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WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF INTRA-CHRISTIAN SECTARIANISM IN SCOTLAND

The dark shadow we seem to see in the distance is not really a mountain ahead, but the shadow of the mountain behind - a shadow from the past thrown forward into our future. It is a dark sludge of historical sectarianism. We can leave it behind us if we wish.

David Trimble

What we merely say says nothing --
All that matters is what we do.
Liz Lochhead

GENDER MATTERS
IN SECTARIANISM

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INTRODUCTION: WOMEN AND SECTARIANISM

The most important thing to say about women's experience of sectarianism in 21st century Scotland is that we still know very little about it. It is usual to begin any report on intra-Christian sectarianism by describing the challenge of defining it; the slipperiness of the intersection between race and sect, and its mutability across different geographical areas and class identities. The independent Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland only essayed a tentative definition of sectarianism in 2013[1], and this definition itself remains flexible to criticism and reflection by practitioners. This lack of clarity about what sectarianism is and how it functions to marginalise, exclude, and discriminate is only amplified when we throw gender into the mix.

On the core question of whether sectarianism in Scotland exists, there is almost no difference between women and men.

> Perceptions of anti-Catholic/Protestant prejudice did not vary significantly by other socio-demographic factors, including age, gender, education, religious identity/upbringing, church attendance, how religious they consider themselves to be, football club support or social ties to Catholics/Protestants.[2]

However, the current popular definition of sectarianism is essentially one of men behaving badly, which rests on public disorder around football matches, marches and parades. This is admixed with a cultural acceptance of "banter", particularly in Glasgow and the west of Scotland, that heavily draws upon the symbology of football, including team strips and their colours. Within this frame of sectarianism, women are to be found lurking in the margins, considered to be either victims of football or alcohol-related violence, or the providers of a calm domestic environment that may function to lure men away from sectarianized public spaces.

If women are largely missing from the latest flurry of discussion around sectarianism, then gender is almost completely absent. Within the context of sectarianism, consideration of intimate relationships, parenthood, care, education, religion, institutional power, participation in public and community life, political

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[1] Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (2013) *Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013*
[2] Hinchcliffe, S., Makcinkiewicz, A., Curtice, J. and R. Ormston *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014: Public Attitudes to Sectarianism in Scotland*

representation, and violence are treated as if they are gender neutral. This is to say, the different between men's and women's lived experience, and norms around men's and women's roles and behaviours are either not considered or not treated as important. This work attempts to en-gender some of the discourses around sectarianism, and to inform this en-gendering with the lived experience of women in Scotland.

Sectarianism in Scotland could be said to be generally under-theorised. A part of the reason for this is a lack of foundational clarity on what sectarianism looks like, and how it affects groups of individuals with different characteristics. Even in 2013 the expert group on sectarianism was setting out a whole range of questions to which it did not have answers about the nature and prevalence of sectarian attitudes and behaviours, and citing a failure on the part of key stakeholders to acknowledge that sectarianism might be a problem within their contexts. A lack of evidence, and a lack of a robust theoretical framework around sectarianism mean that there is no consensus about a theory of change and disagreements between stakeholders about how sectarianism is to be conceptualised. In the absence of this consensus, indicators and outcomes for programmes and initiatives designed to challenge sectarianism are necessarily conditional. This makes it difficult to chart progress and even more difficult to identify whether specific interventions constitute 'good practice', and should therefore be scaled up or widely adopted.

It is Engender's contention that it is impossible to understand a significant social challenge without considering the gendered implications of that challenge. Our contribution to the vibrant and ongoing discussion about sectarianism is summarised in this report. We have tried to answer three questions:

1. How do women experience sectarianism?
2. What does a gendered analysis tell us about sectarianism?
3. What does that mean for how sectarianism is challenged in Scotland?

In the process of bringing women together to talk about sectarianism, and speaking to equalities practitioners across Scotland and within the wider UK, we have added a fourth question:

4. What opportunities and challenges might taking an equalities and/or human rights approach to sectarianism present?

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METHODOLOGY:
WHAT DID WE DO?

In December 2012 and January 2013, Engender delivered a series of short focus groups on sectarianism. These took place as part of meetings of pre-existing groups, most of which were community organisations whose membership lived in specific geographic areas.

The sessions afforded a glimpse into a number of ways that women experience sectarianism across Scotland that has not been identified in previous work. These are summarised in *Women and Sectarianism in Scotland: Beyond Football*[3].

In a second phase of work, Engender continued discussing sectarianism, faith and community with women, but we wanted the design of our programme to reflect some of the findings of our previous work. These were:

● Access to women's groups was contingent upon the leader or co-ordinator of the group's interest in sectarianism or perception that it was a "woman's issue".

● The framing of sectarianism as 'about' public order offences, football, and the west of Scotland meant that women (and especially those who lived in places outside the west of Scotland) required extra time and space to relate the topic to their own lives.

● For those women for whom sectarianism is an immediate, live issue, there may be considerable fear and anxiety in speaking about their experiences. Women with this experience also need additional space and time, and may benefit from meeting outside their immediate geographic area.

● A gap in qualitative research on women's experience of sectarianism meant that Engender needed to enable the most open discussions possible, to enable new ideas, topics, and domains of experience to be brought up. We did not want our own agenda-setting to unduly drive the list of things that women talked to us about.

[3] Engender (2014) *Women and Sectarianism in Scotland: Beyond Football*

2.1 CREATING SPACE

After considering some different methodological options that would enable the broadest range of views to be expressed while creating a purposeful framework, we selected three:

1. Open Space and World Cafe. This approach enabled large and smaller groups to come together, set their own agenda, and have a purposeful discussion on any topics they identified around sectarianism[4].

2. PhotoVoice. This photography-based methodology enables people to take photographs that reflect and represent their experiences.

3. Participatory documentary film making. This approach enabled young women to come together and acquire film-making skills, such that they could explore the issue of sectarianism for themselves, with the support of Urbancroft, based at Film City in Govan.

2.2 THINKING ABOUT DOMESTIC ABUSE

During the eighteen months of delivery we embarked on a further small project, which had been prompted by discussions within the first round of Open Space groups. There has been widespread coverage of the relationship between sectarianism and domestic abuse, which has suggested a strong correlation.

We joined with Scottish Women's Aid to deliver a short survey to women's aid workers in Scotland that sought to elicit their perceptions on whether sectarianism was an issue for women who had experienced domestic abuse. This is the subject of a separate briefing and checklist co-produced with Scottish Women's Aid, which is available from Engender's website[5].

2.3 ANALYSIS

Analysis has been a critical part of the process. Engender has expertise around women's equality and gender, and we have used our analytical capacity and networks to reflect on the findings from our various participatory projects.

[4] A more detailed description of Open Space and World Café can be found in Annex A.
[5] www.engender.org.uk

Engender is a key participant within Scotland's women's sector, and our sector colleagues have influenced our thinking and analysis. Also influential have been Engender's board, which has maintained a keen interest in this project; the project steering group; Electoral Reform Society's Democracy Max initiative, and its findings on participatory methodologies; the wider equalities sector and our shared work on equality law, regulation, and practice; Close the Gap and Scottish Women's Aid's work with Engender on the public sector equality duty and gender; and colleagues who are part of the Human Rights Consortium Scotland.

Section three sets out the issues identified by women, grouped by thematic area. Section four contains our gendered analysis of the issues identified through the participatory processes, and other issues identified as critical by the expert group on sectarianism. Section five makes recommendations. These are drawn from proposals that women made at the Open Space sessions, and from wider work that Engender has engaged in around participatory methodologies, and within wider equalities and human rights discourses.

2.4 DEMAND-LED SUPPORT FOR CSU ANTI-SECTARIAN PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The final piece of work that we undertook was to provide support to anti-sectarian projects that were funded by the Scottish Government's Community Safety Unit.

This work began with a transfer-of-information session about the findings of phase 1 of our work, and continued through the provision of tailored support and work with individual projects and their beneficiaries.

Arising from this work, and from our analysis of the things that women have told us, we have written a short and practical checklist for anti-sectarian projects that are seeking to gender their work[6].

[6] Engender (2015) *Gender Matters in Sectarianism: Making sure your work works*

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WHAT WE FOUND

Conversations about sectarianism are necessarily wide-ranging and overlapping. We have grouped points, statements, and perspectives into themes, and then clustered them into various spaces that women inhabit and move between:

- Scotland
- The family
- Religious spaces
- The workplace
- Communities
- Public space

Words that women spoke directly when describing their experiences to us and each other are captured in **bold text**.

3.1 WOMEN AND SECTARIANISM IN SCOTLAND

There were very few women who attended the Open Space sessions who were unfamiliar with the concept of sectarianism, although the wide range of backgrounds, faith and community identities, and experience of motherhood and intimate relationships of the women meant that there were diverse perspectives on its character and impact.

3.1.1 Clarity over definitions

Each Open Space session began with a short input from Engender staff about the project, and this included the definition of sectarianism that had been developed by the expert group on sectarianism. Nonetheless, in almost every small group, women would make their contributions conditional by saying **it depends how we're defining sectarianism**, or ask **how did we say sectarianism was defined again?**

One small group at the Glasgow discussion had a short but spirited discussion that took in the reformation, the Trinity, the priesthood of all believers, and transubstantiation, as participants tried to respond to a Muslim woman's question about **the difference between Catholics and Protestants**. Others spoke extensively about national identity, about **Irishness** and **Scottishness**, and about immigration and migration.

Discussions about the definition created by the expert working group on sectarianism were mildly critical. There was a strong sense that the definition had not encapsulated women's experience, and particularly that it dealt poorly with **anti-Irishness**, but also that it was too focused on public domains. One woman described it as **concentrating on stereotypes**, and another in a different session said that the **subtleties of sectarianism were being lost within it**.

There was other discussion about the issues that might potentially be lost to a focus on intra-Christian sectarianism. These included conflicts between Christian denominations that were intra-Protestant, which had **divided** communities that some of the participants came from; tensions between lesbian, bisexual and trans women and church communities; and sectarianism in other faiths that had an impact on good relations in Scotland.

