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‘These Things Are Simply Very Difficult’: An Exploration of the Existence of and the Relationship Between Sectarianism and Racism in Present-Day Northern Ireland

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*'These things are simply very difficult':
An exploration of the existence of and the relationship between sectarianism
and racism in present-day Northern Ireland*

Coreen Walsh

Ireland: Transformation of Social and Political Conflict

Fall 2009

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Abstract:

This report is the outcome of a month-long exploratory study of the relationship between sectarianism and racism in present-day Northern Ireland. This exploration compares and contrasts the ideas and beliefs behind sectarianism and racism as well as how these issues exist and continue to be manifested in society. Data was obtained by way of qualitative methods using semi-structured interviews, participant observation and desk research. It is concluded that sectarianism and racism have very similar origins and exist in parallel ways, but these two things are not identical. Sectarianism and racism both represent distorted ways of relating to others and managing difference within society. This paper explores the parallels and differences between these issues within noticeable themes that surfaced during the study. I recommend that this study be furthered by a continued investigation of the same question. The themes could be developed and increased. There could also be an in depth exploration of the interaction within a specific theme.

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Introduction:

To begin, this is a rich topic with many layers, but throughout this paper you will essentially find: two words and one problem – difference. The reason I arrived at this subject for my Independent Study Project was in part because I realized I had been quick to simply view Northern Ireland as only two communities. During my semester in Ireland, I had been so focused on the idea of a ‘sectarian society’ that I disregarded the many other groups of people who make up Northern Ireland. As an outsider, I had overlooked that Northern Ireland is much more than ‘Protestant’ or ‘Catholic.’ It is diverse. This is how I initially arrived at the topic of ‘diversity and responses to diversity’ in Northern Ireland. However, as I began the process of questioning, my project changed. It began with one idea, but that idea quickly erupted into a web of many topics and issues concerning diversity. This is when I stepped back and narrowed my focus slightly to examining the relationship between sectarianism and racism. I acknowledge that this is a very huge area where there is much ground to cover. It is not suitable for only one month, but it is still worth being addressed. These issues are very current and, unfortunately, extremely relevant today.

As my project developed, it took on a very theoretical and philosophical approach. I like philosophy and the exploration of thoughts and meaning. I enjoy thinking about the world and the ways in which we are all connected, because I think these things are important. We must possess a wide worldview and find ways to look beyond ourselves. Furthermore, I love to travel. I find it exhilarating to see new places and different ways of life. There is such beauty in meeting new people and forming relationships. Furthermore, I think it is essential to listen and learn from others. Thus, all of these things impacted the way my project came together in the end.

This project is a culmination of what I knew before, the wisdom I have received and my post-analysis and learning. I have separated my paper into themes in which to compare sectarianism and racism. In order to gain a better understanding, it is helpful to examine these issues through different lenses. My frameworks for looking at sectarianism and racism include: various analytic contexts, the origins of these issues, prejudice and stereotypes, hierarchies and exclusion, the struggle for power, the present situation in Northern Ireland, the transference of behavior, the existence of territories, hate crimes, social class and hope for the future. Within each of these themes, I have demonstrated the complex web of interactions between sectarianism and racism in regard to their existence, manifestation and perpetuation in society.

Methodology:**The process:**

This project is a summary of my experiences, conversations, analysis and learning. As I previously stated, I started with a question concerning diversity and responses to diversity in Northern Ireland. This question exploded into many questions, and I realized that topic was far too multi-faceted. The first few days of my exploration were very much a blur of information and thoughts as I swam in a sea of questions. Thus, I picked a more direct question – the relationship between sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland. I would like to clarify that when I say ‘what is the relationship between sectarianism and racism?’ - I do not mean, ‘if you are sectarian, then are you more racist?’ I am looking at what are these two issues and how do they relate to each other as problems that exist in a place and among its people. It is a theoretical exploration of the relationship between these societal issues in the context of Northern Ireland today, a civilization that is still divided but also increasingly multicultural. Furthermore, Northern Ireland is a place in which you must first look at the past before you can examine the present or future.

This study, of course, led to many more questions, but it was a relatively focused path. It was incredible how much information I gathered and how many aspects of the topic were revealed. I discovered that the single issue of sectarianism or racism is in actuality many issues. Before I began to collect primary data, I had assumed there was a reasonably straightforward relationship between the two. I did not anticipate finding such complexity, but as soon as I began the process of interviewing, I realized it was far more complicated than I had expected. Thus, my initial assumptions about conceivably simple connections were very wrong.

Research methods:

I gathered information for my project through desk research, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. I was based in Belfast for my field study, and although I use the generalization ‘Northern Ireland’ throughout my paper, my primary sources were located in Belfast. I did not use the methodology of meeting with people and participant observation because I felt it was appropriate for my topic. Rather, as I began to use this methodology, my project emerged as a result. The project and the form it has taken is very much a product of the way I began to gather information and ask questions. I allowed my topic to develop as I dived into the ocean of field research.

Literature Review:

As I began to do background research and look for secondary sources, I realized there is not expansive research or literature directly related to this topic. I reviewed the books: *Racism and Anti Racism in Ireland* edited by Ronit Lentin and Robbie McVeigh, *Encounters: How Racism Came to Ireland* by Bill Rolston and Michael

Shannon, and *Divided Society: Ethnic Minorities and Racism in Northern Ireland* edited by Paul Hainsworth. These books certainly address sectarianism and racism in historical and contemporary Northern Ireland; however, while the information I obtained provided a context for understanding, it did not correspond well with the themes that had emerged from my field study. This could possibly be because my topic was so vast and these issues are not commonly explored on such a general, theoretical level. I also perused various articles such as: ‘The Roots of Sectarianism in Northern Ireland’ by Gareth I. Higgins and John D. Brewer, ‘Whiteness, Racism and Exclusion in Northern Ireland: a Critical Race Perspective’ by Paul Connolly and Romana Khaoury, “It goes without saying (well, sometimes)”: Racism, Whiteness and Identity in Northern Ireland’ by Paul Connolly and ‘Prejudice and Tolerance in Northern Ireland’ by Neil Jarman. In addition, I looked to the media as I read reports such as BBC’s ‘Racism in Northern Ireland’ from June 2009 and The Guardian’s interview in July 2009 with Duncan Morrow titled ‘Bridge over Troubles water’. I also read three of Duncan Morrow’s past speeches, which were well articulated and emphasized key aspects of society today. Nevertheless, most of the background information I gathered was not useful as evidence within my paper.

There were a few sources I found very helpful. For instance, the book *Moving Beyond Sectarianism* was key, because it provided an extensive definition of sectarianism. I also found the article ‘Hate Crime in Northern Ireland’ by Neil Jarman coincided very well with my project and provided important in-text support. The article ‘From Good Friday to Good Relations’ by Robbie McVeigh and Bill Rolston was also very applicable as it examined the simultaneous existence of sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland. Many of the supporting quotes that I used in my paper were the result of intentional searching during the writing process, as I needed information to support the ideas and themes raised by my interviews. The quotes I intentionally found, for example, included an article about Jane Elliot’s brown eyes, blue eyes experiment and a speech by Kofi Annan. Furthermore, much of what I went searching for was upon recommendation from the people I had interviewed. These recommendations were very useful, and I will elaborate on the most useful recommendations as I discuss my primary sources.

Analysis of Primary Sources:

The strongest source of information for my project has been through a number of semi-structured interviews (the results of which are located in the appendix). I came to my meetings with a few specific questions, but my questions merely provided a framework for discussion. I was not looking for particular answers, and I found I was blessed with a wealth of knowledge and insight from those I interviewed. I had the opportunity to speak with very intelligent people whose answers substantially shaped my project, and I will explain a little about each of those individuals.

I first met with Zora Molyneaux from Connecting Cultures, which is a community organization that brings people of different backgrounds together. I then met with Darren Ferguson who represents Beyond Skin, a group that aims to address racism

and sectarianism through multi-cultural arts. Next, I had the chance to speak with Eamonn McCallion, Director of Community Relations in Schools (CRIS), which is an organization that assists schools and the wider community in education concerning sectarianism and the challenges of growing diversity. I was able to spend time at the CRIS offices and observe some of their work, on which I will elaborate later. I also interviewed my advisor, Neil Jarman, Director of the Institute for Conflict Research, who is extremely knowledgeable and has done substantial related research. I then met with David Stevens, Corrymeela Community Leader. Corrymeela is a community group that does extensive work towards reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Next, I spoke with Sean O'Baoill who works to build good relations and manage conflict as an associate who practices on the behalf of Mediation Northern Ireland. I then met with academic and researcher Bill Rolston, who is a professor of sociology at University of Ulster. I also spoke with Yuko Chiba, Research Fellow at Queen's University. As my interviewing approached the end, I had the privilege of meeting with Duncan Morrow. He is the Chief Executive Officer of the Community Relations Council, which is the primary body responsible for the funding and development of inter-community relations practice and policy in Northern Ireland. Lastly, I met with Denise Wright who is Race Relations Coordinator of The South Belfast Roundtable on Racism, which does work to eliminate racism and promote community relations. I also conducted two e-mail interviews: one with Dr. Paul Hainsworth, Senior Lecturer of the Social and Policy Research Institute at University of Ulster and the other with Lisa Schenk, a youth worker at Chinese Welfare Association.

My basis for selecting interviewees was largely based on contacts and connections that I had at the onset of the independent study period. I knew that they did work related to my topic, and I wanted to have a conversation with them. One of the main reasons I was able to meet with so many different people was due to the help of David Price. David works for CRIS, and he is very well connected in Belfast. Thanks to his kindness, he helped me arrange several interviews, and I think I owe the success of my research to him.

Also through David Price, I was able to conduct participant observation with CRIS. The staff at CRIS generously allowed me to spend time in their office, ask questions about their work and drink their coffee. One morning, I had the opportunity to go with Jacqui, a CRIS worker, to conduct an audit at a primary school on the Shankill Road on behalf of CRIS and International Fund for Ireland. She was there to gain information regarding how the students felt about their school, their community and Belfast. Thanks to this experience, I gained helpful insight and a youth perspective, which I will expand upon later in my paper.

Each interview I conducted represented different aspects of my project, and I received unique information from each person depending on their individual perspective and experiences. Each was important in different ways, but two interviews in particular led me in directions that were helpful when putting together my final paper. Eamonn McCallion suggested useful background information

concerning these topics as he pointed me to the work and words of Mike Morrissey, Jane Elliot and Kofi Annan, all of which I address in my paper. Eamonn McCallion also prompted me to think more in depth about the power of language and words, and this has become a notable element of my paper. Next, David Stevens pointed me in the direction of philosophy and Ludwig Wittgenstein, of whose ideas I utilize substantially as I introduce the concepts of sectarianism and racism. David Stevens also led me to the book *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, which was extremely helpful in emphasizing the origin of positive, human need, which I discuss at the onset of my paper.

I recognize that the voices from which I gathered information are not necessarily a representative sample. Many of these voices come from academic perspectives and several are also those of practitioners and peace builders. The majority of individuals I met with are male, which perhaps raises an interesting question about the percentage of females in this field. Furthermore, there is certainly a strong middle class bias concerning these issues as well. I was not able to speak with many people on the ground level, and I did not receive any perspectives from members of the most affected communities. Interestingly, several of the people I came in contact with are connected with Corrymeela in some way – David Stevens, Zora Molyneaux, David Price, Ann Marie White, Duncan Morrow and perhaps others in ways I am not aware of! All in all, it has been fascinating to merge these many voices and weave together various threads of society.

Interview Records and Organization:

In most all of my interviews, I employed the use of a voice-recorder. The use of this was a blessing and a curse, but it ended up greatly shaping my project. I transcribed each of my interviews afterwards, which took a great deal of time. Nevertheless, when I reviewed my interview results I realized that I had been provided with brilliant quotes, and it was essential to utilize them as I wrote my paper.

Thus, when the time came to structure my paper, I began to extract and organize direct quotes from my interviews. I felt the words each person used were powerful, because they were words formed by insiders with education, experience and understanding. In recognizing the power of language, I think it is important to accurately represent the language people utilized when helping me understand the meaning of and interaction between sectarianism and racism. Furthermore, I received explanations from experts in ways that I could not have possibly said any better. For these reasons, in order to share my findings in an understandable way, I have dissected interviews and re-grouped the thoughts of various individuals.

Through this process, ‘language’ emerged as a strong concept for me. We often carelessly toss around words like sectarianism or racism or difference, but words are important and actually shape a great deal of what we believe. Part of changing our beliefs and attitudes is making more sense of the language we use and having a more in depth understanding of the meaning of common words, phrases and ideas.

As I continued to review my interview results, themes started to emerge and develop. I found that what people had told me began to form related categories. I did not plan for things to be structured or presented this way. Rather, it happened as I asked questions and allowed the exploration to shape itself. When I reviewed my information I began to see how everything could fit together. I then had to put these ideas in a way that helped me to better understand. My real understanding began to take place as I reflected on my completed field study. At that time, a perspective came into view and patterns began to surface.

I attempted to present the paper in sections that made sense to me as a progression of thought and understanding, but it was difficult to find an appropriate order. The parts and pieces overlap and fit together in a multitude of different ways. The exchange of similarities and differences that take place between sectarianism and racism is all intertwined. These problems occur simultaneously in society, so it becomes messy when you attempt to pull them apart and dissect the individual elements.

As another means of organization, I wanted to highlight words in red within the interview quotes. I felt this would provide a way of drawing attention to the points that stood out to me. Unfortunately though, I could not print in color, so I tried to distinguish important words and phrases with italics instead.

Problems Encountered:

As far as other hindrances, I sometimes felt uncomfortable asking questions about sectarianism and racism; these negative aspects of society. I was worried it seemed I was attempting to provide my 'American insight.' Of course, I did not feel as if I had wisdom to offer, and as I asked questions, I was beginning to see how these problems are universal. Sectarianism, racism and similar issues of managing difference surface all around the world in many ways, and I have only most recently learned about that process specifically within Northern Ireland. So despite my worry that I was being judged as a presumptuous outsider, everyone I met was very welcoming and helpful. Furthermore, they graciously imparted their knowledge to me, the American.

Overall, my field study experience went very smoothly. People willingly agreed to meet with me, and I was able to conduct almost too many interviews! (Talk about an embarrassment of riches!) At the end, a few meetings did not work out as I had hoped but that just made me appreciate how successful all of my previous interviews had been. My biggest problem initially was being overwhelmed by the topic I found myself exploring. It was a large amount of information to wrap my head around, and it was challenging to find a way to understand and synthesize these things.

Review of learning from fieldwork methods:

Until now, I had never completed a research project such as this. It was new for me to base my research so heavily on field study. At first I was uncomfortable with the interview process, but then I learned how to best prepare for each interview, which made me more confident. I quickly understood the importance of researching the interviewee's history and what he or she had done. I also become more practiced in asking questions that were tailored to who I was speaking with as well as asking direct questions in order to obtain pertinent information. Additionally, I learned about adaptability and the necessity to truly 'go with the flow.' I think it was helpful for me to allow field study to guide my research, because it revealed reoccurring themes and what was important. I also learned about accessibility and the way this shaped the information that I gathered. Academics and those at the frontlines of their work are much more accessible, willing to provide information and practiced at answering questions; thus, professors, researchers and directors were who provided me with a great deal of my information. Lastly, as I have mentioned, the tape recorder proved to be very helpful, and I would not conduct fieldwork without it, despite the amount of effort it requires afterwards. All in all, this was a very valuable learning experience in the art of research and field study.

Framework for Understanding:

My exploration of sectarianism and racism has had a strong theoretical element; but of course, an abstract exploration does not suffice, because these issues are not just concepts. Sectarianism and racism both exist in the world as both perceptions and modes of interacting with one another. They exist because belief systems and ways of thinking become realities and are then acted out between individuals and groups of people. Sectarianism and racism are symptoms of distorted ways of living together and sharing the earth.

I use the word ‘we’ in my discussion of these issues, because although this examination is in the context of Northern Ireland, these are fundamental problems that plague humans all across the globe in a variety of different contexts and situations. We need to analyze these social and political phenomena because achieving understanding seems the only way to move beyond them. Learning must come from the heart in order to create real understanding and change.

