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**One Nation, Many Faiths: Representations of Religious  
Pluralism and National Identity in the Scottish Interfaith  
Literature**



**Liam T. Sutherland MA MSc**

**Degree Sought: Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD)  
The University of Edinburgh, 2018**

## Declaration

**I declare that this thesis is solely my own work. It has been composed exclusively in fulfilment of the requirements of a doctorate of philosophy and not in fulfilment of any other degree or qualification.**

**Liam T. Sutherland  
Edinburgh, Scotland  
28/5/2018**



## Thesis Abstract: One Nation, Many Faiths: Representations of Religious Pluralism and National Identity in the Scottish Interfaith Literature

This thesis presents a specific case study of the developing relationship between religious pluralism and national identity in Scotland by focusing on a particular high-profile group - **Interfaith Scotland (IFS)** - the country's national interfaith body, which has received little scholarly attention. This thesis argues that IFS represents religious pluralism as interrelated with contemporary Scottish national identity through its organisation and its literature: representing Scotland as **one nation of many faiths**.

This discourse of unity in diversity presents a structured and limited religious pluralism based on the **world religions paradigm (WRP)**, and is compatible with a civic-cultural form of nationalism. The WRP involves a model of religion which focuses on broad global traditions such as Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, over specific local communities and distinct denominations. These global traditions are defined by coherent, intellectual and ethical dimensions represented as closely equivalent. This paradigm is evident from the governing structures within IFS itself which represents individual religious bodies according to the world tradition into which they can be classified and affords a secondary, non-governing status to those who are not recognised as part of one of these traditions. Their world religions approach is also evident from representations of 'religions' in their literature, which emphasise broader intellectual and ethical traditions even in relation to communities outside the major traditions they recognise and the 'Non-religious' Humanist movement. This demonstrates their reliance on these categories in depicting Scotland and its population.

The chapters of this thesis will explore how IFS depicts the Scottish nation and its population through the category of 'religion': the Christian majority, religious minority groups and the Non-religious. It also examines how IFS draws on civic and cultural resources to construct a common Scottish national identity compatible with their

**structured and limited pluralism.** This **civic-cultural nationalism** is often banal or implicit, reinforcing the conception of interfaith relations taking place within a Scottish national framework through innocuous references to Scotland as a bounded society and the use of common cultural symbols of Scottishness to represent the 'unity' encasing that religious diversity. This can be classified as a form of nationalism because it represents the overarching secular national political framework of Scotland as supremely authoritative, as the legitimate basis for the political representation of the population rather than any specific religious identities. IFS' nationalism was especially evident during the lead up to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence during which they consistently affirmed the right of the Scottish population to national self-determination without endorsing either position. The key themes of IFS' expressions of nationalism and the world religions paradigm are related. The conception of religions as of global importance as intellectual and ethical traditions rather than specific political movements at the local level means that religious identifications do not conflict with the territorially limited authority of the nation. Through these discourses 'religious' and 'national' identities are represented as compatible and non-competitive.

This thesis relates to the wider comparative study of the changing relationship between religion, secularism and nationalism in the contemporary world. It makes a contribution to the critical social scientific study of interfaith groups and the role they play in governance, processes of national integration, the reinforcement of national identity in civil society, and the construction of religious identities. It provides evidence that the relationship between nationalism and religion is not always either wholly separated or related to religious exclusivism as with certain forms of religious-nationalism, but that religious pluralism can also be related to forms of nationalism despite assumptions of their incompatibility.



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## **Abbreviations and Key Words**

**IFS** – Interfaith Scotland (as the organisation has been known since 2012)  
**SIFC** – the Scottish Inter Faith Council (which was the name at foundation 1999-2012)  
**the IFM** – the wider interfaith movement, often used in this thesis to refer to local groups and activists rather than specifically IFS but also the interfaith movement elsewhere in the world and internationally.  
**ACTS** – Action of Churches Together, the major ecumenical group in Scotland  
**AIFG** – Aberdeen Interfaith Group  
**BKS** – Brahma Kumaris – Scotland  
**BKWSPU** – Brahma Kumari World Spiritual University, the international Brahma Kumari organisation.  
**CAIR** – Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations  
**CTBI** – Churches Together Britain and Ireland  
**CF** – Congregational Federation  
**COPFS** – Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (the Prosecution Service in Scots Law)  
**CS or ‘the Kirk’** – Church of Scotland, the established national church  
**EIFA** – Edinburgh Inter Faith Association  
**ESS** – Edinburgh Secular Society  
**FCS** – Free Church of Scotland  
**FIG** – Fife Interfaith Group  
**FFWPU** – Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, known colloquially as ‘the Moonies’  
**GHM** – Glasgow Hindu Mandir  
**GSF** – Glasgow Sharing of Faiths  
**HTS** – Hindu Temple of Scotland  
**HSS** – Humanist Society Scotland  
**IC** – the Iona Community  
**IFNUK** – Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom  
**IFYC** – Interfaith Youth Core  
**IG** – Interfaith Glasgow  
**ISKCON** – International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
**LDS** – the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, colloquially known as the Mormon Church.  
**MCS** – The Methodist Church in Scotland, though the Muslim Council of Scotland has been similarly abbreviated, MCS refers to the Methodist Church in Scotland here.  
**MSP** – Member of Scottish Parliament  
**NHMD** – National Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January  
**NHS** – National Health Service  
**NRM** – New Religious Movement

**PFS** – Pagan Federation – Scotland  
**RLF** – Religious Leaders Forum  
**RSF** – Religious Society of Friends, colloquially known as ‘Quakers’  
**SAS** – Salvation Army – Scotland  
**SCoJeC** – Scottish Council of Jewish Communities  
**SEC** – Scottish Episcopal Church  
**SFT** – Skye Faiths Together  
**SIFW** – Scottish Interfaith Week held in the last week of November to coincide with St Andrew’s Day  
**SNP** – the Scottish National Party, currently forming the Scottish Government and the leading pro-independence party.  
**SRC** – Scottish Refugee Council  
**SRCC** – Scottish Roman Catholic Church  
**SUA** – Scottish Unitarian Association  
**UFC** – United Free Church  
**URCSS** – United Reformed Church – Synod of Scotland  
**WCC** – World Council of Churches  
**WRP** – the World Religions Paradigm  
**YCM** – (SIFC/IFS) Youth Committee Member  
**The Guide** – *A Guide to the Faith Communities of Scotland*  
**Values** – *Values in Harmony*  
**Reflections** – *Reflections on Life Matters*





## Chapter 1: Introduction - One Nation, Many Faiths: Representations of Religious Pluralism and National Identity in the Scottish Interfaith Literature

This thesis is concerned with the relationship between religious pluralism and national identity within the literature produced by **Interfaith Scotland (IFS)** - the country's national interfaith body. IFS is a useful case study because it is the only nationwide interfaith organisation in Scotland: having emerged during the establishment of the devolved Scottish Government and Parliament in 1999. It incorporates most local interfaith groups and major religious bodies throughout Scotland. It represents and relates to the broader interfaith movement (IFM) in Scotland and internationally. Its literature also depicts the governance and civic life of communities throughout the country and Scotland as an overarching national community.

This thesis shows that themes of 'religion' and 'national' identity are actively represented as interrelated but also distinctive: as **'one nation of many faiths'**. Religious and national identities are distinguishable but compatible because they are constructed as non-competitive with one another. Both forms of identification are represented largely positively if they fit the interfaith system of values. That is that strong religious and national identification must encourage peaceful relations and openness to dialogue. With religious communities, this involves contrasting violent with peaceful forms of religion and encouraging contributions to wider society e.g. charitable endeavours. With regard to Scottish national identity, it involves encouraging Scottish national identity to be expressed as inherently religious and culturally diverse, or as inclusive rather than exclusive.

The interfaith movement (IFM) itself has not been subject to much critical social scientific research as a specific subject<sup>1</sup>, especially in relation to national identity. This

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<sup>1</sup> For a relatively rare reflection on the study of interfaith from a religious studies perspective, see Morgan, P. "The Study of Religion and Interfaith Encounters" in *Numen* (1995) 42: pp156-171, though her concerns were more with the interactions between religious groups at international events than the IFM as a distinctive object of study.

means that most of the writing on interfaith is from the perspective of the IFM or interfaith activists, or from various theological perspectives. This thesis is written from a different perspective and reflects different aims and outlooks. It examines IFS from a perspective of a critical social constructionist form of Religious Studies but one indebted to many social scientific fields. It is *not* written from an interfaith perspective and does not seek to promote, improve or oppose interfaith relations. Providing a scholarly perspective does bring with it the danger of unacknowledged bias or the temptation to assume that the social scientific perspective is the 'complete' or 'correct' one. This is certainly not my aim. The advantages of the social scientific approach though, is that it provides a fresh perspective on the IFM and its relationship to national identity by considering the literature produced by IFS as a case.

This social scientific approach carries the basic assumption that such relations are not simply given, but highly contingent to their historical context and shaped by the different actors involved. These specific relations are actively formed in a social environment according to ingrained social classifications and assumptions. For example, it is largely taken for granted that 'religion' itself is a socially significant means of classifying a population and furthermore the common assumption in Scotland that 'religion' is a matter of personal faith. 'Interfaith' relationships are determined by agents with specific worldviews which, like all worldviews, are inherently limited but also structure their ways of relating to one another. For example, if it is assumed that broader religious classifications are more significant than 'denominational' or 'congregational' ones then actors will represent different 'religions' according to these broader religious categories. These relationships are also shaped by the relative power of actors or groups such as the power imbalance between more established and less established religions. The relationships between religious groups and between them and 'national' governments and broader populations will vary immensely because of both the established social environment and the specific choices of agents.

As this thesis attempts to provide a social analysis of this literature, its perspective is quite different from that of the texts themselves. The specific outlook, aims and position of the texts under consideration must be borne in mind. The Scottish interfaith literature strives to promote the value of interfaith relations to the government, public and religious communities. This has included redressing perceived negative stereotypes of religion in Scottish society, particularly as an inherently violent phenomenon. In answer to this, religion is depicted as by and large innately peaceful and the contribution of religious groups to Scotland as a society are stressed. Though, IFS also attempt to persuade different religious groups that they fundamentally have much in common, including common interests through living in Scotland under its devolved political system. This has entailed reinforcing the conception of religious groups according to a common identity as ‘people of faith’ but also specifically as Scots, that they should engage in ‘interfaith’ activism at the Scottish ‘national’ level.

The achievement of peaceful coexistence of many religious groups in Scotland in general should not distract from the particularity of interfaith as an activity, nor IFS’ specific constructions of ‘religion’ in relation to the ‘nation’. That religions should routinely engage in organised dialogue rather than competition and that this should be prominent within public life in contemporary Scotland do not automatically follow on from diversity or tolerance. This is a particular construction of religious pluralism and national identity.

One may certainly be sympathetic to the work and goals of the IFM but it is important to realise that the movement and the actors involved are caught in, exemplify and contribute to wider social dynamics. A different view emerges when the focus is on the IFM as social organisations and as actors rather than the moral quality of their ideals and practices. Given the paucity and freshness of social scientific work in comparison with that of theology in this subject<sup>2</sup>; research which aims to provide data and analysis

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<sup>2</sup> See for example, Cohn-Sherbock, D. *Interfaith Theology: A Reader* (2001) Oxford: Oneworld

about the IFM as a social phenomenon should be allowed to remain focused on that goal. This thesis hopes to contribute to a critical social scientific research on interfaith through a focus on a specific case study – Interfaith Scotland (IFS).

Social categories such as ‘interfaith’, ‘Scottish’, ‘Sikh’ or even ‘religious’ and relations between the groups assigned to them have not been shaped on a level-playing field. Some groups and actors have played a greater role in forming and reforming these social categories, which means that some groups and agents have had to adapt to them with more difficulty than others even when not excluded. These categories could also not be completely inclusive because they inherently define identifiable and bounded groups of people. The religious and national frameworks which IFS represent are examples of this, they are not purely inclusive and some groups have been subject to various forms of exclusion or marginalisation.

This leads on to the core argument of this thesis which presents IFS, and potentially the IFM and contemporary religious pluralism, in a counter-intuitive light. That IFS’ representations of religious pluralism and national identity reflect a **structured and limited pluralism** which fits a model of religion called the **world religions paradigm** (WRP) and can also be classified as a **‘civic-cultural’ form of nationalism**. These themes will be discussed in more detail in light of the evidence and the scholarly debates around ‘religion’, ‘nations’ and ‘nationalism’ and ‘secularity’ in subsequent chapters. This introduction will restate and break down the core terms for this argument, as well as provide a more thorough general introduction to the organisation and its literature, the historical background and the importance of this research to academic knowledge, followed by an outline of the subsequent chapters.

### **Argument**

The argument of this thesis is that Interfaith Scotland’s (IFS) representations of the relationship between religious pluralism and national identity, through its organisational structure and its literature, can be classified as **structured and limited** according to the

**World Religions Paradigm (WRP)** and as a **civic-cultural and secular nationalism**. The world religions model recognises and promotes certain forms of religion over others, and has reshaped actors and groups according to its mould. Furthermore, IFS' representations of the 'nation' into which this religious pluralism fits can be classified as a form of secular nationalism because it reinforces the nation as the authoritative political identification over the specific religious identifications which it incorporates, even though no overt political positions are endorsed by IFS.

IFS' representations of the relationship between religious pluralism and national identity are not apolitical and are shaped by the power relationships between groups within contemporary Scotland. The evidence necessary to demonstrate this argument will be addressed in the core empirical chapters of the thesis. The analytical tools, concepts, categories and broader academic debates which are implicated in these processes must be elucidated to demonstrate this argument and will be thoroughly explored in the subsequent theory and method chapter. This introduction will however briefly unpack the core components of this argument before providing a more general overview of the case of IFS, its sources and the Scottish historical context.

The pluralism promoted by IFS is described as '**structured**' and '**limited**' because it is actively shaped into a specific form that emphasises particular categories, groups and characteristic. This structures pluralism and limits or bounds representations of it. That this pluralism is represented at the Scottish 'national' level through the category of 'religion' already inherently structures and limits it, because 'religion' is emphasised over other forms of cultural diversity and it is territorially limited by Scotland. As these categories are thoroughly indigenous and ingrained in social life in Scotland, they are a mark of operating in this environment. Accepting the foundational categories of 'religion' and 'nation' though, this pluralism is nonetheless structured in several distinct ways.

As noted above, interfaith relations do not simply stipulate the existence of religious diversity, peaceful coexistence between religious groups, religious tolerance or

even the formal equality of their members. Interfaith relations structure this religious pluralism by providing organisations and fora in which representatives of religious groups are encouraged to interact, collaborate and engage in dialogue. Further, while this pluralism matches other forms of pluralism in liberal-pluralist societies, it also differs from many of them in significant ways. The political and economic spheres are defined both by legally and ideologically reinforced pluralism and by competition among the actors and institutions involved, e.g. political parties, interest groups and firms within the market system.

While some religious actors certainly view their relationship with other religious groups in these terms, the IFM overwhelmingly promote the interaction between religious groups as one of common ground, mutual understanding, cooperation and dialogue. This has not necessarily meant that interfaith participants must abandon convictions of exclusive truth but their engagement with the other is encouraged to take this form. Their normative representations of religious groups are not defined by competition and they encourage religious actors to view the religious other and religious diversity as valuable. This is a considerably stronger position than simple adherence to the notion that diverse religious groups should have the right to exist or even enjoy equal legal rights. This underlying institutional and normative basis is dependent on the exercise of power and the means to represent these relations and control these institutions, to maintain these structures and rules. That many would regard this as common sense or obviously necessary should not disguise that this as an exertion of power, of purposeful foundational acts and which must be maintained.

The dependence on particular rules has been an observable feature of multi-faith events since the 19<sup>th</sup> century which are characterised by their tolerance but have always depended on prescribing certain forms of behaviour, including certain forms of criticism and on the authority of certain persons or codes of behaviour. Though these rules are

usually legitimated as a means of encouraging free expression<sup>3</sup>. As Kerry Mitchell points out, the fact that this has often been legitimated as protecting the ‘freedoms’ of others to express themselves openly has led many liberal scholars to abandon their socially analytical faculties when discussing these events because of these liberal discourses. Assuming that ‘freedom’ and ‘self-expression’ are unconditioned, despite the clear ideological role these concepts play among the groups in question and in liberal societies generally should be untenable from a social scientific perspective<sup>4</sup>. These pluralist frameworks not only inhibit certain expressions but can be interpreted as manufacturing new social identities by creating distinctive, bounded social spaces and routine ways of acting and talking.

The pluralism of IFS and the Scottish IFM (as represented in the IFS literature) is limited and bounded in similar ways: through their normative position and through their institutional focus. The attachment of interfaith relations to a specific normative construction of religious pluralism limits them to those who are particularly tolerant, open to dialogue or open-minded about other religions. This has acted as a barrier to at least some religious conservatives. While interfaith events are generally open to the public, it is notable that membership of IFS is restricted to religious institutions which means that looser movements such as the New Age or Holistic movement without institutional representation could not attain the same status within the organisation.

Through the reliance on particular religious representatives and leadership such as clergy or institutionalised forms of religion. It should certainly go without saying that these are factors which IFS do not produce themselves, but which they have institutionalised and reinforced. IFS are exclusively made up of institutionalised member-groups further categorised by broader religious traditions (e.g. Islam, Sikhism) with recognised representatives, and they work closely with religious leadership through the

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<sup>3</sup> Mitchell, K.A. “The Politics of Spirituality: Liberalizing the Definition of Religion” in Mandair, A.P.S. and Dressler, M. (eds.) *Secularism and Religion-Making* (2011) Oxford: Oxford University Press: pp131-132

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell 2011: pp126-127

Religious Leaders Forum (RLF). Religious actors bring the established features of their religion with them into the IFM, many religions have ordained clergy or are institutionalised with official leaders and spokespeople.

On the other hand, institutionalised forms of religions, religious leadership and are not always representative of all adherents or important in every context. The religious leadership are only ever a section of membership and their political role and attachment to the traditions of the religion may mean that they are more concerned with 'correct' practice and doctrine than some lay members. They may be more conservative or occasionally more liberal than the average member of their religion but also, given their representative role, more influenced by broader public concerns or indeed influenced by the IFM. Religious leaders are usually particularly educated and in many communities, are usually older, often male and sometimes exclusively so<sup>5</sup>. Institutions are only one means of expressing religious identification and reflect established authority structures in a way that more individual expressions are not necessarily bound by. The point is, that while including different religious groups would certainly involve these established features, *specifically* incorporating or recognising them structures religious pluralism in a way that does not represent all adherents evenly<sup>6</sup>.

The structured and limited pluralism presented by IFS matches a view or model of religion which is described in the religious studies literature as the **world religions paradigm** (WRP). The WRP entails that religion is best understood through a handful of major world religions or globe-spanning, historic traditions rather than as thousands of

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<sup>5</sup> Morgan 1995: p162

<sup>6</sup> Though, political authorities in their relationships with religious groups have been known to emphasise the need to represent lay members, especially women and young people as a strategic means of bypassing established leadership when they become inconvenient. The UK Government for instance started to emphasise the need to represent different groups within British Islam when the leaders of the Muslim Council of Britain, the formation of which they had encouraged, publicly criticised the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, see Birt, J. "Lobbying and Marching: British Muslims and the State" in Abbas, T. (ed.) *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure* (2005) London: Zed

specific and often highly localised movements, traditions, practices and beliefs<sup>7</sup>. The religions are usually made up of the following: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and sometimes added to this the Bahá'í Faith despite emerging considerably later than the others in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all of which are given recognition by IFS. Along with these seven traditions, other religions such as Confucianism, Daoism, Jainism, Shinto and Zoroastrianism are sometimes added<sup>8</sup>.

The point is that this confines the dynamic religious diversity of the world into about twelve or slightly more, when the number could easily reach into the thousands or even defy enumeration. This model overlooks religions which are entirely local such as ethnic or indigenous religions or newer religious movements in favour of more historic religions, except for those who have attained recognition. These have usually proliferated widely or been particularly influential such as Judaism and the Bahá'í Faith<sup>9</sup>. The WRP also lays stress on the significance of broader religious categories and traditions over specific and often quite local religious communities, congregations, movements, denominations, sects, factions or tendencies which can be classed as part of these world religions<sup>10</sup>. The solution has often been to create new categories such as 'indigenous' religions, 'alternative' or 'new religious movements' which can incorporate these outliers and address distinctions and divisions of broader religions as part of the depiction of the world religions<sup>11</sup>.

Certainly, broader traditions and labels such as 'Islam' can be very socially significant and the specific significance it is given by agents in different social contexts

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<sup>7</sup> Masuzawa, T. *The Invention of the World Religions: or How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (2005) Chicago: Chicago University Press: pp2-3,

<sup>8</sup> Cotter, C.R. and Robertson, D.G. "Introduction" in Cotter, C.R. and Robertson, D.G. (eds.) *After World Religions: Reconstructing Religious Studies* (2016) London: Routledge: p2

<sup>9</sup> Smith, J.Z. *Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (1993) Chicago: Chicago University Press: pp294-296

<sup>10</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp9-10

<sup>11</sup> Cox, J.L. *From Primitive to Indigenous: The Academic Study of Indigenous Religions* (2007) Farnham: Ashgate: p88, Cotter and Robertson 2016: pp1-2

should not be downplayed in the pursuit of some 'real' or 'authentic' social identity<sup>12</sup>. Nevertheless, while distinctions and localisation can be addressed through the world religions model, the stress is on the broader tradition. This may reinforce a sense that world religions are primary and other religions are secondary and that denominational or local religious identities are similarly of secondary significance to that of the world religion itself<sup>13</sup>. This emphasis on broad, globe-spanning religious identities which incorporate different institutions, communities and sub-traditions has other effects. This taxonomy does render those recognised in this way as fundamentally equivalent and equal but also reifies them as bounded, distinct entities which are clearly distinguishable, which downplays the forms of hybridity which can emerge at the local level. Religion is reinforced as a singular identity which is of deep significance to the individual.

As I discuss in greater detail in subsequent chapters, the world religions paradigm emphasises features of religious traditions which were particularly prominent within Christianity, especially certain forms of Protestantism. That is an emphasis on codified and systematic doctrines, intellectual or philosophical and ethical teachings, an authoritative canon of scriptures and a universalistic worldview<sup>14</sup>. Though the visual, aesthetic, material and performative expressions of religious traditions such as artistic styles, the architecture of places of worship, festivals and symbolism are incorporated, these are usually explained as expressions of the intellectual tradition rather than of primary importance. The world religions paradigm fits IFS' representations of religious pluralism in several ways.

Firstly, through their governing structure because while the members of IFS are composed of various institutionalised religious groups and local interfaith groups, their

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<sup>12</sup> Asad, T. "Multiculturalism and Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair" in *Politics and Society* (1990) 18: 4: pp455-480: pp471- 474

<sup>13</sup> Cox 2007: p88, Cotter and Robertson 2016: pp9-10, Sutcliffe, S. "The Problem of 'Religions': Teaching Against the Grain with New Age Stuff" in Cotter and Robertson 2016: p26

<sup>14</sup> Cotter and Robertson: p12, King, R. *Orientalism and Religion: Post-Colonial Power, India and the Mystic East* (1999): London: Routledge: p62, Harvey, G. *Food, Sex and Strangers: Understanding Religion as Everyday Life* (2013) Durham: Acumen: pp2-3

governing body is composed of representatives of the seven world religions: Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh, along with representatives of local interfaith groups and women of faith. These religions are referred to as 'founding members' though they are composed to varying degrees of multiple member-groups<sup>15</sup>. Those member-groups whom are recognised as part of one of the seven traditions elect a representative between them<sup>16</sup>, regardless of how many specific groups are represented and regardless of demographics.

The fact that broader religious labels are given more prominence and are equated with each other is also a very specific means of representing religious diversity. Representing this religious diversity according to individual affiliations, specific congregations or even specific institutionalised bodies would produce a very type of different diversity. If religious groups were represented either according to demographics, congregations or specific institutions then the IFM would be far more heavily Christian in orientation. Laying stress on broader religious classifications should not be taken as a given and has consequences for which religious identifications are given prominence.

However, within IFS religious groups which are not recognised as part of one of these seven traditions are classed as 'associate' members and do not have representation on the governing board. These groups include the Pagan Federation – Scotland (PFS), the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, also known as Mormons (LDS), the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), also known as Moonies, the Scottish Unitarian Association (SUA) and the Brahma Kumaris – Scotland (BKS)<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Interfaith Scotland (IFS) *Draft Report: October 2014 -October 2015* (2015) Glasgow: Interfaith Scotland: p31, Action of Churches Together – Scotland (ACTS) *CAIRing for Scotland: The Churches Contribution to Interfaith Relations in Scotland* (n.d.) Alloa: Action of Churches Together Scotland: p16, <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/> (last accessed 7/3/17)

<sup>16</sup> Dr Maureen Sier (personal communication 18/11/15)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/associate-members/> (last accessed 7/9/17)

As I will demonstrate in the chapters discussing IFS and representations of Christians, religious minorities and the Non-religious, these are echoed by representations within the literature, especially documents which discuss religious traditions in general terms. These documents which will be introduced more fully below, include *A Guide to the Faith Communities of Scotland*, *Values in Harmony* and *Reflections on Life Matters*. These documents have included a broader range of traditions, including Paganism, Jainism, the Brahma Kumari tradition (referred to internationally as the Brahma Kumari World Spiritual University), Mormonism, 'Believers not Belongers' and the 'Non-religious' Humanist tradition - represented in Scotland by the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS). The reason that these documents can be shown to reinforce the WRP is the fact that they are divided into sections arranged by tradition which also classify them according to common elements. Further, the common beliefs, doctrines, ethical and intellectual traditions are reinforced which are represented through sources deemed canonical<sup>18</sup>. There are several ways in which the universality, common ethics and equivalency of these traditions can be demonstrated, which downplay the significance of divisions and distinctions or even particular local communities.

It is important to emphasise that this is far from something that IFS reproduce on their own or entirely according to their aims and interests. The WRP in academic, religious and public circles in modern western societies such as Scotland has become the predominant view of 'religion'. As I recognised above, religious communities often emphasise broader religious labels and intellectual-ethical traditions themselves because these are significant to them to varying degrees. To some extent though this can be regarded as a form of 'strategic essentialism' where minority groups themselves downplay their internal diversity and even conform to the majority's established images of themselves to secure more influence and recognition<sup>19</sup>. Building on the recognition

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<sup>18</sup> Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC) *Values in Harmony* (2011) Glasgow: Scottish Inter Faith Council: p12

<sup>19</sup> This term was coined by Gayatri Spivak, referenced in Eide, E. "Strategic Essentialism and Ethnification: Hand in Glove?" in *Nordicom Review* 31: 2 (2010): pp63-78: p76

and intelligibility of the WRP has allowed more access and influence for different groups within the Scottish public sphere and in relation to the government. Equating the world religions has been vital to the development of IFS, because without this formal equality the organisation would have been dominated by Christian groups.

The reason that some member groups have not been given entirely equal membership is derived from the fact that representatives of the two most powerful Christian churches – the Church of Scotland (CS, known as ‘the Kirk’) and the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC) objected to the membership application of Pagan Federation – Scotland (PFS)<sup>20</sup>. This reveals how much representing religious groups to a large extent is dependent on a structured and limited form of pluralism: recognising institutions and leadership, the increasing stress on world religions from groups themselves, avoiding domination by the Christian majority while also ensuring that its representatives are placated.

It is important to state again that this thesis is not interested in whether these forms of representation are morally correct, especially given the difficulty of negotiating different religious interests and perspectives along with those of the Scots public and government. Indeed, the political difficulties of representing diverse religious groups at a national level attest to my claim that interfaith relations must be understood as reflecting power relations between groups in Scottish society, as well as developments within that society and its predominant understandings of ‘religion’. The WRP may be a model of religion which can be critiqued due to its limitations but it is not an ‘incorrect’ means of representing religion per se, simply a limited one; especially when religions are recognised as socially constructed phenomena shaped by the understandings of the actors involved. However, IFS certainly play an active role in the dissemination, reinforcement and enshrinement of this structured and limited pluralism which

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<sup>20</sup> ACTS: p16

depended to some extent on choices. They may only be one participant in wider discourses which they did not create but they are participants nonetheless.

There are also clear reasons why the WRP is an attractive model to the IFM. The desire to be inclusive can be hampered by the bewildering facts of human diversity, but also by the fact that bounded national populations are also rarely made up of groups with roughly similar numbers. The WRP provides a taxonomy which lays stress on the equality or at least equivalence of religions and a means of understanding, ordering and representing diversity. Emphasis on common, if far from identical, features within religions can also aid mutual intelligibility and reinforce conceptions of common interests and compatibility. As I will demonstrate, the representations of religions through doctrines, intellectual resources and scriptures can be strategically used to demonstrate and assert the connection between religions through that value system. The fact that these representations of religions are easily replicated or reproduced through texts, common religious symbols, art or even certain religious practices make this an invaluable means of constructing an interfaith religious pluralism.

One would certainly expect IFS to reproduce religious pluralism, even if critically analysing its form and operation reveal this to be a far from simple or uncontroversial endeavour. It may seem far less justifiable to argue, as I will throughout this thesis, that IFS' representations of Scottish religious diversity can be classed as a form of **nationalism**. This is only possible with a broader understanding of 'nationalism<sup>21</sup>' and the debates around the academic study of nationalism necessary to fully articulate this will be explored in the next chapter. Fully demonstrating IFS' relationship with Scottish nationalism will be outlined in the empirical chapters. I will briefly outline some of the key points of this argument in this introduction first.

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<sup>21</sup> Sutherland, L.T. *Theorizing Religion and Nationalism: The Need for Critical Reflexivity in the Analysis of Overlapping Areas of Research* (2017a) in *Implicit Religion* 20: 1: pp1-21: pp4-6

It may be objected that the fact that IFS operates at a Scottish national level and as a result represents religious groups within Scotland to the Scottish Government and public does not necessarily make it nationalism. I argue that these factors along with some of the Scottish symbolism used by the organisation and the very nomenclature actually *do* contribute to Scottish nationalism in a certain capacity. Even if these factors are considered trite and insufficient on their own, I would counter that the political and ideological effects of national classifications and symbolism are all too often treated naively as apolitical, as givens without discernible social effects and without requiring explanation.

At the same it is their use in a particular discourse which can be more specifically defined as ‘nationalist’ which I will strive to demonstrate. Nationalism is in common understanding often associated with national supremacism, xenophobic or even violent movements that would certainly not be associated with interfaith. However, the fact that IFS operates in a national framework and makes uses of everything from institutions to symbols, deriving their significance and legitimacy (or power to legitimate) from conceptualisations of the Scottish nation, is an identifiable ideological structure which in the specialist academic literature on nationalism at least is considered nationalism<sup>22</sup>.

From Elie Kedourie I define ‘nationalism’ as any ideology or movement which divides the world into national communities and asserts that they are the legitimate basis for statehood or at least political life<sup>23</sup>. With regard to the ‘nation’ itself, I follow Benedict Anderson’s classic definition of an imagined political community which is imagined as at once limited and sovereign<sup>24</sup>. The ideology which supports this, is ‘nationalism’. It underpins these acts of imagining oneself part of a community that is inherently limited in both population and territory but supremely authoritative or sovereign within its

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<sup>22</sup> Sutherland, L.T. *One Nation, Many Faiths: Civic-Cultural Nationalism and Religious Pluralism in the Scottish Interfaith Literature* (2017b) in *Implicit Religion* 20: 1: pp68-88: pp74-75

<sup>23</sup> Kedourie, E. *Nationalism* (1960) London: Hutchinson & Co: p9

<sup>24</sup> Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) London: Verso: p6

territory. While I contend that most expressions of Scottish identity can fit into this understanding there is a peculiarity of the Scottish case which must be explicated.

Scotland is not an independent country or sovereign state in the language of International Relations, as it was before 1707 but forms part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It does possess a definable population with a demarcated territory, associated with claims about a historic identity and with an autonomous legal system, civil society and government. The current Scottish Government are formed by the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP) and a referendum was held in 2014 with 55.30% voting against independence compared to 44.70% in favour<sup>25</sup>. Nationalism, if it is defined more broadly than xenophobic movements would, in a country like Scotland, be associated with pro-independence sentiment and the movement supporting it.

However, I contend that nationalism especially in the Scottish case should be defined more broadly than this, which is why it can be applied to seemingly counter-intuitive examples like IFS. The autonomous government and civic structure of Scotland are ideologically underpinned by claims to represent a national population. Furthermore, Scottish identity is largely associated with the concept of national self-determination or ultimate sovereignty, whether or not independence is viewed as a desirable outcome, the *right* to self-determination is taken for granted. Scotland is constructed as a political as well as cultural community with ultimate sovereignty through the right to self-determination and through increasing political autonomy. This can still fit into the ideology of nationalism defined above.

It is a broader underlying ideology which is largely shared by different groups and actors in Scotland, whether unionist or separatist<sup>26</sup>. It may not be apolitical but it is not

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/events/scotland-decides/results> (last accessed 7/9/17)

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, A. "Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights and Wrongs" in *American Ethnologist* (1996) 23(4): pp802-815: p803, Sutherland 2017a: pp11-12

associated with a specific overt political programme. It is the basis on which political movements for greater autonomy, independence or indeed the choice to maintain the union in the Scottish 'national interest' are built. This broader nationalism is not simply reproduced by the formal institutions of the Scottish political system but is something embedded in wider Scottish social relations and culture. One would expect to find this form of national identity being reproduced and disseminated in institutions outside of the government and political parties or movements, even if they are not defined by a specific political position.

In this thesis, I contend that Scotland's national interfaith body is one such institution. This relies on the concept of 'banal nationalism' introduced by Michael Billig which will be more fully explained in chapters 2 and 6. Briefly, this concept allows for the fact that national sentiment and symbolism is not always perceived as overtly political or even as 'nationalist' because it forms part of the cultural-conceptual background in which agents operate. Banal or everyday use of national labels, 'nations' as an internalised means of ordering the world and symbols representing the nation are encountered and used on a daily basis outside of formal politics. They nonetheless play a powerful role in reinforcing national identity as something which applies to persons, spaces and institutions. It reinforces 'nations' as a means of categorising the world, as the legitimate basis for statehood or that such communities have the right to self-determination<sup>27</sup>. Note that non-territorial ethnic and religious groups in this frame are not the legitimate basis for political life in this manner.

As I will demonstrate, the nationalism expressed by IFS involves a combination of 'civic' and 'cultural' elements. Within the study of 'nationalism, 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalisms are often contrasted with each other. 'Civic nationalism' defines membership of the nation through factors such as citizenship, participation in the civil society of the nation, and often adherence to core values claimed to embody it such as

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<sup>27</sup> Billig, M. *Banal Nationalism* (1995) London: Sage Publications: pp5-8, p94

liberty or egalitarianism. 'Ethnic nationalism' defined by birth, descent or membership of an ethnic group or culture<sup>28</sup>. In subsequent chapters I will explore the implications of this dichotomy and attempt to introduce a refined version of that model, applicable to the case of IFS. Here I will simply add that this can be an overly rigid distinction and comment that the close association between cultural identity with descent is problematic, especially because culture is discernible within civic forms of nationalism such as the use of cultural symbols, reliance on common language and historical associations of any national community<sup>29</sup>. Certainly, the nationalism expressed by IFS makes use of both 'cultural' resources such as tartan and the poetry of Robert Burns and expressions of ownership over Scotland's civic institutions such as the Scottish Parliament.

Lastly, I must explain that despite IFS' promotion of the importance of religion in Scottish public life, they actually promote a form of **secularism**. This is the form of secularism defined by the philosopher Charles Taylor who argued that secularism should not be understood as exclusive of religion but inclusive of religion<sup>30</sup>. The increasing prominence of IFS and the IFM, as well as incorporation of religious pluralism into public life in Scotland, is 'secular' according to this understanding. This is because the common national institutions and the nation itself are no longer defined or dominated by a specific religious tradition. The public sphere and national identity of Scotland is inclusive of but not exclusively associated with any one religious or Non-religious group. It is in this sense separate from them and the cultivation of pluralist representation of very different groups means that it is harder for any one group to dominate.

Within the literature the active integration and civic participation of different religious groups are encouraged, along with Non-religious groups such as the Humanist

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<sup>28</sup> Özkirimli, U. *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (2010) London: Palgrave MacMillan: pp35-36

<sup>29</sup> Smith, A.D. *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (1986): Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: p134

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, C. "Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism" in Mendieta, E. and Vanantwerpen, J. (eds.) *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (2011b) New York: Colombia University Press: p37

Society Scotland (HSS). This secular-pluralism reinforces the form of nationalism discussed above, which renders the common national identity as publicly paramount even if it includes plural identities within it. The encouragement of civic participation and engagement with the government and public fosters a degree of solidarity through an active politically conscious national population constructed through civic and cultural markers.

The **civic-cultural**, secular and sometimes banal nationalism espoused by IFS can be connected to their construction of a structured and limited pluralism based on the world religions paradigm. The representation of religions as global intellectual and ethical traditions downplays their connection to specific, potentially politicised communities but instead reproduces them as abstract, moral traditions of global significance. While religions are represented as reservoirs of moral inspiration and of in some ways greater universal significance than mere national identity, they are rendered compatible or non-competitive with the limited, local claims to sovereignty of the nation and the day to day secular politics of Scotland's autonomous political system. This is IFS' **'one nation, many faiths paradigm'**<sup>31</sup>. IFS and its literature are considerably more nuanced than I have been able to depict them so far and I will now provide a more thorough profile of both.

### **Profile of Interfaith Scotland (IFS)**

Interfaith Scotland was founded in 1999 as the **Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC)** with support from the UK Interfaith Network (IFNUK)<sup>32</sup>. It was established by a Roman Catholic nun, former Religious Education teacher and former student of Religious Studies Scholar Ninian Smart at Lancaster University: **Sister Isabel Smyth OBE, SND**. I conducted an interview with Sister Smyth at her home in Glasgow on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 to which

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<sup>31</sup> Sutherland 2017b: pp85-87

<sup>32</sup> Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom (IFNUK) *20 Years: Milestones on the Journey Together Towards Greater Inter Faith Understanding and Cooperation* (2007): London: Inter-Faith Network for the UK: p21

I will refer throughout this thesis. The SIFC was launched at St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow by the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament - Trisha Goddard MSP. It is based in Glasgow with its current office at 110 Flemington Street. As IFS developed it has become an increasingly influential part of Scottish civil society. Its stated aims according to the website include:

- To provide a *forum for different religions* in dialogue with one another on matters of *religious, national* and civic importance
- To support a wider interfaith dialogue with other religion and belief groups
- To support *educational activities* in connection with interfaith dialogue
- To *encourage civic engagement by religious communities* in Scotland and to *support religious equality* (emphasis mine)<sup>33</sup>

The SIFC changed its name to Interfaith Scotland when it attained the status of Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2012<sup>34</sup>. It has a small staff with its Director Dr Maureen Sier, with whom I conducted an informal interview at the Glasgow office on Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, to which I will also refer throughout the thesis, as well as Development Officer, Administrative and Financial Officer, Projects Officer, Religious Equality Officer Training Officer, an International Intern and a Refugee Integration Officer<sup>35</sup>.

The membership of IFS is entirely made up of other organisations, not of individuals, though individuals can support IFS as 'Friends' and most interfaith events are open to the public. All member-groups must be a charitable organisation with a formal structure and a constitution. As already mentioned, its governing board is made up of representatives of the Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh member groups classed as 'founding members', along with representatives of women of

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<sup>33</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us) (10/8/15)

<sup>34</sup> IFS *Newsletter September 2012 – Issue 22* (2012): Glasgow: IFS: p2

<sup>35</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/staff](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/staff) (last accessed 4/10/15)

faith and local interfaith groups with an external treasurer and accountant. The board is currently chaired by the Buddhist representative Larry Blance since 2014, before that having been chaired by Sister Smyth<sup>36</sup>.

Non-founding members are classified as ‘associate members’ which include charitable groups, local interfaith groups (technically classed as such despite their representation on the board), religious education groups, a bilateral group – the West of Scotland Council of Christians and Jews, as well as the Pagan Federation – Scotland (PFS), the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (LDS), the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), the Scottish Unitarian Association (SUA) and the Brahma Kumaris – Scotland (BKS). This system of representation was established when SIFC became IFS and created what can be described as the ‘two-tier’ membership system. This both distinguishes between individual member-groups and their representation through their broader religious tradition and distinguishes between founding and associate members due to their lack of board representation.

Before this, concerns about Christian domination of the organisation, including among Christians themselves, meant that Christian membership of the organisation was initially only made up of the three major churches of the country – the Church of Scotland (CS), the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC) and the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC). Smaller denominations being represented by the Christian ecumenical group Action of Churches Together – Scotland (ACTS)<sup>37</sup>. This two-tier system was primarily created because of tensions between representatives of the two biggest churches – CS and SRCC and PFS which had applied for membership (I also conducted a correspondence interview with PFS Interfaith Officer John MacIntyre to which I will also refer). The movement from the foundations of the SIFC to IFS as we know it was a long process,

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<sup>36</sup> IFS *Newsletter Spring 2015 – Issue 27* (2015): Glasgow: IFS: p15

<sup>37</sup> ACTS: p16

there were protracted negotiations between the various parties and PFS was granted observer status for most of that period<sup>38</sup>.

The roots of the IFM as an international phenomenon can be traced back to the 1893 Chicago Parliament of World Religions<sup>39</sup> which brought together intellectuals to provide accounts of a variety of religious traditions along with Christian representatives, as well as engage in dialogue. The Parliament helped to cement the world religions paradigm: emphasis on broader religious labels, on intellectual and textual traditions and on the equivalence of traditions. Several international interfaith groups were founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and contemporary interfaith groups can roughly be classified according to a loose geographical typology: local, regional, national and international<sup>40</sup>. In many respects, the local level has become the most significant; the IFM became a tangible, visible and influential part of the civic life of many western societies at the local or municipal level among increasingly religiously diverse societies. In many cities, interfaith groups were created as an extension of Christian ecumenical councils (ecumenicism here refers to groups involving multiple Christian denominations or multiple sects within one religion), first to synagogues and later to more diverse religious communities<sup>41</sup>.

The IFM in Scotland can be traced back to the work of the Kent born nurse, Red Cross worker<sup>42</sup> and Church of Scotland missionary to Pakistan<sup>43</sup> Stella Reekie (1922-1982) in the West End of Glasgow. Reekie was employed by the Church of Scotland and the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) to work with Pakistani migrants in

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, Interview with John MacIntyre 30/10/16

<sup>39</sup> Brodeur, P. "From the Margins to the Centers of Power: The Increasing Relevance of the Global Interfaith Movement" in *Crosscurrents* Spring 2005 (2005): pp42-53: pp43-44

<sup>40</sup> Pederson, K.J. "The Interfaith Movement: An Incomplete Assessment" in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41:1 Winter 2004 (2004): pp74-94: pp80-85

<sup>41</sup> Pederson 2004: p80

<sup>42</sup> Adamson, J., Ramsay, K. and Craig, M. *Stella: The Story of Stella Jane Reekie 1922-1982* (1984) Glasgow: South Park Press: pp1-2

<sup>43</sup> Adamson, Ramsay and Craig 1984: p6

Glasgow from the late 1960s due to her ability to speak Urdu, engaging in home visits to the wives of migrant workers and families and facilitating socialisation between locals and migrants<sup>44</sup>. Reekie was instrumental in the foundation of Scotland's first interfaith group, Glasgow Sharing of Faiths (GSF) from 1969 because it was thought that the 'spiritual level' of the communities of Glasgow were not as adequately represented in these social projects<sup>45</sup>. GSF engaged in many of the activities which IFS and local interfaith groups continue to engage in, holding monthly public meetings, visiting schools with speakers drawn from different religious groups and an annual festival known as the 'Presentation of Faiths'<sup>46</sup>. Since then, local interfaith groups proliferated throughout the country, including: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness, Skye, East Renfrewshire and Moray<sup>47</sup>.

When a 'national' framework emerged, it was at the UK-level with the foundation of the Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom (IFNUK) in 1987<sup>48</sup>. According to Sister Smyth's account, one of the leading IFNUK activists, Brian Pearce, would frequently come to Scotland to meet with its various religious communities and local interfaith groups. It was Pearce who first suggested the concept of a Scottish interfaith association, initially envisioned as a sub-section of IFNUK and brought the idea to Sister Smyth who had worked with Stella Reekie and the GSF. Smyth set about investigating the feasibility of a Scottish national association and founded a consultative group to liaise between the different religious and interfaith groups in Scotland. According to her account there was broad support, especially with the formation of a devolved Scottish Parliament and

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<sup>44</sup> Adamson, Ramsay and Craig 1984: pp12-14

<sup>45</sup> Adamson, Ramsay and Craig 1984: p26

<sup>46</sup> Adamson, Ramsay and Craig 1984: p28

<sup>47</sup> It has been repeatedly confirmed to me that Glasgow Sharing of Faiths, the oldest interfaith organisation in Scotland is now effectively defunct which explains the development of the Interfaith Glasgow (IFG) project.

<sup>48</sup> IFNUK 2007: p6

Government on the horizon but little energy needed to establish a national framework and thus she undertook the task with the help and support of IFNUK<sup>49</sup>.

Despite its uncertain beginnings and the fact that the organisation involves a handful of staff based in a single office in Glasgow, it has become a well-established, influential and autonomous organisation. It has incorporated most major religious communities and interfaith groups under its umbrella and developed a close relationship with local and national governments in post-devolutionary Scotland. IFS send representatives to IFNUK meetings, along with representatives of the various regions and nations of the UK<sup>50</sup> but it is IFS which by and large represents interfaith at the 'national' level: directing nationwide events and representing religious and local groups to government. It is a mark of the post-devolutionary context that the national interfaith associations are increasingly treated as equivalent to IFNUK through the 'four-nations meetings' between IFS, the interfaith councils of Wales and Northern Ireland with IFNUK representing England and its various regional associations<sup>51</sup>.

Though it must also be stated that local interfaith groups are entirely autonomous from IFS<sup>52</sup>, which simply has the remit to represent interfaith at the national level and coordinates nationwide interfaith activities. While its constituent groups must be considered as autonomous in their own right, IFS should be viewed as more than the sum of its parts. This is partially because it has an organisational structure as well as a variety of publications which form the key sources for this thesis. It possesses much influence and authority, especially to shape 'national' interfaith discourse but is dependent on local interfaith associations on the ground. Indeed, the necessity of this is demonstrated by the fact that it will set up local interfaith groups itself such as IFG<sup>53</sup> and

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<sup>49</sup> ACTS: p16, Interview with Sister Isabel Smyth OBE, SND 20/6/16

<sup>50</sup> [www.interfaith.org.uk/members/other-inter-faith-bodies/](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/other-inter-faith-bodies/) (last accessed 15/11/15),  
[www.interfaith.org.uk/members/about-membership](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/about-membership) (last accessed 15/11/15)

<sup>51</sup> E.g. *IFS Annual Report October 2013 - October 2014* (2014) Glasgow: IFS: p9

<sup>52</sup> Dr Maureen Sier (Personal Communication 18/11/15)

<sup>53</sup> [www.interfaithglasgow.org/about](http://www.interfaithglasgow.org/about) (last accessed 04/10/2015)

Interfaith Moray<sup>54</sup>. It also helps to bind these local interfaith groups together, which reinforces a sense of commonality and interfaith national consciousness. This includes, for example, holding regular networking seminars and training programmes for local interfaith groups' staff and activists<sup>55</sup>.

One of the other primary areas of activity for Interfaith Scotland is related to young people. This involves frequent visits to schools by members of the national or local associations as well as representatives of religious groups for 'interfaith days'. They have also organised youth retreats to Iona and Holy Isle, arranging for schoolchildren to visit places of worship<sup>56</sup> and organising workshops for schools and youth groups<sup>57</sup>. These groups are also strongly linked to university and college chaplaincy services, hold many of their events at Universities or Colleges and attempt to draw in students as much as possible. Interfaith Scotland also organises its own events specifically for young people involved with the interfaith movement, having organised seven youth conferences<sup>58</sup>.

Its most significant activities relate to the institutions of governance in Scotland. This includes local councils which IFS have provided with training courses regarding the provision of services to members of religious communities. They have been consulted and worked with public institutions such as the police, the Crown and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)<sup>59</sup> and significantly the Scottish NHS, collaborating on documents providing advice on the care of religious patients and materials for patients themselves. Significantly, this consultative role has extended to the Scottish Government itself which established the Scottish Working Group for Religion and Belief Relations in 2008 incorporating members of IFS, including: Dr Maureen Sier and Sister Smyth along with a representative of the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) and the then Scottish Minister for

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<sup>54</sup> IFS Spring 2015 p26

<sup>55</sup> E.g. IFS Newsletter 2016: Issue 28 (2016): Glasgow: IFS: p4

<sup>56</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/young-people/events-for-young-people](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/young-people/events-for-young-people) (last accessed 10/8/15)

<sup>57</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/young-people](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/young-people) (last accessed 10/8/15)

<sup>58</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/young-people/youth-conferences](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/young-people/youth-conferences) (last accessed 10/8/15)

<sup>59</sup> SIFC Newsletter February 2011: Issue 19: (2011): Glasgow: SIFC: p11

Community Safety, Fergus Ewing MSP. The working group produced guidelines for inter-communal relations and inclusive civic events *Belief in Dialogue*<sup>60</sup>. Many of the documents produced by IFS, including in collaboration with the NHS and the government, have the aim of reaching and influencing members of the Scottish public, to attempt to disseminate interfaith activities, values and activities as well as their representations of religious and Non-religious groups in Scotland.

### **Interfaith Events**

IFS and the Scottish IFM organise and coordinate a range of interfaith events in Scotland which relate to religious pluralism and the national identity. Many of these events are open to the public or incorporate some members of the public but even closed events are reported on in the literature of IFS. These events are crucial to maintain contact between local groups, religious communities, politicians and the public. They provide a means of instilling, disseminating, showcasing and reinforcing the interfaith system of values and their vision of Scottish national religious diversity. Within the organisation itself there are several dialogue meetings held between the member-groups of IFS, as well as an AGM, and the governing board also meets regularly<sup>61</sup>. There are three types of regular events which are particularly important: **Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW)**, **National Holocaust Memorial Day (NHMD)** and the meetings of the **Religious Leaders Forum (RLF)**.

#### Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW)

Some interfaith events are one-off or planned according to local interests, but there are several regular events which are always held annually on a 'national' scale and organised by IFS. The annual Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW), held in the last week of November involves a range of national and local events coordinated by IFS according to a theme.

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<sup>60</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations Good Practice Guide* (2011) Edinburgh: Crown Copyright: p51

<sup>61</sup> Dr Maureen Sier (Personal Communication 18/11/15)

For example, the theme of 2015's SIFW was 'Care for Creation' because the Paris Climate Change Summit was due to be held in December<sup>62</sup>. The IFS newsletter proudly reported the fact that SIFW acted as a model for a similar interfaith week founded for England and Wales<sup>63</sup>. SIFW is also an opportunity to relate to conceptions of the Scotland as a religiously diverse but common nation. Notably, it was decided to hold SIFW in the week incorporating St Andrew's Day which was a date they decided to keep rather than bring it into line with the UN's religious harmony week<sup>64</sup>.

SIFW can be viewed as reinforcing the one nation many faiths paradigm because it integrates local interfaith events into a common national programme, underscoring the notion of a religiously plural national community through simultaneous engagement in such activities. This is akin to Anderson's example of 'simultaneous' actions by members of the nation, in his example newspaper consumption<sup>65</sup>. It also reinforces the public profile of Interfaith Scotland itself and the value of interfaith relations as a naturalised part of public life, increasing the profile of a diversity of religions in an increasingly secular country.

#### National Holocaust Memorial Day (NHMD)

National Holocaust Memorial Day held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, has become especially important for Interfaith Scotland because the organisation has been charged by the Scottish Government with organising the nation's commemorations of NHMD since 2012<sup>66</sup>. This involves events based around the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust perpetrated by the German Nazi regime in the 1940s but also victims of similar atrocities such as those committed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the 1970s and

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<sup>62</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week) (last accessed 10/8/2015)

<sup>63</sup> SIFC *Newsletter March 2010: Issue 17* (2010) Glasgow: SIFC: p2

<sup>64</sup> SIFC February 2011: p9

<sup>65</sup> Anderson 1983: p34-35

<sup>66</sup> IFS *Newsletter Spring 2014 – Issue 25*: (2014) Glasgow: IFS: p17

the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides of the 1990s<sup>67</sup>. NHMD events include public lectures and discussions, often with special events for schools as well as artistic commemorations such as musical performances and photographic exhibits<sup>68</sup> designed to educate the Scottish public about these traumatic historical episodes. Interfaith Scotland has also brought several genocide survivors, including survivors of the Holocaust to these events as guests of honour, to educate the public through the relation of their personal experiences<sup>69</sup>. In many respects commemorating these events can be linked to the interfaith system of values, demonstrating the need for harmonious relations, dialogue and common understanding between diverse groups as well as the need for the state to accept the diversity of the population.

#### Religious Leaders Forum (RLF)

Another key event organised by IFS is the bi-annual meeting of the Religious Leaders Forum (RLF). The RLF is separate from IFS and their own board meetings but IFS form the secretariat for the RLF<sup>70</sup> and widely reports on them, so they are highly relevant to the thesis. The RLF was founded in the wake of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on September the 11<sup>th</sup> 2002 by then Moderator of the Church of Scotland (CS) - Finlay Morrison, Cardinal Keith o' Brien of the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC) and Bruce Cameron, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC)<sup>71</sup>. The rationale of the RLF is to maintain regular institutional contact between the leadership of religious communities in Scotland, to allow for dialogue, collaboration and statements of purpose. Meetings have often been held in schools, encouraged the involvement of pupils and attracted the attention of the media<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/holocaust-memorial-day](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/holocaust-memorial-day) (last accessed 10/8/15)

<sup>68</sup> IFS *Newsletter Spring 2015 – Issue 27* (2015): Glasgow: IFS: pp21-22

<sup>69</sup> E.g. IFS Spring 2015: p22

<sup>70</sup> Dr Maureen Sier (Personal Communication 18/11/15)

<sup>71</sup> ACTS: pp17-19, SIFC *Newsletter August 2009: Issue 16* (2009): Glasgow: SIFC: p11

<sup>72</sup> E.g. IFS *Newsletter Summer 2013: Issue 24* (2013) Glasgow: IFS: p4

This in some ways, enshrines the official religious leadership of communities as the legitimate representative of their religion compared to the laity. It ensures that the powers of representation are relatively concentrated in the leadership of congregations, associations and other institutions. The fact that the leaders' meetings produce much convergence and agreement can be used by IFS to demonstrate the success of interfaith dialogue and ideas of the underlying commonalities between the religions. It certainly shows that occupation of similar social space and the shared category of 'religion' has led to a convergence of interests. This was reflected by the joint statement made by the leaders at the 2014 meeting calling for official recognition of the place of religions in any future constitution of an independent Scotland, which was widely reported by the media:

[R]epresentatives of Scotland's diverse faith traditions were united in the view that the contribution of faith to Scottish society should be properly recognised whatever the future holds.

All the churches and faith communities present agreed Scotland's diversity of religious belief is an important reflection of Scotland's wider society<sup>73</sup>.

### **Interfaith Scotland's Literature**

Interfaith Scotland produce a variety of documents which can be accessed by members of the public via their website, while those who sign up as 'friends of Interfaith Scotland' for a small monthly fee of £8 receive hard copies of its annual report and bi-annual newsletter through the post<sup>74</sup>. While the ultimate intended audience or potential audience for these texts is the Scottish public, this is most likely tempered by an awareness that those already involved with interfaith groups or religious groups form

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-26903855](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-26903855) (last accessed 04/10/2015)

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/friends/> (last accessed 05/10/15)

the most likely readership. Texts can be differentiated according to how much they address these intended audiences, determined to a large extent by ease of access.

### Website

One such text is the Interfaith Scotland website itself which provides a more direct means of reaching the Scottish public. It provides the organisation's aims and outlook which especially indicates public engagement. It contains a news page, an overview of its key activities and information about its members, executive and staff. It also provides means of accessing its literature, most of which is freely accessible in electronic form as well as links and information about the religions. This includes guides on hosting multi-faith events and providing for the needs of various religious groups for local councils and NHS staff<sup>75</sup>. They also produce general guides to many of the major religions which will be discussed below. These are most clearly aimed at a wider audience, interested members of the public or the specialised audience of NHS or council staff, who would most likely access these texts for professional reasons rather than private interest. The website has recently been redeveloped, IFS have founded a blog and they have increasingly developed their social media presence through facebook, twitter and youtube but these later innovations came after the period of research for the thesis ended.

### Newsletter

The most important document for the purposes of this thesis are the regular newsletter of IFS and its annual reports, the former being an expanded version of the latter. IFS also produced a small 'Parliamentary Newsletter' in the earlier years of the organisation which was revived in September 2015. The Parliamentary newsletter is produced by their Parliamentary Officer who reports on events at Parliament relevant to the interfaith and helps to introduce readers to the Scottish political system<sup>76</sup>. The primary newsletter though is far more substantial, has many more editions and provides a less overtly

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<sup>75</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/publications](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/publications) (accessed 10/8/15)

<sup>76</sup> IFS 2016: p5

political view on IFS' role in representing the relationship between religious pluralism and Scottish national identity. The newsletter forms one of the most invaluable sources for this thesis. IFS' newsletter is published at least annually but the number of issues produced in the year and its schedule have changed. The newsletter is currently on the 29<sup>th</sup> issue but this thesis focuses on issues 15-28 from January 2009 to the 2016 issue. The rationale for this range is relatively simple, the 2016 issue was the last to fall within the period of data gathering for this thesis and the materials gathered were already sufficient for the purposes of the research. As the historical period of the research is framed by the maturation of Scottish devolution, the lead up to the referendum on independence and its aftermath 2016 was deemed to be sufficient for this purpose.

The reason that the range of sources begins with the January 2009 issue (issue 15) is the fact that these were the issues that were publicly accessible through the website<sup>77</sup>, though repeated requests were made to access the earlier issues IFS were not able to provide them. It is unclear whether these have been preserved or copied, and given the increasing expansion and professionalisation of the newsletter, as it was indicated to me that the early issues were not substantial in content. In any case, as an account of the foundation and early years of the organisation have been attained this has not proven detrimental to my purposes. The range of sources used relate to the focus on the period by which both Scottish devolution and Interfaith Scotland had become more established, the Scottish Government was led by a nationalist party and later the referendum on Scottish independence unavoidably impacted life in Scotland.

The content of the newsletter includes depictions of the national and local events discussed above, along with reportage on the activities of religious and interfaith groups in Scotland and further afield, as well as editorials by IFS activists and others. Most of the activities reported are organised by local interfaith groups who create a record of the event and usually provide photographs. The newsletter editor is mostly dependent on

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<sup>77</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/newsletters/> (last accessed 7/9/17)

local associations providing this content and will usually send a request for content through their contacts. The relative informality of this arrangement explains why IFS reports on most interfaith groups throughout Scotland regardless of their official status within the organisation itself<sup>78</sup>. One reason that the IFS newsletter is such a valuable source for this thesis: it provides a somewhat limited but relatively extensive window on the developing relationship between religious pluralism and national identity in communities across Scotland. Though they are sources which are certainly wedded to a positive agenda, this is exactly the reason why the critical approach is vital.

The remit of the newsletter would be to keep interfaith activists and curious members of the public informed about their activities and the activities of member groups, to attract participants. As its own activities or those with which they are involved are the centre of attention, addressing an audience composed of those who are active and those who could be, it has an interest in presenting these as both attractive and important. It also has the larger aim of presenting interfaith dialogue and faith in general as a vital part of Scottish public life and fundamentally beneficial. It is sensitive to the specific religious groups which form much of its readership. The fact that it is promoting itself and its values, and engages with an at once diverse and functionally highly specific audience, quite specifically shapes its content.

In other respects, it is closer to other forms of media than might seem apparent. For one thing, one of their newsletters, is like a newspaper, a collaborative effort. The events are catalogued by members of the organisation who report on the proceedings, which is sometimes intercut with statements made by attendees or speakers if it involves a public lecture. There are also always a few select editorials about wider issues written by members of interfaith Scotland's leadership or invited contributors on wider issues such as the independence referendum and the place of religion in Scottish public life.

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<sup>78</sup> Dr Maureen Sier (Personal Communication 18/11/15)



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Friendship • Cooperation • Dialogue • Respect • Understanding

[www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

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Image: Front cover of IFS Newsletter Spring 2014.

## Representing Religions - IFS' Educational Documents

The ways in which specific religions are depicted in the literature of Interfaith Scotland reinforce the themes discussed earlier, and while they will be discussed in later chapters, there are many wide patterns in such representations which are worth elaborating on here. IFS have produced several key documents which strive to represent specific religions – their values, practices, beliefs and needs - to professionals or members of the public. Along with the newsletter, these documents are vital sources for the thesis that demonstrate the specific means through which IFS construct 'religion' and 'religions' in a and the way they implicitly or explicitly relate them to a Scottish identity. It is important to bear in mind that in all of these cases, there is no evidence of explicit pressure from IFS' activists themselves or of any kind of censorship. These documents were formed with the explicit input and consent of the groups represented, though ways in which this was done varied from document to document.

The significance of this complicity is two-fold: firstly, focusing on these documents produced (or in some cases co-produced) by a specific organisation can be used as evidence of how this means of representing 'religions' (or 'belief' traditions) are reinforced. Secondly, IFS may seek out the self-representations of communities (which have for socio-historic reasons began to conform to type, see chapters 2) but their very act of collating and organising this data in this way secures, contributes to and reinforces this means of representing religion. As the media scholar Marshall McLuhan famously stated, 'the medium is the message' which means that the characteristics of the particular medium are not simply channels through which unaltered communication is directed but effect the particular 'message' being communicated and particular media favour particular types of messages<sup>79</sup>. In this case, the fact that each tradition is given its own equivalent section, arranged mostly alphabetically, with equivalent categories and

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<sup>79</sup> Referenced in Horsfield, P. "Media" in Morgan, D. (ed.) *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture* (2008) London: Routledge: p120

selecting quite similar features reinforces their equivalency and compatibility. Furthermore, these religions are presented as part of a common Scottish society, which they contribute to but are legitimately represented by its devolved government which 'integrates' (but does not fully 'assimilate'<sup>80</sup>) each of them, without being defined by any one of them.

*A Guide to the Faith Communities of Scotland (Guide)*

The simplest and most compact is *A Guide to Faith Communities in Scotland* (henceforth the *Guide*) which was first compiled 10 years ago but revised in light of the 2011 census in 2014, in consultation with the religious communities<sup>81</sup> and is now available from Interfaith Scotland's website<sup>82</sup>. The religions represented are, the 'founding' traditions ordered alphabetically: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and The Bahá'í Faith, followed later by the 'non-founding' traditions: Paganism, Brahma Kumaris and Jainism. In presenting information about each of the religions which are each assigned a two-page section, it relies on the same categories: 'basic beliefs', 'customs and practices', 'places of worship', 'main festivals', 'food and diet' and 'community concerns'<sup>83</sup>.