3.1.2 Change over time

Across the different discussion groups, there was consensus that the expression of sectarianism, however defined, had changed over time in Scotland.

One woman described the shift as being from **structural sectarianism, which was common in the 1960s and 70s, to attitudinal sectarianism**. Others agreed, and one woman said that the earlier explicit sectarianism had **left a legacy that was being held on to** by some people. The word 'legacy' appeared many times in different discussions with other women describing a **generational legacy** that echoed down families.

Older people were particularly likely to identify a shift in behaviours, particularly in the workplace and in allocation of public services and resources, like housing. This did not mean, however, that religious and community differences had been consigned to the dustbin of history. Sectarianism remained a real area of tension, conflict, or challenge for many of the women that attended the discussion sessions.

The media, along with religious organisations and schools, was one of the key national and local institutions identified by women as contributing to sectarianism. The Glasgow discussion session captured significant frustration with the media, but the national media was mentioned as significant to the discussion in each of the sessions. There was a perception that reporting of sectarianism was very

stereotypical, entirely focused on **men behaving badly** and football, and did not capture the experience of women and communities.

Some women felt that at times of the year when sectarian tensions were near the surface of community life, like around Old Firm games and the marching season, some media reporting **inflamed grievances**.

It was felt by some women that Irishness was **invisible** or **muted** in media coverage of sectarianism, including in reporting of threats of violence made against Neil Lennon and other prominent Irish-Scots.

Some women spoke about women's under-representation in the media, and in particular on news programmes that occasionally provided comment on sectarianism. **It's always just pictures of men fighting in the street, or football fans all gathered together, and then other men explaining why it's bad**. Simplistic narratives about the place of sectarianism in public life in Scotland were seen to be partly explained by the lack of women involved in the production of documentaries, journalism, or as media commentators.

Others talked about social media, and the challenge of navigating online relationships with people who posted sectarian material, and the social difficulties of challenging that. Women were acutely aware of the different experience of **using social media while female**, and the risk of receiving gendered abuse on Twitter and elsewhere if they advanced unpopular opinions.

3.2 WOMEN DOMESTIC SPACE: FAMILY LIFE AND SECTARIANISM

Above any other domain, women identified the family as the space in which sectarianism manifested itself, and must be challenged.

3.2.1 Family structure

There was a strong sense that although the nuclear family was still the predominant model of family structure, that **traditional** families were less culturally dominant than they had been in previous generations. Women identified the family as the primary space in which children are socialised.

Although some women felt that the family was still very male-dominated, with men's preferences, including for sectarian attitudes, being elevated above those of other family members, other women disagreed. Some women perceived family structures as being more **fluid**, with individual people in Scotland more likely to meet and socialise with people from a range of different backgrounds, including from both Protestant and Catholic communities. The possibility of children being able to challenge their parents' views around sectarianism was also considered to be a part of this new fluidity.

Others did not perceive power dynamics to have significantly changed within families, and felt that the values inculcated within the family unit in childhood were very **difficult to change**, and provided a lens through which an individual **viewed the world** into adulthood.

Within nuclear families, there was consensus that parents' views were considered to be paramount in shaping the views of their children. Some women described it as being very challenging to disagree with their parents, with life being made **difficult [if you] come against them**.

Those families that cleaved to traditional family structures and practices that were religiously-inflected were described as being likely to isolate women who are divorced, **turning their backs** on them, and perceiving women who were divorced as **bringing shame on the family**. This was described as having significant implications for those women who established relationships or entered into marriages with men from different community backgrounds.

Cross-community marriages and relationships were themselves described as **like interracial marriages** by some women, and were perceived by those women as significant causes of tension. Even when families were supportive **communities would gossip**, and this was perceived as placing additional pressure on relationships. There was a strong sense in women who described **mixed marriages** as problematic that this meant that any difficulties or challenges in their personal relationships could not then be discussed within their families of origin. The notion of 'mixed marriages' or relationships remains as vital as ever in some communities. A youth worker in West Lothian described being told by one family to keep their son apart from his **Rangers girlfriend**.

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Women's identities were themselves considered to be more mutable, with their family names being identified as indicators of this. **Women are in their father's family and then in their husband's**. This was related to nationality, and one woman described the historical practices around women's national identity, when women did not have a national identity of their own, but took on their husband's when they married, even if this meant they were not then a citizen of the country in which they were born and had spent their lives. One woman described religious traditions in the Western Isles, in which a **woman marries in her church and then follows her husband into his**.

This discussion looped round into a consideration of the notion of the **Plastic Paddy**, in which Scots with Irish heritage are considered to be inauthentically Irish in a way that is not paralleled with any other nationality.

3.2.2 Childhood and motherhood

Childhood experiences within families that had sectarian attitudes were extensively discussed by women. These had contradictory impacts, including negatively shaping the individual's own attitudes towards people from a different background, and galvanising other women to ensure that their children would have as balanced an understanding of different communities in Scotland as it was possible to provide.

The family was identified as a critical space in which it was necessary to act to mitigate sectarianism in Scotland. Action **needs to start in the family to achieve change**, said one woman. One woman remembered the role that her mother had in managing conversations about sectarianism. **I remember growing up – Dad talking [approvingly] about terrorism. Mum stopped the conversation, and got us to talk about other things. What if she hadn't?**

There were concerns expressed about the primacy of educating children as an anti-sectarian approach. **Children become vulnerable at home after they've been taught anti-sectarianism at school. How can you teach them in a safe way?** Others were concerned that there was a risk that anti-sectarian school activity was **attacking the child's identity**. Its efficacy was also challenged, with some women feeling that **the mother or father will just tell children what they are [regardless of what they're being] told at school**. Several teachers took part in the discussion sessions

and one said that there is **challenge from some of the parents for teaching anti-sectarianism. They feel like their identity is being threatened**. Another teacher who was part of the same discussion observed that in her experience **mothers are supportive of teaching anti-sectarianism. Female teachers are supportive. Fathers and male teachers are not bothered. Men don't want to be confronted.**

Several women who worked with children, whether in the capacity of teachers, refuge workers, or childcare workers identified an understanding of sectarian symbolism from a very young age. **Kids are already making choices about what colour crayons they will used, based on football**. Others described bans on football colours in nurseries.

The issue of colours emerged in other ways in a number of the discussion sessions, with women talking about the need to be mindful of colour-related constraints when buying goods for the family. **None of them will even use a blue toothbrush**. This extended from **school lunchboxes**, to soft furnishings, to clothes, to cars. **Everyone round my way had something to say about the fact my car is green, but I got a good price so I don't care.**

3.2.3 Families and religious practice

Women were widely seen as a **buffer** within the family; managing and absorbing tensions between different groups of people in the extended family. They were also described in the discussions as being **more religious**, and responsible for the religious upbringing of any children, and enabling family religious obligations. Religious-inflected rites of passage, like baptism, confirmation, communions, and marriages, were principally considered to be women's organisational and social domain. Often the role of social facilitator and buffer collided around rites of passage, for example in smoothing relations between a bride and groom and extended family members who **wouldn't set foot in a chapel**. One woman observed that **women are the peacemakers**.

However, women also felt that women were taken less seriously by religious organisations, and that their religious participation and expression was considered to be of a more homespun, less authoritative type than that of male religious leaders. This is considered further in section 3.3: women and religious space.

3.2.4 Intimate partners and challenging sectarianism within the family

Women described the difficulty of the cultural assumption that men would be **leaders** within their families, and that decision-making was **still not shared between men and women**.

Within opposite-sex relationships, if men were content to enable or **allow** women to push back on family dynamics that were sectarianism-inflected then this was more straightforward for women. If male partners tacitly or explicitly supported sectarian attitudes, then this could lead to an exhausting war of attrition for women who wanted to take a different approach in parenting their children, or engaging with extended family. At its peak this was described as **violating women's rights to make their own choices, controlling behaviour**, and **taking too much energy** to be **worth it**.

Sometimes this was tangled up in expectations about women's roles within the extended family, for example the **unspoken assumptions** that women would **buy presents and cards for [their] in-laws** and how carefully that might need to be done to avoid **giving offence** by selecting something that was the **wrong colour**.

Others were seen as directly impinging on male territory. **I don't like it, but [partner] takes [our son] to the football, and I'm seen as spoiling everyone's fun by saying I don't want that language in the house**.

3.2.5 Sectarianism and domestic abuse

Most women who attended the Open Space sessions were highly critical of the link that had been made between the Old Firm and domestic abuse. They read the relationship between sectarianism and domestic abuse as an **excuse to abuse**, with men blaming their actions on football-related disappointment or anger. **Violence against women is caused by women's inequality**, and not sectarianism.

Seven women who attended across the different Open Space events identified themselves as women's aid workers, who worked or had worked with women who have experienced domestic abuse. They had a range of perspectives on the practice of violence against women services, and wondered whether services routinely ask women about their faith community background or their experience of sectarian-inflected abuse. Some workers reported that it is considered as a live issue

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when women's aid services are considering where to place a woman in refuge. **If we [violence against women organisations] don't raise it then women won't mention it.**

Some women felt that sectarian attitudes created a narrative in which domestic abuse might be explained by sectarianism, for example as constituting acts of **cowardice** that were perpetrated by adherents of a different faith community background because **that's what those people are like**. They cited widely-shared aphorisms like **you don't just marry a man, you marry a family and a culture**, and **inter-marriage doesn't work** as two examples of cultural presumptions that minimise and **explain away** domestic abuse.

Critically, women also described circumstances around so-called **mixed marriages**, where women's families had very little contact with them after marriage, and took what was described as a **you made your bed and now you need to lie in it** attitude towards their daughters' experience of domestic abuse. Another woman said that she had heard many times that **at least if you marry a Catholic then it's one less thing to worry about.**

3.3 WOMEN AND RELIGIOUS SPACES

Religious organisations were discussed in all of the sessions, both with regard to their roles in the ongoing articulation of sectarianism and as possible solutions to it. Women who participated in the Open Space sessions were very diverse in terms of their religious faith, their denomination within that faith, and the extent to which they practised their faith.