It is very difficult to distinguish between *why* these issues exist and *how* they exist, because it is a complex cycle that continues to perpetuate these problems in society. Barriers continue to form... *walls* are built higher and higher (metaphorically speaking, although we have seen the building of physical walls between groups as well)... with each thought, word and action.

As an opening framework for thought and understanding, Ludwig Wittgenstein provides useful insight as I ask the questions: ‘What is sectarianism? What is racism? How do they relate and interact in Northern Ireland?’ Wittgenstein was a 20th century philosopher who played an important role in analytic philosophy during his time. The guiding notion developed by Wittgenstein is that of ‘family resemblances’:

There is no reason to look, as we have done traditionally — and dogmatically — for one, essential core in which the meaning of a word is located and which is, therefore, common to all uses of that word. We should, instead, travel with the word's uses through "a complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing." Family resemblance also serves to exhibit the lack of boundaries and the distance from exactness that characterize different uses of the same concept.¹

These questions lend complex answers that require a lack of exactness. The answers require that there is movement and flexibility. These answers cannot be put in a box. These questions do not provide answers that are either this or that. Rather, there are similarities and differences between sectarianism and racism. There are family resemblances.

¹ Biletzki, Anat, Matar, Anat, "Ludwig Wittgenstein", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/wittgenstein/>.

“They *aren't just the same*. It's important to have some understanding of the difference.” (David Stevens)

“Racism is similar to sectarianism, but not being exactly the same as. It takes the *same forms*.” (Neil Jarman)

I have found this fuzziness between the similarities and differences to be interesting. As exemplified with this next quote, sectarianism and racism have, in general, the same characteristics, but that does not mean they are in fact the same or equal.

When describing sectarianism, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism* explains:

It has both inner and outer aspects. Sectarianism is about what goes on in people's hearts and minds, and it is about the kind of institutions and structures created in society. It is about people's attitudes to one another, about what they do and say and the things they leave undone or unsaid.²

It seems to me the word 'racism' could be substituted for 'sectarianism' here, and the definition would work equally as well. Before I began my investigation, I knew racism and sectarianism had similar elements. I knew that they were, as said in *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, 'close relatives.' However, I didn't know that the relationship, particularly within the context of Northern Ireland, was so complex. The issue of *complexity* has been a reoccurring theme as I searched for a way to understand the link... the connection... between sectarianism and racism.

As I examine this complexity, I reference Wittgenstein again. He emphasized that:

When investigating meaning, the philosopher must "look and see" the variety of uses to which the word is put... "Don't think but look!"; and such looking is done *vis a vis* particular cases, not thoughtful generalizations. In giving the meaning of a word, any explanatory generalization should be replaced by a description of use.³

In a sense, this is what I am trying to do. I am trying to understand sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland through the ways in which they are manifested in society - their 'use' in society.

Words shape the world we live in. Words shape our realities. Furthermore, our words are the manifestation of our attitudes, assumptions and beliefs, which are at the core of these issues. Problems arise when our beliefs reflect ideas that are toxic to society and produce destructive behavior. It is necessary to then change the underlying belief as well as eradicate the negative action itself. I think the ways in

² Liechty, Joseph, and Cecelia Clegg. *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*. Dublin, Ireland: Columba Press, 2001. Print.

³ "Ludwig Wittgenstein"

which our beliefs become manifest is, in effect, our ‘descriptions of use.’ Thus, I will be looking at the existence of sectarianism and racism in society in order to better understand their meaning.

There is a starting point from which all things develop. Sectarianism and racism did not suddenly come into existence. Therefore, the next section draws attention to the source of these issues.

Similar Roots:

Before further exploring this multifaceted relationship between sectarianism and racism, it is important to recognize their similarity in origin. An expanded version of the previous definition raises an important point that needs to be addressed before proceeding:

“Sectarianism...
 ... is a system of attitudes, actions, beliefs, and structures
 - at personal, communal, and institutional levels
 - which always involves religion, and typically involves a negative mixing of religion and politics
 ... *which arises as a distorted expression of positive, human needs especially for belonging, identity, and the free expression of difference*
 ... and is expressed in destructive patterns of relating:
 - hardening the boundaries between groups
 - overlooking others
 - justifying or collaborating in the domination of others
 - physically or verbally intimidating or attacking others.”⁴

“A distorted expression of *positive, human needs* recognizes that we need belonging and identity. *We need borders and boundaries.* But borders and boundaries in themselves carry danger. Sectarianism is a bad, but its actually a distortion of a good, because we all live in groups and there has to be some boundaries and borders. So therefore, you can’t just start from sectarianism is a bad, you have to see why differences become sectarian.” (David Stevens)

Sectarianism and racism have the same beginnings. We all need a sense of community; we all need a group in which to belong. It is the way people have survived and functioned since the beginning of time. There is importance in life together, and as a means of manageably sustaining this group environment, we need between us some sort of borders. Sectarianism and racism are a distortion of community life, which is a good and essential part of surviving, living and thriving. However, as David Stevens pointed out, there is danger when these boundaries become too strong and differences become emphasized and maintained for the

⁴ Liechty and Clegg

wrong reasons. We have strayed from how life was intended to be, and this is the source of these issues. There has been a mutation of positive divisions.

We see the consequences of distorting this good in terms of sectarianism and racism:

“They rely on the same roots and substructures. They both rely on communities being very different from each other and *that difference is being maintained* by hostilities and discrimination. So you are *trying to sustain what you are* and keep the other community different from what you are – absolutely distinct.”

(Neil Jarman)

Having recognized the existence of this positive, human need, as a need to have a set community, we can begin to look at the way these two systems function.

Prejudice and Stereotypes:

Briefly, I want to take the time to look at the ideas of prejudices and stereotypes. Perhaps this is another area, where problems arise due to a distortion of a good. Prejudice is defined, by the Encarta World English Dictionary, as ‘a preformed opinion, usually an unfavorable one, based on insufficient knowledge, irrational feelings, or inaccurate stereotypes.’

A stereotype is defined, also by the Encarta World English Dictionary, as ‘an oversimplified standardized image or idea held by one person or group of another.’

“Prejudice to me is not wrong. It’s *an inherent ability to make complicated life easier*. There is nothing wrong with prejudice. It’s how our behavior model because of prejudices is affected. We make assumptions naturally, but we need to be self-aware and understand that some of our thinking is not rational.”

(Eamonn McCallion)

In 1968, Jane Elliot, an American schoolteacher, did an experiment with her class now known as the “Brown Eyed, Blue Eyed Experiment.” She divided the class according to brown eyes and blue eyes and told one group that they were essentially superior to the other. Her students quickly assumed matching roles based on which group they were a part of. One summary of her results explains:

Jane Elliott had proved - more dramatically than she had ever thought possible - how much discrimination is soaked up subconsciously, by both the oppressor and the oppressed. She had not told her pupils to treat each other differently, only that they *were* different; and yet they developed the characteristic responses of discrimination. Jane Elliott felt that they did this because they had already absorbed discriminatory behaviour from their parents and other adults. On the

plus side, she had also proved that racism can be unlearned as quickly as it can be learned.⁵

Jane Elliot helped society to understand that discrimination is a learned social behavior, and furthermore, if you have learned something, you can also unlearn it.

In 2001, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan emphasized in his opening address to the World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa that we are not born intolerant:

“Let us remember that *no one is born a racist*. Children learn racism as they grow up, from the society around them -- and too often the stereotypes are reinforced, deliberately or inadvertently, by the mass media. We must not sacrifice freedom of the press, but we must actively refute pseudo-scientific arguments, and oppose negative images with positive ones -- teaching our children and our fellow citizens not to fear diversity, but to cherish it.”⁶

Although these experiments and quotes specifically speak of racism, I think that sectarianism can be inserted just as well. When we look at learned societal behaviors, we can see how prejudices and stereotypes become dangerous. Although it is necessary and helpful to have simplified ways of viewing our complex world, there is danger in generalizations and lumping people into categories.

“Prejudices are *abstract*... its different once we know a person individually.”
(Zora Molyneaux)

Furthermore, “stereotypes aren’t wrong, but *stereotypes + power = discrimination*.” (Denise Wright)

Power is a key element in both sectarianism and racism that will be addressed as my study continues. I think Jane Elliot’s experiment also emphasizes this element by demonstrating what happens when differences become defined in terms of superiority or power. When differences are combined with a struggle for power as well as a sense of ‘better or worse’ we begin along a treacherous path towards disaster.

⁵ "Jane Elliot and the Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes Exercise." *BBC Guide Entry*. 19 Aug 2003. Web. 19 Nov 2009. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A1132480>>.

⁶ "Must Banish from New Century Hatred and Prejudice of Past." *World Conference Against Racism*. 31 Aug 2001. Department of Public Information News and Media Services Division, Web. 20 Nov 2009. <<http://www.un.org/WCAR/pressreleases/rdd6.htm>>.

Hierarchy of Differences and Exclusion:

It is when we begin to explain and understand our differences in terms of hierarchy that we begin to form boundaries that exclude people from one group or another.

“They’re both *species of exclusion*. In sectarianism there is exclusion and there is a *sense of superiority*. And I suppose in racism, there’s exclusion and a sense of superiority as well. In that sense, it’s about the family resemblance. However, you can’t remove the color difference – so that’s visibly there. You could in theory remove a religious difference – people could convert.” (David Stevens)

However, there is another side to this argument. Perhaps, even if people wanted to, they could not remove their ‘religious differences’ once the line has been drawn.

“Racism is not based on color. It is a process of racialisation. We look at difference and arrange *difference on a hierarchy* and having done that we find justification for our hierarchy, so we say that ‘our superiority is based on your inferiority.’ This could be due to your skin color, your cultural characteristics, your religion or any of these signs of ethnicity. Racism can be based on differences that are real (skin color), exaggerated (nose size), or imaginary/fictitious. Racism places the emphasis on difference rather than the emphasis on difference causing racism. It’s a social construction that looks for difference, and on that basis, it does not have to be skin color. Sectarianism is a form of looking for difference... sometimes real, in this case, mostly exaggerated and sometimes fictitious. It is looking for difference and building on that difference a whole structure of institutions and justifications and everything else. So sectarianism is a form of racism, it’s our localized version. There are similarities such as the ability of people to cross over from one group to another. Can a black person become white? One of the forms racism takes is the *rigidity of boundaries* - you *cannot cross over*. Of course, this rigidity is fluid at the edges, sometimes race is overlooked or disregarded due to wealth, etc. But for rigid loyalists here, a Catholic can never be anything but a Catholic, there is no such thing as an ex-Catholic.” (Bill Rolston)

In Northern Ireland, sectarian divisions can be difficult to visibly see. Racism is different from sectarianism in that there tends to be a physical difference in terms of race. However, as our SIT (School for International Training) group learned in a workshop at Mediation Northern Ireland with Sean O’Baill, though differences in Northern Ireland may seem like blurred distinctions to an outsider, an insider can quickly tell who is who. People in Northern Ireland can distinguish whether someone belongs to the Protestant or Catholic community based on someone’s name, what school they went to or even how they say the letter ‘H’.

“There’s an international dimension to racism and the language of anti-racism, which is different from the language of sectarianism, which is our own. This

means that people see it [racism]. Its much more visible to people coming from outside.” (Duncan Morrow)

As we look at these divisions being formed, whether based on visible differences or not, there is similarity in the consequences when differences become associated with the possession of power, or the lack thereof.

The Struggle for Power:

As the quotes below explain, both sectarianism and racism are systems that are bred and perpetuated by a disparity of power. As people, such as Duncan Morrow, have suggested problems arise when groups are not just different but enemies as well. Subsequently, their differences such as religion or skin color or ethnicity become the focus as to why they are divided. However, in actuality the issues are much deeper and the reasons for opposition stem from hostilities that are more than ‘skin-deep’ (or ‘church-deep’ if you will). Of course, people are aware of their deeper emotions surrounding the division, but this tends to not be expressed explicitly. It is when we begin to look beyond the surface that we see the significant role of power.

“Sectarianism has clearly something of religious difference at its core. It’s different dimensions of the same faith - a small part, one part against the other. That’s the traditional dimension. However, what it is is the imposition of a *Them and Us* pattern on the basis of that kind of a division. Some people think it’s about religion or it’s about national identity, but effectively the outcome is, you impose a Them and Us identity which helps these divisions. In some sense, racism is the same, but racism uses a marker of race, language, color - these different types of markers. It’s the Them and Us pattern in which Them and Us *are not just different, but rivals*. They’re not just different. If they’re just different, then hey, it doesn’t matter, but the issue is they’re actually *competitors for power*. So power is in play and the issue of power is the issue of *if you win, I lose* - the zero sum game.” (Duncan Morrow)

“There are some similarities between the two, in that they depend on the viewing of another community or another group of people as radically different from you and to some extent there is a *hostility* there. Usually a sense of, with racism, *power differentials* and racism tends to be used to reinforce those differentials. It’s usually seen as a facet of the dominant community to keep the minority community in place. There are more variations of racism now than just the power relationship of the dominant community suppressing the minority community. There are also tensions and hostilities that can be within minority communities or from the minority to the majority community. For example, black people can be racist as well. And with sectarianism there is a history of similarities, in terms of it being seen as something that is predominantly perhaps the Protestant community directed towards the Catholic community – and kind of replicating the Protestant community as the white community and the Catholic community as the black community – and similar to racism in that the power differentials were

directed that way. Practically, you see sectarianism within both communities, and therefore there is an element of reciprocal relationships.” (Neil Jarman)

In the Northern Irish context, although power is a key element in both, the distinction in the issue of power between sectarianism and racism is that power is played out differently. The Protestant and Catholic communities, as groups that express sectarianism towards each other, are at a much more equal level in terms of power. These two warring groups tend to find themselves dangerously close in terms of power, which I think actually causes more tension because both sides possess a legitimate chance of achieving their aims. In the case of racism, there is much more inequality in terms of which group holds the power. The ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland are in fact the minority power holders, although racism can still be expressed from both sides. In a sense, with racism it is still a struggle for power, but it is an attempt to gain any sort of control or right within the system – rather than a battle for the overall system. Perhaps ‘power’ is too strong of word. In essence, I think it is a desire to feel as though you, as a member of your community, have a place and a voice in society. It is the desire to possess this voice without feeling as though it may be taken away, overwhelmed or suppressed. It is the desire to not feel threatened, which is why such focus is given to the differences between the groups – the differences are the visible or tangible representations of that threat.

“In Northern Ireland terms, the issue is we have had - it wasn’t called racism here, because it wasn’t a color issue - but we’ve had a sense of competing groups competing for power at the root of our social and political organization here for generations. Race, in the sense of a visual distinctive difference or even a genetic difference, at some kind of core element was never really part of it. The projecting issue, the reason why people couldn’t be included, was because of religion. That was the divide and all sorts of political things followed: who Them and Us were, what kind of access to politics who has, what allegiances you had, and then economics because it also affected peoples access to jobs. This was all dependent on religion, and its called sectarianism. But essentially it was a mode of people living together trying to distinguish the good and the bad, the in and the out on the basis of this kind of thing, and it had big effect, because it was also about *struggle for power*. ” (Duncan Morrow)

I think that this is the problem. When a *positive, human need* is combined with the struggle for power, it creates a distortion that leads to divisions. Elements of society such as communities, politics or the economy are all fine in themselves and they help make life more manageable. We need ways of simplifying and organizing society, and I think it is okay to have allegiances within these functional aspects; however, there becomes a competition for power among the various elements. It follows that we cannot fight for control alone, so we fight between our groups. These divisions then lead to the other group being seen as a threat, which creates fear and distrust. It then follows that what is feared is what is different from you, and after strong divisions have been established a situation is created where what is feared is the unknown.