Interfaith Scotland's aims to represent the compatibility and similarity of the religions, while also acknowledging and attracting interest through their diverse practices, as well as advocating on their behalf are quite evident. Whilst the similarity of structure suggests editing, the information itself is almost certainly contributed to a large extent by members of the religious community themselves. This is most apparent with the section on the Brahma Kumaris which simply discusses their institution The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU)<sup>84</sup>. What is most striking about the document

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<sup>80</sup> See chapter 6

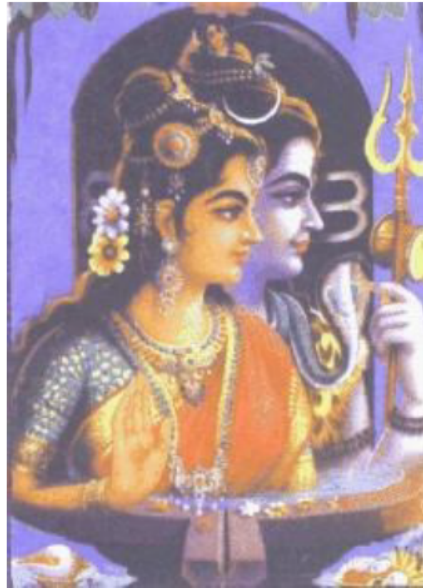
<sup>81</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p16

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/publications/> (last accessed 05/10/2015)

<sup>83</sup> IFS *A Guide to Faith Communities in Scotland* n.d. Glasgow: IFS

<sup>84</sup> IFS *Guide*: pp22-23

is how little information it presents about specific 'communities' or even about these religions in Scotland, it is a general guide to world religions which does not describe denominations, the ethnic character of Judaism or even mention India in relation to Hinduism.



### Places of Worship

Hindus frequently view systematic organisation with some mistrust, believing it to be often showy and wasteful. Likewise, worship and general religious activity are commonly centred around the home. However Hindu temples or *Mandirs*, which have a priest, educated in the scriptures, do have

### Main Festivals

There are many religious festivals which are celebrated in different ways by different communities. The most commonly celebrated festivals are *Diwali* (or *Deepavali*), the *Festival of Lights*, and *Navrathri*, nine nights during which goddesses such as *Durga*, the Great Mother, are worshipped. This takes place over 9 days and nights twice a year.

### Food and Diet

The influence of charity is apparent in the importance attached to hospitality. Every pious Hindu is expected to keep some food aside for an unexpected guest and no-one should ever be turned away hungry. The reverence for life surfaces again in the concept of *ahimsa* (non-injury), one of the highest principles which encourages many Hindus to be vegetarian.

### Concerns of the Community

Hindus should show love and respect for all beings as a way of

Image: sample of the Hinduism section of *The Guide*: p11

### *Values in Harmony (Values)*

As I will discuss more fully later, especially in the chapter on IFS and representations of the 'Non-religious', IFS have increasingly related to organised Non-religious groups, especially the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS). This is partially a result of their working

with the HSS in relation to the Scottish Government which attempts to draw on consultation from representatives of all sections of the population. This also fits a structured and limited pluralism which represents the population according to the category of 'religion' but is also dependent on representation through institutionalised groups and philosophical-ethical traditions. The Scottish Government, IFS and the HSS have increasingly come to rely on the category of 'belief' which was formally introduced as a protected characteristic alongside 'religion' through the 2010 Equality Act<sup>85</sup>. This classifies Non-religious identities based on philosophical positions as defined by inner, personal significance, which would appear to have been constructed to incorporate the 'ethical life stance'<sup>86</sup> of Humanism. This is most likely because Humanism can be equated with religious traditions and can be used to encourage ethical behaviours conducive to an integrated nation of many faiths (and beliefs).

This was reflected in the document *Values in Harmony* produced in 2011, which attempts to demonstrate the conformity of 11 religion and belief traditions in Scotland to a common system of values centred on the 'Golden Rule': do unto others what you would have them do to you. The 11 traditions, each with their own section are, this time listed fully alphabetically with no distinctions between the founding and non-founding groups: (the) Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormonism), Hinduism, Humanism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Paganism and Sikhism. The content of this document was contributed to by lay representatives from each of the traditions who organised a focus group which took care to represent women and younger people (under 30 years<sup>87</sup>). Each section consists of an introductory overview, photography and symbolism but primarily quotations from scriptures or

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<sup>85</sup> *The Equality Act (2010)* Part II, Chapter 1.10.2. quoted and referenced in The University of Edinburgh, A. *Faith and Belief in Scotland: A Contemporary Mapping of Attitudes and Provisions in Scotland* (2014) Edinburgh: Crown Copyright 2014: p6, The Scottish Government 2011: p45

<sup>86</sup> SIFC *Values* 2011: p48

<sup>87</sup> This can be interpreted as an indication of the increasing awareness of the limitations of institutionalised interfaith and perhaps internal debates over issues of representation.

literary sources related to the golden rule and themes such as: love, compassion, justice respect for community, respect for nature etc. While two joint working meetings were held to ensure that there were no ‘offending’ quotes<sup>88</sup>, in general the community representatives appear to have had quite a bit of freedom regarding their section – which the use of the Swastika as a sacred symbol in the Hindu and Jain sections,<sup>89</sup> despite its popular associations with the Nazis, would seem to indicate.

The reliance on literary sources such as scriptures, philosophers and other writers particularly reinforces the identification of ‘religions’ and equivalent ‘beliefs’ with intellectual, global, timeless and universalistic traditions informing but not bound to specific communities. This ethos is particularly demonstrated by two cases, the Pagan section which is presented as not only embodied by intellectual traditions but those from different cultures and time periods: from Babylonian proverbs to contemporary Pagan writers such as Starhawk<sup>90</sup>. The other significant example is the way the Humanist tradition is explicitly presented as *the* tradition of the ‘Non-religious community’<sup>91</sup> which can be utilised to stress their compatibility with their ‘religious’ compatriots. *Values* does, unlike the *Guide* provide contact details for specific groups within Scotland but nonetheless these traditions are presented as relatively ‘context free’<sup>92</sup>, as not bound to particular bounded communities, as appropriable and compatible with more contingent forms of belonging. They therefore can be rendered complementary with a sense of bounded national community.

The other sections of *Values*, including the foreword written by a government minister (Fergus Ewing MSP), are used to stress the importance of building on these stipulated shared values to act as members of a shared society, which is sometimes

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<sup>88</sup> SIFC *Values* 2011: p6

<sup>89</sup> SIFC *Values* 2011: p43 and 59

<sup>90</sup> SIFC *Values* 2011: pp68-71

<sup>91</sup> SIFC *Values* 2011: p10

<sup>92</sup> Gellner, E. *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: pp52-61

implicitly but often explicitly identified with Scotland<sup>93</sup>. The document may stress the need to respect diversity but it also stresses the supposedly inherent unity within that diversity which stems from common habitation of Scotland. It is notable that while certain forms of multiculturalism are championed, the document also explicitly critiques what it refers to as 'mosaic multiculturalism': the concept that communities can lead parallel but largely separate lives from each other within the same space<sup>94</sup>. This does entail that it is shared national identification and not religious or ethnic identification which is stressed as the predominant socio-political identity.

### The NHS Documents

Similar styles and themes are found in the documents that IFS have produced in collaboration with the Scottish NHS. One of the key documents is *Reflections on Life Matters* produced in-house by NHS Scotland in 2011 with over 200 pages, compared to *Values* at just under 100 and the 27-page *Guide*. It involved contributions from representatives of 13 religion and belief groups: Bahá'í, 'Believer-not-Belonger', Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jain, Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh along with the contributions from five NHS Chaplains. The sections of this document are arranged by theme rather than tradition, such as: peace, thanksgiving and forgiveness, healing and the meaning of life and loss, death and bereavement which are then broken down by the various traditions.

*Reflections* is in some respects like *Values* but the emphasis is on comfort rather than moralising and the selected sources tend to be poetic rather than doctrinal, though the Brahma Kumari sections offer a kind of guided meditation to readers<sup>95</sup>. *A Celebration of New Life* is similar but far shorter and aimed specifically at new and expectant mothers and is restricted to readings from scriptural sources from the seven 'founding'

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<sup>93</sup> SIFC *Values* 2011: p4

<sup>94</sup> SIFC *Values* 2011: p8

<sup>95</sup> NHS Scotland *Reflections on Life Matters* (2011) Glasgow: NHS Scotland: p12

traditions<sup>96</sup>. NHS Scotland's *Spiritual Care: A Multi-Faith Resource for Healthcare Staff* lists IFS' *Guide* as a source for their overview of the care of patients from different religious and belief traditions<sup>97</sup> but more specifically activists involved with IFS, including Geoff Lachlan (who edited *Reflections*) and Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, sat on the steering group for NHS Scotland's *Spiritual Care Matters: An Introductory Resource for all NHS Scotland Staff* which is a detailed guide to religious and spiritual care for NHS staff<sup>98</sup>.

### *Belief in Dialogue*

One of the themes which can be deduced from an overview of IFS' educational documents is the affinity between the espousal of unity in diversity in relation to common universalistic values and the act of being a good 'global', 'local' and 'national' citizen<sup>99</sup>. IFS are, as already noted, concerned with issues related to global justice, working with refugees and refugee charities but also in relation to environmentalist causes. Its youth committee produced a booklet entitled *Our Sacred Earth: A Guide for Becoming More Eco-Friendly in Your Faith Community*. The integration of global, national, local and specific communal concerns is evident from the title, along with its use of scriptural quotations and injunctions to study environmental aspects of sacred texts. It primarily consists though of everyday tips for adopting a more environmentally friendly lifestyle<sup>100</sup>.

This format of presenting means of specific social issues related to religious communal life in Scotland is evident from some of their NHS collaborations and from *Our Sacred Earth*, are particularly evident from one of their most important documents:

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<sup>96</sup> SIFC n.d. *A Celebration of New Life* Glasgow: SIFC

<sup>97</sup> NHS Scotland *Spiritual Care: A Multi-Faith Resource for Healthcare Staff* n.d. Edinburgh: NHS Scotland: p40

<sup>98</sup> NHS Scotland *Spiritual Care Matters: An Introductory Resource for all NHS Scotland Staff* (2009): Edinburgh: NHS Scotland: p63

<sup>99</sup> A categorisation frequently repeated in the literature which reinforces the notion that there are distinct 'levels' of interaction, including the national one e.g. SIFC *Newsletter September 2010: Issue 18* (2010): Glasgow: SIFC: p12

<sup>100</sup> Scottish Inter Faith Council Youth Committee *Our Sacred Earth: A Guide for Becoming More Eco-Friendly in Your Faith Community* n.d. Glasgow: SIFC: p12

*Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations in Scotland Good Practice Guide*. This document was produced in 2011 (a productive year for the then SIFC) in the name of the Scottish Government through the Scottish Working Group for Religion and Belief Relations. The working group was chaired by Sister Smyth and involved at least three other interfaith activists involved with IFS: Dr Maureen Sier, Farkhanda Chaudry MBE and the Rev. Tom MacIntyre as well as Ron MacLaren of the HSS and two other members<sup>101</sup>.

The document is presented as a guide for engaging in dialogue between different religion and belief communities and the need for religious and Non-religious Scots to engage in dialogue is given particular stress<sup>102</sup>. It provides techniques, guidelines for holding events or even forming organisations, engaging with the media or establishing newsletters. It provides an overview of some hypothetical activities from visits to places of worship, to interfaith Burn's Suppers to art projects as inclusive events through which dialogue between communities could take place<sup>103</sup>. It also provides information on the various pre-existing structures and organisations which facilitate dialogue such as IFS itself and local interfaith groups<sup>104</sup>. It disseminates a particular normative view of Scottish society as multi-cultural and multi-faith and presents means by which this can be institutionalised or made part of the routines of life in communities across the nation. It reinforces a sense of belonging to an overarching nation bound by shared civic institutions, referenced through common cultural touchstones and which is secular because it incorporates but is not defined by any specific religious identification.

The vision of Scotland that IFS promotes has become widely and successfully entrenched but it is important to acknowledge that this relationship between religion and national identity is relatively novel and is preceded by a long history of Christian

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<sup>101</sup> The Scottish Government 2011: p51

<sup>102</sup> The Scottish Government 2011: p3

<sup>103</sup> The Scottish Government 2011: pp13-18

<sup>104</sup> The Scottish Government 2011: pp10-12

predominance. This heritage has helped to determine the social environment within which IFS operates, because it has shaped the position and perception of different religious groups and their relationship with Scottish identity. However, Scotland has not simply moved from continuous religious hegemony to religious pluralism.

Scottish Christianity has not been a singular phenomenon. Scottish national identity was appropriated by different Christian movements at different times before it was secularised – differentiated enough from specific religious identities to allow it to be compatible with multiple religious identities. This should demonstrate the contingency and lack of absolute security which the current pluralist construction of Scottish national identity shares with its forebears, though the particular past contained within ‘Scotland’ is a powerful source of communal identity building and is continuously utilised by differing actors in relation to Scotland and the communities within it.

### **Historical Context**

The historical context of contemporary Scotland which has shaped IFS and within which they operate, is in certain respects quite specific. It is the product of specific processes of nation formation and a distinctive religious history. This history has not only shaped the social environment but is also the source of collective memory or narratives for the various communities and groups in Scotland. It provides different reservoirs of meaning and often contrary cultural resources which actors can and have used to define their identity and legitimate their interests or values within the Scottish context. The disorganised and distinctive characteristics of ‘Scottish’ collective memory have been the subject of much commentary. The historian Marinell Ash evocatively compared the romanticisation of key events and icons of Scottish history such as Robert the Bruce and the Highland Clearances to ‘peaks’ of memory covered in mist, obscuring the bulk of the landscape and the connections between these ‘peaks’ much like the romantic image of

the Scottish landscape itself<sup>105</sup>. The journalist Neal Ascherson characterised Scottish history as ‘rubbish tip’ from which scavengers take from it what they wish, unlike the well-maintained ‘garden’ histories of many countries. Ascherson praises this as presenting opportunities for re-imagination and to avoid the single or competing ‘commanding’ historical narratives of some countries<sup>106</sup>. Certainly, if this is an accurate depiction of Scottish collective memory then it could be particularly conducive to pluralism.

Even the pre-Christian heritage of Scotland represented by archaeological sites such as the standing stones of Callanish on the island of Lewis have been used symbolically by the Pagan community<sup>107</sup>. Though the stones predate the formation of Scotland itself and little is known about their original purpose. The religious history of Scotland has until the 20<sup>th</sup> century been overwhelmingly Christian. Much of the literary, artistic, cultural, symbolic and built heritage of Scotland is Christian. Even those elements which can be used to distinguish Scottish Christian heritage from the broader Christian world such as ‘Celtic’ crosses and illuminations, are nonetheless firmly Christian. The formation of Scotland as a kingdom, as a cultural identity and nation occurred in the Christian era. It was Christian discourses and symbols which were used in their construction, even if, religiously plural and secular significance have become vitally important in contemporary Scotland. This heritage can be used by Christians, including Christian traditionalists and exclusivists to assert claims over the nation. However, IFS have found it useful to acknowledge this heritage while using it as a foundation upon which to construct a religiously pluralist vision of Scottish identity<sup>108</sup>.

The territory of the modern nation of Scotland was inhabited by several peoples in the Early Middle Ages: the Britons, the Norse, the Angles, the Gaels (known as the

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<sup>105</sup> Referenced in McCrone, D. *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation* (1992) Routledge: London: p18

<sup>106</sup> Ascherson, N. *Stone Voices: The Search for Scotland* (2002) London: Granta: ppvii-viii

<sup>107</sup> E.g. *IFS Guide*: p21

<sup>108</sup> E.g. *IFS Newsletter Summer 2014: Issue 26* (2014) Glasgow: IFS: pp6-7

Scots) and the Picts. It was the political fusion of the Gaels and Picts under a unified kingdom in the 9<sup>th</sup> century which began to forge Scotland as we know it today, especially as it progressively incorporated the territories of the Angles and Britons in the south and Norse in the north. It was the Gaelic Scots who become politically and culturally predominant at the time and which gave rise to the common ethno-national identity of the Scots as a people<sup>109</sup>. Nonetheless the relative ethnic homogeneity of Scotland during much of its history can be contrasted with the diverse peoples from whom ethnic Scots as a group descend, which has been thematically connected by representatives of IFS to modern ethnic, cultural and religious diversity<sup>110</sup>.

Notably though, Scotland cannot be described as culturally homogenous regardless of how successfully a common ethno-national identity was asserted, due to the persistence of at least two distinctive languages throughout most of its history. The Scots Gaelic language is a close but distinct relative of the Irish language as a member of the Celtic language family and was long predominant, supplanting the languages of the Picts, Norse and Britons (closely related to Welsh but belonging to another branch of the Celtic family than Scots Gaelic). It continued to be a major spoken and written language of much of Scotland until the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, though it was supplanted as the politically dominant language from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The language of the Angles in south-eastern Scotland persisted and developed into a language known as Scots or Lallans in south-eastern Scotland and which began to supplant Gaelic in the late Middle Ages. Lallans spread throughout the south, central and north-eastern regions or the Lowlands ('Lallans'). Lallans is a Germanic language which is derived from the Northumbrian dialect of Old English but which diverged. It became a distinctive written and spoken language with a substantial literature. Its derivation from

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<sup>109</sup> Broun, D. "Defining Scotland and the Scots Before the Wars of Independence" in Broun, D., Finlay, R.J., Lynch, M. (eds.) *Image and Identity: The Making and Re-Making of Scotland Through the Ages* (1998) John Donald Publishers Ltd: Edinburgh: p4-5

<sup>110</sup> ACTS: p3

Old English and subsequent strong English influence means that it can also be regarded as a dialect of English, though its political, cultural and historic significance within Scotland means that I will refer to it as a language. Both languages, despite their major differences can be used in the construction of Scottish identity and as cultural touchstones or markers by interfaith groups but both have been supplanted by English as the working language of the country. These languages are not only useful as cultural resources to represent Scottish national identity but can also be used to further assert cultural diversity as intrinsic rather than novel within Scotland.

Historically, actors within Scotland may have claimed a distinctive political-cultural identity of one form or another but this was given significance within the broader framework of Christendom. This was often asserted against the dominant power of an expansionist Kingdom of England. Resistance to English invasion and the Medieval wars of independence provided a defining national narrative and mythologised national icons such as Sir William Wallace and King Robert the Bruce (Robert I). The recognition of the Scots as a people and of Scotland as a kingdom was to a large extent dependent on recognition by the Roman Catholic Church. Further, this identity was given shape by Christian symbolism with the establishment of the Apostle St Andrew as the country's patron saint whose symbol of the x-shaped cross was used to create the national flag – the Saltire<sup>111</sup>.

The relationship between Scottish identity and Christianity shifted irrevocably during the Scottish Reformation from 1560 led by John Knox and the formation of a new Protestant national church – the Church of Scotland (CS, known in Lallans as 'the Kirk')<sup>112</sup>. The Kirk is still the established national church, though it does not have the same political power as the Church of England within England, it is nonetheless still influential and

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<sup>111</sup> McCrone 1992: p19

<sup>112</sup> Lynch, M. "A Nation Born Again?: Scottish Identity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" in Broun, Finlay and Lynch 1998: p84-85

became for many Scots a pillar of national identity<sup>113</sup>. It certainly shaped that identity through its establishment of a nationwide parish school system<sup>114</sup> and differentiated Scotland from other nations by adopting a distinctive Protestant tradition - Presbyterianism. While the Kirk was initially disputed by supporters of Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism, it was the latter that became predominant. Though substantial Episcopalian and some Catholic minorities remained in the country, especially in the Highlands and the north-east<sup>115</sup>, the Presbyterian dominance over the major cities and towns of the Lowlands meant that they successfully monopolised representations of Scottish religious identity.

Both Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism are Protestant but Episcopalianism - represented in Scotland by the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC), like the Church of England, has retained some features of Catholicism such as the predominance of Bishops (Gk. *episcopoi*) in church government. Presbyterianism is a system of church government which is often described as 'democratic', in which the national church is ultimately determined by the lay elders (Gk. *presbyteroi*) of a parish congregation who appoint ministers and the overall national church. This system is constructed from the parish level to regional areas (Presbyteries, equivalent to Diocese in Episcopalian and Catholic systems) and at the national level with the General Assembly (equivalent to a synod) led by the Moderator who is elected on an annual basis<sup>116</sup>. This system can be differentiated from those traditions such as Congregationalism in which local congregations are almost fully autonomous due to its emphasis on its national structure.

The developing relationship between Presbyterianism and Scottish national identity from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards is complex. This is set against major political

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<sup>113</sup> Lynch 1998: p97, McCrone 1998: p37 and pp88-89

<sup>114</sup> Brown, C.G. *Religion and Society in Scotland Since 1707* (1997) Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh: p74

<sup>115</sup> Bruce, S. *No Pope of Rome: Anti-Catholicism in Modern Scotland* (1985) Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing: p8

<sup>116</sup> Brown 1997: p18

changes, primarily the succession of Scotland's King James VI of the House of Stuart, to the thrones of England and Ireland as James I in 1603. While the three kingdoms remained formally separate with their own parliaments, James unsuccessfully championed both their incorporation into a single kingdom and acceptance of Anglicanism. His successor Charles I attempted to impose episcopacy on the Kirk which produced a Scottish Presbyterian rebel movement known as 'the Covenanters' from 1638<sup>117</sup>. Episcopacy was forcefully imposed by Charles II in 1660<sup>118</sup>. Presbyterianism was later restored through the coup against James II and VII (known as 'the Glorious Revolution') led by the Dutch Prince William of Orange and Mary Stuart (reigning jointly as William II and III and Mary II of England, Scotland and Ireland) in 1688<sup>119</sup>.

While Presbyterianism has until the present day been presented as the continuous predominant religious tradition of Scotland since the Reformation, its ability to reshape national identity has been mixed. It provided a new means of unifying the nation and demarcating it from potential absorption by England but also divided largely Presbyterian Lallans speaking southern Scotland from the Episcopalian and Catholic Gaelic speaking Highlands. While a common national identity was maintained into the modern era; religious, cultural and linguistic differences, as well as sharp differences in lifestyle led to sharper boundaries between Highland and Lowland Scotland. Further, their acceptance of the King James Bible helped to introduce a stronger English language influence on Scotland which may have diminished the independent status of Lallans.

During the reign of Queen Anne Stuart, the Kingdoms of Scotland and England formed the Kingdom of Great Britain through the 1707 Treaty of Union<sup>120</sup>. While many Kirk ministers were initially vocal opponents of the Union, the Treaty guaranteed the

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<sup>117</sup>Young, J.R. "The Scottish Parliament and National Identity from Union of the Crowns to the Union of Parliaments, 1603-1707" in Broun, Finlay and, Lynch 1998: pp107-110

<sup>118</sup> Young 1998: pp113-118

<sup>119</sup> Young 1998: p122

<sup>120</sup> Subsequently unified with the Kingdom of Ireland in 1801, the formation of the Irish Free State (now the Republic of Ireland) has rendered the state of which Scotland forms a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

independence of the Scottish Church along with separate Scottish legal and education systems. Lacking a separate Parliament until 1999, the Kirk could plausibly claim that its General Assembly acted as such and it also helped to maintain a distinctive national identity<sup>121</sup>. On the other hand, for the most part the Kirk also encouraged support for the Union through its ties to the monarchy, and even encouraged a British identity defined in relation to Catholic Ireland and France as Protestant.

While Scottish national identity was maintained, attachment to Britain and especially to the emerging British Empire became significant in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many Scots were actively involved in the governance, operation and military expansion of the empire, including its darkest aspects such as the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The opening of Scotland to wider global influence through the Union though also served to loosen the Kirk's monopoly on Scotland as much as its position was legally guaranteed. The Scottish Enlightenment, associated with figures such as David Hume and Adam Smith, with its promotion of free enquiry and scepticism including towards religion, society and governance helped to bring this about<sup>122</sup>.

Paradoxically, being increasingly subject to English and global influences, perhaps along with the loss of independence gave rise to a concern to promote, protect, rediscover and sometimes invent Scottish culture. Much like other contemporaneous European nations, the Scottish Romantic movement drew on different Scottish cultural resources to demarcate the nation. This included James Macpherson's epic poem *Ossian* partially derived from Gaelic poetry and partially invented by Macpherson but the Lallans poetry of Robert Burns also became significant. This romantic national culture was represented visually by symbolism adapted from traditional dress once exclusive to the Highlands, primarily the short or modern kilt (philibeg, as opposed to the traditional

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<sup>121</sup> Keating, M. *The Government of Scotland: Public Policy Making After Devolution* (2005) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: p79

<sup>122</sup> Devine, T.M. *The Scottish Nation: A Modern History* (2012) London: Penguin: pp65-66

'great kilt'). The short kilt was particularly promoted by the novelist Walter Scott and became associated with the more recently invented clan tartan traditions<sup>123</sup>.

These symbols are important because, as evident from depictions of interfaith events, the Romantic movement provided a common stock of symbols which can be appropriated and used to symbolise Scotland - a secular cultural language not dominated by any one religious tradition. This also made it easier to assert a common cultural identity instantly recognisable as Scottish and which further insulated Scots from full assimilation but also can be taken on as symbolism by newly established communities in the county exemplified by the creation of minority tartans<sup>124</sup> and by many of the activities of IFS.

Like other western countries, the shape of Scottish society was irrevocably changed by the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation which concentrated the overwhelming majority of the Scottish population in the cities of the central belt – Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and the various towns between them. Huge numbers of Highland tenant farmers forced from their ancestral lands by their clan chiefs, a process known as the Highland Clearances. It drove many Highlanders to coastal villages and the Lowland cities but also to emigrate to England, Australasia or North America<sup>125</sup>. This undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on the Gaelic language which is now spoken by only about 1% of the population<sup>126</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup> Trevor-Roper, H. "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland" in Hobsbawm, E.J. and Ranger, T. (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: pp21-22, pp29-31, Nairn, T. *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (1977) Edinburgh: New Left Books: p96, pp115-116, Devine 2012: p234, Cameron, E.A. "Embracing the Past: The Highlands in Nineteenth Century Scotland" in Broun Finlay and Lynch 1998: p177

<sup>124</sup> E.g. [www.islamictartan.com/](http://www.islamictartan.com/) (last accessed 17/5/16), McCall, C. "First official Jewish tartan unveiled" in *The Scotsman* Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2016

<sup>125</sup> Devine 2012: pp174-175

<sup>126</sup> National Records of Scotland 2011 *Census: Key results on Population, Ethnicity, Identity, Language, Religion, Health, Housing and Accommodation in Scotland – Release 2A* (2013) Edinburgh: Crown Copyright 2013: p2

Religion continued to be important to Scottish national identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but these seismic shifts in Scottish society and culture meant newer relationships between religion and national identity. The Presbyterian tradition, while still predominant, could no longer be monopolised by the established Church, which experienced numerous secessions, most notably the 1843 'Great Disruption' led by Thomas Chalmers - founder of the Free Church<sup>127</sup>. This demonstrates the way actors tap reservoirs of collective memory or actively gather cultural resources from a common past, this religious revival re-established the significance of the Reformation history and the Covenanter rebels away from the prior Romantic focus on the Scottish Middle Ages<sup>128</sup>. To demonstrate this further one must bear in mind that this interest in the Reformation and the once crucial significance of the Disruption itself have been eclipsed once again by other historical interests<sup>129</sup>.

Nonetheless the crucial Medieval icons of Bruce and Wallace retained their popularity and the common symbolic language established by the Romantics was not abandoned. Rather these symbols were combined with a fervent unionism into a kind of Scottish nationalism which proclaimed that the heroes of the wars of independence had ensured that Scotland was never defeated and assimilated but become equal partners in the Union and Empire with England<sup>130</sup>. The fact that these cultural threads were maintained and disseminated though did mean that they could be appropriated for different interests. A combination of distinct Scottish nationalism and British unionism was also shaped by a Protestant identity which distinguished it from Irish Catholicism<sup>131</sup>. Large numbers of primarily Irish Catholics emigrated to Scotland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, often escaping the potato famine. Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian, Lithuanian

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<sup>127</sup> Devine 2012: pp374-377

<sup>128</sup> Devine 2012: p364

<sup>129</sup> Lynch 1998: pp82-83

<sup>130</sup> Morton, G. "What If?: The Significance of Scotland's Missing Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century" in Broun, Finlay and Lynch 1998: p154, pp164-170

<sup>131</sup> Bruce 1985: pp48-49

and other groups along with some Eastern European Jewish migrants, made Scotland far more religiously and ethnically diverse<sup>132</sup>.

However, the growth and increasing entrenchment of Catholic communities in central Scotland also led to persistent sectarian tensions. These became particularly attached to football clubs such as Glasgow Rangers and Celtic, which continue to be a problem in the country. A desire to maintain Protestant hegemony in Scotland may have helped to reunify many of the Presbyterian denominations including most congregations of the Free Church, in 1929<sup>133</sup>. It was certainly the case that anti-Irish Catholic sentiment was expressed at the General Assembly of that year with an infamous proposal (albeit not an officially endorsed one) called *The Menace of the Irish Race to our Scots Nationality*<sup>134</sup>. In modern Scotland the major churches, the government and mainstream media are unanimous in their condemnation of sectarianism which is now rarely associated with actual religious practice. However, it is still a lingering issue and one that concerns the government, churches and major actors within civil society<sup>135</sup>. This issue does provide a crucial background which can help explain governmental and church support of the IFM in Scotland which could address the issue of Protestant-Catholic sectarianism but also relieve anxieties about other potential forms of sectarianism or similar issues which could emerge in an increasingly plural society.

Scotland continued to be a largely Presbyterian, Protestant and Christian society into the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as one politically integrated into a centralised UK, despite Scottish cultural nationalism, and one firmly committed to the Union. Scotland was represented through its separate legal system, Scottish MPs in the UK Parliament at Westminster, who often informally voted on Scottish matters by themselves, and distinct civil service which was administered by the Scottish Office and the Secretary of State for

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<sup>132</sup> Devine 2012 pp518-522

<sup>133</sup> Brown 1997: p39

<sup>134</sup> Bruce 1985: p46

<sup>135</sup> Geoghegan, P. "Sectarianism still forms divide" in *The Scotsman* 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2013

Scotland<sup>136</sup>. While pressure for home rule or even independence had mounted during periods of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the experience of the Second World War and construction of the expansive British welfare state appeared to make British centralism secure<sup>137</sup>. However, the predominance of both Protestant and British unionist hegemony was undermined in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Scotland experienced one of the most rapid shifts from religious monopoly to increasing secularisation from the 1960's onwards<sup>138</sup> which can be hard to explain but increasing education and social changes may have effected this<sup>139</sup>. While the Church of Scotland continues to be recognised as the national church, church attendance and the Church of Scotland's cultural and political influence has certainly declined. Scottish society at the same time became more religiously and ethnically diverse. From the late 1940s increasing immigration from the UK's former colonies occurred. While even Scotland's cities did not become as ethnically and religiously diverse as major English cities such as London, Manchester or Birmingham, this did change its ethnic and religious landscape. While Jewish communities had already been established, the largest ethno-religious minority groups established at that time were South Asian Muslims along with a prominent Sikh community, communities of East Asian descent some of whom were Buddhist, and smaller communities of South Asian Hindus. It should also be noted that many other, smaller immigrant communities have formed in Scotland from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>.

During the 1990s in particular, the increasingly routine inclusion of religious minorities in Scottish public life became more visible and perhaps slowly encouraged the

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<sup>136</sup> Devine 2012: p307, Keating 2005: pp3-4

<sup>137</sup> Devine 2012: p630

<sup>138</sup> Though the breakdown of Presbyterian monopoly can be traced to much earlier roots, and a variety of alternative forms of religiosity have been analysed by Steven Sutcliffe through the biographies of counter-cultural figures in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, see Sutcliffe, S. "After 'the Religion of My Father's: The Quest for Composure in the 'Post-Presbyterian' Self in Abrams, L. and Brown, C.G. (eds.) *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (2010) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

<sup>139</sup> Brown 1997: p174

envisioning of Scotland as religiously and culturally plural society. While controversial at the time, St Mungo's Museum of Life and Art which sought to represent all religions was built next to Glasgow Cathedral and was representative of the future. Indeed, this was the venue in which IFS was launched<sup>140</sup>. Glasgow City Council was opened by a Muslim Imam in 1995 though ridiculed at the time as the 'Mosquing'<sup>141</sup> of the Council (similar traditions involving ministers in Scotland are referred to as 'Kirking'). These laid the groundwork for the Scottish public landscape evident from the literature of IFS. When the devolved Scottish parliament was established in 1999 instead of opening prayers invited speakers from different religious and Non-religious communities were invited to open the Parliament on a weekly basis, through a ritual known as 'time for reflection'. As has already been observed with many institutional forms of pluralism though, it is bound by particular regulations<sup>142</sup>.

These communities may be relatively small but they have become increasingly established within Scotland and now make up a considerably larger proportion of the population of the major cities than the national average. Non-white ethnic minorities make up 4% of the Scottish population in total but make up 12% of the population of Glasgow, 8% of Edinburgh and Dundee and 6% of Aberdeen<sup>143</sup>. According to the last census conducted in 2011 only 54% of Scottish respondents identified as 'Christian', which includes 16% 'Catholic' and 32% 'Church of Scotland' which has decreased by 11% since 2001. Now those claiming 'no-religion' are numbered at 37% which has increased by 9% since 2001 and has overtaken identification with the national church. Muslims are

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<sup>140</sup> MacCalman, J. "King takes 'holy war' to the Barras" in *The Herald* 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1993, Shields, T. "No Laughing Matter" in *The Herald* 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1993, see also Kelly, A. "St. Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow" in *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* (2005) 1:3: pp435-437

<sup>141</sup> Rev. Norris, A. "Mosquing of the council" in *The Herald* 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1995

<sup>142</sup> Bonney, N. "Established Religion, Parliamentary Devolution and the New State Religion in the UK" in *Parliamentary Affairs* (2013) 66: pp425-442: pp431-438

<sup>143</sup> National Records of Scotland 2013: p2, see Bond, R. "Minorities and Diversity in Scotland: Evidence from the 2011 Census" in *Scottish Affairs* (2017) 26:1: pp23-47 for an academic analysis of ethnic minorities in the 2011 census.

the largest religious minority making 1.4% of respondents while Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs together form 0.7% of the population and the Jewish population is about 6000<sup>144</sup>.

During the same period, support for centralised British government and identification as ‘British’ decreased with Scottish national identification becoming more prominent and more politicised, with support for Scottish devolution growing. This can be explained by factors such the break-up of the British Empire, the decline of the British manufacturing industry and the political disconnect between Scottish electors who favoured the Labour Party but who were massively outvoted by the larger number of voters in England who favoured the Conservative Party. The ascendancy of Margaret Thatcher as Conservative Prime Minister from 1979-1992 was highly unpopular in Scotland as her government privatised public institutions which were part of the welfare state and crucial to the post-war view of Britain as a centralised state<sup>145</sup>.

The perceived ‘democratic deficit’ between a centralised UK government and the Scots as an electorate and nation within the UK led to increasing calls for the re-establishment of a Scottish Parliament. A referendum held in 1979 returned a majority in favour of devolution but the comparatively low turnout and lack of an absolute majority meant that it was not considered binding<sup>146</sup>. During the following decades, a broad-based campaign for devolution shored up support among the Scottish population and civil society<sup>147</sup>, and in 1997 the newly elected Labour government promised to hold a referendum on the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. The referendum held in 1997 won with a landslide and the Scottish Parliament was duly established in 1999<sup>148</sup>.

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<sup>144</sup> National Records of Scotland 2013: p4

<sup>145</sup> Devine 2012:591-594

<sup>146</sup> Ascherson 2002: pp105-107, Devine 2012: p621

<sup>147</sup> Ascherson 2002 pp116-121, Keating 2005: p13

<sup>148</sup> Ascherson 2002: p171, Keating 2005: p18, Devine 2012: p631, on the relationship between religion and devolution, see Sutcliffe, S. “Unfinished Business – Devolving Scotland/Devolving Religion” in Coleman, S. and Collins, P. *Religion, Identity and Change: Perspectives on Religion in Global Transformations* (2004) London: Routledge

While Labour was long dominant in Scotland before and after devolution, the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP), though founded in the 1934, had slowly grown in strength since winning their first (Westminster) seat in 1967<sup>149</sup>. By the 1990's the SNP had begun to distance themselves from ethnic exclusionary nationalism and began to stress an inclusive, pluralist and multi-cultural image of Scottish society in contrast to British identity. This allowed them to construct Scottish identity as an alternative to traditional Scottish Protestant unionist nationalism through inclusive discourse towards Catholic (who had been traditionally suspicious of Scottish nationalism), ethnic and religious minorities and English people living in Scotland. The issue of constructing a common image for a nation which could not be presented as clearly culturally bounded was perhaps actually solved by appealing to diversity as an alternative narrative from Protestant ethnic unionist nationalism<sup>150</sup>.

The SNP were for a long time the second largest party in the nation but the Scottish Parliament with its Scottish base and proportional electoral system provided them with new opportunities. In 2007, they became the largest party in the Scottish Parliament and formed a minority government under Alex Salmond. They later won by a landslide in 2011<sup>151</sup> and have dominated Scottish politics ever since. As they are pro-independence they secured an agreement with the Conservative UK Government to hold a referendum on the issue of independence on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2014. Two multi-party and grassroots campaigning groups were formed: 'Yes Scotland' to campaign for independence and 'Better Together' to campaign against. A slim majority of Scots voted 'No' at 55%, with 44% voting in favour but the SNP have continued to hold on to power and won another landslide in the Westminster general election after the referendum (though slightly diminished in the latest general election<sup>152</sup>).

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<sup>149</sup>, Keating 2005: p55, Devine 2012: p325 and p574

<sup>150</sup> Lynch, P. "A Scots Mosaic" in *The Herald* 9<sup>th</sup> of September

<sup>151</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/election2011/overview/html/scotland.stm> (last accessed 8/9/17)

<sup>152</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2015/results> (last accessed 8/9/17)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2017/results> (last accessed 8/9/17)

As already mentioned, the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> have witnessed a rise in Scottish national identification, to a considerable extent at the expense of British identification. According to an ICM poll conducted in the Scotsman in 1992, 32% identified as Scottish only, 29% more Scottish than British, 29% as equally Scottish and British with only 3% as more British than Scottish, with British only 6%<sup>153</sup>. In 2011 83% of census respondents identified as Scottish, which matches but presumably does not absolutely correlate with those born in the nation also at 83%. 62% identified as Scottish only, 18% as Scottish and British and 8% as British only<sup>154</sup>.

Scottish identification is no longer firmly bound to British identity, to unionism, to Presbyterianism or Christianity but it has not translated into clear support for independence either. However, national identification has been increasingly politicised and is something which is no longer taken for granted. It is perhaps more consciously asserted in different ways according to differing separatist, autonomist and unionist national agendas. National identity can no longer be represented as a background cultural issue but one that people in Scotland must confront especially since devolution has brought democratic governance home.

It is unlikely that these processes of religious, cultural and political change are directly correlated with one another but the period from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards has produced rapid change and moves away from established tradition. Due to the increased autonomy of devolution, these processes are playing out specifically in Scotland and can be potentially directly reshaped, represented and interpreted within Scotland by a variety of actors. This environment of rapid changes to Scottish society can be characterised as: increasing national significance, newly established, increasingly powerful but still malleable political framework with civil institutions and practices

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<sup>153</sup> McCrone, D. Morris, A. and Kiely, R. *Scotland – the Brand: The Making of the Scottish Heritage* (1995) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: p172

<sup>154</sup> National Records of Scotland 2013: p3

emerging around it, as well as the changing character and position of religion<sup>155</sup>. This is the environment in which IFS operates, these are circumstances in which they have been able to establish a position for interfaith relations in the Scottish public sphere but also can account for a concern with the position of religion in a fast-changing country.

[W]e [the Consultative Group preceding the establishment of SIFC] talked about the future of Scotland, what was Scotland going to be like? And interestingly, one of the topics which came up was a fear that there would not be religious freedom and that different faiths would not be able to live out their religious beliefs...

we were going to be negotiating with a separate government...a Scottish Government, and I just think the Scottish Parliament gave us a kind of bigger understanding of what it was to be Scots and Scottish citizens<sup>156</sup>.

It has been important to place IFS in the contemporary social and historical context within which it operates. The historical developments of religion in Scotland and Scottish national and cultural identities demonstrate the inherent limitations of any form of representation of a territory or people. Also, while a particular discourse is prevalent or even hegemonic, its hegemony is never absolute or completely secure. For a long-time Christianity, and more specifically a form of Protestantism could monopolise Scottish identity. Scottish national identification was also by and large successfully incorporated into British Unionism. Contemporary Scotland is represented, including specifically by IFS, as a diverse nation which can combine representations of diversity with a pronounced Scottish cultural identity and an integrated, autonomous political framework.

‘Homogeneity’ and ‘diversity’ though are socially constructed conceptions which depend on social categories, collective identities and their acceptance. Scotland was

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<sup>155</sup> On religion and the issue of independence, see Rosie, M. “Tall Tales: Understanding Religion and Scottish Independence” in *Scottish Affairs* (2014) 23:3: pp332-341

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Sister Isabel Smyth OBE, SND 20/6/16

presented as Presbyterian when it had substantial (albeit largely Christian) minorities and is now presented as fundamentally diverse despite being far less diverse than many comparable countries. The particular ideological representation of the interrelationship between religious pluralism and Scottish national identity appears to be relatively successful for now but as I will show, it is inherently limited and as broader history demonstrates its predominance can never be absolute or unassailable.

### **The Chapters**

The chapters in this thesis begin with the theoretical and methodological chapter, which introduces the wider historical and academic contexts of the three core concepts of 'religion', 'nation' and the 'secular' along with the social constructionist lens through which Interfaith Scotland is presented. The other chapters of this thesis provide the empirical data which demonstrate the argument that IFS' representation of the relationship between religious pluralism and Scottish national identity reinforce a **structured and limited pluralism** and a **civic-cultural** and **secular form of nationalism**. This is achieved by focusing on the ways in which IFS relates to different groups and sections within the Scottish population defined by the category of 'religion' and to the broader construction of a religious plural Scottish national identity. This includes: representations of the Christian population, (non-Christian) religious minorities, the 'Non-religious' population and representations of the 'Scottish nation' as a whole.

The second chapter is the theory and method chapter: ***Social Categories and National Interfaith Pluralism: A General Overview of the Theoretical and Methodological Themes of 'Nation', 'Religion' and the 'Secular' Underlying Interfaith Scotland's 'One Nation Many Faiths' Paradigm***. This chapter will outline the underlying interpretive assumptions of the thesis, clarify and justify the limited but necessary scope of the research and its focus on the literature. It will also elaborate on the social constructionist approach with its debt to the work of the sociologist Peter Berger. It will then provide a historical and analytical overview of the core concepts of '**nation**',

'religion' and the 'secular' as convoluted terms which through their use, implicate this research in broader academic debates. As each of these concepts are historically and culturally contingent and at times both loaded and yet in other ways ambiguous, it will be necessary to outline my understanding and usage of them. The focus of this thesis is on the discernible emic use or application of these categories by IFS and their socio-political implications. Though my different aims and priorities, and my attempt to relate IFS' representations to wider debates and to subject it to critical analysis will entail that my etic application and understanding of these terms will sometimes diverge from theirs, I will therefore, lay out my own application and understanding of the core analytical concepts of this thesis but this will in no way take priority over their emic understanding and is no way intended to 'correct' it.

The theory and method chapter is followed by the four empirical chapters which will directly present and analyse their representations of the Scottish population. The third chapter of the thesis and first of the empirical chapters is: ***Heritage and Partnership: Interfaith Scotland and Representation of Scottish Christians through the Categories of 'Ecumenicism', 'Pluralism' and 'Secularism'***. Christians continue to form most of the Scottish population and the country was profoundly shaped by the influence of the religion. This chapter will explore how IFS have related to that dominant majority and successfully incorporated them into an interfaith pluralism. It will relate how much IFS and the Scottish IFM have depended on the active role of Christians and rest on Christian foundations. It analyses this historical process and means of representing Scottish Christians through the three categories of: 'ecumenicism', 'pluralism' and 'secularism'. The incorporation of Scottish Christians into IFS depended on a historical but still continuously reinforced common Christian identity which was the product of the ecumenical movement. This Scottish ecumenicism though is not inclusive of all Christian groups in the country but has allowed Christians to fit into IFS' construction of religious pluralism as an equal partner among other religions. This entails a form of secularism because it has involved accepting that Christians no longer have exclusive claims over

Scottish identity but has also allowed Christians to maintain some privileged influence in a secularising nation.

The fourth chapter is: ***Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Scotland and Representations of Scottish Religious Minorities through the Categories of 'Religion', 'Ethnicity' and 'National' Identity***. While Christians have certainly played a crucial historic role and form the majority, it is the presence of religious minorities which are crucial to the IFM in Scotland. Most religious minority groups are comparatively small and the products of comparatively recent immigration. IFS have played a key role in the facilitation and integration of religious minority groups into the practical and symbolic public life of the nation. These processes, as represented in the literature, have been dependent on the structured and limited pluralism of the IFM as well as the world religions paradigm and have integrated these groups into a particular construction of the Scottish nation. This will be analysed through the three categories of: **'religion', 'ethnicity' and 'national' identity**.

IFS' particular application of the category 'religion' stresses the universalistic, ethical, intellectual and symbolic content of broader traditions rather than on identifiable communities. Most of the minority communities are also related to particular 'ethnic' heritages which are not ignored or discouraged but are to an extent downplayed in favour of universalistic constructions of religion. When ethnicity is represented, it forms part of general displays of diversity compared with the reifications of religions. These representations of 'religion' and 'ethnicity' are rendered complementary and non-competitive with constructions of a common pluralist Scottish national identity which is represented as politically authoritative.

Chapter five is ***Otherness and Inclusion: Interfaith Scotland and Representations of the Scottish Non-Religious through Changing Forms of Engagement, the Search for 'Common Ground' and Representations of Humanism as a 'Belief' Tradition***. This chapter will chart the developing relationship between the 'Non-religious' population

and IFS, which shifted from one of disinterest, to concern, to a desire to relate closely to some groups within the Non-religious population of Scotland. This has been shaped by the concerns of the Scottish Government to represent and consult with different sections of the population as well as ensure harmonious relations between them. The introduction of the term 'belief' to equate organised Non-religious groups directly with religions has been crucial to this relationship. These processes will be analysed through three sequential but not strictly chronological stages: **changing forms of engagement**, the search for '**common ground**' and the representation of **Humanism as a 'Belief Tradition**.

IFS' engagement with the Non-religious moved from being almost entirely passive, to a reflection of concern with 'militant secularism' and to a concerted attempt to reach out to relatable groups and actors from Non-religious groups. The development of common values and means of relating is exemplified by the record of a conference held in 2013 at the Conforti Institute in Coatbridge in which Catholic, Interfaith and Non-religious activists expressed shared commitment to dialogue and mutual appreciation in contrast with 'other' members of their communities. Through their work with the Scottish Government IFS has developed a relationship with the HSS, and both IFS and the government use the intellectual and ethical tradition of Humanism to construct a common and compatible 'belief tradition' for the Non-religious population.

The last chapter before the conclusion to the thesis is chapter six: '**The Country in which we live': Interfaith Scotland and Representations of the Scottish Nation through 'Cultural Heritage', 'Secularism' and 'Civic Identity**'. The previous chapters have shown how IFS has related to segments of the Scottish population but in order to construct and disseminate the conception of Scotland as a plural society it is also necessary to show how they construct the overarching Scottish national identity into which these segments are fitted. I will draw on a further three categories to analyse this data: **cultural heritage**, **secularisation** and **civic identity**. This chapter will show how

Scottish cultural symbolism and a sense of common heritage are used to instil a shared but nonetheless still territorially bounded national identity. I will also demonstrate how IFS and their increasing close relationship with the government and Scottish civil society contribute to the secularisation of Scotland because the representation of Scots is even less tied to Presbyterianism or Christian churches because Scottish society is represented through diverse 'religions and belief' communities. The increasing reliance on broad consensus among such groups has actually made it difficult to oppose secular governance because of the inherent diversity of political positions among these representatives.

This does not make the relationship between IFS and the Scottish political and public sphere apolitical though. It reinforces an active civic identity that despite being a stateless nation, Scots of all religious identifications are 'citizens' of Scotland. This became particularly apparent during the campaigning for the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. Although IFS did not endorse either position, a sense of the plural Scots population as a bounded community defined by democratic participation and with the right to self-determination was quite evident. This constructs **Scotland as one, ultimately sovereign nation of many faiths.**

## Chapter 2: Social Categories and National Interfaith Pluralism: A General Overview of the Theoretical and Methodological Themes of ‘Nation’, ‘Religion’ and the ‘Secular’ Underlying Interfaith Scotland’s One Nation Many Faiths Paradigm

### Introduction

The key argument of this thesis is that Interfaith Scotland (IFS) constructs and disseminates an image of Scotland as **one nation of many faiths** through their organisation and literature. This reinforces Scottish national identity in a form that is compatible with religious pluralism but is nonetheless a form of nationalism, which I refer to as **civic-cultural nationalism**. However, this pluralism is also **structured and limited pluralism** defined by the **world religions paradigm (WRP)** which fits into a religiously-inclusive form of **secularism** compatible with the interests of the Scottish Government. It also reflects the power relations between groups and persons associated with ‘religious identifications<sup>1</sup>’ within the Scottish public sphere. IFS are dependent on the internalisation of compatible but differentiated social categories which they use to shape the image of Scottish society but nonetheless have wider correspondences than this specific Scottish case. These include ‘**religion**’ and its alters: ‘non-religion’ or the ‘**secular**’ but also the ‘**nation**’ itself along with other categories such as ‘ethnicity’. Throughout this thesis I will discuss their representation of what can be called the **one nation many faiths paradigm**, as it is built up using these categories.

Each chapter will present empirical evidence demonstrating their construction of Scottish society through their representations of specific segments of the population and will be discussed analytically according to the major social categories employed. The particular distinctions made among the population reflect my analytical concerns but are implicit within IFS’ own representations of the Scottish population. These will include: Scottish Christians and Christianity (or the religious majority), Scottish (non-Christian),

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<sup>1</sup> I term I here use to indicate all identifications related to the category of ‘religion’, including ‘Non-religious’.

religious minorities, the Scottish 'Non-religious' population and representations of the Scottish nation in general. I will analyse the construction of these groups according to categories such as: 'religion', 'ecumenicism', 'pluralism', 'secularism', 'ethnicity', 'national identity', 'cultural heritage' and 'civic identity', according to the needs of each chapter.

This chapter however, will offer a more general, comparative and theoretical discussion of the core social categories relevant to the argument of this thesis. This will necessitate engaging with the considerable academic literature related to these areas of study beyond the confines of the specific case study. The three core categories which will be discussed here are: 1) **'nations' and 'nationalism'**, 2) **'religion'** and 3) **'the secular'** which underlie much of Interfaith Scotland's work. Analysing these categories can provide new perspectives on the interfaith movement (IFM) which can critique its established image. This is vital because research into the interfaith movement from critical religious studies, social science or history has been lacking.

This lack of critical social analysis has meant that interfaith groups' relationship with their political environment, the power relations between groups and pre-established categories or narratives about religion have not been brought to the fore. Operating in national, secularised environments have affected interfaith groups, and like other institutions they are produced by agents with relative power shaped by and operating in these environments. In short, interfaith relations do not just happen, they are social and political. The IFM has never involved the simple assemblage of religions but the active jostling for power and representation of identifiable groups and agents who claim to represent 'religions', or indeed interfaith groups and the 'nation'. Interfaith groups may not be indivisible but their own emphasis on pluralism can render the IFM invisible or perhaps camouflaged by the traditions it represents. The way that the IFM shapes agents and their interaction itself should not be ignored and I contend in this thesis that the IFM and IFS are more than the sum of their parts.

However, much of this can only be fully demonstrated through the empirical analyses presented in later chapters. This chapter will elucidate the broader paradigms, developments and themes which IFS relate to and provide the analytical tools that I will use in working through the primary material. These theoretical discussions certainly cannot be exhaustive but will nonetheless help to make the later empirical analyses more well-rounded through engaging with broader comparative and theoretical discussions. As such, this will be related to the case examined in this thesis where possible but not as closely or fully as with the empirical chapters following this one.

Before the three core categories are discussed, it will be necessary to present some of the methodological approaches and assumptions which run through this chapter and the thesis in general. This includes the distinction between emic and etic perspectives, the importance of representation and interpretation and my approach to the agents discussed in the thesis in relation to their environment. Underlying all of this is a social constructionist approach which is particularly indebted to the work of Peter Berger, but also makes use of the concept of 'discourse' as one tool among many.

### **Methodological Assumptions and tools**

Firstly, it is important to bear in mind that the evidence used in this thesis is overwhelmingly focused on how these themes are discernible within the literature of IFS and related sources. This will be supplemented by evidence taken from interviews with a few leading figures: Dr Maureen Sier (current Director), Sister Isabel Smyth OBE SND (the founder) and John MacIntyre (interfaith officer of the Pagan Federation – Scotland) and the Scottish media. This textual focus on a relatively narrow range of sources means a dependence on my interpretation and my attempt to explain these processes and relations in social scientific terms. This thesis does not concentrate on a surface reading but attempts to apply a critical hermeneutic informed by theoretical academic discourses on nationalism, religion and secularism which necessarily makes impositions on these texts. This critical hermeneutic is necessary because these sources have the

specific aim of encouraging participation in interfaith relations, encouraging the engagement of diverse religious groups in Scottish public life and encouraging the Scottish public to embrace pluralism.

As these documents are for the most part publicly accessible and as IFS are quite capable of representing their organisation, aims and ideals themselves, my approach concentrates on analysis. The reader will be supplied with more than enough descriptive evidence to assess the validity of my arguments. I contend that concentrating on these specific sources can provide evidence relevant to broader comparative discussions of the development of nationalism, national identity, religious pluralism and secularism within post-devolutionary Scotland and the contemporary world generally. However, many of the observations made in this thesis must be circumscribed to these specific sources with potentially wider applicability. The focus is on how these themes, events and persons are represented in this body of literature (supplemented by evidence related to the wider context). Few concrete substantive claims are made about the wider reality of these themes in Scottish society and as this thesis is not based on ethnography or direct forms of evidence, the direct experiences of participants outside of those recounted in the literature cannot be stated with certainty. The focus is on representation rather than institutional, demographic or experiential reality.

#### Hermeneutics of Suspicion

Nonetheless as these representations do relate to real institutions, places, events and agents which are subject to my interpretation based on limited evidence, it is important to state my working methodological assumptions informing that interpretation. I will apply what has been called a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' in which, as stated above, the statements or accounts of agents are not taken as completely definitive but as reflections of their underlying ideological and social positions<sup>2</sup>. It is a working assumption that the agents involved have a range of motivations not confined to the value of interfaith

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<sup>2</sup> Gadamer, H.G. "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion" in *Man and World* (1984) 17: pp313-323: p317

relations or dialogue for its own sake, that actors pursue their perceived personal or collective interests but also that the ways that they do so and their degree of success, are dependent on specific forms of representation and power relations. The approach taken will involve 'reading in' these themes into the texts when they are not clearly acknowledged and where there is good evidence to support it.

However, the assumption made is not that the pursuit of perceived interests is an overriding or exclusive concern but rather part of how these agents relate to each other in a social environment. It is also assumed that the actors discussed here are generally sincere in their statements and actions as well. When they espouse the value of interfaith relations, dialogue, pluralism, inclusivity and national public-spiritedness as much as they are driven by a need to secure their interests within a framework defined by these values, they almost certainly mean what they say. Indeed, it will partially reflect the continuous representation, repetition and reinforcement of these ways of thinking and acting in a social framework. There will be varying degrees to which these are quite consciously espoused, but also as parts of their background environment, they can be less consciously expressed as part of the ingrained patterns of thought or even embodied actions of these agents<sup>3</sup>.

#### Methodological Agnosticism

As this thesis relates to several contentious and controversial areas of study, namely 'religion', 'nationalism' and 'secularism', it adheres to a 'methodologically agnostic'<sup>4</sup> approach in multiple ways. This means that no presumptions are made about the reality

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<sup>3</sup> This is something embodied in the Social Constructionist approach described below, in media studies, this is described as the 'culturalist' approach which attempts to balance analysis of the influence of social environment and material conditions with human agency in social processes. In media studies, this was used to critique the conception of the recipients of media as passive, as my focus is on a particular form of media, I would concur with this approach and do not intend to suggest that the audiences for these texts are passive, especially given that they are overwhelmingly interfaith activists themselves. See Morgan, D. "Introduction: Religion, Media, Culture: the Shape of the Field" in Morgan, D. (ed.) *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture* (2008) London: Routledge: pp3-4

<sup>4</sup> This term was coined by pioneering Scottish scholar of religion Ninian Smart referenced in Bowie, F. *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction* (2006) Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: p26

of many of the core claims or underlying worldviews of the actors represented aside from those which can be directly empirically addressed. The most obvious example in religious studies would be the validity of claims about 'extra-natural' beings, forces or realms such as deities, karma or heaven<sup>5</sup> etc. This thesis is also agnostic regarding normative questions such as whether IFS should have the public role that it does or whether the religious and non-religious groups should be represented in the way that they are. It does not endorse any specific political position with regard to Scotland or in relation to nationalism or secularism. As I will explain below, some of the core concepts used will be defined for analytical reasons in various ways but is also agnostic to any sense of ultimate validity or authenticity of the identities of actors or groups. It is uninterested in questions such as whether certain groups are 'real' religions, whether appeals to established Scottish symbols should be viewed as 'authentically' Scottish or whether the churches embracing interfaith relations are 'truly' Christian etc.

This methodological agnosticism is certainly not applied to everything and obviously does not mean that no arguments or assertions are made. It simply means that the focus is on how IFS represent the particular social context, social groups and actors of contemporary Scotland. This does allow for the possibility of accuracy or inaccuracy, though things are rarely quite so clear cut. Certainly, if claims made by IFS can be verified or falsified through scientific research then this will be acknowledged. It was once claimed in the newsletter for example, that the media generally has a negative view of religion<sup>6</sup>, which has been contradicted by research on British media representations of religion which found not only that the British media was in general sympathetic to

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<sup>5</sup> Sutherland, L.T. "Tylor and Debates about the Definition of 'Religion': Then and Now" in Tremlett, P.F., Sutherland, L.T. and Harvey, G. (eds.) *Edward Burnett Tylor, Religion and Culture* (2017c) Oxford: Bloomsbury: p96, Sutherland, L.[T.] "Tylor and Neo-Tylorian Approaches to the Study of Religion: Re-evaluating an Important Legacy in the Theorisation of Religion" in *Paranthropology: Journal of Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal* (2012) 3: 3: pp47-57: p53

<sup>6</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p12

religion but decidedly critical of outspoken atheists<sup>7</sup>. Though the fact that one can find articles in the Scottish media hostile to religion in general should also be acknowledged as a demonstrable social fact. Most social scientific questions relevant to IFS and representation are in fact issues of demonstrable contingency and limitation which does not necessarily conflict with methodological agnosticism. For example, it is possible to acknowledge the limitations and specific character of their representations of religions and of Scotland in socio-historic terms without denying that they have genuine social basis and especially without denying or supporting these as norms. One can point out that these constructions are not the only ones which are, have been or could be asserted.

### Social Constructionism

The underlying methodology of this thesis is avowedly socially constructionist and this approach underlies the theoretical discussions of the IFM and the categories of nation, religion and the secular. This entails that all the categories, concepts, groups, worldviews, values and institutions discussed are ultimately the products of human action, sometimes even specific agents but always in an identifiable social environment which itself shapes those agents and their actions<sup>8</sup>. This may seem rather obvious in some cases, that social institutions like IFS were founded by specific persons at some point is unlikely to be controversial. However, it has not been uncommon for socially constructed groups, categories or ways of thinking to be treated as natural or endemic: to be naturalised - treated as ingrained in nature<sup>9</sup> or reified – treated as inert objects in themselves rather than meaningful products of human beings<sup>10</sup> e.g. that the gender roles of a culture are simply natural expressions of human biology.

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<sup>7</sup> Knott, K. Poole, E. and Taira, T. *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred* (2013) Farnham Ashgate: pp173-178

<sup>8</sup> Martin, C. *A Critical Introduction to the Study of Religion* (2014) London: Routledge: p21

<sup>9</sup> Martin 2014: p28, Koenig, M. and Knöbl, W. "Religion, Nationalism and European Integration" in Spohn W., Koenig, M. and Knöbl, W. *Religion and National Identities in an Enlarged Europe* (2015a) Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan: p7

<sup>10</sup> Berger, P. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (1969) London: Doubleday: p86

The social constructionism coupled with a critical approach should also help to avoid essentialism, treating these *phenomena* as having intrinsic or predictable characteristics especially as a single, indivisible *phenomenon* simply because they are given a label<sup>11</sup>, i.e. that ‘religion’ or ‘nationalism’ are essentially violent or peaceful. Furthermore, this approach encourages suspicion against claims to the universality of social phenomena or forms of them e.g. that all cultures and languages have a discrete domain of life which can be neatly translated as ‘religion’ or that the ‘nation’ were always the primary unity of political and cultural organisation. Social constructionism encourages a focus on the contingency and mutability of social phenomena.

However, social constructionism does not entail that socially constructed phenomena are somehow unreal, cannot be durable or that they can always be easily changed, controlled or destroyed by agents. Part of the reason for this is that they are social – determined by and related to a large group of agents rather than individuals but also because they are constructed – established within the social environment as a feature of it like any other structure<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, one example of this is the built environment and features of material culture which have been physically constructed. The degree to which social phenomena can be changed depends on the relative power of actors within a given context.

The social constructionism discussed here is indebted to the work of the sociologist Peter Berger who broke the processes of social constructionism down into three cyclical stages: ‘externalisation’, ‘objectivation’ and ‘internalisation’. The externalisation stage acknowledges that social constructions originate ultimately and originally in the human mind; but to be truly ‘social’ and effect other agents and the environment they live in, such conceptions must be externalised through action. This can include speech and writing as well as physical actions which bring them into the external

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<sup>11</sup> Martin 2014: pp37-38 and pp41-42

<sup>12</sup> Martin 2014: pp27-31

environment. This leads to the second phase, 'objectivation', where the products of human conception having been reproduced are now encountered in the external environment as part of the reality of the agents inhabiting it. As these have been rendered into external objects of the environment, agents must negotiate them in some way. Lastly, as agents encounter the products of themselves and fellow human agents as part of an external environment this affects their subjective experience in some way: they are internalised<sup>13</sup>.

