RELIGION-RELATED DISCOURSE
A CRITICAL APPROACH TO NON-RELIGION IN EDINBURGH'S SOUTHSIDE

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THESIS DECLARATION

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted in any form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Christopher R. Cotter, 29 September 2016

ABSTRACT

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This thesis has been undertaken to critically engage with, reframe and rehabilitate a burgeoning body of contemporary research on 'non-religion' within the critical academic study of 'religion', and to explore the benefits of such a reframing for empirical research. I begin by critically introducing research on 'non-religion' and identifying a number of key problems which directly relate to ever-raging debates surrounding the definition of 'religion'. I then justify my chosen approach—discourse analysis—and provide a discursive re-reading of studies of 'non-religion', arguing that it should be approached as part of a 'religion-related field', before outlining the theoretical questions addressed in the thesis.

I argue for locality as a productive means through which to examine religion-related discourse, justify the selection of Edinburgh's Southside as my field site, and introduce my data sources and the specifics of my analytical approach. Chapter 4 presents my analysis of the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP), conducted in the mid-1990s, while Chapters 5–7 present the analysis of my own empirical work in the contemporary Southside, and place this into conversation with the PEP. In these chapters I demonstrate that the religion-related field is entangled with a variety of powerful discourses that are inflected by the Southside's local and national particularity. I also demonstrate the importance of looking beyond the supposed 'religious' or 'non-religious' character of discourses, in order to assess the underlying structures and entanglements, and to avoid unjustifiably reifying the religion-related field. In some cases the 'non-religious' is implicit in the subject position of actors utilizing religion-related discourse. It also appears that being positioned as 'religious' or 'non-religious' means more in certain circumstances than in others. Furthermore, I reflect on the notion of religious 'indifference', arguing that, in some instances, the *performance* of indifference is a tactic for coping with contextually meaningful difference.

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Christopher R. Cotter
Edinburgh, 29 September 2016

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: NON-RELIGION, NON-RELIGIONS, NON-RELIGIOUS

> "Religion" is not a native category. It is not a first person term of self-characterization. It is a category imposed from the outside on some aspect of native culture. It is the other, in these instances colonialists, who are solely responsible for the content of the term. (J. Z. Smith 1998, 269)

> I just don't have any interest either way, but I wouldn't want to understate how uninterested I am [in religion]. There still hasn't been a word invented for people like me, whose main experience when presented with this issue is an overwhelming, mind-blowing, intergalactic sense of having more interesting things to think about. (Goldacre in A. Z. Williams 2011)

'Religion' is a problematic and contested category which can be (and indeed is) strategically deployed in a number of more or less distinct and interrelated ways by individuals, groups, and societies as they go about their daily lives. It is a word that is laden with power, and hostage to its own very particular history. The concept 'is absent in the ancient world' (Nongbri 2013, 4) and finds its way to its contemporary 'common sense' usage through a complex etymological process, first through the Latin 'religio' (worship practices, superstition, etc) of the early decades of the first millennium, through to the development of the twin concepts 'religiosus' and 'saecularis' of the mediaeval period, which distinguished between clergy leading a monastic lifestyle, and those pursuing their calling in the 'secular' world (Nongbri 2013, 5, 28–31; Asad 1993, 39). It has been argued that until the early Enlightenment period 'there was arguably no concept in the English language' either of 'a religion' or of 'secular neutrality', and that 'religion' was a term applied solely to 'Christian Truth' in contrast to others' 'barbaric superstitions' (Fitzgerald 2007a, 283). In the

Enlightenment period, with the European 'discovery' of new worlds, and the attendant rise in colonial exploitation, the notion of 'religions' then began to take shape due to 'an explosion of data'(J. Z. Smith 1998, 275). This same period saw the rise in the notion of 'the secular' as a separable, public, 'neutral' space, and the compartmentalization of 'religion' into 'the private sphere, the realm of conscience, apart from the public sphere of the state' (Knott 2005, 66).

Thus, the contemporary term 'religion' is implicated in a particular historical trajectory, constructed along the lines of Protestant Christianity, and 'deeply implicated [...] in the discourses of modernity, especially [...] in technologies of power' (Jantzen 1998, 8). This is the line of argument laid out in Jonathan Z. Smith's seminal chapter 'Religion, Religions, Religious' (1998), and summarized neatly in the quotation at the top of this chapter. This argument is not unique to Smith, but forms the backbone of a distinctive position within the contemporary academic study of religion, known as the 'critical' study of religion, which is primary concerned with 'the critical historical deconstruction of "religion" *and related categories*' (Fitzgerald 2015b, 303–4). The basic premise of this position is social constructionism, holding that 'there is no such thing that answers to the name "religion"', but only phenomena that 'we habitually label religious' for historically contingent reasons (Jong 2015, 20). With this thesis, I position myself firmly in this critical strand of the contemporary study of religion.