“Both have the same roots of *Fear, Hate & Ignorance.*” (Denise Wright)

“It’s about exclusion. The underlying principle is ‘you are less than me,’ but it actually must drive from ‘*I fear I’m less than you.*’ The drive must be ‘I fear I’m less than you, but I have the power to get rid of you... to act out on that.’ So it’s the two coming together – ‘*I’m frightened of you and I have the power to expel you.*’ If systems adopt the defense of one group against another on this basis, racism [or sectarianism] is not just an individual thing; it’s a systemic issue. It’s right at the core of the system and that happens when you have political capture of the system by one group or the other. You get direct exclusion as policy.”

(Duncan Morrow)

I think this is an interesting concept; the idea that the driving force is ‘I fear I’m less than you.’ I believe this is a fear that all humans can relate to at some level. It is insecurity in our self and a fear of elimination. I think it is natural then to feel the need to defend what we are or what we have, when faced with people who might have the ability to threaten that. Despite this possible justification, Northern Ireland today reflects the consequences of these responses, such as the institutionalization of both sectarianism and racism, which I will explain further in the next section.

Current Situation in Northern Ireland:

After having briefly introduced a few elemental features of these issues, this section looks at present-day Northern Ireland as it relates to both sectarianism and racism together. I think this is important because they are intertwined and exist simultaneously in society. However, I will broadly paint a current picture of sectarianism and racism individually. Nevertheless, even within these ‘individual’ pictures, you will see a criss-crossing of the two issues.

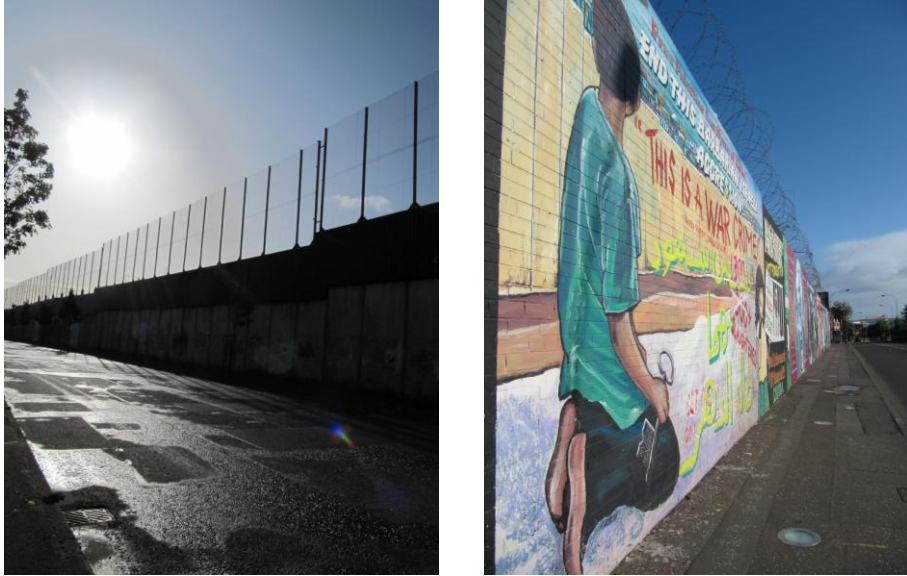
Sectarianism:

Northern Ireland is still very much a divided, sectarian society. After spending even a short amount of time there, this is quite visible. It is visible, for example, in terms of the divisions of residential areas through peace walls, of which even more have been built since the peace agreement in 1998. These statistics help to paint a picture:

By 2005 there were forty-one government authorized peacelines or interface barriers across Belfast, with others in Derry Londonderry, Lurgan and Portadown. But there are also numerous other barriers and defense structures that serve to segregate and divide the two communities.⁷

⁷ Jarman, Neil. "Hate Crime in Northern Ireland: An Overview." (January 2008): 8. Print.

One example of a ‘peaceline’ or ‘interface’ in Northern Ireland is the wall that divides the Protestant community surrounding the Shankill from the Catholic community surrounding the Falls Road. Both sides of this wall are represented by these images:



Shankill Road (left) and Falls Road (right) in Belfast
(Photographs taken by Coreen Walsh)

While a picture is worth a thousand words, the division is also evident in the things people say as well as what they do not say. I had the opportunity to hear the perspective of some young members of the Protestant community when I visited a primary school on the Shankill Road. As part of an International Fund for Ireland and Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) project, I was able to listen to what children of Year 3 and Year 6 thought of their school, their community and Belfast. I was surprised to find that there was still a strong feeling of sectarianism (although they did not use that word) among very young kids today. They expressed that there was fighting in the area and that ‘bad boys’ threw glass bottles and stones. When asked why there was a wall, one young boy responded ‘to stop Catholics from throwing things at Protestants.’ They said there were houses being burnt and people calling names. One little girl said she liked being at school, because ‘there is railings and no one can get me.’ One young boy was clearly taken aback when he found out that the facilitator from CRIS was a Catholic and said, ‘I didn’t know you were a Catholic. This is a Protestant area.’

Inserted on the next page are pictures produced by two Year 3 students when asked to write or draw their answers to questions 7 and 8 of the audit. I will interpret what each says, because it can be difficult to discern.

Question 7) ‘What do you like about living in your community?’

The first student’s response is, “I love being safe in my house.” The second student’s response is, “I like to play in the bands.”

Question 8) ‘What would you change about living in your community?’

The first student’s response is, “I hate my street. It always is getting glass bottles thrown at.” The second student’s response is, “ I don’t like the bad boys throwing stones.”

Through organizations such as CRIS, there is work being done to help educate and bridge the divide between the two communities. CRIS also helps young people meet students their age from other schools, and some of the children understand the importance of this integration. As one young boy said, ‘Even if they have a different religion, you can learn how they live.’

“Young people still have a very astute understanding of sectarianism and segregation. The underlying issues still exist, although violence is less.” (Eamonn McCallion)

These underlying issues are perpetuated by the way sectarianism remains effectively very institutionalized in Northern Irish society. These patterns seem so established and *normal*, that they appear to be participated in almost unconsciously. It is a way of life, as described in this article:

There is no area of social life in Northern Ireland which is not sectarianised, or structured in some way to be sectarian. The correlation between political party and ‘perceived religion’ is as absolute as it ever was. Sectarianism continues to profoundly structure where people are born, where they go to school, where they live, where they work, where they socialise, what sports teams they support and where they are buried.”⁸

“You can see it in many *legal, institutional forms*. The fact that kids are sent to separate schools in some sense is legitimizing the sense that ‘they’re different from us. They go to their own schools.’ That emphasizes that fact that there is a difference there –which is also expressed by churches and politicians. So people are saying ‘We’re not sectarian, but we’re just trying to protect our own.’ It’s a bit like apartheid; separate development. In some sense, if you’re emphasizing that we have to do ‘ours’ differently and separately from ‘theirs,’ you can’t help but have a sense of there being superiority, inferiority... better, worse... proper, incorrect... all those kinds of positions between.” (Neil Jarman)

⁸ McVeigh, Robbie, and Bill Rolston. "From Good Friday to Good Relations: sectarianism, racism and the Northern Ireland state." *Race & Class*. 48.4 (2007): 17. Print.

Racism:

While continuing to hold that image of sectarianism in mind, let us look at society in relation to racism. After a political peace concerning the sectarian conflict was established, what has happened in the last decade or so is that Northern Ireland has become a very different place. It has become an increasingly multicultural society. Of course, this has been happening all over the world due to increased globalization, but the change has been particularly dramatic in Northern Ireland where prior to this there has been very limited diversity. Here is a short summary of Northern Ireland's history of minority ethnic populations:

Although the Irish ethno-political landscape has been dominated by the relationships between Catholics and Protestants, there has long been a variety of other minority communities on the island. ... Collectively these communities have been in small numbers, in the 1990s the minority ethnic population accounted for barely one percent of the total population, and until relatively recently they have had only a limited profile in any of the histories of Ireland or Northern Ireland. ... The increase in the local awareness of racism and in the number of racist incidents occurred during a time when the minority ethnic, national and religious communities were growing in size, in prominence and in visibility. There is some evidence of a rise in the minority ethnic population through the 1990s as the armed conflict came to an end and the peace process was established ... From 2001 onwards the growing black, Chinese, south Asian and Filipino communities were joined in turn by migrants from a range of European countries. ... The exact numbers of new migrants in Northern Ireland is uncertain due to the difficulties of accurate enumeration, but it is probable that the minority ethnic, national and faith population of Northern Ireland has at least doubled between 2001 and 2007.⁹

“We’ve started to get refugees and asylum seekers. Migrant workers (particularly from Eastern Europe) have also come into Northern Ireland as well, so we’ve *become a more diverse society*. This has happened *very quickly* and our capacity to handle this is not all that great.” (David Stevens)

Thus, this is the context in which racism becomes a current and talked about issue. Just as the local communities were settling after years of physical violence and unrest, the ethnic minority population grew very rapidly. Certainly, this change was not anticipated. Neither the Protestant nor the Catholic community had sufficient time to establish a sense of security, physically or psychologically.

“Essentially we are now mixed peoples, and you get a deep reaction sometimes from people of the previous group, because they are frightened that they are now

⁹ Jarman 10-11.

losing their place, which was already precarious in a social sense, to people who are coming in and racism emerges very often." (Duncan Morrow)

"People have arrived and changed the community when the community *wasn't expecting this change* after the peace process. *Survival* is very deep-seated¹⁰ and it is hard to change so quickly. Due to the legacy of conflict, *for 30 years being afraid and suspicious kept people alive*. So now, there is too much change too quickly. There are newcomers who people can't help but be suspicious of. Furthermore, people don't feel they have a choice in all of this. In addition, the economic downturn makes change more threatening when communities already feel like they are suffering economically. Change is also a threat to their traditional background." (Denise Wright)

A noteworthy point is made in this quote about the innateness of survival and the way suspicion was a necessity to survive. Throughout the violent years of the Troubles, people had to be cautious. When unfamiliar people were around, it often meant danger. These issues relate to dimensions such as the transference of learned behavior and the creation of territories, which I will discuss in the upcoming sections. The transference of suspicion of 'other' in the face of very rapid change is understandable. Nevertheless, just because we understand something does not mean we should condone it. Although this is a recently emerged issue, it does not mean it is okay.

"These are *new* and complex issues, and we are still figuring out how to deal with them on a social and political level. In terms of racism, there are hate crimes but it is also *institutionalized*. It is difficult to integrate into society. There are very complicated rules and regulations, particularly for people who just arrived here with usually nothing! Newcomers need adequate housing, healthcare etc. before they can be integrated into society! We need to remove the social, political and economic integration barriers." (Denise Wright)

As Denise Wright mentions, there are various ways in which it is difficult for ethnic minorities to integrate into society due to the way the system is established. The system is biased against them, although it is most likely unintentional. It seems that racism is institutionalized in society to some extent; however, I think it is even more 'unwittingly'¹¹ present than sectarianism in societal structures. Nonetheless, the role of the state cannot be disregarded in the matter, but this facet of the issue is not necessarily specific to Northern Ireland. An acknowledgment of these issues elsewhere and a more general analysis of the part of the state is emphasized here:

¹⁰ 'deep-seated' vs. 'deep-seeded' – in the interview, I thought I heard 'deep-seeded' which is the wrong word, but interestingly, these issues do have deep seeds in society

¹¹ "Racism." *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*. 24 Feb 1999. Web. 20 Nov 2009. <<http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/sli-06.htm#6.6>>

... First, not only is the state not above racism, but the survival and replication of racism in its most fundamental and structural sense is entirely dependent on the state; second, the state's role in the reproduction of racism is neither constant nor fixed, but mutates to suit wider geopolitical and economic developments.¹²

Furthermore, another layer of complexity is added to the interaction between sectarianism and racism today when looking at the history of silence concerning sectarianism. There is a hushed sense in Northern Ireland about the past of sectarian divisions and the way they still exist in the present. There is a refusal to outwardly acknowledge sectarianism in society. People seem to live in multiple levels of reality. There is the surface level of every day life where communities are able to coexist, and then at a deeper level the underlying issues are left unspoken. Thus, historical divisions are easily unnoticed by outsiders in towns like Belfast, which complicates the relationship between sectarianism and racism.

“Immigrants and newcomers are unaware about sectarian divides. For example, they don't understand the meaning of the different flags or the segregated school system. No one gives them advice or *talks about these issues openly*, so they become at risk and vulnerable when they don't understand which area they are living in or walking through. People can become sectarian, not racist targets.”
(Denise Wright)

It is a divided society, but it is a society divided in silence. So when newcomers enter, it is as though there are mine fields, and they do not know when they are entering dangerous or contentious territory. This blurs the lines between sectarianism and racism. Sometimes it is difficult to discern which differences are being targeted.

“In the way of exclusions, if you're not quite sure of the differences between people there are problems.” (David Stevens)

Additionally, there is the added element of the recent economic downturn and the way financial difficulties create greater tension in any society.

“Northern Irish society is no different from any society in that in times of economic hardship and when there is a small group of ‘the other’, they are always seen as a threat. This is because lack of employment, housing, etc. means there is an *unstability of society* - particularly in a society that has never done well with dealing with difference, so how does it deal with difference as it expands in a rapid way that the society is not used to.” (Eamonn McCallion)

I feel the emphasis here should be change. Northern Ireland is a changing place in a changing world. An influx of foreigners at a time of economic instability can create a situation where it seems as though the newcomers are the agents of change, although they are actually subjects of it as well. These issues are being experienced

¹² McVeigh and Rolston 6.

in the context of change, the difficulty of which I will further elaborate on in a moment.

There tend to be specific circumstances that cause arriving ethnic minorities to be viewed as the carriers of change:

Large influxes of foreign workers can awaken xenophobia, particularly when the host country's population is ethnically and culturally homogenous and the foreign workers' culture and appearance are significantly different or when economic downturns heighten the tendency to assign blame to others.¹³

Xenophobia is an interesting concept and can be defined as, "An unreasonable fear, distrust, or hatred of strangers, foreigners, or anything perceived as foreign or different."¹⁴

"Who are these people? Who am I? All of these changes going on raise these questions, and I think its not surprising that negotiating this is painful. There are pluses of having a diverse society as it offers opportunities of creativity and so on. The United States has had a tradition of being a melting pot but European societies less so. There are realities here in that differences can lead to massive scapegoating in the context of economic crisis. There can also be a loss of national identity and pride. There are dangers here. We shouldn't be too euphoric about what may happen." (David Stevens)

The reality is, it is not easy. Change is not easy. It is uncomfortable. It is difficult to be pushed beyond what we are familiar with, especially when we feel like we don't have a choice in the matter. I am not sure whether I would claim that xenophobia is exactly what is taking place in Northern Ireland. However, when issues such as these are beyond our control, I think it is often difficult to act rationally. It seems the response in Northern Ireland has been similar to xenophobia in that there has been an irrational distrust and dislike of foreigners and those that are different, because people are afraid.

"We are *not a society that has dealt well with the differences we have had* and that has led to substantial violence. Effectively, there was a small Jewish minority of a few thousand people, the numbers which peaked after the Second World War and have been declining, and then the Chinese presence in the 1960s and that was about it. This is a society where suddenly all of this has come in this decade more or less, and I think we, or at least many people, find this difficult to cope with. You can talk abstractly about globalization and all the rest, but now you start to see some of this." (David Stevens)

¹³ "foreign workers." Encyclopædia *Britannica*. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 16 Nov. 2009. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1373299/foreign-workers>>.

¹⁴ "xenophobia." *The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005. 16 Nov. 2009. <[Dictionary.com http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/xenophobia](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/xenophobia)>.

This segment is a reflection of the complex and multi-layered interaction between sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland at present. Looking at today, what is being done when faced with this change? In difficult situations we often rely on our instincts and emotions. It is this instinctual reaction that leads us to act in the same way we have in the past. In the next section I will look at how we seem to repeat formed patterns and learned behaviors.

Transference of Learned Behavior:

‘Transference of learned behavior’ is the idea that, although racism exists in the absence of sectarianism all over the world, it may have a more systematic way of existing in Northern Ireland due to the history of division and conflict. It appears that the mindset of looking for markers of sectarian difference could be readily transferred to looking for difference in terms of race, ethnicity or culture. Of course, it is more than just looking for difference. It is judging and fearing the difference and then acting accordingly; allowing walls and divisions to be built on this basis.