To provide an example relating to the research at hand, the IFM did at some point originate with the sentiment that religious groups should engage in peaceful constructive dialogue and embark on common projects. This then led to the founding of interfaith groups, some of which were organised on the national level, and organisational, textual and symbolic representations of religious groups. These are now part of the social environment in which religious agents operate and they are now faced with a choice that they did not have before: either get involved with interfaith relations in some capacity or do not. The extent to which they do so, is now dependent on pre-established institutional positions, formal and informal relations, categories and patterns of thought. They will internalise interfaith in some fashion as necessary or superfluous, as interesting or dull and as compatible or incompatible with their religion. However, it is important to bear in mind that pre-existing categories and social structures underlay this process: 'religion', 'nation', the value of dialogue or tolerance etc., which were subject to analogous processes of social construction.

#### Discourse

One analytical tool that will form part of the broader social constructionist toolkit is the concept of discourse which was introduced by the philosopher Michael Foucault. A discourse is a way of talking about or representing the world, objects, persons and societies through interrelated presumptions, categories or rules. Discourses can help to

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<sup>13</sup> Berger 1969: p4

naturalise certain patterns of thought which influences the behaviour of agents because they are appropriated by different agents and are repeated and reinforced<sup>14</sup>. For example, that the world is divided into national populations and that these national populations have the right to self-determination because of that status<sup>15</sup>. Like the broader concept of social construction, discourses should not be casually dismissed as unreal nor can there be any neat separation between the object of discourse and the discourses related to it, because even the natural environment must be conceived and understood through human language and concepts.

However, there can be competing discourses related to a similar object, for example the competing discourses of the intrinsically peaceful or violent characteristics of religion are both based on a shared discursive object 'religion' which is imparted with clear and intrinsic characteristics. Similarly, agents can be seen to compete within the same discourse: for example, that Scotland is a nation and that its people share a common national interest is competed over by different political parties as each claim to represent that interest. Different discourses or differing versions of the same discourse can particularly promote the interests of certain groups or persons but also can convince others to accede to these interests because successful discourses have been naturalised as ingrained patterns of thought, though discourses are malleable and can be appropriated or commandeered by different agents depending on their ability to use this to communicate. Christian conservatives in Scotland have attempted to appropriate the discourse of human rights to defend their opposition to same-sex marriage or tolerance to defend the teaching of creationism in schools<sup>16</sup> but it is unclear how successful this has been in convincing most Scots that it is a valid use of that discourse.

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<sup>14</sup> Özkirimli 2010: pp206-210, Taira, T. "Making Space for Discursive Study in Religious Studies" in *Religion* (2013) 43: 1: pp26-45: p28

<sup>15</sup> Kedourie 1960: p9

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Davies, L. "Same sex marriage: Scotland urged to resist Catholic church campaign" in *The Guardian* 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2012, Bussey, K. "Bid to ban creationism is 'militant atheism' in *The Scotsman* 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2014

Discourses are dependent on the relative power of agents within their social context which is certainly uneven. This can be related to the distinction between elites such as religious leadership and lay practitioners or Scottish politicians and members of the public. Certainly, these actors do enjoy greater access to the channels of communication and greater ability to shape discourses even within the IFM. This would fit a classic Marxist interpretation of elite power, that everywhere the ruling ideas are those of the rulers who control the means of production, including the production of knowledge<sup>17</sup>. However, Foucault argued that discursive power is more diffuse throughout social relations and cannot always be enforced from the top-down, that the capillaries of power which reinforce worldviews, values or practices are found at a more local level in the interactions between persons<sup>18</sup>. Elites may have more relative power, but their ability to influence the masses is dependent on the degree to which their conceptions are received and disseminated among the populace who have internalised and thus help to mould these discourses. Furthermore, that reinforcement and enforcement is found in the relations between persons of the same level not just between elites and non-elites.

For example, religious elites such as the Roman Catholic clergy still have institutional power and authority relative to lay Catholics. They are still recognised as authoritative to some extent and it is the institutional church and its leadership who are generally given recognition within the interfaith movement (IFM). This is not only dependent on the recognition of rank and file Catholics but it is not unlimited. The Church has been able to maintain its internal ban on same-sex marriage but it has been unable to convince most lay Catholics to actively and vocally oppose it<sup>19</sup>. This can be partially explained by the broader social relations among the Scottish population where the influences of elites must be balanced with the ways in which value systems are

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<sup>17</sup> Pals, D. *Eight Theories of Religion* (2006) Oxford: Oxford University Press: p130

<sup>18</sup> Referenced in Giddens, A. *Sociology* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2006) Oxford: Polity Press: pp846-847

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Editorial "Gay Marriage: Scotland the Brave" in *The Guardian* 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2012

disseminated, maintained and reinforced through interactions between ordinary Scots on a daily basis. From the interfaith literature, the common discourses of secular-pluralism, the world religions paradigm (WRP) and Scottish national identity are reinforced by rank and file interfaith activists and attendees at a local level, not simply by the leadership.

#### Emic and Etic

The thesis and this chapter are concerned with analysing the construction and operation of social categories within a specific social context – Interfaith Scotland’s (IFS) literature, but also appreciating them through broader comparative theoretical lenses. There can be a tension between the approaches taken by scholars and those provided by the people in question who provide the evidence necessary for the study. Acknowledging the differing, contextual and mutable employment of categories by actors can avoid reifying such concepts as fixed and obvious objects in themselves, rather than as contextual social products. On the other hand, as agents can represent themselves and often do so according to their own interests and rarely for the purposes of critical social analysis, it may be necessary to impose concepts defined for analytical purposes.

The employment of categories which are defined to provide a means of analysing social groups, agents and relations are referred to as ‘etic’ categories. Those used generally by actors themselves are referred to as ‘emic’ categories. These terms are derived from linguistics and the phonetic and phonemic means of transcribing languages. The phonetic script is used to compare the sounds of different languages using a common script representing those sounds, while the phonemic scripts of different languages reflect their highly specific quirks and historic development<sup>20</sup>. The use of emic

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<sup>20</sup> Jensen, J.S. “Is a Phenomenology of Religion Possible? On Ideas of a Human and Social Science of Religion” in *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion* (1993) 5: 2: pp109-134: p124, McCutcheon, R.T. *Critics not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (2001) Albany: State University of New York Press: pp63-65

and etic has simply adapted this understanding to the study of cultural concepts more generally.

Etic categories are used for the purposes of demarcating areas of study, critically analysing or modelling their operation and explaining them through a theoretical framework, as well as allowing for comparison across contexts. These needs are quite distinct from those of the actors themselves and have a specific purpose. Imposing etic terminology or etic definitions of key words will allow the scholar to be clear, concise and purposeful in their usage. The use of etic concepts allows for the identification of pre-determined cultural features of agents or groups or social processes by outlining how they should be classified. This is inherently comparative as it allows for the qualification of how these features are found in different forms and different contexts and how these relate to each other. This is analogous to the way the phonetic script allows for the comparison of sounds in highly different languages.

Some etic terms used by scholars are not widely used outside of scholarship or have such a drastically different meaning that they may as well be different terms, such as 'ideology' or 'discourse'. However, some etic definitions are provided which are also in frequent emic use, 'religion', 'secularism', 'nations' and 'nationalism' are chief examples of this. Most scholarly terms started out as folk terms, usually of western derivation which have been changed through their application and more systematic usage. The problem is that without paying attention to the different nuances of emic usage, scholars can easily start to treat their own definition as the 'correct' one and emic usages as aberrant, which in some cases may have consequences for the subjects. 'Religion', 'nation' and 'secularism' are politically loaded terms which have a great deal of importance, defining these terms in such a way that includes or excludes certain groups may have political consequences, such as if being classed as a 'religion' leads to state protections.

The very fact that these terms are nuanced, shifting and politically significant within the contexts in which they are employed means that emic usages should not be downplayed or ignored. They may be key to the workings of power relations between the actors in question and controlling the definition of core social concepts can be significant. This also means that one can still engage in social scientific analysis while relying on emic terminology; modelling and explaining the power relations between agents in a stipulated social context. This also has a global comparative dimension related to the historical processes such as colonialism and immigration. 'Religion', 'nation' and 'secularism' are all western originated categories which were historically imposed on populations throughout the globe as part of general western domination but it is important to bear in mind that the notion of discrete religious and secular domains did not have direct equivalents or even easily translatable terms outside of the west<sup>21</sup>. The extent to which they have been adopted and adapted are relevant to this thesis, especially in relation to immigration to Scotland and the adaptation of minority groups to the indigenous categorisation schemes.

This is another important dimension to emic terminology because it applies to all non-specialised usage, such usage can vary immensely. Therefore, I would argue that the terms 'insider' and 'outsider' can also be of use, though it is important to avoid reifying the boundaries between groups. For example, for Scottish Presbyterians the term 'religion' is both emic and specifically indigenous to their culture (insider-emic). However, when those Scottish Presbyterians sent missionaries to India and encountered a form of 'Dharma' practised by the locals they generally referred to it as 'religion' even though this was not the term used by the insiders (outsider-emic). However, this becomes ever more complex when practitioners of that Dharma emigrate to Scotland and increasingly make use of the category of 'religion' to establish themselves, secure

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<sup>21</sup> Asad, T. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (1993) Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press: p28, Fitzgerald, T. *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (2000) Oxford: Oxford University Press: p8

their community and relate to other 'religions' through the interfaith movement (IFM). The term 'religion' only became 'etic' when it was specifically used by social scientists to classify and compare these groups.

Ignoring or downplaying emic usages and the way they relate to power relations within the Scottish interfaith movement would simply not be effective. However, as focusing on certain identified themes or features aside from shifting emic usage will allow the evidence from the Scottish interfaith movement to be integrated into broader comparative discussions, some etic definitions will be offered. Those pre-determined features can be socially relevant along with the emic employment of categories and moreover such categories which are associated with this material may not always be overtly used by the actors themselves in a clear fashion. Most significant would be the terms 'nationalism' and 'world religions'. Another reason that I intend to couple analyses of emic terminology with my own use of etic terminology where relevant is the risk of my implicit understanding of these categories unconsciously ordering the data or imposing unstated assumptions. Outlining my own etic definitions of these core concepts will ensure that my usage is consistent and clear to the reader, while I will also discuss those evident from the literature of Interfaith Scotland (IFS).

The tension between prevailing emic and etic usages of the categories of 'nations' and 'nationalism', 'religion' and 'secularism' have quite distinct and interesting implications that may not at first be apparent. Within discursive approaches to religious studies for example, the work of scholars such as Bruce Lincoln concentrated on the analysis of 'religious' discourses which depended on an analytical definition of 'religion'. While religion was defined by the scholar in a clear and fixed manner, the way claims made about gods, the afterlife or sacred things were used by actors as legitimating tools was the focus of analysis<sup>22</sup>. Though for the most part the understanding of discursive

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<sup>22</sup> Referenced in Taira, T. "Doing Things with 'Religion': A Discursive Approach in Rethinking the World Religions Paradigm" in Cotter and Robertson 2016: p76

objects such as 'deities' would be for the most part determined by the usage of actors themselves (though perhaps in loose translation, deity may not technically be the insider-emic term). However, some scholars such as Teemu Taira focus on 'religion' as a discourse, how particular emic understandings of the category are employed by agents in relation to one another or to legitimate their practices<sup>23</sup>.

'Secularism' could be treated in a relatively similar manner, including through it is significant as a 'semantically parasitic' category in relation to 'religion'<sup>24</sup>. This is however somewhat more complicated in relation to 'nations' and 'nationalism'. Discursive approaches have also been widely used in nationalism studies but largely relate to differing assertions or claims made about 'nations'<sup>25</sup>. Nations may not need to be defined at all because of the wide variation in putative 'national' communities and competing national claims of agents. However, this concentration on discourses surrounding 'nations' is perhaps analogous to the role of 'deities' or 'the sacred' within 'religious' discourses. This still leaves 'nationalism' as a scholarly concept implicitly defined as 'discourses about nations' which outside of academic circles would be largely counterintuitive. Indeed, a discursive analysis of 'nationalism' may have interesting results because largely unlike 'religion', it is viewed primarily in pejorative terms. Within Scottish politics, proponents of both independence and the union routinely accuse each other of embodying 'nationalism'<sup>26</sup>. As fascinating as such a discursive study of nationalism would be, it is not the concern of this thesis which employs tools from nationalism studies to model IFS. Interfaith Scotland would not generally be viewed in

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<sup>23</sup> E.g. *ibid*

<sup>24</sup> Referenced in Day, A., Vincett, G. and Cotter, C.R. "What Lies Between: Exploring the Depths of Social Identities between the Sacred and Secular" in Day, A., Vincett, G. and Cotter, C.R.(eds.) *Social Identities Between the Sacred and the Secular* (2013) Farnham: Ashgate: p2

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Özkirimli 2010: pp206-208

<sup>26</sup> E.g. MacNab, S. "Ruth Davidson: SNP guilty of 'Orwellian' nationalism" in *The Scotsman* 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, Learmonth, A. "New Tory councillor unmasked as influential arch- 'BritNat' twitter troll who boasts about his manhood online" in *The National* 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2017

emic terms as 'nationalist' but I will try to demonstrate in the next section how they do fit a broader etic approach to 'nationalism'.

### **Nations and Nationalism**

The nation is one of the most important social and political categories of modern times and representing religious groups within the Scottish nation is the remit of IFS<sup>27</sup>. The category of the 'nation' is crucial to IFS' means of representing themselves and religious groups. Their literature is addressed implicitly to an audience located in Scotland and relates to, and thereby recognises the authority of the Scottish Government. It also attempts to integrate diverse religious and cultural groups into a pluralistic yet commonly held Scottish cultural and political identity defined by pre-established national 'cultural repertoires'<sup>28</sup>. These aims and means of representation can be linked to specific ideological assumptions about 'nations' during a period when the autonomous Scottish national government was still establishing itself and during a campaign for national independence. In the academic literature, this can quite easily be categorised as a case of the ideology of nationalism and it is one of the aims of this thesis to demonstrate that IFS promotes a form of civic and cultural nationalism.

Even though 'nationalism' would seem to be an entirely relevant category to the case, and despite IFS' dependence on the category of the 'nation', analysing IFS through the study of nationalism can still appear discordant. The IFM is rarely associated with nationalism, having its beginnings in the 1893 Chicago Parliament of World Religions which gave rise to an international movement<sup>29</sup>. Its worldview, its pluralism, global interests, concern with minority communities and world-spanning traditions, its crossing of national borders, as well as its humanitarianism and pacifism, would appear to distance it from nationalism in popular discourse.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/> (last accessed 15/9/2017)

<sup>28</sup> This term was taken from Koenig, M. and Knöbl, W. "Varieties of Religious Nationalism" in Spohn, Koenig, and Knöbl 2015b: p158

<sup>29</sup> Brodeour 2005: pp42-45

The fact that working within a national framework and drawing on national symbols for political aims is taken for granted should raise critical suspicions and can certainly not justifiably be viewed as apolitical. Further, the category of the 'nation' like the category of 'religion', should not be taken for granted as a natural feature of social relations and should be located within an ideological framework which in the scholarly literature at least, is 'nationalism'. How the relations and representations of IFS to communities and institutions within the Scottish population reinforce a particular nationalist ideology will be examined in turn in subsequent chapters, but this section will relate to broader academic debates on the study of nations and nationalism.

### 'Nations'

In common emic and etic usage, the nation can be a convoluted category because it incorporates both broader cultural elements and more concrete political ones. 'Nations' are often both formally and informally used to refer to the recognised independent countries of the world with established borders, governments and citizenry such as Spain or the Central African Republic. However, they can also be used to refer to a group of people with a shared cultural identity which may not form an independent country at present, such as the Kurds or indeed the Scots<sup>30</sup>.

These two distinct uses of the term also make it difficult to distinguish nations from the categories of the 'state' and 'ethnicity'. This is rendered even more confusing by the fact that the system of mutually recognised and sovereign states, which forms the bedrock of global political relations, is referred to as the 'nation-state' paradigm<sup>31</sup>. The hyphenation, itself though, inherently implies that the two concepts of 'nation' and 'state' are distinct, that they can be encountered separately from each other and that while they have fused in some cases, this bond can be broken. This confusion between

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<sup>30</sup> Heywood, A. *Politics* (2002): Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: p528

<sup>31</sup> Halliday, F. "Nationalism" in Baylis, J. and Smith, S. (eds.) *The Globalisation of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2005) Oxford: Oxford University Press: p528

nations and states, is aided by the prevalence of the nation-state system and states' own monopolisation of 'national' language and symbolism, their citizens are 'nationals' and states all have flags, crests and 'national' anthems. A source of further confusion is that the territorial and governmental sub-divisions of some states such as Australia, the United States of America, Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil are themselves referred to as 'states'.

In international relations, the 'state' refers to the whole political apparatus of an independent 'country'<sup>32</sup>, extending from central government to the network of agencies branching from it – the legal, educational, and military and communication systems as well as local government. The state is sovereign – independent and supremely authoritative within its territory. As Max Weber argued states have a 'monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory'<sup>33</sup>. The 'nation' then does not fundamentally refer to the governmental structures or territories but to people with a kind of cohesive social identity which they consider to be 'national'. Crucially not all states have been able to convince their population that they are a 'nation'.

All states have populations, but that population does not always have a cohesive identity, nor have states always derived their legitimacy from representing their population. Pre-modern monarchies derived their authority from the dynasty's ancestral claims to rule over territories, the agents of the state claimed to represent the monarch not the people. The right of conquest was also widely recognised, giving rise to empires with diverse territories and populations<sup>34</sup>. It is one of the peculiarities of modern global politics that while there are several monarchies, usually legitimated as representing the people, there are no states claiming to be empires. Nonetheless all modern states claim to represent their population and derive their legitimacy from their citizens on the

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<sup>32</sup> Though both nations and states are referred to as 'countries' at different times by different actors, states for the most part have successfully monopolised this to a significant but not exclusive degree.

<sup>33</sup> Dunne, T and Brian, C. Schmidt "Realism" in Baylis and Smith 2005: p172

<sup>34</sup> Gellner 1983: pp13-16, Anderson 1983: pp19-22

international stage, whether that population claims a cohesive cultural identity or not. This helps to explain the fact that the two are often bound together.

'Nation-states' then are states in which the population have a cohesive identity which can be described as 'national', states which derive their legitimacy from and claim to represent a 'nation'. Not all states can claim to be nation-states in this way, and not all groups of people considered 'nations' have the 'political roof' of an independent state but the nation-state is still the prevailing norm. State governments are not the only ones who can make national claims, and the claims made by other individuals, parties or movements may not only differ from the national vision of the regime but may be made on behalf of a different putative 'nation', whose borders and population do not match those of the state. National claims which do not match the boundaries of the state can be referred to as 'stateless nations', at least when these claims of nationhood have been successfully disseminated among the population and accepted by them. This helps to explain why the world is not only made up of nation-states but also separatist, autonomist and irredentist movements organised around a distinct sense of national belonging<sup>35</sup>.

However, so far nations have not been differentiated from other bodies of people or cohesive social identities. Any individual will participate in multiple social groups and could be classified by multiple social categories throughout their life. Nations can be identified as bodies of people defined by shared culture, traditions, customs, language or shared history but so can other major cultural groups such as 'ethnicities'<sup>36</sup>. What can be used to differentiate nations from ethnic groups is the way that they have been shaped by the ideology of 'nationalism', but this can also be a difficult concept to pin down. It has also acquired quite particular associations which can mean that prevalent emic understandings of nationalism often clash rather awkwardly with scholarly usage.

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<sup>35</sup> van den Berghe, P. *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (1981) Praeger: New York: p62

<sup>36</sup> Smith 1986: p32

## Nationalism

Nationalism is often understood as a fringe ideology that is largely viewed in pejorative terms, as clashing with the liberalism and pluralism associated with democratic states. National conflicts and their portrayal by the media, as well as the growth of far right and racist movements in the West have led to reified image of nationalism as a thing which is inherently violent, extremist or supremacist<sup>37</sup>. These phenomena were easily linked up with collective memory of the wartime enemy, the German Nazis and their Italian and Japanese Fascist allies. The popular correlation between nationalism and the Far Right is not always so strict and the term is also often used to refer to separatist, autonomist or irredentist movements which seek to form an independent or unified state based on the national claims of a group of people<sup>38</sup>.

In this understanding, the furthest thing from being classed as 'nationalism' is the political mainstream, despite being defined by states which claim to represent populations, mostly presented in national terms. A sense of belonging to the nation-state and its shared culture, history and institutions is certainly encouraged, but this is usually considered 'patriotism' rather than 'nationalism'. This distinction is analytically suspect because it appears to entail that established and accepted national ties and expressions of those ties, are fundamentally distinct from others. This often entails that 'our' ties and sentiments are merely 'patriotism' while 'nationalism' is a term reserved for the 'other', either other nations or certain members of one's own nation. 'Patriotism', entailing those expressions and sentiments defined as 'normal' or within the ideological 'range' deemed acceptable can be contrasted with 'nationalism' which is considered 'extreme', at the political fringes and outside 'normal' political participation. Patriotism

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<sup>37</sup> Calhoun, C. *Nations Matter: Culture, History and the Cosmopolitan Dream* (2007) London: Routledge: p7

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Gellner 1983: p1

is also often the preserve of the established nation-state while nationalism is often something associated with stateless nations<sup>39</sup>.

Like any concept 'nationalism' can be defined more broadly or more narrowly but at the very least refers to movements or sentiments connected to the idea of the 'nation'. In this section, I will articulate and defend the broader understanding of 'nationalism' which is prevalent in the academic literature. Elie Kedourie for example defined nationalism as an ideology based on two presumptions: that the world was divided into national populations and that this was the legitimate basis for statehood<sup>40</sup>. This would include the often articulated right to national self-determination. Notably, this definition of nationalism does not describe a form of fringe politics but something approaching the global norm. It is also an international ideology as the world is made up of multiple nations who are rendered equivalent through the category of 'nation'.

This ideology is in many respects foundational and even somewhat invisible and taken for granted, it does not refer to a detailed ideological programme but highlights the fact that national units undergird the political norm. Nations are not natural divisions but are social, historical, political and ideological. It is a measure of success of certain established national programmes that the nation is so taken for granted that its internalisation and reproduction by different political actors rarely registers as 'nationalism' or as a distinctive political act in itself<sup>41</sup>. That is why it is only those actors whose national programmes differ substantially from the mainstream, or whose national claims do not match established borders or whose use of national identity is outside of the ideological 'range' deemed acceptable are recognised as 'nationalist'.

The fact that the 'nation' as a model or discourse which can be appropriated by different agents according to differing national programmes, has meant that nationalism

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<sup>39</sup> Özkirimli, 2010: p4

<sup>40</sup> Kedourie 1960: p9

<sup>41</sup> Billig 1995: pp5-7

can be seen to cut across other political divides. Nationalism is always coupled with some other form of ideology because the nation needs to be governed. Nationalism can be secular or religious, socialist or laissez fair, conservative or liberal<sup>42</sup> and is always determined by the specific cultural and social context. The reason that I deem it appropriate to classify all of these phenomena into the category of 'nationalism', is to highlight the discourse of nations which underlies the ideological reproduction of national politics in general. As this is a relatively broad framework, nationalism is *one* element of the construction of quite specific and quite distinct ideological programmes which can be easily qualified by other political labels.

Adopting this broader approach does not mean to deny or even downplay the existence of prototypical forms of nationalism but simply places them within a broader conceptual framework and the same historical context as mainstream national politics. Belligerent, bellicose, exclusionary, supremacist and even violent forms of nationalism have appeared to have experienced a resurgence in recent years. The election of Donald Trump in the USA, the rise of the online alt-right movement, the candidacy of Marine La Pen in France, the politics of Brexit in the UK and the popularity of exclusionary and reactionary nationalist governments in Poland, Hungary, Russia, India and many other cases are examples of this<sup>43</sup>. This is also coupled with the prominence of largely liberal and left-wing nationalist national movements – the Yes campaign during the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014 and the SNP government, as well as similar movements in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Quebec and Taiwan. However, this must be placed alongside the continuation of 'mainstream' national politics across the world. These are all distinctive cases and should not be closely identified or assumed to possess similar characteristics, but what they do share is the ideologically charged category of

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<sup>42</sup> Smith 1986: P134

<sup>43</sup> Sutherland 2017a: pp4-5

the 'nation' with some attendant assumptions. This is very similar to the diversity of expressions of the categories of 'religion' and the 'secular' explored in later sections.

The problem with equating an ideology so conceptually linked to the category of the 'nation' with very specific characteristics, is that there is no reason to presume that they are always associated. Furthermore, these are related to distinct categories with their own associations which can be broader or narrower than 'nationalism'. 'Racism' or 'racialism' is the doctrine that discrete characteristics of personality or culture are genetically inherited and that these are of a 'higher' or 'lower', 'moral' or 'immoral' nature to the point where different human descent groups are almost different species<sup>44</sup>. Benedict Anderson has argued that while racism and nationalism have been combined in certain cases, most obviously Nazi Germany, this combination is not especially typical. For Anderson, this is because racism relates more closely to the ethos of societies stratified by genealogy rather than the horizontal communities envisioned by modern nationalism<sup>45</sup>. To this could also be added Michael Billig's observation that nationalism is by and large international in outlook, so that nations are rendered equivalent and equal through shared membership of the category of 'nation'<sup>46</sup>.

Xenophobia is more general than this and implies simply to a general mistrust or hatred of people considered 'foreign'<sup>47</sup>. It is certainly easier to find nationalism coupled with general xenophobia. The characteristics of the nation can often be constructed against those of an 'other', some forms of Scottish nationalism against England for example. For Kedourie, the problem of equating nationalism with xenophobia in general is the fact that xenophobia has been an ingrained tendency in all historical periods, can be expressed through various social forms and should not be equated with the comparatively recent and particular formation of nations. The fact that nationalism can

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<sup>44</sup> Giddens 2006: p493

<sup>45</sup> Anderson 1983: pp148-150

<sup>46</sup> Billig 1995: p4

<sup>47</sup> Kedourie 1960: p74

be defined in these broader terms and entails the construction of horizontal societies which are by and large, rendered equal within the framework of nationalism. These qualifications should hopefully clarify why relating nationalism to interfaith relations can be plausible.

### The Development of Nations

Like 'religion' and the 'secular' however, 'nations' are social formations (which at least as concepts) originated in the contemporary west. They have been imposed, adopted and adapted into other societies. In the academic study of nationalism, the modernity and antiquity of both 'nations' as units and the ideology of 'nationalism' have been intensely debated. Most scholars of nationalism are 'modernists', regarding nations and nationalism as modern phenomena, emerging somewhere between the late Medieval or early modern era to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is certainly rare for scholars of nationalism to espouse primordialism – the idea that nations have always been a core feature of the human political and cultural landscape but some have asserted that nations are 'perennial', that they are recurring social formations which have emerged in different periods. The other school of thought within nationalism studies is the ethnosymbolic approach associated with the work of Anthony Donald Smith, which classifies nations as the contemporary developments of pre-modern ethnic identities and symbolism<sup>48</sup>.

It is certainly the case that the 'nation' as a linguistic category has the same cultural origins as 'religion' and the 'secular'. The concept of the 'nation' can be traced to the Latin 'natio' referring to a 'people' and is can be equated with the Greek term 'ethnos' from which the term 'ethnicity' is derived. Notably though, the earlier concept of 'nation' lacked some of the associations of the later concept of 'nation', and for much of its history the concept could be applied to an identifiable group of any sort, such as classes or even royal dynasties. In its original context, 'natio' was used to refer to the various 'barbarian' peoples ' of Roman citizenship which has passed into other European

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<sup>48</sup> Özkirimli, 2010: pp6-7

languages<sup>49</sup>. This distinction was then applied to translations of the Bible and the Jewish differentiation between the Jews as the chosen people and non-Jews as 'goyim' ('gentiles') or 'the nations'. Adrian Hastings has argued that the model of Biblical Israel as a politically conscious, territorially defined people with a particular relationship to God, influenced the articulation of national identities in Europe<sup>50</sup>. This became more pronounced with the Protestant Reformation and the increasing prominence of local languages or vernaculars, the development of national churches and the expanding power of European states<sup>51</sup>. Notably the western European states which became dominant and established overseas colonies were comparatively ethically and culturally uniform and can be viewed as exporting the national model throughout the world<sup>52</sup>.

The linguistic origins and associations of the word 'nation', like the words 'religion' and 'secular' cannot prove whether it is possible to discuss 'nations' comparatively in other periods and areas. This is not a debate I can definitively address here outside of these cursory terms. However, it cannot be denied that whether examples of nations can be presented in different periods or not, as an overarching and predominant system of legitimacy – nationalism is newly ascendant. It has been argued that some Medieval Scottish and Irish documents do articulate the right of peoples to be ruled by their own monarchs, through claims about their identity as a 'nation', rather than the right of a dynasty to rule.<sup>53</sup> However, it is still the case that most states were not legitimated by the identity and self-determination of their population but instead by the divine right of kings or even the right of conquest until the modern era. Many states were either small enclaves within a region, such as Germany and Italy, or large multi-

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<sup>49</sup> Calhoun 2007: pp1-2

<sup>50</sup> Hastings, A. *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (1997) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: p4

<sup>51</sup> Smith 1986: pp130-134

<sup>52</sup> Smith 1986: pp138-140, p149

<sup>53</sup> Cowan, Edward J. "Identity, Freedom and The Declaration of Arbroath" in Broun, Finlay and Lynch 1998: pp39-43, Watson, F. "The Enigmatic Lion: Scotland, Kingship and National Identity in the Wars of Independence" in Broun, Finlay and Lynch 1998: p31

ethnic empires such as the Habsburg, Ottoman, Russian, French, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, and British Empires, whose claims were universalistic rather than strictly territorially limited.

The contrast with the contemporary world is staggering, where most states claim to be 'nations' and where no modern state claims to be an empire. This is a world in which states are legitimated through their claims to represent their population but also in which the right to self-determination continues to be invoked by rival national movements. As Michael Billig pointed out, we are intuitively primed to view international politics through a decidedly national lens: the illegitimacy of the violation of national territory by a foreign government is equal or perhaps greater to violence committed against individual persons<sup>54</sup>. In reading about disputes within states around national questions such as the campaign for Flemish independence from Belgium, the desire of a culturally distinct group to form a state and the desire of the Belgian government to maintain their national unity are both intuitively understandable to us<sup>55</sup>.

This international order has for the most part produced a world of 'nations' which are rendered conceptually and symbolically equal rather than superior. Some of the contrary associations derived from the linguistic origins of the 'nation' have been imported into the modern concept. Each 'nation' is rendered unique and of paramount importance within its limited frame but the world is populated with such equivalent bounded nations<sup>56</sup> rather than an undifferentiated mass of 'peoples' or 'barbarians'. This correlates with parallel developments regarding 'religion' in European thought, moving from a distinction between Christianity and an undifferentiated 'Pagan' mass to one made up of equivalent 'religions' placed on a par with Christianity<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Billig 1995: pp2-4

<sup>55</sup> Billig 1995: pp13-14

<sup>56</sup> Anderson 1983: pp6-7

<sup>57</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp45-47

Nations can be differentiated from both non-national states and ethnic groups through association with the ideology of nationalism which as defined, divided the world into discrete national units and holds that nations are the legitimate basis for statehood. Nationalism was defined succinctly by Ernest Gellner as the notion that the cultural and political units should be congruent<sup>58</sup>. This approach presents two conceptual hurdles for this thesis because it is uncertain whether this would apply to IFS or to the case of Scotland. The issues are whether nationalism necessarily entails the attempt to achieve statehood and how much it would necessitate cultural uniformity.

#### Civic, Ethnic and Civic-Cultural Nationalisms

As we have seen, nations are linked conceptually to both states and ethnic groups to the point that it is difficult to separate them from either. For Gellner, the answer is relatively simple: nations bridge cultural groups and states through the active pursuit of statehood by nationalists, either through independence or unification in cases like Germany or Italy. However, while most approaches to nationalism stipulate that a given territory and population must be involved, some contend that nationalist groups differ in how they achieve solidarity and political mobilisation. As previously mentioned, one of the most common typologies of nationalism, introduced by Hans Kohn, divides nationalism into 'civic' and 'ethnic' or 'cultural'. Civic nationalism is defined by citizenship, loyalty to the state, subscription to its values and participation in its civil society or public life – the classic examples being France and the USA. Membership of the nation is potentially open to all living on the national territory. This could be contrasted with ethnic or cultural nationalism which is determined by cultural affinities and often by ties of blood, conceived as closed to outsiders<sup>59</sup> e.g. Nazism, many forms of Eastern European nationalism, Japanese and Jewish religious nationalism.

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<sup>58</sup> Gellner 1983: p1

<sup>59</sup> Özkirimli 2010: pp35-36

It is problematic though to couple nationalism based on common cultural ties with those which mediate membership based largely on blood ties. 'Civic' nationalism may not be mediated by blood but certainly does not lack cultural content. Traditionally, French nationalism for instance is based on loyalty to the state, but is associated with a historic people and furthermore enforces a sense of the national language and culture<sup>60</sup>. A modified version of this dichotomy could be useful but only if the 'civic' and 'ethnic' forms are taken as poles of a spectrum which allows for periodic, strategic shifts in emphasis. The fact that culture, the use of collective identity, nomenclature, symbols and narratives provide the community with its form and ability to politically mobilise is crucial. However, the fact that culture inherently permeates all human societies does not need to entail that culture is ethnically exclusive or that descent is a salient factor.

I would argue that this spectrum continues to be a useful, if the fact that these relations could never be devoid of culture is recognised and if another type is added to the spectrum: **civic-cultural nationalism**. While cultural factors may permeate the spectrum, one could still classify some expressions of nationalism as *primarily* civic if the references used relate primarily to civic structures, laws and value systems – though even these practices and the symbols used to express them are still cultural, expressed in a language and against a cultural-historical background related to a particular people and place. The focus on civic factors does however make it easier to distinguish national identity from ethnic identification and is particularly compatible with multiculturalism because ethnicity or cultural practices are not used as boundary markers.

One can certainly identify forms of nationalism in which ethnicity is fused with national identity, white racist forms of nationalism espoused by the Scottish Defence League for example would identify only those of 'Scottish ancestry' as 'Scottish'. However, while ethnicity can be defined by descent in some cases and is often used as a synonym for race or descent, it is not always used in this way within the anthropological

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<sup>60</sup> Smith 1986: p134

literature. For Frederik Barth, ethnic groups are defined by their boundaries and the factors used to mark them out, which can involve anything from language, lifestyle, practices, religion, language or whatever else. In many cases, it is not descent but the ability to successfully negotiate these boundaries that defines one as a member of an ethnic group<sup>61</sup>. Some forms of ethnic nationalism can be exclusively defined by an ethnic identity which accepts only those who have taken on the relevant trappings of the uniform culture, e.g. an Israeli nationalism open to ancestral Jews and open to converts but nonetheless correlates Israeli national identity with Jewish ethno-religious identification.

The modification to this spectrum presented here has included (largely) civic, racial ethnic and culturally exclusive forms of ethnic nationalism but to classify the forms of nationalism evident from Interfaith Scotland I would add **civic-cultural** nationalism. This would potentially include any form or expression of nationalism which involves both pronounced civic and overt cultural elements but not ethnic exclusivism. As I have indicated there can be no such thing as a purely civic form of nationalism because no ideology could be communicated in a cultural vacuum and nationalism is always related to a people and place by definition. However, in civic-cultural nationalism, expressions of cultural factors or symbols are prominent. In this case though, expressions of cultural identity need not be bound to the desire for cultural uniformity and can be coupled with multiculturalism, ethnic and religious diversity.

These different forms of maintaining and modifying national boundaries relate to the general sociological discussion of forms of 'integration' which is also significant to the analysis of IFS. 'Integration' refers to the general means by which diverse societies function as a whole, or are managed by governments to avoid disintegration or conflict. 'Assimilation' generally refers to the abandonment of minority identities and cultures for

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<sup>61</sup> Barth, F. "Introduction" in Barth, F (ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (1969) Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press Inc: p9-15

that of the majority, with the somewhat distinct 'melting pot' model indicating the fusion of diverse cultures into one. Both of which are rejected by IFS. Assimilationism can be correlated with the culturally exclusive, if not ethnically or racially exclusive forms of nationalism. 'Multiculturalism' or 'cultural pluralism' indicates the continued co-existence of different groups within a common society but might not necessitate any overarching sense of 'national' belonging<sup>62</sup>. Both IFS and the Scottish Government reject the latter conception of multiculturalism, referred to as 'the mosaic' model,<sup>63</sup> where groups can lead parallel lives within the same society. This is because both IFS and the government encourage a common Scottish national identity, close interfaith relations and an active sense of citizenship. While this could have been expressed in purely civic terms, the association of Scottish identity with a vivid body of cultural symbols and the fact of both Scotland's statelessness and its increasing autonomy and possible future independence, may have produced a stronger need to embed diverse communities into the wider culture and heritage of land and people, while claiming space within that to maintain distinct identities. In this thesis I will refer to IFS' preferred form of integration simply as 'integration' as distinct from mosaic multiculturalism and assimilationism.

The integrationism promoted by IFS is nationalist in the sense I have been using it, because it reinforces the conception of Scotland as an overarching nation and the sense that the national framework is politically paramount over other forms of social identity in Scotland, such as ethnicity and religion. It is also a form of civic and cultural nationalism because it involves a mix of civic and cultural elements but is not ethnically or culturally exclusive, because it allows for the maintenance and public expression of cultural diversity. In order to encourage and reinforce this national integration, they draw on established Scottish cultural symbolism such as Burns' Suppers, Scottish traditional music, Cèilidhs etc. Members of ethnic and religious minority communities in Scotland such as the Jewish, Muslims, Sikh, Buddhist and Chinese communities have also

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<sup>62</sup> See Giddens 2006: pp497-498 for a discussion of models of integration.

<sup>63</sup> SIFC *Values*: p8

engaged in this themselves generally through things like the creation of tartans representing their communities<sup>64</sup>. Indeed, while various expressions of Scottish nationalism have been expressed by different Scots at different times, this civic-cultural form of nationalism appears to be particularly applicable within Scotland generally.

The Scottish National Party (SNP), which currently forms the Scottish Government with a comfortable majority, has been the leading pro-independence party in the country and has largely concentrated on articulating the case for independence in political and economic terms<sup>65</sup>. This has meant establishing the current territorially bound autonomous civic and political framework as an independent state has been their focus. However, this political programme has almost certainly depended on a wider and established sense of national identity which has convinced the Scots that they are a distinctive nation, if not of the need for independence. This latter form of nationalism, a 'cultural' if not strictly 'ethnic' nationalism is arguably more overt and self-conscious in Scotland than in many comparable societies and is by no means restricted to the SNP or the campaign for independence. As Anthony Cohen argued:

As an inclination found widely across the political and social spectrums, however nationalism has appeared more as a lament for the continuing denial of the integrity and authenticity of Scottish nationhood, in the long wake of the loss of the Scottish nation-state...It is essentially a *cultural* [emphasis in original] nationalism that has some similarity to nationalistic and other reactions that follow from a popular perception of the denigration of a culture by a powerful neighbour...In this sense, Scottish nationalism is a statement of *identity*, the potency of which is separable from – and independent of – its more partisan political program<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> E.g. <https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=10644> (last accessed 16/9/17)

<sup>65</sup> Keating 2005: pp55-56

<sup>66</sup> Cohen 1996: p803

While Scotland does have a distinctive structure through its separate legal system, media, education system, infrastructure (police, fire brigade etc) and since 1999 its devolved Parliament, it has been part of the United Kingdom since the Union of 1707. A distinctive cultural identity defined by different and even contrary elements has arguably been essential in ensuring that Scottish national identity was not dissolved entirely into a British identity. The fact that Scotland lacks 'hard' cultural bulwarks such as an overwhelmingly spoken separate language has been significant<sup>67</sup>. Scots overwhelmingly speak English, though the closely related Lallans Scots language is spoken to varying degrees by some of the population, Scots Gaelic is only spoken fluently by a small percentage of the population but the language has attained a degree of significance greater than this and may be used in a symbolic manner.

By and large though, Scottish culture is composed of a variety of cultural practices and symbols associated with the territory of Scotland, including images of the landscape itself, and a sense of shared history. It involves elements as diverse as: its traditional music, bagpipes, kilts, Cèilidhs and other traditional dances, a distinctive cuisine including haggis, the poetry of Robert Burns, historical figures such as William Wallace, Robert the Bruce or Bonnie Prince Charlie and even more general national symbols such as the thistle and the national flags – the Saltire and lion rampant. This may be a shifting and perhaps incoherent collection of symbols but in as much as they are ingrained they are a means of articulating and reinforcing a distinctive national identity through cultural symbols and they are certainly effective.

Michael Billig has argued that nationalism should not be understood as something exceptional or as inherently violent or extreme. He noted that nationalism is something which is regarded as symptomatic of social ill which will disappear with the abatement of crises<sup>68</sup>. Instead nationalism should be viewed as a largely banal system which

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<sup>67</sup> McCrone 1992: P174

<sup>68</sup> Billig, 1995: pp5-6

inculcates national identity through symbols which reinforce it but go effectively unnoticed<sup>69</sup>. Billig argued that nationalism was not best thought of in terms of flags being frantically waved but by flags which hang unnoticed from public buildings<sup>70</sup>. National identity is also reinforced by the media and by politicians who use simple terms (deixes) like 'we', 'us' and 'our' which reinforces identification with territory and people, filtering into everyday conversation<sup>71</sup>. Exemplars of banal nationalism are certainly not lacking in Scotland, from mass produced tartan, to the printing of Scottish Sterling notes, to a distinct mass media which certainly displays the national deixis that Billig refers to.

While I would differentiate civic and civic-cultural nationalism from the cultural exclusivism which can be associated with forms of ethnic nationalism, it is important not to reify this distinction. The *sine qua non* of nationalism (and ethnicity in contrast with potentially universal identifications) is that it is bound to a particular people and place that depend on boundaries. Therefore, all forms of nationalism involve a degree of exclusion to a limited extent in that they do not or could not include everyone. Some distinctions must be made for these identities to be maintained. What can be differentiated is the extent to which these forms of nationalism depend on ethnic and cultural uniformity, and civic and civic-cultural forms of nationalism can include ethno-cultural diversity. They are compatible with multiple forms of social identification, including different ethnic and religious identities which are differentiated from overarching national identification.

#### Nationalism and Independence?

Nationalism may always entail a cultural content to some extent, but as I have shown they are not necessarily bound to claims of cultural homogeneity. Therefore, Gellner's definition of nationalism was deemed problematic for contemporary Scotland and

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<sup>69</sup> Billig 1995: p6

<sup>70</sup> Billig 1995 p8

<sup>71</sup> Billig 1995: p94

especially for IFS. There are reasons why analysing them through a nationalism studies lens would appear fruitful in as much as they construct a notion of a territorially defined people represented as having the right to self-determination. If Gellner's definition of nationalism was interpreted as stipulating cultural uniformity, then IFS would not fit this definition but would appear to fit Elie Kedourie's definition of nationalist ideology. There is a further problem with Gellner's approach related to the case of Scotland more generally though in relation to its statelessness.

While Gellner does not explicitly discuss the distinction between ethnic groups and nations, for him the nation is a modern formulation given shape by the ideology of nationalism. The difference between a 'nation' and an 'ethnicity' or other cultural group would appear to be association with a nationalist movement or widespread sentiment which entails the desire to render the state and the cultural units congruent. This could have interesting consequences for approaching the case of Scotland analytically. It is certainly the case that the Scots have traditionally been classed as a 'nation' and during the 2011 census, an overwhelming majority of Scots classed their national identity as Scottish (83%) and while the correlation is no doubt not exact, this exactly matches the percentage of respondents born in the country<sup>72</sup>.

As noted, Scotland is not an independent state but rather forms part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, though it was an independent kingdom before 1707. Many of the classic cases of nationalism discussed by scholars like Gellner arose among nations before independence, so this would not present an issue. However, when a referendum was held on Scottish independence in 2014 a modest but decisive majority of 55% voted against independence with 44% voting in favour<sup>73</sup>. How would this fit Gellner's classification if most Scots did not desire to provide their cultural identification with a political 'roof'? Applying 'nation' as an etic analytical term at least

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<sup>72</sup> National Records of Scotland 2013: p3

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/events/scotland-decides/results> (last accessed 15/9/2017)

from a social constructionist perspective means that 'national' status is not something innate to a group and does not depend on self-identification but reflects given social circumstances and processes. Miroslav Hroch for example analysed the means by which various ethno-cultural and linguistic groups, defined by some elements of shared culture under the influence of intellectuals and activists, came to greater consciousness of themselves as a group and which eventually led to nationalist pressure for statehood<sup>74</sup>.

Scots may certainly have the first two characteristics – distinctive cultural markers and collective consciousness - but are there justifiable reasons for the widespread emic identification as a 'nation' to be reflected in etic classification? Not necessarily, one could argue that the Scots population is in fact divided between 'ethnic' and 'national' conceptions of its identity, defined by the successful dissemination of Gellnerian (pro-independence) nationalism. However, I would argue that there are sound reasons to classify Scottish identity as contested between competing nationalist projects rather than ethnic vs. national conceptions<sup>75</sup>. This approach is best exemplified by another seminal scholar of nationalism: Benedict Anderson.

As Anderson famously argued, nations are 'imagined communities' which their members have been socialised into imagining themselves part of. By this, he does not mean that nations are somehow 'fake' or 'inauthentic' but perfectly real as socially inculcated ways of thinking. He argued that all communities are in fact imagined, but nations can be distinguished by the fact that most members could never meet each other and that they are horizontal political communities at once limited and sovereign<sup>76</sup>. The key to the definition is these three elements: 1) an imagined community which is conceptualised as both 2) limited and 3) sovereign.

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<sup>74</sup> Hroch, M. *Social Preconditions of National Revival: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations* (2000) Columbia University Press: New York: pp22-23

<sup>75</sup> Sutherland 2017b: p75

<sup>76</sup> Anderson 1983: p5-6

Anderson's definition does not stipulate cultural uniformity, merely the widespread conception of a bounded community which will always be constructed using cultural resources of one form or another. However, the nation may be imagined through its constituent sub-groups defined by particular categories and taxonomies such as 'ethnic' and 'religious' groups and certainly at the very least regions, areas, settlements, institutions, professions etc. The question of sovereignty is somewhat more ambiguous as this entails being conceived as the highest political authority and is something generally claimed by states and pro-independence nationalists. As Anderson's focus is on the conception of sovereignty rather than its achievement this does afford the possibility of differing conceptions of that *ethos* of sovereignty.

It is possible to characterise this ethos of sovereignty as in some cases conceived as an *ultimate* sovereignty, rather than one leading to formal sovereignty or in other words conceived as the *right* to national self-determination not the necessity that it is exercised through the formation an independent state. In subsequent chapters discussing IFS representations of the referendum on independence, I will demonstrate how a sense of the right to self-determination is expressed without endorsing either side during the referendum. This reflected a broader conception among the Scottish public that Scotland is an ultimately sovereign nation with the right to independence but which chooses to remain part of the union with England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This conception has deep historical roots, despite the fact that the Treaty of Union was not democratically acceded to and was driven through by the monarchy and English government<sup>77</sup>, this was not the subsequent conception. Scotland appeared to be omitted from the rise of nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but Graeme Morton has challenged this common notion of Scotland's 'missing' nationalism<sup>78</sup>. He argues that there is evidence of widespread national sentiment and this nationalism was largely

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<sup>77</sup> Young 1998: p122-130, Finlay, R. "Caledonia or North Britain? Scottish Identity in the Eighteenth Century" in Broun, Finlay and Lynch 1998: pp145-146

<sup>78</sup> Morton 1998: p157

supportive of the Union<sup>79</sup>. It successfully mobilised the cast of Scotland's mythic history – Bruce, Wallace etc - for its purposes of maintaining the union by reinforcing the idea of a modern Union of equals<sup>80</sup>. An important element of this was the fact that Scotland was not a conquered country and that this equal union was secured by Medieval resistance to invasion, and further through Scotland's contribution to the British imperial project, conceived as an equal and distinct partner.

The fact that nationalism, as defined by Anderson, can accommodate different cultural groups is important, because it means that these potentially disruptive or rival identifications, which might undermine the legitimacy of the nation, can be integrated into the imagination of the nation as an overarching bounded sovereign community. Forms of cultural diversity within the state may not be downplayed but can be classed as 'ethnic' or 'regional' and distinguished from the 'national' framework. However, in some cases such as the UK, Spain, Canada or Belgium minority populations such as the Scots have maintained a sense of 'national' identity within a distinctive territory. These states have been able to manage that plurality of nations and the potential for succession by recognising the state as being made up of multiple nations and by bestowing measures of autonomy. It is the struggle between separatist and unionist conceptions of Scottish national self-determination which is evident but dependent on a broader *common* conception of Scotland as a nation with the right to self-determination. Specific nationalist programmes are dependent on the dissemination and reinforcement of a broader ideology of nationalism<sup>81</sup>.

However, autonomous national governments such as the Scottish Government *also* must manage the heterogeneity of their population to ensure that it does not lead to further rupture. They can also use conceptions of pluralism and categories such as 'ethnicity' and 'religion' to imagine and to legitimate the national framework. While both

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<sup>79</sup> Morton 1998: p167

<sup>80</sup> Morton 1998: p165

<sup>81</sup> Sutherland 2017b: p75

categories are not apolitical in themselves, the fact that ethnic minorities, or at least those formed through immigration rarely have the territorial basis to form a state means that they can be incorporated through recognition and the distinction between 'ethnic' and 'national' identities. As we shall see 'religious' groups can be similarly managed through incorporation and recognition and through secularism.

### **Religion and Religions**

'Religion' is the core category upon which the IFM are dependent. It is the conception of common underlying 'religious' characteristics which allow for and can be used to encourage closer relationships between the 'religions'. It is assumed that certain groups have something fundamentally in common with each other that they do not have with groups not classified as a 'religion'. Though obviously the category of 'religion' is by no means exclusive to this movement but is a core category of social life in the contemporary west and to a large extent other parts of the globe. In Scotland certainly, the category of 'religion' has been thoroughly disseminated, objectivated and internalised. It is part of the intuitive and institutional means through which social groups are categorised.

In countries such as Scotland, 'religion' is a matter of fact category referring to identifiable, parallel phenomena found in all societies which are easily distinguished from other domains of social life. However, the critical and theoretical study of religion has revealed this to be a considerably more difficult concept to tackle than first assumed. In this section, drawing on the emic and etic distinctions made above, I will distil some key debates within the critical study of religion to approach the Scottish interfaith movement. I will argue that 'religion' can be defined in such a way to render it into a heuristic device for analysis, organisation of data and comparison and provide a working definition of my own. This will be coupled with a means of analysing IFS' own emic understanding of 'religion', which can be modelled through the world religions paradigm

(WRP) discussed in the literature and which can be put into dialogue with my own ethic model.

### The Roots of 'Religion'

The term religion is derived from the Latin 'religio' which reveals the European cultural roots of the concept much like 'natio' and 'saeculum'. Tracing this linguistic origin though reveals an ingrained tension which has to some extent continued into contemporary usage. Even the original term 'religio' was subject to two competing strands of interpretation. The Roman writer Cicero connected it to 'relegere' to 'treading over the same ground' and linked the concept to tradition in general. This emphasis was on participating in communal rituals and on attentive (though also mindful) practice, or orthopraxy. While mental states were not ignored, what was not emphasised was 'faith' or belief in systematised doctrines or orthodoxy. It was Christian authors such as Lactantius and St Augustine who traced 'religio' to 'relegare' to 're-bind' oneself to God and classed all other practices as 'superstitio', a term that Cicero had reserved only for the most mechanistic or unreflective practices<sup>82</sup>.

'Religio' passed into other European languages, as 'religion' in English but remained a European-Christian folk category. While it was employed largely as a term for Christian belief or for features of Christian practice such as monasticism ('religious' orders and priests as opposed to parish or 'secular' clergy<sup>83</sup>), it was sometimes used as a larger taxon with which to compare the true Christian 'religion' to the false 'religions' of heretics, Muslims, Jews and Pagans<sup>84</sup>. This extension of the category to others was largely unsystematic but become increasingly common with the expanding global reach of European traders, missionaries and colonialists which brought European Christians

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<sup>82</sup> King, R. 1999: pp35-36, Berliner, D. and Sarró, R. "On Learning Religion: An Introduction" in Berliner, D. and Sarró, R. (eds.) *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches* (2007) Oxford: Berghahn Books: pp2-3

<sup>83</sup> Casanova, J. "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms" in Calhoun, C., Juergensmeyer, M. and van Antwerpen, J. (eds.) *Rethinking Secularism* (2011) Oxford: Oxford University Press: p56

<sup>84</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp47-52, pp60-62

into regular contact with these 'other religions'. Increasing awareness of the philosophical sophistication, complexity and variations among at least literate non-European religions began to affect these forms of classification.

Multiple 'religions' were increasingly identified rather than the previously common four-fold distinction between Christianity (and its various schisms), Islam, Judaism and Paganism. The 'discovery' of the 'religions of the east' such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Jainism, Shinto and Sikhism owed much to increasingly systematic scholarship. The new science of religion was pioneered by the German philologist Friedrich Max Müller who participated in and led the translation and collection of 'the sacred books of the east'. While this may have placed increasingly equated other 'religions' with Christianity, it meant that they were largely interpreted and translated according to a Christian and often specifically Protestant model of religion which emphasised personal belief, orthodoxy and codified authoritative scriptures. It also meant focusing on the religion of literate and clerical elites over that of other practitioners<sup>85</sup>.

Nonetheless the employment of religion as a non-confessional comparative term, increasingly distant from inherently evaluative or specifically Christian content, did have consequences. 'Religion' was applied to practices, beliefs, groups and institutions which were more distant from Christianity. Along with the science of religion, the development of archaeology, social anthropology and sociology led to the application of the term to the practices and beliefs of non-literate indigenous peoples and to peoples of the remote past led by figures such as Herbert Spencer, Sir E.B. Tylor, William Robertson Smith, James G. Frazer and Émile Durkheim.

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<sup>85</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp64-68

## Approaches to Definition

Despite this increasing application of the category of 'religion' both within scholarship and wider society, it has proven a difficult concept to define. There are broadly two approaches within social scientific studies of religion: 'substantive' and 'functional'. Substantive approaches define religion in relation to characteristics which usually entails beliefs and claims about 'supernatural' or 'transcendent' beings such as deities or spirits, other realities such as worlds of the dead or forces such as karma or qi. While the community formed around these beliefs and claims may be the object of study as a 'religion', these features are those used to demarcate 'religions' from other forms of social organisation or identity<sup>86</sup>. The other approach to defining religion is usually referred to as 'functional' because it concentrates on the social function which 'religions' perform such as ideological legitimation or providing psychological comfort<sup>87</sup>. Substantive approaches can lead to essentialism – the assumption that there is a common essence to all religions simply because these features are comparable, which is often based on theological assumptions: i.e. that these are different responses to the divine<sup>88</sup>. Functional approaches, on the other hand, appear to render the category of religion analytically superfluous<sup>89</sup>.

The problem with this conventional distinction is that it is misleading and reinforces a false dichotomy. Religion can be demarcated according to certain characteristics and then analysed according to its social, ideological, psychological or

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<sup>86</sup> Platvoet, J.G. "To Define or Not to Define" in Platvoet, J.G and Molendijk, A.L. (eds.) *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts, Contents* (1999) Leiden: Brill: pp252-253

<sup>87</sup> Pals 2006: p113-114

<sup>88</sup> See Luther Martin's distinction between homologous and analogous approaches to 'religion' Martin, L.H. "Comparison" in Braun, W. and McCutcheon, R.T. *Guide to the Study of Religion* (2000) London: Continuum: pp52-53

<sup>89</sup> Spiro, M.E. "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation" in Banton, M. (ed.) *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (1966) London: Routledge: p90, Horton, R. *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (1993) London: Hurst and Company: p23

other function<sup>90</sup>. Indeed, without this, the endeavour is self-defeating because how can one analyse what something does without specifying what 'it' is? This would either entail relying on a preconceived implicit definition of religion or else identifying 'religion' with the factors being used to explain it. Religion would be indistinguishable from ideology or therapy while being explained as ideological or therapeutic. Many functional approaches to religion such as those of Karl Marx or Sigmund Freud, rely on implicit Judeo-Christian conceptions of religion and make references to the Judeo-Christian God and other features of these traditions<sup>91</sup>. It is important to differentiate a definition, which entails demarcating a subject, with a broader theoretical framework which is being used to explain the origins or operation of the subject at hand.

The substantive and functional distinction risks confusing definition and theory but to a large extent is simply the conventional nomenclature for a deeper divide between definitional approaches. I would introduce the labels 'minimal' and 'widening' to categorise these strands within the study of religion which I trace to two seminal scholars, the founder of social anthropology Sir E.B. Tylor and the founder of sociology Émile Durkheim, who both introduced specific, bounded definitions of 'religion' and employed them in constructing functional theories of that subject matter. In Tylor's theory, religion is part of an ingrained human tendency to explain natural processes<sup>92</sup>, while for Durkheim, religion acts to reinforce a powerful sense of social belonging through collective rituals and symbols<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup> Segal, R. "Theories of Religion" in Hinnels, J.R. (ed.) *Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (2005): New York: Routledge: p54

<sup>91</sup> Arnal, W.E. "Definition" in Braun, W. and McCutcheon, R.T. (eds.) *Guide to the Study of Religion* (2000) London: Continuum: p28, Pals 2006: p306

<sup>92</sup> Tylor, E.B. *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom* Volume 1 (1903 [1871]) London: John Murray: p108

<sup>93</sup> Durkheim, É *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (2001 [1912]) Oxford: Oxford University Press: pp249-250

However, Tylor also introduced a 'minimal' definition of religion simply as 'belief in spiritual beings'<sup>94</sup>, while Durkheim defined religion as a community formed in relation to things considered 'sacred' or of supreme social significance<sup>95</sup>. Tylor's definition is minimal in two senses, in that it widens religion beyond the expectation that these systems will include scriptures, a priesthood, temples or supreme deities. This means that this definition is 'minimal' enough to highlight comparable features in different cultures but without binding them to other features which might be coupled with them in other contexts. It is also minimal in the sense that it narrows 'religion' to an identifiable set of features. Durkheim's approach widens 'religion' to include anything of supreme social significance which can include values such as freedom, the scientific method or indeed nationalism<sup>96</sup>. The possibility of applying Durkheim's approach to football, other sports or rock concerts have also been explored<sup>97</sup>.

The tension between Tylor's minimal definition and Durkheim's widening definition of religion continue to be relevant to the study of religion, and I would argue account for different approaches more accurately than the labels 'substantive' and 'functional'. It is also possible to view these strands within the contemporary social scientific studies of religion as successors to the ingrained tension between implications of communal ritual or personal belief teased out of the concept of 'religio' by figures like Cicero and Augustine. The difficulty of achieving a widely agreed definition of religion and the historical and cultural contingency of even the differing western interpretations of 'religion', has led to much critical reflection on the wider applicability of the term, at least as a scholarly category.

It should be borne in mind that as outlined above, the widespread use of the category owes much to western political and cultural domination, not anything

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<sup>94</sup> Tylor 1903 Vol 1: p 424

<sup>95</sup> Durkheim 2001: p46

<sup>96</sup> Durkheim 2001: pp332-333

<sup>97</sup> See Coles, R. (1975): "Football as a Surrogate Religion?" In: Michael Hill (ed.): A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, 8 SCM Press Ltd., 61-77

intrinsically indispensable about the category. It needs to be acknowledged that many languages and cultures did not have a readily translatable category for 'religion' as a distinct domain of life and new terms were either often coined such as zǒng-jào or shūkyō<sup>98</sup>, or established categories with narrower or wider meanings such as dharma or dīn were employed, though arguably even the original concept of 'religio' is quite alien to the contemporary concept of 'religion' which makes claims for its universality questionable. In short, religions had to be 'made', existing cultural features and institutions within societies had to be reconfigured into 'religions' and thus also other features were rendered 'secular'<sup>99</sup>.

Tim Fitzgerald has even argued that the category of 'religion' should simply be jettisoned as an academic category because of these reasons. He argued that attempts to define 'religion' either tended to be theological or at least essentialist – supernatural claims were often thought to imply a common perception of the divine or else, as with Durkheim's definition of religion, were so wide as to be indistinguishable from the study of culture generally. For Fitzgerald, the peculiarly Christian origins of the term may be replicated even unintentionally, while attempts to avoid this by widening the category demonstrate the futility of using it as a self-consciously non-confessional and comparative term<sup>100</sup>.

However, Fitzgerald's own approach reflects a kind of reification of conceptions because it renders the possible conscious uses as inevitably either theological or meaningless, ignoring scholarly agency in the process. Religion is certainly not a term without history or context, a term which corresponds to sharply delineated areas of social life or a category which refers to self-generating entities unaffected by social processes. However, 'religion' is far from uniquely contingent in this manner. Like all

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<sup>98</sup> Fitzgerald 2000: p22, Gentz, J. *Understanding Chinese Religion* (2013) Edinburgh: Dunedin: p3

<sup>99</sup> Mandair, A.P.S. and Dressler, M. "Introduction: Modernity, Religion-Making and the Postsecular" in Mandair and Dressler 2011: pp3-10

<sup>100</sup> Fitzgerald 2000: pp26-33

analytical terms, it is dependent on self-conscious reflection to be sharpened into a scholarly tool which can be applied with care to other contexts for heuristic reasons. As I stated above, etic terms are usually of emic derivation but have been self-consciously modified, just as a scalpel is a sharpened knife.

Fitzgerald's dichotomy does, I would argue, demonstrate the problems with widening the category to the point that it is superfluous as a comparative device and the need to avoid importing too much conceptual baggage from the emic origins of 'religion'. I would argue that the approach stemming from the work of E.B. Tylor is the most useful in the construction of an etic definition of religion<sup>101</sup>. This is the broad tendency to stipulate a distinctive set of features which recur in different cultural contexts, which can be compared but which are not presumed to be closely equivalent or share common origins. If we are to impose a scholarly category then it should be clear so that the useful or detrimental effects of imposing that lens are clear. The other advantage of a Neo-Tylorian<sup>102</sup> approach is its minimal characteristics, while the subject matter has been clearly outlined, no further assumptions follow from this and the peculiarities of the case should not be obscured.