Turning to the substantive focus of this thesis, the first decades of the twenty-first century have seen a marked rise in the number of individuals choosing to not identify as religious across the world. Debates continue to rage as to the significance of this apparent rise and what it might mean, and the causal relationship between these apparent statistical 'facts' and the methodologies used to produce them. Nevertheless,

the same decades have seen a related rise in academic studies of what it might mean to be other than religious, and a burgeoning body of substantive data from work in psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, and other disciplines, mapping and theorizing the beliefs, practices, identifications, values and social contexts of 'non-religious' populations.

Given my outline of the critical approach above, it is little surprise that scholars who label themselves as 'critical' tend to look askance at substantive studies of 'non-religion', viewing them as simply reproducing and perpetuating all of the attendant problems of the category 'religion', and as uncritically reifying and substantiating a category created for multiple-choice surveys. On the other hand, many of those scholars who are engaged in such substantive study seem quite uninterested in critical questions surrounding category formation. This is not to say that there is no quality substantive work being carried out—as we shall see in the next chapter, this is far from the case. However, from a critical perspective, most of these studies are merely peppered with a few peripheral references to Talal Asad, with the main focus being to continue on with gathering, typologizing and theorizing data for a new field of study on 'the nones', 'non-religion', 'the secular', or whatever they choose to call it. In this thesis, I argue that both 'camps' have a lot to learn from each other, and that it is possible for good empirical work to be conducted ostensibly under the religion/non-religion binary with the potential or explicit aim of contributing to the critical project. This thesis represents an original attempt at doing so—as both a manifesto, and a first step in putting that manifesto into practice.

Whilst I argue that research into 'non-religion' is clearly relevant to the academic study of 'religion' (due to their dialectical relationship), the second quotation at the top of this chapter, from physician and science writer Ben Goldacre,

presents us with a problem. What is to be done with this sort of perspective, which clearly has much to say that is of relevance to the study of religion, without also doing him violence? Going further, then, this thesis represents an innovative attempt to incorporate this individual into the academic study of religion without disingenuously labelling him 'religious' or 'non-religious'. Along the way, I argue for discursive analysis as the most appropriate way to approach these topics, and develop an innovative method that utilizes 'locality' as a framework through which to access 'religion-related' discourse (Quack 2014). The empirical component of the thesis centres on a particular locality—the Southside of Edinburgh—utilizing data from the contemporary Southside and from a historical data set from the mid-1990s to provide theoretical and methodological insights that are not only relevant to studies of 'religion' and/or 'non-religion', but also to broader research on diversity, the built environment, identity formation, and public discourse in the UK and beyond.

1.1   Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2 begins by introducing research on 'non-religion', reflecting on its development, and presenting a critical assessment of four dominant approaches to the 'non-religious'—which I dub 'subtractionist', 'radically contextual', 'substantial' and 'discursive'. I identify a number of key problems with the majority of such research as it currently stands, which directly relate to one of the central themes in the academic study of religion—namely, the ever-raging debates surrounding the definition of 'religion'—and conclude that discursive approaches provide the most fruitful way forward for my purposes.

Discussion then turns towards Discourse Analysis, and I proceed to outline existing discursive approaches to 'religion' and some of the key terminology

employed therein. I provide a discursive re-reading of studies of 'non-religion', including my prior research, and argue that an adaptation of Johannes Quack's concept of a 'religion-related field' (2014) provides a productive way forward. Having done this, I set the research agenda for the empirical component of the thesis, which is to examine the religion-related field of discourse in a particular context, with the aim of addressing the following questions:

- Could I develop an approach that would include the voices of those who might, according to certain measures, be classified as 'religious' and 'non-religious', those who are 'indifferent' to religion, and those who are 'in between'?

- Would there be a coherent discursive field in which all such people could participate?

- How dependent would the structure of these discourses be upon particular configurations of religion-related identifiers (discursive objects)?

- What would this say to academic constructions of 'non-religion'?

- What entanglements would this 'religion-related' field have with other fields, and just how contextual would they be?