“We know how to be *suspicious of ‘other’*.” (Zora Molyneaux)

“Once you have kind of *normalized the principle of exclusion* into your society, which we have in sectarianism, people are then coming into a society where inclusion is something new.” (Duncan Morrow)

“There is transference of learned behavior of sectarianism to this growing diversity, learned behavior of how we deal with people that are different from us. However, transference of learned behavior but not transference of actual behavior, because both behaviors are happening simultaneously. If you have a small population and an influx of diversity and already have a mindset that ‘the other’ is a threat, of course *you go back to what you know*.” (Eamonn McCallion)

The question raised here for me is whether or not what people ‘know’ in Northern Ireland is something distinct? It is a unique culture where difference is more feared and unaccepted than in other parts of the world? Has a sectarian past significantly shaped the way people are dealing with increased diversity today?

“Certainly there is a *culture of intolerance* in which prejudice is allowed to be *legitimized* to some extent at the level of sectarianism, which is deeply rooted in Northern Ireland. If you take prejudice against Catholics for example, because they’re different from us and we fear them in some ways because they are challenging our political authority and political status or our dominance. Then equally, you can feel legitimized in expressing prejudice against black people or Chinese people, because they’re different and they’re perhaps going to challenge your culture. But equally against gays and lesbians, because they’re going to challenge your norms of sexuality. And we also see issues around hostilities or prejudice towards people with disabilities, because they challenge your notions about what is normal and what is acceptable in terms of body.” (Neil Jarman)

This wider view of diversity is essential to the discussion. Difference can be in terms of religion, culture, sexuality or physical form. Although of course a generalization, it may be concluded that there is an underlying yet identifiable ‘legitimization’ of prejudice when what is determined by an individual to be normal is challenged in Northern Irish society.

In Duncan Morrow’s speech ‘The Real Work Begins’ at the CRC Policy Conference on April 30, 2008, he elaborates on this prejudice:

“Until now it has been extremely hard to be a minority in Northern Ireland. Being a Protestant along the border has been very hard when being British was seen as a treasonable act. So too has been the life of Catholics in some parts of Antrim, where hanging out the Gaelic jersey was seen as sufficient justification for a violent attack by some. But it is often no easier for lesbian and gay people or for people identified as foreigners or ‘ethnics’.”

Perhaps there is a lack of openness that is present due to the insularity of Northern Irish society. It has been insular in an outward sense in terms of lack of global diversity as well as in an inward sense in relation to very separate communities. I think this inward-looking nature has limited Northern Ireland’s exposure to difference of all kinds. It seems natural then to fear what is unknown. What is unknown takes the form of what makes another person different from you. Furthermore, people then follow the known and traditionally established pattern of dealing with dissimilarity. I will now explore one of the distinctive ways sectarian difference has been dealt with in Northern Ireland, the creation of territories, and the way this influences the issue of racism.

Creating Territories:

The creation of territories is not quite a ‘learned behavior’ rather a learned way of life in Northern Ireland. It is a mode of coexisting and a pattern of sharing (and not sharing) space. I will outline what I see to be the general stages in the process of forming territorial divisions:

- 1) Distinct groups are formed and differences identified**
- 2) A power struggle emerges along with seemingly competing goals**
- 3) Division and psychological lines are drawn**
- 4) Safety is desired within these boundaries**
- 5) Walls are built to further establish territories and keep ‘them’ out**
- 6) The marked out area and distinct community is protected**
- 7) Defense leads to violence and then aggression**
- 8) A mindset is created as well as a sense of the ‘other’**
- 9) A ‘memory of wounds’¹⁵ is left and a legacy of distrust and fear**

¹⁵ Dr. Paul Arthur

10) **Consequently, problems arise when new groups enter these pre-defined territories**

Throughout my semester, I have learned about and beheld the complex history of Ireland and, accordingly, the complexity of the relationship between the Protestant and Catholic community. What has stood out to me is that it is a past that is very much part of the present, and this past has seeped into many areas of life today. An area that clearly reflects historical difference is the residential sector:

Northern Ireland was established on the basis that there is a fundamental difference between members of the Protestant and Catholic community with the two communities having distinctive and different cultures, histories, beliefs and allegiances.¹⁶

These differences and opposing aims of the two communities eventually erupted into a violent period known as ‘the Troubles’, which lasted approximately from the late 1960s to the mid 1990s.

“So within that violence people felt threatened by each other. Sectarianism, therefore, looks like trying to exclude these other people, trying to discriminate. It had effects like when violence was up, people wanted to live in safe places and so they *lived among their own*. So you got this notion of different areas, you got discrimination in jobs, you got a sense of our flag flies only in this area – *marking of territory*. This notion of there’s a Them and an Us and everybody knows who it is. Sectarianism isn’t just an idea, it is a practical *reality* for people in their lives. Its where they’re safe, its what they feel comfortable saying with their neighbors, its their friends, its who they can marry without annoying their mothers. Sectarianism is a whole package of behaviors as well as attitudes.”
(Duncan Morrow)

“And what has happened with sectarianism really is that people have become increasingly separate from each other - segregation – so very often on a day to day basis people are not rubbing up against each other in a way that those prejudices might get readily expressed. Where as with minority communities, they *don’t have their own territories* where they can come and live, so they are living in the protestant communities or the catholic communities, and therefore there will be more opportunities to express that prejudice.” (Neil Jarman)

The result of this division of space and protection of territories, which is an issue in itself, is that it creates further problems as newcomers arrive.

“Now, if you have a society which has normalized Them and Us and turned that into something which is *not just a personal choice but territories where people live*, developed organizations which claim to be community defenders -

¹⁶ Jarman 4.

paramilitary organizations - and into that for the first time come immigrants or people from outside, then its not that racism is different here from anywhere else. Racism occurs in much the same way as it occurs across Western Europe – people coping with the fact that there is major social change here and that these people are different. Then people acting out their insecurity on the different in a discriminatory and violent way - that happens, I'm afraid to say, as a process, and Northern Ireland isn't distinct there. What's distinct is, because they *come into a place where people own territories*, they're very visible. They come into a place where the paramilitaries already act, whether with or without community permission, to eliminate people who they don't like. You get a situation where attacks on people who are different are almost normal to start with. Second of all, *we can tell who they are* because it takes place within the territory. Third of all, we have the means, the violent potential to actually carry this out and consider it patriotism.” (Duncan Morrow)

We can see the complexity of this contested space. It is not straightforward. There is an inherent element of competition among territories in Northern Ireland. Communities have created territorial divisions as a means of protection and survival. The way they lived within these territories was precarious before, and they have hardly had time to create a new sense of security. Thus, when immigrants have no choice but to become part of these spaces, they are automatically associated with an instability that was actually present to begin with.

“In Northern Ireland the whole issue of racism is tainted with the sectarian one as well, where it becomes again more complex. There's always that aspect of the diversity of the other, which you separate yourself from. But by its very nature, in a *divided society* people who arrive into that conflict have to choose where they're going to live, where they're going to go to school, where they're going to shop or eat. They're more likely to choose a Protestant/unionist/loyalist/British background for a couple of reasons. In Belfast the demographics are changing and the spaces for people to move into, low cost housing, are most likely going to be Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist areas. So immigrants move into those areas and things reach tipping points. Usually at somewhere between 10-20% of immigrants in an area, local people believe that the numbers have reached over 50%. People tend to be wrong about it, but by the time numbers reach 10-20%, the assumption is 'there's more of them than there are of us' – which is completely wrong, its not even a quarter but its believed to be over half. Now in the Northern Irish context you get the concept of 'what we have, we hold – we're not going to be taken over by them.' So from the loyalist perspective, you get things like people feeling 'we spent generations fighting off the provisionals (IRA) and republicans, and now *here they come taking the space.*' ” (Sean O'Baoill)

In relation to the protection of territory, it is evident the way sectarian divisions help generate racist attitudes. Both Protestant and Catholic communities have sacrificed a great deal to maintain their space, and now other groups are threatening what they have each worked so hard to sustain.

“‘We don’t want you living here, because you are taking houses away from our locals. We have to defend what we are. As Protestants, we’ve already lost too much to the Catholics - they’re getting everything.’ Then the Catholics on the other hand are saying the same thing.” (Eamonn McCallion)

There is a connection between people and place. Each community has an inherent need to defend their space and uphold their identity.

“There is a need to have the territory, because ‘if I don’t have the territory, I feel as if I lose my identity.’ The issue is that it’s not a sign of security; it’s a sign of *insecurity*. These are people who are very frightened of the future or alternatively have a deep experience of the past and are frightened it will be repeated. Then into these communities come unsuspecting people who just arrive.” (Duncan Morrow)

There are so many parts to the equation. As we look at the issue of territory, there is insecurity and this insecurity has been managed in a specific way. Today, changing demographics and economic circumstances are challenging this management. There is also a changing world and the unknowns with which that brings. When we fear the unknown we become defensive, which can often lead to violent aggression.

Hate Crimes:

These issues of fear, safety and protection have historically led to the expression of violence in the form of hate crimes.

“Hate crimes are intentionally trying to abuse or hurt - emotionally or physically - an individual because they are different.” (Eamonn McCallion)

Sectarian hate crimes and violence has been a defining feature of the history of conflict in Northern Ireland: “One of the enduring legacies of the conflict, and probably of all sustained conflicts, has been a greater legitimization and tolerance of the use of force as a means of achieving one’s goals and of expressing anger, fear and uncertainty.”¹⁷

It seems that this pattern and mode of violence has been continued, in a sense, as a way of expressing racist attitudes as well. These statistics demonstrate what has taken place: “Over the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the number of racist incidents recorded by the police from forty-one in 1996 to 1,047 in 2006-2007.”¹⁸

The most recent example of what seemed to be hate crime took place this past June.

¹⁷ Jarman 17.

¹⁸ Jarman 13.

It was reported by BBC that on June 17, 2009 “more than 100 Romanian people have fled their homes in Belfast, saying they feel intimidated after a series of attacks.”¹⁹

“What happened with the Roma community seemed to be very much a *continuation of behavior* that was developed and institutionalized over the course of the conflict. You have an area, which is perceived as belonging to one community, and then you have members of another community living there. Perhaps it gets to a certain number of people, a tipping point, where there are incidents or a certain type of behavior that some people in the community don’t like or don’t agree with and then it provokes a reaction, which is to get rid of them. A lot of the incidents you hear about, in terms of forms of abuse, are through physical assault, damage to property or graffiti. In that sense, if you say that sectarianism is the base line prejudice in Northern Ireland, the same sorts of behavior are carried on in all sorts of hate crime – you find similar forms of verbal abuse, physical abuse and criminal damage. You also see that the key perpetrators are always the same as the front line actors – basically young men, groups of young men. Its usually not one acting alone – its 2 or 3 or 4 or more people doing the racism, or doing the sectarianism.” (Neil Jarman)

It seems that the manifestation of sectarianism and racism is a community or group phenomenon. There is an extent to which these problems can be perpetuated and carried on by individuals alone, but I think they are rooted in distorted ways of living and interacting as *groups* of people.

Hate crimes appear to be a form of learned behavior that can be transferred from sectarianism to racism. However, violence is not always acted out as a means of expressing fear or intolerance of difference. These manifestations are greatly shaped by the circumstance of the individual. The social and economic circumstances people find themselves determine how they experience and react to sectarianism or racism.

The Role of Social Class:

There are different contexts for experiencing sectarianism and racism, which greatly influence their expression. An important context to emphasize is that of socio-economic status, which has repeatedly surfaced as a significant theme throughout my investigation. The circumstance of the individual seems to be so influential that it has the power to affect people’s behavior.

“There is more injustice and deprivation in lower economic status, but prejudice still exists upwards. It is the same as during the Troubles – *more violence in lower economic areas.*” (Zora Molyneaux)

¹⁹ "Racism in Northern Ireland." *BBC News* 17 Jun 2009; Web. 1 Nov 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/8104978.stm>.

“Responses to multicultural society depend on parameters. It depends on whether we are middle class or working class. It depends on social mobility and social stratification. Working class are struggling more, because they have to deal with different issues than middle class – there is more *competition for resources*. It also depends on perspectives. It is easier to be accepting of other ethnicities if your job isn’t being challenged.” (Eamonn McCallion)

“Part of the difficulty is that many of these people impact on sections of this society that are finding change most difficult. Where refugees and asylum seekers would live is often in Protestant working class areas of Belfast, and these are the people that suffer the greatest impact of social change as their jobs have ended. So it can be easy to blame refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities for the situation they (those at the end of social change) find themselves in. *Its easy to talk about tolerance if you are not personally losing out from social change.*” (David Stevens)

I have begun to see the strong relationship between social class and the expression of racism or sectarianism. This is a complex pattern that is difficult to describe without too many generalizations. As the above quotes convey, it seems that the ‘other’, in terms of both sectarianism and racism, are more threatening in lower economic areas. In light of economic troubles and social change, certainly newcomers to society are more of a threat to those who find themselves in precarious situations. The way physical violence is more evident in working class areas is also an interesting element when looking at the actual manifestation of sectarianism or racism. Upwards in society, where there is by and large equal access to resources and higher standards of living, prejudice still exists; however, the way it is expressed is altered. Its manifestation seems to be concealed or perhaps even disguised.

This is an area where my American, middle class perspective is a bias that hinders my understanding. I would assume that when there is less need to focus on the harsher realities of life, such as finances and family provision, there are also fewer wishes to outwardly express sectarian or racial prejudice. It seems that economic stability is essential in creating peace, because people need to feel secure in their financial situation before they can begin to address problems concerning deeper attitudes or belief structures. In this last section, I will look at other factors needed to create a lasting peace in society.

‘A Shared Future’²⁰:

Before completely looking towards the future, the past must be addressed once more. There is still a sense of denial in society about the extent of sectarianism that exists. People seem to admit more openly that racism is a feature of Northern Ireland society, which allows it to be more criticized, challenged and combated.

²⁰ the Northern Ireland government’s recent policy framework

“You can’t credibly stand up and say ‘we deplore racism but its okay to be sectarian,’ but that’s what people are doing to some extent. It’s much easier for everybody to stand up and condemn racism, because *everybody around the world condemns racism*. But it has proved more difficult to start to condemn sectarianism in any meaningful way. People can admit to being racist, but there is still a sense of *denial around the levels of sectarianism in society*.” (Neil Jarman)

“Racism may be easier to educate about, because with sectarianism there is such *complicated history and emotions*.” (Denise Wright)

This aforementioned denial impacts the way these issues can be addressed. There has to be acknowledgment of the realities of the situation before society can truly move forward. However, as Denise Wright suggested, I agree the strong emotional roots related to sectarianism make it very difficult to tackle. This is not to say there are not emotional wounds related to racism as well, but sectarianism has been very entrenched in society for many generations. This deep sense of the past has an impact on the present and future.

This section is a brief look at what is already being done to combat sectarianism and racism as well as how to build on this work. Of course, there are many organizations and individuals striving to build a sustainable peace and combat sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland; however these are the few perspectives I was privileged to encounter. The main question being asked at this point is ‘Where to go from here?’

“We can’t just deal with racism, social economy or sectarianism. All of these issues are intertwined - like a rope, there is a *complexity of strands*.” (Eamonn McCallion)

As I’ve said, we must hold these things together, because they exist together, even though it may be easier to try to look at them separately.

Michael Morrissey, an economist and former member of the NI Economic Research Council, has emphasized what he sees as necessary for a prosperous, stable society. These priorities are “an ease with different ‘others’ and high levels of trust between citizens from diverse backgrounds and low levels of social inequality.”²¹

As Duncan Morrow said in his speech ‘The Real Work Begins’, “the message needs to go out that we are safe in each other’s hands.”²² **I believe that trust must be present first and foremost. There must be trust before there can be a true ‘ease with**

²¹ Wilson, Derick. "Reconciliation: Valuing a Desired Future." University of Ulster. UNESCO Centre, 15 Nov 2007. Lecture.