I would argue that a Neo-Tylorian approach to religion which focuses on things like gods, spirits, afterlives, supernatural forces, is the most useful. However, Durkheimian scholarship can be useful for a different reason: to allow for the comparison of different phenomena deemed 'sacred' by different social groups. It is simply that the sacred should not be equated with religion, either to assume that all sacred things are religious or religious things are necessarily sacred. Durkheim rightly pointed to the fact that national symbols can be just as sacred to nationalists as prototypically religious

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<sup>101</sup> See Sutherland 2017c, Sutherland 2012

<sup>102</sup> As Tylor wrote in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and worked with a problematic cultural evolutionary schema, it is important to distinguish contemporary scholarship which adopt similar approaches to definition and theory from Tylorianism as a whole, see Horton 1993, Tremlett, P.F. Sutherland, L.T. and Harvey, G. "Introduction: Why Tylor? Why Now?" in *Edward Tylor, Religion and Culture* (2017) London: Bloomsbury

rituals<sup>103</sup> and for some the secular and Non-religious identifications such as Humanism can be sacred in this Durkheimian sense<sup>104</sup>. I would argue that the strength of Tylor's approach to religion is that it did not stipulate that 'religious' institutions, rituals or postulated beings such as gods were necessarily deemed to be of paramount personal or communal importance. Their social position or role could vary according to the case<sup>105</sup>.

### Balancing Emic and Etic

While few critical scholars of religion would seek to jettison the category of 'religion' as part of comparative scholarship, many have focused on emic usages of 'religion' without the need to impose an etic definition<sup>106</sup>. As 'religion' is an originally western folk category but one which has been imposed, adopted and adapted throughout the non-western world to differing extents, one can concentrate on the circumstances of its use. That is how the category of 'religion' is understood and articulated by different actors in different contexts for their own purposes, how it is used to legitimate or de-legitimate different persons or groups. This involves paying attention to the internalised assumptions about religion, whether these are viewed positively or negatively, such as the notion that religions are based on intellectual teachings e.g. that the 'core' teachings are compatible or else that religions are inherently 'dogmatic'.

This approach does have several advantages, most prominent among them that religion is not assumed to be an ahistorical category which transcends socio-cultural contexts or is uninvolved with political processes. The category clearly has its complex cultural and historical origins which continue to mark it out. This approach should not be confused with a naïve one which simply takes for granted what is entailed by the term 'religion' and does not model religion theoretically. Religion is modelled in such an

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<sup>103</sup> Durkheim 2001: pp332-333

<sup>104</sup> See Chapter 5 of this thesis

<sup>105</sup> Sutherland 2017c: p94

<sup>106</sup> E.g. Taira 2016: p76

approach but as a category which is shaped by its context. It is a contingent category and one that often plays an ideological role that scholars can analyse. This approach has revealed the extent to which 'religion' as a comparative category often carries particularly Christian or even Protestant conceptual baggage: the perceived importance of doctrine, personal faith, a codified set of scriptures and religious institutions as distinct from other areas of life<sup>107</sup>.

Understandings of the people under study is always vital in social science and the risk of distortion is real. Though using an etic definition of religion is certainly not indispensable, there are several reasons why it can be useful as well. For one thing, scholarly accounts are always distinct from the accounts provided by informants or sources because they are produced for different reasons. Social scientific approaches should also not be purely descriptive, but should provide models, analysis and explanation<sup>108</sup>. In doing so, even in modelling emic usages, this will render the categories used somewhat distinct from their original context. As J.Z. Smith put it map is not territory<sup>109</sup>. There is also a risk that one's own internalised understanding of religion can shape one's approach to emic usages and while other measures can be taken to control this, self-consciously outlining one's understanding of religion adapted (and indeed inherently shaped by) analysis may be useful.

Another thing to consider though, is that as the study of religion involves the analysis of much more than 'religion' in the broad, not only specific 'religious' features but also factors which interact with 'religion' such as culture, ethnicity, nationalism, politics, economics etc. Inevitably in modelling 'religion', one will rely on folk or intuitive understandings of some of these factors but also on understandings peculiar to

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<sup>107</sup> King 1999: pp37-39

<sup>108</sup> McCutcheon 2001: p22, 63-65

<sup>109</sup> Smith 1978

scholarship and will introduce original argumentation or angles on the features studied which are distinct or even unrecognisable to the persons under study.

The analysis of the cultural contingency of emic categories and their ideological role can be coupled with etic approaches if the latter is not designed to replace the former. If an etic definition of religion is used to shed light on similar, identifiable features within differing cultural contexts and the different way they are socialised, then emic understandings should be part of that analysis. The etic definition is used to articulate what characteristics are used to organise data but the way these features are framed by the agents in question is vital to this endeavour. This can also be part of the comparison which etic definitions help to facilitate. As the case which concerns this thesis is that of a Scottish organisation, the etic definition I will use draws attention to the way these features are socially categorised, including through their emic understanding of 'religion'. The fact that the etic and emic definitions are distinct can be useful in allowing me to highlight what unconscious assumptions and conscious choices have affected these relations and the categories vital to them<sup>110</sup>.

The clarity and comparative lightness of a minimal Neo-Tylorian definition can prove useful to an approach which distinguishes but incorporates both etic and emic understandings. My own definition of religion is as follows: 'beliefs and practices based around postulated extra-natural beings, forces and realms...emerging and transmitted in particular social contexts<sup>111</sup>.' I use the term extra-natural to avoid the implications of superiority, awe or paramount significance which might accompany the term supernatural. Extra-natural beings can include lowly spirits as well as supreme deities along with the human soul, other worlds such as realms of the dead or gods and spirits and impersonal forces such as karma, qi, magic, fate, astrology or the Dao. The term 'natural' should also be understood as strictly etic and does not necessarily indicate a

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<sup>110</sup> Sutherland 2017c: pp100-102

<sup>111</sup> Sutherland 2017c: p96, Sutherland 2012: p53

wide gulf between the worlds, beings or forces and this one. Indeed, one of the strengths of the Tylorian approach is that it does not presume that such phenomena are deemed especially transcendent or alien but can be somewhat pedestrian features of everyday life<sup>112</sup>.

While these are additions to the common human experience of living in the world which Clifford Geertz would term the 'naïve empirical' mindset along with the 'critical empiricism' of science<sup>113</sup>, these may not be deemed 'extra-natural' from an emic perspective. They are indeed integral to the specific religious conception of the cosmos and in that sense, cannot be viewed as 'non-natural' from that perspective. Rather these things can be described as extra-natural only from the position of contemporary science but embracing a methodologically agnostic approach to religious claims does not entail a vacuum but does depend on a set of presumptions and a framework of interpretation which can be termed socio-naturalistic. As Donald Wiebe has argued, to remain scientific the study of religion must be independent of the perspective of practitioners<sup>114</sup>. Though the recognition of the embeddedness of religious studies within broader scientific paradigms and its dependence on the contemporary scientific codification of 'nature' can also be a humbler means of embracing its own inherent contingency and limitations.

The use of the category of 'extra-natural' is not intended to imply a universal bifurcation between 'nature' and 'transcendence' nor attempt to remove analysis from historical processes, but like the etic approaches to the emergence of nationalism above and secularism discussed below, can provide a lens through which to view these processes because of its differentiation from emic self-identification. The introduction of modern scientific conceptions of nature was also exported globally and necessitated the construction of new cultural classifications and identifications in different societies. This

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<sup>112</sup> Sutherland 2017c: p94

<sup>113</sup> Geertz, C. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz* (1973) USA: Basic Books: p111-112, Sutherland 2017c p97, Sutherland 2012: pp54-55

<sup>114</sup> Wiebe, D. *The Politics of Religious Studies* (1999) New York: Palgrave: p7

process can include the construction of 'Non-religious' and 'secular' identifications but also the persistence and reformulation of pre-existing systems based on epistemic claims outside of scientific paradigms into 'religions'. Though, as with nationalism and secularism, not all emic conceptions of 'religion' are as broad as this and the attempt to construct different categories of 'religion' can still be acknowledged but analysing these wider processes is also vital.

There is one final issue with a Neo-Tylorian approach which needs to be ironed out: the question of belief. A persistent problem with the study of religion and the naïve replication of the category of religion has been a Christian or even specifically Protestant bias which entails several specific assumptions. One of these key assumptions, which can be traced back to the Christian interpretation of the root 'religio' is the inherent significance of personal faith or belief which is not only not shared by many non-western religious conceptions, but was not even shared by non-Christian interpreters of the same word from (roughly) the same cultural background. The problem is that many religions are orthopraxic and whether or not one has an appropriate inner conviction is not universal concern, whereas outward behaviour almost always is. Belief understood in this sense does not always mediate membership of communities or is significant for the efficacy of ritual<sup>115</sup>.

The presumption of the centrality of belief has been widely critiqued in the study of religion and rightly so<sup>116</sup>. The problem is that as Clifford Geertz argues, without it the concept of religion as a comparative category does not make much sense 'it attempts to stage Hamlet without the prince<sup>117</sup>.' Without widespread belief or claims about extra-natural beings, forces and realms, religious rituals would be indistinguishable from other cultural practices<sup>118</sup>. 'Religion' as an etic category is sometimes imposed on a culture

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<sup>115</sup> Sutherland 2017c: p93

<sup>116</sup> Needham, R. *Belief, Language and Experience* (1972) Oxford: Basil Blackwell: p31, Harvey 2013: pp2-3

<sup>117</sup> Geertz 1973: p109

<sup>118</sup> Sutherland 2017c: pp93-94, Sutherland 2012: p55

which does not use the term but even where it is indigenous, its academic rendering always makes it somewhat alien, therefore to justify such an imposition one must be clear. The fact that belief is sometimes thought to entail deeply felt or cultivated inner conviction, or even at times a strongly intellectual focus or ‘abstract Baconian deduction<sup>119</sup>’ is also misleading.

‘Belief’ need not refer to systematised and policed doctrines but general presumptions about reality which include all such religious and non-religious presumptions<sup>120</sup>. Human beings cannot avoid interpreting reality according to preconceived notions and make use of frameworks in which to do it. Performing a sacrifice to a deity for example may not depend on the inner convictions of those performing it to be considered effective but the conceptual background is still that there is a deity who can be appeased through sacrifice. Indeed, the fact that some attendees or performers act in the way they do because of cultural heritage is interesting but modelling this distinction can make use of the category of belief and religion.

The etic approach that I am adopting is interested in the social role of extra-natural beliefs and how they are used to construct social categories, including the emic constructions of ‘religion’ and ‘non-religion’ (increasingly identified as ‘beliefs’). The presence or lack of these features may to some extent be used by the agents to differentiate religion from non-religion but IFS’ understanding of ‘religion’ has been shaped by more extensive assumptions. As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, ‘religion’ and even the equivalent category of (non-religious) ‘beliefs’ have been shaped by ingrained assumptions. My approach attempts to stand back from their representations of religions to demonstrate how the specific features picked out by my definition are given specific significance or conceptually packaged by IFS. Their core assumptions are that religion forms part of the core of personal identity as of deep

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<sup>119</sup> Geertz 1973: p109

<sup>120</sup> See Sturgeon, S., Martin, M.G.F. and Grayling, A.C. “Epistemology” in Grayling, A.C. (ed.) *Philosophy 1: A Guide through the Subject* (1998) Oxford: Oxford University Press: pp13-14

personal and social significance and is associated with an established, even ancient body of ethical-philosophical teachings.

### The World Religions Paradigm (WRP)

The distinction and the analytical potential of this etic approach should become apparent once in relation to the world religions paradigm (WRP) mentioned in the introduction. I will demonstrate the close fit of IFS to the world religions paradigm in a subsequent chapter but here I will provide a more extensive outline this model and analyse it through my own etic definition. As noted, the WRP refers to the stress on a handful of broad globe-spanning traditions, emphasising these abstract traditions and labels over sects or subdivisions within religions. The traditions usually include: the Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Shinto and Zoroastrianism<sup>121</sup>.

This model was introduced into scholarship by C.P. Tiele who distinguished 'ethnic' or 'national' religions, those confined to a single group, from those which were proselytising, potentially universal or sought to 'conquer the world'<sup>122</sup>. How problematic Tiele's distinction was aside, it was constructed primarily for analytical reasons and does draw attention to a genuine distinction within the operation of certain religions. He also was more consistent in his classification by grouping Judaism and Hinduism as 'national religions' and only recognising Christianity, Islam and Buddhism as 'world religions'<sup>123</sup>. The problem has been the way this has been carried forward unthinkingly into the representation of religions which tends to side-line or misrepresent religions which do not fit the WRP. Most non-specialised texts on religion conform closely to the WRP and organise religions according to these 'great traditions' but unlike Tiele's understanding of 'world religion' consider themselves to have represented all or most of the religions

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<sup>121</sup> Cox 2007: pp1-2, Cotter and Robertson 2016: p2

<sup>122</sup> Masuzawa 2005: p112

<sup>123</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp110-111

of the world. Even when its limitations are recognised, smaller religious groups are usually crammed into catch-all terms such as ‘indigenous’ or ‘new religious movements’<sup>124</sup>.

The WRP has moved from being a specific analytical category to a widely disseminated and internalised view of religion which carries with it many assumptions. These include: the assumption that religions are universalistic, global in scope, that broader traditions are more significant than sects or other distinctions, that they are based on a coherent set of doctrines, a philosophical and ethical systems and a codified and authoritative canon<sup>125</sup>. One’s religious identity is also widely assumed to be of deep personal significance as a primary identity. The problem is that this downplays the importance of specific identifiable communities or contexts of belief and practice which can be highly distinct. It is certainly the case that broader traditions and identities formed around them can be highly significant such as ‘Muslim’ or ‘Buddhist’, and even that some institutionalised religions do have global reach such as the Bahá’í Faith or the Roman Catholic Church.

However, many of the core traditions of the contemporary WRP do not fit especially well. Most obviously Judaism, Shinto and Hinduism are by and large ethnic religions with some exceptions and are largely non-proselytising much like Sikhism. To a large extent, an overarching sense of common religious identity was a result of the classifications of western scholars and the response of indigenous intellectuals to those classifications, as well as to colonialism and Christian missions<sup>126</sup>. Now recognised as one of the key components of the world religions model, ‘Hinduism’ did not even exist as a term until the 19<sup>th</sup> century (the Persian derived term ‘Hindu’ was considerably older<sup>127</sup>). For most of Indian religious history, while Buddhism and Jainism were recognised as

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<sup>124</sup> Cox 2007: pp1-2, Cotter and Robertson 2016: p2

<sup>125</sup> King 1999: p62, Cotter and Robertson 2016: pp8-9

<sup>126</sup> King 1999: pp93-98, pp103-107

<sup>127</sup> King 1999: pp98-100

relatively removed from what would now be termed the Hindu mainstream, different sects, philosophical schools and devotional cults were quite distinct without much stress on an overarching identity. Nor were Hindu scriptures, especially the Vedas, widely disseminated among the populace. The scriptural, doctrinal and ethical approach of the WRP can reify 'religions' as something quite separate from the community practicing it and open it to wider interpretation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this often took the form of western scholars judging contemporary Buddhism and Hinduism by standards deduced from scriptures which were not necessarily significant or widely disseminated. This is a direct result of the attempt to equivocate between the Bible and the scriptures of other religions<sup>128</sup>.

The WRP is crucial to modelling the way religion is constructed in contemporary Scottish public life and elsewhere. Religious communities are represented through these traditions and now largely conform to this model, at least in public representations. Religious diversity is boiled down to a handful of equivalent intellectual traditions which are significant bases for individual identity. These beliefs and practices related to extra-natural claims have been codified in a manner which lays stress on an overarching tradition, ethics and teachings. However, it is not and has not always been the case that such beliefs and practices are packaged in this way and coupled with these other associations.

Using my own etic definition of religion, I would draw attention to the fact that this model of religion quite specifically leaves out some socialised beliefs and practices which have similar features but which do not conform to these more specific associations. There are a whole range of beliefs and practices which are labelled 'New Age', 'holistic' or 'alternative' which are not based on codified doctrines, scriptures or which form a large overarching tradition or an institutionalised community. These can include belief in and postulated relations with angels, deities, spiritual beings, ghosts,

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<sup>128</sup> King 1999: pp101-107

extra-terrestrials or inter-dimensional beings and practices such as channelling, scrying, dowsing, astrology or alternative medicine. What is particularly interesting is the fact that not only are these often not the basis of a discrete community or clear identity but the fact that these practices are not always undertaken as fundamental to personal identity. They may be undertaken casually without being accredited with deep personal significance. This is an example of the ways in which I can use my etic definition of religion, which because of its minimal character avoids making too many specific assumptions and can be used to stand back from and shed light on the ways in which these beliefs and practices are conceptually and socially packaged. The alternative or holistic phenomenon is scarcely mentioned in the literature because it does not fit the dominant emic scheme through which Interfaith Scotland represents religion<sup>129</sup>.

### **The Secular and Non-Religion**

Modern constructions of the category of 'religion' are not isolated but are enacted in tandem with the category of the 'secular'. The two categories were described by Tim Fitzgerald as 'semantically parasitic on each other'<sup>130</sup>. The secular is usually identified in conceptual opposition to 'religion' as 'non-religious' space but the concept can be considerably more complex, and along with the more overt category of 'non-religion' can be used in differing, even contrary ways. Like both 'nation' and 'religion', the 'secular' is a core category of contemporary western societies, including in Scotland. By virtue of both their public role in Scotland and their dependence on the category of religion, IFS must work with the concepts of the 'secular' and 'non-religion' in various ways.

Secularity was often deemed prototypically modern and even an essential part of 'modernisation' processes and indeed nations and nationalism were particularly

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<sup>129</sup> Sutherland 2017c: pp100-102, for discussions of some of these practices see Sutcliffe, S. *Children of the New Age: A History of Spiritual Practice* (2003) London: Routledge, Harvey, G. and Vincett, G. "Alternative Spiritualities: Marginal and Mainstream" in Woodhead, L. and Catto, R. in *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (2012) London: Routledge

<sup>130</sup> Day, Vincett and Cotter 2013: p2

assumed to be secular. Like the other core categories discussed here though, it is a concept with specific western origins which has been imposed, adopted and adapted throughout the world to varying extents through the colonial legacy<sup>131</sup>. It overlaps with, but can be distinguished from conceptions of 'non-religion' which is at once broader and more specific as I will explain. Suffice to say, the development of increasing concrete, systematic and sharply bounded constructions of 'religion' entail that there must a negative category defined in relation to that.

### Secularisation, the Secular and Secularism

The category of the secular is associated with at least three differentiable but related and overlapping concepts: 'secularisation' as a process, the 'secular' as a socio-political and epistemic reality and 'secularism' as an ideology<sup>132</sup>. Secularisation refers to a process where religious identity, conceptions and rituals become less significant within institutions, areas of life or society at large<sup>133</sup>. This includes things like declining church attendance in Scotland but also the lessening of the cultural significance of Christian identification, symbols or narratives and the way areas of life such as politics or media are not defined by, or even particularly involved with religion. Secularisation can highlight processes which have undeniably occurred to a large extent in Scotland. However, it is bound up with the once predominant and thoroughly disputed secularisation thesis which represented secularisation as a (largely) uniform teleological process essential to modernisation leading inevitably to the decline of religion rather than simply the differentiation of religion from politics or privatisation of religion<sup>134</sup>.

Critics of this thesis point to the resurgence of politicised religion from the American religious right to Political Islam and the general fact that such processes of

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<sup>131</sup> Smith, D.E. "Religion and Political Modernization: Comparative Perspectives" in Smith, D.E. (ed.) *Religion and Political Modernization* (1974) London: Yale University Press: pp3-4, pp8-9

<sup>132</sup> Casanova 2011: p54

<sup>133</sup> Calhoun, C. Juergensmeyer, M. and van Antwerpen, J. "Introduction" in Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and van Antwerpen 2011: p10

<sup>134</sup> Casanova 2011: p60

secularisation have been largely confined to Europe. The secularisation thesis still has its dogged defenders such as Steve Bruce who hold that the evidence still points towards secularisation and that its critics have misrepresented the argument<sup>135</sup>. This thesis will be unable to make any kind of contribution to this debate and will circumscribe its observations to the case at hand due to the limitations of its scope and its focus on representation over wider social processes.

Secularity refers to the state whereby an institution or sphere of life has been secularised but does not necessarily entail the secularisation thesis<sup>136</sup>. For example, this can refer to the secular character of the political system which is not based on or does not involve strong religious elements but rather on the 'secular' nation, state, economy, human rights and scientific framework. This does not necessarily also entail that religion is otherwise insignificant or in decline but that it has been produced by different processes of differentiation which mark out different bounded 'religious' and 'secular' domains, not necessarily identical with those experienced in western Europe<sup>137</sup>. This may entail that 'religion' and 'politics' are demarcated spheres of activity which is often naturalised as the proper relationship between them. Neither 'secularism' nor 'secularity' are truly apolitical though because they are dependent on institutionalised power relations but are also sometimes the subject of overt political contestation. Nonetheless these terms can be used descriptively, and secularity can be part of the established and taken for granted framework within which actors operate.

Secularism however, refers to different ideological projects which promote different forms of secularisation or defend the secularity of institutions, especially public institutions such as schools or the political sphere. In its more passive sense, secularism undergirds secularity through a related set of assumptions about the world and a

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<sup>135</sup> See for example, Bruce, S. "Secularisation, Church and Popular Religion" in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (2011) Vol. 62: 3, pp543-561

<sup>136</sup> Casanova 2011: p65

<sup>137</sup> Casanova 2011: pp 63-65

normative agenda, much as nationalism in the broader sense undergirds the nation<sup>138</sup>. It can also be associated with more muscular activism through pressure groups such as secular societies, which in Scotland have campaigned against religious influences on schools and other areas of life deemed to be properly secular<sup>139</sup>. Various forms of secularism have also been part of the official ideologies of states including the USA, France, Turkey and Communist regimes such as the USSR.

### Non-religion and non-religion

The secular can be distinguished from conceptions of 'non-religion' as a category in several ways. The secular is conceived in more specifically 'spatial' terms in relation to public spheres of operation. Even in comparatively radical forms of secularism, public life is rendered secular and religion is afforded space within the private sphere of the home and place of worship. Further, one can be 'religious', operate within secular spaces and support or promote secularism even in this more radical form. The term 'non-religion' on the other hand can be more general as a purely negative term, everything not classified as 'religious' or alternatively as a much more specific and active negation of religion than secular<sup>140</sup>. It has been increasingly common for individuals, including 37% of the Scottish population in the last census, to identify as 'non-religious<sup>141</sup>' and specific groups and intellectual traditions which define themselves as 'non-religious', such as the Humanist movement, have attained increasing prominence.

The vague and purely negative conceptions of non-religion and specific positive identification as non-religious scarcely correlate. This has led one scholar, Lois Lee, to argue that 'Non-religious' identities, worldviews and organisations should be

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<sup>138</sup> Casanova 2011: pp66-70

<sup>139</sup> E.g. Duffy, J. "The new battle over religion in schools" in *The Herald* 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2013

<sup>140</sup> Campbell, C. *Towards a Sociology of Irreligion* (1971): London: MacMillan: p21

<sup>141</sup> National Records of Scotland 2013: p4

distinguished from 'non-religion' in general through capitalising the 'n'<sup>142</sup>. I will follow this convention throughout this thesis. 'Non-religious' identities are constructed specifically in contrast with 'religion' as understood by the agents, while 'non-religion' can entail everything that is not specifically considered religious. Both can correlate with certain forms of secularism but neither completely overlap with them.

Non-religion may involve campaigning for secularism or result from processes of secularisation but it is also a personal or collective identity. It negates religion to an extent that the secular rarely does, because any form of secularism attempts to incorporate and even discipline religious groups and actors. The most general sense of non-religion though does not have to be bound by any stipulations, even in a thoroughly religious society, certain things may be deemed non-religious in the sense of being not specifically religious. To a large extent in the Scottish context though non-religion and secularity considerably overlap because, for example, political parties such as the Scottish Greens can be described in both terms but are also open to religious and Non-religious participants. Secularity is to an extent conceptually encompassed by the term non-religion but does entail an ideological basis which the broader term need not entail.

### The Development of Secularism

Social scientists concerned with Non-religion such as Lee have arrived at a very similar conclusion to scholars concerned with secularism: these should not be understood purely as a negative or as the state of affairs which intrinsically arise from the absence of religion as a 'subtraction story'<sup>143</sup>, they reflect historical developments and operate within social contexts. This is analogous to one of the aims of this thesis, to argue that interfaith is more than a simple 'multiplication story' of the interaction between religious traditions but an observable phenomenon in its own right.

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<sup>142</sup> Referenced in Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., Hooley, T., Moore, N., Purdam, K. and Weller, P. "Researching the Non-Religious: Methods and Methodological Issues, Challenges and Controversies" in Day, Vincett and Cotter 2013: p176

<sup>143</sup> Taylor, C. "Western Secularity" in Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and van Antwerpen 2011(a): p39

The categories of 'religion', 'Non-religion' and 'secular' have developed in close relationship with one another. The term 'secular' is derived from the Latin 'Saeculum' meaning 'the times' or the particular era that one was living in and came to mean 'this world' or 'worldly' affairs. Under Christian influence, this notion of the times or this world could be particularly contrasted with eternity, heaven and God. In Medieval Europe, the terms 'secular' and 'religious' were used to contrast ordinary parish priests with monastics or those belonging to 'religious' orders<sup>144</sup>.

'Secular' and 'religious' could also be used to contrast the authority of the Church on the one hand with those of local monarchs or other rulers, though as such rulers were sanctioned by the Church, they were not outside of religion such as Pagans or Heretics. The fact that ecclesiastical authorities and local political authorities were separated did not entail modern secularism because the authority of the Church was supreme and percolated throughout Europe. This separation of religious and political authorities perhaps facilitated later developments, but it reflected the unique historical situation of Western Europe. This situation did not reflect other areas of the world, including Orthodox Christian societies, and where religious and political authorities could be distinguished, they did not reflect this unique relationship<sup>145</sup>.

This state of affairs changed considerably due to the break-up of religious hegemony in Western Europe brought about by the Protestant Reformation which emerged in the 1520s and 30s under Martin Luther, though the Scottish Reformation led by John Knox is dated 1560<sup>146</sup>. The emergence of rival Protestant churches increasingly using local vernaculars rather than Latin, and confined to national borders meant that secular rulers, even Roman Catholic ones, became increasingly powerful. After a series

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<sup>144</sup> Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and van Antwerpen 2011: pp8-11

<sup>145</sup> Taylor 2011a: pp32-33, See Fokas, E. and Karagiannis, E. "Greek Identity and Europe: Entanglements and Tensions" in Spohn, Koenig and Knöbl 2015, Lycourinos, D. "Modern Greek Ethno-Religious Nationalism: An ideological and Temporal Relocation of Selfhood" in *Implicit Religion* (2017) 20:1: pp23-41

<sup>146</sup> Taylor 2011a: pp37-38, Lynch 1998: p84-85

of 'wars of religion' between Catholic and Protestant princes ending in the Thirty Years War, the supremacy of secular rulers was enshrined with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). This treaty guaranteed the rights of secular princes to determine the official religion of their state but this is also used as a marker for the beginning of the modern state system defined by mutual recognition of sovereignty and clearly demarcated borders<sup>147</sup>.

This still entailed that religions had an enshrined status within each state and the degree to which minorities were tolerated varied. Contemporary secularism, which to different degrees separates religious and political life, is also bound up with the enshrinement of religious pluralism which was yet to emerge. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment championed the right to free inquiry, reason, scepticism, free speech and the development of science which challenged established traditions and doctrines. This particularly challenged the dominant status of religion and its relationship to governance through its promotion of freedom of conscience. The subsequent French and American revolutions enshrined official forms of secularism but more subtle changes occurred in other nations such as the rise of the 'Moderate' faction within the Church of Scotland around the same time<sup>148</sup>.

Research into and explanation of the world in relation to the physical environment, life, human beings, broad philosophy and increasingly politics, economics, society and ethics were confined to what has been described as 'the immanent frame' based on the sharp distinction between 'natural' and 'supernatural' (or extra-natural in my terminology). The immanent frame refers to the confinement of appeals or references to 'this-worldly' explanations, to natural and social explanations as opposed to 'transcendent' explanations. The development of increasingly sophisticated technical knowledge based on the immanent frame led to increasing reliance on it, including in

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<sup>147</sup> Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and van Antwerpen 2011 pp13-15

<sup>148</sup> Brown 1997: p19

governance and politics. The secular became identified with the 'real' and the 'necessary' with the 'religious' or the 'transcendent' as an addition to that<sup>149</sup>.

The secularism discussed here reflects these histories rather than universal experiences. It reflects the former domination of ecclesiastical authorities, the fact that church and state were already somewhat separate and despite religious division - the shared history of cross-continental religio-political conflict. The narrative of religious domination, violence and exclusion informs the ideology of modern secularism which has been imposed, imported and adapted throughout the world to varying degrees<sup>150</sup>. While it would be difficult to find areas of the world where violence and exclusion were unrelated to religion entirely, mass religious wars were not universally prevalent. Nor were the presence of multiple religions or minorities necessarily a problem for regimes which were nonetheless religiously legitimated. Further, the need to free the pursuit of knowledge from the control of religious authorities which form a basis of the secularist mythos was shaped by the struggles of figures such as Copernicus, Galileo and indeed David Hume with church authorities.

The separation of public and private and the notion that religion is a matter of personal belief and affiliation rather than one based on birth, ethnicity or other factors were novel to many cultures. The growth of secular nationalism throughout the world of various forms was one response to this but another was the construction of political religious responses which were nonetheless shaped by the three categories of religion, nation and the secular – even while in the case of some forms of Political Islam they seek to reject or disrupt those categories. While this is a vast topic and cannot be addressed here, it is important to bear in mind that these different responses were based on the

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<sup>149</sup> Taylor 2011a: pp50-51

<sup>150</sup> Goldstone, B. "Secularism, 'Religious Violence', and the Liberal Imaginary" in Mandair and Dressler 2011: pp104-108

reaction between pre-existing conditions and the specific development of western influences in the region.

Differing global experiences may have affected perceptions of the relationship between 'religion' and 'secularism' by Scots of a variety of religious identifications and may have directly shaped the experiences of immigrants. This involves adapting to the specific secular and religious environment of contemporary Scotland but shaped by the negative and positive experiences of religion and secularism in other nations. This could take the form of hostility to perceived anti-religious strands within secularism, or on the other hand a fear of religious domination engendering support for radical secularism. Sensitivity to media portrayals of religion in other environments, such as of life in Islamic regimes, may lead to a desire to demonstrate the compatibility of their religion and secular-pluralism. Comparing the form of secularity and secularism operational in Scotland with the differing western forms of secularism is more directly relevant. Scotland may conform closely to a specific form of secularism but the proximity and public awareness of other forms of secularism mean that these can influence the perception of actors and could even lead to a shift from one form to another in the future (though unlikely).

### Three Western Secularisms

Even within western history the experiences of religion diverged and led to the development of distinct secular responses. The strictest model of secularism can be described as the 'French-model' or Laicism (from 'Laïcité'), though also in Germany and formerly Turkey. Laicism stipulates the strict separation of church and state which entails that governmental institutions such as schools and hospitals, are strictly separated from any perceived religious influence. In its more radical form, Laicism has been interpreted as a strict separation between public and private outside of strictly state institutions which has been used to justify bans on the Burkha in France as a publicly visible religious

symbol<sup>151</sup>. Even when confined to state institutions, similar interpretations have been used such as the ban on Hijabs within German and Swiss schools for teachers because they are state employees with authority over pupils<sup>152</sup>. Laicism reflects the French Revolutionary reaction to the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church over French society which explains both the strict boundary policing based on narratives of religious authoritarianism and the treatment of religion in the singular<sup>153</sup>.

The American model of secularism can appear like the French but in practice could scarcely be more different. Both models entail that the state is legally secular, that no religion is or could be officially established and officially protects religious minorities, though Laicism has notably been strategically employed to target minority practices such as wearing the Hijab and not against Catholic nuns' habits. The American model entails that the state and its institutions are separated from specific religious domination but unlike Laicism, the political culture is not particularly secular, as in differentiated from religion. In the USA, the overwhelmingly Christian culture and the development of powerful religious interest groups such as the 'religious right' mean that politicians and activists can overtly appeal to common religious language and interests or publicly engage in religious practices.

Religion may be formally separated but in the American model it is not religion per se which is kept out of politics but rather the domination of any given religious group. It is the separation of the state from domination by any one church rather than a wide and well-policed gulf between religion and politics. The American model reflects the historical establishment of the American colonies by religious minority groups – mainly

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<sup>151</sup> Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and van Antwerpen 2011: p9, Bacquet, S. "Religious Symbols and the Making of Contemporary Religious Identities" in Sandberg, R. (ed.) *Religion and Legal Pluralism* (2015) Farnham: Ashgate: p114

<sup>152</sup> Taylor 2011b: p49, Gozdecka, D.A. "Religious Pluralism as a Legal Principle" in Sandberg 2015: pp186-187

<sup>153</sup> Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and van Antwerpen 2011: p15, Taylor 2011b: pp39-41

nonconformist Protestants who rejected the Anglican establishment (though Maryland was a Catholic colony)<sup>154</sup>.

Scotland does not fit into either the French or American models but unsurprisingly, given its location fits into what could be dubbed the 'North-West European' model which includes the countries of the UK, the low countries and the Nordic nations (though also many former British colonies: Australia, New Zealand and Canada). These countries are mostly monarchies with established or official churches which might be viewed as challenging their secularity were it not for the fact that political culture has been thoroughly secularised. These countries share with their Laicist neighbours a high degree of cultural secularisation, decreasing active religious practice and decreasing religious affiliation – which differentiates them from the USA.

This means that secularism is the de facto rather than de jure ideology of these countries, just as religion unofficially strongly influences politics in the USA despite official distinctions. In Scotland, despite officialdom, politics and religion are firmly separated in practice. This is part of the ingrained practice and expectations of actors operating within Scottish politics. Scottish politicians do not appeal to religion in the same manner as American politicians because it does not have broad based appeal and may even alienate many voters. While churches in these countries have various institutionalised roles, in Scotland certainly, this is largely confined to religious education. Nonetheless the establishment of religion in a secularised society and political sphere mean that religion is not forcibly kept at arms-length from the political process, which makes it open to religious influences but not the kind of strong religious influences found in the USA.

The North-Western European model can be viewed as the result of a continuing process whereby religious institutions have used their institutional position to be able to adapt to secularism in a manner that is advantageous to them but inevitably involves

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<sup>154</sup> Casanova 2011: pp60-64

genuine concessions. They have changed in order to conserve but this has not made the changes any less significant. In Scotland, increasing challenges to the established church by dissenting churches within their own Presbyterian tradition after the Great Disruption (1843) and the continuing and increasing presence of Catholic minorities, led ultimately to the secularisation of politics. The Free Church which emerged from the Disruption was avowedly secularist in disavowing the notion of established religion but also breaking the monopoly of the established Kirk on many areas of Scottish life which allowed secular authorities to fill the vacuum<sup>155</sup>. If they had achieved their goal of a 'Godly Commonwealth' in thoroughly Christian 19<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, the form of secularism may have conformed to the American model. This is unlikely to have been successful though given the decline in church attendance, growth of non-Christian religious diversity and growing Non-religious population in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

It was Christian churches in general which developed ties with the governance of Scotland. Formerly, the pre-devolutionary Secretary of State for Scotland would customarily meet with the heads of the churches in Scotland<sup>156</sup> and Roman Catholic leaders have had a presence in Scottish media and politics for a long time<sup>157</sup>. However, growing cultural secularisation, diversity and disaffiliation have meant that the churches would find it difficult to dominate Scottish politics. The fact that post-devolutionary Scotland is still developing has meant that the relationship between different groups in Scotland and governance has been changing. Being viewed as having disproportionate and inappropriate levels of influence could lead to the loss of their position. Therefore, increasingly including diverse religious groups and Non-religious representatives in the relationship with governance has been beneficial. There is the unlikely possibility that

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<sup>155</sup> Devine 2012: pp374-375

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Sister Smyth OBE, SND 20/6/16

<sup>157</sup> See for example Ritchie, M. "Comment" in *The Herald* 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1998, Currie, B. "Churches warn against hasty anti-sectarianism Law" in *The Herald* Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2011

Scotland would move into a Laicist model of secularism if the Scottish public, even some Christians, felt their established secular norms were challenged.

The fact is that no one religious group, even the established church, can dominate political or cultural life in Scotland. Therefore, it is still a secular system because while politics and religion are not rigidly separated, religious groups and Non-religious groups can influence politics but politics is quite distinct from religion. While the concerns of religious groups, especially in relation to their rights to practice their religion, can be voiced within the public sphere, society is not defined as intrinsically religious or defined by any one religion. This is unlike some constructions of the USA as a fundamentally Christian society and indeed some unsuccessful attempts to depict Scotland in a similar way<sup>158</sup>. Pluralism has also been fundamental to this model of secularism because it is increasing pluralism which has undercut the established church and brought greater concessions and the need for common secular structure. As if to mark the distance between Laicism and secularism in Scotland, recently Police Scotland have introduced a uniform which incorporates the Hijab to allow Hijabi Muslim women to join secular Scotland's police force<sup>159</sup>.

#### Habermas vs. Taylor

The different geographically based models of secularism are not the only differing means through which secularism can be viewed. Within academic debates on secularism there are deeper disagreements about the processes involved which are not simply concerned with the outward form. These different understandings of secularism are not only distinctive but have differing implications for the conceptualisation of the 'secular' in relation to religion, non-religion and Non-religion.

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<sup>158</sup> Rev. Robertson, D. "Independent Scotland 'could not be secular utopia'" in *The Scotsman* 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2013

<sup>159</sup> Cockburn, H. "Police Scotland approve hijab as official uniform to boost number of Muslim women joining force" in *The Independent* 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2016

For the philosopher Jürgen Habermas, secularism is fundamental to the development of the public sphere – the domain of life between the private domain of the individual and the family and the institutions of the state. The development of a public sphere from the Enlightenment onwards, where citizens could debate and communicate their concerns with each other and with the government, is fundamental to contemporary society<sup>160</sup>. For much of his career Habermas regarded the public sphere as fundamentally secular, which replaced religion rather than as something rooted in religion. Later in his career, he admitted that religion had influenced the public sphere and that religious groups could continue to influence it<sup>161</sup>. However, he argues that while religious interests need not be confined to the private sphere entirely, the public sphere is fundamentally ‘secular’ as in non-religious. Drawing on the work of John Rawls, he argues that to operate within the contemporary public sphere and to be able to influence governance, religious groups must ‘translate’ their interests and concerns into secular language. This means that their arguments and references must be confined to the immanent frame, avoiding any transcendent referents specific to their religion to be understood<sup>162</sup>.

A completely different model was put forward by another philosopher, Charles Taylor and to a large extent his version of secularism reflects the normative view of IFS and the Scottish Government. According to Taylor, secularism does not entail the marginalisation of religion at all but binds secularity more fully to pluralism. To be truly secular, a state or system of governance must not be defined by the worldview or norms of any group but provide a neutral framework within which all groups can assert their views and interests<sup>163</sup>. For him, the mistake of most writers on secularism has been an ‘obsession’ with religion which in line with the critique of many scholars of religion,

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<sup>160</sup> Giddens 2006: p601

<sup>161</sup> Mendieta and van Antwerpen 2011: pp4-5

<sup>162</sup> Habermas, J. “The Political: The Rational Meaning of a Questionable Inheritance” in Mendieta and van Antwerpen 2011: p27

<sup>163</sup> Taylor 2011b: pp47-48

highlights the reification of 'religion' and 'non-religion'<sup>164</sup>. The question of secularity is whether groups agree to the common 'rules of the game' or whether the society in question has been entirely defined by one system of values. Soviet Communism or the Kemalist Secularism formerly predominant in Turkey (perhaps implying French Laicism in addition) cannot be truly secular because they do not allow for a pluralism of values<sup>165</sup>.

The specific structures or institutions of governance, the state or the public sphere cannot be expressed in a manner which reflects any of these groups. However, where Taylor particularly disagrees with Habermas is in the fact that not only can religious groups express their interests, values and worldview within the public sphere, they do not have to unduly 'translate' their messages. In a culture with a Christian heritage such as Scotland, making references to God and to Biblical passages would not necessarily be a barrier for wider understanding<sup>166</sup>. While some of the features of other religions may be less familiar, the common Abrahamic heritage of Judaism and Islam and even increasingly widespread knowledge of Indic concepts such as karma or the Buddha, mean that specifically religious language could be understood within the public sphere. For Taylor, the values of religious groups are no different from the expression of non-religious appeals to utilitarian or Kantian ethics. Expression of any system of values are compatible with the workings of secularism if they do not dominate or exclude, or challenge the base values of the liberal-pluralist system itself. This would be contravened if laws were exclusively made to appeal to the interests of Kantians or enshrined utilitarianism as a system because it would exclude other systems<sup>167</sup>.

Taylorian secularism is compatible with the norms promoted by IFS and the Scottish Government. As I will demonstrate though, there are reasons to suggest that to a degree the Rawlsian notion of 'translation' is not lacking and in fact the religious

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<sup>164</sup> Taylor 2011b: p40

<sup>165</sup> Taylor 2011b: p37

<sup>166</sup> Taylor 2011b: p58

<sup>167</sup> Habermas, J. and Taylor, C. "Habermas and Taylor: Dialogue" in Mendieta and van Antwerpen 2011: p63

influence has declined without being supplanted by a specific Non-religious ideology. Nonetheless the framework in operation is firmly Taylorian because it has incorporated different groups, including organised Non-religious groups. While Habermas has made the concept of non-religion into an absence of religion, in general this Taylorian form of secularism can be equated with a more positive notion of non-religion (as opposed to specifically Non-religious identities and groups). Most institutions have been rendered non-religious, not in the sense of a vacuum of religion but in the sense of being not specifically religious which includes things like membership of Scotland's political parties. This is quite different from the active construction of specifically Non-religious identities such as Humanism which has in a sense, been placed in the same category as 'religious' groups using the category 'belief' introduced by the 2010 Equality Act. Such religious and Non-religious groups may be invited into the public sphere and even allowed a particular input but within the public sphere they do not have the means to define or dominate it.

### **Conclusion**

The three core concepts of 'nations' and nationalism', 'religion' and the 'secular' or 'non-religious' can all be related to Interfaith Scotland in various ways. These three concepts are all contentious and can be interpreted in divergent ways. This has been one of the reasons that it has been so vital that the scholarly debates surrounding them have been explored and my own position on these issues outlined. These concepts are also all politically contentious and are specific conceptual products of western societies, subject to long periods of development but also exported through colonialism, to be imported back to societies such as Scotland through immigration. The reason that it has been useful to differentiate my own etic approach to these concepts has been the fact that IFS' position in relation to them reflects their own ideological aims and concerns while my own approach is concerned with critically analysing their representations as social processes. The reason that I do not simply analyse their own emic position in relation to these concepts is because IFS' representations can be related to existing comparative

scholarly debates, and further that these offer insights on this material by approaching it from a different angle than that of IFS itself.

IFS have always promoted groups which they deem to be 'religious' and are also dependent on conceptions of the Scottish 'nation'. Though they have never classified themselves as explicitly 'nationalist' which can still appear strikingly counter-intuitive from an emic perspective and, their own attitude to 'secularism' and 'Non/non-religion' has demonstrably shifted. I have attempted to use my own minimal definition of religion to highlight the ways in which IFS' construction of religion is dependent on a world religions model which emphasises both global intellectual traditions and that religion is always depicted as of deep personal and communal significance. This has affected how they relate to different groups in Scottish society, with some groups which do not conform to this model being afforded a second-tier position but also being increasingly represented through this mould.

I classify their representations of Scottish nationhood as nationalism because while they do not endorse any specific political position, including on independence, they reinforce a sense of belonging to a common national community with the right to self-determination. They reinforce a broad nationalist ideology upon which different political positions in relation to independence are constructed. Their increasing enshrinement of pluralism has further intensified the already well-established secularisation of the Scottish public sphere. This is because the position of IFS outside of party politics, their inherent diversity and increasing collaboration with the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) mean that no one 'religion or belief' community can define or dominate Scottish public life. These themes can be tied together by the fact that IFS encourage the representation and integration of diverse religious groups into Scottish society and reinforces the overarching significance of the secular national framework. Religions may be represented as of broader global intellectual and ethical significance but these are non-

competitive with the territorially bound but ultimately sovereign representation of the Scottish nation.



## Chapter 3: Heritage and Partnership: Interfaith Scotland and Representations of Scottish Christians through the Categories of Ecumenicism, Pluralism and Secularism

### Introduction

This chapter will examine Interfaith Scotland's (IFS<sup>1</sup>) representations of Scottish Christianity and Christians through its organisation and literature. It is specifically concerned with how IFS integrates the powerful historic and majority religion into its construction of Scotland as **one nation of many, equal faiths**. There are three primary difficulties with incorporating Christianity into the interfaith movement (IFM) in Scotland. The first is that Christians form an overwhelming majority of religious Scots, the second is that many of the Christian churches are considerably more powerful and entrenched than other religions. The third problem is that while Christianity is generally regarded as a common religion, it is diverse and there are more Christian denominations in Scotland than belong to any other religious affiliation. This brings with it the difficulty of balancing representation of those different denominations and their common identity:

For the Churches the question of the Christian membership was much discussed: should membership be...ecumenical...or from different Christian denominations... [T]here was now concern that the Council would be unbalanced.... And yet if the Churches were represented by ACTS, individual denominations might not take the Council seriously<sup>2</sup>.

The facts of greater numbers, greater resources and greater diversity of groups means that Christians could easily dominate the organisation. Nonetheless, incorporating the historic majority religion of Scotland means potentially wider influence and an ability to draw on the churches' considerable resources and links with the public and government.

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC) until 2012.

<sup>2</sup> ACTS or Action of Churches Together Scotland is the major Christian ecumenical group in Scotland, ACTS: p16

This helps IFS achieve its goals and provides them with greater legitimacy. Integrating Scottish Christianity into Interfaith Scotland is crucial to the process examined in this thesis: representing, disseminating and reinforcing the notion of Scotland as **one nation of many faiths** which necessitates incorporating the majority. The problem for IFS is doing so while ensuring that they take an *equal* place alongside other religions.

It is necessary to briefly outline what the categories of ‘Scottish Christianity’ and ‘Scottish Christian’ are intended to include. They include the major, ‘traditional’ churches in Scotland such as the Church of Scotland (CS) and the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC), along with religions which self-identify as ‘Christian’ but which are rendered alien or marginal within Scotland, and world Christianity such as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU). The focus of this chapter though, is not on wider Scottish society but on representation within IFS. It is important to acknowledge that Christian interfaith activists and representatives are those who represent a particular ‘interfaith’ Christianity. Whether they are representative of Christianity in Scotland at large cannot be fully addressed here.

This chapter will argue that the integration of Scottish Christianity and Christians into IFS and their representation, is shaped by three identifiable concepts: 1) **Ecumenicism**, 2) **Pluralism** and 3) **Secularism**. These three factors as systems of values and institutional and wider social realities help to explain both *how* and *why* a Scottish interfaith Christianity has been constructed which fits into IFS’ one nation, many faiths paradigm. ‘**Ecumenicism**’ as it is commonly used has a similar meaning to ‘interfaith’ but among the denominations or sects of a specific religion: seeking to work together, engage in dialogue and stress common ground<sup>3</sup>. Developing closer relations among the numerous Christian denominations means that Christians can be represented as a single

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<sup>3</sup> The term is derived from ‘oikumene’ (Gk. ‘the inhabited world’), originally applied to the movement to foster inter-Christian relations and restore the unity of the Christian Church, established in 1910 in Edinburgh. See Bowker, J. *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (1997) Oxford: Oxford University Press: pp303-304. See also Kesting, M.S. “Ecumenicism in Scotland” in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* (2014) 14:2: pp175-192

group who can be placed on equal par with other 'world religions'. It encourages the acceptance of an interfaith form of **pluralism** which stresses the equality and equivalency of different religious traditions through their shared categorisation as 'religious'. Through ecumenicism and pluralism, Christianity is rendered into *one* religion among *many*. This acceptance of religious pluralism means that the Scottish Christian majority will identify with the interests of other religious groups in Scotland. This also depends on the promotion of a form of **secularism** which ensures that the nation, its public sphere and influence on its government and institutions are not dominated by a single group. Though this form of secularism accommodates religion and is a means through which the churches can secure their position.

These themes will be examined through the institutional representation of Christians within Interfaith Scotland and their depictions in the literature, in relation to interfaith events and activities. The conscious efforts to represent 'Christianity' as a tradition in some of IFS' educational documents on religion, mentioned in the introduction, will also be important. This includes *A Guide to Faith Communities in Scotland* (henceforth the *Guide*) which provides sections for each religion, discussing them according to similar themes: basic beliefs, customs and practices, places of worship, main festivals, food and diet and concerns of the community. It also includes *Values in Harmony* (henceforth *Values*) which provides more expansive sections for each tradition and uses scriptural and other sources to demonstrate their conformity to the Golden Rule: 'do unto others what you would have them do to you'<sup>4</sup> but also provides a separate section for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or 'Mormonism') from the 'Christianity' section. While the focus is not on accurately representing wider Scottish society but on representations within IFS, it will be necessary to place these processes in their social and historical context as much as possible to explain their relationship with IFS.

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<sup>4</sup> From Luke 6:31

The shaping of Christianity into a single world religion through ecumenicism has been led by the major and traditional churches according to their points of agreement. This marginalises non-mainstream forms of Christianity in Scotland and in IFS which do not conform to those points of agreement. Acquiescing to an interfaith world religions pluralism has reflected the established and dominant status of the major churches in comparison with other groups because their predominant position has not been threatened by small minorities<sup>5</sup>. It has also meant that such engagement is based on the world religions model which can be used to exclude groups outside of that model such as the Pagan Federation – Scotland (PFS). Lastly, acquiescing to a religiously inclusive form of secularism has been a means of protecting the influence of the churches, which they might otherwise have lost without working with other groups.

On the other hand, without the development of increasingly regular ecumenical relations, it would have been difficult to render interfaith representation acceptable to such a large body of Christian groups in Scotland. The consistent stress on a (largely) common Christian identity has made it easier for different churches to collaborate with each other and other religious groups. The acceptance of this common religious identity has encouraged the acceptance of Christianity as a member of a family of world religions alongside others and the acceptance of a somewhat diminished institutional position as a result. Without the cultivation of this ecumenical and interfaith representation of Christianity, IFS may have either been dominated by Christians or have had no Christian involvement at all.

### Christianity in Scotland

Christians form not only most Scots (54%) but an overwhelming majority of *religious* Scots, with non-Christian religious minorities amounting to just under 3% of the

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<sup>5</sup> See the next chapter for a discussion of IFS and the representation of non-Christian religious minorities in Scotland.

population<sup>6</sup>. Christianity is the traditional religion of Scotland, culturally and institutionally entrenched to an extent that other religions cannot rival.

The largest church - the Church of Scotland (CS) is still the official religion of the nation. It is recognised as the 'national' church in Scotland and its status within Scotland was guaranteed by the 1707 Treaty of Union which formed the United Kingdom. Its status is however not directly equivalent to the Church of England which has a more direct relationship with the state. The British monarch is also head of the Church of England and some Church of England Bishops are entitled to sit in the House of Lords while there is no equivalent for representatives of the Church of Scotland in either the UK or Scottish Parliaments<sup>7</sup>. The Kirk's 'national' status is primarily reflected through its role in contributing to religious education in non-denominational schools, sending representatives to the educational boards of local authorities (see below). Its current status can be viewed as more historic and symbolic than would have been the case in previous eras of Scottish history.

The three largest Christian denominations including COS, the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC) and the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC); have a level of access, influence and entanglement with the government, media and public which other religions do not have. As mentioned, CS provides religious education and helps administer non-denominational state schools, while the SRCC manages its own network of independent schools across Scotland<sup>8</sup>. Without Christian involvement interfaith groups would be little more than a means of promoting and agitating on behalf of religious minorities. There are of course many reasons why developing closer interfaith relations has become

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Religion/RelPopMig> (last accessed 6/4/16)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about\\_us/how\\_we\\_are\\_organised](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/how_we_are_organised) (last accessed 16/5/18), Moran, M. *Politics and Governance in the UK* (2005) Basingstoke: Palgrave: p175

<sup>8</sup> Brown, 1997: p119

increasingly important to Scottish Christians and the churches, which will be discussed below.

### Christian Foundations of Interfaith

Whatever alternative means by which the interfaith movement (IFM) could have come in to being, it is a historical fact that Christians have been invaluable in its foundation and development. Christians have been active in international interfaith movements from at least as early as the Chicago World's Parliament of World Religions in 1893.<sup>9</sup> As this chapter will discuss though, the subsequent foundational role of Christians with interfaith organisations has been dependent on the acceptance of a broad ecumenicism. The 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference was a vital early step in this process, predating the reunification of the Free Church with the Church of Scotland in 1929 and the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. This conference ended the period of intense competition between rival Protestant churches (though Roman Catholic representatives were not included) which was considered to have hampered missionary efforts. For this reason, the conference is regarded as the foundation of the ecumenical movement because broader Christian aims and identity were successfully promoted over denominational ones<sup>10</sup>.

The first Scottish interfaith group, Glasgow Sharing of Faiths (GSF), was founded by a former Church of Scotland (CS) missionary to Pakistan, Stella Reekie in the 1970's<sup>11</sup>. Christians have since been active within local interfaith groups throughout Scotland<sup>12</sup> and Christians also played a key role in the formation of the Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom (IFNUK)<sup>13</sup> in 1987. Most importantly for our purposes, the Scottish

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<sup>9</sup> Brodeur 2005: pp42-53: pp43-44. An origin acknowledged by IFS see *IFS Guide*: p4

<sup>10</sup> See Bowker 1997: pp303-304 and pp646-647

<sup>11</sup> Adamson, Ramsay, and Craig, 1984: pp1-2

<sup>12</sup> ACTS: p14

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/background> (last accessed 10/02/2016), ACTS: p5

Interfaith Council (SIFC) was founded in 1999 by a Roman Catholic (SRCC) nun, Sister Isabel Smyth OBE, which became Interfaith Scotland (IFS) in 2012<sup>14</sup>.

Christian churches also founded the Religious Leaders Forum (RLF) which involves bi-annual meetings between the leadership of different religious groups. The RLF was set up in 2002 by the heads of the three major churches of Scotland: Finlay MacDonald - then Moderator of the Church of Scotland (CS), Keith O' Brien - Archbishop of Edinburgh as well as head of the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC), and Bruce Cameron - Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC). It was formed in response to the terrorist attacks of September the 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. The RLF claims that it represents all faith communities in Scotland, providing a mechanism for the religious leadership of Scotland to respond to major national and international issues. Their meetings have been publicised by the Scottish media and have even been explicitly compared to historic Christian ecumenical meetings in the 1960's. It is also noteworthy that IFS are entrusted with the role of secretariat for the religious leaders' meetings affording them a crucial role which underscores the endorsement and increasing imbrication of the churches with the IFM in Scotland<sup>15</sup>. Before the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, the Secretary of State for Scotland would regularly meet with the heads of Scotland's churches. Now the Scottish First Minister meets with members of many religions through IFS and the RLF<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> ACTS: p16, *IFS Guide*: p5, IFS September 2012: p2, IFNUK 2007: p21

<sup>15</sup> ACTS: pp17-19, SIFC August 2009: p11

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Sister Isabel Smyth OBE, SND 20/6/16)



Image: The Religious Leaders Forum meeting with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in 2015, available at: <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/news/news-archive-2015/> (last accessed 17/5/2018)

#### Christian Membership of Interfaith Scotland

The Christian membership of IFS includes the Church of Scotland (CS), the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC) and the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC). These are the three largest churches in the country and represent its most historic traditions: Roman Catholicism, Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism. Smaller Protestant churches include the United Reformed Church: Synod of Scotland (URCSS), the Salvation Army – Scotland (SAS) and the Methodist Church in Scotland (MCS). It also includes the Religious Society of Friends (RSF) whose members are popularly known as ‘Quakers.’ The Iona Community (IC), joining in 2015, are a Christian ecumenical organisation founded by the Revd. George Macleod in 1938 on the island of Iona, one of the early Christian centres in the country<sup>17</sup>. These Christian members are represented collectively on the board of IFS by

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<sup>17</sup> IFS Draft Report: pp29-30, <http://iona.org.uk/about-us/history/> (last accessed 10/02/2016)

a single representative, currently Alan Anderson<sup>18</sup>. According to IFS Director, Dr Maureen Sier, all recognised Christian members are contacted to ensure that they approve of the nominated Christian representative<sup>19</sup>.

However, there are three groups which could be classed as 'Christian' but which are classed as 'associate members' and therefore are not represented on the board: The Church of Latter-day Saints (LDS, known as 'Mormons'), the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU, generally known as 'Moonies') and the Scottish Unitarian Association (SUA, generally known as 'Unitarian Universalists' or 'Unitarians'). This two-tier structure was adopted so that a group which is not one of the 'world religions', the Pagan Federation Scotland (PFS) did not have the same kind of representation due to the objections of the CS and the SRCC<sup>20</sup>. However, this two-tier structure has also been used to reinforce what Gerald Parsons referred to as the 'ecumenical establishment'<sup>21</sup>. It excludes marginal groups which do not fit this ecumenical construction of Christianity composed of Christian churches recognised as part of the established landscape of Scottish Christianity. Individual groups may be encouraged to participate in official dialogues and other IFS events but the degree to which they have a direct influence over the governance of the organisation varies according to whether they are recognised as 'Christian'.

### **Ecumenicism**

The Interfaith movement is to a large extent built on the foundations of ecumenical relations internationally and in Scotland specifically. The most prominent example of Christian ecumenicism is the World Council of Churches (WCC) which was formed in 1948 building on the legacy of the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference described above,

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<sup>18</sup> IFS *Draft Report*: 31, ACTS: p16, <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/> (last accessed 7/3/17)

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Maureen Sier (personal communication 18/11/15)

<sup>20</sup> ACTS: p16

<sup>21</sup> Parsons, G. "Contrasts and Continuities: The Traditional Christian Churches in Britain Since 1945" in Parsons, G. (ed.) *The Growth of Religious Diversity: Britain from 1945 Volume I: Traditions* (1993) London: Routledge: p28

which includes most Christian churches, though not the Christian associate members of IFS and not the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church has worked with the WCC and other ecumenical groups informally since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s<sup>22</sup> but in Scotland, the Catholic Church is formally involved with the ecumenical movement. Interfaith groups often grew out of ecumenical groups directly when their membership expanded to encompass other religious congregations, often initially synagogues followed by other non-Christian religious communities<sup>23</sup>. According to Sister Smyth:

[The contribution of Christians to interfaith was] absolutely vital... Stella Reekie herself was a Christian and...without my energy and efforts as a Christian...the Interfaith Council [would not have been founded] and I think it's because, well, there's more Christians than there are other faiths and think Christianity was at the stage of being interested in interreligious dialogue all stemming really from the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s and the work of the World Council of Churches. We were now beginning to think about and to develop a theology of relationship with other faiths...it wouldn't have happened without Christian Churches<sup>24</sup>.

In Scotland, most major Christian churches are members of an ecumenical organisation called Action of Churches Together – Scotland (ACTS) founded in 1990<sup>25</sup>. The membership of ACTS overlaps with the 'Christian' membership of IFS considerably, including the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC, unlike the World Council of Churches), the Church of Scotland (CS), the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC), the Religious Society of Friends (RSF), the Methodist Church in Scotland (MCS), the Salvation Army – Scotland (SAS) and the United Reformed Church: Synod of Scotland (URCSS). There are

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<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/faq#is-the-roman-catholic-church-a-member-> (last accessed 27/6/17) and Bowker 1997: p304

<sup>23</sup> Pederson 2004: p80

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Sister Isabel Smyth OBE, SND 20/6/16

<sup>25</sup> ACTS: p10

only two members of ACTS who are not members of IFS: The Congregational Federation (CF) and the United Free Church (UFC)<sup>26</sup>. The UFC must be distinguished from the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and other smaller ('non-established') Presbyterian traditions independent of CS which are not members of ACTS, see the table below:

| Christian (board represented) members of IFS | Christian Associate members of IFS | Members of ACTS who are members of IFS | Members of ACTS who are not members of IFS | Members of neither IFS nor ACTS                                      |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| CS, SRCC, SEC, URCSS, SAS, RSF, MCS, IC      | LDS, SUA, FFWPU                    | CS, SRCC, SEC, URCSS, SAS, RSF, MCS    | CF, UFC                                    | FCS, other Presbyterian, Baptist, Orthodox, Jehovah's Witnesses etc. |

While some denominations had interfaith departments before the creation of the SIFC, the ecumenical-interfaith body the Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations (CAIR) founded in 1995<sup>27</sup> played a key role in bridging ecumenicism and interfaith. The roots of CAIR lie in the CS' Community and Race Relations Group which was extended to include representatives from other churches<sup>28</sup>. Increasingly direct church involvement in IFS and the implementation of the new system of representatives incorporated Christian

<sup>26</sup> ACTS itself is linked with Churches Together in Britain in Ireland (CBTI) <http://www.acts-scotland.org/about-us/about-acts/item/158-who-we-are-member-churches> (last accessed 13/02/2016), <https://ctbi.org.uk/about-ctbi/> (last accessed 4/7/17)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.acts-scotland.org/component/content/article/120-activities/inter-faith/cairs-archive/187-about-cairs?Itemid=624> (last accessed 13/02/2016)

<sup>28</sup> ACTS: p10

ecumenicism into the organisation which made CAIR superfluous and it was disbanded in 2014<sup>29</sup>.

In Scotland, the interest of the government in overcoming sectarian tensions - conflict between Catholic and Protestant communities - has led them to encourage ecumenical relations<sup>30</sup>. Christian ecumenicism in Scotland has also arguably been vital in encouraging Christian participation in the interfaith movement. If there was still deep antipathy or there were no ties between the Christian denominations then extending a sense of common interest and identity to ever more diverse religious groups would be considerably more challenging. However, the success of ecumenicism in Scotland has not depended on incorporating the whole Christian population into that ecumenical Christianity. Ecumenicism depends on both a willingness to tolerate divergence but also stresses common Christian identity which some marginal Christian groups might not fit.

Also, some Christian groups have proven unwilling to join ecumenical groups possibly because some, such as the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) seceded from an established church or because of theological and political disagreements with the mainstream churches. Nor have all groups moved from ecumenicism to interfaith e.g. Congregational Federation (CF), United Free Church (UFC) which reflect a rejection of the increasing acceptance of secular-pluralism by the major churches which is discernible in the FCS Moderator's statement below. Though a full appreciation of the relationship between individual churches, ecumenicism and interfaith in Scotland is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Denominational identities among the mainstream churches of Britain have been eroding since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, making ecumenicism and the espousal of a common Christian identity much easier but only for churches that fit that mainstream. According to Gerald Parsons, the mainstream churches have become an 'unofficial ecumenical

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<sup>29</sup> ACTS: p12 and 16

<sup>30</sup> Kesting 2014: p176

establishment<sup>31</sup> which now fully includes the Roman Catholic Church<sup>32</sup>. The ecumenical establishment reflects the official and organisational realities of groups like ACTS or CTBI but it also refers to the informal and implicit recognition of these different traditions as part of the established landscape of British and Scottish Christianity because of their long residence and degree of overlap in theology, values, practice, aesthetics and cultural outlook.