3.3.1 Women's roles in religious organisations

Some women pointed out the different levels of power and responsibility that men and women had within religious institutions. Others described very different roles for women within their context, with women being responsible for many of the enabling tasks of religious organisations, including: provision for children and young people, **childcare**, cleaning and caring for church buildings, **doing the teas and coffees after the services, visiting the sick** and housebound people from their religious community, and participating in activities designed to benefit the wider local community.

Others described a **stained glass ceiling** in which women were culturally or systemically prevented from taking up leadership roles within the religious organisation, and were excluded from taking part in development of **theology or doctrine**. A number of women who were religious leaders, including ministers of religion, were critical of their organisation's lack of engagement with the issue of sectarianism: **I didn't learn anything about sectarianism while I was training as a Minister.**

3.3.2 Women's equality and religious organisations

Some women had very strong critiques of how their religious institutions engaged with the issue of women's inequality. Some of this was doctrinal, like the **tyranny of forgiveness** that one Church of Scotland adherent described, in which women who had experienced domestic abuse were counselled to process this experience principally or initially through the means of forgiving their abuser. Others cited positions on **abortion**, institutional **child abuse**, and recent historical manifestations of these positions such as **homes for unwed mothers** and **Magdalene laundries** as being fundamentally at odds with women's equality and **dignity**. Others expressed a view that women's equality and religious organisations were fundamentally at odds, saying that **God is just an excuse for men's exercise of power over women**.

Women's perspective on the relative positions of women's equality within religious organisations was mixed. Some felt that gender inequality within the religious organisation of their childhood had prompted their atheism or agnosticism, others described positive resistance and challenge to religious organisations, a further group that the personal **liberation** that religion provided them was offset favourably against other problems about a **woman's role**, and a final small group took the view that their religious organisation's **complementarianism**[7] was a perspective with which they agreed.

The notion that Scotland is **now a secular society** came up in some discussions, and women who professed faith sometimes felt that the most significant challenge to their engagement with their religious organisation came from outside that

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[7] Complementarianism is a theological view held by some in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, religious leadership, and elsewhere.

organisation: **I've never heard sectarian 'banter' at work but I have heard lots of my colleagues imply that people of faith are stupid and discriminatory.**

3.4 WOMEN AND COMMUNITIES

The concept of 'community' emerged in many of the discussions. For some women, community meant their city or village or town. For others, it meant a much smaller geographical space, perhaps only a single street or a few streets of houses. For other women, 'community' was based around relationships rather than space, and their community was a small number of families who socialised and even worked together. For others, 'community' was principally based around their identity, including their membership of specific religious organisations, campaigning organisations, or political parties. Most women described themselves as belonging to a number of different communities, which were often linked to life stage. For example, many women who were mothers felt that a community that was particularly significant in their lives was the one based around their children's school.

One woman, in trying to define 'community' said that it was **somewhere where you feel able to be yourself; where you feel that you are accepted**.

3.4.1 Tribalism

The word 'tribal' was used by women who saw sectarianism as both a socially destructive force, and women who saw it as **bringing people together** as community.

Women in the latter group situated sectarianism as joined by a thread to the **fragmentation of community** that happened after the recession of the late 1980s. They believed it to be **nothing to do with church** but instead about **community and identity**. Others linked it back to an even earlier period in Scottish history, describing a connection to **clans**, and **a sense of belonging and sense of security**.

Others saw **divisiveness**, with communities pushed apart, and families and individuals forced to **pick a side** in an **aggressive** conflict that saw **one tribe against the other**. (Sometimes this choosing sides was very literal. One woman described how the introduction of a handrail into a lane in Possilpark created **Catholic and Protestant sides**.)

Women noted that **communities can exclude others** by creating **outsiders**, and that sectarianism was seen as a very explicit way of creating in-groups and out-groups. Some said that **how can we do community better?** was one of the most critical questions facing Scotland, as **isolation is a major issue** for so many people in Scotland.

3.4.2 Silence and collusion

Women perceived much of the public discussion at community level about sectarianism to be disingenuous.

One teacher said **they claim there is no sectarianism in [local authority area] but there are staggered breaks in different schools, and no sports competitions between non-denominational schools and Catholic schools.** Another woman said, **my trade union branch is 90 per cent Catholic, but everyone refuses to talk about it**.

In a different discussion session, one woman who worked in education said that **we were told in our school not to talk about sectarianism with our classes. Other schools do**. In the same conversation, another woman said that **education clusters provide a great opportunity to break down the religious divide, but it's an opportunity that isn't taken up**. Another woman in a different discussion described **an anti-Catholic feeling in the [local authority name] education departments, with allegations about what nuns and priests did in schools**. Another woman challenged her on this, expressing the view that religious institutions had comprehensively failed to engage with institutional child abuse.

3.4.3 Sectarianism, power, and local decision-making

Several women across a number of discussion groups that took place in different areas of the country described local authority decision-making about issues they had personally been involved with as being influenced by sectarian-inflected thinking. **You think everything will be fair and open, and then you find out the people who are making the decision are in the same secret organisation as some of the other people involved**. Another woman, who had not been part of that conversation, nonetheless echoed her point. **There is shadowy justice done, sometimes. I know that people have been intimidated by men who are in those kind of organisations**. A woman in the same discussion group followed up on that

specific comment: **Yes, you can't get a job at [employer name] unless you are in the Masons**[8].

Two women in separate discussions additionally noted that membership in secret societies involves **allegiance to the institution and not broader society**, and that **secret societies like the Masons and the Knights of St Columba are just not talked about with women**.

3.5 WOMEN AND THE WORKPLACE

Although some of the concerns around sectarianism and power and decision-making related to workplaces, and so suggest a perception that there is discrimination in employment related to sectarianism, no women explicitly described experiencing or knowing someone else who had experienced sectarian discrimination.

Interestingly, the biggest distinction drawn between types of experience at work was that between women of faith and women of no faith. Several women described what they called a secularisation of Scottish society, that meant that they **find it difficult to talk in the workplace about faith. I feel safe with those who visibly demonstrate faith through wearing a headscarf or a cross or crucifix**.

Women observed a great deal of anxiety around faith on the part of some of their employers. One Muslim woman who worked for a council said that she did not like the corporate rebranding of Christmas as 'Winter Festival'. She said that it made her feel **under pressure**, because people might think that she and other Muslims had complained about the previous programme of Christmas activities.

There was a very detailed discussion at one of the Open Space days about equalities approaches to religion and belief. One woman said that her employer had refused to put in a prayer room a number of years ago, and had used the space for another purpose, which had chilled relations between employees of faith and their colleagues. Others said that **equality and diversity were laughed** at in their

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[8] Although freemasonry is not explicitly Protestant in character, as it has members from other religious faiths, the Catholic church has considerable difficulty with its symbology. "The rituals are also inimical to Catholicism," says the website catholiceducation.org in a piece that extensively critiques the practice of freemasonry.

organisation, which made it impossible to raise any concerns about potential tensions or conflict. One woman said that her colleagues seemed over-sensitive to her faith background, saying that **people stopped talking about ISIS when I arrived as they assumed they couldn't talk to me about it as a Muslim**.

Another woman described the inadequacy of her employer's approach to including sectarianism within dignity and respect training. **The trainer told us that there was a line between 'banter' and being offensive when we were talking about the Old Firm. I asked him for examples, but he looked like he didn't know what to say. I still don't know where the line is supposed to be**.

Significant numbers of women described relentless workplace conversations about the Old Firm, and sectarian symbols. **My boss looked at a publication I'd designed and told me it could be any colour but "fucking orange"**. A woman who had not always worked in Scotland described her shock at the prevalence of football in some organisations' public-facing communications. **I went to a conference and every male speaker made a football joke, or reference in his speech**. Another woman said, **I like football but when I tried to talk about it to the men at work they changed the subject. I figured out that it wasn't that they cared about the topic, they just wanted something that the women couldn't join in**.

3.6 WOMEN AND PUBLIC SPACE

A wide range of views were expressed in the discussion groups on violence against women and sectarianism. Women were generally extremely well aware of the media reporting that had drawn a connection between Old Firm fixtures and reports of domestic abuse. Women's perspective on this is captured in section 3.2.5.

3.6.1 Street harassment

If the women who took part in the Open Space sessions were sceptical about the connections between domestic abuse and sectarianism, they were clear about abuse and street harassment that took place in public spaces.

Women in Glasgow described the efforts they would make to **avoid the town** on Old Firm days, or days when they knew that Celtic or Rangers were playing at home. Several had stories of being what they described as **caught out**, when they had

forgotten that a match was scheduled, or had an urgent errand to run, and they had found themselves on public transport with large crowds of drunk fans who were **making [sexual] comments**, or had to walk past pubs with **the men all hanging around outside shouting at women**. Women described being shouted and sworn at, being **grabbed and pulled** onto laps of men sitting on trains, and touched inappropriately.

They said that they used a range of well-rehearsed avoidance tactics, including **phoning [their] mum so they wouldn't talk to me**, finding other women on the train to sit near, trying not to make eye contact, attempting to position themselves so that groups of men were not between them and the door, and **fiddling with [their] phone** in order to seem occupied. The discussion groups collectively described **stress, fear**, and **anxiety** about encountering groups of football fans.

Women across Scotland took similar steps to miss football crowds and marches with their **drunken hangers-on**. One woman summed this up by saying, **women find and apply avoiding tactics to escape from the impact of sectarianism**.

The most common type of religious-inflected street harassment, though, was of Muslim women wearing hijab or other types of head-covering. One woman described **crying in the street in shock** after a man came up and pulled at her head-covering and shouted in her face. Passers-by did nothing to intervene, or to comfort her afterwards.

Semi-public spaces were also discussed. A youth worker in West Lothian described a set of tensions between the young people that she worked with at a youth club that ebbed and flowed with each Old Firm match. She said that she was **relieved** that Rangers and Celtic were no longer playing in the same league, and **dreaded** them playing against each other again because **things have been so calm**. She described frequent aggressive outbursts and fighting between young men around Old Firm games, which soured the experience of the club for many of the young men and women who attended.