²² Morrow, Duncan. "The Real Work Begins." CRC Policy Conference. 30 Apr 2008. Speech.

difference’, because we can only be at ease once we no longer find difference threatening. The issue of economics is also raised again in the need for ‘low levels of social inequality.’ I think that what is needed is a fluid sense of security in all areas of society. I say fluid, because I do not mean secure in way of being firmly fixed, but secure in a way that change does not lead to vulnerability. In many ways, these issues are about responding to change and living with a sense of openness. This openness should be the reflection of an exchange that is taking place within society.

“It is not just important for them to come to us, but for us to also go towards them. We need to find a form of integration that is *a to and fro, an exchange*, rather than assimilation, which is about them coming to us and normalizing to our standards. Society needs to become more diverse, so inevitably the host community will *change*.” (Neil Jarman)

I believe this integration can and should be in terms of an exchange between the host community and arriving minority groups, but also between Protestant and Catholic communities. Certainly Northern Ireland is a ‘divided society’, but I do not think this is in essence the problem. There should be community divisions. We need some sort of framework for our lives. It would not work to live in a world without borders, but it is when we do not want or allow these boundaries to be crossed that causes the trouble. There needs to be a lack of fear that allows these borders to be permeable. We need groups that are willing to change and adapt. We need security in our own identity so that when other identities arrive – they are not threatening. We need a sense of flexibility so that change and difference does not lead to an unmanageable instability. Difference need not be threatening. Of course, these things are unpredictable so it is scary; there is no denying that. (I acknowledge I am also in some ways overlooking the issue of competition, survival and limited resources.)

The levels where I saw these issues being addressed and worked through were: schools, communities, mediation, academics and politics. However, the answers regarding the future given from these different perspectives were not limited to their concentration within society. Each individual recognized the need for a holistic and multi-level approach when combating sectarianism and racism. I have chosen a few quotes that I feel emphasize important building blocks and approaches to peace.

“*Issues of reconciliation are not just about Protestant and Catholic.*”
(David Stevens – Corrymeela Community)

“How do you bring fearful people into a less fearful place? How do you make *relationships* which are going to be long enough and strong enough and carry enough for this? We have to start talking about a shared future for everybody. That’s probably a global picture, not just a local issue, but that’s not an easy adjustment. It does mean change. *It does not mean stay the same* and we will just manage it. It means change, and people are nervous about change until they feel

its over. But the reality is, it may not be over.” (Duncan Morrow – Community Relations Council)

“Education is about getting rid of myths and assumptions. For example, myths such as ‘Muslims are terrorists’ or ‘Polish are taking our jobs.’ It is about drawing out what people think they know by asking them ‘How do they know this idea is true? Where is the evidence for this belief?’ Then *destabilizing these certainties* by meeting with another group - that group you ‘know everything’ about. It starts with certainty and then certainty becomes uncertainty, which leads to curiosity. Once you have reached curiosity, then you can’t go back to certainty.” (Zora Molyneaux – Connecting Cultures)

“We all are racist and sectarian, but we are at different levels, different ends of the spectrum. So how do we respond to it? If society is requiring individuals to change, we must *understand the self*. ... Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) is about good relations, community relations and diversity. All of this work is about relationships - between individuals, between societies, between civil society and institutions etc. and then *managing these relationships*. It is about widening our understanding of diversity as well as *deepening our understanding of segregation and sectarianism*. CRIS aims to: bring people together in a meaningful way and challenge preconceptions and perspectives, create shared spaces to have honest conversations, create models of trust, link education to the wider society, and develop models of capacity building. When looking at issues of diversity and engagement with other groups, we *need to know our identity*. We need to know what we are. We can deal with diversity at the softer end, such as food and dance, but not at the wider end, the realities of it. We need to form inclusive institutional frameworks, but we haven’t had time or resources in relation to ethnic minorities.” (Eamonn McCallion – Community Relations in Schools)

“The solution in the 1980s was to try to get people to recognize their similarities and say ‘deep down we’re all the same.’ That is still a very popular idea, particularly amongst middle classes, but I think its unhelpful. Because what the subliminal message is ‘If we were different, it would be okay to kill you or discriminate against you, and its not okay because we’re the same.’” What I try to get across is a different message, ‘Its not okay and we are different.’ I’m much more interested in the concept of the European anti-racism strategy, which had the slogan ‘*All Different. All Equal.*’ This was translated into all the different European languages. I would very much support that concept of ‘We are different, and we are of equal value, equal worth.’ This doesn’t mean we are equally talented or equally skilled, because people have natural tendencies. I think this is a concept that we still haven’t got in Northern Ireland, and the more violence goes away, we try to bury the conflict by saying ‘deep down we’re all the same.’ Now when you have a Nigerian man, who is clearly culturally different, linguistically different, physically different, and then you say ‘deep down we’re all the same’ – everybody knows you’re talking nonsense. It becomes an aspiration of ‘I’d like to pretend we’re the same so we can pretend we’re

treating each other the same.’ In reality, we’re deeply different and perhaps we have different needs as well, so the concept of equity as opposed equality - to each according to their needs - is more important.” (Sean O’ Baoill – Mediation Northern Ireland)

“Its difficult to legislate at prejudice. It has to be worked out through the education system, through raising kids, through living in mixed environments. Same between Protestants and Catholics - when you start to mix more, you start to *see that people haven’t got horns and tails* and that they’re just like you and me. Same with racism - if more people mix then they see that diversity is a normal thing. They see that people that are different colors and from different cultures are *not a threat*.” (Neil Jarman – Institute for Conflict Research)

In reflecting upon these words of wisdom, what stands out to me is the need to see the individual, the actual human being. It becomes an issue of dehumanization - a lack of regard for another human life as equally important and as equally essential as my own. I am different, but I am not better. We must respect the opportunity and gift we all have to live for a short period of time on this earth. Not one of us is more or less deserving of this gift than the next. The solution cannot be ‘color-blind’ or ‘religion-blind’ or ‘*difference-blind*’. Ignoring or pretending these differences do not exist is not the answer. It is about relationships – so that we do not see people as groups or generalizations, but as individuals who, like us, want to have fruitful lives and rich experiences. We all want to reach our full potential, and we need peace and freedom from conflict to achieve this. Thus, with an increased awareness following my exploration of these things, I will summarize my findings and conclusions.

Conclusion:**My Findings:**

The most appropriate metaphor for my project has been a giant puzzle. First, I searched for the various puzzle pieces, and then I tried to work out how they fit together to form the larger picture. Sectarianism and racism do not stand-alone. These issues are not isolated; in contrast, they are linked with history, conflict, violence, religion, ethnicity, globalization, politics, institutions, personal experiences and much more. Throughout this process, a theme that has remained has been the notion of ‘walls’ – walls that divide us. ‘Walls’, coincidentally, have seemed to act as the edge puzzle pieces – the ones that provide the outline of the picture. The framework for this study has been the way divisions become destructive when they evolve out of fear.

I have concluded that yes, there is a pattern and mode of intolerance in Northern Ireland. This is not to say intolerance does not exist in other places, but this is a place where it is normal to send children to segregated schools, to live in segregated housing and to see ‘peace walls’ as if they were a natural part of the landscape. How can a society condemn the expulsion or discrimination of a minority ethnic group, such as the Roma or Polish, but then institutionally and fundamentally allow and support this same discrimination towards another group – i.e. Protestants or Catholics? Furthermore, there is a strong, historical prejudice against Irish Travelers, another minority racial group in Ireland, which I did not address in my paper and could very well be another topic in itself.

Personal Reflection:

In regards to my personal development and learning, when asking myself, “How are these issues of sectarianism and racism real for me now after having done this research?” - there are a few levels to my answer. Certainly, these words now recall extensive ideas, thoughts and meaning. I have a glimpse into the way they are represented as societal institutions and structures, such as schools, residential areas, peacelines, etc. Moreover, I feel as though there should be an element of experiential understanding in relation to these concepts, but this was not the case for me as an outsider. Sectarianism and racism do not exist on the surface of society. They are in fact very invisible. You cannot see them, but you can feel them. For example, I have sensed sectarianism when hearing a Catholic taxi driver in Belfast speak of his opinions concerning the predominantly Protestant Shankill Road or sensed racism through an individual’s careless comment about ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, these things are not explicit in every day life, which is why gaining access to insiders in Northern Ireland has been so essential.

I cringe as I use the word ‘ethnic minority’ because I have also become more aware of diversity and the dangers of viewing difference as a whole without separate parts. We cannot lump those that are different into one. We should have a holistic

perspective of diversity that allows for difference within difference. We are quick to generalize, because generalizations are a more simplistic way of looking at things. For example, the word ‘racism’ has become so all encompassing, when often the differences targeted are not even necessarily race.

Furthermore, when speaking with Duncan Morrow, he mentioned the way:

“Racism tends to be the generic word here for anybody who’s attacked on the basis of a cultural difference that’s not Catholic or Protestant. So it’s a kind of generic word, but the issues for Polish may be very different from the issues for Indians, you know there is always an issue with the word racism that you treat it as a single issue, when in fact its many issues, because the cultures you’re dealing with are many.”

I have seen how the use of words is very complicated and impacts the questions that we ask and the answers we find.

What do we actually want from diversity? Diversity can be a very euphoric term, but we often do not think about the realities that having diversity brings. This reminds me of a lecture about immigration we received from Fidele Mutwarasibo, who deals with immigration issues in Ireland. His observation was that all we really seem to want from increased diversity is food, dance and culture. I think he raises a very important point, and I have realized that there are harsher realities to increased integration and globalization. We have to learn to live together in new ways, and it changes our communities and societies. It particularly changes society for those at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder.

My bias in this issue really struck me when Sean O’Baill asked:

“So what do you do with your middle class ideas about why don’t we all just get along? What judgments would you make from the bottom...when systems are biased against you or when your job and family’s wellbeing is at risk?”

What would I do? I am not certain; perhaps I would not be as positive about diversity and open to new people entering the place I call home if I experienced the more direct and threatening impacts. Perhaps I would not use such idealistic words about peace and harmony or relationships and life together.

Cross-Cultural Insight:

I am now more in tune with the reality of my experiences growing up in the United States and the parallel issues we have in America. We are known to be a ‘melting pot’, and it is true that the U.S. is a very multicultural society. I think we have very high levels of acceptance and integration between communities. Nonetheless, I have realized that my experience with diversity in the states has been colored. Growing up in a middle-class, suburban area has given me a very rosy picture of everyone

getting along. I now see that I have very limited knowledge about lower or working class areas in America where there is still segregation and high levels of prejudice. Furthermore, I have reflected on how I attend a private, Christian university that actually possesses very little diversity. My school has a small representation of minority ethnic groups, but in fact, we are a predominantly white student body. These experiences and contexts of living are important for me to be aware of, because they impact my worldview. It is important that I expand my understanding of the issues surrounding tolerance of difference and racism in the United States.

It would be ignorant to ignore that we all live somewhere on the spectrum of prejudice, and everyone fears difference in some way, shape or form. In some ways, I think that Northern Ireland's recent past provides a distinct opportunity to directly address issues of difference. In America it can be overlooked, because we like to think we do not need such work - we are *the* 'melting pot'. However, I am beginning to wonder what actually are our societal beliefs? We may be a melting pot on the surface, but what is bubbling underneath?

Project Critique and Future Questions:

My topic of study is very deep and expansive, and within one month I was only able to scratch the surface. I certainly was not able to do the issues full justice. For instance, I could have explored in more depth the different themes that arose from my field study investigation and the specific relationship between sectarianism and racism within these themes. Nevertheless, I do feel as though I addressed my aims of exploring the relationship between sectarianism and racism. Despite the largeness of the topic within the short time frame, I am happy with my project overall. When looking at the length of the paper, it is obvious that I included a great deal from my field study interviews. Nevertheless, I still left out much of what people said and omitted most of my background research from the actual work itself.

I like what happened as I let my exploration guide me. My topic seemed to emerge without my forcing, and in the end, the project suits me. It suits who I am and what I like. Perhaps I am a philosopher of sorts at heart, and I enjoy asking questions. However, "answers" seem to only lend themselves to further questions. This theme of questioning has been present during the entire semester, not only within this project. I think we should always be open to asking questions. It is a good way to go about life, because it is how we continue to learn, grow and challenge ourselves. We cannot stay the same, because life does not stay the same; we live in a changing world. The only thing that stays the same is God, and in fact, some of Jesus' greatest answers were questions. In accordance with the idea that sometimes the best answer to a question is another question, the next paragraph mentions some specific questions that I am left with.

After much research, I am still not clear on the extent of the similarities and parallels between sectarianism and racism. Is sectarianism an expression of racism, and is racism then an expression of our discomfort with difference, with the

unknown and with things that we do not recognize in ourselves? There are two problems here that are not the same but that are clearly related and emerging from a similar place. So, how do we create a prosperous society (and world) that we can share together when we all are very, very different? How do we make sure everyone's needs are met? Perhaps we start by understanding one's self. We need to be confident in our own identity. Once we have a sense of ourselves, it is possible to break down other anxieties and remove fear and lack of knowledge concerning the 'other'. Differences become a less threatening encounter when we are secure in who we are. Then we can experience 'others' as not better or worse, just different. In our interactions, we need to eliminate any sense of superiority or inferiority. We need to create new attitudes and beliefs, personally and socially, because our beliefs are our realities. We need to become less certain about what we 'know' and more open to creating new understandings of truth.

Returning briefly to the puzzle analogy, I do not feel I was able to gather all of the pieces to form a completed picture. I have certainly fit pieces together into sections, but the many sections do not yet form a congruent image. Spending more time looking at the same question could further this discussion. The discovered themes within the relationship between sectarianism and racism could be expanded and elaborated. There could also be a more extensive exploration of the interaction within a specific theme.

Closing Thoughts:

Sectarianism and racism continue to be carried out in society, in our relationships, in our thoughts and attitudes and in ways we are not even quick to realize or discern. I think what is important to remember is that behind all of these definitions, generalizations and theories are actual human beings who for them, this is life. So how do we deal with these things— as individuals, communities, societies and countries?

It is an extremely large task, but in sum, I believe this is all about peace building and restoring harmony. It is about restoring what was lost and maybe introducing what was never there to begin with. We need to leave behind our distorted ways of relating to one another. We should not be content to live adversely divided among ourselves. It is a matter of making this world a better place to be for everyone. Sectarianism and racism are universal issues that plague each person. These diseases affect all of us, whether we realize it or not, and when we work towards a 'societal cure', we are really helping ourselves...

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out--

because I was not a communist;

Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out--

because I was not a socialist;

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out--

because I was not a trade unionist;

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out--

because I was not a Jew;

Then they came for me--

and there was no one left to speak out for me.

-Martin Niemoller ²³

²³ "Martin Niemoller - Communists, Socialists, Jews." *Famous quotations and quotes*. Web. 25 Nov 2009. <http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/quotations/niemoller_jews_communists_socialists.html>.

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Appendix:

Interview results: Zora Molyneaux
Tuesday, November 3, 2009
12 PM at Wellington Park Hotel

Not belonging is something everyone here understands... except for those few who live in a bubble.

‘More injustice and deprivation in lower economic status, but prejudice still exists upwards. Same as in the troubles – more violence in lower economic areas.’

(problem of generalizations)

We are certain about what we know (even if its wrong) → breaking these certainties
Everything we think we know comes from our families and communities.

Part of her program is: ‘Drawing out what people think they know – How? Where is the evidence for this belief? Then destabilizing these certainties by meeting another group/ maybe meeting that group you ‘know everything’ about.’

“Certainty → uncertainty → curiosity → then can’t go back to certainty.”

(Sectarian past?)

“We know how to be suspicious of other” – underlying tradition of rural Ireland... a mindset. But its not just an Northern Ireland thing, happens everywhere.

“Prejudices are abstract... its different once we know a person individually.”

Once we actually know people that are different, its not a problem. → learn commonality.