Roman Catholicism was long represented as ‘foreign’ or specifically as ‘Irish’, against which ‘British’ and ‘Scottish’ Protestantism were defined<sup>33</sup>. The increasing normalisation of Roman Catholicism and integration of Roman Catholics into mainstream British (and Scottish) society through the liberalisation of the Second Vatican Council and emergence of the Catholic middle class, irrevocably changed this<sup>34</sup>. Those groups with radically different practices or theology but with long habitation of Scotland, such as the Quakers or groups with very low numbers but recognisably like other forms of Christianity such as the Methodist Church in Scotland (MCS), have been easy to incorporate formally and informally into this ecumenical Scottish Christianity. Groups that lack both of these characteristics such as the Mormons (LDS) and Moonies (FFWPU) have not been incorporated into this ecumenical establishment.

#### The Christian Associate Members

None of the Christian associate members could be defined as one of the traditional or mainstream denominations of Scotland or Christianity globally. In a Scottish context, they could be defined as ‘non-indigenous’ forms of Christianity, as ‘unconventional’ in their doctrines and could all fit an expansive definition of ‘New Religious Movement’ (NRM<sup>35</sup>). The process of creating the two-tier system was driven by mainstream Christian

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<sup>31</sup> Parsons, 1993: p28

<sup>32</sup> Parsons 1993: p45

<sup>33</sup> See Brown 1997

<sup>34</sup> Parsons 1993: pp34-35

<sup>35</sup>Barker, E. *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (1989) London: HMSO: pp145-148

objections to Pagan (PFS) membership but also clearly reflects their now ecumenical but also exclusive, understanding of 'Christianity'. The fact that the distinction between the 'founding' and 'associate members' of IFS was based on perceived 'historical' status, compared to groups perceived as 'new' has been explicitly stated:

The Churches...remained clear that there should be a recognition of the distinction between the major historical world religions and newer religious movements<sup>36</sup>.

The historic derivation of FFWPU, LDS and SUA from Christianity and identification with the world religion of 'Christianity' does not appear to be reflected by this distinction due to their 'newer' status, even though all three predate the establishment of the United Reformed Church in 1972<sup>37</sup>. There must then, be factors involved which mark them out from Scottish ecumenical Christianity other than the date of their foundation. To understand the differences between these three forms of Christianity and how they differ from 'traditional' Scottish Christianity, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of each in turn.

The FFWPU or 'Unification Church' are certainly the most controversial, founded by the Korean Reverend Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012) in 1954 as the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. They came to prominence during the 'cult' scares of the 1980's and were accused of 'brainwashing', though this has not been corroborated by scholarly research, especially given their high turnover of membership. Their known practices included the staging of mass weddings often officiated by Moon (from whom the term 'Moonie' is derived) himself, who claimed to be the Messiah and espoused other unconventional doctrines<sup>38</sup>. Their Christian self-identification however is not only evident through the significance of Christ but also the name 'Unification Church' which claims to unify Christianity.

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<sup>36</sup> ACTS: p16

<sup>37</sup> Bowker 1999: p1005

<sup>38</sup> Barker 1989: pp213-214, Chryssides, G. "Can the Moonies Keep on Shining?" in *The Telegraph* 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep 2012

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) was founded by Joseph Smith (1805-1844)<sup>39</sup> in the US State of New York in the 1820's, notably pre-dating the establishment of the Iona Community (IC) in 1938 and the Bahá'í Faith in 1844, which are both represented on the board of IFS<sup>40</sup>. Smith claimed to receive a revelation from the angel Moroni which included an addition to the Christian canon: The Book of Mormon (from which the label 'Mormon' is derived)<sup>41</sup>. The Mormon community later migrated to what is now the US state of Utah, which still forms the centre of the Mormon world<sup>42</sup>. The LDS differs from other Christian sects in many respects, especially with their unique scriptures claiming to account for the history of the lost tribes of Israel and their migration to North America<sup>43</sup>. The LDS is still infamous for its allowance of polygamy even though the Church forbade the practice from 1890 onwards<sup>44</sup>. Their Christian identity is clear through their official nomenclature. LDS is one of the communities specifically addressed in the document *Values in Harmony* which will be discussed below, but *as a separate entry* from that of Christianity<sup>45</sup>.

A very different case is presented by the Scottish Unitarian Association (SUA)<sup>46</sup> who in the USA are referred to as Unitarian Universalists<sup>47</sup>. While the LDS and FFWPU possess definite institutional hierarchies and conservative social teachings, the SUA are quite the reverse. The modern movement emerged from the unification of Christian congregations espousing Unitarianism and those espousing Universalism, which set them apart from mainstream Christianity. Unitarianism is the doctrine that God is a Unity or one personality rather than a Trinity of three persons (The Father, The Son/Jesus

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<sup>39</sup> Shipps, J. *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (1987): Chicago: University of Illinois Press: pp151-161

<sup>40</sup> See *IFS Guide*: p18

<sup>41</sup> Shipps 1987: p3

<sup>42</sup> Shipps 1987: p60

<sup>43</sup> Shipps 1987: p25

<sup>44</sup> Shipps 1987: p167

<sup>45</sup> *SIFC Values*: p3

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.sua.org.uk/> (last accessed 13/02/2016)

<sup>47</sup> Revd. Long, A.J. "Unitarianism" in *The Expository Times* 112: 2 (2000): pp46-51: p49

Christ and The Holy Spirit) as the dominant Trinitarian forms of Christianity espouse<sup>48</sup>. Universalism in this context refers to the doctrine of Universal Salvation: that Christ's death and resurrection had saved the whole of humanity unconditionally rather than specifically believing and practicing Christians.<sup>49</sup>

Their doctrinal differences with mainstream Christianity and their Universalism meant that they were open to other religious influences and personal interpretation<sup>50</sup>. Many Unitarians no longer define themselves as exclusively Christian and their congregations are certainly no longer defined as such<sup>51</sup>. They are thus notable for their lack of overt doctrines or prescribed rituals. Unlike similar inclusive and individualised 'spiritual' movements however they maintain a congregational, communal structure and use the common symbol of the flaming chalice, the lighting of which forms one of their few common rituals<sup>52</sup>.

The three cases are thus in many ways distinct and the reasons why they are not included as Christian cannot be stated with certainty, but some possibilities emerge. Firstly, none of these groups are part of ACTS or the WCC, and they stand outside the Scottish Christian 'mainstream', at least as defined by the most well-established, powerful and largest churches. The controversial nature of FFWPU and to a lesser extent LDS is possibly a factor because 'Christian' membership would empower these groups to influence IFS directly. That this is likely the result of mainstream Christian pressure is revealed by the very creation of the two-tier system through pressure to disempower the PFS. When I discussed this structure with Dr Sier however she argued that it was a means of recognising the input of the founding members but emphasised that associate members were still included in all dialogues and events<sup>53</sup>. IFS' desire to be inclusive and

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<sup>48</sup>Long 2000: p46

<sup>49</sup> Long 2000: p49

<sup>50</sup> Long 2000: p50

<sup>51</sup> Long 2000: p49

<sup>52</sup> Long 2000: p50

<sup>53</sup> Dr. Maureen Sier (personal communication 18/11/15)

promote dialogue comes at a price, and is affected by the public image and power balance between the *included* groups. The involvement of the major Christian churches has entailed that they are able to determine the boundaries of 'Christianity' which may edge out alternative 'Christianities'. It reinforces a specifically 'Scottish Christianity' bound up with the heritage and norms of the nation against which Christian groups are measured.

The Unitarians form a more ambiguous case because they are certainly not controversial in the same way or to the same extent. While their Unitarianism and their Universalism (to the extent that they are even defined by a specific theology anymore) may formally be at odds with the doctrines of the mainstream churches, many modern liberals within the major churches would probably accord with their Universalism, if not their Unitarianism. The modern Quakers are also known for the openness of their doctrines (at least of the liberal variety)<sup>54</sup> and spontaneity of their services,<sup>55</sup> with some also embracing a 'post-Christian' identity<sup>56</sup>, though arguably they have a larger public profile and entrenched involvement in the ecumenical movement. Quakers have long been a well-established part of the Scottish religious landscape. It is quite possible that the SUA are not classed as Christian because they *do not want to be*. They have been active in many local interfaith groups, in the case of Edinburgh Interfaith Association (EIFA), for example they elect a representative who sits on EIFA's board *alongside* a Christian representative and representatives of other religions<sup>57</sup>.

#### Ecumenicism in the Literature

This ecumenical Christianity is not simply structural and institutional but is reinforced and disseminated in the literature of Interfaith Scotland. These documents reflect the increasing ecumenicism of Scottish Christianity, most notably in the Christianity section

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<sup>54</sup>Dandelion, P. *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* (2008) Oxford: Oxford University Press: pp65-67

<sup>55</sup> Dandelion 2008: pp48-52

<sup>56</sup> Dandelion 2008: pp67-68

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.eifa.org.uk/the-board/> (last accessed 13/02/2016)

of the *Guide* which discusses the origins of Christianity and the role of Jesus Christ in a manner which affirms the universal (if not necessarily universalist in the sense discussed above) and Trinitarian theological position:

Christians believe Jesus to be the Son of God...following in the way of Jesus who revealed the forgiving love of God for all people and God's concern for human beings<sup>58</sup>.

It confirms the centrality of Jesus – his life, death and resurrection from the dead, describing him as the “revelation of God” which can free human beings from sin but adds that for *many* he is understood as the incarnation of God. This brief nod to non-Trinitarian forms of Christianity does not hinder the overall identification of Christianity with Trinitarianism because the doctrine of the Trinity is then outlined. Ecumenicism is reflected in several other ways. Disagreement between denominations regarding the necessity of infant or adult baptism is discussed but a common Christian identity is also reinforced “[i]ndividuals are admitted into the Christian Church through Baptism.” Similarly, Holy Communion or the Eucharist is described as uniting Christians with the resurrected Christ in a “symbolic” or “sacramental” way, which acknowledges but also glosses over the doctrinal dispute regarding transubstantiation<sup>59</sup>.

These themes are similarly reflected in *Values* in which ACTS are the sole contact provided at the end of the Christianity section. An image of Iona Abbey with a Celtic cross in the foreground is also used which can be interpreted as stressing the common Scottish Christian heritage, rooted in the country's landscape and culture but it is also described as a “centre for pilgrimage for Christians of many diverse backgrounds<sup>60</sup>.” Support for a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural understanding of Christianity is also expressed by the selection of quotations such as: “[t]here is no longer Jew or Greek... (Galatians 3:28<sup>61</sup>)”.

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<sup>58</sup> IFS *Guide*: p8

<sup>59</sup> IFS *Guide*: pp8-9

<sup>60</sup> SIFC *Values*: p29

<sup>61</sup> SIFC *Values*: p31



Image: Iona Abbey with a Celtic cross in the foreground, placed at the beginning of the Christian section of *Values*: p28

The ecumenical stance is made explicit towards the end of the introduction, almost certainly informed by the issue of sectarianism (though not actually referenced as such):

Today there are many different traditions and churches within Christianity. Regrettably, Christian history has suffered the scandal of division. Thankfully, today many Christians are actively seeking to work more and more closely together...to learn from one another. The aim is to re-establish unity among all of Christ's followers – *a unity which encompasses the rich diversity* found among our many and valued Christian traditions (emphasis mine)<sup>62</sup>.

It is notable however that this 'broad church' still has walls. Those Christians who do not wish to engage in ecumenical or interfaith activities are tacitly referenced, even condemned as perpetuating "the scandal of division" rejected by the "many Christians" who form the ecumenical mainstream-majority. This kind of Scottish Christianity is one which embraces pluralism, recognises the importance of good interfaith relations and accepts its place alongside other religions within the secular nation.

Notably, the LDS section is fronted by a photograph of an LDS Cathedral in Preston which conforms closely to typical western church architecture<sup>63</sup>, the choice of a UK church (albeit English rather than Scottish) may be an indication of an attempt at indigenisation, contesting their American associations. It is also striking that the quote used to indicate their adherence to the Golden Rule is the exact same one from the Gospel of Luke used for the 'Christianity' section. The opening lines of the introduction make the self-identification of the LDS clear:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a Christian faith with Jesus Christ at its head. We believe that the gospel, as preached by Jesus Christ in ancient times,

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<sup>62</sup> SIFC *Values*: p29

<sup>63</sup> SIFC *Values*: pp33-34

is restored to the earth and continues to be directed by Him through a living prophet and twelve apostles through prophecy and revelation<sup>64</sup>.

The Mormon section affirms the doctrine of the Trinity, that the Old and New Testaments form the word of God along with the Book of Mormon which details Christ's ministry among the indigenous peoples of the Americas after his resurrection. The universality of God and the Mormon message are also emphasised. The section includes quotations from all three of these scriptures as well as statements from Mormon leaders and their works<sup>65</sup>. The example of Jesus is discussed, which include the need to be tolerant, respectful, humble and non-judgmental. These values can be seen to particularly fit interfaith values. While they have not downplayed Mormon distinctiveness, or their sense of difference from other traditions, the section also reinforces its Christian self-identification with reference to common Christian symbols and scriptures.

### **Pluralism**

The emergence and entrenchment of ecumenicism in Scottish Christianity has been vital for its integration into the Scottish interfaith movement (IFM) because it encourages cooperation and good relations. Ecumenicism and the inclusion of multiple churches as members with a single Christian representative have been vital in adapting to a pluralist structure which renders the powerful majority institutionally and symbolically equal to the other religious groups. In a period of eroding denominational barriers, but also declining church attendance and declining Christian affiliation among the Scottish population, it is relatively easy to comprehend the increasing ecumenicism. However, that does not explain why the major churches emphasised the form of ecumenicism which is pluralist and interfaith: facilitating the integration and elevation of religious minorities. Christian unity could have been constructed *against* the non-Christian other.

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<sup>64</sup> SIFC *Values*: p34

<sup>65</sup> SIFC *Values*: pp34-38

Both a desire for ecumenicism and a critique of interfaith are evident in the Easter message of the Revd. David Robertson Moderator of the FCS:

Church leaders are continually pleading for unity. We in the Free Church long for Christian unity – but it must be Christian...It is impossible to be united with those who would deny the very basics of the Christian faith<sup>66</sup>.

The embrace of interfaith relations by Scottish ecumenical Christianity differentiates it from forms of Christianity which do not share the same pluralist values, and the formal acceptance of the equal position of Christianity with other religions no doubt further alienates them. The representation in IFS is inherently pluralist because it depends on the equivalency and equality of the 'founding members'. The Christians are placed on an equal footing with six 'world religions': Bahá'í, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh, all of whom send representatives to the board<sup>67</sup>, despite Christian numerical strength in Scotland and the number of distinctive Christian denominations which *could* have been represented separately.

#### Representing Pluralism

This pluralism is reflected through the textual and photographic representations of interfaith events in the literature. Representations of Christian clergy usually appearing surrounded by visibly distinct counterparts: Buddhist monks in robes, Kippah wearing Rabbis, Imams in Middle Eastern or South Asian garb, Sikhs in turbans etc (see the above photograph of the RLF).<sup>68</sup> While many participants in the interfaith events are Christians, members of religious minorities are very well represented in the photography. This could be explained in terms of the significance of dress for some religions i.e. the Sikh turban,

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<sup>66</sup> Revd. Robertson, D. "Moderator: Time for church leaders to stop living in denial" March 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 <https://freechurch.org/news/moderator-time-for-church-leaders-to-stop-living-in-denial> (last accessed 29/3/16)

<sup>67</sup> IFS *Draft Report*: 29-30, This contrasts somewhat with IFNUK (see above) in which one co-chair of the organisation must be Christian while the other co-chair rotates between other communities <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/structure> (last accessed 10/02/2015)

<sup>68</sup> C.f. IFS September 2012: p4

the fact that many members of religious minorities are also ethnic minorities and wear distinctive garb such as the South Asian sari. It does differentiate minorities from the default white Christian Scottish identity into which the 'other' is embraced, invited to dialogue and afforded a place. Scottish Christians are not the centre of attention in the IFS literature because they are the norm.

Another dimension of this has been the representation of religious spaces: both active places of worship and pilgrimage sites are represented as part of a multi-faith national sacred landscape. Ancient Christian sites such as Iona, including its photogenic Medieval Abbey (see photograph above) are commonly reproduced in the literature but are also destinations for interfaith pilgrimage<sup>69</sup>. Sites like Iona can be considered part of a national sacred landscape which is being reconstructed as 'multi-faith', open to all 'people of faith' through their shared religiousness. Similarly, non-Christian sites and local places of worship are integrated into this common national sacred landscape through analogous activities and the use language. The purpose-built Buddhist monastery of Samyé Ling in Eskdalemuir and Holy Isle, off the coast of Arran, owned by the same Buddhist community have also become popular sites of interfaith pilgrimage in the manner of Iona<sup>70</sup>. The construction of a multi-faith Scottish landscape can be detected in accounts of visits to Holy Isle's 'Christian and Buddhist holy sites'<sup>71</sup>. Even the common interfaith activity of visiting different local places of worship can be presented in similarly sacred, interfaith and national terms. For example, an IFS youth away-day which visited five places of worship in Glasgow including a local CS parish church, was framed as a "pilgrimage to sacred sites in Scotland"<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> E.g. *IFS Newsletter Spring 2013: Issue 23* (2013) Glasgow: IFS: p15, IFS Summer 2014: p17

<sup>70</sup> IFS Summer 2014: p5, IFS Spring 2015: p13, *SIFC Newsletter August 2011: Issue 20* (2011) Glasgow: SIFC: p11, IFS Spring 2015: p6

<sup>71</sup> SIFC September 2010: p8

<sup>72</sup> SIFC August 2009: p9

## Pluralism in the Literature

Alongside representations found throughout the literature, the placing of Christianity on an equal footing with other religions is particularly evident in documents such as the *Guide* and *Values* with their alphabetically arranged sections for Christianity alongside other traditions. Under the final heading in the Christian section of the *Guide*, 'Concerns of the Community' contrasts with many other traditions' sections by its comparative generality and reflects a community which does not feel threatened. Other traditions mention specific prejudice against their communities such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and no doubt other Christians may have used this as an opportunity to attack perceived prejudice against Christians or the threat of secularism, but here a staunchly pluralist interfaith Christianity is evident:

{T}hey believe in the presence and support of God's spirit among all...many Christians find common cause working together with others for the good of communities at local, national and international levels<sup>73</sup>.

In *Values*, the Christian section briefly introduces Christianity and acknowledges their shared acceptance of the Hebrew Bible with their "Jewish brothers and sisters<sup>74</sup>." The scriptural quotes presented subsequently are described as expressing the Christian perspective and commonality with other traditions, "we trust that these will resonate with the insights and values of other traditions<sup>75</sup>." An Interfaith message is again reinforced, though also linked to specific Christian doctrine:

These values are shared by many people in our world. The majority of Christians seek to live in harmony with adherents of other faith traditions and philosophies.

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<sup>73</sup> IFS *Guide*: p9

<sup>74</sup> SIFC *Values*: pp29-30

<sup>75</sup> SIFC *Values*: p30

For the Christian, the reason and purpose of these values is centred in Jesus Christ, God who is Love<sup>76</sup>.

This could be interpreted as stating that, while Christians identify the *ultimate* source and purpose of these common values as Jesus Christ, people of ‘all faiths and none’ can practice or exemplify them. Some passages can also be read as providing scriptural support for Christian engagement with the IFM and other religions including the acceptance of a diminished status, particularly presented in this context:

*...encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with them* (1 Thessalonians 5:14<sup>77</sup>) (editing mine)

*Do not seek your own advantage but that of the other.* (1 Corinthians 10:24)

*...in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others...* (Philippians 2:3-5) (editing mine)

*Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.* (Romans 12:16)

The introduction to the Mormon section states that Mormons offer service to all “regardless of religion, race or culture<sup>78</sup>.” The LDS section presents its interfaith credentials: “[a] respect for the diverse beliefs and unique contributions of all the world’s faiths is one of the hallmarks of our faith<sup>79</sup>.” The right of the church to “ecclesiastical independence” and doctrinal disagreement is asserted which nonetheless should not stand in the way of good works for all of humanity. The writings of the founding Prophet Joseph Smith are invoked to demonstrate this, along with a statement by the current Prophet:

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<sup>76</sup> SIFC *Values*: p29

<sup>77</sup> SIFC *Values*: p30

<sup>78</sup> SIFC *Values*: p35-37

<sup>79</sup> SIFC *Values*: p38

“We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where or what they may”

Articles of Faith 1:11

“The world in which we live is filled with diversity. We can and should demonstrate respect towards those whose beliefs differ from ours.”

President Thomas S. Monson, Oct. 2008, Prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints<sup>80</sup>

### Explaining Scottish Christian Pluralism

Why have leading Scottish Christians sought to raise the position and profile of the other ‘world religions’? Even to the point of using their allotted space to legitimate interfaith relations rather than seek to address stereotypes or express unique concerns in the manner of many other communities. Why does the overwhelming and powerful majority of Scotland desire equality with tiny far less powerful minorities? To a large extent modern Scottish Christians can be viewed as having been shaped by the same modern value system as the rest of the population: secular-pluralism. This has influenced their self-perception, their view of their own place or role as a group. Modern religions are generally encouraged to be open to others, tolerant and engage in friendly relations with each other by governments while modern nations are expected to be multi-religious<sup>81</sup>. Christian churches have either learned to accommodate themselves to the pluralistic value system or have found themselves outside of the ecumenical establishment.

Embracing or at least accommodating pluralism has the advantage of allowing Christians to operate within pluralism as a discourse and within institutions like IFS to continue to have influence and secure their goals. Nonetheless the advantages which

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<sup>80</sup> SIFC *Values*: p38

<sup>81</sup> See Greenfield, L. “The Modern Religion?” in *Critical Review* (1996) 10: 2: pp169-191: p177

pluralism provides for these churches does not change the fact that they have internalised it, that they actively maintain, promote, participate in, reproduce and contribute to this pluralism. It is also likely that for the most part, they promote pluralism because they are *pluralist*, not only that they sincerely adhere to it, but also that they are as much the products of modern pluralist Scotland as everyone else. This is reinforced by the fact that *some* Christians in Scotland *have* consciously and deliberately avoided and even rejected institutional and discursive pluralism.

As the traditional and majority religion, being seen to dominate the IFM or IFS too much would be counter-productive, regardless of how much interfaith relations are pursued for their own sake or to gain or secure power in modern Scotland. For Scottish Christians, to deliberately diminish their own status can not only be viewed as humility, which they have justified with explicit scriptural references, but also allows religious minority dialogue partners to develop. How could Christians engage in friendly and equal relations without other prominent would-be partners otherwise? This has entailed for facilitating and indeed establishing interfaith relations, by sharing their resources with religious minority groups, by securing for them a more established status. This has also meant giving them greater prominence than their numbers would have had if they were to be represented proportionately. It is also notable that a common underlying or emerging 'faith' agenda is discernible. The major churches used the events of September the 11<sup>th</sup> to make common cause with Muslims and other minorities through their shared 'religiousness'. This could be viewed as a reaction to the tarnished image of religion and its association with violence, intolerance and terrorism through such events.

#### The Creation of the Two-Tier System

However, the world religions approach limits the number of religions to a handful of grander traditions which are rendered equivalent through markers of tradition, not demographics. The world religions model has been another means by which Christians have shaped their counterparts. This is because it is based on the predominant

characteristics of the Christian Churches such as the centrality of belief in established doctrines, the possession of codified scriptures and the significance given to the broader tradition i.e. Christianity.<sup>82</sup> However, just as Christian ecumenicism has been used to exclude, the world religions approach has been used to exclude groups which do not comfortably conform to one of the major religions.

This issue emerged with the application of the Pagan Federation -Scotland (PFS) to join the organisation; for a long time whether such groups would be granted membership was uncertain but eventually the two-tier system was adopted and they were granted associate membership, lacking direct representation on the board. The essentialism of the world religions paradigm clearly shaped the different attitudes of Christians because of both the expressed desire to hold dialogue between ‘the major world faiths’ but also the fear that they might exclude ‘bona fide’ religious groups<sup>83</sup>.

[T]here was a request for membership from the Pagan Federation...that was a great shock...Had we realised that there might be groups which called themselves ‘religion’ that weren’t members of six or seven major world traditions? ...[T]he only way forward that...allowed people to work together in harmony was to have governing members...and associate members...<sup>84</sup>.

Christian interfaith activists were themselves split over the issue of Pagan membership but CS and the SRCC representatives remained officially opposed to formal membership, while the Buddhist and Hindu representatives were supportive. The latter were apparently intrigued by the emergence of western form of polytheism<sup>85</sup>. The issue became particularly concerning for IFS because the possibility of CS withdrawing their

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<sup>82</sup> See King 1999, Masuzawa 2005, Cotter and Robertson 2016.

<sup>83</sup> ACTS: p16

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Sister Isabel Smyth OBE, SND 20/6/16

<sup>85</sup> Interview with John MacIntyre 30/10/16 (see appendix 2) SIFC *Report on the Pagan Federation* 26/10/2003

membership was raised in 2003<sup>86</sup>. This does show the extent to which the largest churches continue to wield a disproportionate amount of power informally rather than formally. The issue took ten years to resolve, but PFS was granted 'observer' status during that time. PFS interfaith officer John MacIntyre, who negotiated on behalf of PFS, speculated that the intransigence of some Christians was derived from the historical roots of Paganism, their own declining demographics or even possibly a perceived challenge to their preeminent claim on Scottish national heritage:

[There was] [p]ossibly a fear that modern Paganism represented a significant demographic challenge to their own faith. A sympathizer reported overhearing... *"These Pagans have come out of nowhere and are taking all our young people."* ... [t]here may have been...unconscious discomfort at encountering a religion that had not come to Scotland from another part of the world. Christianity...[is] widely accepted as indigenous...some Christians seem to unconsciously assume they are the hosts and the others the guests<sup>87</sup>.

The well-established nature of the Christian church has meant that accepting an equal position has been possible for Scottish Christians but this also reflects a more implicit security as the dominant, majoritarian tradition embedded in national heritage. While relations between Christians and Pagans appears to have improved, the PFS could possibly challenge their claims to be the sole custodians of the religious heritage of the nation or gain preeminent recognition from groups like the Hindus. What is fascinating about these accounts is the effect that the essentialist world religions model has on the perspectives of these sources. While awareness of the modernity of the Pagan

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<sup>86</sup> SIFC *Report on the Pagan Federation* (26/10/2003) SIFC: Glasgow

<sup>87</sup> Interview with John MacIntyre 30/10/16

*movement* is not lacking, all parties recognise *Paganism* as the modern incarnation of pre-Christian religion<sup>88</sup>.

However, even these events reflect the desire of Christians to institutionalise and support a form of pluralism through dialogue between the 'world faiths'. Furthermore, the values of inclusivism were successfully mobilised by those sympathetic to the PFS and there appears to be a genuine anxiety over exclusion. What is evident from this episode is the extent to which some Christians are concerned with the changing religious demographics of the country. This brings with it fears of a loss of majority status and a loss of influence. These shifts have been affected by growing pluralism to some extent but also processes of secularisation and increasing non-religious affiliation. While some Christians remain hostile to pluralism, many Christians have adapted themselves to it and used it as a means of developing new informal and institutional ties and new forms of representation. A parallel process can be identified with relation to the last category examined in this chapter: secularism.

### **Secularism**

As we have seen, Scottish Christianity has become increasingly ecumenical and that this has facilitated their acceptance and espousal of a form of pluralism which formally and symbolically places them on an equal footing with other world religions. The third factor which has been significant to the moulding of Scottish Christianity into an interfaith Christianity, adapted to Interfaith Scotland's one nation, many faiths paradigm, is secularism. The secularisation of the Scottish public sphere and the increasing secularisation of much of the population has been an environmental factor for the engagement of Scottish Christians with other groups. The churches' increasing acceptance and promotion of interfaith relations and pluralism does entail a form of secularism which marks out Scotland as one nation of many faiths and none. This is because while the right of 'religious' groups to access and influence the public sphere

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<sup>88</sup> E.g. SIFC 26/10/2003

are asserted through the interfaith movement, this is not to claim an exclusive influence, even on behalf of multiple religions. The process of secularisation and the promotion of a religiously-compatible form of secularism are interrelated and the latter is a means of adapting to this changing environment, to present an alternative model of secularism to 'militant secularism' which would exclude religion.

The processes of secularisation refer to the increased numbers of 'non-religious' identification, declining 'Christian' identification and declining church attendance. The churches, including or perhaps especially CS, have since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century been unable to maintain their hegemony over Scottish society and its value system<sup>89</sup>. Making common cause with members of other religions can also serve as a useful means of building an alliance against the perceived threat of militant secularism. By highlighting the importance of 'religion' or 'faith' rather than 'Christianity', they help to defend the place of the latter, which is firmly bound up with the category of 'religion'. This allows the churches to maintain a public position in Scottish society because that position is increasingly shared, which means that they are no longer seen to dominate or have special privileges. Building alliances with religious groups means that they can achieve their goals and potentially reach even greater audiences, a statement signed by 'Scotland's religious leaders<sup>90</sup>' or IFS carries more weight in a pluralistic society than one coming from CS or even ACTS. Developing formal and informal links with other religions whatever the balance of motivations, has necessitated ceding more space to non-Christian groups.

I think for many Christians we had to learn...they weren't the powerful  
and the only voice in Scotland and they had to share their voice<sup>91</sup>....

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<sup>89</sup> C.f. Lynch 1998: p82, Brown 1997: p174, Bruce 1985: p216

<sup>90</sup> A good example of this is their statement on the importance of religion being able to utilise the public square IFS Summer 2014: p7

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Sister Isabel Smyth OBE SND 20/6/16.

Sharing their voice and supporting religious minorities has entailed more than pluralism in the sense of encouraging the flourishing of a variety of groups, or even the equality and close relationship envisioned in interfaith discourse. It has also entailed accepting a form of secularism which does not define Scottish national public space as belonging to any one group<sup>92</sup>. While the Church of Scotland is still the national church, and the historic position of Christianity in relation to Scottish heritage is recognised by interfaith bodies, the right of access to the public sphere and government and actual relations within it are secular. This is because IFS, the RLF and local interfaith groups have increasingly become the means through which religious groups in Scotland are publicly represented in Scottish civic society.

As discussed in the last chapter, the form of secularism operating in Scotland and the UK can be differentiated from the form of secularism associated with France: laicism. Laicism entails that both the state and public life are strictly separated from any religious influence, which is why even the public display of religious symbols such as the Hijab have been controversial<sup>93</sup>. In Scotland and the UK, the state and other public institutions have a historically established relationship with a national church but politics and public life are not particularly religious. In this form of secularism, religion is not barred from the public sphere and there is an established church but one which does not dominate public life and which is separated from politics. Religion and politics are represented as distinctive but religious groups are able, even encouraged at times, to influence but not dominate public life.

Given these conditions it has been possible and desirable to simply diversify the relationship between religion and governance in Scotland which resolves the tensions between secularism and the established church and between a small Christian majority and growing Non-religious population. The secularisation of day to day politics and the

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<sup>92</sup> See Taylor, C. 2011a

<sup>93</sup> See Casanova 2011: pp57-60

secularisation of public culture has meant that Christians are less able and inclined to dominate public life in the manner of some countries. In other words: these conditions are ideal for the increasing enshrinement of the interfaith movement.

These processes of secularisation and the growing overt identification as ‘non-religious’ bring with them the concern that Scotland could shift to a laicist or militant form of secularism. The historical context is crucial: the still developing civil society, public sphere and governance of post-devolutionary Scotland. The fact that new institutions and authorities were established at the Scottish level around which interest groups, media and citizens would relate also meant that the relationships with Scottish religious groups could and did change. Not only did Scottish politicians relate to all religious groups and Non-religious groups, this was institutionalised in Parliament, instead of opening Christian prayers, multi-faith and belief ‘time for reflection’ was instituted<sup>94</sup>. Post-devolutionary Scotland brought with it the possibility of independence and a future constitutional settlement than that of the UK. This has led for calls from the RLF to recognise ‘religion’ in any possible future independent Scottish constitution<sup>95</sup>.

However, increasing secularisation and seismic political shifts in Scotland do invite greater scrutiny on the perceived ‘privileged’ position of the Church of Scotland and other churches in Scottish politics and public life. One area of controversy has been the influence that CS has over non-denominational schools through the provision of religious education. The most controversial feature of this has been the fact that CS has sent non-elected representatives with voting powers to the education boards of local councils. While it is not always expressed in these terms, the manner of defending these

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<sup>94</sup> Bonney 2013: pp431-438

<sup>95</sup> Scottish Christians have also articulated their own versions of a pluralist and indeed ecumenical and secular nationalism, such as the Church of Scotland Reverend Doug Gay’s theological defence of liberal Scottish nationalism which also advocates recognising religion in a future Scottish constitution, see Gay, D. *Honey from the Lion: Christianity and the Ethics of Nationalism* (2013) London: SCM Press: pp1-8, pp25-26 and pp183-186

relationships has been to fight militant secularism with pluralism, by pointing to the incorporation of members of minority groups onto these education boards<sup>96</sup>.

The increasing prominence of IFS and pluralisation of Scottish public space would appear to have made Scotland more secular in a sense because the religious influence on it is no longer overwhelmingly Christian. It was always secular in as much as politics is distinguished from religion, very different groups have access to the public sphere and no group dominates Scottish society. This means that Scottish politicians do not claim to represent Scottish Christians but all Scots, to be Scottish is not synonymous with being Christian or Presbyterian etc. Increasing pluralisation though pushes Scotland further away from that, where 'religious' and 'national' identities are completely distinct.

However, as with ecumenicism and pluralism, the power of public representation has not been completely even. After all, the major churches have invested in the representation of religious groups or their fellow 'people of faith', Non-religious groups are not directly represented in the same way. As I will explain in chapter 4, the processes of pluralism and secularism have increasingly driven IFS to reach out to Non-Religious groups and the Scottish Government has a greater interest in including them. Groups such as the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) can be used to legitimate Christian or religious positions among the Non-religious. For example, CS worked with the HSS to change the religious services offered in non-denominational schools to 'time for reflection'<sup>97</sup>. Nonetheless this means that religious groups are afforded a means of accessing the Scottish Government, civil society and the public through IFS that Non-Religious groups do not have but this may change as the processes of pluralisation and secularisation intensify.

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<sup>96</sup> Munro, A. "Bid to remove religious voice from education" in *The Scotsman* Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2013

<sup>97</sup> E.g. Fraser, S. "Not just 'three Rs' – there's religion too" in *The Scotsman* Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2013

To a large extent this still developing, inclusive secular-pluralist model of Scotland is something that Christian interfaith representatives accede to and reinforce. For example, secularist themes are evident in the Christian section of *Values*: Romans 13:7 is quoted, urging respect, honour and indeed taxes to be paid to whom they are due, while 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:17 is used to urge Christians to “Honour the Emperor<sup>98</sup>.” The ‘Emperor’ can be interpreted as the secular Scottish Government, particularly given that the document’s foreword had been provided by a government minister and they have strongly supported IFS.

The community in which this pluralism is fitted into is implicitly and explicitly identified with the Scottish nation<sup>99</sup>. Scottish Christians have had a particular role in the history of the nation and Christianity has established much of the symbolism of the nation itself, as well as establishing the IFM, the world religions model and even secularism with its separation between eternal religious reality, inner conviction and worldly affairs<sup>100</sup>. However, despite their formative influence, greater power in relation to other groups and the sincere commitment of many Scottish Christians to secular-pluralism, they *have* genuinely lost exclusive, if not preeminent influence over the relationship between religion and Scottish national identity. That all other groups have little choice but to build on the foundations that they have established does not mean Christians have genuinely not had to cede ground upon which other groups have established themselves in Scottish public life. The interfaith movement has become a primary means through which religion is represented and relates to the Scottish government and public which is increasingly being broadened to Non-Religious groups. However, this means that to some extent the whole into which others are being invited is still ‘Christian’ to some extent, as it is also interfaith and belief and secular-plural.

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<sup>98</sup> SIFC *Values*: p30

<sup>99</sup> See Chapter 6 on IFS and Scottish Governance and Identity

<sup>100</sup> Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and van Antwerpen 2011: p8

This is particularly reflected in the symbol of Scotland's flag, the Saltire. The logos of IFS and the SIFC reproduced throughout their literature are both based on the Saltire of St Andrew, largely because it evokes the common sense of Scottish nationhood which is uncontroversial and utilised widely by Scots of all backgrounds, including for the logos of the Muslim Council of Scotland<sup>101</sup> and HSS<sup>102</sup>. However, it is undeniably a symbol of Christian derivation. The Saltire is an interesting representation of this process as the development of an inclusive, religiously pluralist and secular Scotland cannot be completely divorced from its specific Christian heritage as recognised in a statement by the RLF: “[i]n Scotland we do not start from a blank slate. Historically Christianity has had a vital role in shaping the Scotland in which we now live<sup>103</sup>.” It is also a heritage which the Scottish interfaith movement cannot ever be completely separated from.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed how Christians and Christianity have been shaped to fit the one nation, many faiths paradigm of Interfaith Scotland. Christianity is the religion of the majority of Scots and is imbricated in its history, symbolism and culture to a degree that no other religion can match. It is also made up of many distinctive denominations while possessing a common religious identity and one of those denominations, the Church of Scotland (CS), is still the official religion of the country. All of these factors have made representing Christians and Christianity in Interfaith Scotland a particular challenge. The fact that Christians such as Stella Reekie and Sister Isabel Smyth have played a clear foundational role has meant that some Christians had the security and power to overcome some of these challenges. Though the fact that some Christians chose to invest in the interfaith movement does not completely account for their motivations or those fellow Scottish Christians they persuaded, nor tell us precisely how Christianity fitted into Interfaith Scotland.

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<sup>101</sup> <http://www.mcscotland.org/> (last accessed 13/02/2016)

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.humanism.scot/> (last accessed 13/02/2016)

<sup>103</sup> IFS Summer 2014: p7

The position that Christianity holds within the organisation has depended on the prior development of ecumenicism: increasingly close relations between Christian groups and the stress on a common Christian identity over denominational ones. This was necessary not only to ensure that Christian denominations were capable of cooperating within IFS but also that they did not insist on the separate representation of each Christian group which would have led to Christian dominance. This ecumenicism also had to be interfaith, accepting a form of pluralism which placed Christianity on an equal footing with other world religions rather than hostile to non-Christians or insistent on a preeminent position. This has meant accepting a less dominant position which is dependent on equivocation with others through the category of 'religion' rather than recognition of demographics or denominational identities.

The increasing support of the Christian churches for interfaith relations has however been a means of preserving Christian influence in the public sphere in a country with declining church attendance, a growing non-religious population and a changing national political system. This has entailed embracing a form of secularism because it has encouraged a view of Scotland in which different groups, including the Non-religious, have access to a public sphere and system of governance which is not defined or dominated by any group or tradition.

These developments though have reflected the disproportionate power of the mainstream churches of Scotland in comparison to other groups, and this power has sometimes been used to exclude. The construction of an ecumenical Christianity has been defined by the churches established and dominant in Scotland. The relationship between ecumenicism and interfaith has alienated more conservative churches hostile to interfaith but within IFS this ecumenical Christianity has been used to define Christian membership of the organisation, with marginal Christian groups occupying a secondary position. The pluralism which Christians have helped to define has been based on a world religions model which has shaped other religions in a Christian image and has been used

to marginalise groups which do not fit this paradigm. Lastly, the major churches continue to occupy a preeminent place in the secular nation which is defined by Christian heritage to a large extent. While representing and relating to the Non-Religious has become increasingly important, Scottish Christians have attempted to secure their position by promoting the position of many faiths in a secular nation. In the next chapters it is to representations of those other faiths that we turn.

## **Chapter 4: Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Scotland and Representations of Scottish Religious Minorities through the Categories of 'Religion', 'Ethnicity' and 'National Identity'**

### **Introduction**

In the last chapter, I discussed the representation of Christians in Interfaith Scotland (IFS) and its literature. It was noted how Christians played a central role in the construction of these narratives and in the interfaith movement (IFM), that their participation was historically crucial to the movement as we know it. Yet Scottish Christianity was also moulded by interfaith relations into an 'Interfaith Christianity', able to take an equal place alongside the other 'world religions'. This entailed downplaying denominational differences and ignoring those Christian traditions uninterested in interfaith relations. While groups like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), that could not fit comfortably into a Scottish ecumenical Christianity, were given a marginal position. We also saw how IFS was keen to utilise the Christian heritage of the nation because its embeddedness in the Scottish landscape could provide a common national heritage for 'people of faith'.

In this chapter, I will examine the representations of non-Christian religions within the structure of the organisation and as depicted in the IFS literature. Many of the themes developed in the last chapter are echoed here: the construction of interfaith-compatible 'world religions', emphasis on institutionalised leadership over sub-groups or individuals and the marginalisation of groups which do not fit the paradigm. The shaping of non-Christian religious minority groups into institutionalised, accessible and relatable dialogue partners who can be placed alongside ecumenical Christianity will become more evident. The desire to present minority groups as positive contributors to Scottish society and thereby promote a positive image of 'religion' in general will also be a clear theme.

The key theme driving this chapter will be how Interfaith Scotland fosters and represents wider forces of integration in Scotland, promoting an implicitly national 'unity in diversity'. As I mentioned in the theory and method chapter I use the term 'integration' to refer to the process whereby IFS encourages identification with Scottish national identity without the loss of minority religious or cultural identity. This can be differentiated from both assimilationism, whereby minority identities are dissolved without remainder and 'mosaic multiculturalism' whereby religious or cultural communities can be separated from each other, without requiring integration into a broader social (national) framework.

I will examine how religious minorities are re-made as members of the nation and 'people of faith', in a manner dependent on a combination of religious-cultural pluralism and civic-cultural nationalism. Religious pluralism and nationalism have been rendered compatible because of the encouragement of integration rather than assimilation. This process is dependent on specific versions of the categories of: 1) '**religion**' 2) '**ethnicity**' and 3) '**national identity**'. I will use these three categories to structure this chapter, to present and analyse the data taken from the literature of IFS and reveal how that 'unity in diversity' is constructed.

### **Scottish Religious Minorities**

The participation of identifiable non-Christian religions which are small minorities in Scotland, is fundamental to Interfaith Scotland (IFS). Without minority involvement, they would simply be another Christian ecumenical group and would not be 'interfaith'. One cannot represent the nation or organisation as 'plural' without emphasising 'diversity', and in a comparatively homogeneous population this necessitates bringing minorities to the fore.

For the purposes of this chapter 'religious minority' entails 'non-Christian religion:' groups deemed by themselves and others to be 'religious' but not 'Christian.' Muslims are the largest religious minority in Scotland at 1.4%, with Hindus at 0.3%, both

Buddhists and Sikhs at 0.2% each, Jews at 0.1% and other at 0.3% identified with 'other' religious minority groups which would include Pagans, Bahá'ís etc. According to these figures, religious minority groups added together make up just below 3% of the population<sup>1</sup>. However, they form a much larger proportion of the population of the cities: 5% in Edinburgh and 7% in Glasgow comparable with 1% in the Highlands<sup>2</sup> but this is still lower than in England and Wales at 9%<sup>3</sup>. It should be remembered that it is through the Scottish 'national' framework and the world religions categories (e.g. 'Christianity', 'Sikhism' etc.), that these groups are rendered into minorities, and IFS plays a role in the replication and adaptation of these categories.

### Structural Representation within IFS

As previously discussed, IFS' representations of religious minorities both reinforce religious categories and give greater prominence to certain groups. It divides its member-organisations into either one of the seven 'founding members' with representation on the board, or second-tier 'associate members' without such representation. The executive board of IFS includes, along with a Christian representative, a representative of women of faith and a representative of local interfaith groups, representatives of six religions: Bahá'í, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh<sup>4</sup>. However, the religious minority associate members not represented on the board include: The Pagan Federation Scotland (PFS) and the Brahma Kumaris Scotland (BKS)<sup>5</sup>.

This reflects the global establishment and recognition of these 'founding' traditions more than their position in Scotland specifically, as some communities such as

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Religion/RelPopMig> (last accessed 11/4/16)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-visualiser/#view=religionChart&selectedWafers=0> (last accessed 11/4/16)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religioninenglandandwales2011/2012-12-11> (last accessed 11/4/16)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/> (last accessed 4/6/17)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/associate-members/> (last accessed 4/6/17)

the Scottish Jews and Hindus are very small. The representatives of the founding traditions are appointed entirely by the member-groups recognised as part of that 'tradition'<sup>6</sup>, regardless of how many member-groups belong to that tradition. While there are several Jewish, Muslim and Sikh congregations and local and national organisations which are members of IFS they have one representative per tradition, so does the single Bahá'í member: the Bahá'í Council of Scotland.

### **The Three Categories: 'religion', 'ethnicity' and 'national identity'**

While the three categories of 'religion', 'ethnicity' and 'national identity' are integral to this chapter, they are difficult to separate, applying to varying degrees to all the communities discussed here. The analytical significance of these categories is their role in IFS' construction of national religious pluralism, allowing them to promote the discourse of 'unity in diversity'. These three social categories are all broader, 'second-order' categories which classify other social categories which are applied to groups, persons and traditions. A person can be classed as a 'Bahá'í', as a member of the 'Iranian' diaspora and as a 'Scot' but these categories would themselves conventionally be classified by the broader categories of 'religion', 'ethnicity' and 'national' identity. These three categories are far more general than even the broadest social identities which they serve to classify and articulate. 'Muslim' and 'Buddhist' may refer to huge global populations and incorporate sub-categories such as 'Shi'a' and 'Tiratna' but they do still refer to an identifiable group of people and their traditions. These three categories on the other hand, are further removed because they are a means of identifying specific *types* of groups and differentiating social groups according to these categories.

The degree of overlap between these categories is what makes their implicit and explicit use so telling, because they are presented as non-overlapping or non-competitive. These categories can conflict or be combined in an exclusive manner as in many forms of ethno-religious nationalism. The separation of these categories allows for

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<sup>6</sup> Maureen Sier personal communication 18/11/15

differing combinations of them, which can be fitted together without dissolution. One could say that without said separation, 'unity' and 'diversity' would be in competition if these identities were exclusive, one would have to choose between being say 'Scots' or 'Hindu'. Even in the interfaith literature these categories are not always presented in precisely the same way because their tangled associations are sometimes quite evident.

Though all the communities discussed here are identified as 'religions' in the interfaith literature and wider society and are encouraged to express a Scottish 'national' identity, some of them fit the universalistic interfaith view of religion more comfortably than others. The fact that some have strong associations with ethnicity has made matters more complicated when it comes to fitting into these categories and this has been managed in different ways. Buddhism, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith more readily fit IFS' view of 'religion', while Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism are strongly correlated with 'ethnicity', while the Pagan community presents a case which can be associated with 'national identity' to a degree matched only by Christianity because of the significance they give to the land and elements of its heritage. IFS for its part particularly promotes the category of 'religion' and in a more implicit sense, 'national identity' but it also must relate to 'ethnicity' in certain ways.

### **Representations of Religious Minorities through IFS' Construction of 'Religion' in the Literature**

#### 'Religion' according to IFS

Interfaith Scotland's representation of 'religion' can be deduced from who is included in the organisation as well as their representations in the literature. These listed features are not part of an official policy but are implicit, forming an underlying rationale; influenced by wider, culturally ingrained assumptions and by the communities themselves, who have substantial input in their depiction. While some of these terms are used in the academic study of religion and to scholarly debates, I have adapted these terms myself to interpret and analyse the representation of religious minorities within

the literature of IFS. It should also be noted that these eight characteristics are based on my interpretation of the literature using the critical tools adapted from religious studies theory.

‘Religions’ for Interfaith Scotland are understood to be: 1) **substantive**: based on postulated ‘supernatural’ (or as I prefer ‘extra-natural’<sup>7</sup>) beings, forces and realms, primarily God or gods and belief in the afterlife<sup>8</sup>, 2) to the point of **essentialism**: ‘religion’ as intrinsically, fundamentally and qualitatively distinct from other types of social formations<sup>9</sup> and 3) which is represented as intrinsically of deep **personal and social significance**. 4) Religions are **institutionalised** – possessing institutional frameworks with recognised leadership of some form, who are its legitimate representatives, embedded in specific congregations.

The remaining characteristics fit into the **world religions paradigm** (WRP) which can be broken down into the following characteristics in which religions are: 5) **intellectual** – possessing a body of doctrines, prescribed practices and teachings. 6) **Ethical** – fundamentally concerned with encouraging good behaviour, especially in the public sphere, and 7) **traditional** – rooted in well established, often ancient lineages or at least those recognised or represented as such. The broader tradition and identity is also represented of more significance than any sub-divisions: sects, denominations, trends or factions within it. 8) Lastly, religions are **universal**, of global importance and world-spanning but also rendered in the most universally applicable terms as a body of doctrines, teachings, practices and paraphernalia which can be reproduced anywhere, potentially by anyone. This last feature is crucial because it means that it can be combined with identities which are ‘limited’ and which could not impinge on those universal credentials such as ‘ethnic’ and ‘national’ identities.

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<sup>7</sup> Sutherland 2017c: p96, Sutherland 2012: p53

<sup>8</sup> Platvoet 1999: pp252-253

<sup>9</sup> Martin 2014: pp37-38

## Substantivism, Essentialism and Socio-personal Significance

IFS' implicit emic understanding of 'religion' can be classed as broadly and implicitly substantive, the 'religions' are defined by postulated relations with 'supernatural' beings, forces and realms most often God or deities. This is reflected in their summaries and descriptions of the religious traditions as espousing belief in a God or gods: the Bahá'í Faith, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Paganism and Sikhism. The Buddhist tradition, as presented, fits this less securely: the centrality of meditation and the non-theistic doctrines of many forms of Buddhism are acknowledged. Nonetheless Buddhism is discussed in terms of belief in reincarnation, the search for enlightenment and the essence of Buddhahood within individuals<sup>10</sup>, which differentiates it from representations of 'Non-religious' 'belief' systems such as Humanism<sup>11</sup>.

However, alternative, New Age or Holistic beliefs and practices such as Reiki, astrology, dowsing and aromatherapy are entirely left out of the category of 'religion' in the perspective of Interfaith Scotland, though they involve substantive features. What they do largely lack are the features described below, such as forming an institutionalised community or an intellectualised tradition. Also, beliefs and practices such as Reiki and astrology are often cast as practical solutions for dealing with everyday issues, overcoming misfortune and healing, which is very distinct from the groups which IFS claims to represent. These practices may not be of much significance to the individuals practicing them, let alone form the basis of communal identity which necessitates specific representation in the Scottish public sphere.

IFS did include a section in a document for NHS patients *Reflections on Life Matters* (henceforth *Reflections*) – which presents passages from sources deemed relevant to different groups, dedicated to 'Believers not Belongers'<sup>12</sup> expressing spiritual

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<sup>10</sup> IFS *Guide*: pp6-7

<sup>11</sup> See the subsequent chapter on Interfaith Scotland and the Scottish Non-Religious Population

<sup>12</sup> NHS Scotland *Reflections*: p11

beliefs unaffiliated with a tradition. Aberdeen Inter Faith Group (AIFG) also invited a member of the 'New Age' Findhorn community near Elgin to lead a ritual called a Harmonic Temple combining elements of four different religious traditions<sup>13</sup>. The views of many alternative practitioners and interfaith participants appear to *converge* in not viewing them as a specific group, just as 'interfaith' is itself not represented as 'a faith'. Both alternative and interfaith practitioners often draw on sources or practices attributed to different traditions at their events, but this eclecticism depends on representation of traditions as clearly codified and bounded repertoires.

One reason Humanists and New Age practitioners are not included in their category of 'religion', other than matching the views of these agents themselves, is that neither match their means of representing 'religion' to the Scottish government and public. The thrust of IFS' approach is in highlighting the *importance* of religion, partially through presenting curated ethical and intellectual traditions:

The faiths which people hold contribute to the formation of the human person and the communities in which they live...If Scotland is to continue to develop into a society in which all are valued, the unique contribution of people of faith must be respected and enabled to flourish<sup>14</sup>.

Therefore, diffuse beliefs and practices of varying significance lacking articulation of social identity do not conform to this need. The needs of religious groups are represented as tied to institutional representation, doctrinal requirements, reflecting deep personal and social significance which need to be accommodated in a plural society. Notably even the one example of incorporating alternative spirituality as a category into an IFS document, the 'believers not belongers' in *Reflections* focused on personal, inner significance and presented a selection of texts. Religion is however also presented as essentially unique, as qualitatively distinct from other forms of significance

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<sup>13</sup> SIFC *Newsletter March 2012: Issue 21* (2012) Glasgow: SIFC: p6

<sup>14</sup> From RLF statement IFS Summer 2014: pp6-7

such as secular ethical systems (e.g. Humanism) which entails an implicit substantivism which differentiates them and informs their shared questions and conversations:

I don't believe that faith communities can't talk to themselves... religions have their own questions and their own conversations<sup>15</sup>.

#### Institutionalisation

IFS are dependent on institutions and their leadership through its composition. Its membership is made up entirely of other organisations not individuals, these group must have charitable status and a constitution<sup>16</sup>. It is reflected in their involvement with the Religious Leaders Forum (RLF), attended by the leadership from many Scottish religious groups biannually. As mentioned the RLF was founded by church leaders to maintain regular contact among Christian and minority religious leaders in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Though it is formally distinct from it, IFS act as their secretariat<sup>17</sup> and reports on their meetings extensively in their literature, which means that it shapes their representation of religion generally. Institutionally sanctioned religious leadership, as variable as their internal roles or status may be, are recognised as especially significant and equivalent. This is embodied in a humorous description of their meetings by one of those leaders:

Can I tell you the one about the Minister, the Priest and the Rabbi? Actually my story also includes the Sikh Ghani, the Buddhist Monk, the Tibetan Lama, the Hindu priest and the Baha'i - that's me - amongst others! *Alan Forsyth* [sic]<sup>18</sup>

This plays on the tradition of jokes involving the figures of a Priest, a Minister and a Rabbi, which reinforces Protestant and Catholic Christianity and Judaism as variations on the western religious norm. Forsyth though actually reinforces a similar, if broadened,

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Sister Smyth 20/6/16

<sup>16</sup> Maureen Sier personal communication 18/11/15

<sup>17</sup> Maureen Sier personal communication 18/11/15

<sup>18</sup> SIFC August 2009: p11

religious norm which equates and legitimises these persons as representatives of their 'religion'. They meet because of their common institutional position in organisations defined as 'religious'. It posits that religious representatives fundamentally have much in common that they do not share with other social groups or institutions in Scottish society to the same extent, but also require distinctive recognition from lay adherents as particularly legitimate voices of those religions.

### **The World Religions Paradigm**

The general position of IFS is characterised in this thesis as structured and limited pluralism. This is evident not only from their stress on common values and Scottishness but also their emphasis on reinforcing identification with a handful of equivalent 'world religions' – the Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism<sup>19</sup>. As previously discussed, the WRP entails that the world religions are treated as intrinsically analogous, which also override any internal distinctions within them<sup>20</sup>. Each religion has a common essence, expounded in codified teachings and accorded more agency than their myriad 'adherents', while denominations or distinctions are secondary<sup>21</sup>. The WRP most frequently involves the 'big five': Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism usually, as Cotter and Robertson point out, with Christianity and the other Abrahamic religions listed first, though with other religions such as Sikhism, Daoism or Confucianism and catch all terms such as 'indigenous' or 'new' religions frequently added<sup>22</sup>.

IFS follow this list closely but with the far from unprecedented addition of the Bahá'í Faith, which is an indication of the wider recognition the Faith have received globally. Stella Reekie specifically invited them into Glasgow Sharing of Faiths<sup>23</sup>, the effects of this

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<sup>19</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp2-3, Cotter and Robertson 2016: p2

<sup>20</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp9-10

<sup>21</sup> Cox 2007: p88, Cotter and Robertson 2016: pp9-10,

<sup>22</sup> Cox 2007: pp1-2, Cotter and Robertson 2016: p2

<sup>23</sup> Adamson, Ramsay and Craig 1984: p27

are evident today with the governing position of the Bahá'ís – the current Director of IFS Dr Maureen Sier is a Bahá'í. As J.Z Smith has argued the category of 'world religions' is recognition of a religion's perceived significance, or the importance of the parts of the world which they represent, reflecting their power and that they are recognisable enough to be equated with Christianity<sup>24</sup>. They have lost some of their otherness by being placed on equal terms with Christianity as traditions, rather than represented demographically as minorities or even in terms of specific groups, in which case the Christian members would have dominated.

The minority groups which have become members of IFS have attained that level of recognition through their affiliation with a broader abstraction, a global religious tradition i.e. Hinduism rather than one of the specific Hindu congregations. According to J.Z. Smith 'world religions' are those religious systems deemed world-shaping and as active agents in history unlike the many more localised groups which have never attained the same numbers of adherents. Religions which are not recognised in this way are often rendered invisible or treated homogenously e.g. indigenous religions<sup>25</sup>. Indeed, within IFS itself those groups which are not recognised as members of the seven 'founding' traditions either are not members of IFS or are given a less prominent role within the organisation. Furthermore, the significance of the recognised minority groups has little to do with their demographic share of the Scottish population. They are recognised as representatives of a major religion in the wider world. It scarcely matters that Buddhists make up a tiny fraction of the Scottish population, they are the representatives of a major religion in the wider world and representatives of a rich ancient tradition.

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<sup>24</sup> Smith 1973: pp294-296

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

## Intellectual

One of the key features of the world religions approach is a focus on the intellectual features of religious traditions, especially religious literature. It is the literary approach which helps to explain the focus on identifiable 'teachings' or doctrines which were often historically the preserve of a small literary and clerical elite<sup>26</sup>. Hence the focus on scriptures which could be treated as functionally equivalent and key to understanding the religion as practised by people on the ground, even though historically many of these literatures were not known to most practitioners<sup>27</sup>. Religious texts did not necessarily have the same status as the Bible or the Qur'an, though they have taken on that significance for many practitioners because that is the mould in which the world religions paradigm has reshaped them.

Interfaith activities though, often make use of religious literatures to represent different traditions because texts, at least in translation can be easily replicated, transported and appropriated for different purposes by different actors. Interfaith services can be held which slot minority religious scriptures into a basically Christian structure. For example, an interfaith service held at a church in Aberdeen for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee provided readings from the New Testament, 'Hindu Scriptures' (unnamed) and the Qur'an<sup>28</sup>. This representation through textual quotes can include a wide variety of religions regardless of whether they have any kind of scriptures but also provide a means of representing the religions of the world when members of those traditions are not actually present. For SIFW in 2009, Skye Faiths Together (SFT) held a 'Vigil for the Planet' in Portree which made use of quotations from Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Quaker, Native American, Buddhist, Bahá'í, Daoist, Sikh and Muslim traditions to reinforce a common environmentalist ethic, though it is unlikely some or even most of

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<sup>26</sup> Cotter and Robertson 2016: pp8-9

<sup>27</sup> King 1999: p62

<sup>28</sup> IFS September 2012: p13

those traditions had attendant representatives<sup>29</sup> Evidence of this textual approach to religious representation should become even clearer in the discussion of the educational documents such as *A Guide to the Faith Communities of Scotland* and *Values in Harmony*.

However, this cannot disguise the fact that this model of religion is rooted in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Islam, Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith, and that these religions fit this mould more comfortably. One example of this is the interfaith practice of 'scriptural reasoning', involving close readings of texts and reasoning about its applications, have generally been confined to Abrahamic traditions and include discussions of Abraham's hospitality<sup>30</sup> or the 'common ground' between the Bible and the Qur'an<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless, the possibility of extending this practice to other religious and belief groups has been discussed, this demonstrates both the Abrahamic mould but also the process of inclusion based on that predetermined mould.

While representation of religions as communities and even representation of their members as individual agents is not lacking, the most general representations of religions are not as cultural aggregates, bound up arbitrarily with specific geographic and ethnic populations. Instead, religions are not only presented as coherent, finely honed intellectual systems but systems of information which could be appropriated by anyone regardless of their location or background as the example of the SFT Vigil revealed, even when many religious traditions are also ethnic and non-proselytising traditions. This reflects what Ernest Gellner referred to as 'context-free' communication, which for Gellner was integral to the rise of modern industrial societies. The context in which the communication is received does not matter, it is context-free or not bound to specific tangible persons, places or situations but is general and abstract enough to be consumed

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<sup>29</sup> SIFC March 2010: p3

<sup>30</sup> IFS Summer 2014: p11

<sup>31</sup> SIFC February 2011: p12

and appropriated by any literate person, which is reflected in the WRP and IFS specifically<sup>32</sup>.

### Ethical

Just as the world religions paradigm renders religions into bodies of teachings or doctrines, it also stresses religions as fundamentally concerned with ethics, indeed those that are universal and compatible. This is exemplified by the attempt to demonstrate the conformity of each tradition to the golden rule in the document such as *Values*, which does so in an intellectualist fashion by quoting authoritative religious sources. As with the intellectual and literary emphasis of the WRP, this is based on a Christian, especially liberal-Protestant mould, but one based on pre-existing sources or traditions recast to that mould. All cultures had some system of ethics, not necessarily specifically bound up with 'religion'. but under this influence preaching an ethical code of conduct and answering moral quandaries became one of the key concerns of religion.

While these processes have shaped wider perceptions of religion in Scotland, there are reasons why it is in the interests of Interfaith Scotland (IFS) to reinforce this image. Their position in the Scottish public sphere and engagement with the government means that that they need to legitimise and secure that position and emphasising the innately ethical character of religion is a means of doing this. They are therefore not simply a partisan interest group, let alone an illegitimate one, but are an inherently beneficial influence on public relations and the governance of Scotland.

The problem is of course that this image of 'religion' as intrinsically ethical has been tarnished by increasing associations with religious violence and intolerance, particularly the emergence of global Islamic terrorism, which in turn has given greater prominence to critics of religion such as New Atheist authors. The Scottish Muslim community is generally regarded by themselves and others as successfully integrated

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<sup>32</sup> Gellner 1983: pp52-61

and has even been held up as an example for other Muslim communities<sup>33</sup>. Though there are still Islamophobic incidents<sup>34</sup> and a prominent case of inter-Muslim violence, the murder of the Ahmedi Muslim shopkeeper Ahmad Shah in Glasgow by a Sunni Muslim.<sup>35</sup> Repeated media coverage of cases such as the Scots 'Jihadi bride' Aqsa Mahmood who travelled to Syria to marry an ISIS soldier and was accused of attempting to lure three underage schoolgirls to Syria<sup>36</sup>, certainly have not helped.