In **Chapter 3** I argue that this research agenda is best served by locating the religion-related discourses that are employed in social interaction by non-elite social actors who strategically place themselves, and are strategically placed by others, in a variety of positions within a contextual religion-related field. After considering the options available to me, I then argue for locality as a productive means through which to seek such discourses, and justify the selection of Edinburgh's Southside as the bounded context in which to conduct my analysis. I then introduce the reader to the Southside and outline and justify my selection of data sources—the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP), new interviews and ethnographic observation, and interviews from my prior research—the specifics of my interview techniques, and discuss attendant ethical implications. Finally, I describe my iterative analytical process of coding and triangulation between data sources.

Chapter 4 presents the results of an analysis of 37 transcripts of individual and group interviews conducted in 1995/6 for the PEP, a two-year joint project between the *City of Edinburgh Council's Museums and Galleries Division* and the *Workers' Educational Association*. The analysis was conducted primarily to test various analytical techniques, but also to provide an historical data source that was connected to the Southside, enabling a degree of methodological triangulation and accountability for the resulting conclusions. After presenting seven prevalent discursive groupings excavated from this data set, and presenting one interview extract that is analyzed in depth, I reflect upon the methodology and mandate of the PEP and the impact upon the discourses produced, before offering some nascent conclusions.

In **Chapter 5** our focus shifts twenty years to Edinburgh's contemporary Southside, where I present detailed examinations of the discourses on *Power* and discourses on *Civic Space*—two of the eight prevalent groupings produced in the contemporary Southside, alongside discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment*, *Lived Religion*, *Religion and Social Identity*, *Religion and Containment*, *Religion and Relationships*, and *Religion, Science and Meaning.* Throughout this I demonstrate the viability and utility of treating the entire religion-related field in the Southside of Edinburgh as a coherent whole, and that it is entangled in discourses that are effectively 'a-religious', in that they can be 'described and analysed without any reference to religious phenomena' (Quack 2014, 446), yet with '(non-)religion' appearing as a contextually useful trope throughout. I also consider the dependence of these discourses upon particular configurations of religion-related identifiers (discursive objects) and conclude that, in this case, religion-related identifiers are

theoretically interchangeable, but the particularities of the Southside mean that some arrangements will be more prevalent than others.

Chapter 6 turns first of all to a presentation of the discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment, Lived Religion,* and *Religion and Social Identity*. I also develop an insight from the previous chapter, by thoroughly assessing the role that the Southside has played in the production of these discourses, and placing my own work into conversation with other studies, particularly in the village of Comberton (Jenkins 1999), and in the Birmingham districts of Highgate and Handsworth (Stringer 2013a). My conclusion here is that the religion-related field in the Southside is indelibly imbued with this locality. Thus, whilst choosing locality as a 'container' for my discursive analysis brings an element of 'coherence and conceptual manageability' (Knott 1998, 283), it also represents the artificial containment of a fluid field of discourse.

In **Chapter 7** I focus upon final three discourse groupings—discourses on *Religion and Containment, Religion and Relationships,* and *Religion, Science and Meaning*—and place them into conversation with my conclusions from the preceding chapters. I then return to the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP) in order to examine discursive change in the Southside over the past twenty years, and reflect upon the position of the researcher in the production of discursive data.

Finally, in **Chapter 8** I present the key conclusions of the thesis, before acknowledging some limitations, suggesting future research directions, and reflecting on the impact of thesis within the study of 'religion' and beyond. These conclusions emphasize the importance of looking beyond the surface of discourses in order to better understand the tightness of their entanglement in the religion-related field, and the significance of the acts of positioning taking place by the actors who employ them.

They temper the temptation to reify religion-related field simply because it is entangled in particular discourses, and focus our attention instead on the nature of these entanglements. And they emphasize the importance of being relentlessly self-conscious about the limits we have set on our vision and how these impact upon our conclusions.

Specifically concerning the relational category of 'non-religion', I conclude that it makes no sense to refer to the discourses I encountered in the Southside as 'religious' or 'non-religious'. What we can say is that these are resources that are utilized by social actors to contextually position themselves and others in relation to 'religion'. In some cases the 'non-religious' is implicit in the subject position of those actors utilizing religion-related discourse, rather than explicitly articulated in the discourses themselves. It also appears that being positioned as 'religious' or 'non-religious' means more in certain circumstances than it does in others. Furthermore, I bookend the thesis by returning to the Ben Goldacre quotation from the top of this chapter, and reflect on the notion of 'indifference' to religion, arguing that, in some instances, the *performance* of indifference is a tactic for coping with contextually meaningful difference.