‘Education is about getting rid of myths and assumptions. Ex. ‘Muslims are terrorists’ or ‘Polish are taking our jobs’

Interview results: Darren Ferguson
Tuesday, November 3, 2009
1 PM at Wellington Park Hotel

Radio programmes → Q&A – chance to ask real questions. Myth-busting... media can distort and give false information – so a chance for people to get the truth

Q&A works both ways – EX. man from Ghana asked 2 groups of lads (Catholic & Protestant) – Do you worship the same God? Then why are you fighting each other?

IME (Interactive Music Education) – cultural integration through music

Youth in Motion with the Motion Project
Ex. young people from Polish community

Peace builders... building good relations

Started with 1 Giant Leap... being aware of what’s going on in the rest of the world. Bringing together musicians from all over the world... connecting through music.

Interview results: Eamonn McCallion
Thursday, November 5, 2009
12 PM at CRIS offices

CRIS founded in 1982

Historical context to the conflict

→ Not about religion or identity – territorial attachment

at foundation - NI context – polarized, segregated society

statutory agencies began to take issue of community relations more seriously

education system was a “safe haven” – but then became responsibility of schools to start looking at these issues → required involvement in ‘education for mutual understanding’

osmosis principle – when you bring people together its good & magical → but this isn’t true... need

knowledge and understanding to develop simultaneously in effective intervention models

many migrants coming to live in Ireland from European states. Struggling with ourselves and cultural diversity, but also now facing greater degree of diversity.

My question about... how much learned behavior associated with segregation, sectarianism and polarization has been transferred?

Sectarian as a systemic system and racism as a systemic system -a lot of similarities -for complex reasons. CRIS – interventionist model -engage schools with community relations program and provide support for teachers

→ much difficulty → teachers are part of this society & therefore they have the emotional baggage from growing up here – therefore lack the confidence & capacity to deal with these issues. So how do we develop an institutional capacity within schools to help teachers undertake this work? Organizations like CRIS can’t be relied upon – needs to be embedded in institutions.

Current times – Romanian population, Polish population

NI society no different from any society in that in times of economic hardship & when there is a small group of ‘the other’, they are always seen as a threat b/c of employment, housing, welfare, etc. – unstableness of society... particularly in a society that has never done well with dealing with difference, so how does it deal with difference as it expands in a rapid way that the society is not used to.

Assumption that we can readily transfer the sectarianism that all of us here have, whether that be benign or malignant, I believe we all have been sectarian and we all have behaved in sectarian ways – b/c its engrained, institutionalized, inherent in our nature from the way we’ve grown up.

So the model in CRIS... How to build institutional capacity through the whole life of a child’s educational journey – David’s project –3 year project (IFI)

Models of teaching/knowledge/learning exchange... conventionally use rational approaches, but when dealing with issues of sectarianism and racism – rational goes out and its about the emotional. So how do you move from rational approaches to be able to work in an educational framework around contentious issues? (where emotional biases & opinions are not facts, but are taught as though they are) Informal and emotional approaches... can’t only develop knowledge, also need to develop understanding.

CRIS is about providing opportunities to look at contested issues in a way that allows young people to express identity, feelings, emotions... so that teachers can be facilitators.

Difficulty – teacher joins the students on their level... which is uncomfortable.

NI has an absence of violence, but not a peaceful society... not on a territorial front or an ethnic-diversity front. People are being discriminated against b/c of who they are & the nature of being different.

Any society that has a future needs to be prosperous... and → Mike Morrissey – being at ease with difference is the key to having a prosperous, stable society

How do you do this with a legacy of (at least) 40 years of conflict? Some people still consider themselves victims... there is still the emotional rawness.

How do we really fully understand reconciliation?

CRIS tries to grapple with these many concepts within an educational context.

...can't just teach people/teachers how to deal with these issues, they have to experience it so they not only facilitate knowledge but also understanding.

All of this work is about relationships.... Between individuals, between societies, between civil society & institutions, etc. & managing these relationships

CRC strategy – 3 core principles of Equity, Diversity & Interdependence

'Respect for Diversity' – how do we really do this? Especially if it goes against the grain of our values?

Some teachers welcome ethnic diversity, because they can ignore the specifics of NI. Sometimes looking at ethnic diversity is a way of ignoring our own issues.

Section 75 – 1998 Act – around 9 areas of equality....

Widening understanding of diversity as well as deepening understanding of segregation & sectarianism.

Transference of learned behavior of sectarianism to this growing diversity... learned behaviors of how we deal with people that are different from us... prejudice, discrimination, violent behavior...

Have to grow knowledge as well as understanding... 8 yr olds have said 'they are coming in and taking our houses' – where do they get this info.... How do we link those schools to the societies they exist in?

Teachers, peers, parents, societies influence children.

It's a collective responsibility – school, church, community, etc.

Theoretical perspective: relationship between s & r.... two perspectives.... Similarities of how these two systems function, then look at how do these systems exist and manifest themselves within society?

A lot of people are sectarian and racist, but they don't have a concept of how they are, because they don't understand the system. –TV program Jane Elliot, Brown eyed Blue eyed experiment →helped to understand that discrimination is a learned social behavior. If you have learned something, you can unlearn it – so how do we provide opportunities to unlearn? Kofi Annan (UN) said no child or individual is born intolerant, they learn to be intolerant. How do we develop interventionist models that bring to peoples conscious that we are all on a continuum of racism and sectarianism? We all are racist and sectarian, but different levels, different ends of the spectrum. How do we respond to it? – By understanding the self... if society is requiring individuals to change... this is where we have to understand the idea of transference, understand the issues... - work of John Paul Letter –

Dr. Paul Connolly – in societies where there is difference, children as young as 2 ½ or 3, know there is difference... not necessarily cognitively... but behaviorally?

How do we understand these issues? Need to have self-awareness & engagement.

Its complex but not complicated... complex b/c social learning theories, which says we pick up from the society we live in...

I do believe there is transference.... But not exactly moving from here to here... we are not less sectarian, but we are more racist.... So is it transference or something else?

Not a new problem... evidence that racism has always been a problem... we were a small insular society, not such great external diversity & people often accepted the dominant

Have had more opportunities to racism... capability of being more expert racism b/c of sectarianism and now with growing diversity.

Prejudice to me is not wrong... its an inherent ability to make simplistic, complicated life easier. Nothing wrong with prejudice.. its how behavior model because of prejudices is affected. We make assumptions naturally, but we need to be self-aware and understand that some of our thinking is not rational. No one is unprejudiced.

Hate crimes – intentionally trying to abuse, hurt... emotionally or physically.. an individual because they are different.

We have to understand we are prejudice as a way of reducing hate crimes...

We can laugh at difference, laugh at each other... as long as its not in a superior, us v. them context.

Haven't moved from sectarian violence. Reduction in criminal sectarianism/paramilitary activity but we do not have a reduction in the number of sectarian incidents... there is not less calling names, putting up flags, throwing stones. Not a reduction in segregation.

What do we define as sectarianism?

-paper by Peter Shirlow...-

Increase in violence in relation to racism... statistics... but not a shift from one to the other. More ethnic diversity here, some transference.. but a more complicated picture.

'culture of intolerance'? – all societies have this and there is some good reasons for cultural intolerance... extreme Ex. female circumcision – should be intolerant to that sort of cultural expression, is that being intolerant? Are we intolerant to difference though – yes. Historical context of difference in NI is around inequality, hurt, pain... breeding ground for intolerance. 'tolerance'... I can tolerate you, but I don't need to understand you.... Is there an open, accepting society – yes! That is the complexity of it.... NI is embrative and friendly.. but when put into the historical context... then yes intolerant of 'the other' – the other group is to blame. → because of inequalities?... the state was set up because CNR was the minority and had to protect the majority (CNR perspective).... cycle of them vs. them that bred mistrust, intolerance, generalizations and had a political system that stood up for that and promoted it?

If you have a small population and an influx of diversity and already have a mindset that 'the other' is a threat, of course you go back to what you know... 'you protect what you have' 'we don't want you living here, because you are taking houses away from our locals.. demographic shift... we have to defend what we are.. as protestants, we've already lost too much to the catholics, they're getting everything' and the catholics on the other hand are saying the same thing.

Can't just deal with racism, social economy, sectarianism... all these issues are intertwined... like a rope, there is a complexity of strands.

Politicians still can't deal with difficult issues. Progress has been made...but, schools still being built for catholic kids and another one for protestant kids... separate youth centers.. still promote idea of segregation b/c its easier than forcing communities to deal with the issues or accept shared resources.

There was also an intra-community tension as well as inter-community tension... especially among loyalism. There is also racism creeping in... 'don't want them in'

Transference of learned behavior but not transference of actual behavior, because both behaviors are happening simultaneously.

Still a polarized society... if not more polarized?

Potential for racism always existed and now there is more of a population to be racist against.

CRIS: good relations, community relations & diversity... have widened programs to look at diversity (many different models & contexts) as well as deepened NI context.

--presenting frameworks that are fit to specific circumstances, encouraging flexibility & facilitation

--developing models of capacity building

--bringing people together in a meaningful way... challenging preconceptions & perspectives

--creating shared spaces to have honest conversations

--models of trust

--how to link education to the wider society

As an organization - must respond to current issues & continually develop new strategies. – always debrief and evaluate after workshops & sessions.

Diversity & community relations now part of curriculum

As a society, we have moved forward – politically and socially – but can't forget current context and issues. NI is a very different society today & must recognize that.

Approach in general to dealing with s & r is the same, but specifics are different – its about engagement, understanding & theoretical perspective... But also have to understand the consequences are rather different. Approaches need to be similar in terms of commitment to dealing with it and then specifics need to be different.

In terms of racism, we lump those that are different in one... but there are tensions between some of the ethnic minorities. Intercultural perspective is necessary.

Are we diversity blind? Do we want to integrate? Assimilation perspective?

Intercultural perspective – relationships & dialogue where there is true understanding how you relate to me and how we are different?

In term of facilitative approach - Reaching the actual needs rather than the perceived needs... Also when working with students – working with people who have to be there, not with people who want to be there.

Part of the legacy of our understanding as a British mono-cultural society has played a role.

Progressive learning... many topics/themes are important, not one over the other.

Fundamental to build trust/relationships so can engage in meaningful conversations.

'Whatever you say, say something'

It is a process.

One of the biggest challenges among working with youth is bringing in other elements of diversity, for example ... sexual orientation & homophobia (can't be talked about in schools). How can schools be challenged to look at diversity in a holistic perspective?

Young people still have a very astute understanding of sectarianism & segregation. –underlying issues still exist, although violence is less.

*Challenges concerning these issues are always about 'them or the other' – always a threat... only context that is different is that have to share the space between Irish & British, Catholic & Protestant... but with ethnic minorities there is the solution of 'sending them back' young people still won't talk about sectarianism as freely & openly as they talk about sectarianism. 'always the elephant in the room' – assumptions shape the world we live in – very good at making assumptions and finding out who is who, which community, which group.

Need to know identity, need to know what we are... when looking at issues of diversity and engagement with other groups (→ interview w/ Mags)

*Responses to multicultural society depend on parameters... depends on whether we are middle class or working class... different contexts – depends on social mobility & social stratification... working class are struggling more b/c they have to deal with different issues than middle class – there is more competition for resources, etc. –not straightforward! Depends on perspectives. Easier to be accepting of other ethnicities if your job isn't being challenged, etc.

We can deal with diversity at the softer end (food, dance etc.) but not the wider end (realities) -- Still not exactly preparing people to be at ease with difference.

Vast majority of teachers are uncomfortable with dealing with this stuff & lack the capacity.

'tolerant, inclusive society?' – aspirations, but there is positive, deep meaningful relationships that allow prosperity – see people as humans & equals... how do we become at ease with each other? Fair society that is resourced for all, where there is engagement for all. Allows for difficult conversations. Being at ease

with difference – preparing young people to live in a diverse & global society. Equity, Diversity, Interdependence

What do people need to be exposed to and have the freedom to explore?
Openness to ‘the other.’ Openness to engagement. Need these issues to be part of education... education is about preparation for life – in a contemporary, modern, diverse society. Teachers becoming facilitators. Civic, social & personal development.

*Challenge value & belief structures
And then the change is up to the individual...

Need to talk about these things & deal with them. The conflict was about not talking about it/ hiding issues.

Need opportunities for new spaces & new narratives...
Creating new realities

Keep in mind tension between knowledge & emotional understanding.

Education system – in general, schools deal with diversity & inclusion superficially but not usually in meaningful ways. We haven’t had the proper time or resources to have inclusive institutional frameworks. --fuels/perpetuates sectarianism (segregated system)

Interview results: Neil Jarman
Friday, November 6, 2009
4 PM at Institute for Conflict Research

Some similarities between the two – in that they depend on the viewing of another community or another group of people as radically different from you and to some extent there is a hostility there.

Usually a sense of – with racism – power differentials and racism tends to be used to reinforce those differentials. Its usually seen as a facet of the dominant community to keep the minority community in place. More variations of racism now then just the power relationship of the dominant community suppressing the minority community. There is also tensions and hostilities that can be within minority communities or from the minority to the majority community, for example... black people can be racist as well.

And with sectarianism there is a history of similarities, in terms of it being seen as something that is predominantly perhaps the protestant community directed towards the catholic community – and kind of replicating the protestant community as the white community and the catholic community as the black community – and similar to racism in that the power differentials were directed that way. Practically you see sectarianism within both communities, and therefore there is an element of reciprocal relationships going on.

In regards to them being the same rather than different...
They rely on the same roots and substructures – they both rely on communities being very different from each other and that difference is being maintained by hostilities and discrimination – a variety of things. In some ways, its designed to reinforce the boundaries of the community that is expressing the racism or sectarianism. So you are trying to sustain what you are and keep the other community different from what you are – absolutely distinct. And here you’d say that most countries would have racism but not sectarianism but here its predominantly been sectarianism without racism but that’s because there have been limited numbers of minority communities here.
Racism is similar to sectarianism, but not being exactly the same as. It takes the same forms.

(Question about BBC quote)

Certainly a culture of intolerance in which prejudice is allowed to be legitimized to some extent at the level of sectarianism, which is deeply rooted in Northern Ireland. –As I said in that quote - If you take prejudice against Catholics for example, because they're different from us and we fear them in some ways because they are challenging our political authority and political status or our dominance. Then equally, you can feel legitimized in expressing prejudice against black people, Chinese people, b/c they're different and they're perhaps going to challenge your culture. But equally against gay and lesbian because they're going to challenge your norms of sexuality. And we also see issues around hostilities or prejudice towards people with disabilities b/c they challenge your notions about what is normal and what is acceptable in terms of body. So yes you can see that if one form of prejudice is given wide spread legitimacy in a society there is no rational while other forms of prejudice shouldn't be adopted at the same time. So you can't credibly stand up and say we deplore racism but its okay to be sectarian, but that's what people are doing to some extent. Its much easier for everybody to stand up and condemn racism, because everybody around the world condemns racism. But its proved more difficult to start to condemn sectarianism in any meaningful way. People say okay well we admit to being racist – but still a sense of denial around the levels of sectarianism in society. Once you've started to have one form of prejudice given a sort of social legitimacy, you can see it in many legal institutional forms – the fact that kids are sent to separate schools – that in some sense is legitimizing the sense that 'they're different from us. They go to their own schools.' That emphasizes that fact that there is a difference there –which is also expressed by churches & politicians. So people are saying we're not sectarian, but we're just trying to protect our own – it's a bit like apartheid, separate development. In some sense, if you're emphasizing that we have to do ours differently and separately from theirs - you can't help but have a sense of there being superiority, inferiority... better, worse... proper, incorrect... all those kinds of positions between.

(Question about hate crimes)

Roma community – seemed to be very much a continuation of behavior that was developed & institutionalized over the course of the conflict – you've got an area which is perceived as belonging to one community and then you have members of another community living there – and perhaps it gets to a certain number of people, you get to a tipping point – where there are incidents or a certain type of behavior that some people don't like or don't agree with and then it provokes a reaction, which is to get rid of them. And then the state steps in, and rather than them saying – no these people have a right to live here, instead they say – okay, these people are vulnerable? we will remove them and then we will condemn the people who took action. But once you've removed them, you've given the victory to the people who've been prejudice and hostile.