Mothers, aunts, partners, and grandmothers within the discussion groups who had family members who went to football matches were concerned about them getting caught up in **trouble**, and also worried that they might be **silly** or **wound up** and then fall foul of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening

Communications (Scotland) Act 2012. In several discussion groups there were long conversations about this piece of legislation, which suggested a general lack of clarity as to what kind of behaviours it proscribed. This lack of clarity added to women's anxieties about whether it criminalised their own behaviour at football matches, or that of their children or partners.

3.6.2 Women and football

A small proportion of the women who attended the discussion sessions identified themselves as football fans, and went to matches. Some went with their fathers, some with their partners, and some with their friends.

Women described a certain distance from the mainstream of football culture. **The first time I went to Parkhead, the guy I was with apologised to me for all the swearing. As if I'd never heard swearing before**. Another recounted the culture on one of the supporters' buses that went to away games. **There was one woman who was Rangers daft, but the guys all assumed her boyfriend knew more than her, even though he wasn't that in to his football**.

There was a strong sense from the women who were football fans that they perceived themselves to be straying into men's space. **Football is run by men, for men. We're just visitors**.

3.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of each Open Space discussion event, women were invited to make recommendations for anti-sectarian interventions. These were gathered together and voted upon by women who participated. The following list is of recommendations for anti-sectarian work that women most wished to see implemented in Scotland.

Gender, community engagement and participatory approaches
- Have more participatory, community level activity that is accessible on a drop-in basis.

- Women should be empowered through free education and training to take part in their communities.

- Anti-sectarianism projects should specifically talk about gender issues in sectarianism.
- Bring women together across faith communities to talk about sectarianism.

Education
- End segregation in schooling.
- Teacher training should include tackling sectarianism as well as dealing with other types of discrimination.

Religious organisations
- Train clergy in sectarianism, so that they can open up this conversation within faith groups.

Media
- Engage the BBC and other broadcasters in Scotland to introduce sectarianism as a topic in soap operas and dramas, to create opportunities for conversation and reflection.
- Challenge news media coverage, and create reporting guidelines that are similar to those for mental health and violence against women.

Institutions and power
- Public officials should have to declare their membership of the Knights of St Columba, the Masons, and the Orange Order.

4

ANALYSIS

> This section provides some analysis of the things that women told us. It also contextualises some of the discussions in wider discourses around sectarianism, and in a number of related policy areas.
>
> As before, words that women spoke directly when describing their experiences to us and each other are captured in **bold text**.

4.1 WHAT DO WE KNOW THAT WE DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE?

Anti-racist organisations have privately described sectarianism in Scotland to Engender as under-theorised. It is certainly true that there is a surprisingly limited body of research that attempts to scope its nature and prevalence, and continuing uncertainty as to its definition.

It is also the case that much of the writing around sectarianism in Scotland takes contradictory positions about whether sectarianism can meaningfully be considered to exist at all. An anthology edited by Tom Devine, *Scotland's Shame*[9], which made a strong and compelling argument for tackling anti-Catholic, anti-Irish discrimination was followed five years later by a book written by Steve Bruce and others, *Sectarianism in Scotland*[10], that analysed some of the same data and drew diametrically opposing conclusions. Although we do not entirely set aside this disagreement, because some arguments within it touch on some of the gendered dimensions of sectarianism, we proceed without engaging with it wholesale.

4.1.1 The advisory group on sectarianism

What we do set our findings and analysis against is the work of the advisory group on tackling sectarianism in Scotland. This body of experts[11] was established in

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[9] Devine, T.M. (ed.) (2000) *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*

[10] Bruce, S., Glendinning, T., Paterson, I., and M. Rosie (2004) *Sectarianism in Scotland*

[11] Members include: Dr Duncan Morrow, Chair of the Advisory Group; Dr Cecelia Clegg, Senior Lecturer in Practical Theology at the University of Edinburgh; Margaret Lynch, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Scotland and a board member of the Conforti Institute; Rev Ian Galloway, a Church of Scotland minister and a board member of Faith in Community Scotland; and Dr Michael Rosie, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh.

2012 by Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs to provide Scottish Ministers with advice on all issues relating to sectarianism in Scotland.

Following a raft of meetings with stakeholders and community groups, and a review of the available research evidence, they reported to ministers in 2013[12]. This report included a definition of sectarianism.

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

It also included some additional elucidation of the definition that appeared to be more comfortable in determining what sectarianism *isn't* than what it *may be*. It clearly ruled out the possibility that sectarianism was merely aggressive bigotry, or that it was synonymous with either anti-Catholicism or anti-Irishness.

The report says in several places that the imprint of sectarianism varies by gender, but there is no further narrative or analysis that provides any insight into what the advisory group means by that. It sets out domains in which sectarianism is discernible, which include marches, football, communities, and education, although this list is inferred from the recommendations rather than formulated as a positive expression of what sectarianism is. The report proposes that sectarianism be treated as an equalities issue, but there is no further consideration of how this might happen or what the policy and practice implications of doing so might be.

The advisory group makes some 59 conclusions and recommendations to Scottish Ministers about tackling sectarianism. Some relate to the need to build an evidence base, including at community level. The others make specific reference to action

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[12] Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (2013) *Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013*

across a number of domains. These, using the report's own classifications fall into the following categories:

- Permissive environment (culture)
- Regulatory environment
- Civil leadership
- Media
- Local government
- Policing
- Young people and education
- Community activity
- Churches
- Marches and parades
- Football
- Workplace
- Professions
- Human rights, equality and good relations
- Public responsibility and mainstreaming

None of the 59 recommendations and conclusions refers to women. Some mention gender in the context that anti-sectarianism work should be (in an unspecified way) similar to activities to promote gender equality.

We take up some of these issues raised in the report in the analysis that follows.

4.1.2 Gender and sectarianism

Women comprise 52 per cent of the population of Scotland. Women also live quite different lives from men, and the majority of these differences are socially constructed and therefore relate to *gender* rather than to biological sex.

Despite these differences, which see women taking on different roles within the family, having the majority of responsibility for domestic and reproductive labour, participating less in decision-making at local and national level, undertaking different types and levels of paid work, and having a very different experience of violence, most work around sectarianism has not taken a gendered approach. It has acted as though sectarianism and its impacts were replicated and experienced by an undifferentiated group of people and not men and women.

It is undoubtedly a challenge to elicit distinctive views on sectarianism from women. Sectarianism is framed, in the media, by policymakers, and in the research, as taking place within male-dominated spheres such as football. Sara Lindores observes of her own qualitative research that "these narratives seemed to have impacted the female participants' ability to articulate and accept the positionality of women in relation to this social phenomenon."[13]

Engender's work over eighteen months is an initial contribution to the work to overcome barriers to understanding what sectarianism means to women, and how they act and are acted upon within the context of sectarianism.

Chapter three sets out some of the detail around what women told us. We summarise the findings here, and introduce some of the discussions that will follow in later sections of this report.

Rejection of narratives of sectarianism

Women clearly identified that current national articulations of what sectarianism is fall short of full understanding, with an over-reliance on stories of "men behaving badly", which are told by men and commented upon by other men in national and local media.

Women further perceived that a focus on sectarianism as the principal form of faith-related tension and conflict runs the risk of excluding experiences of religious-inflected exclusion, like the tension between religious organisations and lesbian, bisexual, and trans women; the street harassment of Muslim women; and religious organisations' position on abortion or domestic abuse; that are at least equally important to women. Women questioned the single focus of the current programme on anti-sectarianism and repeatedly expressed the view that local communities should have had some say in allocating those resources.

Family

While the focus of sectarianism policy and research is on public spaces, women's personal reflections were principally around the tensions and difficulties presented by sectarianism to their intimate relationships and family lives.

[13] Lindores, S. (2014) *Women and Sectarianism in Scotland: Policing Ethno-Christian Relational Boundaries* Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland

The notion of the "mixed marriage" is not yet historical in Scotland, and women described resistance from their own families and from their wider community to their forming relationships with men from different community backgrounds. (No participant commented on whether similar resistance was around "mixed" same-sex relationships.)

Women described the ways that extended-family tensions reduced their capacity to cope with domestic abuse and relationship pressures, created emotional labour in managing and **smoothing** those tensions, and had consequences for the parenting of their children. Although women were clear that sectarianism did not cause domestic abuse, it was felt that narratives around it perpetuated difference and unintentionally created a context for abuse.

We consider how sectarianism work might be gendered, including a sustained focus on families, in section 4.2.

Institutional power

The institutions that are principally charged with engaging with sectarianism are schools and youth education programmes, churches, football clubs, the criminal justice system, and local authorities.

Women identified churches and football clubs as male-dominated institutions that functionally excluded women's participation. They raised additional questions about the extent to which local decision-making was influenced by men's membership in male-only secret organisations.

We consider the role of male-dominated gender-blind institutions in anti-sectarianism work in section 4.3.

Community engagement

Women spoke extensively about **tribalism** and **divisions** within their local communities, and also about the necessity of bringing communities together to tackle sectarianism.

We consider some of the implications of sectarianism for the new community empowerment agenda in section 4.4.

The workplace and sectarianism within the anti-discrimination paradigm
Although no women who took part in the sessions perceived themselves to have experienced what would amount to sectarian discrimination, there were significant discussions about the failure of individual employers to engage with religion and belief as a protected characteristic covered by equality law.

We consider equalities approaches, as well as possible engagement of human rights, in section 4.5.

Criminal justice responses to sectarianism
There has been significant media coverage of the notion that there is a link between sectarianism, and particularly with Old Firm, Celtic, and Rangers games being played in Scotland, and domestic abuse. The women who attended the discussion sessions firmly rejected a causal relationship, and instead perceived the notion of a link as giving abusive men permission to blame their abuse on external factors.

Instead, women were very clear that the large groups of men inhabiting public space as a result of football matches and marches provoked stress, anxiety, and fear.

Women described numerous individual experiences of sexual harassment, including harassment of Muslim women wearing hijab, and the constraints on their freedom to move about their local communities and use public transport.

Women also identified concerns about the extent to which they and their family members were being criminalised by the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012.

Criminal justice responses to sectarianism are briefly considered in the section on hate crime at 4.5.3.

4.2 GENDER, SECTARIANISM, AND THE FAMILY

This section considers the content of the analysis that underpins anti-sectarian work, and how this might change if a gendered approach was taken.