The closing admonition of this thesis is for scholars to fully embrace the position whereby the critical study of 'religion' includes all phenomena that are discursively placed in a meaningful relationship of difference to this constructed category. But if you are yet to be convinced, you'd better turn the page and settle in for a while: things are about to get serious.

CHAPTER 2

BUILDING A CASE FOR THE DISCURSIVE STUDY OF 'NON-RELIGION'

2.1   Introduction

This thesis has been undertaken with the aim to critically engage with, reframe and, to some degree, rehabilitate the burgeoning body of contemporary research on 'non-religion' within the framework of the critical academic study of 'religion', and to explore the benefits of such a reframing for empirical research within this framework. This chapter begins by critically introducing research on 'non-religion', reflecting on its development, and identifying a number of key problems with the majority of such research as it currently stands, which directly relate to one of the central themes in the academic study of religion—namely, the ever-raging debates surrounding the definition of 'religion'. I then turn to one justifiably fashionable approach to these debates—Discourse Analysis—and proceed to outline existing discursive approaches to 'religion' and some of the key terminology employed therein. Finally, I provide a discursive re-reading of studies of 'non-religion' and outline the research agenda for the empirical component of this thesis.

2.2   Research on Non-Religion

It is rhetorically useful for me to introduce the academic study of 'non-religion'[1] via the narrative of my own research journey. In 2009/10 I was completing my

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[1] Although I have utilized the non-hyphenated 'nonreligion' in previous work, my current preference is to utilize 'non-religion' in order to emphasize the relational nature of this category, and that I do not

undergraduate work in Religious Studies at the University of Edinburgh and became very interested in applying the theories, methods and insights of the discipline, as I then understood them, to a phenomenon which seemed to have received little serious attention, the recent construction of 'New Atheism' (coined in Wolf 2006). During the course of researching my undergraduate dissertation—which examined the narratives of four popular Atheist authors in comparison with Enlightenment, Romantic and New Age themes (Cotter 2011a)—I became aware of a substantial gap in existing literature concerning religion's 'other', the 'non-religious', which did not easily fit within standard models in the academic study of religion. My recognition of this gap was shared with many others around the same time, exemplified by the establishment of two key research groups in the mid-2000s—the *Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society & Culture* (ISSSC) at Trinity College, Massachusetts, and the international *Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network* (NSRN)—and a growing body of literature, to which discussion shall shortly turn. In 2010/11, I attempted to address this gap in my Masters dissertation (Cotter 2011b) by providing an analytic typology of the narratives of ostensibly 'non-religious' students at the University of Edinburgh, adapting an earlier iteration of Lois Lee's oft-cited definition of 'non-religion' as 'anything which is *primarily* defined by a relationship of difference to religion' (2012b, 131 emphasis in original). However, my own thoughts concerning how to best understand 'non-religion' within Religious Studies have evolved along with broader scholarly currents through my subsequent publications (Cotter 2012; 2015; 2016), and this shifting trajectory towards a more critical and discursive approach explains the direction taken in this thesis. In particular, I now take my lead from Johannes Quack's 'relational approach' (2014).

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wish to reify 'nonreligion' as a substantive phenomenon (see below). Where I cite the work of others I shall preserve their preferred (non-)hyphenation.

Quack advocates a ground-up methodological approach which avoids understanding the non-religious through a lens of normative religiosity and, as such, utilizes the notion of 'non-religion' as 'a descriptive term for a certain group of understudied phenomena and not as an analytical term aiming to draw clear boundaries between religion and non-religion' (2014, 441). Non-religion, in this understanding, is not everything which is not religious. Neither does utilizing the term mean that one is defending 'any universal distinction between religion and non-religion' (2014, 441). Merely for analytical purposes these are understood as mutually exclusive categories; they do not cover the full range of extant phenomena. In Quack's model, 'irreligious' covers the full range of phenomena which are not religious, whereas

> "Non-religious" and "a-religious" are [...] mutually exclusive sub-fields of all that is irreligious. [...] any analysis of non-religious phenomena necessarily relates to a specific discourse on "religion", while a-religious phenomena are generally described and analysed without any reference to religious phenomena. (2014, 446)

Thus,

> "Non-religion" is not to be understood as a something with thing-like existence, not as something that has clear definitions with primary and secondary features but as denoting various ways of relating to religion (whatever is understood to be religious in any specific case). (2014, 448)

As we shall see below, I argue that a discursive adaptation of this relational approach provides an effective means of embracing the study of 'non-religion' within the critical academic study of 'religion, and avoiding the pitfalls of other approaches. Discussion now turns to a critical assessment of four dominant approaches to the 'non-religious'—which I dub 'subtractionist', 'radically contextual', 'substantial' and 'discursive'—and concludes that the latter provides our way forward.