IFS have attempted to manage this image, not by denying the existence of religiously motivated violence or intolerance but by depicting it as a departure from generally benign tendencies, exemplified by charity work. Stressing the common category of 'religion' and acting as the representatives of 'faiths' in Scotland means that IFS must also tackle negative images associated with specific groups as well as in general. The fact that much of this media and public attention on religion is related to Islam has meant that IFS has attempted to counter this negative image of Islam and indeed of religion. They promote and highlight Muslim activists' efforts to combat Islamophobia, educate the Scottish population about Islam, undertake charity work and cultivate friendly relations with other religious communities.

The work of Islamic charities such as Islamic Relief has been highlighted on several occasions<sup>37</sup>, a group of Glasgow Mosques have worked with a Christian charity

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<sup>33</sup> Azam, I. "Revealed: how Scotland's Muslims are fighting the rise of radical Islam at home" and "Why I believe there is a difference between Scottish Muslims and the rest of the UK when it comes to radical Islam" in *The Sunday Herald* 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2015. For academic discussions of Scottish Muslims see Bonino, S. "Scottish Muslims through a Decade of Change: Wounded by the Stigma, Healed by Islam, Rescued by Scotland" in *Scottish Affairs* (2015) 24: 1: pp78-105, Kidd, S. and Jamieson, L. "Experiences of Muslims Living in Scotland" (2011) Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, Saeed, A. Blair, N. and Forbes, D. "New Ethnic and National Questions in Scotland: Post-British Identities among Glasgow Pakistani Teenagers" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (1999) 22:51: pp821-844

<sup>34</sup> Rodger, H. "Vandals target Muslim graveyard in Glasgow" in *The Herald* 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2015

<sup>35</sup> Swindon, P. "Hundreds of floral tributes laid near spot where Glasgow shopkeeper Asad Shah was killed" in *The Herald* 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2016

<sup>36</sup> Settle, M. and Braiden, G. "Police: Scots jihadi bride will be prosecuted if she returns to Britain" in *The Herald* 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2015

<sup>37</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p6

to distribute meat from Eid al-Adha celebrations to the homeless<sup>38</sup>. The importance of charity generally and the practice of annual alms giving (Zakat) as one of the pillars of Islam is discussed in their section of *A Guide to the Faith Communities of Scotland*<sup>39</sup>. The genuine and sincere motivation of the charitable endeavours of both IFS and religious groups are not in doubt. Nor is IFS' desire to promote the welfare of the Scots population and to help Scottish Muslims combat prejudice. Though their statements do reflect assumptions about the essentially charitable and humanitarian character of religion. Scottish Muslims are defended largely through their classification as a 'religion' and defending Muslims has also undeniably been used to defend the position of religion in Scottish public life generally. This was reflected Sister Smyth's condemnation of militant secularism:

With the suggestion that there is no place for religion apart from the privacy of home and place of worship...Would advocates of a secular Scotland want...Church Action on Poverty or Islamic Relief to stop caring<sup>40</sup>?

Educating the Scottish public about Islam and facilitating opportunities for information, dialogue and contact with Muslim communities has also been important. Jewels of Islam, a Muslim women's group in Kirkcaldy held monthly open days to allow contentious topics to be discussed with visitors, such as the meaning of the Hijab and Muslim marriage<sup>41</sup>. The group met with Malala Yousafzai in 2014, the young Pakistani girl who survived being shot by the Taliban for going to school and who now campaigns for women's education<sup>42</sup>, demonstrating efforts to cultivate positive Muslim female role-

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<sup>38</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p12, IFS Spring 2014: p10

<sup>39</sup> IFS *Guide*: p12-13

<sup>40</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p12

<sup>41</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p6

<sup>42</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p25

models. Concerns with the perception of women in Islam is reflected by some of the quotes chosen for the Islamic section of *Values*:

Muslims believe that all men and women are created equal. A Muslim woman has the same duties in her religion as a man.

*Women are the other half of men. (Hadith)*

*The most perfect in faith amongst you is the one who has best manners and kindest to his wife (Hadith [sic]<sup>43</sup>)*

One Muslim Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC, now IFS) Youth Committee Member (YCM) Mohamed Omar (now Refugee Officer for IFS), visited schools in Shetland to promote the importance of interfaith dialogue. He particularly chose to highlight the ethical qualities of Islam such as the importance of generosity and altruism. Like the Jewels of Islam volunteers, Omar also stressed his openness to a wide variety of questions<sup>44</sup>. Perhaps this tendency to emphasise openness reflects a desire not only to demonstrate tolerance but also to combat images of religious people and Muslims particularly as sensitive, quick to offence, closed minded etc.

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<sup>43</sup> IFS *Values*: p53

<sup>44</sup> IFS Spring 2014: p15



Image: YCM Mohammed Omar discussing Islam with primary school pupils in Shetland in IFS Spring 2014: p15

Some of the religious traditions do not have equivalent associations and in fact are viewed in largely positive terms, which ignores ways in which they have been bound up with violence, intolerance or other contentious issues. This is most striking in the case of Buddhism, where the positive image of the religion is drawn upon and utilised, despite being bound up with conflicts in certain parts of the world. Emphasis on the compassionate and pacific image of Buddhism is evident from the *Guide* which describes Buddhists as being drawn to the caring professions and that many are “actively engaged in...promoting justice and peace<sup>45</sup>.” The existence of ethno-religious Buddhist xenophobic and chauvinistic nationalist movements and sentiments in Thailand<sup>46</sup> and

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<sup>45</sup> IFS *Guide*: p7

<sup>46</sup> Jerryson, M. “Buddhism can be as violent as any other religion” in *Aeon* (2017) at <https://aeon.co/essays/buddhism-can-be-as-violent-as-any-other-religion> (last accessed 6/6/11)

recently in Myanmar and Sri Lanka<sup>47</sup> goes completely unacknowledged in the literature. It is possible that this unproblematised pacifist image of Buddhism associated with meditation and its popularity among the general population, including the Non-religious, mean that appropriating Buddhism is a means of defending 'religion'.

### Traditional

Playing on the term 'founding', one could assert that those members of IFS are the ones regarded as essential or 'foundational' religions. Their number of adherents or historical establishment within Scotland are rendered insignificant considering the world significance they are accorded. However, world religions still need to be related to locally, and indigenised. Both their world significance and the perceived need for localisation or indigenisation to adapt to conditions across the world mean that including them in Scottish public life and national identity, inviting their representatives to the Ceilidh or Burns supper becomes ever more important.

In the *Guide*, the reader is given general information about Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, The Bahá'í Faith, Paganism, Brahma Kumaris and Jainism. I have replicated the order in which each 'faith community' is presented, it is noticeable that alphabetical ordering is used to suggest equality between the seven founding members and then completely dispensed with to present its associate members. The religion lacking in any representation, Jainism, is notably last. Each religion is described in terms of comparable categories: 'basic beliefs', 'customs and

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<sup>47</sup> This was particularly evident during a radio interview with members of IFS and the Sri Lankan Buddhist leader Venerable Rewatha of the Scottish Buddhist Vihara, on the BBC Radio Scotland Kaye Adams programme in which it was remarked that no one could possibly view Buddhists as violent, without any mention of conflicts involving Buddhists, including in Rewatha's home country. "The Kaye Adams Programme" BBC Radio Scotland 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 available at [www.bbc.co.uk/programme/b0828xfx](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programme/b0828xfx) See also, Ramey, S. "The Critical Embrace: Teaching the World Religions Paradigm as Data" in Cotter and Robertson 2016: p48, Siddiqui, U. "Muslim Minorities in Peril: The Rise of Buddhist Violence in Asia" 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 *Al Jazeera Centre for Studies* available at <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2016/09/muslim-minorities-peril-rise-buddhist-violence-asia-160908090547506.html> (last accessed 27/9/17)

practices’, ‘places of worship’, ‘main festivals’, ‘food and diet’ and ‘concerns of the community’. What is most striking about this however, in a document with ‘faith communities of Scotland’ in the title, is the fact that they do not present any information about any specific communities in Scotland but rather generalised information about each tradition<sup>48</sup>. This is echoed by other documents such as *Values* which provide general information, though the latter does at least include contact details<sup>49</sup>.

It is not my task to specify where religions begin and end but to describe and analyse actors’ assertions, constructions and reinforcement of these classifications. This is because, as was evident with Christianity, there is some contention about which groups are classified as belonging to a tradition within IFS. For example, while the Brahma Kumaris could be classified as ‘Hindu’ they are classified separately but this may also reflect their own claims to be open to members of all religions<sup>50</sup>. The boundaries constructed around religious traditions cannot be regarded as absolute, they can be arbitrarily exclusive but also difficult to police, though presented as self-contained and bounded entities<sup>51</sup>.

Religious actors sometimes make claims about the traditions or materials from other religious communities, which can be contentious especially when these claims themselves about other traditions become integral to their tradition. The Hindu community have ‘claimed’ the Buddha and the prophets of other religions as divine avatars<sup>52</sup>, the Bahá’ís claim their Prophet Bahá’ulláh to be the latest in a lineage of ‘revelations’ embodied in the recognised world religions<sup>53</sup> which in IFS form their

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<sup>48</sup> *IFS Guide*

<sup>49</sup> *SIFC Values*

<sup>50</sup> See Barker 1992: pp213-214

<sup>51</sup> Sutcliffe 2016: p26

<sup>52</sup> *IFS Guide*: p10-11

<sup>53</sup> *IFS Guide*: p18, *IFS Values*: p15

partners, just as Christians and Muslims claimed to succeed the lineage of Jewish prophets<sup>54</sup>.

This can make the different tradition sections of the *Guide* discordant, but notably this is never addressed or recognised as problematic or even noted anywhere in the document. The Buddhism section specifically denies the divinity of the Buddha, whom, it is stated Buddhists do not really ‘worship’ because of their lack of belief in creator gods<sup>55</sup>. Furthermore, in the Islam section, God or Allah is described as “One Unique Incomparable God” and that there is nothing else worthy of worship<sup>56</sup> which conflicts with the Hindu sections’ statements that God can be worshipped in many forms including as the Buddha. Nonetheless, these representations of Hinduism show both the desire to form Hinduism into a closely relatable religion which can take its place alongside all others *and* a religious universalism which would conceptually absorb them into itself.

Despite the huge cultural and theological diversity within Hinduism, it is consistently presented as a common religion with clear tenets, which was echoed by a public talk given by the priest of the Glasgow Hindu Mandir (GHM) on “the essence of Hinduism<sup>57</sup>.” This ‘essence’ is described in firmly monotheistic terms in the *Guide* “Hindus believe in one God and worship that God under many manifestations and images” while also being described as non-dogmatic. Other, more particular doctrines such as karma and reincarnation are discussed, along with the doctrine of the avatar. The section also expresses pantheistic ideas, describing God as present in all beings<sup>58</sup>. Varying emphases on different deities and pantheistic and monotheistic ideas are also found in the Hindu section of *Values*, along with elements of Hindu ritual and symbol –

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<sup>54</sup> IFS *Guide*: 4 and 12

<sup>55</sup> IFS *Guide*: pp6-7

<sup>56</sup> IFS *Guide*: p12

<sup>57</sup> IFS Summer 2014,

<sup>58</sup> IFS *Guide*: p10

most strikingly an image of a Hindu swastika without any references to its controversial status<sup>59</sup>.

Paganism is described in terms of the ancient pre-Christian religion and in *Values* the quotations used range from Babylonian writings, Ancient Greek philosophers to modern Pagan writers such as Starhawk<sup>60</sup>. Though it is emphasised that there are no universal doctrines or scriptures<sup>61</sup> the notion of a common underlying phenomenon stretched across a vast expanse of history and geography is reinforced. The values expressed involve unsurprisingly, care for the environment but also those which would fit comfortably into interfaith narratives, that religion should not be forced on anyone, even that trying to convert others is 'rude'<sup>62</sup>.

Paganism or Neo-Paganism is an umbrella term for several NRMs such as Wicca, Druidry, Asatru and others. What they have in common is their claims to represent or affiliate with the religious traditions of pre-Christian Europe or the ancient world. While their theology is diverse, from pantheism to animism, their practices involve worshipping pre-Christian deities like Thor or Morrigan identified with the forces of nature, especially Mother Earth figures<sup>63</sup>. Representations of Paganism reflect their self-image as related to ancient religion and affirm a common religious identity:

Paganism has its roots in the indigenous, pre-Christian religions of Europe, evolved and adapted to the circumstances of modern life. Its re-emergence in Scotland parallels that observed in other Western countries<sup>64</sup>.

The position of Paganism within IFS and its literature is in many respects unsurprising, they are a religious movement which have become more visible in recent decades. They

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<sup>59</sup> SIFC *Values*: pp39-44

<sup>60</sup> IFS *Values*: p69

<sup>61</sup> IFS *Values*: p68

<sup>62</sup> IFS *Guide*: p21

<sup>63</sup> IFS *Guide*: p20, IFS *Values*: p68

<sup>64</sup> IFS *Guide*: p20

are numerically small, not only in Scotland but also globally, and they are not as widely recognised as one of the ‘world religions’. Yet the existence of PFS and similar organisations, their use of common labels, nomenclature, discourses, symbols and espousal of common traditions make them easier to fit into IFS than many groups within the alternative religious or spiritual milieu. In short, they are alien but not too alien.

### Universal

The world religions approach constructs ‘religions’ as fundamentally universalistic, with its emphasis on those with many ‘adherents’ scattered across the world and its literary, philosophical and ethical traditions associated with founders, great personages and canons<sup>65</sup>. While some of these features were not lacking beforehand, these have been as much the construction of European scholars, missionaries and colonialists, and indigenous responses to them, now exported back to the west throughout immigrant diaspora<sup>66</sup>. They have been moulded by western Protestant Christianity into its likeness, per its values and especially presenting a set of beliefs as the paramount or central attribute<sup>67</sup>.

In Scotland this can be partially explained by Christian influence, by the hegemony of liberal pluralism and by the fact that most religious minorities are diasporic communities who, if they wish to engage with the public sphere in Scotland, emphasise the relatable, accessible and universalistic content of their traditions. While certain religious groups such as Paganism do not comfortably fit into the world religions paradigm (and receive less recognition), their representations are nonetheless refracted through the world religions model. These actors are influenced by the dominant

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<sup>65</sup> Masuzawa 2005: pp17-18, Cotter and Robertson 2016: p6

<sup>66</sup> King 1999: p107, Martin, C. “Religion as an Ideology: Recycled Culture vs. Religion” in Cotter and Robertson 2016: pp70-71 and evident from IFS *Guide*

<sup>67</sup> King 1999: p92, Harvey 2013: pp2-3, Cotter and Robertson 2016: pp7-8

paradigm and this encourages the reification and intellectualisation of these traditions, galvanising them into a single coherent phenomenon<sup>68</sup>.

The paradigm is arguably ideal for interfaith discourse because it constructs religions as distinctive, identifiable traditions which are functionally equivalent and relatable through common values. It is no accident that one of the common symbols used within the IFM, by Interfaith Glasgow (IFG)<sup>69</sup> and Edinburgh Interfaith Association (EIFA)<sup>70</sup> is a tree symbol where the leaves are made from the symbols of different religions. Just as denominations and sects are represented as branches of a common root tradition, the religions of the world are conceived of as linked and related by common root values underneath the soil. Revealingly, a tree was planted outside St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life in Glasgow to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the foundation of the Scottish Inter Faith Council (now Interfaith Scotland)<sup>71</sup>.

A 'World Religion Day' was even celebrated in Dumfries on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 which attempted to "foster the establishment of inter faith understanding and harmony by emphasising the common denominators underlying all religions<sup>72</sup>." World Religions Day has involved prayers and readings from different "world faiths<sup>73</sup>" and "followers of every religion are encouraged to acknowledge the similarities between different faiths" and "the fundamental oneness of faith<sup>74</sup>." Iain Stewart of Edinburgh Inter Faith Association (EIFA) presented a talk for pupils of St Mary's Primary School in November 2013 entitled 'The Common Threads of World Religions' introducing them to "the similarities and foundations that bond all belief systems together<sup>75</sup>."

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<sup>68</sup> Cotter and Robertson: p12

<sup>69</sup> <http://interfaithglasgow.org/> (last accessed 9/4/16)

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.eifa.org.uk/> (last accessed 9/4/16)

<sup>71</sup> SIFC March 2010: p10

<sup>72</sup> SIFC February 2011: p4

<sup>73</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p8

<sup>74</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p25

<sup>75</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p9

As the WRP is rooted in liberal Protestant Christianity, even for the ‘world religions’ themselves, some religions find it easier to operate within these discourses than others. The model is based on textual, belief-centred, monotheism and trans-national and trans-ethnic status. Aside from Christianity, perhaps only Islam and the Bahá’í Faith match it closely. The Bahá’í Faith particularly exemplifies this universalism with its connections to other ‘world religions’ through its recognised prophets and its strong internationalist ethos, advocating the establishment of a world government and pacifism<sup>76</sup>. Its comparative modernity, originating in 19<sup>th</sup> century Iran with the Prophet Bahá’ulláh (1817-92), means that its values can far more easily fit the interfaith mould than more well-established world religions:

“May Fanaticism and religious bigotry be unknown...and the religions of the world enter the divine temple of oneness.” (Compilations *Baha’I World Faith*, p. 256<sup>77</sup>)

“A religion which does not conform with the postulates of science is merely superstition.” (Abdu’l Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 82)

“Religious truth is not absolute but relative.” (Shoghi Effendi, Summary Statement – 1947, Special UN Committee on Palestine<sup>78</sup>)

While Judaism and Sikhism are monotheistic and textual they are also ethnic and non-proselytising, though their universalistic features are accentuated within the literature just as the monotheistic tendencies has been accentuated with regards to Hinduism. Indeed, as Richard King argues, the construction of modern ‘Hinduism’ as an inclusive but nonetheless common religion appealed selectively to specific texts to present Hinduism as *more universal* than the Protestant Christianity from which these discourses derived<sup>79</sup>. The Hindu, and indeed perhaps Bahá’í, balance of universalism which

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<sup>76</sup> IFS *Guide*: p19

<sup>77</sup> IFS *Values*: p15

<sup>78</sup> IFS *Values*: p18

<sup>79</sup> King 1999: pp93-98, pp103-107

integrates but does not claim to assimilate traditions without remainder is arguably exemplary of the dominant interfaith approach.

This universalistic presentation of religious traditions makes them far less bound to specific geographic and cultural context, much more transportable and universalistic in focus and easier to equivocate. In the case of Buddhism, the intellectual and meditative elements of Buddhism are emphasised. Though this may be because Buddhism's non-theistic position, at least as represented in IFS literature allows, it to play a different role, offering practices which can be safely appropriated, despite the presence of deities and supernatural figures in many forms of Buddhism<sup>80</sup>. For example, Aberdeen Interfaith Group (AIFG) invited a local Buddhist monk to provide a talk on Buddhism, and a discussion was held afterwards about "how people can apply Buddhist insights in their lives."<sup>81</sup> While discussions about the values espoused by various religions are commonplace, I have found no parallel invitations to apply 'insights' from any other religious tradition to oneself.

Judaism can also be presented in these universalistic terms through interfaith discourse and relations, and the espousal of universalistic values and its non-proselytising approach can be cast in pluralist rather than exclusivist terms: "Judaism does not seek converts, believing that non-Jews should follow their own path<sup>82</sup>." Universalism is evident in Rabbi Mark Solomon's sermon at an interfaith Shabbat service during 2014 SIFW in Edinburgh:

All men and women, of every colour and creed, of every race and nation, are our brothers and sisters...Like brothers and sisters, we should feel a sense of common

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<sup>80</sup> Spiro 1966: pp92-93, Guthrie, S. *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion* (1993) Oxford: Oxford University Press: p.19

<sup>81</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p9

<sup>82</sup> SIFC *Values*: p62

identity...For God, who created us, cares for all of us; therefore we should care equally for one another<sup>83</sup>.

IFS volunteers including a Jew, Tibetan Buddhist convert, Muslim and Church of Scotland member were invited by a Jewish community in Glasgow to speak about their 'faith journeys' as part of Limmud<sup>84</sup> Day with its theme of 'Your Jewish Journey'<sup>85</sup>. In this sense Judaism is not simply an ethno-cultural inheritance but an active 'journey' through which Jews can relate to the 'journeys' of other people of faith, through the shared category of 'faith'.

As a minority group, the common category of 'religion' can be used as a means of defending controversial practices such as Orthodox methods of animal slaughter and circumcision, making common cause with Muslim communities. The emphasis on 'religion', though, means that this is fed into a larger Scottish discussion of 'religion', critiquing perceived attacks on religion around issues such as religious schooling<sup>86</sup>. While minority groups can benefit from the protection of the category of religion, they can be used to associate the defence of the Christian religious majority in the public sphere by associating religion with the liberal values of inclusivism and pluralism.

However, while Christians have laid the discursive and institutional groundwork for the IFM and continue to wield more power, the intrinsic importance of minorities to the IFM means that minorities can demonstrate agency in their use of these structures and discourses. They can in different ways argue that they are implicitly more universal and pluralistic than the established Christian majority as King noted historically in 19<sup>th</sup> century Hindu thought. The overwhelmingly 'ethnic' religions can also recast their

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<sup>83</sup> IFS Spring 2015: pp8

<sup>84</sup> Limmud is a Jewish educational organisation and registered charity <http://limmud.org/> (last accessed 2/4/16)

<sup>85</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p7

<sup>86</sup> IFS *Guide*: p15

composition as an interfaith virtue which could be used to delegitimise attempts at assimilation or conversion.

### **Representations of Religious Minorities and 'Ethnicity' in the Literature of IFS**

Scotland's current religious diversity is largely a product of comparatively recent immigration and there is considerable overlap between the ethnic and religious minority populations<sup>87</sup>. As discussed in the introduction, much of the ethnic minority population is of South Asian and East Asian origin, many now second, third or even fourth generation. Asian immigration to Scotland became significant from 1948 onwards, increasing in the 1960's and 1970's<sup>88</sup>. The foundational interfaith group in Scotland, Glasgow Sharing of Faiths (GSF) was based on the work of its founder, Stella Reekie, with immigrants in Glasgow who were primarily from Pakistan.

IFS strongly supports a form of multiculturalism alongside specifically religious pluralism, reporting on many local multicultural celebrations attended by local and national interfaith activists or incorporating these into its own events. These feature art, food, music, dance and performances of diverse cultural origins often combined with presentations of Scottish culture and heritage. However, these convey a diffuse diversity and are made up assorted cultural elements broadly described by origin as Arabic, African, Indian, Chinese etc. This differs from their depictions of religious diversity because it is not tied to the depiction of groups or communities, institutional representation or bounded traditions. While I have emphasised the ways that religious traditions are generalised, rendered universalistic and even abstract, they are still tied to institutions, well defined traditions and individual attendees at interfaith events represented as members of those religions.

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<sup>87</sup> Though it should also be borne in mind that some immigrants and ethnic minorities are Christian, from Irish Catholic immigration from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards to contemporary Eastern European, African and other communities.

<sup>88</sup> Devine 2012: pp563-564



Image: children in multicultural festival costumes at an International Women's Day Celebration in Glasgow in 2010 from SIFC February 2011: p8

However, while IFS is concerned with religious groups, the ways in which these religious traditions are intertwined with immigrant ethnic heritage in Scotland has meant that these become part and parcel of the ways in which they are represented. The Muslim population is largely made up of Pakistani communities, one Muslim IFS member being the Pakistan Association Edinburgh and East Scotland<sup>89</sup>, though with other Muslim immigrant communities and some converts<sup>90</sup>. The Sikh community is overwhelmingly of Punjabi descent<sup>91</sup>, while the Hindu community is composed of different Indian communities with some non-Indian converts to groups like the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON or 'Hare Krishnas')<sup>92</sup>. The two Hindu members of IFS are the Glasgow Hindu Mandir (GHM) and the Hindu Temple of Scotland (HTS), also in

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<sup>89</sup> IFS *Draft Report*: p30

<sup>90</sup> Wolfe, J. "Fragmented Universality: Islam and Muslims" in Parsons 1993: pp144-145, pp152-153

<sup>91</sup> Thomas, T. "Old Allies, New Neighbours: Sikhs in Britain" in Parsons 1993(a): pp209-210

<sup>92</sup> Thomas, T. "Hindu Dharma in Dispersion" in Parsons 1993(b): pp193-194

Glasgow, while most Indian communities in Britain are of North Indian origin<sup>93</sup>, the HTS is associated with the South Indian Community Centre<sup>94</sup>.

The Jewish community is also the product of immigration, though earlier, and Judaism, like Sikhism and like Hinduism, is as much 'ethnic' as 'religious'. The Jewish community of Scotland is largely of Ashkenazi origin, descended from Eastern European Jews who emigrated to Scotland from the 1870's onwards<sup>95</sup>. This was reflected by an event held at the Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre in Salisbury Road in June 2014 when immigrants to Edinburgh were invited to share their experiences and traditional Jewish food and music. Participants were encouraged to reflect on and narrate stories of their immigration and family origins<sup>96</sup>.

The Buddhist community involves sizeable numbers of both people of East and South East Asian descent and 'indigenous' converts. The two Buddhist organisations which hold membership of IFS are the Kagyu Samyé Dzong (Tibetan<sup>97</sup>) and the Triratna Buddhist community, a Western form of Buddhism<sup>98</sup>. The Tibetan tradition in Scotland, the current convenor of IFS and Buddhist representative, Larry Blance is a Tibetan Buddhist convert. Other Buddhist communities such as the Sinhalese and Thai Theravada communities, remain largely immigrant communities. The Sinhalese Vihara (monastery), Scotland's Buddhist Vihara led by the Venerable Rewatha in Glasgow celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June 2012, involving a mix of Scottish and Sri Lankan themes<sup>99</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> Thomas 1993(b): p187

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.hindutempleofscotland.com/> (last accessed 11/4/16)

<sup>95</sup> Devine 2012: pp518-522

<sup>96</sup> IFS Summer 2014: p13

<sup>97</sup> There has been some recent academic research on Tibetan Buddhism in Scotland and the relationship between converts and Tibetan traditions, see Mackenzie, J.S. "Keeping it Real!: Constructing and Maintaining Traditional Authenticity in a Tibetan Buddhist Organisation in Scotland" in *Sociological Research Online* (2011) 16 (3): 7 at <http://www.socresonline.org.uk>,

<sup>98</sup> Formerly the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO), *IFS Guide*: p7

<sup>99</sup> IFS September 2012: p6

This immigrant experience and the ways in which the adoptive homeland can be constructed in religious communities has featured as part of interfaith events and activism because they are imbricated in the histories and concerns of minority communities. Interfaith groups have held public talks on the Sikh immigrant experience in Scotland or those of Muslim refugees<sup>100</sup>. The Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) have been involved in many of their events, John Wilkes their CEO provided a lecture at the AGM which I attended on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 and Mohammad Omar (mentioned above) has now been appointed to the new position of Refugee Officer<sup>101</sup>.

Portrayals of the Hindu and Sikh communities are heavily intertwined with South Asian culture. Interfaith events have often involved performances of Indian music, from Hindu devotional songs (Bhajans)<sup>102</sup> to Bollywood music<sup>103</sup>. Many similar themes and elements are found in depictions of Sikhs and Sikhism, the image of a turban wearing Sikh appears especially popular, its distinctiveness recognised by YCM Charandeep Singh, who recounted his visit to an Oban school “I quickly realized that a Sikh donned with a turban on their head was not a common sight in Oban” but interfaith encounters “helped those pupils to recognize that we share common values and humanity as young people in Scotland<sup>104</sup>.”

Representations of the Jews and Judaism are particularly tied to the commemoration of the Holocaust because of its fundamental impact on all Jewish communities, primarily through National Holocaust Memorial Day (NHMD), held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, which since 2012 has been officially coordinated in Scotland by IFS<sup>105</sup>. NHMD commemorates the victims of the Holocaust, the attempted extermination of European Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, the disabled and other groups during WW2. It

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<sup>100</sup> IFS September 2012: p17, SIFC March 2012: p2

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/staff/> (last accessed 4/6/17)

<sup>102</sup> SIFC March 2012: p2

<sup>103</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p10

<sup>104</sup> SIFC August 2011: p8

<sup>105</sup> SIFC March 2012: p8

also commemorates victims of other genocides such as the Armenian genocide of 1915, and the Cambodian Khmer Rouge massacres of the 1970s, Bosnian and Rwandan genocides of the 1990's and Darfour genocide of the 2000s'<sup>106</sup>.

Representing these atrocities is significant for IFS because it demonstrates the importance of dialogue, good relations and the roles religious groups can play in preventing and counteracting hatred. Representatives of the Jewish community are heavily involved with these commemorations. For example, Rabbi David Rose visited Broughton High School in Edinburgh during 2012 NHMD and read out the Jewish prayer for the Dead<sup>107</sup>. Commemorations appear to balance representations of general, and specific communal significance. Their significance for Jews is recognised but their broader significance to all is stressed: providing historic lessons and reinforcing common values. These broader themes also seem to be of interest to Jewish participants who arguably have a role in interpreting and disseminating their significance.

These tendencies can be combined to connect communities, as exemplified by Church of Scotland Reverend Andrew Sarle's discussion of his German-Jewish father's flight to the UK from Nazi persecution and his distant ancestor, a Rabbi<sup>108</sup>. Similarly, Maureen Sier wrote about her husband, Nick Sier's family's connections to the history of Jewish persecution and immigration in the newsletter to reflect IFS' role with NHMD, both being practising Bahá'ís, his grandparents were murdered in Auschwitz while his mother had escaped to the UK <sup>109</sup>.

While elements of ethnic heritage and the immigrant experience continue to form a part of interfaith representations, the presence of converts and the prevalence of universalistic world religions discourse helps to further separate 'ethnic' from 'religious' categories. Though links between them are acknowledged, for IFS 'faith' is the

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<sup>106</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p18, Spring 2015: p20

<sup>107</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p14

<sup>108</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p29, ACTS 2014: p

<sup>109</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p21

paramount category which renders all the distinctive ‘faith communities’ and ‘people of faith’ equivalent to each other. Religions are rendered ‘universal’ in scope and significance, defined by distinct but compatible core beliefs or tenets and moral values which also means they can be integrated into the limited but sovereign space of the nation<sup>110</sup>.

Similarly, ethnic heritage may be celebrated as part of general diversity and can form part of ‘culture sharing’ but like national identity it is nonetheless ‘limited’ in comparison with the ‘universalism’ of religion, even though some religions are entirely ‘ethnic’ in composition. The ethnic and cultural elements associated with some religions are primarily emphasised visually and performatively in the photography of interfaith documents and as part of interfaith events. This can include the centring of interfaith events around presentations of sacred arts or traditional dance which are then reproduced in the literature as powerful visualisations of interfaith relations<sup>111</sup>. They form part of the aesthetics of interfaith but they are not necessarily different from the diffuse view of cultural diversity discussed above, because they exist to symbolise, exemplify and embody the intellectual core of these traditions. In general, the Scottish interfaith representation of culture is not bound to groups but is transmittable or appropriable, which renders the largely ethnically homogeneous population into a multicultural one but also allow or encourages Scottish minorities to take on Scottish national cultural and identity.

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<sup>110</sup> Anderson 1983: pp6-7

<sup>111</sup> E.g. SIFC Feb 2011: pp3-4, IFS Spring 2014: p2



Image: 'The Seven Candles of Unity' from Bahá'í New Year celebrations attended by representatives of many religious communities in Dumfries in SIFC August 2011: p13

These ethnic cultural elements, symbolism and histories are part and parcel of the ways in which some communities are incorporated but it is the universalistic, intellectual, ethical and textual elements which are brought to the fore. Despite the ethnic ties of all the religious communities represented in the literature, which in some cases were very evident, they are primarily represented as religions not ethnicities, which is most strikingly exemplified by the *Guide* which does not discuss the ethnic elements of Judaism, or even mention India in relation to Hinduism (though other documents do).

## **Representations of Religious Minorities and National Identity in the Literature of IFS**

While the primary category is religion or faith, and ethnicity is acknowledged, these representations are framed by Scottish national identity, implicitly and explicitly. This is partially because IFS are a Scottish organisation, with the aim of representing religious groups to the Scottish public and government, though, their involvement with the Scottish Government and embeddedness in the Scottish public sphere and civil society means that they also help to integrate minority groups into the nation through the category of 'religion' and the ways in which they instil a sense of attachment to the civic and cultural elements of Scottish 'national' identity<sup>112</sup>. There is also clear evidence that like the ways in which minorities have genuinely internalised and expressed the predominant interfaith discourse of 'religion', but have adapted it to their outlook and interests, a similar process has occurred with 'national' identity.

This interfaith version of Scottish national identity is constructed and reinforced through the symbolic use of Scottish culture, often in combination with elements of minority ethnic and religious heritage but also appeals to shared values and shared civic space<sup>113</sup>. This reflects the interfaith agenda of integration rather than assimilation, and is also used by members of minority groups to secure and elevate their position and protect themselves against threats. If they are to be active members in Scottish society, while being allowed to maintain their distinctive identity, then as we saw above, this can be used to protect their right to engage in specific practices such as Halal or Kosher methods of slaughter. Further this provides them with a platform against which they can stress the impact of specific prejudice against them, like antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Rose Drew of Interfaith Glasgow (IFG) and other interfaith activists were invited to discuss rising Islamophobic incidents and other religious-aggravated offences with

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<sup>112</sup> This will be explored more fully in a subsequent chapter on IFS and Scottish national identity.

<sup>113</sup> See Chapter 6

First Minister Alex Salmond in June 2013<sup>114</sup>. Volunteers from Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre visited 19 secondary schools, to help to dispel stereotypes about Muslim women. They created an exhibition of personal messages from the women called 'I speak for myself' held at the Scottish Parliament. One volunteer, asked Muslim women to share messages with their "fellow Scots" and added "I see myself as Scottish and Muslim, they go hand in hand. I'm proud of all my identities<sup>115</sup>."

Similarly, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC), a member of IFS, has engaged in research funded by the Scottish Government, and brought Jews and non-Jews together to discuss their 'Being Jewish in Scotland' Project in Edinburgh 2013, and in Peebles in 2014. SCoJeC found that while Jews in Scotland for the most part felt integrated, they still experienced pockets of anti-Semitism especially related to Israel, echoed by a Jewish participant at the event. Otherwise "Scotland was 'a great place to be a Jew <sup>116</sup>'. Along with Muslim groups' efforts to combat Islamophobia, this demonstrates the ways in which minority groups have been able to galvanise governmental support through their active participation in the Scottish public sphere, to address specific issues of concern to them. IFS and the IFM have sometimes facilitated this but certainly play a role in recording and disseminating these efforts. These campaigns appear to have reinforced their identification as Scottish through their use of these structures.

This engagement with Scottish civic space is not only a reflected in campaigning on serious issues but in major national events such as the 20<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games held in Glasgow in 2014 which exemplify the ways in which religious categories and national identity are implicitly referenced in these representations. One important Sikh interfaith activist, Ravinder Kaur Nijjar and her husband Dr Amarjit Singh Nijjar were selected to be baton bearers at the 20<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games 2014 in Glasgow, while

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<sup>114</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p4

<sup>115</sup> IFS September 2012: p18

<sup>116</sup> IFS Spring 2014: p11, IFS Spring 2015: p15

the IFS organised interfaith service of welcome held before the Games featured a Sikh children’s choir clad in tartan outfits<sup>117</sup>. Though more ordinary developments within religious minority communities such as their growth, development and entrenchment in Scottish cities can be given national rather than simply local or communal significance.



Image: tartan clad Sikh children’s choir at opening of Commonwealth Games in Glasgow 2014 in IFS Summer 2014: p10

The opening of the new purpose-built Gurdwara on Albert Drive in Glasgow was described as eagerly awaited by “Scottish Sikhs.” One young Sikh activist stated that “[the Gurdwara] is also inherently open to everyone, of any religion or no religion...it will serve as a focal point for us to engage with the wider Scottish population<sup>118</sup>.” This demonstrates the internalisation of notions of religious and national discourse, that this has a broader importance for engagement with the national population in a universalistic manner, rather than simply acquiring a place to worship.

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<sup>117</sup> IFS Summer 2014: p10

<sup>118</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p14

When a Church and Mosque in Aberdeen<sup>119</sup> held joint prayer services on Christmas Eve, the Imam stated “[I]t is very important for different religions to come together.... true Muslims look to have a multi-faith dialogue” This was praised by Alex Salmond, who wrote “[t]his is a wonderful example of the different strands of Scotland’s tartan coming together to celebrate both the diversity of our nation and the values we share <sup>120</sup>”. What it also demonstrates is the ways in which a local event, involving two specific congregations, can be given national significance because it involves broader religious categories and reflects the desired values of national pluralism promoted by the Imam, the politician and the interfaith newsletter quoting both. These universalistic values are not only framed by the conception of a common national identity which integrates different religious identities but that national unity in diversity are symbolically referenced in Salmond’s tartan metaphor as it was visually represented with the Sikh children’s choir.

As I discussed in the last chapter, the category of ‘religion’ can be used to open elements of Christian heritage such as historic sites to ‘people of faith’ but also one framed by the nation, as national sacred space. For example, One Muslim woman, who stayed at Bishop’s House on Iona for two months, emphasised the spiritual qualities of the island and that the Christian services she attended “shone a light on God’s path.” Echoing statements made above, she stated that she did not think she had the “right to dismiss the truths that others hold dear” and that “being from the UK, my faith is Islam my culture is not<sup>121</sup>.” Her pluralistic references to multiple truths also indicate an internalisation of an interfaith mentality and one which she reproduces within the interfaith literature but also the distinction between religion and culture with the reference to the UK explaining why they are distinctive.

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<sup>119</sup> This event has been discussed from a theological perspective See Brittain, C. “Partnership not Dialogue: Lent and Ramadan under the Same Roof” in *Ecclesial Practices* (2016): 3: pp190-209

<sup>120</sup> SIFC February 2011: p9

<sup>121</sup> IFS Spring 2014: pp22-23

The embeddedness of those Christian sites such as Iona in the Scottish cultural landscape and their incorporation into a religiously pluralist sacred landscape can be achieved by embedding minority sites alongside them, for example, Tibetan Buddhist community's purpose-built monastery of Samyé Ling in Eskdalemuir and Holy Isle, which is owned by the same community. Like Iona, these Buddhist sites have become popular destinations for interfaith pilgrimages, providing an opportunity to “learn about the unique contribution of Tibetan Buddhism to Scotland’s religious landscape<sup>122</sup>.” This even has a pre-Christian dimension with Neolithic sites such as the standing stones of Callanish in Lewis, it is a mark of the increasing recognition of the Pagan community that their ties to these sites are acknowledged, being used to symbolise their religion in the *Guide*<sup>123</sup>.



Image: photograph of Callanish standing stones on the Isle of Lewis taken from the Pagan section of *The Guide* p21

There are several reasons why world religions categories and the IFM have been so bound up with national integration. The organisation of religious groups into broader institutionalised categories on a national scale, defined by an accessible and relatively easy to understand set of tenets, practices and requirements means that they are easier to relate to and integrate but also provides a means through which minority groups can access power. While this is not full assimilation, this mould affects the ways in which

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<sup>122</sup> SIFC September 2010: p8, IFS Summer 2014: p5, IFS Spring 2015: p13, SIFC August 2011: p11, IFS September 2012: p17, IFS Spring 2015: p6

<sup>123</sup> IFS *Guide*: p21

religious groups present themselves (IFS being only a small and recent example of these dynamics), though these are voluntary, they do reflect prevailing power structures.

The world religions paradigm, especially as presented here also provides an equivalent set of values which can be aligned to those of the nation. For example, *Values* stresses the commonality and compatibility of religious traditions through their shared commitment to the golden rule and values stemming from it. This is made more explicit in the introduction to the document which explicitly critiques ‘mosaic-multiculturalism’, the idea that different communities should be fragmented, leading separate lives from one another. Different religious groups are urged to recognise that their shared society, implicitly identified with Scotland<sup>124</sup>.

The reason that this universalistic model of religion is successfully combined with a certain form of civic and cultural nationalism is because of the ways that national belonging and religion are rendered entirely distinctive categories. ‘Religion’ is rendered transcendent, non-territorial and with a limited degree of success has been detached from culture, meaning that it can be combined with an inclusive civic and culturally informed Scottish national identity. While Scottish national identity is inclusive, it is still limited, bound to specific territorial, civic and cultural attachments which could not compete with the universality of religion, which nonetheless is so universalistic and transcendent that it does not disrupt or delegitimise its mere sovereignty.

### **Conclusion**

Interfaith Scotland has facilitated and represented religious minorities as successfully integrated without being fully assimilated, into a version of Scotland marked by unity in diversity. Its efforts to do so have been structured by three identifiable categories of ‘religion’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘national’ identity. A common Scottish national identity as a common imagined democratic community is, implicitly and explicitly, what religious

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<sup>124</sup> SIFC *Values*: pp5-8

minority groups are being encouraged to integrate into. This has meant that active participation in Scottish civic society and the taking on of Scottish identity informed and symbolised by Scottish cultural symbolism have been part of that process. There is evidence that minorities have been able to use this to secure their position and address their concerns, as much as they have also internalised Scottish national identity themselves.

As most of these minority communities come from immigrant and ethnic minority origins, ethnic and cultural heritage have been significant, especially in providing some of the aesthetics of the interfaith movement. This is especially the case with some of these minority groups which are overwhelmingly ethnic minority in composition, they are an inevitable part of representing these communities. However, while IFS support multiculturalism, it does not appear to lay much stress on ethnicity, preferring instead to stress generalised cultural diversity and the other categories of religion and national belonging.

Their stress on religion reflects a world religions approach which lays stress on intellectualised traditions and ethical teachings, which can be used to integrate them into the nation as an expression of its unity in diversity in which the content of religions is distinct from the specific communities which practice them, though in the literature of IFS 'religion' is also differentiated from secular worldviews, alternative forms of spirituality and from other social formations. This universality renders Scottish minority religions into a position of nominal equality and equivalency with each other and with Scottish Christianity but their global universality means that religious and national identities are distinctive and non-competitive. This is because they transcend but do not disrupt the limited but sovereign sense of the nation into which they can contribute as representatives of these timeless traditions as active citizens of Scotland.



## Chapter 5: Otherness and Inclusion: Interfaith Scotland and Representations of the Scottish Non-Religious through Changing forms of Engagement, the Search for Common Ground and Representations of Humanism as a Belief Tradition

### Introduction

As we saw in the last two chapters, Interfaith Scotland (IFS) has reinforced a ‘world religions’ discourse through its internal structure and its literature. This has depended on the acceptance of a common, ecumenical Christianity placed on an equal footing with religious minorities through similar emphasis on common, identifiable traditions: Bahá’í, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh over demographics or divisions within each religious tradition. This construction of the category of ‘religion’ allows these groups to fit into a religiously pluralist but still bounded construction of the Scottish nation: **the one nation, many faiths paradigm**. However, those groups which do not fit comfortably into one of the recognised traditions: Mormons, Moonies, Unitarians, Brahma Kumaris and Pagans have been able to join the organisation but have not been granted the same level of representation. When they are represented in the literature though, they are moulded to fit the world religions model, as with representations of Paganism as a global, primarily intellectual and ethical tradition.

As we have seen, IFS has espoused the idea that ‘people of faith’ intrinsically have much in common because of their shared ‘religiousness’; that they should relate closely and that their particular rights to participate in the Scottish public sphere should be protected. However, IFS has also stressed their value and relevance for Scottish society as a whole, that their activities benefit the population of Scotland generally. To an extent they can even claim to represent the Scottish population, both as its national interfaith body but also because they incorporate most religious communities in Scotland.

However, what about the portion of the Scottish population that do not fit into a 'religious' category at all<sup>1</sup>?

IFS has struggled to incorporate groups which do not fit its normative view of 'religion' but which are generally regarded and regard themselves as 'religious'. However, how do they relate to people who reject 'religion' entirely or define themselves in contrast to it? There is a large and growing section of the Scottish population who identify as 'Non-religious', whom they would have found it increasingly difficult to ignore. According to the 2011 census, the 'Non-religious' now form 37% of the Scottish population, having increased by 11% since 2001. This increase represents over a third of the population, compared with the 57% claiming a religious affiliation<sup>2</sup>. Like any category of person, they are far from homogenous and include 'atheist', 'agnostic', 'Secular-Humanist' and indeed 'spiritual but not religious' identifications. What can be said to unite this group then is a rejection of the category 'religion' and the world religions categories (i.e. 'Islam', 'Christianity', 'Sikhism' etc.) which are so central to IFS' ideas of religion.

IFS for a long time did not concern itself much with the Non-religious population but it has increasingly found it necessary to interact with and represent them in various ways. The relationship between IFS and the Non-religious has shifted over time, from a distant and indirect one to a relationship which is increasingly regular, direct and close. There are three key factors which I will use to describe and analyse this relationship they are: 1) the **changing forms of engagement** with the Non-religious, 2) the cultivation of **common ground** between the interfaith movement (IFM) and certain Non-Religious activists, and lastly 3) the representation of **Secular-Humanism as an intellectual 'belief' tradition** comparable to the representation of religious traditions. The discussion of each

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<sup>1</sup> For a study of Non-religious identities in Scotland specifically, see Cotter, C.R. "Without God, Yet Not Without Nuance: A Qualitative Study of Atheism and Non-Religion among Scottish University Students" in Beaman, C.G. and Tamlin, S. (eds.) *Atheist Identities: Spaces and Social Context* (2015) London: Springer

<sup>2</sup> National Records of Scotland 2013: p4

factor in turn is not intended to be read as a strictly chronological model of this developing relationship, though the first two factors can be regarded as interrelated steps of an ongoing process which have been necessary for the third factor to take root.

The discussion of its **engagement** with the Non-Religious will discuss the development of their interactions with the Non-religious population of Scotland, including its often indirect, means of representing this population in contrast to 'religion'. The evidence for this section is scoured primarily from general literature of IFS such as its newsletter and other documents. There are several indications that its attempts to reach out to members of the Scottish public who are uneducated about religion in general have been aimed implicitly at the Non-religious. I will trace this more indirect representation of the Non-Religious to the attempt to address the perceived threat of 'militant secularism', to the more direct and friendly engagement with Non-Religious groups and activists which concern the next sections.

The discussion of the attempt to find **common ground** between Interfaith and Non-Religious is derived from the account of a historic conference (and now regular series of conferences) hosted by the Roman Catholic Conforti Institute (to which Sister Isabel Smyth OBE SND is affiliated) in 2013. The conference was titled *Common Ground* and a document with the same name which compiled some of the papers from that conference, will serve as a case study for this section. While Conforti is a Roman Catholic institute and the document was produced by the Xaverian Missionaries of the United Kingdom and USA, it is good, direct evidence of the specific interaction of IFS and Non-religious activists. The reason that this document is so useful is the fact that the attempt to cultivate common ground between the religious and Non-religious is precisely what the document exemplifies. It reveals the increasing development of shared values, outlook and means of relating to one another, that a broader form of interfaith inclusive of and reproduced by certain Non-Religious actors. The key themes exemplified include: the importance of dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect for one's personal religious or

Non-religious 'journey' and inclusion in the shared community of the nation. That this is specific to certain sections of the Non-Religious population must certainly be borne in mind, along with the limited degree to which interfaith activists represent the religious population.

The cultivation of this common ground has allowed for an increasing relationship to build between one Non-Religious movement, **Secular-Humanism** and IFS. This developing relationship to a large extent reflects the interests of the government in representing all sections of the Scottish population. It has also reflected the language and agenda of the 2010 Scottish Equality Act which lists 'religious' and '**belief**' groups as being part of the same shared protected characteristic alongside race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, age etc. Non-Religious groups or systems of values are now increasingly referred to as 'belief' groups by all parties but this also reflects an emphasis on equivalency with religion and the notion that such identities are overwhelmingly significant for individuals concerned.

This means of approaching Non-Religious groups equates them to religious groups without abandoning the distinction entirely. The movement that has been the easiest to fit into these paradigms is Secular-Humanism, which is now the preeminent Non-Religious movement. It is now generally simply referred to as Humanism and I will follow this convention throughout the rest of the chapter<sup>3</sup>. Humanism actively seeks to provide the ethical, social and intellectual framework for the Non-Religious, based around humanity itself and has therefore been easier for IFS to relate to. I will show how IFS have reinforced this by providing Humanist sections in their documents which push the equivocation further as a common essential **tradition** for the Non-Religious. In this way, IFS can incorporate the Non-Religious into its construction of Scotland as One

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<sup>3</sup> 'Humanism' is a much older term and with its origins in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries cannot be described as 'secular', which is why the modern Non-religious movement has been referred to as 'Secular-Humanism'.

Nation of Many Faiths but also maintain a distinction between religious and Non-Religious.

### Defining Non-Religion and the Non-Religious

As briefly discussed in the secularism section of the theory and method chapter, the term 'non-religious' can be even more imprecise than the category of 'religion' but arguably is essential to elucidate the latter. It can be used as a relational or oppositional category defined negatively by the category of 'religion'<sup>4</sup>. The category of 'non-religion' makes 'religion' definable in the first place because it contrasts 'religion' against everything else. 'Non-religion' can also be used in a manner which suits the interests of specific parties because it inherently shifts according to the understanding of 'religion'<sup>5</sup>. It can serve as a 'miscellaneous' category for everything which does not fit comfortably into one of the established 'religious' categories, and is perhaps in that respect *less disruptive* to those who wish to monopolise or shape the image and discourse of religion, than those groups which do not fit the established scheme and yet categorise themselves or are categorised as 'religious'. After all it is only within the discourse of distinctive religious traditions that others are rendered 'non-religious'<sup>6</sup>.

However, as the census reveals, this sometimes residual and negative category has nevertheless become a category of religious self-identification<sup>7</sup> and opens the possibility of more specific definition than the purely negative definition<sup>8</sup>. This category can *negatively* refer to everything not classified as 'religious' but considering how exhaustive that would be, 'Non-religious' (Lois Lee advocates using the term with a

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<sup>4</sup> Campbell 1971: p21, or as Tim Fitzgerald has described the category of 'secular', a 'semantically parasitic' referenced in Day, Vincett and Cotter 2013: p2

<sup>5</sup> José Casanova made a similar observation about the category of 'secular' Casanova 2011: p55

<sup>6</sup> Stringer, M. "The Sounds of Silence: Searching for the Religious in Everyday Discourse" in Day, Vincett and Cotter 2013: p171

<sup>7</sup> This term 'religious identification' can be used to refer to all forms of identification in relation to the category 'religion', including 'Non-religious'.

<sup>8</sup> As Charles Taylor has long argued regarding 'secularism' Taylor 2011a: p39

capital -N<sup>9</sup>) can entail groups, movements or persons specifically and positively identified, either by themselves or others, as ‘Non-religious’ (I will use capitalisation to differentiate the two understandings of the term).’

A distinction must be made between ‘non-religious’ groups or institutions, including most of Scotland’s political parties who are not *specifically* ‘Non-religious’, and those groups or identities that are specifically and deliberately defined as ‘Non-religious’, antagonistically or not, including ‘Atheism’, ‘Humanism’, ‘Free Thought’ and the ‘Secularist’ movement<sup>10</sup>. This form of ‘Non-religion’ is distinct from ‘non-religion’ in the broader sense, it is the rejection or disavowal, not the absence of religion, which defines the groups in question<sup>11</sup>. This can be differentiated from identity affiliations or groups unconcerned with, or considered unrelated to these questions, such as identifying as a ‘feminist’ or being a member of the Scottish Liberal Democratic Party.

The negative category of ‘non-religion’ on the other hand, as I am using it here, can be equated with Charles Taylor’s model of secularism. In Taylor’s approach, the state and its institutions are not defined by any specific religious or Non-religious identity<sup>12</sup>. One can adopt this more specifically to areas of life which are not defined by religious identification such as political parties, interest groups, social clubs etc. In effect, social groups within society which are non-religious replicate the secularism of society at large on a smaller scale but are defined by some other measure of belonging. Non-religion as a social identity is entirely defined by its relation to ‘religion’ and as such profoundly relevant to IFS representations of religion and modern Scottish society.

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<sup>9</sup> Referenced in Cheruvallil-Contractor, Hooley, Moore, Purdam and Weller in Day, Vincett and Cotter 2013: p176

<sup>10</sup> Campbell 1971: p4, the Secular movement represented for example by the Edinburgh Secular Society (ESS) <http://edinburghsecularsociety.com/> (last accessed 4/6/16), for a history of the Secular Movement in the UK and US see Campbell 1971: pp46-61

<sup>11</sup> Campbell 1971: p27

<sup>12</sup> See Taylor 2011b: p37

## Engagement with the Non-Religious

One of IFS' remits is championing the active role of religion in the political, civic and cultural life of the nation according to one of their aims: “[t]o provide a forum for different religions in dialogue with one another on matters of religious, national and civic importance<sup>13</sup>.” Whether they should be specifically concerned with the Non-religious was not always clear but representing ‘religious’ people is necessarily conceptually contrasted with ideas of a ‘Non-religious’ population. There appears to have been something of a shift over time from relatively little direct concern with the Non-religious, to attempts to counter negative views of religion implicitly associated with the Non-religious, to overt critiques of the perceived threat of ‘militant secularism’. This however, has culminated in an active attempt to relate to and represent the Non-religious through the Humanist movement.

Nonetheless there are still little signs of full incorporation of Humanism into IFS and interfaith activists continue to recognise the distinctiveness of religion, though some forms of Non-religion have been equated with it. It is worth bearing in mind that the successful proliferation of the broader Interfaith movement (IFM) in Scotland and elsewhere is still a comparatively new phenomenon, occurring in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has meant that in Scotland, developing connections between Christian churches (which had become increasingly ecumenical) and the religious minority groups has been the primary business of the IFM and IFS. Interfaith relations could be viewed as something of interest to people from religious communities, (at least those of an interfaith mentality) and therefore unconcerned with the Non-religious.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us) (10/8/15)

## The Non-religious as Invisible Other

Non-religious people are mentioned quite rarely in the literature especially in the earlier documents, though this began to change from the second decade of this century. In *A Guide to the Faith Communities of Scotland* (henceforth the Guide), the Non-religious are not even mentioned in relation to the 2011 Scottish census when discussing its results for its religion question. The *Guide* lists 'Buddhist', 'Christian', 'Hindu', 'Jewish', 'Muslim', 'Sikh' and 'Other' next to the amount of 'members' they are revealed to have. Even though, as the *Guide* points out this is a voluntary question, these are simply those people who have affiliated or identified with a label rather than confirmed 'members' of congregations or organisations.

What makes this particularly noteworthy is the fact that Non-religious affiliation was as high as it has ever been in Scotland, having overtaken those affiliating with the Church of Scotland. Here Non-religious people are only represented implicitly and negatively against which the religious population are defined. The reproduction of the census results suggests that IFS were interested only in how many religious people or 'people of faith' can be identified in the country and thus how many potential interfaith participants can be reached. The fact that the *Guide* also cautions that because the question was voluntary there may be more "people with a religious faith" than represented by these statistics<sup>14</sup>, widens 'religion' to include those who have not affiliated with a label, while active Non-religious identification is considered irrelevant. However, the religious population is implicitly measured against the Non-religious population. The Non-religious are not represented as a tangible group or even a loose collection of individuals, rather as part of the background environment.

The problem is that ignoring a large section of the Scottish population could undermine IFS' claims to be a national body, as well as its contention that interfaith relations and their close association with the Scottish Government and public sphere is

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<sup>14</sup> IFS *Guide*: p5

beneficial to all Scots. As IFS and the Scottish IFM have become more established, the desire to relate to the Non-religious has grown more pronounced. The discourse of interfaith, with its emphasis on faith communities, may have shaped their initial focus but its emphasis on the significance of dialogue and common ground between diverse groups have also proved influential in their subsequent attitudes. The motto of Interfaith Scotland after all is “making a difference through dialogue<sup>15</sup>.” Greater engagement and representation of the Non-religious may also stem from a perception of them as a potential threat to their position, for which there is evidence in the literature. The emergence of the virulently anti-religious ‘New Atheism’ movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century defined by authors such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris and their ability to capture public and media attention has doubtlessly influenced this.

IFS had to begin to identify Non-religion in some form before they could relate to them. This tendency should become evident in the ways in which they have particularly relied on and accorded space to the Humanist movement. As one might expect, IFS are careful to avoid engaging in wholesale attacks on large groups of people which would conflict with their self-image and goals. IFS do not criticise any group directly without perceived provocation. However, the Non-religious are also implicitly the source of negative stereotypes of religion which they must challenge through their work. For example, the newsletter touts the success of interfaith school visits by quoting pupils who had received visits in 2013:

“I hadn’t realised that religious people were NORMAL! (sic)

To which they added:

Interfaith Scotland’s youth have worked as wonderful *advocates of faith and religion* (emphasis mine)<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> C.f. <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/> (last accessed 2/6/2016)

<sup>16</sup> SIFC Spring 2013: p4

These school visits are one of the ways that IFS engages with the Scottish public. One can glean from the quotes above that these are represented as promoting a positive image of religion and even advocating the benefits of being religious. The fact that it is 'religion' that is being represented positively against negative stereotypes, not a specific religion such as Islam<sup>17</sup>, is significant. It is implicitly the Non-religious who are represented as holding and disseminating these anti-religious sentiments. The IFS volunteers are there to spread positive images of religion among the Non-religious.

### Militant Secularism

Nonetheless, that the benefits of religious influence are conferred on *all* members of Scottish society, as Scots, which includes the Non-religious is also espoused in the literature. The common perception that the media has an anti-religious bias is repeated on several occasions, even though this has been shown by recent scholarship to be highly dubious. Even if specific anti-religious content is sometimes produced, it is not the norm, though the British press is decidedly critical of Islam<sup>18</sup>. There is only one Non-religious tendency or movement which has come in for direct criticism in the interfaith literature 'militant secularism', from an editorial by Sister Smyth:

A lot has been said recently about a secular Scotland with the suggestion that there is no place for religion apart from the privacy of home and place of worship. In a recent article in a well-known Scottish newspaper, religion is depicted as intolerant and judgemental, excluding and exclusive<sup>19</sup>.

She goes on to address these stereotypes by pointing to the fact that religious people are human but that many religious people are very far from these stereotypes, crucially

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<sup>17</sup> Tackling Islamophobia through similar talks has been an important part of the work of the IFM which was discussed in the previous chapter but it is differentiable from this general defence of religion.

<sup>18</sup> C.f. Knott, Poole and Taira 2013: pp173-178

<sup>19</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p12, it is possible that she is reacting to an article, whose definition of secularism entailed "religion should not be banished or persecuted, but it is to ask that it be relegated to the purely private or personal realm." Goring, R. "Religion should be relegated to the private and personal realm" *The Herald* Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2013

that they are “open and welcoming to all regardless of their beliefs<sup>20</sup>.” In other words, religions should fit a tolerant and pluralist mould which is here represented as part of their nature. Her arguments would preclude dismissing the Non-religious entirely, as I mentioned in the last chapter the charitable contribution of religious groups is stressed, though some of her statements can be read as encouraging increased interactions between the religious and Non-religious:

Do the detractors of religion know what actually happens within faith communities? Do they know of the work of interfaith relations that bring together people of different faiths to explore differences as well as commonalities? This kind of activity allows people to move beyond tolerance to respect and appreciation of different beliefs and views<sup>21</sup>.

Sister Smyth also recognises the need for a secular state but one where all can express their views and contribute to society “from their own value base<sup>22</sup>.” One could argue that the IFS perspective on religion is quite secular in a different sense, religions are defended by pointing to their practical contributions to Scottish society through philanthropy. The unique contribution of religious communities and their rights to the Scottish public sphere are expressed against a hostile militant secularist other. Notably, Smyth is careful to avoid critiquing the Non-religious in general, clearly stating support for a form of secularism, in place of ‘militant’ secularism. Critiquing the form of secularism which would undermine their position, without attacking the Non-religious population, avoids alienating those Non-religious Scots who are unconcerned with IFS or even sympathetic to their position<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> SIFC Spring 2013: p4

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> Who Campbell refers to as “the religiously sympathising unbeliever” Campbell 1971: p25

## Overcoming 'the New Sectarianism'

IFS would almost certainly want to avoid being cast as prejudiced against the Non-religious population, or as contributing to rather than bridging divisions. This is reflected in wider, growing concerns, in 2014 Edinburgh University released the *Faith and Belief Scotland* report which contends that polarising attitudes between religious and Non-religious represents a 'new sectarianism', it recommended increased dialogue between these groups and that local government should do more to accommodate Non-religious groups'<sup>24</sup>. The use of the word 'sectarianism' is particularly emotive in Scotland because it refers to a persistent and quite specific form of interreligious tension and prejudice which is still highly visible in parts of the country and which especially for older generations, has been experienced by many Scots.

### Common Ground

IFS have been involved in several events in which religious and Non-religious groups engage in dialogue. These generally involve Non-religious people affiliated with Humanist or Secular societies and representatives of religious groups. One historic event was organised by the Xaverian missionaries of the United Kingdom and the United States, a Roman Catholic missionary organisation linked to the Conforti Institute in Coatbridge, between the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 involving Christian, Muslim, Bahá'í and Non-religious participants<sup>25</sup>. Conforti has been used for several interfaith events because of Sister Smyth's affiliation with the institute, it was also the location of the conference, though later proceedings were notably held at the Scottish Parliament<sup>26</sup>. The conference did include some academic contributions, including the Sociologist of Religion and

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<sup>24</sup> The University of Edinburgh 2014: pp2-4

<sup>25</sup> Xaverian Missionaries of the United Kingdom and the United States *Common Ground: Conversations among Humanists and Religious Believers*: (2013) Xaverian Missionaries: p4

<sup>26</sup> IFS *Newsletter* Spring 2014: p23

Humanist, Professor Calum Brown and the Church of Scotland theologian Professor Willie Storrar<sup>27</sup>. Similar events have been held in subsequent years<sup>28</sup>.

The Xaverian missionaries compiled a book from some of the papers from the first conference entitled *Common Ground: Conversations among Humanists and Religious Believers*, (henceforth *Common Ground*). The leading role played by senior IFS activists, the close relationship between Conforti and IFS and the fact that these conferences are featured in the newsletters means that I class this document as part of IFS' wider literature. This document serves as a useful case for the development of an increasingly close relationship between Non-religious groups and the IFM in Scotland. The common ground that is being cultivated is a shared set of values, shared language and attitudes which make it increasingly easy for Non-religious groups to work with religious groups through the interfaith movement. It is also dependent on certain shared assumptions and categories which render Non-religious and religious groups equivalent but distinct, and can be used to integrate both into the nation.