4.2.1 Masculinities and sectarianism

There is a slender strand of commentary within the mainstream sectarianism discourse that relates some of the challenges of sectarianism to "toxic masculinity"; a rigid confinement of male identity to a performance of aggression, dominance, competition, independence, strength, and stoicism[14]. "Toxic masculinity" is not a Scotland-specific phenomenon, and is found across cultures, but we have come across a number of references in conversation with women and practitioners to **men in the west of Scotland** or **men in Glasgow** that hint at a sense of the presence of a particularly intransigent or virulent form.

Connections between work around masculinities and work around sectarianism have yet to be made, although the potential for them has been recognised. Kay Goodall and Margaret Malloch write in a recent book chapter on gender conceptualisations of sectarianism that "analyses of law and masculinity in the context of Scottish history and current affairs are opening new avenues of research."[15]

Engender has engaged with other projects funded under the Scottish Government's sectarianism projects in three ways. We invited projects to a knowledge-transfer session that shared the findings from our first phase of work[16] and introduced projects to thinking about ways that they could include women in the design of their initiatives. We provided individual demand-led support to projects that wanted Engender to deliver sessions to its beneficiaries on women and sectarianism, or to consider how they might better engage with women and target delivery at women. We took part in a series of "national discussion days", hosted by Voluntary Action Fund, which brought projects and initiatives together to reflect on their practice and share their findings. Although some projects had explicitly designed their interventions around young men, including community justice work, none of the projects apart from Glasgow Women's Library's, which was also targeted at women, was explicitly and deliberately gendered.

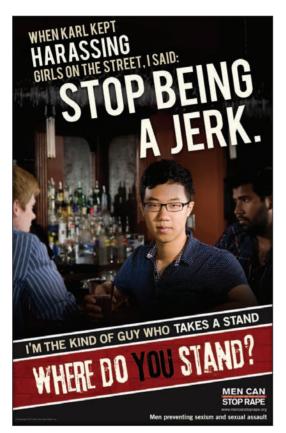There has been considerable focus on the relationship between masculinity and

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[14] http://lallandspeatworrier.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/you-take-high-road-and-ill-take-low-road.html
[15] Goodall, K. and M. Malloch (2015) Women, Football and Communitie: Gender Conceptualisations of 'Sectarianism' In Flint, J and J. Kelly (Ed.) *Bigotry, Football and Scotland* (pp.163-179)
[16] Engender (2013) *Women and Sectarianism in Scotland: Beyond Football*

sport, which we touch on in section 4.3.2. Given the centrality of the Old Firm and football and marches, which are male-dominated events, to public understanding of sectarianism it seems that an exploration of masculinity in the context of sectarianism would be at least helpful, and may be vital.

One image from a bystander campaign targeted at young men. © Men Can Stop Rape

Without wishing to anticipate the likely outputs and outcomes of such an exploration, it may be that this work provides an evidence-base for practical interventions with young men. Although this work happens in a slightly different context, another sector has generated a large number of initiatives that work with young men to develop what they describe as "healthy masculinity", and to challenge a form of violence that is considerably more prevalent that sectarianism-related violence: violence against women and girls.

They have developed what is called a "bystander approach", which is targeted at what evidence tells them is the large proportion of young men who would challenge sexual harassment and sexual assault if they had the tools to do so. There is a wealth of different interventions, from programmes in schools, colleges, and male-dominated services like the US Army and Navy, to awareness-raising above-the-line campaigns.

Engender has not comprehensively analysed existing anti-sectarianism campaigning materials, but the long-running poster campaign on ScotRail took the opposite approach, in warning young men of the criminal justice and violent consequences that may befall them if they engaged in sectarian behaviours.
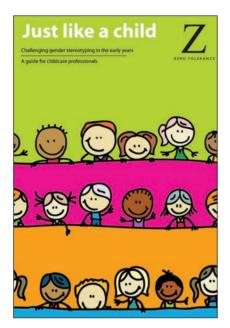
4.2.2 Gender and families

Women in the discussion groups identified the family as a critical space in which anti-sectarianism work would need to take place to be effective.

Part of the need for work centred on the family related to the transmission from parent to child of sectarian values and ideas. There are obvious gendered differences in parenting, which partly relate to the division of responsibilities for childcare between mothers and fathers in families with parents who are an opposite-sex couple. Some women in the discussion groups also clearly identified that their male partners expected to be **in charge** of deciding the extent to which their children engaged in sectarian behaviours.

There is a reference in the advisory group's report to the fact that "much of the sectarian behaviour exhibited among young people take place outside of school."[17] Nonetheless, beyond a recommendation for "programmes [to be] developed to support youth work in this area" there is no further discussion or reflection on non-school based interventions.

Of the interventions funded under the current programme of anti-sectarianism interventions, the only two that appear to be targeted at parents are the partnership between In Cahootz and Parent Network Scotland, who are running anti-sectarianism workshops for parents[18], and the project run by Scottish Marriage Care, which is working with young parents and prospective young parents. The In Cahootz project, from the description on Parent Network Scotland's website, will build the capacity in parents to reflect on their influence on their children, and to be "community champions" of anti-sectarianism. There is no indication of whether the two projects will explicitly consider gender in this work, either by attempting to achieve gender balance in its participants, or in grappling with the stereotypically different roles of fathers and mothers. It is also not clear whether the parents targeted by In Cahootz will have children of any particular age group. It will be important for the wider programme for the experiences of these initiatives to be evaluated and reflected upon.

[17] Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (2013) *Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013* p.37
[18] http://www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk/site/news/47/72/IN-CAHOOTZ-AND-PARENT-NETWORK-SCOTLAND-ARE-OFFERING-TACKLING-SECTARIANISM-WORKSHOPS-FOR-PARENTS/

Projects that have worked more broadly on anti-discrimination activities with very young children have taken place in Scotland. Zero Tolerance, which has undertaken some work on gender stereotyping as part of its broader anti-violence against women agenda, has produced materials for early years workers[19].

Close the Gap, which works around women's labour market participation, has a project called *Be What You Want*, which targets materials at children and young people with the purpose of encouraging them to think about gender stereotyping about subject choice and enabling non-stereotypical career choice[20].

Just Like a Child. © Zero Tolerance

Be What You Want. © Close the Gap

In addition to work targeted at changing children's attitudes through engaging with families, there is another clear need that has been identified through the discussion sessions. Not all women want to challenge the sectarian attitudes of their partners, but those who do are in relationships that exist within a context of women's inequality.

Although women almost have de jure equality in Scotland[21], they do not have de facto equality, and intimate relationships and the family are key sites of this inequality.

[19] http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/Projects/EarlyYears
[20] http://www.bewhatyouwant.org.uk/
[21] Legally sanctioned exclusions include, among other things, the application of primogeniture in land inheritance, religious ordination, and inability to join private members' clubs such as the Orange Order, Lodges, and golf clubs.

This is a very difficult area of work, but the programme may be able to draw on approaches developed by initiatives like Wise Women[22], who provide confidence building and personal safety training and coaching. This is not done with a deficit model in mind, which must redress some failing on the part of women, but supports women to develop strategies and behaviours of resilience in the context of women's inequality. Their work facilitates women's articulation of their own perspectives, and their engagement in their community or communities.

4.2.3 Taking a gendered approach

The under-theorising of sectarianism and the gap in evidence about the ways that gender relates to sectarianism makes taking a gendered approach more challenging.

However, there are tools and processes that can enable gender-sensitivity at the programme and project level, and these tools do not appear to have been well-used in the current programme of sectarianism.

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to undertake a process called equality impact assessment on significant pieces of policy, which in the language of the public sector equality duty also includes programmes. This is a multi-step process that enables a public body to reflect on the purpose of its policy (programme), the evidence of its impact on protected groups (including women and men), and to redress or justify any ways that the initial design of the policy (programme) may benefit one sex more than another. The public sector equality duty additionally requires public bodies to use their policies (programmes) to advance equality between women and men. Although an equality impact assessment does not appear to have been done on the current sectarianism programme or on the portfolio of applications, it may be useful to take a modified impact assessment approach when undertaking a final evaluation of the programme. Equality impact assessment should also be used when future anti-sectarianism policy or programmes are developed.

Gender budget impact analysis[23] is another tool that can be used to determine who benefits from programmes of public expenditure. A topline analysis of

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[22] http://www.wisewomen.org.uk/
[23] Close the Gap (2014) *A tool for assessing the gender impact of spend on skills and training*

programme spend tells us that only 7 per cent was spent on projects that took a gender-sensitive approach. It may be interesting to know what proportion of each individual project's beneficiaries were male and female and to set that against the spend of individual projects.

> **Recommendations on gender, sectarianism, and the family:**
> - Future research on sectarianism should focus on the links between masculinity and sectarianism.
>
> - Anti-sectarian projects should explicitly focus on gender, both in terms of challenging "toxic masculinity" and in building women's capacity and resilience to resist and challenge it.
>
> - The evaluation of the current sectarianism programme should explicitly consider the gendered outcomes, and should reflect on the gender composition of its beneficiaries.

4.3 INSTITUTIONAL POWER

This section considers two different institutions that wield various levels of power in Scottish society. Both have been identified by the advisory group as important stakeholders of the anti-sectarian agenda. Both have been identified as sites of entrenched gender inequality.

4.3.1 The church(es)

Social attitudes surveys tell us that Scotland is an increasingly secular society. The proportion of Scots who do not identify with any religion has increased from 40% in 1999 to 54% in 2013[24]. Arguably, the political influence of the churches is declining. Marriage equality, in the form of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act, is an example of a high-profile piece of legislation that was vigorously opposed by both the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland. Nonetheless, the role of the churches is considered to be very important to anti-sectarianism initiatives. They feature both as recipients of funding under the current programme, and as key stakeholders identified in the 59 conclusions and recommendations.

[24] Hinchcliffe, S., Marcinkiewicz, A., Curtice, J. and R. Ormston (2015) Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014: Public Attitudes to Sectarianism in Scotland Scottish Government Social Research

Specifically, the advisory group recommends that "the leaders of Christian communities in Scotland prioritise inter-church relationships at an institutional level to include a focus on sectarianism", and that "churches collaborate in the development of a toolkit which will promote and deliver better and stronger co-operation on matters of concern at parish level"[25].