2.2.1 Subtractionist Approaches

Describing the context in which I initially began my research journey, in 2012 Stephen Bullivant and Lois Lee traced a historical neglect of 'non-religion' to the apparent non-religiosity of many of the social sciences' early pioneers who, in trying to understand why so many people could believe in something 'so absurd', 'arguably failed to recognize that their own lack of belief might itself be amenable to similar research' (2012, 20).[2] At the same time, they also point to extensive interest in the anomaly of 'unbelief' from Catholic social scientists throughout the 1950s and 1960s (see Caporale and Grumelli 1971). In his own summary of the state of the field, Frank Pasquale highlights that much of the early research that mentions the 'non-religious' has included them 'as a comparison group, a statistical outlier, or an afterthought' or, indeed, as a *problem* to be dealt with (2012; also Lee 2015, 52). Indeed this seems to hold for a body of work, largely within the sociology of religion, which acknowledges the 'non-religious' but tends to pay them little attention, or treat them as a monolithic minority religious position alongside other minority groups; as a residual category, or abnormality (as in, for example, Sherkat and Ellison 1999, 367; C. Smith et al. 2002, 600; Bryant 2006)**.** For our purposes, these can be understood as exemplifying the first type of academic approach to the 'non-religious', variously understood: in this case, as *an uninteresting residuum*.[3] Indeed, Lois Lee justifiably devotes a significant amount of space in *Recognizing the Non-Religious* (2015) to charting this subtractionist approach to religion's 'insubstantial' other which, she argues, 'pervades social scientific research' and 'is visible in religion-centric methodologies, in which the

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[2] There are, of course, a number of prominent sociological (Campbell 1971; Demerath 1969; Demerath and Thiessen 1966; Vernon 1968) and historical (Berman 1988; Budd 1977; Thrower 1979; 1980; 2000) exceptions to the rule.

[3] It is important to note that, as we shall see below, multiple approaches can be taken within a single study.

secular is viewed as a context in which religion exists and is enacted.' (2015, 50) In other words, these acknowledgments of the 'other than religious' occur in a framework that is dominated by secularization theory, and focused upon 'religion' as something substantial and interesting, as opposed to the insubstantial, empty, baseline norm that remains when 'religion' is removed from the equation. This reification[4] of the notion of 'religion' does not sit well with the critical thrust of this project as outlined in **Chapter 1**.

2.2.2 Radically Contextual Approaches

A second body of approaches to the 'non-religious' are those which are radically contextual, through being restricted to very particular contexts—historical, textual, ethnographic, and so on. For example, the 'Atheisms' presented in studies of Atheism in Antiquity, such as Bremmer (2007), Drachmann (1922), Sedley (2013), or Thrower (1980), are 'couched in history' and 'affixed to the contexts within which they exist' (Quillen 2015b, 118). Thus, although they are very interesting in-and-of themselves, they 'should not be seen as merely describing the word 'Atheism,' but instead understood as descriptions of the historical time and place within which the usage of that word itself is being used' (2015b, 118). This makes it very difficult for scholars to engage in comparisons with 'Atheism' in different historical contexts, or for these studies to contribute *directly* to contemporary debates on category formation within the critical study of religion. Similar issues of translation are encountered with studies dealing with restricted bodies of texts—such as my undergraduate dissertation—or social-scientific studies which focus closely on particular 'non-religious' groups and

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[4] With reification being understood as the 'apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products--such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will' (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 89).

contexts—such as Aston (2015), Cimino and Smith (2007; 2010; 2015), Cotter (2011a), Engelke (2011; 2014), Lee (2015), Mumford (2015), Quack (2012) or Tomlins (2015). As with the historical studies, I am not claiming that these studies do not contain conceptual theorization which goes beyond the context at focus, nor that there is no merit to such contextually-bounded studies. What I am arguing is that, when read critically via the 'discursive' approach outlined below, such studies then have much more to say to the central concerns of this thesis, i.e. to critically engage with, reframe, and rehabilitate contemporary research on 'non-religion' within the framework of the critical academic study of 'religion'.

