism; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam; Judaism and Sikhism (Cole, 1998).
[5] There is some debate about whether anti-Irishness can be correctly identified as racism, as Scots and Irish are not races (Finn, 2000). Finn argues persuasively that the Irish menace campaign racialized the debate and the Irish Catholics.
[6] Burnett (2000, P. 165) identifies islands such as Benbecula, South Uist, Barra, Rhum, Eigg and Canna and areas on the mainland: Kintail to Glensheil to Glen Cannich, Strathglass and Glenmoriston; Knoydart and Glengarry to Fort Augustus, the Great Glen and Stratherrick; Moidart, Morar, Glenfinnan to Lochaber and Glencoe, through Brae Lochaber to Badenach and the Spey; Upper Deeside and Braemar to Glengairn and Strathavon; Tomintoul and Glenlivet to the Cabrach and Strathbogie.
[7] The Orange Order is a Protestant fraternity founded in Ireland in 1795. The Orange Order and the Orange walks in Scotland have been historically associated with anti-Catholic sentiments and hostility (including violence). The Order in Scotland has taken a more moderate stand in the 21st century.
[8] Holder (2004) states that Calvinism has an inherent tendency to internal schism because of the driving impulse for doctrinal purity.
[9] Understandably, It is one of the eras of history that is often revisited by academics: with some form of affiliation to Catholicism (Damer, 1990; Finn, 1999, 2003; Conroy, 2008) and those with no affiliation (Bruce, 2000; Bruce et al., 2004).
[10] Andrew M. Douglas, a Church of Scotland Minister, served on a County Education Committee from 1943 to 1975 (chairman for four of those years). He was also, prior to retirement, Convener for the General Assembly's Committee on Education. He states that as a member of this committee, he was keen to revive the issue of denominational schools and proposed that the Kirk (Church of Scotland) oppose denominational schools and lobby for a 'national integrated system' (Douglas, 1985, p. 11; pp. 94-95).
[11] The five arguments are as follows (the enumeration and summaries are mine). First, the state should not sanction educational privileges to any religious denomination that essentially subsidizes sectarian beliefs and practices. Second, Catholic schools were useful and justified 'as a temporary measure' to raise the 'standard of educational facilities for the Catholic community'. This aim was worthy but has now been achieved. Third, the segregation of children into different schools 'tends to perpetuate the less admirable features of sectarianism in our society'. Fourth, he states that Catholics regard the 1918 Act as a 'sacred promise' and desegregation

would be viewed as a betrayal. Fifth, Catholics view Catholic schools as a parental right.

[12] Similarly, Brown's (1987) use of the word sectarianism vacillates between sectarianism referring to a sect and sectarianism in the pejorative sense. He states that 'religiously segregated state schools' contribute to the survival of bigotry (which is close to the third argument of Douglas) and 'institutional sectarianism in education' is one of the factors that stalls the demise of sectarianism (p. 245).

[13] Donald Findlay, a highly successful court lawyer and vice–chairman of Rangers football club was filmed singing sectarian songs at a Rangers function. This prompted widespread condemnation and he resigned as vice-chairman and was disciplined by the Faculty of Advocates (BBC Scotland, 1999).

[14] The other bodies were: SSTA; COSLA; NASUWT; Scottish Consumer Council; Secondary Head Teachers Association; Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations in Scotland; Glasgow Jewish Representative Council.

[15] In one report, a Catholic commentator responding to an unreported question argues that 'sectarian divisions no longer hold' (Forrest, 2008).

[16] There is also a reference to Catholic schools in Annex A.4.: Bruce (1999) claims that the 'divisiveness and influence of segregated schools is declining'.

[17] 52% of the crimes were directed towards a member of the Police force or a person in an official capacity. The most common location for offences was a police station/car. Only 4% of the crimes involved violence. Only 2% of all racial incidents were directed at 'white Irish'.

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