A lot of the incidents you hear about, in terms of forms of abuse, through physical assault, damage to property, graffiti. In that sense, if you say that sectarianism is the base line prejudice in Northern Ireland, the same sorts of behavior are carried on in all sorts of hate crime – you find forms of verbal abuse, physical abuse, criminal damage and you also see that the key perpetrators are always the same as the front line actors – basically young men, groups of young men, its usually not one acting alone – its 2 or 3 or 4 or more people doing the racism, or doing the sectarianism.

(Was racism overshadowed during the troubles or more of an issue now due ot increasing minority communities)

We can assume that racism existed during the troubles, but we don't have any evidence. Not much was written on minority communities before the ceasefire – there just wasn't very much written on them – since they were relatively small. But I suspect that the prejudice was there and it was expressed. But we don't know the scale of it, we don't know very much about it – no data. There's not a huge number of people from minority communities who were here in the 60s, 70s, 80s. But we can assume that people didn't start becoming prejudice in the 90s and since. But certainly as more people form minority communities were established here and more people from migrant backgrounds, there is more opportunity for those people who are prejudice to express their prejudice towards them. And what has happened with sectarianism really is that you know people have become increasingly separate from each other -segregation – so very often on a day to day basis people are not rubbing up against each other in a way that those prejudices might get readily expressed. Where was with minority communities, they haven't got their own territories where they can come and live in, so they are living in the protestant communities or the catholic communities, and therefore there will be more opportunities to express that prejudice.... So greater opportunities are more evident than they were.

(What is needed now to create an inclusive, tolerant society?)

The path that has been pursued has been in terms of getting the police to document what is going on and accurately record it – build relationships with minority communities and try to respond to attacks. And legislation... education system?

Its difficult to legislate at prejudice – it has to be worked out through the education system, through raising kids, through living in mixed environments. Same between protestants and Catholics - when you start to mix more, you start to see that people haven't got horns & tails, that they're just like you and me. Blimey! Same with racism, if more people mix and see that diversity is a normal thing. See that people that are different colors and from different cultures are not a threat. There is a sense in which that will happen, but you need to help that along in a way that increases a sense of engagement and understanding. Things like... Chinese community festival that is held in the center of town.... There is also an Indian festival in the park every year – which both attract a lot of people. Those kinds of things where those communities are inviting people to see their social lives and fellowship and celebrations.

Example in schools – kids need to get a sense of other cultures and festivals – and understand the importance. And see that it is not just important for them to come to us, but for us to also go towards them. We need to find a form of integration that is a to and fro – an exchange – rather than assimilation, which is about them coming to us and normalizing to our standards. Society needs to become more diverse... so inevitably the host community will change... because it has more people with different religions, languages, backgrounds, and you know, that has been happening to some extent.

We seem to kind of think that mixing and diversity is a new thing and there is a new dynamic of it... but go back to Rome and Britain, and Britain was being invaded for a 1,000 years with different groups of people arriving from everywhere with different cultures and backgrounds and it was transformed into something that wasn't there in the first place.

English is a world language but it has words in it from languages all over the place – it works because it can absorb and accept differences. Once you start becoming open and recognize that it is a process. Its not 'our pure thing', where people are going to come in and be like us, it means that we are going to have to change - which is a good thing. The problem is the people that don't want to recognize that there is a need for that change.

Interview results: David Stevens

Monday, November 9, 2009

10 AM at Corrymeela House

Ludwig Wittgenstein (philosopher) – developed the idea of family resemblances. Ex. Diff & similarities between American baseball & American football – both sports & they have rules, but its quite hard to describe the similarities & differences. So you can argue that there is a family resemblance between sectarianism & racism. They're not the same, but they're similar. They're both species of exclusion. In that sense.... Racism – people can't convert.. you're black or you're white.. it is a physical thing. But with sectarianism, in theory, you could convert. There are differences.

Ex. of conflict where differences were blurred. Violence more intensified because of fluid differences. In the way of exclusions, if you're not quite sure of the differences between people there are problems.

Book – Moving Beyond Sectarianism → Definition of sectarianism

A distorted expression of positive human needs → recognizes that we need belonging & identity. We need borders & boundaries. But borders and boundaries in themselves carry danger. Sectarianism is a bad, but its actually a distortion of a good, because we all live in groups and there has to be some boundaries and borders. So therefore, you can't just start from sectarianism is a bad, you have to see why differences become sectarian. I think that's sort of helpful...

In sectarianism there is exclusion and there is a sense of superiority. And I suppose in racism, there's exclusion and a sense of superiority as well. In that sense, its about the family resemblance. However, you can't remove the color difference – so that's visibly there, you could in theory move a religious difference – people could convert. There is always that visible thing there... all sorts of different colors... so they're different. They aren't just the same. Its important to have some understanding of the difference.

I think what has happened here as ethnic minorities and racial minorities and so on have come into NI, we've had rising numbers of racial and ethnic attacks, and its often people who are at the bottom of the heap & feel hard done by... and take it out on even more vulnerable people. Certain amount of displacement activity going on. Displaced some of our sectarian thing on more vulnerable and weaker groups.

(Strategic Plan)

What practically happened in Corrymeela was that we started to have a week for refugees & asylum seekers in the summer. And we recruited through NICRAS. We developed a closer link with them, which led to providing them with training & committee skills and so on. Then PEACE III money came available, developed a project around the integration of refugees & asylum seekers with host communities. And we got that project underway this year in the early March. Issues of reconciliation are not just about protestant and catholic. So as the situation changed in NI, we developed into other areas and refugees & asylum seekers have been one. Also a certain amount of work with ethnic minorities – a week in the summer called Connecting Cultures... which brings people of different cultural backgrounds together. As NI has become a different place, we have been moving into other areas. That's been happening all through this decade.

(tolerant, inclusive society)

I suppose.... We've started to get refugees & asylum seekers. Migrant workers (particularly from Eastern Europe) have also come in to NI as well, so we've become a more diverse society. This has happened very quickly & our capacity to handle this is not all that great, I think. A lot of these people are doing jobs the locals don't want to do. Somewhere like the states is a far more diverse society, we've only come very recently to these things and we're learning as we go. Part of the difficulty is many of these people impact on sections of this society that are finding change most difficult. Where refugees & asylum seekers would live is often in Protestant working class areas of Belfast, and these are the people that suffer the greatest impact of social change as their jobs have ended. So it can be easy to blame refugees, asylum seekers & ethnic minorities for the situation they (those at the end of social change) find themselves in. Its easy to talk about tolerance if you are not personally losing out from social change. I think that's part of the challenge and the difficulty here. For some people a more diverse society is highly attractive, but for other people its not, particularly people who are on the end of social change. I don't think we should be too euphoric about all of that. European societies have found this quite difficult & in a sense it's the big issue in Western European society and its generating substantial political action, in places like Holland. Particularly in relation to Islam... poor people who are Muslims Ex. of Paris... How we deal with some of these challenges is a profound issue and NI has only just started on this journey.

(fear of difference)

We are not a society that has dealt well with the differences we have had and that has led to substantial violence. Effectively there was a small Jewish minority of a few thousand people, the numbers which peaked after the Second World War and have been declining and then the Chinese presence in the 1960s and that was about it. This is a society where ... Suddenly all of this has come in this decade more or less, and I think we or at least many people find this difficult to cope with and I suppose, it impacts certain areas more than others. South Belfast is where you see a lot of this. There are other places where you're not going to see colored faces in NI and this it the reality of change. You can talk abstractly about globalization and all the rest but now you start to see some of this.

Who are these people? Who am I? All of these changes going on raise these questions, and I think its not surprising that negotiating this is painful. There are pluses of having a diverse society... offers opportunities of creativity and so on. US has had a tradition of being a melting pot and European societies less so. Therefore, I don't think European societies don't have much to teach Americans about all of this.... Holocaust. There are realities here that differences can lead to massive scape goating in context of economic crisis and a loss of national identity and pride. There are dangers here. We shouldn't be too euphoric about what may happen.

Interview results: Sean O'Baoill
Monday, November 9, 2009
3 PM at Mediation Northern Ireland offices

They both come from the same root – which is the inability to deal with the concept of diversity. And from that – the developed concept of we're not just diverse, we're different, because we're different we should separate – so there becomes division. And once you get groups of people that are divided, on whatever grounds, things are more likely to become contentious & more difficult to resolve.

So in race terms – its much easier usually to see what the differences are. But if you practice, as people in Northern Ireland have been for a long time, we start seeing differences (ex. of activity we did during our workshop – got the orange card, taig, etc. – based on your name, what school you went to, how you say 'h').

In NI the whole issue of racism is tainted with the sectarian one as well, where it becomes again more complex. There's always that aspect of the diversity of the other, which you separate yourself from, but by its very nature, in a divided society people who arrive into that conflict have to choose where they're going to live, where they're going to go to school, where they're going to shop or eat... and they're more likely to choose a Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist/British background for a couple reasons – 1) in Belfast the demographics changing so the PUL community is diminishing and the CNR community is increasing and where the PUL community is going is into the towns around it. Belfast itself, as a city, becomes more CNR and the spaces for people to move into, low cost housing, is going to be PUL areas, so you have a much higher instance of immigration into those areas. (was mostly Chinese, Pakistani, Indian? But now increasingly Eastern European)

So immigrants move into those areas and things reach tipping points and usually at somewhere between 10-20% of immigrants in an area, local people believe that the numbers have reached over 50% - people tend to be wrong about it. They see one face that's a dark color on the street and they think 'that's one' – then by the time they see a dozen, that seems like an awful lot and by the time numbers reach 10-20%, the assumption is 'there's more of them than there are of us' – which is completely wrong, its not even a quarter but its believed to be over half.

Now in the NI context you get the concept of 'what we have, we hold – we're not going to be taken over by them' so from the loyalist perspective, you get things like people feeling 'we spent generations fighting off the provisionals (IRA) and republicans and now here they come taking the space' and you tend to get a reaction to that which appears to back up republican propaganda that says 'loyalists are inherently more racist or sectarian' but its more a result of demographics than it is of sectarianism or racism. In West Belfast (CNR?), where you're still down about the 1-2% of the population its still 'welcome foreign brother' but when you get into places like Donegal Pass you get letters sent out about the 'yellow peril' – which is obviously racist – from the loyalist organizations there – which gives the impression that they are more likely to be racist... but this is unlikely to be true. (depends on demographics, economics, etc.)

So there is definitely a connection between the two.

Tendency to assimilate into the different groups – some minorities into PUL others into CNR – then there is the Roma, who are rejected by both due to long tradition of racism against our own Irish Travelers – who are by far our biggest minority racial group and by far the worst treated. Life & Times Survey: asks people who would you like to live beside? – Even at the height of the conflict, people were more likely to say 'I'd live beside Republican or Loyalist (the opposite, the enemy), but I won't live beside a traveler.... Or let my daughter marry a traveler or work with a traveler, etc.' Huge level of racism that has been there for a long time – very deep, very strong.

So... come from the same root – the concept of 'the other' – which makes you so different from me, we can't possibly meet, there is no point at which we have similarities. For me unfortunately, the solution in the 1980s... was to try to get people to recognize their similarities and say 'deep down we're all the same' & that's still a very very popular idea, particularly amongst middle classes. – but I think its unhelpful, because what the subliminal message is 'if we were different, it would be okay to kill ya or discriminate against you & its not okay because we're the same.' What I try to get across is a different message – 'its not okay and we're different.' I'm much more interested in the concept of the European anti-racism strategy, which had the slogan 'All Different. All Equal.' & was translated into all the different European languages. And I would very much support that concept of – we are different and we're of equal value,

equal worth. Doesn't mean we are equally talented or equally skilled, because people have natural tendencies. – and I think that is a concept that we still haven't got in NI, and the more violence goes away, we try to bury the conflict by saying deep down we're all the same.

Now when you get a Nigerian man, who is clearly culturally different, linguistically different, physically different and then you say 'deep down we're all the same' – everybody knows you're talking nonsense. It becomes an aspiration of 'I'd like to pretend we're the same so we can pretend we're treating each other the same' In reality, we're deeply different & perhaps we have different needs as well, so the concept of equity as opposed equality - to each according to their needs is more important.

Ex. work with town in Limerick – 50% travelers

Unfair laws & legislation – directed towards travelers – in all areas of society. Mediators pointed this out, but they were in denial. Just like in NI, the one thing you can't admit is that you're sectarian... its not acceptable to admit that you're racist down there – its not racism, its just protecting yourself from the travelers. Ex. one man doesn't let travelers in his hotel bar/restaurant. Call them terrible terms behind their backs. Travelers have just as much disdain for the settlers as settlers have for the travelers. So there is deeply engrained racism in all aspects of society. Mediators' assessment of the situation was that everyone in the system was inherently racist, but they continued to deny it. Didn't try to change to accommodate travelers, they just wanted travelers to accommodate them. 'white flight?'

If you're not willing to face the stuff, you're not going to be able to solve it. Same problem here – huge amounts of denial about what's really going on. Huge amounts of racism & sexism & homophobia that exist in society... but its not talked about & systemic problems aren't looked at. Still worried about sectarianism, but everybody's in deep denial about the sectarianism. We're also not admitting that. People know that their friends are Protestant or Catholic and boast when they have friends that are the 'other'... and the fact that they know it and boast about it proves it is a sectarian society when there are parts of the world where people have no idea what religious background their friends are – not sectarian societies.

MOST program: linking NI to the Balkans – learn from each other

No such thing as 3rd party neutral... maybe 3rd party impartial, professional... but not neutral, everyone comes with their baggage/their background.

Understanding situation of refugees... hostile circumstances of new countries... they arrive with nothing. The system is biased against them. Not welcome.

So what do you do with your middle class ideas about why don't we all just get along? What judgments would you make from the bottom?

Holy Land area (where common grounds café is) – is where the Roma incident took place. They have increased in number in Belfast now, and as in all societies, there reaches a tipping point. If you're a refugee – you can't get state benefits & you can't get work. Roma are treated like shit everywhere. Slightly different although connected to Irish Travelers. In terms of nomadic peoples, we already treat our own nomadic peoples pretty badly, we're certainly going to teach visiting nomadic peoples pretty badly. 'Spent a lot of time fighting off Republicans, we're not going to accept them either.'

Paul mcCarthy – hate crime for slander against Roma

Robert Murdie (police officer) – you may not make racist statement like 'all Roma are criminals'

But, so common a crime that didn't even realize was committing a criminal act.

1970s, 1980s... comedies about racist jokes. Not acceptable in 1990s, but we aren't very far from that.

Most adults grew up with very overt racism not being challenged. Now children are learning something better, but it's at least a generation away.

Interview results: Bill Rolston
Tuesday, November 10, 2009
4:30 at Queen's Student Union

Sectarianism is very very like racism and concluded that... Sectarianism is a racism.
 Racism is not based on color. Process of racialisation... look at difference and arrange difference on a hierarchy and having done that we find justification for our hierarchy, so we say that our superiority is based on your inferiority... could be due to your skin color, your cultural characteristics, your religion, any of these signs of ethnicity. Racism can be based on differences that are real (skin color), exaggerated (nose size), or imaginary/fictitious. Key argument is that... Racism places the emphasis on difference rather than the emphasis on difference causing racism. It's a social construction that looks for difference, and on that basis, it does not have to be skin color. Sectarianism is a form of looking for difference... sometimes real, in this case, mostly exaggerated and sometimes fictitious. Looking for difference and building on that difference a whole structure of institutions and justifications and everything else. So sectarianism is a form of racism, its our localized version. Similarities such as the ability of people to cross over from one group to another... can a black person become white... one of the forms racism takes is the rigidity of boundaries, you cannot cross over. Of course, this rigidity is fluid at the edges, sometimes race is overlooked/disregarded due to wealth, etc. but... for rigid loyalists here, a catholic can never be anything but a catholic, there is no such thing as an ex-catholic.