2.2.3 Substantial Approaches

A third approach takes up the baton where subtractionist approaches left off, and attempts to give substance to this residual category. Common motivating factors for such approaches are large-scale social surveys, such as those presented by Zuckerman (2007), which are taken to demonstrate that 'nonbelievers in God' as a group come in fourth place behind 'Christianity', 'Islam' and 'Hinduism', with between 500 and 750 million 'adherents' (Zuckerman 2010, 96). If smaller groups are deemed worthy of scholarly attention, so the argument goes, then the same attention should be directed towards this constituency, the 'world's "fourth largest religion"' (Lee 2015, 61; cf. Baker and Smith 2015, 1; Zuckerman, Galen, and Pasquale 2016, 4–6). Adopting this defensible logic, we thus find a growing body of scholarly work focusing on the 'nones'[5]—a residual category constructed by censuses and surveys which, once in place, has seen many within and outside the academy rushing to 'imbue this group

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[5] For example, Vernon (1968), Hadaway and Roof (1979), Tamney et al. (1989), Baker and Smith (2009a; 2009b), Pasquale (2007), Voas (2009), Lim et al. (2010), Cragun et al. (2012) and Wallis (2014), among others.

with a material face, social interests and political persuasions, as if this group, always there but now with a name, is available for their commentary and speculation' (Ramey and Miller 2013, n.p.). As Lee notes, the phrase 'the nones' has 'no meaning except in relation to multiple-choice grammars' and thus, 'in accommodating and attending to non-affiliation, academics are implicated in the creation not only of a population but of a social group.' (Lee 2015, 132) Thus, in addition to work focusing specifically on the 'nones' of religion-centric surveys, we find a further body of material, including my own Masters dissertation, which aims to substantiate, in some way or other, what it 'means' to be other than religious.[6]

Such studies are, in many ways, a logical progression of a broader move away from secularization theory in the academic study of religion,[7] or even its reversal,[8] and the attendant radical particularism in the form of 'lived religion' and related concepts[9] that seems to have overtaken the discipline in recent years. In other words, given that the supposed 'evidence' for the currently prevalent view that religion has 'returned', or that it 'never left', seems to be largely based upon a combination of in-depth studies of what people are 'really' doing 'on the ground', and redefining 'religion' to fit this data—speaking of the 'changing nature of religion' etc (Davie 2015, xii)— it makes sense that some scholars would turn their attention to similarly in-depth studies of social actors who appear not to have this 'religion'. That being said, I should emphasize that much of the work exemplifying this third approach to the 'non-religious' has a great deal to offer to the academic study of religion and related

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[6] For example, Bullivant (2008), Zuckerman (2010; 2011), Cotter (2011b; 2015), Catto and Eccles (2013), Chervallil-Contractor et al. (2013), Hassall and Bushfield (2014), Silver et al. (2014), Baker and Smith (2015), Beyer (2015), Eccles and Catto (2015), Lee (2015), Mann (2015), Manning (2015), and Zuckerman, Galen and Pasquale (2016), among others.

[7] Towards, for example, notions of 'implicit religion' (Bailey 1998), believing without belonging (Davie 1994), or 'vicarious religion' (Davie 2007; 2008).

[8] On the 'resurgence of religion' (Blanes and Oustinova-Stjepanovic 2015) see, for example, Berger (1999) on 'desecularization', Davie (2010) on 'resacralization', or Gane (2002) on 're-enchantment'.

[9] See, for example, Hall (1997), Orsi (2005) or McGuire (2008).

categories in terms of in-depth, qualitative and quantitative, studies of identity formation, ritual, parenting, politics, gender, material culture, and more. It is also important to note that particular works can and do take multiple approaches. However, from a critical perspective in particular, there are a number of cogent criticisms that can be raised. Discussion now turns to three of these critiques, utilizing Cotter (2011b) and Lee (2015) as particular case studies, before turning to a fourth approach to 'non-religion' that sits much more comfortably within a critical framework.

The Substantial 'Non-Religious' and the World Religions Paradigm

In **Chapter 1**, I positioned this thesis within the critical study of 'religion', a sub-field of Religious Studies that is particularly focused upon the deconstruction of categories, and exposing the power dynamics inherent in the utilization of these categories by a variety of interlocutors, including academics. A major target for this critical study has been the 'World Religions Paradigm' (WRP)—a taxonomy of 'religions' that

> typically includes "the Big Five" [….] of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism—and moreover, almost always presented in that Abrahamocentric order — increasingly with additional 'catch-all' categories such as 'indigenous religions' or 'new religions' included. (Cotter and Robertson 2016b, 2)

The WRP has been thoroughly critiqued for, among other things, repeating and reinforcing a model based on the presumptions of Protestant missionaries, centred on the primacy of belief and evinced by texts and institutions, privileging the accounts of elites, de-emphasizing variation and syncretism, and marginalizing constructions which do not fit into the major categories (see Owen 2011; King 1999). The point here is not to rehearse these critiques,[10] but to argue that substantive approaches to 'non-religion' are implicated in them.