Non-religious activists have historically been divided quite sharply between two camps, 'abolitionist' and 'replacement' schools, and hostility between these camps has been a feature of the Non-religious movement from its foundation. The former oppose religion on principle, considering it the cause of key social ills, while the latter may reject religion but their critique of religion is related to their promotion of a broader comprehensive value system, i.e. Secular-Humanism. They are more likely to acknowledge features of religion which they regard as beneficial or laudable and appropriate them, hence the name 'replacement'<sup>29</sup>. The hostility of the 'replacement school' for the 'abolitionists' is palpable from many of the Non-religious contributors to *Common Ground* and points to the construction of shared discourses and attitudes with

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<sup>27</sup> Though their contributions were not featured in the document discussed below, Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p5

<sup>28</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p14

<sup>29</sup> Campbell 1971: pp37-38

pro-interfaith religious actors (who it must be borne in mind are a very particular trend within religion).

Even if the ultimate aim of the replacement school is to *replace* religion, that does not mean that they cannot cooperate with like-minded religious groups or actors, as indeed they have historically<sup>30</sup>, or engage in interfaith relations. Given that the aim of replacing religion is not related to uniform opposition or hostility, the achievement of which is an eventual and indirect aim, it would be quite easy to quietly drop it from their agenda. There is some evidence from the Humanist contributors that Humanism is now primarily considered a *particular* rather than universal 'replacement' for religion, for those who are not attracted to any religion. This would also be an agenda that IFS would support and is conducive to the incorporation of 'Non-religious' 'belief' groups into IFS' one nation, many faiths (and beliefs) paradigm. This also reinforces the liberal tendencies of contemporary secular pluralism, one's religious or Non-religious identity is a *choice* reflecting developments in one's life and both the equivocation and differentiation of these categories, some *need* a replacement for religion.

This 'common ground' constructed in the document can be defined by the following themes: the importance of dialogue and tolerance, respect for one's personal religious or Non-religious 'journey' balanced with ethical communitarian values and activism, a stress on inclusivity, as well as common membership of the wider community of the nation. I will discuss these themes as expressed by several of the contributing papers by representatives of religious, Non-religious and interfaith groups at the conference. This common ground reinforces a stress on common values which unite these activists as the representatives of sections of the population, but also differentiates neatly between 'positive' and 'negative' forms of religion and Non-religion. This distinction may not divide religion from Non-religion but it is stark nonetheless and

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<sup>30</sup> Campbell 1971: p54

also reflects their activist bias, which lumps the apathetic and the intolerant together into the 'negative' category.

The conference also reflects the transnational interests and ties of religious, interfaith and Non-religious groups, with many of the contributors travelling from the United States and England to attend. However, the national context of Scotland is referenced in several ways and this reflects the already existing paradigm of 'the traditions' as global phenomena but which can and should be fitted to the 'local' national geographic, civic and cultural context. The contributors discussed below include several Non-religious participants: Chris Stedman – the Humanist Chaplain for Harvard and Yale Universities, Prerna Abbi – a self-described 'Secular Hindu' who is a member of Chicago's Inter Faith Youth Core (IFYC), Jeremy Rodell – Chair of the South West London Humanists, and Gary MacLelland of the Edinburgh Secular Society (ESS). The contributions of both Dr Maureen Sier and Sister Isabel Smyth will be discussed, along with that of Friar Carl Chuddy SX, Superior of the Xaverian Missionaries of the USA and the introduction credited to the Xaverian Missionaries.

### Dialogue

The fundamental importance of promoting dialogue between the religious and Non-religious in contemporary society is consistently reinforced by the contributors. The Xaverian's introduction recognises the capacity of the Non-religious to pursue truth, goodness and beauty and that the Non-religious are 'precious allies' in the defence of human dignity and peace<sup>31</sup>. Jeremy Rodell, a Humanist, described the division between religious and Non-religious as 'one of the most important fault-lines in Western society, especially here in the UK<sup>32</sup>,' but emphasises how developing relations help to bridge divides. While Sister Smyth closes her article by stating that dialogue between the religious and non-religious is crucial for the promotion of:

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<sup>31</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p4

<sup>32</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p44

[O]ur common humanity and common citizenship, our common concern for the future of our world, our nation and our society<sup>33</sup>.

However, because that dialogue has been less institutionalised and routinised than interfaith dialogue, many of the contributors emphasise the need to cultivate that dialogue further. She praised the conference as a somewhat unprecedented step in the right direction. Friar Carl Chuddy SX, discussed the attempt by the Xaverian Missionaries of the USA and UK to establish a 'safe and deferential space<sup>34</sup>' for religious and Non-religious dialogue. Chuddy echoed many of the points raised by the other contributors, showing particular support for Pope Francis' attempts to reach out to the Non-religious<sup>35</sup>.

The commitment of IFS to strengthen its relations with and facilitate dialogue between the religious and Non-religious was explicitly confirmed in this document. In her paper, Dr Maureen Sier presented interfaith groups as particularly equipped to facilitate dialogue between the religious and Non-religious because they have already developed tools for facilitating dialogue between religious communities<sup>36</sup>. This is evidence of an expansion of the self-defined remit of the IFM to include the representation of all groups. This common emphasis on the importance of dialogue and mutual engagement between the religious and Non-religious is quite specifically constructed against those who are opposed to it, or even not considered to exemplify it. Interfaith activists have here simply applied the same standard they use to differentiate the 'positive' and 'negative' forms of religion: openness to dialogue.

Smyth for example explicitly praised the Humanist chaplain Chris Stedman's commitment to interfaith dialogue as an atheist and Humanist by contrasting him

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<sup>33</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp41-43, echoing the replacement of common religion by national loyalty in the work of Anderson 1983: pp10-12 and Greenfeld 1996: pp171-174

<sup>34</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p36

<sup>35</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p40

<sup>36</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p33

favourably with famous atheist and critic of religion, Richard Dawkins<sup>37</sup>. It is notable that Stedman's own contribution specifically provided guidance on how to engage in respectful dialogue with the Non-religious from an atheist perspective but addressed to a Christian audience<sup>38</sup>. Furthermore, the desire for dialogue, and co-existence as well as the opposite impulse, to avoid dialogue, are recognised as found among the religious and Non-religious in the introduction<sup>39</sup>. This was a theme echoed by Friar Chuddy SX:

One of the remarks that surfaced consistently in our Common Ground conference among humanists and religionists was that it seemed easier to find ways to dialogue among religious believers and *humanists because we all believed this dialogue was important* to undertake and came to the conference for that explicit purpose...That conviction that we all saw so apparent in our conference is in fact *not shared at all with many of our colleagues, friends and fellow believers* (emphasis mine)<sup>40</sup>.

Furthermore, Rodell builds on this critique, by identifying those within 'religion and belief' communities who 'know they're right', who are uninterested in dialogue and who consider all others to be 'the enemy<sup>41</sup>'. What Rodell and many of the contributors are constructing can be viewed as more than mere common ground but a pluralistic yet common group *identity*, the boundaries of which are defined by engagement in 'interfaith' or perhaps 'inter-belief' relations.

### Tolerance

The conference also reinforced the need for tolerance and further mutual understanding between the religious and Non-religious. Various speakers highlighted perceived lack of tolerance against their own groups, while also recognising areas where other groups

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<sup>37</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp41-42

<sup>38</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp8-11

<sup>39</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p4

<sup>40</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p38

<sup>41</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p45

suffers or have suffered from intolerance. Both groups of speakers often astutely drew attention to perceived stereotypes or disadvantages of their group by drawing analogies with the other. While this is certainly strategic to a degree, it does also serve to construct and reinforce mutual tolerance of both, and allow a certain airing of grievances which is used to support rather than undermine this construction.

Stedman astutely critiqued the 'conflict-driven' media presentation of religion, particularly highlighting media attention on protests by the Westboro Baptist Church rather than Church soup-kitchens, to critique the identification of *atheists* with anti-religious attitudes<sup>42</sup>. Rodell's paper also indicated that Non-religious interfaith activists bristle against the same perceived caricatures of interfaith relations as 'kumbaya interfaith', as religious interfaith activists<sup>43</sup>. Sier's account of religious and Non-religious repression acknowledged the former but focuses on the latter:

Sadly some of the worst atrocities committed against humanity have been motivated by strongly held *ideologies*, these include massacres that have occurred because of religious beliefs but have equally been perpetuated...by people holding strong held beliefs that include wiping out a specific religious community or suppressing religion generally (emphasis mine<sup>44</sup>).

Crucially she discussed an activist involved with 2013 National Holocaust Memorial Day (NHMD), Arn Chorn Pond who was a survivor of the atrocities committed by the Cambodian Communist Khmer Rouge regime<sup>45</sup>. The other examples she provided are related to the suppression of religion by Communist regimes and she went on to discuss the roles that religious and interfaith groups have played in rebuilding communities. Gary MacLelland of the ESS, argued that atheists and humanists have a place in interfaith

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<sup>42</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p9

<sup>43</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p45

<sup>44</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p34

<sup>45</sup> Guest of honour at the 2014 National Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations IFS Spring 2014: pp18-19

dialogue because it is an opportunity to overcome stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against Non-religious people<sup>46</sup>.

Smyth singled out Professor Calum Brown's 'sobering' paper on religious 'leavers', pointing out that many were moved to leave religion by youthful bad experiences especially for homosexual people. She used these examples to reflect on Sri Lankan theologian Aloysius Pierris' notion that religions are composed of 'oppressive' and 'liberating' aspects which can help to explain the different experiences of many, though which imply that these could be applied to Non-religious groups. Smyth then reflected on the problems of religion in a manner which of all her work offers the staunchest criticism of some forms of religion, though without being specific:

This is shameful for those of us who are religious. Much of the tensions between religious and non-religious people is caused by religions being dogmatic and rejecting people who felt they couldn't fit in and some of this feeling had begun at an early age which also shows the importance of good religious education...Prof. Brown's research showed a significant decline in religious affiliation in the 1960s...The reason was attributed to the self-realisation of women at the time – another lesson for religion<sup>47</sup>.

I would argue that this is more than merely tolerant moderates reacting to intolerant radicals or hardliners, but an emerging sense of common identity, a participatory community marked by shared expressions, terminology and references (in other words common discourse) and ways of behaving. There is even evidence that shared symbolism has begun to emerge, the interfaith tree discussed in the previous chapter graces the cover of the document, though the leaves are patterned to represent the globe rather than religious symbols. These tendencies are rendered more obvious when Rodell introduced an expression from Eboo Patel, founder of the Inter Faith Youth Core (IFYC),

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<sup>46</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p50

<sup>47</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p42

'the faith line', divided between 'liberals' and 'hardliners', not 'religious and 'Non-religious' (though he purposefully played on the double meaning in the quote below). The language is akin to converts to a religion from many countries or communities, returning home with the new message:

But the fact that we don't directly reach the hard liners doesn't invalidate the exercise. They can only be reached or perhaps *faced down*, by more open-minded people from their own belief backgrounds – people on 'our side' of the line. It is by dialogue that we can all become better informed and feel better supported in advocating the interfaith approach within our own communities (emphasis mine<sup>48</sup>).

#### Personal Journeys and communitarian activism

One of the more interesting areas of common ground related to a shared tension between an individualistic and voluntaristic view of religious identification and a stress on communal ethics and activism. In this view 'religion' and 'Non-religion' are the concern of the individual. Any attempts to restrict this are 'oppressive' legacies and the ability to outwardly embrace the relevant religious identity as part of a personal journey, sometimes in contrast to one's upbringing, must be allowed to flourish. Sier discusses her own Non-religious (but also culturally Presbyterian) background, her burgeoning interest in religion and her conversion to the Bahá'í Faith. Astutely, she draws parallels between her move from a Non-religious to a religious position to those participants who moved from a religious to a Non-religious position, acknowledging that this often came with personal and familial struggles. This underscores her contention that for some religion can be liberating rather than constrictive<sup>49</sup>. This is coupled though with Smyth's admission in her article, that for some leaving religion is both 'liberating' and 'honest'<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p45

<sup>49</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp32-33

<sup>50</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p42

However, these valorisations of personal self-discovery contrast with the introduction's critique of 'personal spirituality' based purely on the individual's preferences, though, this kind of spirituality is not attacked wholesale but only in as much as it lacks communitarian and altruistic values<sup>51</sup>. While Prerna Abbi from the IFYC declared that she knew that she was an agnostic from an early age, it was the *communal* aspect of religion to which she was most drawn to. Her Secular-Hinduism relates to these values, especially Karma Yoga – the path of good works, and to Hindu philosophy, though without theism or ritual. Abbi also stressed that engaging in common charitable endeavours may help religious and Non-religious groups to relate more closely<sup>52</sup>.

This may seem contradictory but it must be borne in mind that while identity may be constructed as a personal choice, all speakers are *activists* concerned with promoting a set of values: they may be personal but they are also public. This emphasis can be related to the world religions approach of IFS which is dependent on the construction of intellectual and ethical traditions, which can be taken on by individuals where they feel an affinity with them. However, this approach is dependent on the use of social categories and the stress on ethical and doctrinal systems which does render them distinct from some forms of spirituality. In another sense though, this reflects the fact that not only are all speakers in favour of dialogue, they are also all activists engaged directly with institutionalised groups concerned with representation and other goals. Further, their claims to legitimately represent swathes of the population are certainly bolstered by active membership but also by their ability to represent the interests and concerns of groups with well-defined boundaries and clear characteristics.

### Inclusivity

These values and the now shared commitment of these groups to increasingly direct relations depend on inclusivity. This is especially stressed by Non-religious groups as their

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<sup>51</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p6

<sup>52</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp22-30

right to represent the Non-religious through specific institutionalised groups such as Humanist societies. Prerna Abbi's biographical details claim that she 'is particularly passionate about including the voices of non-religious, like herself, in interfaith work<sup>53</sup>.' She describes the struggle of many Non-Religious (specifically Humanist) groups to be accepted within chaplaincies and other interfaith circles in the US. She also emphasised the need for the Non-religious to attain a shared community and recognition, which necessitates making it clear that Non-religious 'philosophical' positions are welcome.

This does chime with IFS' desire for greater interfaith representation and a desire to maintain the public representation of religion in Scotland as well as facilitate the greater inclusion of religious minority groups. Maureen Sier ends her article by calling for religious and Non-religious people to be recognised as equals and for the protection of human rights, particularly freedom of conscience<sup>54</sup>. Some of the ways in which IFS has publicly promoted relations with the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS), including in their relations with the government, will be discussed below. As with the other themes of *Common Ground*, the theme of inclusivity was used to address perceived inequality between the religious and Non-religious while also reinforcing that common value system. For example, Chris Stedman critiqued the sense of 'persecution' of some Christians, pointing out the prejudice against atheists in the USA and calling for the recognition of 'Christian privilege':

Imagine how you would feel if, instead of hearing President Obama make references to God and Jesus in speeches, he spoke about how what unites us as Americans is that we don't believe in God. <sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p22

<sup>54</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp31-34

<sup>55</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp7-11

While emphasising that Humanists are a minority, Gary MacLelland argues that interfaith dialogue is a chance to work towards goals such as ending extremism and oppression and that there is much that can be learned from interfaith groups.

As secular humanists, we must not waiver from our responsibility to expose injustice and collusion, yet at the same time, seek to promote a positive and friendly dialogue of compassion and understanding<sup>56</sup>.

The need to reconcile different understandings of secularism were also discussed by many of the speakers. Gary McLelland, describes how the conference motivated him in his own secularist campaigning to strive to appear less frightening to religious people<sup>57</sup>. Rodell discussed how the terms 'secular' and 'interfaith' often complicate relations between religious people and Humanists. He advocated the need to ensure that the broader understandings of these terms are emphasised, to include 'belief' groups in interfaith and religious groups in secularism<sup>58</sup>. This also echoes the religiously inclusive form of secularism promoted by Charles Taylor discussed above, who is also explicitly and approvingly invoked by Friar Chuddy<sup>59</sup>.

Chuddy relates the concerns of many Humanist attendees regarding the religious influence on public policy and argues in favour of a separation of religious belief and politics but without barring religion from the public sphere, though the fact that some Humanists and some religious believers may be uncomfortable with this 'balanced' approach is mentioned<sup>60</sup>. This stresses the division between 'negative' and 'positive' versions of each religious identification and associates the latter with dialogue and compromise. The negative fringes which are opposed to this 'balance' could also be

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<sup>56</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p50

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*

<sup>58</sup><sup>58</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p46

<sup>59</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p37

<sup>60</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp35-40

identified with 'militant secularism' but also with religious groups that expect to dominate public life.

The integration of religious and Non-religious groups is not always related purely to these forms of dialogue and to governance but is also exemplified by a symbolic and intellectual integration related to the world religions approach. Sister Smyth's paper exemplifies this intellectual and symbolic integration. She made explicit use of Non-religious ideas to discuss her own religious worldview. She argued that she could identify as an 'agnostic' in relation to the 'unfathomable Mystery of God', as a 'Humanist' in relation to human rights and a 'secularist' in advocating freedom of religion and belief. She uses this to demonstrate openness to the 'wisdom and insight of others<sup>61</sup>' by specifically aligning herself with three key non-religious identifications (though notably not atheist).

Smyth's paper reinforces the idea of an intellectual Non-religious tradition, with its own core values, which can be appealed to in a similar way to religious traditions. The theme of the internal diversity of religious and Non-religious groups is also a consistent theme in these representations. A striking feature of this is how much it is used to represent both as relatively neatly divided between 'good' and 'bad' forms, which can be used to insulate the 'good' from any potential associations with the 'bad'. This equivocation between the 'good' and 'bad' sides of religion and Non-religion can be used by representatives of each to protect the image of their tradition. It is also clear that 'good' religion and Non-religion are communal, active, tolerant and socially integrated into wider society which is implicitly framed by the Scottish nation.

### The Nation

While this conference had a clear international and UK dimension, this did not mean that it lacked national significance, even as expressed by those visiting Scotland. This is

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<sup>61</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp42-43

partially because there is an implicit wider society into which these activists wish to integrate the religious and Non-religious as socially engaged and public-spirited citizens. While some of the contributors may have formed their common ground in the USA or England, these can still be transplanted to a different national context with relative ease, which reflects the fact that the broader ideology of nationalism is internationalist and egalitarian rather than exclusive or supremacist. Engaging with wider society and governance in Scotland does mean doing so in a particular national context with an autonomous political structure. Further, the positive and negative elements of relations between the religious and Non-religious in Scotland were addressed, while references were made to the civic rituals of the Scottish Parliament within which some of the proceedings took place<sup>62</sup>. The implicit significance of the national context was evident from Dr Maureen Sier's paper which begins by stating:

It is in the context of wider 'dialogue with other religion and belief groups' that Interfaith Scotland is delighted to engage with humanists, secularists and see this dialogue as playing an important role in ensuring that Scotland is a just and inclusive country that promotes dialogue and civic engagement whether you have or have not religious beliefs<sup>63</sup>.

Smyth herself opens by admitting that while Scotland has had much success with interfaith dialogue, dialogue between the religious and Non-religious has been lacking – pointing to a single event held in London rather than Scotland as a successful precedent<sup>64</sup>. On the other hand, Rodell ends his paper praising the fact that despite being less religiously diverse than London in real terms, Scotland and its government 'seems to be way ahead' in recognising and enshrining interfaith relations. He praises the document *Belief in Dialogue* (discussed below) for its attention on the need to integrate Non-religious people into such interfaith structures, and even echoes the document's

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<sup>62</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p46

<sup>63</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p31

<sup>64</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p41

focus on the values inscribed on the mace of the Scottish Parliament (having been shown it while visiting the Parliament): wisdom, justice, integrity and compassion which ‘no Humanist would disagree with<sup>65</sup>.’ MacLelland closes his article by discussing future endeavours bringing together religious and Non-religious groups and reveals that he was invited to provide the Scottish Parliament’s time for reflection due to his participation in the conference, ‘a welcome alternative to the UK Parliament’s practice of Christian only prayers<sup>66</sup>.’

This specific example of the interactions between interfaith and Non-religious activists reflect the wider process of the inclusion and representation of Secular-Humanism as the legitimate representatives of the Non-religious population. Humanism has been represented in several IFS documents and these examples show the same stress on institutionalised groups and on intellectual traditions which defines IFS’ representation of religious groups. This developing relationship between Humanism and IFS has been particularly promoted and facilitated by the Scottish Government and reflects their desire to promote common, active membership in the Scottish nation by appealing to the shared values discussed above. This has been dependent on the application of the category of ‘belief’ to describe and represent Non-religious philosophical positions, which has the effect of both equivocating and differentiating ‘religious’ and ‘Non-religious’ groups, it also reinforces the underlying notion that one’s religious or Non-religious affiliation is of paramount importance.

### **Humanism as a Belief Tradition**

#### Non-religious Belief

The equivocation and mutual representation of the Non-religious population through the Humanist tradition has been bolstered by the language of the 2010 Equality Act which introduced the concept of ‘belief’ to represent Non-religious identities. The

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<sup>65</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp44-47

<sup>66</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: pp48-50

Equality Act makes ‘religion and belief’ part of a common protected category alongside other characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity and age. The religion category does include protection for the lack of religion but the use of the term ‘belief’, as differentiable from the lack of religion, does point towards recognition of increasingly conscious, positive identification as ‘Non-religious’ but confusingly can include religion:

“Belief may mean any religious or philosophical belief”<sup>67</sup>.

While as indicated above belief can include religion, it has come to be used to refer to Non-religious ‘philosophical’ belief<sup>68</sup> as a shorthand for systems such as Humanism<sup>69</sup>, as in The University of Edinburgh’s *Faith and Belief in Scotland* report<sup>70</sup>. Though, it must be stressed that *lack* of religion and belief are also protected, it is only those for whom religion or belief is an overriding factor of identity that are explicitly recognised as described by these categories. ‘Belief’ has to be Tillichian ultimate concern, only those who take their religion or belief ‘seriously’ who need to be taken seriously as ‘religions’ or ‘beliefs’:

To be protected, a person must belong to a religion that has a clear structure and belief system...A philosophical belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a belief about a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour – so, for example, humanism<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> *The Equality Act (2010)* Part II, Chapter 1.10.2. quoted and referenced in The University of Edinburgh 2014: p6, The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p45

<sup>68</sup> In this chapter ‘belief’ should be largely taken to refer to the concept of ‘philosophical belief’ systems or groups protected by the Equality Act and worked into IFS’ discourses, not belief in the popular, anthropological or epistemological senses.

<sup>69</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: pp4-6

<sup>70</sup> The University of Edinburgh 2014: p13, Cheruvallil-Contractor, Hooley, Moore, Purdam and Weller 2013: pp173-174

<sup>71</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p45

This reflects the emerging common ground discussed above, emphasising the significance of ethics, intellectualism, communalism and activism. It does stand to reason from a governmental point of view that only those for whom their religious identification has some stated importance to them, who need to be specifically represented in this way. Certainly, it is far easier to simply integrate a recognisable institutionalised group with a recognisable set of ethical-intellectual teachings than it is to integrate an amorphous section of the population defined in purely negative terms. This terminology has been increasingly taken up by IFS as they have increasingly sought to relate to those same groups as in one of their stated aims:

- To support a wider interfaith dialogue with other religion *and belief groups* (emphasis mine)<sup>72</sup>

This shift has proven influential in the interfaith literature. For example, IFS have incorporated the language of ‘religion and belief’ into the training programmes that they offer council staff<sup>73</sup>, which may provide a clue to future developments of the relationship between IFS and the Non-religious. While there are different Non-religious ‘belief’ groups which IFS could relate to, it is particularly the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) with whom they worked. Increasingly IFS have sought to incorporate Humanists into many activities – working directly with its representatives and representing it as fitting into its overall frameworks, though it remains to be seen whether they will formally be incorporated into the organisation. A variety of active Non-religious movements have been established in Scotland from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards but since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century it is Humanism which has emerged as the major institutional and communal

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<sup>72</sup> [www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us) (10/8/15)

<sup>73</sup> IFS *Annual Report* October 2013 – October 2014: p17

Non-religious movement<sup>74</sup>. Humanism can be described as a *human-centred*, non-theistic ethical 'life-stance' which bases its values on human needs, reason and science<sup>75</sup>.



Image: logo of the HSS from *Values*: p46

### Why Humanism?

There are several reasons which can possibly explain why it is particularly Humanists that IFS have sought out. One reason is that they are simply the largest organised Non-religious movement and the most well established. There are other likely reasons however: Humanism is concerned with ethics and provides an intellectual tradition which can be compared to religious traditions. As we shall see Humanists are also specifically modelled on institutionalised religion. These factors taken together most likely explain the prominence of Humanism and specifically the HSS in Scotland.

Relating to institutionalised groups with many members is far easier than relating to individuals who happen to affiliate or identify in a particular way. IFS would be particularly inclined towards this because they are an organisation made up of representative organisations. There is also another reason why IFS may prefer dealing with such groups, *specifically* Non-religious groups in a roundabout way reinforce the importance of *religion*. Apathy and indifference to religion may be far more threatening to IFS' position than even militant secularism. Another important feature of Humanist

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<sup>74</sup> Fowler, J. *Humanism: Beliefs and Practices* (1999) Brighton: Sussex Academic Press: pp25-30, Campbell 1971: pp89-96

<sup>75</sup> Fowler 1999: p11

groups is the fact that they stage life-cycle ceremonies or rites including naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals etc., provided by their own trained and accredited officiants or celebrants<sup>76</sup>. Humanist celebrants have been legally allowed to conduct marriage ceremonies in Scotland since 2005 and by 2010 it was found that they had overtaken the number of Catholic weddings conducted in Scotland<sup>77</sup>. The HSS have also proven quite willing to work with religious groups, the HSS and the Church of Scotland issues a joint call for the religious observances in non-denominational schools to be changed to 'time for reflection'<sup>78</sup>. This almost certainly reflects a shift to the 'religion and belief' discourse.

Recognition of Non-religious 'belief' or 'philosophical' communities make it easier to defend religious rights to the public sphere in an egalitarian society. It also legitimates their position within the Scottish public sphere, encouraging and even promoting Non-religious 'belief groups' access to the public sphere is in their interest. If Non-religious groups attain recognition this can dampen criticism of the privileging of religion. In this way it can be shown, that all communities have access or influence but it is crucial to note that it is *community* influence or access which is promoted. To present religious and Non-religious Scots as equally able to wield this communal influence, they must promote the notion of the Non-religious as an institutionalised community and it is Humanism which particularly fits this mould.

#### IFS, HSS and the Scottish Government

One of the most important documents which can shed light on the developing relationship between IFS, the HSS and the Scottish Government is *Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations Good Practice Guide* (henceforth *Belief in Dialogue*). This was produced by the Scottish Government's Scottish Working Group on Religion and Belief relations which is chaired by Sister Smyth and involves Dr Sier and other IFS

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<sup>76</sup> Fowler 1999: p283

<sup>77</sup> *The Scotsman* "Losing our religion to make Humanist Vows" in *The Scotsman* 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2011

<sup>78</sup> Marshall, C. "Religious education 'can halt violent extremism' in *The Scotsman* 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2014

activists and a representative of the HSS, Ron MacLaren. The document was produced in 2011 and publicly launched at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2011<sup>79</sup>. This has cemented IFS' commitment to working with and representing the Non-religious and the discourse of 'belief' communities as distinct but equivalent from 'religious' or 'faith' ones. As the SNP Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing MSP explains in the introduction:

[T]his is a very particular kind of guidance document for dialogue. It is one which has the ultimate aim of encouraging constructive dialogue to take place between those who hold religious beliefs and those who hold non-religious beliefs. Such dialogue is vital if we are to live harmoniously together as a society<sup>80</sup>.

The common interfaith discursive trope of acknowledging inter-religious violence, prejudice and hatred, while also pointing to religion as motivations to contribute to society is effortlessly extended to include belief communities as harmful or beneficial motivators. The solution to the negative motivations among both groups is also the same: the promotion of dialogue<sup>81</sup>. The document does make sure to challenge the stereotypes that Non-religious 'belief groups' are necessarily anti-religious, as well as the notion that religious groups are necessarily conservative and dogmatic<sup>82</sup>. As above, the mutual acceptance of secularism of Scotland has been defended by noting what secularism is not:

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<sup>79</sup> SIFC August 2011: p2

<sup>80</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p3

<sup>81</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p6

<sup>82</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p48

Secularism is often defined as a doctrine that rejects religion and religious considerations and accepts the complete separation of religion from government<sup>83</sup>.

The desire of IFS to promote and construct Humanists as dialogue partners and representatives of the Non-religious has been hampered by the fact that there is still comparatively little to work with. For example, part of the document lists 'existing dialogue structures' including IFS itself, local interfaith groups and religious-led interfaith structures, but under 'dialogue initiatives by non-religious belief groups' that single dialogue event mentioned by Smyth in *Common Ground* event, held between Catholics and Humanists in London during the visit of Pope Benedict XVI was the only entry<sup>84</sup>. However, in one of the later sections which provides hypothetical examples, ideas and suggestions for interfaith activities, one of the examples used is a local Humanist group organising a visit to a local mosque to 'better understand the Islamic faith.' Most of this concerns practicalities but the desired outcome is that:

The local Humanist group feels they have developed a greater understanding of Islam and that a friendship between the two groups has begun, creating more community harmony and respect<sup>85</sup>.

One can read this as an expression of a desire for Humanist groups to involve themselves more fully with interfaith relations and indeed develop friendly relations with religious groups. It is worth noting though that Humanists were themselves actively involved in compiling this document<sup>86</sup>. The way Humanist contributions have been incorporated into these documents, and the evidence from Non-religious interfaith activists, indicates

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<sup>83</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p7

<sup>84</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: pp10-12

<sup>85</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p24

<sup>86</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p51

that they are mobilising to play a more active role. As with all other groups though, it is those shaped by the interfaith mould into willing dialogue partners and representatives of a tradition and institutions, which take on this role and can be so represented.

The same process of category construction and reinforcement can be discerned with the various religious categories, forging the Non-religion into a concrete group with specific features and even traditions. This is very much in keeping with the way Scottish Christian pluralists helped to actively shape the Scottish religious minority communities of Scotland through interfaith relations. This process of category construction may be conceptual and shaped by IFS' own goals and outlook but it is also informed by the concrete relations they have with Non-religious groups and actors. It is activists of one form or another who predominate in such encounters and thus determine the ways in which groups are represented, which are usually institutionalised. However, these groups cannot claim to speak for the Non-religious in the manner of some institutionalised religions, and the active members of Non-religious groups represent a tiny fraction of the Non-religious<sup>87</sup>.

#### Humanism as Tradition

However, there is evidence that Humanism is being increasingly cast as *the tradition* of the Non-religious and a means through which one must relate to them. The 2011 document *Values in Harmony* (henceforth *Values*), which seeks to demonstrate the shared adherence to the golden rule by 11 religion and belief communities in Scotland<sup>88</sup>, explicitly includes a section contributed by members of the HSS. This document is evidence of the increasing incorporation of the Non-religious into interfaith discourses in Scotland but rather akin to the reification of world religions evident in the document and elsewhere, it presents a common tradition for them: Humanism, which is

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<sup>87</sup> Cheruvallil-Contractor, Hooley, Moore, Purdam and Weller 2013: p185

<sup>88</sup> As Casanova argues, in modern secular societies it is values such as humanity, human rights, the individual, the nation and the political system which forms the common Durkheimian sacred which unites members of differing 'global denominations' into a single moral community Casanova 2011: p65

harmonious with the religious traditions. This attempt to forge the Non-religious into an identifiable and thus relatable group, is evident from the introduction of the document, which also renders them into a ‘community’:

The *Humanist Society of Scotland* is one such representative of wider society, otherwise also known as *Secular* society or the *non-religious community*. Humanists base their moral principles on a rational approach to life, underpinned by shared human values and respect for all others...although, not deriving their moral and ethical position from any “higher authority” such as God, by virtue of their common humanity Humanists share the same values in common with Faith communities that promote good relationships, and naturally this includes the *Golden Rule*<sup>89</sup> (sic).

No less of an authority than the Dalai Lama is invoked to legitimate the claim that Non-religious people have the same ‘spiritual qualities’ including love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness and humility, as the religious<sup>90</sup>. The introduction ends with a series of quotes taken from each of the traditions, the Humanist quote assuring readers that:

*“Humanism is ethical. It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual .....and Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations.”* [Humanism]<sup>91</sup> (sic).

The introduction to the Humanist section explains that the basis of Humanist ethics and worldview as based on reason, ‘shared human values’, respect for persons and the desire to cultivate human flourishing. The position of many Humanists in relation to the IFM expressed in *Common Ground*, is also evident here in both advocating greater representation and cooperation with religious groups, while critiquing perceived religious injustice and privilege: “[t]o this end, humanists aim to co-operate with people

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<sup>89</sup> SIFC *Values*: p10

<sup>90</sup> SIFC *Values*: p11

<sup>91</sup> SIFC *Values*: p12

of all faiths and none, to achieve a caring free society, but deplore any religious adherence that harms or disadvantages others.” The fact that Humanism is more than atheism, is thoroughly ethical and is even developed in a manner like the perceived qualities of religion - as an over-arching ethical and philosophical worldview and communal structure - is also reinforced:

Humanism provides a moral framework for a life free from superstition and supernatural beliefs, and holds that this life is the only one we have. Although...Humanism is more than just a simple denial of religious belief...Humanists demand equal opportunities for all, irrespective of age, disability, race, creed, gender or sexual orientation<sup>92</sup>.

The communal and ritualistic aspects of the Humanist movement are also discussed in relation to rites of passage rituals provided by the HSS and their celebrants, which provide “a meaningful, non-religious way to mark life’s special occasions.” This is followed by a reproduction of the six points of the Humanist Declaration adopted at the Humanist World Congress in 2002, Humanist principles are described as the outcome of a *long tradition* of ‘free thought’. Affirming the ethical characteristics of Humanism and humanity: ‘morality is an intrinsic part of human nature<sup>93</sup>.’ Democracy, human rights and a desired balance between individual freedom should be tempered by social responsibility and are expressed though also ‘not dogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents.’

The ways in which the Humanist movement attempts to provide some of the perceived benefits of religion for Non-religious people is made clear: ‘Humanism . . . is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion’. Humanism is later described in terms somewhat like the world religions model as something universal, ‘Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.’ While the last point

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<sup>92</sup> SIFC *Values*: p46

<sup>93</sup> SIFC *Values*: p47

affirms the importance of creativity and imagination along with science, this is perhaps why the section is closed by an anonymous poem called 'community', reflecting on both the need for human community and the beauty of nature<sup>94</sup>.



World scenes of life today; bees and flowers, child painting, global warming floods, the ozone hole - Courtesy Humanism Photos

Images: photographs from the Humanist section of *Values*: p49

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<sup>94</sup> SIFC *Values*: p48

The last section of *Values* is entitled 'practical applications of *Values in Harmony*' some of which relates to the Non-religious and it is stated with some concern that while 68% of attendees of the focus group meetings on which the document was based, knew that the golden rule was common to religions, only 47% knew that it was common to 'non-Religious people, i.e. secular Humanism.' This section relates to the Non-religious in another sense, two of the five focus groups were made up exclusively of young people, the fact that many had not heard of the golden rule and felt that religion did *not* promote harmony was also noted. For IFS, this shows a need to address 'stereotypes in young people who are not actively following *any* particular Religion or Belief (emphasis in original).' This statement indicates a desire to reach out to the Non-religious but by emphasising the importance of some form of 'belief' group or tradition which can be related to, which can be appealed to as an ethical tradition and to a lesser extent an institution, and which can be used to defend and legitimate religion. Appeals to features of the Humanist tradition and Humanist content can be incorporated into the interfaith repertoire e.g.:

[N]otwithstanding the need to respect *differences*, Religion and Belief communities should be raising awareness of their shared *commonality* (emphasis mine)<sup>95</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview and analysis of the developing relationship between IFS and the Non-religious population who form over a third of the contemporary Scots population and therefore whom IFS found it increasingly necessary to relate to. The Non-religious groups and institutions who are increasingly referred to by the category of 'belief', can be differentiated from everything not specifically defined as 'religious' such as the form of secularism which underpins the Scottish political system. The Non-religious are those who specifically reject religious affiliation and Non-religious groups are those who have cultivated social identities based around their Non-

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<sup>95</sup> SIFC *Values*: p82

religious affiliation such as the Secular-Humanist movement. The desire of IFS and the Scottish Government to ensure that they can claim to represent all sections of Scottish society in relation to religion has necessitated developing increased relations with the Non-religious.

I analysed the developing relationship between IFS and the Non-religious through three categories: increasing engagement, common ground and Humanism as a Belief-Tradition. While the Non-religious population have sometimes been simply represented as the implicit other, against which interfaith activities have taken place, IFS had a particular interest in combating perceived stereotypes and anti-religious sentiment among this population through public engagement. The critique of attempts to block religion from the public sphere do suggest the need to include the previously unrepresented Non-religious population in such endeavours, Non-religious activists having developed a positive identity based on values which are compatible with those of the IFM. Increasing relations between interfaith and 'belief' group activists has led to the cultivation of common values and a similar outlook which valorises activism itself, dialogue, tolerance, inclusivity and the espousal of communitarian, intellectual-ethical worldviews. This development was exemplified by the report of the Common Ground conference held in 2013 in Coatbridge and the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh.

The cultivation of this common ground has helped to facilitate the increasing inclusion of the HSS as a partner in IFS' work with the Scottish Government but Non-religious groups remain somewhat undeveloped, and encouraging this development would serve to legitimate the position of IFS in the Scottish public sphere. The reason that it is specifically Humanism which is represented by IFS is the fact that they are an intellectual-ethical tradition with an institutional structure and common rituals, which can be equated but also differentiated from the world religions represented by IFS. The Non-religious population can not only be seen to be represented through the HSS, but Humanism as a belief-tradition has been reinforced, which can be touted as compatible and supportive of the aims and outlook of IFS and its members. For the Scottish

Government this also ensures that different sections of the population are actively integrated into the one nation of many faiths (and beliefs).



## Chapter 6: 'The country in which we live': IFS and Representations of the Scottish Nation through Cultural Heritage, Secularism and Civic Identity.

### Introduction

In the last chapter, I discussed representations of the 'Non-religious' in the literature of Interfaith Scotland (IFS) and analysed how representations of them have developed. The Non-religious population was often not directly represented or was represented as the other. However, IFS found it increasingly necessary to relate to and represent the Non-religious because of their own emphasis on the importance of dialogue and inclusion. Though they did so according to their own preference for active institutionalised groups, based around intellectual-ethical traditions which led them to work with the Humanist movement. It was shown that dialogue between interfaith and Humanist activists reflected shared assumptions and values regarding the benefits of dialogue, pluralism and institutionalised activism. Furthermore, their work with the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) and representations of Humanism in the literature reflect inclusivity in their construction of Scotland as one nation of many faiths, while distinguishing 'religion' from (Non-religious) 'belief'.

The concern of this thesis is how IFS constructs Scotland as a religiously plural nation through their organisation and literature and how this relies on the reinforcement and internalisation of the distinct social categories of 'religion' and 'nation': **the one nation, many faiths paradigm**. The three previous chapters all focused on the ways in which IFS represents certain sections of the Scottish population as defined by the category of 'religion': Christians (or the religious majority), (non-Christian) religious minorities and the Non-religious. This chapter however will explore how IFS represents Scotland as a whole nation composed of different religions and beliefs. I will analyse IFS' representations of Scotland as a nation through three categories: **cultural heritage, secularism and civic identity**.

Firstly, I will briefly reiterate the concept of 'civic-cultural' nationalism which I have introduced in this thesis along with Michael Billig's concept of 'banal nationalism'. Both conceptual tools are fundamental to my understanding of the three specific concepts used in this chapter to analyse IFS' representations of Scottish National identity. I will then demonstrate the ways in which IFS makes use of elements of Scottish **cultural heritage**, such as traditional music and tartan which have been rendered accessible to, and compatible with multiple social identities. That Scottish cultural heritage has been widened beyond Scottish ethnic heritage and can now be drawn on by persons of differing backgrounds. Scottish cultural heritage for IFS, represents the diverse but nonetheless territorially limited nation and can be combined with different religious and ethnic identities.

This religious pluralisation and the development of the interfaith movement (IFM) in Scotland have been part of the further **secularisation** of the Scottish public sphere, civil society and government. While Scottish politics have long been de facto secular, governmental promotion of religious pluralism as part of civic representation, along with increasing representation of Humanism, moves Scotland even further from its hegemonic Presbyterian past. As explained previously, this is a form of secularism which is inclusive of religion and even incorporates religious groups but one that makes even informal hegemony difficult because of that pluralisation. The overarching national framework has been rendered independent and paramount over all the religious identifications which are included within it.

Lastly, I will discuss the reinforcement of a particular Scottish **civic identity** by IFS. Cultural representations can be distinguished from specific political or civic structures (though they are by no means apolitical). IFS does not simply imagine Scotland as a national community defined by shared cultural symbolism but reinforces a sense of belonging to the Scottish system of governance, including national and local government and a sense of common public space. The diverse communities of Scotland are

encouraged to be active, civically-minded Scots, united by shared values and common participation in the political system. This was particularly evident during the lead up to the 2014 referendum on independence, during which a form of nationalism was evident in which the ultimate sovereignty or right of self-determination of the Scottish population was emphasised without endorsing either side. My classification of the form of nationalism evident from IFS is dependent on two qualifiers: that it is 'civic-cultural' and 'banal' and it is to these categories that I must first turn.

### Civic-Cultural Nationalism

According to a the commonly utilised, two-fold model of nationalism discussed in the theory and method chapter, there are two major forms of nationalism: 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism. Civic nationalism is the form of nationalism associated with most securely established, largely western nation-states: especially France and the USA. Civic nationalism entails that belonging to the national community is associated with or mediated by 'civic' factors such as citizenship, acceptance of common laws, participation in the political system, inhabitation of the national territory and core 'national' values such as liberty, equality etc. In this model, civic national belonging is not based on ancestry or cultural background and is potentially open to anyone inhabiting the national territory, though dependent on acceptance of these common civic structures and values. Civic nationalism can be viewed as compatible with religious and ethno-cultural diversity because the overarching national framework is independent of these factors which also renders it 'secular' according to most scholarly approaches. This is because 'religion' is either relegated to the private sphere or at least does not define the (national) basis of the community<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Habermas 2011, Casanova 2011, Taylor 2011a, Taylor 2011b

The contrary form of nationalism in this model is generally referred to as 'ethnic' but also as 'genealogical' or 'cultural' nationalism<sup>2</sup>, but I will use the former as shorthand. Ethnic nationalism bases national membership on ancestry or membership of the ethnic or cultural group, on behalf of whom nationalists claim political self-determination over a given territory. In this form of nationalism, boundary markers such as language, customs, cultural practices, religion or sometimes descent or race can be significant. This form of nationalism was often associated with minority or former minority groups such as in Eastern Europe who claimed independence from larger empires and because of this, the promotion of their ethnic identity, language and culture were significant parts of their nationalism<sup>3</sup>.

The two-fold model does provide a useful framework for discussing different national claims according to the different factors used to demarcate the nation. However, the two-fold model has two major problems: it can neatly divide forms of nationalism into seemingly 'good' and 'bad' types and as previously argued, the fact that culture permeates all national claims albeit in different forms. The neat identification of 'ethnicity', 'genealogy', 'race' and 'culture' and the separation of 'culture', from 'civic' factors is also questionable. As Anthony Smith pointed out, the fact that civic nationalism was associated with secure, dominant western nation-states often renders the cultural factors bound up with such civic structures invisible even while they are prominent<sup>4</sup>. The French nation-state for example is thoroughly bound up with the French language but also with a distinctive collective memory and a culturally distinct population. I would also point out that even civic structures and symbols are dependent on a cultural context in which they are given meaning, depend on communication, ingrained lifestyles or

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<sup>2</sup> Though the latter can be used to refer to the expression of national belonging through cultural production e.g. literature, poetry, painting etc which will be discussed below. Anthony Cohen identified Scottish cultural nationalism as a general expression of identity independent of particular political programmes, see Cohen 1996: p803

<sup>3</sup> Özkirimli 2010: pp35-37, Smith 1986: pp138-144

<sup>4</sup> Smith 1986: p134

patterns of behaviour and have their own historical or even mythic narratives; all of which are 'cultural'.

The two-fold model of nationalism can be salvaged if it is utilised as an ideal-typical spectrum rather than a hard bifurcation, though the permeation of culture in all national projects should be acknowledged. The spectrum could still be useful because it draws attention to the factors upon which specific national claims are based: those used to demarcate the nation and assert its right to self-determination. It may well be the case that the factors asserted are *primarily* 'civic', related to the territory, the legal system, the structures of governance and universalistic values i.e. justice, fairness, unity in diversity etc., but these are always asserted in a geographically limited context, among a population with a variety of cultural features (whether especially distinctive or not), a shared history or collective memory. These same civic factors are also cultural in the broader sense, along with the symbolism attached to civic institutions and values. However, it is possible that appeals to a distinct national culture or specific parts of it are not overtly expressed. For example, the Scottish National Party (SNP) has for the most part concentrated on political independence as defined by the territory and civic structure of Scotland (though not exclusively).

There are also ethnically or racially exclusive forms of nationalism, in which national identity is dependent on birth or descent such as among white supremacist groups. However, as Frederik Barth has shown, ethnic boundaries can often shift and are usually demarcated by cultural factors such as language, lifestyle, dress etc<sup>5</sup>. An ethnic nationalism not dependent on birth or descent might still encourage cultural uniformity. As mentioned in the theory and method chapter, forms of Israeli nationalism which construct Israel as exclusively Jewish nation would most likely include converts to Judaism. Furthermore, there is no reason to presume that nationalism must always either downplay 'cultural' factors in favour of 'civic' ones or must insist on cultural or

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<sup>5</sup> Barth 1969: pp14-15

ethnic homogeneity. It is important to bear in mind at this point that all forms of nationalism are somewhat exclusive because they are bound to limited territories and populations. It is for this reason that I have introduced 'civic-cultural nationalism', in which both civic and cultural factors are significant and which is not bound to ethno-cultural homogeneity.

The largely civic focus of the SNP and the campaigns for devolution have coexisted in Scotland with forms of cultural nationalism concerned with protecting and asserting the cultural distinctiveness of the nation, which is an attitude found widely among the Scots population<sup>6</sup>. Scotland has not been independent since 1707 and the devolved government and Parliament were not established until 1999. This has meant that collective memory, symbolism (e.g. tartan, kilts, bagpipes) and cultural factors from cuisine, accent and speech, the Scots Gaelic and Lallans Scots languages and distinctive musical and literary traditions (e.g. the poetry of Robert Burns) have been important in maintaining national identity along with autonomous institutions (e.g. the Scots legal system). Civic and cultural expressions of nationalism have most likely helped to reinforce each other and both can be found in the literature of IFS. While I contend that they are part of the same discourse I will sometimes refer to 'cultural' and 'civic' nationalism separately when discussing expressions or elements of that nationalism but would classify the whole as civic-cultural.

The inclusivity and pluralism of IFS would mean that they would be unlikely to reinforce any ethnically exclusive form of nationalism based on descent or even the encouragement of cultural uniformity. There are many features of civic nationalism which would make it more appealing to IFS: it encourages civic engagement, is open to ethno-cultural diversity and espouses universalistic values. However, there are reasons why the expressions of an inclusive but also overt cultural nationalism are significant as well: many of IFS' activities are cultural and emphasise the value of culture-sharing and

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<sup>6</sup> Cohen 1996: p803

distinctive cultural heritage. Appeals to Scottish heritage and culture can not only encourage or include the majority but cultivate a particularly Scottish cultural diversity by rendering these symbols into representations of the diverse nation as a whole. It can also indigenise diverse groups, demonstrate their connections with the nation and their common rights to participate in its civic society and governance. This pluralisation of Scotland and indigenisation of diversity has been rendered more effective by connecting to the idea of the Scots as an 'imagined community'<sup>7</sup>, a whole population rather than simply to the government or civic structure. These claims to wider and deeper connections are symbolised by historic and wider cultural symbolism which are more diffuse than those civic structures.

#### Banal Nationalism

No matter the balance between 'civic', 'ethnic' or 'cultural' factors within a given form of nationalism, it is dependent on invoking and reinforcing a common identity and symbolism. Nationalism is like all other discourses most evident when it is overtly expressed, when the concept of the nation or its symbolic repertoire are consciously and directly invoked to mobilise a national population in support of a political programme related to historic events. However, this kind of conscious and active national mobilisation is not sustainable and cannot always be related directly to major events: the establishment of national independence, crises or conflict etc. The problem that Michael Billig identified is: how does national identity not cease to be significant and life-shaping in the mean-time or more simply how is that people don't 'forget' that they are members of nations<sup>8</sup>?

They do so because they are continuously reminded of the fact that they are members of the nation, that the country in which they live is a 'national' territory and even more significant still: that they live in a world divided into 'nations'. People are

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<sup>7</sup> Anderson 1983: p6

<sup>8</sup> Billig 1995: p8

'reminded' by symbols and references to the nation which reinforce national belonging continuously<sup>9</sup>. Even national commemorations or celebrations cannot achieve this on their own, not every day could be St Andrew's Day or the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, because this level of activity or fervour cannot be sustained. Therefore, Billig argues that most forms of nationalism are not fervent at all but banal, because the symbols and referents which continuously remind one of national belonging, of other nations and nationalism as a political principle have become part of the background environment, often unremarked upon and scarcely noticed<sup>10</sup>.

To paraphrase Billig, the most commonly encountered expression of national belonging is not a flag being fervently waved but lying unnoticed on the pole of a public building. Examples of banal nationalism include the national symbolism and references which proliferate public life in a nation including: national flags or crests, currency, maps of the homeland and national sporting strips. These can include references which indicate the nation: cultural tropes, historic figures, famous buildings, features of the landscape etc. Scotland is steeped in symbols such as these from the national flags (the saltire, lion rampant), the thistle emblem, tartan, kilts, Scottish traditional music including the bagpipe, Scottish traditional dance (Cèilidhs, sword dances etc.) and historic figures (William Wallace, Robert the Bruce). The map of Scotland as a bounded territory is often reproduced, as are features of the natural and historic landscape (especially the mountains of the Highlands, historic castles etc.) and cuisine (Haggis, whisky etc). Scotland may use the UK pound sterling but banks in Scotland have for a long time printed their own notes which are mostly nationally themed and except for the Olympics, Scotland fields its own national sports teams.

National politicians, the media and ordinary people often casually reference the nation using 'small words' or innocuous indicators which implicitly refer to the national

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Billig 1995: pp5-7

community and thereby reinforce it. These terms or deixes refer to the nation or the homeland informally through terms like 'we', 'our' or 'the government', in the latter case because we rarely need to be told whose government it is<sup>11</sup>. Scotland may not be independent now but its autonomous government, civil society and distinctive media - with Scottish based newspapers and Scottish editions of UK-wide papers and broadcasters - which mean that it can be referenced in the same manner. These reinforce Scotland as a political and discursive community and a Scottish sense of 'home' from which broader events are framed. Banal nationalism also reinforces the conception of other nations as distinct and equivalent, underwriting the concept that nations are the primary units of political and social life and the legitimate bases of statehood.

To draw on one of Billig's examples, when 'our' newspapers discuss the tensions between Flemish separatists and the Belgian government, we intuitively understand the claims of the Flemish separatists to desire a separate state because of 'their' cultural-linguistic differences from their Walloon (French speaking) neighbours and that of the Belgian government to maintain the unity of 'their' nation. The example used by Billig refers to the tensions between a larger state and nationalists within an autonomous stateless nation defined by a sense of cultural identity which is analogous to the Scottish case. Banal nationalism is not something exclusive to independent states and arguably cannot be: a sufficient number of the population need to be convinced that they are members of a cultural and political community before nationalism can attain much salience. Scottish national identity is reinforced as part of the social environment of Scotland and may not always be overtly political or supportive of a specific political programme such as independence.

This is why researching non-partisan and seemingly tangential areas of social life such as the interfaith movement (IFM), in relation to national identity can be so revealing. The overt politicisation of Scottish national identity by either independence or

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<sup>11</sup> Billig 1995: p94

unionist supporters depends on a more diffuse internalisation of a broader, banal Scottish nationalism. Scotland forms a distinctive national community from other nations despite its current statelessness, bound to civic institutions and marked by cultural factors and with the right to national self-determination regardless of whether that entails being independent or part of the UK.

The most obvious example of IFS' banal Scottish nationalism are their most superficial and seemingly unremarkable characteristics. The very labelling of the organisation as the 'Scottish' Interfaith Council, then as 'Interfaith Scotland' and their operation and reportage on interfaith events throughout the territory of Scotland reinforce this, as the 'national level' between the 'local' and 'global'<sup>12</sup>. They also reinforce and naturalise the common Scottishness of disparate groups and territories within the bounded territory of Scotland which are rendered distinct from other countries<sup>13</sup>. They organise 'nation-wide' interfaith events such as Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW) in the last week of November, established in 2004<sup>14</sup>, which the newsletter proudly reported had served as a model for similar events in England and Wales<sup>15</sup>, and National Holocaust Memorial Day (NHMD) on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January. All of this reflects their construction of a 'Scottishness' which seeks to be inclusive of everyone living in Scotland. It renders them 'Scottish' and people of 'our country'<sup>16</sup>.

### **Cultural Heritage**

Firstly, I turn to the examination of the use of Scottish cultural heritage to construct an inclusive but common national identity. The trappings of Scottish heritage are perhaps particularly significant for the banal nationalism that Billig describes because they are

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<sup>12</sup> A categorisation frequently repeated in the literature which reinforces the notion that there are distinct 'levels' of interaction, including the national one e.g. SIFC September 2010: p12

<sup>13</sup> E.g. 'Interfaith Scotland youth continues to cover the length and breadth of Scotland with an enthusiastic team of...volunteers from the seven world religions.' IFS Spring 2014: p14

<sup>14</sup> SIFC August 2011: p14, IFS Spring 2015: p17

<sup>15</sup> SIFC March 2010: p2

<sup>16</sup> IFS 2016: p4

part of the general culture of the population but can also be utilised by groups such as IFS because they are not specifically partisan as Anthony Cohen remarked. Though this does not mean that the mobilisation of Scottish cultural heritage is always banal and furthermore I will also demonstrate that civic identity is an important part of the banal, and at times less banal nationalism of IFS.

IFS' broader indications of Scottish national identity, mentioned above, may be effective because of their background banality but they might not be particularly effective if they are always so abstract. More tangible symbolism which represent the nation can be useful which would most commonly consist of visual symbols such as flags. The IFS and prior SIFC logos are both stylised representations of the Saltire, the national flag of Scotland. These logos represent the organisation itself but also identify it with Scotland, as 'Scottish', but such symbolism is dependent on being salient within a cultural context shaped by specific historic associations. In a similar vein, it may be useful to cast the net wider and draw on a broader repertoire of symbols to reference the nation. These are not simply confined to visual symbols such as the Saltire. There are a whole range of embodied and sometimes performative symbols which can be auditory or based on smell, touch or taste: cuisine, dance, music, celebrations. There are countless examples of some of these symbols evident from the literature, many of which have already been mentioned but which will be presented in more details later in this chapter.



Image: Bagpipers clad in Samyé Ling tartan at the opening ceremony of the Kagyu Samyé Dzong Centre in Edinburgh on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 SIFC August 2011: p7

### The Inheritance of St Andrew

Along with more abstract expressions of Scottish identification, these symbols can be used to stress membership of the nation's political system and help to convincingly shape the way the nation is conceived. This is one reason why analysing IFS constructions of Scotland cannot be confined to purely civic factors but must be attuned to their use of elements of Scotland's recognisable cultural heritage and symbolic repertoire. These are used to reference, express belonging to and assert rights within Scottish national discourse. As I discussed in the chapter on IFS and Christianity, the Christian heritage of the nation has been opened to symbolise people of faith or a common religious heritage of Scotland. The combination of national and religious themes is most clearly expressed with the Saltire which symbolises both the country's patron saint, St Andrew and the nation. What could be a symbol of a homogenised identity, fusing ethnic and religious Scottish Christian identity, has instead been used by IFS to represent a religiously plural Scotland.

The fact that the symbol has been thoroughly secularised as primarily the symbol of the nation to the point that it is no longer a specifically religious symbol, does not mean that its religious significance has been lost entirely. As I have argued in previous chapters, stress on the category of 'religion' can be used to take on elements of Scottish Christian heritage, as part of common 'religious' and 'national' heritage: accessible to all but ensuring specific recognition of 'religion'. There have been other ways in which the symbolism of the country's patron saint has been invoked. IFS continue to hold Scottish Inter Faith Week (SIFW) in the week of St Andrew's Day and specifically chose *not* to bring it in to line with the UN's Inter Faith Harmony Week in February<sup>17</sup>. The Religious Leaders Forum (RLF, see below) also supported St Andrew's Day becoming a public

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<sup>17</sup> SIFC February 2011: p9

holiday, though of course reflecting their religious pluralist concerns, as Sister Smyth wrote:

[they] agreed that while it was desirable that Scotland should have a national holiday, it should reflect the faith and multicultural nature of Scottish society. This could be an opportunity for all citizens, of all faiths and none, to learn more of what it means to be Scottish<sup>18</sup>.

SIFW has been described in a manner which evokes the importance of religion, pluralism and Scottish heritage as a means of celebrating “the rich religious heritage and diversity that makes up modern Scotland<sup>19</sup>.” By combining their emphasis on diversity with the use of Scottish cultural heritage they help to bind them together and promote the latter through the former. These are often symbolised at these events through things like ‘Scots-Indian fusion dance<sup>20</sup>’, ‘curry and ceilidh<sup>21</sup>’ events and the multicultural festivals discussed in chapter 4 on IFS and religious minorities. Their promotion of St Andrew’s Day also demonstrates the ways that these symbols are not purely visual but entail activities which embody and reinforce this sense of national unity in diversity through organised activity.

#### New Patterns in an Old Style

Dual belonging and the combination of religious and cultural pluralism and civic-cultural nationalism are often thematically combined but they depend on framing. As discussed in chapter 4, the newsletter replicated Alex Salmond’s comments on a shared initiative between an Aberdeen church and mosque, which *could* have remained a purely local event but was ascribed national significance, as ‘different strands of Scotland’s tartan coming together to celebrate the diversity of our nation and the values we share<sup>22</sup>.’

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<sup>18</sup> ACTS: p19

<sup>19</sup> IFS *Draft Report*: p4

<sup>20</sup> IFS Spring 2014: p2

<sup>21</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p9

<sup>22</sup> SIFC February 2011: p9

Tartan is quite an evocative image, not only because of its strong associations with Scotland but the fact that it involves different coloured lines and patterns which form a whole pattern. As echoed in Salmond's explanation, we 'come together', to celebrate 'diversity' but it is the bounded diversity of 'our nation' to which shared values are ascribed and which we celebrate. It is also noteworthy that Jewish<sup>23</sup>, Islamic<sup>24</sup> and Samyé Ling Buddhist tartans<sup>25</sup> have been created by members of these communities in recent years. In Scotland, this may be an image which is readily reproducible and encountered commonly in the country but this goes some way towards demonstrating the effectiveness of banal cultural symbolism in reinforcing the sense of distinctiveness and heritage of the nation, as part of one's pattern of thought. As the above example shows though, these symbols can be appropriated for different actors in the pursuit of different goals but their national associations mean that they can affect the ways in which the nation is conceived and politicised.

Other common Scottish cultural symbols are also commonly encountered in IFS depictions of interfaith events. Scottish music and dance, including traditional fiddle music<sup>26</sup>, bagpiping<sup>27</sup>, Cèilidhs<sup>28</sup>, the Clàrsach and Gaelic songs<sup>29</sup> are frequently used at interfaith events, though these are often coupled with expressions of minority ethnic heritage and cultural diversity<sup>30</sup>, and sometimes combined as in the aforementioned

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<sup>23</sup> McCall, C. "First official Jewish tartan unveiled" in *The Scotsman* Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2016

<sup>24</sup> [www.islamictartan.com/](http://www.islamictartan.com/) (last accessed 17/5/16)

<sup>25</sup> SIFC August 2011: p7

<sup>26</sup> E.g. SIFC August 2009: p2, IFS Spring 2013: p3

<sup>27</sup> E.g. SIFC *Newsletter January 2009: Issue 15* (2009): Glasgow: SIFC: p3, SIFC September 2010: p9

<sup>28</sup> E.g. SIFC March 2012: p10

<sup>29</sup> E.g. SIFC February 2011: 2

<sup>30</sup> E.g. SIFC February 2011: p3, SIFC February 2011: p8

examples of ‘Scots-Indian fusion dance’ and ‘curry and ceilidh’ events, along with Burns Suppers<sup>31</sup> and frequent uses of the poetry of Robert Burns<sup>32</sup>.



Image: Scottish traditional dancing at Dumfries and Galloway ‘Curry and Ceilidh’ event held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 from IFS Spring 2015: p9

These broader representations and national events may have a wide influence but they are usually enacted at the local level by grassroots volunteers from local groups who appear to play a key role in integrating diverse communities into Scotland as well as the local community through civic and cultural resources. To provide one example: Interfaith Glasgow (IFG) has recently organised a ‘weekend club’ for asylum seekers, refugees and new migrants to Glasgow to relieve their frequent social isolation. Their activities are “designed to help newcomers better understand Scottish culture and feel more at home in Glasgow,” two concerns that are in this phrasing completely equated.

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<sup>31</sup> E.g. IFS 2016: p13, also one of the suggested events for interfaith groups suggested in *Belief in Dialogue*, the outcome of the event is described as “the local faith communities feel a renewed sense of trust and friendship and a sense of their shared identity as citizens of Scotland.” The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: pp21-22

<sup>32</sup> E.g. SIFC March 2010: p9

Their activities are thoroughly pluralist, being made up of interfaith volunteers, relating to the history of immigration to the city but also related to Glasgow and Scotland: practicing ‘Glasgae’ slang, holding a Burns supper complete with piped in haggis and a Cèilidh<sup>33</sup>. This and many of the events described may appear innocuous and limited in impact but when they are taken together as part of a national organisations’ drive to promote close interfaith relations on a Scottish national level, their significance should hopefully become clear. Especially when this is coupled with IFS’ developing relationship with the Scottish Government and the clear repudiation of forms of multiculturalism which do not promote the integration of diverse groups into an overarching society.

#### A Historic Landscape

A sense of being defined by specific bounded history is evident from a booklet written by Sister Smyth’s but which she uses to bolster a pluralist national vision. She argues that from the time of the Celts, Scotland has been diverse and a destination for immigrants who have contributed to it. In this way, the ancient migrations of the peoples who make up the ‘indigenous’ Scots majority are related to the more recent history of migration of minorities<sup>34</sup>. This intangible identity can also be related to the landscape of Scotland itself. This includes examples discussed in previous chapters such as engagements with and representations of Iona but also local churches, which because of their established historicity do not need to be as purposefully ‘Scottified’ as interfaith or religious minority events. Other religious sites such as the Buddhist Samyé Ling Monastery and local places of worship can be embedded together as part of a network, a kind of emerging plural national sacred landscape. This is reinforced or ritually enacted through visits, exchanges and interfaith walks or pilgrimages which bind them together through these actions. Even a series of visits to local places of worship can be framed by the literature in such a

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<sup>33</sup> IFS 2016: p13

<sup>34</sup> ACTS: p3

way as to invest them with 'national' and 'religious' or 'spiritual' significance, as a 'pilgrimage to sacred sites in Scotland'<sup>35</sup>.