Every societies racism is unique to it. Look at not just how it came about, how it expressed itself.. must look at history to figure out how to unravel it. Specificity of Irish racism... trapped between two worlds.. the 1st and 3rd world... victim of colonialism but also continued colonialism... ambiguity. Some heroes some villains for racism. Given that ambiguity, it allows for a play in relation to Irish anti-racism that is not necessarily available to other societies. More difficult to see yourself rooted in an honorable tradition of anti-racism in British history, but its easier in Irish society.

Not to be exaggerated... but an elective affinity between loyalism and racism. Inclusivity & exclusivity... we is defined very narrowly/not very flexible. Loyalism doesn't mix. Racism rests easier with loyalism. Hardest thing is to hold on to both of these at once. Racism – not entirely different from a lot of societies... not as integrated as London... but not as white as we once were. Scope for mixing was less, is less... until recently. Racial intolerance reaches the surface, but not as bad as some places... like Merced... 'race hate capital of Europe' – media crap. Rose in a very short time as a racist society.

Quantitative measure... more racism then more sectarianism? Conversely, less sectarianism do you become more tolerant? – can't easily obtain figures like that. Relationship between the two is quite complex.

We all grew up in a racist society here. Didn't think about it, part of culture/entertainment

Complex mix of the two.

Stress the notion of complexity.

Interview results: Yuko Chiba
Wednesday, November 11, 2009
2 PM at Queen's Student Union

Sectarianism – everywhere in NI

Racism – always existed, but been ignored... recent change

Racism... there are issues against white migrants, that's ethnicity.

History of Chinese, Indian, Palestinians, Jews – kept a low profile

Now – Eastern/central European

Case by case issues... depends on where they live, where they go to school, their *job*

Ex. state housing/working class.... Many more problems

Have to deal with these things together... they're both about difference

Suggestions:

CWA

ICC

NICEM

MCRC – ‘out of shadows’ Mann-Kler

PSNI – 1994 figures?

Equality Commission – legislation, 1997 (very new)

NI Human Rights Commission website

Govt. policy? – 2005 ‘Racial Equality Strategy’ ‘A Shared Future’ ... supposed to have published a new specific policy plan... but hasn’t come yet.. “cohesion...”

Sinn Fein “Good Relations” – not accepted by DUP – can’t come up with an agreed policy... still dealing with issues within parliament between parties...

sectarian divide affecting ability to deal with new racial/ethnic divide!

Interview results: Duncan Morrow

Wednesday, November 11, 2009

4 PM at Community Relations Council headquarters

(societal divisions interview quote)

Well I suppose there is two ways to look at this, one is generic which is that racism essentially occurs at a point when we are interacting with each other on a daily basis but we are not fully apart of one another’s worlds and so there is a kind of attempt to redivide the world on a basis... which doesn’t accept any more people... and so it is essentially usually acted out in the weaker party. Racism carries away a deep insecurity in society, where the minority effectively gets blamed for the chaos and the uncertainty which another group feels. This is common, its been an issue in all sorts of place, and its becoming a deeply problematic issue across the whole of the world, because migration is creating situations in which we’re all interactive with each other. So racism now looks like picking on members of society on the basis of some characteristic or other. In Europe, there was a history of people having seen things as nation states... Germany belonged to the Germans, France belonged to the French... that was the way we were organized. The way the world works now is not like that. People migrate for jobs because of the economy. The colonial period has brought a whole history of discrimination... Travel has brought people into different worlds. The American experience – ‘the melting pot.’ Essentially we are now mixed peoples, and you get a deep reaction sometimes from people of the previous group, because they are frightened that they are now losing their place, which was already precarious in a social sense, to people who are coming in and racism emerges very often – that would be working class racism. Sometimes the people at the bottom coop the bosses into a system whereby the bosses then make political capital... on the back of these alliances? So you get really deep problems .

In Northern Ireland terms, the issue here is we have had... it wasn’t called racism here, because it wasn’t a color issue... but we’ve had a sense of competing groups competing for power at the root of our social and political organization here for generations. And while race in the sense of a visual distinctive difference or even a genetic difference at some kind of core element was never really part of it... The projecting issue, the reason while people couldn’t be included was because of religion, that was the divide and all sorts of political things followed...who Them and Us were, what kind of access to politics who has, what allegiances you had, and then economics – it also affected peoples access to jobs, peoples capacity to being trusted doing certain things... This was all dependent on religion and its called sectarianism. But essentially it was a mode of people living together trying to distinguish the good and the bad, the in and the out on the basis of this kind of thing, and it had big effect, because it was also about struggle for power. So within that violence people felt threatened by each other and sectarianism therefore looks like trying to exclude these other people, trying to discriminate and it had effects like... when violence was up, people wanted to live in safe places and so they lived among their own – so you got this notion of different areas, you got discrimination in jobs, you got a sense of our flag flies only in this area – marking of territory, just Them and Us – this notion of there’s a Them and an Us and everybody knows who it is – running through

society like letters through a rock?. Sectarianism isn't just an idea, it's a practical reality for people in their lives - Its where they're safe, its what they feel comfortable saying with their neighbors, its their friends, its who they can marry without annoying their mothers. Sectarianism is a whole package of behaviors as well as attitudes.

Now, if you have a society which has normalized Them and Us and turned that into something which is not just a personal choice but territories where people live, developed or grown organizations which claim to be community defenders -paramilitary organizations- And into that for the first time come immigrants or people from outside, then its not that racism is different here from anywhere else, racism occurs in much the same way as it occurs across Western Europe – people coping with the fact that there's major social change here and these people are different and acting out their insecurity on the different in a discriminatory and violent way... that happens, I'm afraid to say, as a process, and Northern Ireland isn't distinct there. What's distinct is, because they come into a place where people own territories, they're very visible. They come into a place where the paramilitaries already act –whether with or without community permission-, because its never asked for in a formal sense- but to eliminate people who they don't like. You get a situation where racism, attacks on people who are different, are almost normal to start with. Second of all, we can tell who they are because its in the territory. Third of all we have the means, the violent potential to actually carry this out and consider it patriotism. Racism occurs here against a background and part of the problem of racism is therefore that ethnic minority people, who don't control territories, find themselves having to live as minorities in territories which are very clearly distinct and then are potentially the object of all sorts of attack –which may vary from verbal to physical to expulsion. So that's the problem. Once you have kind of normalized the principle of exclusion into your society, which we have in sectarianism, they're coming into a society where inclusion is something new and so that's the issue for me. Essentially the same attitude of this is our space and you are different, and the way I protect myself is by keeping people who are different out. So racism shows some of the same kinds of characteristics. Its not got the same political message, because migrants are not organized with a political message to change the nature of the state. But for the person, who is stuck at the end of the attack, it has the same outcome. It's a social phenomenon about outsiders and it is certainly attacking the smaller group – the weaker people who can't defend themselves. But the difference between sectarianism and racism actually is that sectarianism has become essentially the principle of politics and racism cannot simply because of numbers, it can't.. so it doesn't split in that way. But at the same time, probably proportionately you're at more risk if you're an ethnic minority than if you're a protestant or catholic, because you're very vulnerable, you're in a minority situation. Its not about better or worse, its about how these things continue. And in attacking racism, saying you know this is wrong and people recognizing that its wrong, because there's an international dimension to racism and the language of anti-racism which is different from the language of sectarianism which is our own (except for Iraq?) means that people see it, its much more visible to people coming from outside.

(Denial of sectarianism?) – Absolutely, you tend to move from one to the other, you either get the total denial of sectarianism... and one of the things that has happened since increase of ethnic minorities is that everybody's focused on racism, no one is talking about sectarianism anymore. OR, the other, which is that we still talk about sectarianism and don't we now also have this problem which is being exercised on ethnic minorities. And in fact, we have two problems, not the same problem, but they're clearly emerging from the same issue - which is the problem of communities who do not know how to be with other people, they have to be in opposition to other people and where that becomes normative and people act out. So they're connected, but the impacts aren't the same and the vehicles may not be the same, because they're happening in different ways. And also, racism tends to be the generic word here for anybody who's attacked on the basis of a cultural difference that's not catholic/protestant. So it's a kind of generic word, but the issues for Polish may be very different from the issues for Indians, you know there is always an issue with the word racism that you treat it as a single issue, when in fact its many issues, because the cultures you're dealing with are many.

(underlying 'fear of difference'?) It is a fear. Its complicated. In some way, the issue here is that the arrival of difference means the elimination of you. The actual fear is the elimination of myself... its that I've lost my place, that's what is feared. In fact what is changing that is the economy, is wider decisions being taken. The decision by the middle class is in some ways not to have solidarity with you but to transfer it to the cheapest labor possible, so over there. So the way it works out, is in a fear of these people and they are the carriers of this change. They are the people who we notice as new, although they are not actually origins of the problem. The origins of the problem are you're losing your place. And so part of the question we have

to ask is how do we... We can't secure people's place in the old world, which is there is only us around here.. but we need to do some work. There is two sides to the work – one is how to bring people who are coming in and welcome them in and the other one is to talk to the community which is losing its space and the people in that community about where we're going and what the future is going to look like and how they're going to participate in it. Need to do the two pieces of work.

(security? Territory.. identity) Sense of identity, well part of the problem is that it is expressed strongly here, but actually it means its very weak. It means that the reason you have to express it so strongly is because if you don't something else will.... You feel you're about to be overpowered or abandoned. Strong flag waving is the opposite of not doing it... it is actually a representation of how frightened people feel. These communities are not secure communities that are doing this, these are the insecure communities – the people who feel obliged to really emphasize We are this. So more insecurity is coming into already insecure communities, and their only way to respond to that is violence and expulsion. The core question we have is... they are going to keep coming... but how do we engage a process which involves people in shaping whats coming. Otherwise, what it will break down into is racism... terrible violence worked out on people ... 'race capital of Europe' that whole thing... but at the same time, our community is feeling like their issues aren't being taken seriously, that their threats to them aren't being taken seriously, like they're being all blamed for this.

In asking about identity... need to have the territory, because if I don't have the territory, I feel as if I lose my identity. The issue is that its not a sign of security, it's a sign of insecurity. These are people who are very frightened of the future or alternatively have a deep experience of the past and are frightened it will be repeated (nationalist communities?)... and into these communities come unsuspecting people who just arrive. What constitutes identity is more a clinging on to something that if you didn't have it you wouldn't know who you were.

So part of the job is to give it its place & an identity... yes you are here and we understand that...and we have to do that in a context which is more complicated than that.

How do you bring fearful people into a less fearful place? How do you make relationships which are going to be long enough and strong enough and carry enough... for this? –Shared Future – Have to start talking about a shared future for everybody... and probably that's a global picture, not just a local issue... but that's not an easy adjustment. It does mean change. It doesn't mean stay the same and we'll just manage it. It means change, and people are nervous about change until they feel its over. But the reality is... it may not be over.... (When is the end of change?)

Sectarianism has clearly something of religious difference at its core. It's a distinction made on the basis of something connected to... you say a sect, which means its not actually the entire faith, it's different dimensions of the same faith.. a small part, one part against the other. That's the traditional dimension. However, what it is is the imposition of a Them and Us pattern on the basis of that kind of a division. Some people think its about religion, its about national identity... but effectively the outcome is, you impose a Them and Us identity which helps these divisions. In some sense, racism is the same, but racism uses a marker of race, language, color.. these different types of markers. In most of the world, well certainly in the US where a lot of this language came out of the post-colonial period, the issue was not so much religion as race. Its interesting now... as the Islamic thing has come up that religion is also an issue now within these concepts... but it's the Them and Us pattern in which Them and Us are not just different, but rivals. They're not just different. If they're just different, then hey, doesn't matter... but the issue is they're actually competitors for power. So power is in play and the issue of power is the issue of if You win, I lose... the zero sum game. Now, for the minority, its usually articulated as question of we've lost for years or the coming up group..... But the definition is a struggle for power between two groups who regard each other not just as different but as enemies and who use religion or religious tradition as a marker. The issue of racism is essentially the exclusion of one group by another on the basis of racial division. Part of the question is that the actual act of exclusion is being done by one side and not done by the other, because of historic power struggles. So getting people to recognize their racism or sectarianism is quite hard?, you can usually see it in others. There is two questions, one is.. actually existing racism may be being carried out by the group which has been in power and is losing, so the whites against blacks. And that's slightly different from saying that there's the potential for any power group to develop exclusionary mechanisms. So you're both dealing with the fact that at one level you can acknowledge that everybody participates in processes of Them and Us, but in factual terms the discriminations you have to deal with are one way rather than two way. There's not much examples of Polish people excluding Northern Irish people, that's just the reality. Sectarianism is slightly different in as far as it's a closer contest, and so

therefore, there are more examples of the two-sidedness of it here. Although it would still be the truth, which is most people still reject the notion that this is sectarian. Most people agreeing it's a terrible thing sectarianism and very few people standing up and saying I am sectarian.

Its about exclusion. The underlying principle is you are less than me, but it actually must drive from I fear I'm less than you. The drive must be I fear I'm less than you, but I have the power to get rid of you... to act out on that. So it's the two coming together... I'm frightened of you and I have the power to expel you. If systems adopt the defense of one group against another on this basis, racism (or sectarianism) is not just an individual thing, it's a systemic issue. Its right at the core of the system and that happens when you have political capture of the system by one group or the other. You get direct exclusion as policy.

Interview results: Denise Wright
Thursday, November 12, 2009
10 AM at South Belfast Roundtable for Racism office

Steve West - Diversity training

Roma incident – very hyped up, not the entire community, wasn't orchestrated – was kids, *media

Some 'racist incidents' aren't really racist motives but caused for other reasons related to people not getting along... but because between different races/ethnicities... then its 'racist.'

Racism: hate crimes but also institutionalized → difficult to integrate into society... ex. no access to public funds (no school dinner, uniforms, etc.)... some now allowed to work (besides being self-employed)... most difficult for migrants from countries that just joined the EU in 2007, Romania & Bulgaria. Very complicated rules – particularly so for people who just arrived here with usually nothing! → EmbraceNI.org

People arrive and change the community when the community wasn't expecting this change after the peace process... survival is very deep-seeded and its hard to change so quickly

Legacy of conflict → for 30 years being afraid and suspicious kept people alive... so now, too much change too quickly (newcomers – cant help but be suspicious)... furthermore, people don't feel they have a choice in all of this + economic downturn makes change/new people more threatening when they already feel like they are suffering economically. And, it's a threat to their traditional background.

For example, there aren't really as many issues with the Chinese who have been here more long term and they are self-sufficient, so they're not as much of a threat.

These are *new* and complex issues – still figuring out how to deal with it on a social & political level.

Westminster controls many policies, so NI waiting for more policy & funding to deal with this. Section 75?

Racism may be easier to educate about... Sectarianism so much complicated history/feelings. But both have the same roots of Fear, Hate & Ignorance. The two issues do tie together. They have both always existed. For example... for a protestant marrying a 'Black Catholic' was the ultimate sin.

Immigrants/newcomers are unaware about cultural/sectarian divides.... Ex. don't understand the meaning of the different flags or the segregated school system, and no one gives them advice or talks about these issues openly. They become at risk/vulnerable when they don't understand which area they are living in, walking through, etc. Ex. Kids walking in a certain area to get to school with a distinct uniform from the opposite community – they can become sectarian, not racist targets. → Migrant & Immigrant awareness.

People have come into contested space – complicated things. This isn't a secure society on its own, not secure in its own identity... so need community confidence! Analogy: If you're a dysfunctional family, you're not going to be inviting people over for dinner. → affects hospitality. And its difficult with lack of jobs, etc. – newcomers are an easy scapegoat.

Newcomers need adequate housing, healthcare, etc. before they can be integrated into society! – need to remove the social, political, economic integration barriers.

Also issues between some minority ethnic communities – European historical issues/conflicts. Ex. some minority communities are more anti-Roma than Irish are.
Must remember this is actually a European context... as NI is part of the EU, etc.

Stereotypes aren't wrong, but stereotypes + power = discrimination.

Needs to be learning from the heart, so that there is understanding.

Dehumanizing.

Generational differences/growth – breaking down barriers.

Differences need to become irrelevant/beside the point, not ignored/invisible?

Sectarianism & racism... both about integration... but a different kind