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[10] For more on this see, for example, J. Z. Smith (1978; 1998), McCutcheon (1997), Fitzgerald (2000b; 2007b; 2007a), Masuzawa (2005), Nongbri (2013) and Cotter and Robertson (2016a).

I have drawn attention above to arguments that the 'non-religious' are worthy of scholarly attention due to significant numbers of '(non-)adherents', and already in this basic argument we can see a logic of WRP-expansion in play. However, if we turn to Lee's *Recognizing the Non-Religious* as a recent paradigmatic example, we can see this logic being invoked much more subtly. My focus on Lee should not be taken to imply that hers is the only work in which we can see this logic exemplified. Indeed, I could have equally focused upon my own work here.

In Lee's text, we see the 'non-religious' being referred to as a 'group' (2015, 12), the study of which is justified alongside the study of 'traditional and […] alternative religions' and spirituality (2015, 3). Lee embarked upon her study of this 'group' alongside other

> empirical phenomena that are typically, if somewhat indeterminately, called "secular", […with the] sense that being "secular" might not only be a matter of being *without* religion but also a matter of being *with* something else. (2015, 5)

Ultimately, she views her work as 'taking seriously the possibility of a substantial aspect to "secularity"' (2015, 69) in contrast to those theorists who 'see the endpoint of secularization processes in the achievement of hollow or insubstantial secularity, and see non-religious cultures as a temporary and incidental feature of that process' (2015, 14).

There is much to commend here. Indeed, if we grant the various 'religions'—'alternative' and 'traditional'—and 'spiritualities' substance, and view social actors' identifications with various 'religions' as saying something meaningful about their subjectivities, shouldn't the same respect be given to the 'non-religious' or 'secular'? Such an understanding recognizes as legitimate the position of those in society who wish, for whatever reason, to distance themselves from 'religion', and destabilizes presumptions of normative religiosity that accompany viewing society through a

religion-coated lens. However, when considered in conjunction with the critique of the WRP, there is a danger here that substantiating the 'secular' and 'non-religious' in this manner simply 'rearranges the deckchairs on the Titanic' (Sutcliffe 2016, 27) while 'the band plays on despite the ship taking on water' (McCutcheon 2005, 35). As I have argued with David Robertson, although such a move to 'expand the tent' of the WRP 'might seem at first a positive step' it actually further entrenches the typology (2016b, 12). The incorporation of the additional categories such as 'non-religious' or 'secular' enables them to 'act as "pressure valves", allowing for voices which otherwise do not fit' the WRP, and essentially forcing them 'to behave like World Religions', homogenizing differences and prioritizing certain religion-like features (2016b, 12). In this manner, 'differences and contradictions which might potentially challenge the presuppositions of the WRP are co-opted in its service, sometimes against the best intentions of' the author (2016b, 12).

This final point is worth emphasizing, as Lee also goes on to critique the very notion of dividing populations up according to 'religion', pointing out that 'There is no "opt-out" sub-category in the studies of gender, race, politics, nationality, age, education, ethnicity, or any other major sociological category.' (Lee 2015, 196) Clearly something is wrong with this classificatory schema—or, indeed, with the acceptance of 'religion' as a 'major sociological category'. Strategically or subversively employing the WRP can be a useful tool of critique, and Lee clearly sees her work as contributing to this, arguing that the study of 'non-religion' might precipitate a much wider reformation in academic discourse (Lee 2012a, 4–5), and acknowledging that 'non-religion studies' will have failed if the term is still being employed in ten years (Lee 2012c). However, despite this admirable critical intent, the concurrent construction of a substantive 'non-religion', and the life that this

substantiated category takes on beyond the confines of nuanced scholarly work, mean that its problematic implication in the WRP works against substantive non-religion's critical clout.