Churches, like all religious organisations, are exempt from many of the measures in the Equality Act 2010, which otherwise proscribes discrimination against women and men. Women can be excluded from ordination. Historically women have been excluded from church leadership in all of the churches in Scotland. The first woman was ordained as a minister in the Church of Scotland in 1969. Women cannot be ordained as priests in the Catholic Church.

Although the Church of Scotland has taken enormous steps forward in reflecting on and reconsidering the complementarianism that saw women consigned to the private and domestic sphere while men inhabited the public sphere of which the church was part, they are nonetheless only partway through that journey and cannot be said to have significant gender competence.

> The quest for true gender justice in our community of faith, well beyond formal equality, is far from over, and the legacy of our patriarchal past continues to affect contemporary church life in many ways. In the name of Christ, hundreds of women were persecuted as witches, others were subject to intrusive surveillance and punished for not conforming to the acceptable norms of submissive female behaviour. Women were scrutinised, shamed and stigmatised - especially for sexual sins and crimes – and while church courts frowned upon extreme domestic violence, and kirk sessions often sought to provide practical support to its victims, women were frequently enjoined to obedience and patient suffering. This report has highlighted the need to wrestle with that legacy in a spirit of honest and reflective humility.[26]

[25] Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (2013) *Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013 p.56*
[26] Church of Scotland Church and Society Council (2014) *Living a Theology that Counters Violence Against Women* Church of Scotland

Some of the women who attended Engender's discussion sessions had very clear accounts of being counselled by religious leaders to submit to domestic abuse. Others were immensely critical of the Catholic Church's response to the exposure of its failings around what could be described as systemic child sexual abuse, and what the UN Committee against Torture[27] and Committee on the Rights of the Child[28] has judged to be attempts to evade responsibility for making reparations for this, and for "plac[ing] the preservation of the reputation of the Church and the protection of the perpetrators above the child's best interests.[29]"

Others cited the ongoing struggle for justice on the part of women who had been imprisoned and ill-treated within Magdalene laundries, which were found across Scotland, Ireland, and England[30]. Women described to us a disruption in trust that churches have the interests of women and children at heart.

At the policy level, Engender perceives a lack of gendered analysis in churches' thinking about important social issues. While the Church of Scotland, for example, has historically engaged extensively with poverty and the economy, a recent commission that it established to explore this more thoroughly managed to miss completely that poverty in Scotland, as everywhere else in the world, is profoundly gendered. Its report, *A Right Relationship with Money*, mentions women only twice and does not take cognisance of the factors underpinning women's experience of poverty and economic inequality at all[31]. This report also leans on the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, which it describes as "offering profound theological reflection" and commends it for further "study and assessment"[32]. Unsurprisingly, this encyclical of the Catholic Church has a decided perspective that is in opposition to women's reproductive health and rights and same-sex relationships[33].

[27] UN Committee against Torture (May 2014) Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture: Holy See

[28] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (February 2014) *Concluding observations on the second periodic report of the Holy See* Office of the High Commission on Human Rights

[29] *ibid.*

[30] UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (July 2013) *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*

[31] Church of Scotland (2012) *A Right Relationship with Money: The Church of Scotland Special Commission on the Purpose of Economic Activity*

[32] *Ibid* p.41

[33] http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html

This is not to say that the churches have no useful role to play in anti-sectarianism work, or in addressing other critical social issues. It is by way of identifying the limitations of their capacity to take a gendered approach, and the male-domination of their power structures, that has led at best to a partial understanding of some issues for women, and at worst institutional indifference to fundamental breaches of women and children's rights. Given this mixed picture on gender competence, Engender recommends that the churches' limitations in engaging with women and in taking a gendered approach be reflected upon in the context of their involvement in anti-sectarian work.

4.3.2 Football clubs and the football establishment

Striking connections have been made across the world between sports fandom and masculinity or maleness. Michael Kimmel describes a gamut of experience running from "harmless and even positive experiences of emotional expressiveness, friendship and connection through the vaguely silly or gross, toward the other pole on which such positive experiences may be based on dominance, exclusion, and anger."[34] Mariah Burton Nelson sees engagement with sport as being all but compulsory. "Regardless of his reasons, the grown man who pays no attention to male sport dramas must be, it seems to me, among the most secure and confident of all men, because he relinquishes a daily opportunity to identify with the culture's primary male heroes and in the process risks censure or at least estrangement from other men."[35] This centrality exists, for Gerry Hassan, in the Scottish context. "[Football] has come close to being seen as a public orthodoxy which you have to embrace for fear of being a social outcast and which shapes much of what it means to be a man."[36]

The Old Firm is symbolically at the heart of the discourse about sectarianism in Scotland. In a recent book about football and sectarianism, Michael Rosie summarises a line of argument that suggests that rather than the sectarian singing at Old Firm games being a "safety valve" or "overspill" of sectarian attitudes that are widely held in Scottish society, they are all that remains of historical enmities. In 1988, he points out, Steve Bruce argued that "the relatively rare public displays

[34] Kimmel, M. (2008) *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* Harper
[35] Burton Nelson, M. (1994) *The Stronger Women Get the More Men Love Football* Avon: Women's Studies
[36] http://www.gerryhassan.com/short-journalistic-essays/blowing-the-whistle-on-the-mclad-phenomenon/

of sectarian animosity are not the visible tip of a submerged mass of ice but are rather all that is left."[37]

The Open Space discussion sessions that Engender hosted clearly describe a set of challenges for women that are not all explicitly related to football, even if there is a connection in some instances. One woman, for example, said **I don't like it, but [partner] takes [our son] to the football, and I'm seen as spoiling everyone's fun by saying I don't want that language in the house**.

Internationally, an increase in female fans attending matches has been associated with a decrease in violent and anti-social behaviour. This has led to something of a backlash. For those women who attended our Open Space sessions and who also attend football matches, their participation was seen by male fellow fans as conditional and sometimes inauthentic[38]. English Premier League figures cited by Malloch and Goodall suggest that a quarter of fans at EPL games are now women, and that the number of women attending Scottish games has increased. However, the rise of female fans has been linked with the "gentrification" and even the "feminisation" of football.[39]

Again using violence against women and sexual harassment as our shibboleth, the football establishment in Scotland cannot remotely be said to have embraced gender equality. Although programmes like Kick Racism out of Football have been introduced, within broader anti-racist initiatives stipulated by European governing body UEFA, there has been no concomitant action to rid the game of the sexist 'banter' that is almost endemic at matches. Engender joined other women's organisations in Scotland in calling on the Scottish Football Association to create guidelines for clubs in dealing with sex offenders among its players and staff, following a string of publicly controversial links between English football clubs and convicted rapist Ched Evans, but did not receive a response[40]. Of the "ten big

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[37] Rosie, M. (2015) Outside the Hothouse: Perspectives Beyond the Old Firm In Flint, J and J. Kelly (Ed.) *Bigotry, Football and Scotland* (pp.19-33)

[38] This phenomenon of querying women's authenticity of participation is also seen in other male-dominated hobbies or pursuits like video-gaming (it constituted a strand of the criticism levelled at Anita Sarkeesian as part of the "Gamergate" controversy), and in "geek culture" more generally, in which women are frequently labelled "fake geeks" whose motivations for consuming geek culture are questionable.

[39] Goodall, K. and M. Malloch (2015) Women, Football and Communities: Gender Conceptualisations of 'Sectarianism' In Flint, J and J. Kelly (Ed.) *Bigotry, Football and Scotland* (pp.163-179)

[40] https://commonspace.scot/articles/113/ched-evans-women-s-organisations-urge-the-sfa-to-take-a-lead-on-sex-offender-guidelines-in-scotland[41] http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/30748104

questions facing football" identified by BBC Sport's chief football writer following the collapse of an attempt by Oldham to sign Ched Evans, none relate to girls and women's participation in the sport, to the inclusion of female fans, to the safety of women working for clubs in which a player convicted of rape has been signed, or to any other question around gender equality[41].

It is hard to find evidence that challenges the proposition that the wider football establishment is at best neutral or hostile to women's participation in the game. Tam Cowan, host of football phone-in radio programme, *Off the Ball*, was forced to apologise for a column in the *Daily Record* that reviewed a match that Scotland's women's team had played and which referred to some female footballers as "blokes" and said that "nobody cares about women's football"[42]. Sepp Blatter, head of world governing body FIFA, notoriously said that women should play in tighter shorts to encourage interest in the women's game.[43]

There have been women working for Scottish clubs. The first woman to manage a men's team in a senior division, Helena Costa, was a scout for Celtic before she took on her role at second division French side Clermont Foot in 2014. Nonetheless, football clubs in Scotland, like those elsewhere in the world are male-dominated, with the majority of non-technical managerial and club staff coming from the ranks of professional footballers.

In addition to a lack of capacity to address gender by engaging with women on sectarianism, there are also questions about the clubs' capacity to tackle "toxic masculinity". Although formally abjuring sectarianism, there is no question that the off-the-pitch tensions around the Old Firm have shifted merchandise, as fans seek to demonstrate their allegiance, and created an international profile for the Old Firm matches themselves. Unlike any other match in Scottish football, Old Firm games are routinely covered by foreign media. They are also included in a perennial favourite feature of football writing: the list of the world's most fiercely contested derby matches. Bleacherreport.com ranks the Old Firm the number one derby in Europe[44], Talk Sport features the match thirteenth on its global list[45], Fox Sports

[41] http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/30748104
[42] www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/comedian-says-sorry-for-own-goal-womens-football-column.22299644
[43] http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/15781405
[44] http://bleacherreport.com/articles/975856-world-football-biggest-derby-games-in-europe/page/17
[45] http://www.sport-magazine.co.uk/features/tale-one-city

has it in third spot[46], Sky Sports first[47], and Australian website the World Game in sixth[48]. Fixtures make it onto these lists not for the quality of the play, but the enmity between groups of fans. Contenders that regularly pip Celtic v Rangers to the post include Red Star Belgrade v Partizan Belgrade, at which fans are routinely injured as "seats shatter, concrete crumbles" and fireworks rain down on the stadium, and players are sheltered from flares by riot police shields as they make their way to the dressing room at half-time[49]. The grit of "toxic masculinity" in the relationship between Celtic and Rangers fans brings international profile as well as income.