Representations of the Scottish landscape have often been used in the interfaith literature, tying an inclusive territorial but nonetheless romantic invocation of Scotland to interfaith activities and concerns. It can express a key interfaith concern, environmentalism<sup>36</sup>. Nonetheless engaging with or using the Scottish landscape has been useful more generally, interfaith groups have organised walks which often take in local religious sites which may help to reinforce a sense of common habitation and relatedness to the natural, built and religious landscape of Scotland<sup>37</sup>. Awe of nature can be used to express a supposed common spirituality among religious groups<sup>38</sup>. Notably, *Reflections on Life* (henceforth *Reflections*) uses artistic depictions of the Scottish landscape in this way<sup>39</sup>. This pluralisation of Scottish cultural symbolism is in a sense secular and is evidence of the shift away from the fusion of Scottish ethnic, national and Protestant (Presbyterian) Christian religious identities.

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<sup>35</sup> SIFC August 2009: p9

<sup>36</sup> E.g. SIFC September 2010: p6, SIFC *Our Sacred Earth*, 2015 SIFW had the theme of 'Care for the Environment' to coincide with a UN climate conference IFS 2016: p6

<sup>37</sup> SIFC August 2009: p8, SIFC August 2011: p12

<sup>38</sup> E.g. At the SFT 'Vigil for the Planet' SIFC March 2010: p3

<sup>39</sup> NHS *Reflections*



Image: painting of the Scottish landscape from *Reflections*: p12

### Secularism

Interfaith Scotland are undeniably committed to promoting the interests of religious groups in Scotland which they continue to distinguish from Non-religious or 'belief' groups<sup>40</sup>. They have been scathing about the perceived threat of 'militant secularism'<sup>41</sup> and the Religious Leaders' Forum (RLF), with which they are closely associated, have called for the recognition of 'religion' in any future Scottish constitution<sup>42</sup>. However, IFS and the RLF are thoroughly secular according to one interpretation of secularism, the model introduced by the philosopher Charles Taylor which was discussed in the theory and method chapter. I will use the RLF to specifically demonstrate the affinity between Taylor and the IFM at the end of this section but first I must unpack some of the issues surrounding the application of the term 'secularism'.

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/> (last accessed 8/8/2016)

<sup>41</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p12

<sup>42</sup> IFS Summer 2014: pp6-7

The militant secularism which is critiqued by IFS can be identified with the French style of secularism laicism (laïcité), which strictly polices religious involvement in the public sphere. As mentioned previously, in Laicism, the state or government institutions are kept strictly separate from religious influences and its most uncompromising interpretations have led to the ban on the wearing of religious garb in state-owned institutions<sup>43</sup>. This has never been the form of secularism practiced in Scotland or the UK, as the country continues to have a national church while Scottish politics and civic institutions remain quite secular. Scotland's secularism is *de facto*, part of the ingrained reality of Scottish politics rather than *de jure* (official) because the Church of Scotland is still the established national religion. Scottish politics, its public sphere and civic institutions are however thoroughly secular because they are separated from any religious identification.

The secularisation of party politics in Scotland is important because political affiliations cut across religious identifications. Politics is based on 'non-religious' (as in not specifically religious) ideologies: social democracy, liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, and are divided over questions of economics, style of governance and indeed the question of independence. Scottish politicians do not generally use religious appeals to gain votes as in countries like the USA but make their appeals as broad as possible, which for the most part involves avoiding questions of religion. The fact that politics and public life are largely separated from religion and are legitimated by other means has encouraged a broader cultural secularism which renders religion a relatively private affair.

This has not entailed the rigid policing of the division between the secular public and political spheres and private religious one, as in France. Religious identities and interests can be publicly expressed, especially in relation to the protection of the right to practice religion. However, this broader cultural secularisation makes it difficult to use

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<sup>43</sup> Bacquet 2015: p114

religion to appeal either to the government or public which have been conditioned to respond to broader appeals. The social philosopher Jürgen Habermas argued that the public sphere was inherently secular. He did revise his arguments to allow for the fact of religious participation but continues to argue that these are inherently doomed to failure unless these are framed in explicitly secular terms<sup>44</sup>. This can be contrasted with the work of Taylor's argument that secularism should not be defined as antithetical to religion but rather as a neutral to any specific worldview, religious or non-religious, aside from the basic 'rules of the game' of secular-pluralist and liberal society. While Taylor admits that there may be issues of intelligibility when certain groups express their perspectives and interests, this is not an issue of religious language, some of which may be quite well understood i.e. Judeo-Christian language in Scotland. The language of government, he acknowledged, must be differentiated because it serves as a neutral arbiter between groups rather than partial to any of them<sup>45</sup>.

This view of secularism would certainly appeal to IFS because it allows for religious participation and even mirrors their inclusion of belief groups as a legitimisation strategy. The work of Taylor has even been referenced by people with whom they work and represent in their literature<sup>46</sup>. It does describe the realities of the post-devolutionary Scottish political system in which groups like IFS, the RLF and the Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) have been able to relate to the government and have been consulted by them. There is an extent to which Scotland fits a more traditional view of secularism in terms of the social environment, if not legally, because religion and politics have been thoroughly separated.

In other ways, Scotland, as particularly exemplified by the development of IFS, is closer to Taylor's model. This is because the increasing public visibility and references to religious diversity have involved an incorporation of different religious groups as an

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<sup>44</sup> Habermas 2011: pp25-27

<sup>45</sup> Taylor 2011b: pp34-35

<sup>46</sup> Xaverian Missionaries *Common Ground*: p37

institutionalised and symbolic part of public life. One example of this is the multi-faith and belief 'time for reflection' a weekly ritual which opens the Scottish Parliament<sup>47</sup>. This arguably, ensures that no one group has a dominant symbolic relationship or has special influence over the nation's parliament but also perhaps reinforces the parliament itself as the common gathering place for diverse communities of the nation and a shared sense of ownership over it. The nation is secular in Taylor's model because it is represented as an overarching community which incorporates all groups but is not defined specifically by any one of them. On the other hand, this is why Anderson regarded the secular nation as a replacement for religion because it rendered the individual part of a larger entity which precedes her birth and will (most likely) continue long after one's death<sup>48</sup> or as Greenfield argues, the secular nation is sacred within modernity and forms the pre-eminent framework of social consciousness<sup>49</sup>.

This institutional and symbolic incorporation of religious diversity into the civic structures of post-devolutionary Scotland has actually reinforced secularism in several respects. It has pushed Scotland further from its hegemonic Christian and specifically Presbyterian past because 'religion' is no longer identified exclusively with the Christian churches. let alone the Church of Scotland specifically. There is no special recognition of a religious group which can claim to represent the nation in a different capacity from that of the government. Further, pluralisation has made it particularly difficult for specific religious agendas to be promoted which could not otherwise be justified in secular political terms. These processes are exemplified by a particular body, the RLF.

#### The Religious Leaders' Forum (RLF)

The RLF is a gathering of official representatives of religious communities in Scotland and IFS forms their secretariat and features them frequently in their newsletter. They are

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<sup>47</sup> See Bonney 2013: pp431-436 and pp436-438

<sup>48</sup> Anderson 1983: pp10-12

<sup>49</sup> Greenfield 1996: pp171-174

useful for both the government and religious leaders in facilitating communication. While the government has reason to care what lay or rank and file members of religious groups think, religious leaders as persons in a position of authority are useful people to develop ties with. There is also evidence that the RLF are viewed by some of their participants as possessing a kind of public remit comparable to that of the government itself, as the Bahá'í representative Allan Forsyth described them as possessing a 'shared commitment to serve Scotland<sup>50</sup>.' Religious leaders are valuable allies for the government however because of their connectedness to their wider community, their potential for influence within that community and potentially the wider public. Allowing leaders access, and consulting them on policy matters can be useful. This is one reason that the RLF routinely meets with important members of the Scottish Government such as the First Minister.

Their diversity and degree to which they represent most religious communities in Scotland provides them with greater authority when they produce consensus statements or policies. However, consensus may be difficult, more because of political than purely theological disagreement (or at least theological in the sense of cosmological doctrines etc). While some institutionalised religions may have official policies such as the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in favour of same-sex marriage<sup>51</sup>, and the Scottish Roman Catholic Church (SRCC) in opposition to it, others such as the Church of Scotland (CS) may be divided internally on LGBT issues<sup>52</sup>.

This diversity itself may stop religious groups from becoming powerful blocks within the public sphere. Many of the values promoted by religious and interfaith groups in the public sphere are in fact not especially 'religious' but general liberal-pluralist values of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, charity, environmentalism and individual rights. The

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<sup>50</sup> SIFC August 2009: p11

<sup>51</sup> See Cranmer, F. "Quakers and the Campaign for Same-Sex Marriage" in Sandberg 2015

<sup>52</sup> Carrell, S. "Gay clergy row threatens mass resignations from Church of Scotland" in *The Guardian* Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011

government would have every reason to promote groups which reinforce values aligning with their interests, just as religious involvement in charitable work helps to tackle the kind of social issues which can threaten their legitimacy.



Image: Scottish Religious Leaders 'raise a cup' for McMillan Cancer Supports 'World's Biggest Coffee Morning' SIFC August 2011: p1

Such consensus statements are often related to these base values or would likely reflect substantial sections of the population, which would merely corroborate evidence from other sources. One of their landmark statements simply argued for the public recognition of religion in any future constitutional settlement in Scotland, because it is ultimately the agenda that they share<sup>53</sup>. Their other activism has included very general, relatively unobjectionable statements: responding to a consultation on St Andrew's Day as a public holiday, calling for the eradication of global poverty, stopping climate change and supporting the Bahá'í community in Iran.

The newsletter stated that the Religious Leaders' Forum (RLF) allows the religious leaders to respond to national and international events, which is certainly true but their very composition discourages these from being partisan. The RLF reinforce pluralist civic

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<sup>53</sup> IFS Summer 2014: pp6-7

nationalism, they 'symbolise the inclusive and dynamic nature of Scottish society<sup>54</sup>.' Their moral authority is dependent on being unifying, meaning that they cannot easily threaten the secular and partisan political sphere. They reflect the predominant distinction between 'religious' and 'secular' spheres, while the former may be accorded some vestigial or perhaps ultimate authority, it is the latter, which is the domain of worldly power<sup>55</sup>.

These facts have been reflected in the Scottish Government's past dealings with religious groups. The SNP government spent a lot of time and effort developing friendly relations with the Scottish Roman Catholic Church, given that Catholics historically were suspicious of the SNP<sup>56</sup>. However, while they tried to maintain good relations with the SRCC, once they had won over Catholic voters, the Catholic leadership could not successfully threaten them on issues such as same-sex marriage because of the difference in values between many lay Catholics and Catholic leaders<sup>57</sup>.

In this sense, the RLF exemplifies a form of secularisation of the Scottish public sphere through pluralism. All groups are given a degree of access and recognition but their very diversity means that not only is religious monopoly difficult to achieve but also the religious messages which are conveyed in the public sphere are those which tend to conform to the predominant liberal-secular value system. The fact that all groups are given some recognition and are not actually inhibited from promoting controversial agendas, means that they cannot plausibly claim to be marginalised. While no one group is inhibited from departing from this interfaith-secular consensus, their effectiveness would be inhibited because religious groups' influence is increasingly limited and they would certainly have no guarantee of governmental support. If they do conform to this

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<sup>54</sup> IFS Spring 2015 p13, IFS 2016: p6

<sup>55</sup> As Tim Fitzgerald would argue, see Fitzgerald 2000

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Ritchie, M. "Comment" in *The Herald* Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2009

<sup>57</sup> E.g. Braiden, G. and Dinwood, R. "Bishop steps up attack on gay marriage" in *The Herald* Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2011, Gordon, T. "The real battleground between the snp and the Catholic Church...gay marriage" in *The Herald* Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2011

consensus though, they may have a greater chance of addressing their concerns if these do not conflict with wider interests, and perhaps frame their concerns in secular-pluralist terms i.e. 'tolerance' etc.

The RLF, IFS and IFM provide a channel through which governments in Scotland can reach, influence and hear the concerns of sections of the population which might include issues related to specific communities. They help to manage communities in a 'hands off' manner, as third parties, which is important because doing so directly is difficult in a liberal-pluralist society. While formal or institutionalised groups are subject to legislation, all members of IFS are charitable bodies and they do not have any obligation to relate to the government but doing so means greater potential influence. The relationship between the parties involved: interfaith groups, specific religious groups and the government, is defined almost entirely by 'soft power'. If power in human social relationships can be defined as the ability of one party to get another party to do something they wouldn't otherwise have done, 'soft power' is the use of influence and persuasion rather than 'hard power' involving some form of coercion or force<sup>58</sup>.

#### Secularism and Governance

IFS can exert soft power or influence over sections of the Scottish population for the government, to maintain the kinds of desired attitudes, behaviours and values which legitimate their governance. This is most evident in *Values in Harmony* with its promotion of the 'golden rule' as intrinsic to all major religion and belief traditions in Scotland. As previously mentioned, the foreword, provided by Fergus Ewing MSP, and the introduction specifically critiqued the 'mosaic' model of multiculturalism which represents communities as separate and self-contained<sup>59</sup>. The values championed by the document may be relatively general, vague and thereby easily inclusive but they

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<sup>58</sup> Heywood 2002: p11, McLean, I. and McMillan, A. (eds.) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* (2003) Oxford: Oxford University Press: pp431-434, Kingdon, J. *Government and Politics in Britain: An Introduction* (1991) Cambridge: Polity Press: p7

<sup>59</sup> SIFC *Values*: pp5-8

reinforce banal civic nationalism as well as the significance of intellectualised and discrete traditions. The fact that these values are widely shared is represented as stemming from these traditions, they can be used to integrate the specific communities and persons to which they are attached *into* Scottish society specifically. It should be stressed that Scottish identity is also moulded in these processes just as religious communities and traditions must be moulded to fit together.

A similar document *Belief in Dialogue* was produced by the Scottish Working Group on Religion and Belief relations formed in 2008 which incorporated representatives of IFS and the HSS under the auspices of the Scottish Government. This quite explicitly goes on to articulate this form of pluralism, where differences should be accepted and welcomed but they must be prevented from undermining an overarching sense of community and society. Here the different 'levels' of community dialogue are invoked, 'local', 'international' and 'national'<sup>60</sup>, society is presented as a thing apart from individuals and communities upon which they may not impose their views, showing that it is also a kind of secularist religious pluralism.

Intercommunal prejudices are presented as akin to diseases affecting the health of the national body which can be alleviated through dialogue<sup>61</sup>. 'All the inhabitants of Scotland are interconnected in a way that makes them interdependent<sup>62</sup>'. This interconnection depends not simply on the wide recognition of common cultural identity or acceptance of secularism but also integration and a sense of active participation in a common civic structure. These themes are evident in Allan Forsyth's statement about the sentiments of the religious leaders 'I have been struck by the common affection that everyone around the table has for the country in which we live and the desire to help make Scotland a better place<sup>63</sup>.'

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<sup>60</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p6

<sup>61</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: pp8-10

<sup>62</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p9

<sup>63</sup> SIFC *Newsletter* August 2009: p11

## Civic Identity

IFS and their related bodies, represent this kind of active and political (if not specifically partisan) sense of belonging to the Scottish nation which fits the civic as well as cultural (though not ethnic) forms of nationalism. Some elements of this civic nationalism are banal but less consistently so than with cultural tropes and symbols or the abstract senses of Scotland or Scottishness, this theme is considerably more active and conscious. Two of IFS' officially stated aims are:

- to provide a forum for different religions to dialogue with one another on matters of religious, national and civic importance...
- to encourage civic engagement by religious communities in Scotland and to support religious equality<sup>64</sup>

The documents produced by SIFC before they became IFS carried the following statement:

We commit ourselves in a spirit of friendship and co-operation to work together as people of faith for a just and inclusive Scotland<sup>65</sup>.

## Representing Scotland and Scots

There is a sense in the literature that IFS represent Scotland as a whole nation within the interfaith world and is thus more akin to the government itself or indeed the Church of Scotland, rather than simply a Scotland-based organisation. For example, IFS represent Scotland through their participation in the Interfaith Network of the United Kingdom (IFNUK)<sup>66</sup> and strikingly at the 'Four Nations Meetings' with interfaith representatives of

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<sup>64</sup> <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/> (last accessed 8/8/2016)

<sup>65</sup> E.g. SIFC March 2012: p1

<sup>66</sup> SIFC March 2012: p3

England, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>67</sup>. These meetings between the four interfaith groups closely mirrors the post-devolutionary governance of the UK with three separate governing bodies for the minority nations and the UK body representing England. These can be read as making a political statement about national consciousness and the recognition of the autonomy and identity of the nations, alongside the promotion of religious diversity.

This representativeness is not simply institutional but has implications for interfaith activists, who are identified as members of the nation of diverse ethno-religious backgrounds. The actors represented in the interfaith literature are generally framed as representatives of a tradition but also, especially in international events, as representatives of 'Scotland', reinforcing both forms of categorisation<sup>68</sup>, when Pramila Kaur attended the 2010 Parliament of World Religions in Melbourne, she writes that 'there were a few Scottish faces at the Parliament including Di Williams the Chaplain at Edinburgh University, Rabbi David Rose and Donald Reid<sup>69</sup>.' This may be inclusive but it always implies a differentiation between Scots and others and while the boundaries distinguishing the two may be more negotiable than they could be, they are still dependent on maintenance.

The above example is a Scottish activist providing an account of a visit to another country but they are probably most evident when visitors to Scotland are depicted interacting with resident communities. For example, when the Inverness and Skye interfaith groups organised a picnic in Whin Park in Inverness they made welcome a tourist couple from Saudi Arabia who had been visiting the park but who had been followed and insulted by drunks during their visit. The newsletter reports that 'the picnic had restored their [the Saudi couple's] faith in Scottish hospitality and friendship<sup>70</sup>!

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<sup>67</sup> IFS September 2012: p3

<sup>68</sup> E.g. SIFC August 2009: p10

<sup>69</sup> SIFC March 2010: p11

<sup>70</sup> SIFC August 2009: p1

What is interesting about the way in which national identity frames these events is the fact that the sense of a territorially defined national community is quite evident despite the significance given to universalistic values of ‘hospitality’ and ‘friendship’. While Scottishness is associated with the values of hospitality and friendship in this statement, the members of the Scottish interfaith groups are still rendered ‘Scottish’ by their inhabitation of Skye and Inverness. Relating to the group has not rendered the visiting Saudis ‘Scottish’ nor the offending drunks ‘un-Scottish’ in any way, demonstrating how association with core values has not undermined the significance of people and place.

#### Interfaith Scotland and Governance

These more diffuse expressions of Scottishness are significant but they are deeply informed by IFS’ vital relationship with the governments of Scotland. SIFC was founded after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and aimed to facilitate relationships between religious communities and this emerging devolved government<sup>71</sup>. The formation and development of IFS can then be described as part of the broader impact of devolution, or even part of the devolutionary process. IFS and the IFM have also developed close relationships with many local governments in Scotland.

The government has charged them with organising NHMD since 2012<sup>72</sup> and SIFW has become an increasingly significant part of the civic calendar as exemplified by the frequent attendance of high ranking politicians. IFS in turn are a group which the government can consult and use to access religious representatives. IFS have also provided training courses and guidelines for government employees, particularly local government and NHS staff, though also at times these are offered to the public<sup>73</sup>. Politicians frequently attend many key interfaith events as guests of honour with speakers, from the First Minister<sup>74</sup> to members of local government such as the Provost

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<sup>71</sup> IFS *Guide*: p5

<sup>72</sup> SIFC March 2012: p8

<sup>73</sup> SIFC August 2011: p3

<sup>74</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p19

of Stirling<sup>75</sup>, and such events are often held in civic spaces from the Scottish Parliament to Falkirk City Chambers<sup>76</sup>. IFS have also recently reinstated a Parliamentary Officer, a Parliamentary newsletter and a Parliamentary section of the general newsletter<sup>77</sup>.

The First Minister called an interfaith summit at her residence in Bute House in 2015 (see photograph in chapter 3) which involved the religious leaders and key representatives of IFS, IFG and EIFA. Maureen Sier saw it as an opportunity to emphasise the work of interfaith and faith groups, to ensure governmental support for their activities. Stating that Scotland is regarded as a 'leader' in interfaith relations, which will "keep our country safe, open and tolerant." Nicola Sturgeon herself commented on the summit, saying:

Interfaith work and the contribution of faith groups is essential in transforming lives and building a stronger, fairer and equal Scotland. By working together with all communities I want to see a safer, stronger and more inclusive society, one which we are all able to fully contribute and benefit from<sup>78</sup>.

IFS have also worked with the police, to organise interfaith events in secondary schools<sup>79</sup> and a youth conference<sup>80</sup>, and Police Scotland utilised their links with IFS to participate in an interfaith conference in New York<sup>81</sup>. This demonstrates the extent to which interfaith events are considered worth investing their time, energy and funds into by different governmental institutions in Scotland. IFS have also worked with NHS Scotland to produce several documents, providing words of comfort for patients represented as the distillation of different religion and belief traditions and a similar document for

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<sup>75</sup> SIFC January 2009: p4

<sup>76</sup> SIFC August 2009: p2

<sup>77</sup> IFS 2016: p5

<sup>78</sup> IFS 2016: p4, *IFS Draft Report*: p10, <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/news-events/news-archive-2015/> (last accessed 10/8/2016)

<sup>79</sup> SIFC August 2009: p8

<sup>80</sup> SIFC August 2011: p11

<sup>81</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p5

expectant mothers<sup>82</sup>. They have also worked on guidelines for dealing with patients of different religious and increasingly belief affiliations<sup>83</sup>.

#### Technicians of Faith

The relationship between the governments of Scotland, the NHS and IFS reveals the degree to which the latter (and the wider IFM in Scotland) have been cast as experts or technical specialists upon which the government and its institutions can rely. This closely matches the philosopher Michael Foucault's notion of 'governmentality', that in societies where governmental legitimacy is dependent on promoting the welfare, happiness and health of their population, governments will increasingly depend on, utilise, even manufacture fields of expertise quite separate from the state and its agencies to manage the population. These domains of expertise form distinct authorities which are clinical or technical in character and include fields such as medicine, law or education, but I would argue that interfaith groups have taken on this role<sup>84</sup>.

One of the suggested interfaith activities in the Scottish Government's *Belief in Dialogue* is the delivery of recognised goals (outcomes) for local and national government, that interfaith groups can agree to deliver or work towards, i.e. raising the prominence of religious minorities<sup>85</sup>. Writing in the newsletter, Anne Davies, a Quaker representative in IFS revealed that members of IFS are often approached for comment on Scottish Parliamentary legislation concerning religion, such as the new religious education curriculum<sup>86</sup>. This 'technical' side of IFS is reflected in their production of guidelines and provision of training courses for local government employees, college and university staff<sup>87</sup> and voluntary sector workers<sup>88</sup>. The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal

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<sup>82</sup> SIFC *A Celebration of New Life*

<sup>83</sup> NHS Scotland *Spiritual Care Matters*

<sup>84</sup> Chamberlain, J.M. "Governmentality" in Arrigo, B.A. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Criminal Justice Ethics* (2014) Thousand Oaks: Sage

<sup>85</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p42

<sup>86</sup> IFS Summer 2013: p11

<sup>87</sup> IFS Summer 2014: p3

<sup>88</sup> IFS *Annual Report 2013-2014*: pp16-17

Services (COPFS), representing the Scottish legal system, worked closely with IFS (then SIFC) in 2010, incorporating them into their Equality Advisory Group to provide advice on the impact of policies, particularly related to hate crimes in different communities. IFS were particularly adamant of the need for COPFS representatives to visit places of worship to discuss these issues with communities directly<sup>89</sup>.

That is not to say that the government values them only for their more technical connections and abilities. Their more general desire to disseminate desired values through documents such as *Reflections*, events such as NHMD and their frequent visits to schools are invaluable<sup>90</sup>. IFS have prepared resources for use by schools and youth groups while their own youth committee organise an annual youth conference<sup>91</sup>. Scottish schools have also shown a desire to draw on IFS to hold their own Interfaith Days and workshops<sup>92</sup> and schools have been frequently involved with the commemoration of NHMD<sup>93</sup>. The most significant example of their technical consultancy role is the Scottish Working Group on Religion and Belief Relations which involves Sister Smyth, Maureen Sier and others and produced *Belief in Dialogue*. The fact that this document, produced by the government, designed for public consumption, to demonstrate how to engage in interfaith relations, prescribing how religious and belief groups, government agencies and individuals should go about setting up or participating in interfaith events and generally engage in dialogue demonstrates the degree to which interfaith is valued by the secular national authorities<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> SIFC February 2011: p11

<sup>90</sup> E.g. IFS Summer 2013: p10, the RLF have also frequently held their meetings in schools and attempt to engage school pupils e.g. IFS Spring 2013: p3, it is also one of the suggested types of events in The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: pp24-25

<sup>91</sup> IFS September 2012: p14, for a list of workshops and resources offered by IFS to various groups see <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/resources-for-school-youth-and-community-groups/> (last accessed 8/8/2016)

<sup>92</sup> IFS Spring 2013: p4

<sup>93</sup> E.g. IFS Spring 2013: p12

<sup>94</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p5

The reason that IFS have attained a degree of authority over the domain of religion (and increasingly belief) in Scotland is their wide membership of different religions and this mean that they can be cast as 'experts on religion' thereby lending that authority to the government's aims and policies. Notably, one of the suggested interfaith events in *Belief in Dialogue* is a public consultation, in this case on religious forms of animal slaughter e.g. Halal or Shohet (kosher) methods<sup>95</sup>. To a very large extent though, this depends on presenting a view of religion which not only accords with the dominant value system but also meets the culturally primed expectations of their audiences. Religions are not only presented as tolerant and pluralist but can be represented as a handful of codified and intellectualised traditions which can be reproduced through an identifiable set of facts: tenets, festivals and inspiring quotes from an identifiable canon. IFS' role as experts in religion is bound by what the government and the public expect 'religion' to be, and therefore what knowledge religion experts can offer them.

A description of *Belief in Dialogue* in the newsletter echoes many of the above themes, stating that dialogue is crucial to avoid 'isolation' and 'hostility', subtly critiquing the 'mosaic' model also critiqued in *Values*, to make 'Scotland a country where all feel at home and all will feel valued for the contribution they have to make to the common good<sup>96</sup>.' Here the nation is represented as 'home', as a shelter under which many communities can share space but to do so they are expected to acknowledge their common 'home' and its common interests. For the Scottish IFM this document can also be viewed as a means of maintaining, expanding or reproducing interfaith groups. Fergus Ewing MSP, stated in the foreword to *Belief in Dialogue*:

I believe in a Scotland built on the basic values of mutual trust, respect and understanding. A Scotland where everyone regardless of background, can live and raise their families in peace and fulfil their potential by contributing what they can

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<sup>95</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p23

<sup>96</sup> SIFC August 2011: p2

to the society that we all share....Dialogue... helps us find common ground...[and] live harmoniously in together as a society<sup>97</sup>.

Similarly, in the introduction Sister Smyth, who is chair of the working group, states that Scotland is a country committed to 'social cohesion, justice and equality.' She also reflects on the renewed sense of national identity and civic engagement which followed the establishment of the Scottish Parliament 'through increased levels of consultation and better access to decision makers.' She emphasises the importance of all people in Scotland being able to have a voice and that dialogue is a means to alleviate 'moments of tension which threaten to disrupt stability and undermine community cohesion'<sup>98</sup>.

The religion and belief traditions are used to legitimate harmony, tolerance, good neighbourliness and pluralism in a manner which does not challenge the government and promotes its broader social aims. All of this also takes place within, the sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit, confines of the civically and culturally defined (if not exclusive) national community, from which and to which communities and individuals have rights and responsibilities. While the government and IFS have influenced each other and have moulded religion and belief groups according to a particular shape, they have consistently emphasised active participation and a sense in which all groups should feel that they have a stake in Scottish society. Similarly, their desire to represent the whole population has not been primarily about individuals but about representing groups and institutions who can be related to through their traditions as the building blocks of a common society.

These themes were evident at the tree planting ceremony (see previous chapters for an explanation of the symbolism of the tree in interfaith circles) outside St Mungo's Museum in 2010, about which the newsletter said:

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<sup>97</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p3

<sup>98</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p4

The tree acts as a reminder to Scotland's diverse faith communities of the need to be unified in their common goal of living and working for the good of Scotland<sup>99</sup>.



Image: tree planted outside St Mungo's Museum in Glasgow in honour of the centenary of the SIFC in SIFC March 2010: p10

### Interfaith Corporatism

The relationship between the governance of Scotland, IFS, the IFM and the religious and belief groups can be described as 'corporatist'. In corporatism, elements of civil society, usually interest groups such as forms of business and organised labour, are incorporated into the structures of the state. This is different from totalitarianism where all institutions are directly controlled by the state, the groups in question are still independent, still self-organising third parties. However, the government forms structures or channels through which they can access these groups and through which they can be accessed. While not under direct governmental control, relating to them is part of the business of governance, with the government understood as a distinct agent. They define the broader legislative framework and the specific channels through which groups may

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<sup>99</sup> SIFC March 2010: p10

influence them, including which groups can use them. In turn, while generally the elected government has an interest in wide representation, the groups involved may help to determine membership of these structures and, as third parties the government can't determine the membership specific groups themselves<sup>100</sup>.

The Scottish government has a means of accessing most of the religious groups through IFS and the RLF and can simply add the HSS to claim to represent all religion and belief communities in Scotland.<sup>101</sup> IFS is used as a means of promoting a form of civic nationalism among religious groups through this participation in the public sphere which reinforces a sense of active, common ownership of the civic structure of Scotland. This common civic identity is reinforced through appeals to common values which are often universalistic but also in certain respects bound, up with the workings of Scottish society and its governance. This sense of Scottish civic values is indicated by things like references to the words inscribed on the mace of the Scottish Parliament: wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity<sup>102</sup>. Condemnation of the infringement of these values is also important to this civic nationalism. As both IFS and the Scottish Government espouse liberal, democratic and pluralistic values, albeit rendered compatible with national identification, highlighting the consequences of their abandonment is important.

#### Scottish Values and National Holocaust Memorial Day (NHMD)

This helps to explain the significance of National Holocaust Memorial Day (NHMD) which is held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January and has been organised in Scotland by IFS since 2012. NHMD commemorates the victims of the holocaust committed by the German Nazi regime during WW2 against the Jews, Roma, homosexuals and others but also links this with other atrocities committed by intolerant and authoritarian regimes including in

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<sup>100</sup> Kingdom 1991: p423, Heywood 2002: pp275-81, Hague, R. and Harrop, M. *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction* (2004) Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan: pp177-178

<sup>101</sup> The Scottish Government *Belief in Dialogue*: p51

<sup>102</sup> E.g. SIFC January 2009: p3

Armenia, Bosnia, Darfur, Cambodia and other locations. These traumatic historical episodes can be used to demonstrate the possible consequences of a lack of harmony, tolerance and commitment to peace. NHMD is used as a form of public education which reinforces the values shared by IFS and the government and frequently involves Scotland's politicians. Notably the 2015 NHMD involved a reception at the Scottish Parliament well attended by politicians, with speeches provided by survivors of the Holocaust and Bosnian war atrocities<sup>103</sup>.



Image: 2014 NHMD speakers Arn Chorn Pond, Dr Alfred Munzer and Dr Rachel Weiman at IFS member's dialogue event in Glasgow in IFS Spring 2014: p21

Unsurprisingly, it is the affected persons and communities and key universalistic values which are foregrounded. Nonetheless the specific territorially bound imagined community of Scotland is implicitly part of the background, and is referenced using specific cultural features or signifiers, which locate these sentiments in the soil of Scotland. Indeed, Scottish culture is specifically invoked in the expression of universalistic and humanitarian civic values. These values can then be ascribed to or at

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<sup>103</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p22

least reinforced in Scotland, when Maureen Sier reflected on her husband Nick Sier's grandparents who were killed in Auschwitz-Berkanau and his mother's flight to the UK, she writes:

we thought of all Nick's murdered relatives and thanked God that Scotland was a country committed to never forgetting, and committed to building a society where bigotry, prejudice, extremism and hatred is constantly challenged<sup>104</sup>.

In another article for the newsletter, the sense in which the nation can perform actions, even to the point of feeling and thinking, are evident: 'Scotland remembered' and it also 'welcomed' survivors of and activists against these atrocities. Furthermore, the simultaneity of the activities and identifications of the imagined community emphasised by Anderson are evident from the multiple local acts of remembrance carried across the nation. In line with Billig's observation of the constant reminders of national belonging, these acts of remembrance must be kept up so that they will never be forgotten but national identification is remembered in a specific way alongside it<sup>105</sup>.

#### Expressions of Sovereignty and the Scottish independence Referendum

Many of the disparate themes of this chapter are evident through IFS representations of the lead up to and aftermath of the referendum on Scottish independence held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2014. Significantly, they adopted the same neutral but engaged position as the major churches, promoting and facilitating debate and using this as a means of addressing community concerns<sup>106</sup>. The reasons for this would seem fairly evident, taking a position among a divided population would divide members, public

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<sup>104</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p21

<sup>105</sup> IFS 2016: p27

<sup>106</sup>Barlow, J. "Scottish independence: Church urges focus on social justice issues" in *The Scotsman* Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2012, Brown, C. "Scottish independence: Episcopal Church debate warning" in *The Scotsman* Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2014, IFS *Annual Report* 2013-2014: p2

participants and readers. Also, like the churches they assumed a kind of moral and supra-political role while upholding the political system and its values.

As Scotland was not and did not become a state, they can best be described as relating to the Scottish wider political system or quasi-state rather than specific movements or parties. Though not possessing any official or constitutional status, they followed the national church in presenting themselves as above day to day politics. As much as they are on the edges of the political system and have been involved in the pragmatic or 'efficient' side of politics, they are here at the fringes of the 'dignified' or symbolic side of politics<sup>107</sup>, space shared with the Kirk and ultimately the Queen. This sense of being above partisan politics was evident from the newsletter's introduction to the leaders' statement on the need to publicly recognise religion in Scotland, 'the statement paints a bigger picture than the binary 'yes' or 'no' of the referendum debate and...will help navigate the relationship between the state and faith communities for future generations<sup>108</sup>.'

The referendum can be, indeed has been, used to construct and reinforce a shared Scottish national identity uniting both sides. This is through the representation of the shared experiences of living in Scotland during the referendum process as a commendable exercise in democracy. It is particularly 'national' because it reinforces belonging not only to the imagined yet limited community of the nation but one which is sovereign. This was exemplified by the personal reflection of Zaf Ziza, a Scots-Pakistani interfaith activist who wrote about visiting a church in Edinburgh the day before the referendum. He uses this personal reflection to not only encourage readers to visit different places of worship but writes about his encounter with an old couple in the church with whom he discussed the referendum:

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<sup>107</sup> Walter Bagehot introduced the distinction between 'dignified' and 'efficient' aspects of governance referenced in Hague and Harrop 2004: p280

<sup>108</sup> IFS Summer 2014: p6

as we talked about the Referendum I felt a sense of shared emotion. We all felt the gravity of our place in Scottish society, on the eve of such a huge decision...{they} spoke passionately about their history, their political choices, and their belief in a fairer and more equal society<sup>109</sup>.

Before the referendum IFS acted to relate information about the referendum and covered aspects of the campaigning, including public debates, organised by local interfaith groups<sup>110</sup> and the release of the government's white paper on the referendum<sup>111</sup>. Roseanna Cunningham, the SNP minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs was accorded space within the newsletter to outline the proposed referendum and provided means of replying as part of a public consultation in a section entitled, 'Your Scotland, Your referendum:'

We are considering our future in a peaceful and inclusive way to find the best system of government for the people of Scotland to bring fairness and prosperity...the referendum on independence will allow the people of Scotland the chance to shape their future, the Scottish Government is determined to listen to society as a whole....

We want to know your views and now is the time to get involved and make your opinions heard. Faith groups are such a vital and meaningful part of civic society and I urge all readers...to join the discussion, put forward your vision and help build a better Scotland...<sup>112</sup>.

IFS held a series of meetings referred to as 'values and visions for the future of Scotland' and emphasised the shared vision of Scotland rooted in the values inscribed on its

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<sup>109</sup> IFS Spring 2015: p27

<sup>110</sup> E.g. IFS Spring 2014: p8

<sup>111</sup> IFS Spring 2014: p6

<sup>112</sup> SIFC March 2012: p11

Parliamentary mace, ascribed to both sides and people of 'all faiths and none'. This was reflected in a statement from an IFS members meeting:

Those gathered stated that they appreciated Scotland's commitment to human rights, egalitarianism and freedom of religion and belief. It was felt that Scotland is a self-reflective nation which welcomes people and celebrates diversity. Indeed, it was remarked that people from different ethnic backgrounds often feel very positive about calling themselves 'Scottish'<sup>113</sup>.

An event held in the Conforti Institute involved a group of artists called 'the bus party', also using the name 'listening lugs' which involved holding public dialogue around the question 'what kind of Scotland do you want?' Many established themes or tropes were evident from this meeting, Scottish culture was signified by pipe music and groups' use of Lallans, stories and poems by the artists, with a more academic dimension provided by the theologian Willie Storrar. The stipulated civic values of the imagined community were also clearly drawn out in the account of the event, participants were invited to write their hopes and dreams for the future of Scotland (proof that civic nationalism is not necessarily focused on legalism, practical or institutional features) on a large scroll which had been used by participants across the nation.

Storrar noted that these did not involve hopes for a wealthier Scotland but rather fairer, egalitarian and environmentalist hopes. The artists all contributed pieces reflecting on Scotland as 'home' and it should also be noted that many of the invited participants were from a local high school<sup>114</sup>. The themes of the civic values ascribed to Scotland, unsurprisingly, involved inclusiveness but Scottish national identity was evident. The dissemination of key values such as compassion and inclusivity were

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<sup>113</sup> Though the statement critiqued perceived individualistic, materialistic, 'extreme secularism' and the ridicule of religion IFS Summer 2013: p2

<sup>114</sup> IFS Summer 2014: pp4-5

celebrated, accompanied by ideas of Scotland as 'home', associated with feelings of fondness, though the need to tackle certain social injustices was also recognised. It should also be noted that representations of the 20<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games and related events held in Glasgow 2014 expressed a similar combination of cultural, civic and interfaith themes as described in previous chapters<sup>115</sup>. From this it is possible to see the constructions of a form of civic-cultural nationalism which transcends separatist or unionist forms of Scottish nationalism, which is internally diverse but also has a shared identity and the right to self-determination.

### **Conclusion**

In representing Scotland as one nation of many faiths, Interfaith Scotland have had to represent a sense of the nation as a unit along with segments of that population. As they have the political goal of reinforcing this conception of Scotland and securing the recognition of diverse religious groups within Scottish public life, they have inevitably engaged in a form of nationalism. As I have shown, while this nationalism is not ethnically exclusive or associated with cultural homogeneity, it nonetheless is bound to the conception of these universalistic and pluralistic conceptions within a bounded territory and among a specific population.

Interfaith Scotland may have created more conscious representations of their vision of Scotland but has often involved the reproduction of a banal nationalism which implicitly and somewhat unconsciously reproduces the sense of Scotland as a nation among others and as a bounded society. That the 'national' level is one within which interfaith activists must operate, help diverse communities to adapt to, which does differentiate Scots from non-Scots and which renders IFS into representatives of Scotland. The form of nationalism reproduced by IFS is cultural as well as civic because cultural symbolism has been useful in representing the whole nation into which diverse communities have been integrated as 'strands of Scotland's tartan'. Representations of

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<sup>115</sup> IFS Summer 2014: pp10-11

Scottish heritage and traditional symbolism is significant to IFS because it reinforces a common national identity and making use of these national symbols has been an important means of widening that identity beyond its ethnically and religiously homogenous origins, widening this heritage beyond an ethnically or religiously exclusive one.

This increased inclusivity and pluralisation of Scottish public life has made it more secular and the religious groups represented by IFS have been encouraged to adapt to this as each contributing to a common society in which they have a common stake. The overarching society into which they fit, is secular because the partisan politics which IFS has largely avoided are separated from religious identification and because the political and civic structures of the society are not defined by any one group. Unlike French-style Laicism, the system has allowed for a close relationship between religious and belief groups to develop with the government through the emphasis on consulting with those groups and symbolically recognising within Scottish civil society. However, the values espoused by IFS and the very pluralist structure help to guarantee the secularity of the system while allowing for some level of recognition and access for religious groups.

However, religious groups have been encouraged to be active citizens of Scotland, to participate in the political system and to decide on its future. The neutral attitude of IFS to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence demonstrated the extent to which these universalistic and pluralistic values have been coupled with a civic-cultural Scottish nationalism. Representatives of the many faiths have been encouraged to identify strongly with their bounded nation and its paramount right to self-determination.



## **Chapter 7: Conclusion – One Nation, Many Faiths: Representations of Religious Pluralism and National Identity in the Scottish Interfaith Literature**

In this final chapter I will draw out some of the most significant contentions and contributions emerging from my analysis of Interfaith Scotland (IFS) and the Scottish interfaith literature. First, I will provide a brief overview of the core argument made in this thesis: that IFS can be characterised by a structured and limited pluralism as well as a civic-cultural and secular nationalism.

It will also be necessary to link the more in-depth analysis offered throughout the chapters to the broader etic definitions of the core concepts used to analyse IFS: 'religion', 'nationalism' and 'secularity' which were introduced in the theory and method chapter. This is especially important because my use of these concepts has contrasted with the approach of IFS in particular ways but also provides a distinctive analytical purchase on the data. Once these elements of my approach have been elucidated I will briefly summarise how the argument has been successfully demonstrated throughout the chapters of the thesis. I will bring this chapter to a close with a discussion of the particular insights and achievements of this work and outline some areas for further research in this field.

### **The Limitations of Pluralism and the Pervasiveness of Nationalism**

The core argument of the thesis was that Interfaith Scotland promotes a structured and limited pluralism through its organisation and literature, which can be equated with the world religions paradigm (WRP) and which has been rendered compatible with a civic-cultural and secular nationalism. As discussed, the world religions paradigm recognises and promotes certain forms of 'religion' over others but also has been used as a mould through which actors, groups and traditions can be re-shaped in order to fit into the interfaith sphere.

IFS can be described as both 'secular' and 'nationalist' because it recognises and reinforces the Scottish 'nation' as the primarily authoritative political identity and social framework which incorporates but does not assimilate all other social identities within Scotland. It was shown that IFS drew on a range of 'civic' and 'cultural' repertoires or resources to achieve this but also that it did so, at least partially, in order to carve out and defend a place for diverse religious groups within that public sphere but according to their structured and limited religious pluralism.

This recognition is all the more significant because Scotland is not and did not become an independent state. The autonomous Scottish Government and political sphere around it are not formally sovereign. The attitude expressed by IFS and other actors in the Scottish public sphere was characterised as reinforcing a sense of the 'ultimate sovereignty' of Scottish democracy. Nonetheless, this ethos of ultimate sovereignty was not connected to any overt political programme such as the desire for independence but could hardly be described as apolitical. Indeed, this widespread recognition of the Scottish nation, as expressed through non-partisan actors and institutions such as IFS, reinforced the common foundations upon which differing national political agendas are constructed.

Lastly, IFS' representations of the relationship between religious pluralism and national identity in Scotland was also shown to be thoroughly 'secular'. This is because national belonging and right of participation in the Scottish public sphere were thoroughly differentiated from any specific religious identification. In other words, the public sphere is defined by common nationality rather than any of the plurality of recognised religious identifications. IFS certainly depicted religious identification as a matter of great personal, communal and national significance and promoted its public expression as a positive influence on national life. However, this was never represented as a right to dominate public life - a charge interfaith activists have proven to be quite sensitive to.

It has been argued in this thesis, particularly in the final chapter, that in fact IFS' construction of religious pluralism mitigates against any possibility of such religious domination of Scottish public life. One reason is that close collaboration between such different groups and actors by its very nature discourages contentious or controversial actions. The necessity of working with agents defined by different religious identifications has also discouraged the participation of chauvinistic representatives of communities who might desire to make such impositions. Furthermore, working at the Scottish 'national' level and liaising with the Scottish Government has meant that to a large extent, the thing that they have most in common is a relationship with Scotland.

Lastly, the representation of religious pluralism through the world religions paradigm has further reinforced this secularity. This is because 'religions' (and 'beliefs') have been constructed as globe-spanning primarily intellectual, ethical and textual traditions. These traditions have been represented as relatively acontextual, ancient or timeless traditions which form part of an individual's personal 'faith'. These faiths do not compete with the more specific but directly politically authoritative claims of the nation as much as they can inspire one to contribute to it.

### **The Use of Definition and the 'Etic' Approach**

In the introduction it was strongly asserted that a key factor differentiating my approach from previous perspectives on interfaith is that it is distinct from that of the proponents of the interfaith movement (IFM) itself. This external perspective alongside the application of critical and social scientific tools and the use of data from Interfaith Scotland to engage with wider debates in these fields is one of the key contributions of this thesis to scholarship.

I contended in the theory and method chapter that this critical distance was achieved in part by maintaining a visible distinction between my own 'etic' understanding of the core concepts of 'religion', 'nation' and 'secular' from its own 'emic' perspective. This distinction between my own perspectives and those of the agents under study has not

been an attempt to 'correct' or 'replace' their understanding. The advantage of this approach has meant that it has been easier to analyse this specific case in terms of wider scholarly models such as the literature on the WRP. It has also been important to place these core categories and the phenomena which they categorise within long historical processes much wider than the Scottish interfaith context.

I refer to the processes whereby these protean and originally western folk-categories were imposed, adopted and adapted throughout the world (including in the west itself) and then to an extent imported back to Scotland through immigration and religious diversification. It was acknowledged that it would have been possible to discuss these concepts critically through an analysis of their emic employment as long as historical processes and power dynamics were attended to.

Nevertheless, it was asserted that the use of etic definitions can facilitate comparative analysis and provide a distinctive angle on the power and representation of groups. Etic definitions can be used to highlight the ways in which emic categories are constructed in particular cases, as well as the limited and contingent outcomes or choices made in the representation of groups through social categories. Furthermore, each of the specific social categories used in the thesis have benefited from similarly broad approaches which are differentiable from the perspectives of the agents in question. This similar approach has made it easier to relate these distinctive concepts to each other i.e. religion and nationalism. Furthermore, outlining my own perspective and assumptions about these concepts makes these visible to the reader and avoids confusion with the perspective of IFS.

As discussed in the theory and method chapter, 'nations' and 'nationalism' (and concepts defined in contrast to them) in the contemporary sense emerged through increasing state centralisation and states' legitimation as representatives of their citizens, preferably defined as a cohesive body of people. This led both to the attempt to

consolidate 'nation-states' and a desire for autonomy or independence for those populations who were not considered to be represented by their state.

I maintained that the popular identification of 'nationalism' with xenophobia was unhelpful and that a broader approach rooted in the academic literature on nationalism was needed to analyse the ideological relationship between IFS and Scottish national identity. Interfaith Scotland certainly does not identify itself as 'nationalist' and therefore an emic approach would make this analysis difficult, but IFS does reinforce Scottish national identity in a manner that could not be viewed as genuinely apolitical.

To outline this broader approach, I turned to Elie Kedourie's definition that 'nationalism' was an ideology which divided the world into 'nations' and which identified them as the legitimate basis of political life. I coupled this with Benedict Anderson's definition of 'nations' as 'imagined communities' which were specifically imagined as both (territorially) bounded and sovereign. I did find it necessary to specify that as long as a community was represented as ultimately sovereign or possessing the right to self-determination, then they could be defined as nations. I considered this a necessary means of outlining the common ideological basis for most Scots with differing positions on independence and also 'neutral' parties such as IFS which nonetheless converge on the conception of Scotland as a bounded nation with ultimate sovereignty or the right to self-determination.

Similarly, the crucial binary of 'religion' and the 'secular' emerged in the same processes which produced modern nationalism. The political authority of the state, the production of knowledge through science and even cultural identities were increasingly categorised as 'secular'. This meant that they were increasingly differentiated or even forcibly separated from 'religion' despite the fact that it was often a relatively arbitrary distinction. This was a distinction which was either new to many societies or even in the case of the west, was formerly reversed in that 'religion' was considered more fundamental than the 'secular'.

This distinction was defined by Charles Taylor as between the 'transcendent' and 'immanent' frames. The former ('religions') indicated those worldviews and practices rooted in claims beyond the empirical and material and the latter ('secular') those practices, institutions and worldviews limited to the scope of the material and the empirical. This relatively novel distinction meant that 'religions' were represented as personal and additional rather than integral to social and political life. It was also in this same period that seemingly parallel systems and traditions to European Christianity were increasingly viewed in comparison with it.

My own approach to defining 'religion' acknowledges these historical processes and attempts to use them to produce an analytical and comparative lens on particular social groups or contexts. The definition of religion was: 'beliefs and practices based around postulated extra-natural beings, forces and realms emerging and transmitted in particular social contexts.' Like my approach to nations and nationalism, this is a relatively broad definition which owes a debt to the 'minimal' definition first proposed by E.B. Tylor. It is also Neo-Tylorian in a different sense because it refuses to stipulate the form or level of social or personal significance that these beliefs and practices are given.

This etic approach acknowledges the manner in which religions have been contested in modernity in contrast to or at least in addition to contemporary 'secular', 'material' or 'scientific' worldviews. This broader definition makes my own assumptions clear along with my particular theoretical and comparative interests. It also provides a particular angle on the ways in which particular identities, social groups and movements are constructed in response to the emergence of the contrast between 'religion' and 'secular'. It also allows for an exploration of the particular characteristics or stipulations which have been built upon this basic distinction in emic discourses as well as how identities have been constructed in contrast to 'religion' (i.e. 'Non-religious' identities). This definition could be used to explore subsequent relations effected by this distinction:

how is it maintained, bridged, contested or transcended. In order to address questions such as this I argue that a distinctive analytical framework lens focused on this distinction can be very useful as long as it allows for the recognition of distinctive emic perspectives as well.

My approach has been particularly useful in the case of Interfaith Scotland because it highlights the choices, developments and relationships effected by this binary in a particular way. As I have consistently demonstrated, IFS does not include or acknowledge many of the countless 'extra-natural' worldviews, practices and representatives which could potentially be included as part of 'religion' in Scotland. Though it goes without saying that its choice to avoid including social practices such as football in the category of 'religion' also has consequences.

My definition draws attention to the fact that IFS excludes or ignores many groups or worldviews in their construction of 'religion' despite possessing similar features to those which are included (i.e. 'the world religions'). The identifiable similarity between many of the included and excluded is that these are groups, practices and worldviews related to 'extra-natural' claims positioned outside the 'immanent frame'. This is a distinct binary from 'religion' and 'Non-religion' or the 'secular' (see chapters 2 and 5 for a lengthy discussion of these terms). Explaining this other distinction has been important to this thesis: teasing out IFS' understanding of 'religion' from the literature and analysing it through the WRP. This focus has also helped to provide a firmly critical and social scientific analysis of IFS by revealing its representation of 'religion' to be historically contingent as well as dependent on its choices and assumptions (alongside its more basic acceptance of the 'religion' and 'secular' distinction).

Undeniably many of these 'alternative' forms of religion would be difficult to represent due to small numbers and non-institutional characteristics. I have consistently shown that IFS reinforces a particular construction of religion rooted in the WRP even among those groups who are capable and willing to participate. Their particular institutional,

global, ethical-philosophical and textual approach is one which is continuously reinforced among the included groups as well as among the general public.

This definition was also used to integrate rather than separate the analysis of 'Non-religion' (especially their work with the Humanist Society Scotland) from that of 'religion', as my chapter on IFS and the Non-religious population demonstrated. I used this definition to highlight how some groups construct identities, worldviews and practices in contrast to 'religion' and espouse 'naturalist', 'materialist' or 'immanent' worldviews. Nonetheless, while both IFS and HSS recognise and reinforce this basic distinction they also construct religious/Non-religious in the same specific and contingent manner. 'Religion' and 'belief' are both represented institutionally and textually as broad intellectual-ethical 'life-stances' which are of fundamental social and personal significance which also chimed with the agenda of the national government. This was particularly evident from the 'Common Ground' conference in which representatives of both condemned 'personal spirituality' and apathy alongside condemnations of inter-group hostility. This does not mean that IFS and its allies in the HSS and the government necessarily represent the attitudes and lifestyles of the Scots population ('religious' or 'Non-religious') to religious identification which may not take this form or attain this kind of significance.

### **How the Argument was Demonstrated**

Throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis I made use of the regular newsletter which prints accounts of interfaith events across Scotland and provides a perspective from the 'local level' alongside the 'national' one. This was coupled with evidence taken from those documents such as *Values in Harmony* which are intended for public circulation to educate the Scottish public about religion and interfaith. These sources and the structure of the organisation itself have been used to demonstrate how IFS reinforces a structured and limited religious pluralism defined by the WRP coupled with a secular civic-cultural nationalism.

It was consistently shown that IFS favours institutional forms of religion; indeed it is exclusively composed of institutionalised groups. It affords religious leadership a disproportionate level of influence through the Religious Leaders Forum (RLF) and enshrines a distinction between the major recognised world religions ('founding members') and those which have not attained this recognition ('associate members') with the former being represented on the governing board and the latter lacking such representation.

The structure of the organisation groups members according to broader world traditions and appoints a common representative for the members classified according to one of the seven recognised world traditions. This reliance on the WRP was shown to have been further reinforced and further disseminated by the approach of the educational documents which are divided up into sections dedicated to these global traditions.

These structural and textual features both serve to reinforce the conception of these broad traditions as equivalent as well as the notion that the common characteristics of different sub-groups trump distinctions within the tradition. Such distinctions were glossed over in the texts if they are acknowledged at all. It was also thoroughly demonstrated that there is a consistent emphasis on the commonality and putative ethical core of 'religion' especially represented by the 'golden rule'. In these interfaith discourses, religious differences are bridged through consistent cooperation but legitimated by references to these common features.

The religious traditions are represented as intellectual bodies which can be distilled into a common essence through the selective presentation of texts which were favoured over accounts of specific communities. As I argued in the chapter on IFS and religious minorities, the often highly particular ethnic associations of religious traditions are somewhat downplayed. Ethnic diversity is welcomed and even utilised to express religious traditions but it is used to support rather than disrupt these more universalistic perspectives on religion. This is not merely a top-down process however; these

perspectives are echoed on the ground by the activities of interfaith activists in their work with the Scottish public. This is especially clear with discussions of the 'essence' of Hinduism, invitations to apply the 'insights' of Buddhism and the articulations of the 'true' character of Islam. It is revealing that even traditions outside the traditional WRP such as Paganism are represented in the same way.

IFS can be shown to promote a civic and cultural nationalism because the very organisation and its literature continuously reinforce a sense of belonging to Scotland as an overarching political community. They champion the right of religious groups to access the public sphere but thereby help to disseminate Scottish national identity and encourage diverse religious groups to imagine themselves part of a Scottish national community. This is rendered particularly salient by the fact that Scotland is not an independent state but also by the establishment of the devolved national government. IFS was explicitly founded to respond to the post-devolutionary context and to maintain the rights of religious groups within an increasingly autonomous and nationally conscious Scotland.

The coverage of interfaith events demonstrated the consistent use of Scottish cultural symbolism, close relationships with members of Scottish civic institutions and Scottish politicians along with continuous references to Scotland, 'our country' and 'our nation'. These can be viewed as encouraging identification and integration but not assimilation, into a religiously pluralist Scottish nationalism. Interfaith activists stressed the importance of contributing to the welfare of Scotland and the responsibility to be active members of a common society. This was explicitly contrasted with negative portrayals of mosaic multiculturalism - the conception that different groups should be self-contained.

The consistent invocation of charitable work by religious organisations was used as a means of defending the reputation of 'religion' as a whole but this charitable work was also conducted against a Scottish national backdrop and could also be offered as an

example of the engagement of religious groups with wider Scottish society. These themes were thrown into sharp relief during the lead up to the referendum on Scottish independence in 2014. Though IFS did not endorse either position on the question of independence, it represented the referendum as a common 'national moment', something which religious groups should be engaged with. The newsletter discussed the initial white paper on the referendum, as well as facilitated and reported on debates.

A consistent theme of IFS' representation of the referendum was the desire for a 'better Scotland' as in more just and fair. Alongside these concerns, the conception of Scotland as a nation with a right to national self-determination was consistently reinforced without suggesting how the nation should decide. This also demonstrates the manner in which IFS' representation of Scottish nationalism is also ultimately secular. This ultimate sovereignty and right to self-determination is not associated with any particular religious affiliation but is something vested in religiously diverse Scots through their common national identity.

#### **What Insights have been Achieved**

This thesis has demonstrated how much interfaith as a field of religious and social activity has lacked the critical gaze as well as social contextualisation. It has been demonstrated that religious pluralism and collaboration of religious groups through interfaith groups cannot entirely be taken at face value. Rather, interfaith groups have produced a structured and limited pluralism which reflects uneven power relations as well as particular assumptions about religions and how they should be represented.

The thesis has shown that the working of interfaith groups in a specific national context and certainly at the national level with national governments, cannot be viewed as apolitical or lacking in specific ideological effects. It was continuously asserted that IFS exemplifies and contributes to the wider dissemination, internationalisation and reproduction of the political significance of the 'nation', alongside the IFS construction of 'religion'.

IFS has also been shown to be dependent on a particular view of the relationship between these contingent historical categories. 'Religion' and 'national' domains are constructed as discrete and non-competitive forms of belonging and authority. This entails that religions can safely enter the Scottish public sphere but also confirms a secular view that the public sphere must be differentiated from religion and belief groups even while allowing them to work within it. This confirms the authority of the secular national, even if not independent, Scottish political sphere.

The interfaith movement still remains relatively unexplored from a critical and social scientific perspective. My own approach has been textual and concerned with the national framework, but with regards to the Scottish interfaith movement, more comparative research such as ethnographies of local groups will become crucial. As my research period had a particular cut off point early in 2016 my research has been defined by the impact of the lead up to the referendum on independence and its aftermath. This did not allow me to gauge the impact of later events or the current political climate such as the increasing growth of far-right nationalism across Europe and the impact of the vote to withdraw from the European Union ('Brexit').

Interfaith Scotland specifically began to expand its use of social media after the period of research which will affect its relationship with the Scottish public significantly. The impact of this expansion should be addressed in the future. In general, the need for more critical research on the interfaith movement in a variety of social settings (national and otherwise) is stark. It is hoped that this is a field which will blossom in the future and when it does it will provide an invaluable perspective on the manner in which 'religion' is represented and socialised in the contemporary world.









## **Appendix: Current Membership of Interfaith Scotland**<sup>1</sup>

### **Board of Interfaith Scotland**

Larry Blance – Buddhist and Chair  
Jeremy Fox – Bahá'í Community  
Liaquat Ali – Muslim  
Alan Kay – Jewish  
Inderjit Singh – Sikh  
Madhu Jain – Hindu  
Alan Anderson – Christian  
Marlene Finlayson – local interfaith groups  
Trishna Singh – women's interfaith organisation

### **'Founding' Members**

Bahá'í  
Bahá'í Council of Scotland

#### **Buddhist**

Kagyú Samyé Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre  
Triratna Buddhist Community (Scotland)

#### **Christian**

Church of Scotland  
Scottish Roman Catholic Church  
United Reformed Church: Synod of Scotland  
Salvation Army Scotland  
Scottish Episcopal Church  
Methodist Church in Scotland  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
The Iona Community

#### **Hindu**

The Hindu Temple of Scotland, South Indian Cultural Centre  
Glasgow Hindu Mandir

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<sup>1</sup> Please see <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/about-us/members/> (last accessed 25/9/17). Please also note that membership and nomenclature may have shifted somewhat from the time of writing and also that IFS has developed informal relations with non-member groups.

## Jewish

Giffnock and Newlands Hebrew Congregation  
Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation  
Glasgow Jewish Representative Council  
Scottish Council of Synagogues  
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

## Muslim

Muslim Council of Scotland  
Muslim House  
Islamic Society of Britain  
Scottish Islamic and Cultural Centre  
UK Islamic Mission  
Pakistan Association Edinburgh and East of Scotland  
Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society  
Ahl Al Bait Society<sup>2</sup>

## Sikh

Glasgow Gurdwara Council  
Sikh Sanjog  
Ramgarhia Association of Glasgow, Guru Nanak Sikh Temple  
Central Gurdwara Singh Sabha  
Scottish Sikh Women's Association

### **'Associate' Members**

#### Religious groups

Scottish Unitarian Association  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Brahma Kumaris Edinburgh<sup>3</sup>  
Family Federation for World Peace and Unification  
Pagan Federation (Scotland)

#### Local Interfaith Groups

Shetland Inter Faith Group

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<sup>2</sup> Spellings divergent, please note that this is not a typo

<sup>3</sup> Brahma Kumaris Scotland at the time of writing and as represented in the documents discussed in this thesis.

Dundee Inter Faith Association  
Glasgow Sharing of Faiths  
Edinburgh Inter Faith Association  
Inverness Interfaith Group

**Bilateral Groups**

Council of Christians and Jews, West of Scotland Branch

**Religious Educational Groups**

Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education

Religious Education Movement in Scotland

Al Maktoum College of Higher Education



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Interfaith Scotland (IFS) - <http://www.interfaithscotland.org>

The Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom (IFNUK) - [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

Interfaith Glasgow (IFG) - [www.interfaithglasgow.org](http://www.interfaithglasgow.org)

Edinburgh Inter Faith Association (EIFA) - <http://www.eifa.org.uk>

Action of Churches Together - Scotland (ACTS) - <http://www.acts-scotland.org>

Churches Together Britain and Ireland (CTBI) - <https://ctbi.org.uk>

The World Council of Churches (WCC) - <https://www.oikoumene.org>

The Iona Community (IC) - <http://iona.org.uk>

The Church of Scotland (CS) - <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk>

The Free Church of Scotland (FCS) - <https://freechurch.org>

The Scottish Unitarian Association (SUA) - <http://www.sua.org.uk>

Hindu Temple of Scotland - <http://www.hindutempleofscotland.com/>

Muslim Council of Scotland - <http://www.mcscotland.org>

Islamic Tartan - [www.islamictartan.com/](http://www.islamictartan.com/)

Limmud (Jewish educational organisation) - <http://limmud.org/>

Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) - <https://www.humanism.scot/>

Edinburgh Secular Society (ESS) <http://edinburghsecularsociety.com/>

Scottish tartan register - <https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk>

BBC news - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>

Scottish census analysis -

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Religion/RelPopMig>

<http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-visualiser/#view=religionChart&selectedWafers=0>

England and Wales census data -

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religioninenglandandwales2011/2012-12-11>