The advisory group report makes fifteen conclusions and recommendations that are directed at football and football clubs. It cites a report of the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee from 2011, which states:

> The Committee agrees that the football authorities have failed to take firm action to deal with offensive behaviour at football. Over many years, they have allowed the issue to drift. If firm action had been taken earlier, offensive behaviour at football might have been stamped out or at least significantly reduced. It is for the SFA and the SPL [Scottish Premier League] to determine once and for all who has authority in relation to disciplinary issues concerning the supporters of SPL clubs.[50]

The recommendations relate to actions for football's governing bodies and clubs, including tackling sectarianism through youth, amateur, and junior football; disassociating themselves from sectarian behaviour inside and outside grounds; and creating penalties for clubs within UEFA anti-racism guidelines.

It is entirely proper for governing bodies and clubs to act within their scope of influence, but there are questions about how cultures that tacitly enable "toxic masculinity" can act to challenge it. The fact that there has only been one out gay

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[46] www.foxsports.com/foxsoccer/world/lists/top-ten-world-derbies-manchester-united-liverpool-usa-mexico-real-madrid-barcelona-celtic-rangers-032612#photo-title=Rangers+vs.+Celtic&photo=30845104
[47] http://www1.skysports.com/sportzine/27979/8312555/top-10-football-derbies
[48] http://theworldgame.sbs.com.au/article/2014/10/16/11-footballs-biggest-rivalries
[49] http://supportersnotcustomers.com/2013/11/04/welcome-to-hellgrade/
[50] Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (2013) *Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013* p.42

footballer in the history of English professional football, and none in Scottish professional football, speaks volumes about the acceptability of diverging from traditional masculine roles.

There are also significant questions about how the footballing establishment engages with women. The lack of action on sexual harassment of female fans, and the seemingly tepid enthusiasm for including women within the sport at all, indicate a lack of gender competence that fundamentally undermines clubs' ability to deliver whole-population anti-sectarian work.

> **Recommendations on institutional power:**
> - Programmes to tackle sectarianism should be clear about the limitations of institutions that are male-dominated and lack gender competence to engage women and substantively engage with gender as a factor that underpins sectarianism.

4.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

Engender selected the Open Space methodology, in which women set their own agenda for discussion, because we wanted to provide an opportunity to have the widest-ranging possible discussion on sectarianism. Although Goodall and Malloch published after our programme of engagement had started we had the same experience in the first phase of our work[51] that they identify in their recent book chapter.

> Our discussions with women highlighted their ambivalence about the association between football and 'sectarianism'. [...] Indeed, there was some initial reluctance to discuss these wider issues, and often it took time before the women chose to engage with the question of whether sectarianism was of any relevance in their lives or if, instead, it was something they felt able to fence off by using avoidance strategies. [...] One woman exclaimed: 'Can you not ask about sex? You'll get a lot more answers.'[52]

[51] Engender (2014) *Women and Sectarianism in Scotland: Beyond Football*
[52] Goodall, K. and M. Malloch (2015) Women, Football and Communitie: Gender Conceptualisations of 'Sectarianism' In Flint, J and J. Kelly (Ed.) *Bigotry, Football and Scotland* (pp.163-179*)*

Open Space, then, was selected to give women more time and space away from their usual contexts to slowly explore the issues around sectarianism that were of relevance to them.

One of the recommendations that the women agreed upon across discussion sessions was that they enjoyed and saw value in such open-ended discussion spaces. They perceived community work on sectarianism as essential and strongly recommended that it should involve more opportunities for open-ended discussion that were accessible by women. This, along with a recommendation about membership in secret organisations, overlaps ongoing developement of the community empowerment agenda in Scotland and so we briefly consider the interrelationship between sectarianism and community relationships with public bodies.

When describing their local communities, which may have been spatial or thematic or both, women perceived sectarianism to be something that introduced division and separated people from one another. Sometimes this separation was very literal, in the instance of a handrail that divided a lane into 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' sides. Sometimes this disruption was more subtle, but acted against people coming together to discuss shared concerns, or trusting one another's motivations for seeking power and decision-making authority. Some women lacked faith in the transparency and fairness of decisions that were made by public bodies, fearing that they had been unduly influenced by the decision-makers' membership of secret, male-only organisations.

In this way, sectarianism can be seen to cut across participation in communities. *The Pathways through Participation* project found that:

> People's upbringing, family and social connections play an important role in shaping their participation as does the environment in which they live; whether, for instance the voluntary and community sector is thriving locally and whether local groups and organisations have a culture and facilities that support and encourage participation.[53]

[53] Brodie, E., Hughes, T., Jochum, V., Miller, S., Ockenden, N., and D. Warburton (2011) *Pathways through Participation: What Creates and Sustains Active Citizenship?*

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The Electoral Reform Society in Scotland has been bringing together people for over a year to explore and discuss the question "What makes a good Scottish democracy?" Their *Democracy Max* project[54] identifies that "people are interested in local-based and community politics" and that "making deliberative democracy part of a more localised approach could also increase people's faith in the system and confidence in their own ability to influence that process, leading in turn to greater inclination to engage and participate.[55]"

The Pathways through Participation project sounds a warning note about the ways that entrenched inequality in power may affect participation. Although this England-based project was not referring specifically to sectarianism, its words can be applied to that context.

> Deeper and more entrenched issues in society are reflected in disparities in the practice of participation. Issues of power and inequality in society are critical to understanding how and why people get involved and stay involved. The uneven distribution of power, social capital and other resources means that not everyone has access to the same opportunities for participation not do they benefit from the impacts of participation in the same way.[56]

Michael Rosie states in a recent book that "there are very few published accounts, popular or academic, on sectarianism within Scotland's politics, economic structure, employment, housing, social policy, resource allocation or constitutional debate."[57]

We think that it would be helpful to get a clearer sense of whether sectarianism is having an impact on local participation and engagement with public bodies, and we would suggest more qualitative research on this point. This has obvious connections with the community empowerment agenda.

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[54] http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/democracy-max
[55] Electoral Reform Society Scotland (January 2014) Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill Consultation Response
[56] Brodie, E., Hughes, T., Jochum, V., Miller, S., Ockenden, N., and D. Warburton (2011) *Pathways through Participation: What Creates and Sustains Active Citizenship?*
[57] Rosie, M. (2015) Outside the Hothouse: Perspectives Beyond the Old Firm In Flint, J and J. Kelly (Ed.) *Bigotry, Football and Scotland* p.23

Recommendations on community engagement and empowerment:

- Develop a gender-disaggregated evidence base to support understanding of the impact of sectarianism on local participation and engagement with public bodies.

- Publish and maintain a register of public officials' membership of secret organisations, including the Knights of St Columba, Freemasons, and the Orange Order.

- Fund participatory projects that include women and engage with women to tackle sectarianism at the community level.

4.5 EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACHES

The report of the advisory group makes two explicit recommendations for the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland (EHRC) and Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC)[58], and also suggests that there should be a "challenge to the environment of friendly indulgence or passive acceptance of sectarian 'banter' in a manner akin to modern approaches to tackling other social issues, such as racism, gender inequality and homophobia."[59]

We have suggested approaches that might usefully be adapted from anti-sexist bystander and capacity-building work in section 4.2, so in this section we will consider whether sectarianism might fit within the broader context of anti-discrimination law or a human-rights based approach.

4.5.1 Equalities approaches

Anti-discrimination law in Great Britain is contained within the Equality Act 2010, which replaced approximately 113 previous pieces of law and regulation. It was intended to offer greater legal certainty to employers, providers of goods, facilities, and services, and to individuals about what unlawful discrimination was and was not. Equalities law is different in Northern Ireland.

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[58] Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (2013) *Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013* p.57
[59] Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (2013) *Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013* p.53

The Equality Act covers what are called "protected characteristics". These are:

- Age (with regard to employment or training only, with exclusions)
- Sexual orientation
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity (with regard to employment or training only)
- Religion and belief

There are exceptions and exemptions, but broadly speaking individuals can seek legal remedy if they experience discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in employment, or in the provision of goods, facilities and services because they have one of these characteristics.

Additionally, the Equality Act places a proactive duty on public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

This is called the public sector equality duty general election. To help public bodies better meet this duty, each of the three nations covered by the Equality Act 2010 has set out its own regulations (called "the specific duties"). The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 set out a range of requirements, including the need to conduct equality impact assessment of significant policies.

One of the key features of this anti-discrimination framework for sectarianism is that although it creates coherence between protected characteristics the protections against discrimination and harassment apply to single characteristics. Remedy cannot be sought for so-called "multiple discrimination", where a discriminatory act occurs because an individual has two separate protected characteristics. This means that a sectarian act must either be discrimination on the grounds of race, or discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief. It can also be both, but an individual would need to seek remedy separately for each at tribunal or court. This approach would obviously be at odds with the advisory

group's clear position that sectarianism is neither anti-Irish racism nor anti-Catholicism, but it is currently all that the law provides for.

There is greater alignment between current conceptualisations of sectarianism and the proactive approach that public authorities take in response to the specific duties of the public sector equality duty. There has been some enthusiasm for engaging with multiple discrimination and with intersectionality, although there is no evidence to suggest that public bodies are including anti-sectarian work in their prioritised lists of equalities outcomes that they see as most strategically relevant, or in the action plans that generally accompany these.

The employment data that public bodies must publish in their mainstreaming reports is generally segregated by protected characteristic, so it is not possible to ascertain whether individuals who identify as Irish and Catholic, for example, are being treated unfavourably or favourably during recruitment and promotion.

Good relations
The particular 'limb' of the public sector equality duty referred to in the advisory group's recommendations for the EHRC and SHRC[60] is that of fostering good relations. This concept, which emerges from anti-racism, relates to relations between different communities.

As a concept it has gained some traction in England as part of the community cohesion agenda and following the riots of 2011. In Scotland, it is less infrequently invoked, but is most usually found in the context of the interface between lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people and faith communities.

An EHRC good relations brief from 2012 notes that "surprisingly little conceptual work has been done to define and refine what good relations might be. Often a default position of "bad relations" has been adopted leading some to describe "good" as the absence of "bad" things - i.e. good relations equal no rioting, few hate crime incidents, or overt segregation in housing."[61]

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[60] We should note that 'good relations' is not understood by Engender to be a human rights concept, but instead a framing that comes to the Equality Act 2010 via the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
[61] EHRC (2012) *Good Relations in Scotland: A Short Brief*

Helpfully, the Commission sets out some positive domains that can be used to replace this deficit model in assessing whether or not good relations have been fostered in local or national contexts. There are:

- Attitudes
- Interactions
- Personal security
- Participation

These may prove helpful in acting as a framework that public bodies can use to assess whether good relations exist between all of the communities within their ambit, or if sectarianism is frustrating good relations. Engender would urge that such an approach be gendered, with consideration given to relations across different spatial domains and spheres.

4.5.2 Human rights

There are many areas of life in which Engender and other organisations perceive there to be breaches of people's human rights in Scotland. We use the UK's international obligations to make visible some persistent gender inequalities, including the unequal realisation of women's economic, social, and cultural rights and rights afforded under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Many of the conventions and covenants to which the UK is a party have an article that requires the rights to be realised "without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,"[62] or with some other similar form of words.

Non-governmental organisations and national human rights institutions[63] in Scotland could therefore use international obligations to make visible any breaches of rights that occur in connection with sectarianism. The challenge that may exist is that there is not (yet) clear evidence to suggest that the rights of individuals are being breached in this way.

[62] International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights. Article 2.
[63] Scotland has two "A" status NHRIs: the Equality and Human Rights Commission (acting around human rights that pertain to reserved matters) and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (acting around human rights that pertain to devolved matters).

4.5.3 Hate crime

Ironically, one of the possible areas in which individuals' rights may be being breached apropos sectarianism is around a piece of legislation intended to tackle it.

In Scotland, as in many other jurisdictions, when crimes are committed that are motivated by ill-will or malice towards a particular social group, this is considered to be a "hate crime" and this is treated as an aggravating factor. There is no such thing, in Scots law, as a hate crime against women, but crimes can be aggravated on the grounds of religious and racial hatred, among other characteristics.

In addition, the Scottish Parliament passed an act in 2012 that relates specifically to behaviours around football matches. The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 gained Royal Assent on 19 January 2012. The Act provides for two new criminal offences:

- The offence of *"offensive behaviour at regulated football matches"* criminalises offensive or threatening behaviour, including sectarian, homophobic, racist, and other offensive chanting, that is likely to incite public disorder at certain football matches. The offence may be committed at or on the way to a match or a place (other than domestic premises) where a match is being televised. It may be committed by way of behaviour of any kind, including things said or communicated in any other way (e.g. with a banner or t-shirt), or things done.

- The offence of "*threatening communications*" deals with the sending of communications which contain threats of serious violence or threats intended to incite religious hatred. It covers offensive postings on the internet, "*photo-shopped*" offensive images and images on clothing. It also includes "*implied threats*", which covers the posting of bullets and images depicting serious harm. There is a defence that the behaviour was "reasonable" in the particular situation.[64]

The SHRC sets out a number of concerns about the Act in its Getting it Right? Human Rights in Scotland report. A detailed discussion of these is beyond the scope of this report, but they principally engage Article 7 of the European

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[64] Scottish Human Rights Commission (2012) *Getting it Right? Human Rights in Scotland*

Convention on Human Rights, pointing out that the Act is so vague that individuals prosecuted under it may not have known that they were committing an offence. Engender parenthetically notes that the Act does not include sexist chanting or street-based harassment.

The Scottish Government publishes data on the number of charges for religiously aggravated crimes. This includes crimes that have been committed pursuant to the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012[65].

Charges for the last three years are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Charges for religiously aggravated crimes				
	2013-14	2012-13	2012-11	% of population
TOTAL CHARGES	635	762	898	
Charges made for breaches of the Offensive Behaviour at Football etc. Act	48	73	N/A	
Charges for crimes against Catholicism	367 (63%)	388 (57%)		15.9%
Charges for crimes against Protestantism	169 (29%)	199 (29%)		37.9%
Charges for crimes against Islam	48 (8%)	80 (12%)		1.4%
Charges for crimes against Judaism	9 (2%)	27 (4%)		0.1%

An interesting feature of the framing of the law is that the aggravation comes when a feature of the crime is its targeting of a particular *religion* or sect, rather than an individual who either adheres to that particular religion or sect, or is presumed to do so. No figures appear to exist that capture the identity, including the sex, of any victims of religiously aggravated crimes.

[65] McKenna, J. and Kathryn Skivington (2014) *Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland 2013-14*

It is nonetheless interesting to consider the proportions of religiously aggravated crimes against the number of people in Scotland who belong to those religious groups. Broadly speaking, we see over-representation of crimes against Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam, and under-representation of crimes against Protestantism.

Data about victims of religiously-aggravated crime is not gender-disaggregated, but data about the accused is. 90 per cent of accused persons of religiously aggravated crimes are men.

Some women who attended our Open Space sessions were very anxious about the impact of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012. They perceived the goalposts to be shifting around what constituted an offensive song, and their concern was that their children, nieces and nephews, family friends, or partners would be criminalised because of their unwitting participation in previously acceptable fan behaviour.

It is disappointing that the advisory group was not able to make an assessment of the impact or the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012, and we would counsel an early review that also considered its impact on women and girls.

Recommendations on equalities and human rights:
- Guidance should be created on how to foster good relations between communities divided by sectarianism, using the positive domains identified by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

- Public bodies should engage in a gendered way with the good relations agenda in the context of sectarianism as part of their work to respond to the public sector equality duty.

- Gender-disaggregated evidence should be gathered on whether sectarianism is preventing the realisation of individuals' rights in Scotland.

- The impact of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012, including its impact on women and girls, should be assessed.

5

RECOMMENDATIONS

We end the process of reflecting about women and sectarianism in Scotland with more questions that we had at the start. We offer these recommendations, which are a combination of those that emerged from our analysis and those identified by the women who attended the Open Space sessions, as our best thoughts on where Scotland should go next in its efforts to define and tackle this social problem.

Gender and sectarianism

- Future research on sectarianism should focus on the links between masculinity and sectarianism.

- Anti-sectarian projects should explicitly focus on gender, both in terms of directly challenging "toxic masculinity", and in building women's capacity and resilience to resist and challenge it.

- The evaluation of the current sectarianism programme should explicitly consider the gendered outcomes, and should reflect on the gender composition of its beneficiaries.

Community engagement and empowerment

- Women should be empowered through free education and training to take part in their communities.

- Develop a gender-disaggregated evidence base to support understanding of the impact of sectarianism on local participation and engagement with public bodies.

- Fund participatory projects that include women and engage with women to tackle sectarianism at the community level.

- Have more participatory, community level activity that is accessible on a drop in basis.

Education

- End segregation in schooling.

- Teacher training should include tackling sectarianism as well as dealing with other types of discrimination.

Religious organisations

- Train clergy in sectarianism, so that they can open up this conversation within faith groups.

- Bring women together from different faith groups to talk about sectarianism.

Media

- Engage the BBC and other broadcasters in Scotland and encourage them to introduce sectarianism as a topic in soap operas and dramas, to create opportunities for conversation and reflection.

- Challenge news media coverage, and create reporting guidelines that are similar to those encouraging sensitive reporting of mental health issues and violence against women.

Institutions and power

- Programmes to tackle sectarianism should be clear about the limitations of institutions that are male-dominated and lack gender competence to engage women and substantively engage with gender as a factor that underpins sectarianism.

- Public officials should have to declare their membership of the Knights of St Columba, the Masons, and the Orange Order.

Equalities and human rights

- Guidance should be created on how to foster good relations between communities divided by sectarianism, using the positive domains identified by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

- Public bodies should engage in a gendered way with the good relations agenda in the context of sectarianism as part of their work to respond to the public sector equality duty.

- Gender-disaggregated evidence should be gathered on whether sectarianism is preventing the realisation of individuals' rights in Scotland.

- The impact of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012, including its impact on women and girls, should be assessed.

ANNEX A: OPEN SPACE AND WORLD CAFÉ

Mindful of the need not to be overly prescriptive in setting topics for discussion, in light of the significant uncertainties around women's roles in experiencing and enacting sectarianism, we selected methodologies that would enable groups of all sizes to set their own priority topics. To do this, we used a mixture of Open Space and World Café approaches, depending on the size of the group with which we were working.

Open Space
The methodology known as 'Open Space' enables a large group of people to come together, who are passionately interested in a subject, usually because it directly affects them. Open Space has no speakers, a 'top table', or 'experts' in the subject under discussion. It assumes that the people directly involved are experts in the chosen theme or subject because they have 'walked the walk, and talked the talk'. All they have to do is to be enabled to talk, in smaller groups, with other people who are equally interested. An Open Space event is not just a chat between people – it is a purposeful discussion, leading to a gathering-in of views, and what is called 'convergence' of the matters under discussion.

The participants commence the day in a large circle or circles together, break voluntarily into groups which are selected by the whole group, and at the end of the day, come together again in the large circle. In a space of about six hours, including a lunch break, a large group of, say 100 people can emerge with having spent two sessions of work, broken into 20 smaller groups in all, and agreed on some three actions per group, or 60 different lines of action to be taken forward. These actions are then voted upon by the participants, to determine their thoughts on priorities on the day.

World Cafe

World Café captures significant conversations. It uses compelling questions from which real possible solutions might emerge as they relate to the real-life concerns of the group. It aids groups in numbers from 12 up to many hundreds to explore issues in increasingly deeper lines of inquiry.

The process uses principles that connect diverse perspectives, encourages contributions, and shares collective discoveries. It harnesses a collective belief in open and honest conversation on the topic. The topic is genuinely open, and has not already been decided. Finally, there is an agreement by the host organisation to take the results of the café further, after the event.

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