Ideal Types and Semantic Anarchy

Referring to the 'insubstantial' secular, Lee pithily observes that 'it is not possible to organize absence into types' (2015, 51). However, this is not the case with substantive understandings, and thus my own Masters dissertation set out to produce a typology of non-religion (Cotter 2011b). This project was carried out amongst the undergraduate student body of the University of Edinburgh taking a grounded theoretical approach (Engler 2011a) which elicited narratives via electronic questionnaires and qualitative interviews. Although there is much more that could be said about this previous research, two of the key insights suggested by this work were that:

- The ways in which students negotiated (non-)religious terminology throughout their narratives allowed the development of five ideal types which were seemingly independent of established religious categories: *naturalistic, humanistic, philosophical, familial* and *spiritual.*

- Regardless of the salience of the students' (non-)religious identifications, they appeared to be keenly aware of where they stood when religion or non-religion was perceived to interact with what mattered to them' (2011b, 103).

Understandably, any extrapolations that could be made from these insights were highly influenced by the limitations of the methods employed. The narratives analysed emerged from a comparatively narrow demographic, and the practicalities of the investigation foreclosed the possibility of comparing a wide variety of (non-)religious narratives. However, one of the most significant reasons I have felt unease with these insights as they stand is my somewhat lofty and obfuscating attempt to provide an exhaustive ideal-typical account of non-religion.

The concept of ideal types emerged from the work of Max Weber (1949), and they are commonly understood as 'analytical tools to be used to facilitate comparison' (Barker 2010, 188 fn. 2), as 'pragmatic constructs' which can in no way 'be regarded as essential categories or ontological realities' (Cox 2006, 83). Classic examples of ideal-typical models would be Ernst Troeltsch's three major types of early Christianity (1991 [1911]) or William James' account of the varieties of religious experience (1985 [1902]). More recent examples would be Robert Towler's presentation of five varieties of conventional religion (1984), Alex Norman's 'five modes of spiritual tourism' evident in the 'spiritual marketplace' of Rishikesh (2011, 33–41), Lois Lee's five types of 'existential culture' (2015, 161–72), and my own five types of non-religion. (Indeed, this very typology of approaches to 'non-religion' is itself ideal typical.) Even when writing my Masters dissertation I was clearly uneasy concerning the correlation between these ideal types and my data:

> These narrative-based types cannot be assumed to be constant, and must be understood as firmly rooted in the context in which they were revealed. However, they reflect what individuals actually say, and give priority to individual self-representations, providing a much 'truer' representation of what (non)religion means to these individuals than wide-ranging, quantitative, typologies which suffer from the same contextual constraints. (Cotter 2011b, 76)

Although I, and most other scholars who employ ideal types, have never claimed that classifying individuals is a simple matter, and have emphasized that there is a large amount of overlap between types, it is almost invariably the case that their artificial and constructed nature becomes lost in translation, giving the false impression that individuals can be easily boxed off into one of a discrete number of types. Whilst such work is very valuable for macro-level analysis, it fundamentally breaks down at the level of the individual where heterogeneity and contextuality abound: there is 'no such thing as a perfect or ideal-typical form' of difference to 'religion' (Lee 2015, 44). As

I, and many others, have argued before, 'Religious, spiritual, secular, and non-religious identities are not stable, unitary formations' (Hoesly 2015, n.p.), but rather 'operational acts of identification' (Bayart 2005, 92). However, in relation to the study of 'Atheism', Quillen argues that prevalent ideal-typical generalizations are perhaps 'nothing more than a product of the current scholarly study of Atheism's predominant focus on the social-scientific attempt at making sense of "Atheism-in-general," rather than "Atheism-in-specific"' (2015a, 30), the 'attempt at finding an identity in the numerous applications of an ambiguous word' (Baird 1991, 11).

Going further, these problems with ideal types are clearly connected to issues surrounding terminology. The contemporary situation has been described as verging on 'a situation of semantic anarchy, in which individual scholars work with idiosyncratic definitions' (Jong 2015, 19), 'infecting our subjects with language created for our own benefit' (Quillen 2015a, 33). Although I tend not subscribe to Quillen's hyperbolism when he, for example, labels such category construction as 'tortuous' (2015b, 132), he is right to argue that the whole discourse on 'types' of 'non-religion', or indeed the very terminology of 'ir-religion,' 'un-belief,' 'non-religion' etc., is 'not unlike that which complicates the definition of 'religion' (2015b, 132), and falls foul of much of the critique outlined in **Chapter 1**. In addition, 'The conceptual balkanisation that results from the proliferation of idiosyncratic definitions makes […] fruitful collaboration more difficult' between scholars doing empirical work in different contexts (Jong 2015, 19). We need not despair, though: this situation of proliferating ideal types and idiosyncratic terminology can be remedied by the type of radically contextual approach to 'non-religion' discussed above, or the discursive approach discussed below, which fit much less problematically with the critical project.

'Non-Religion' as Parasitic on 'Religion'

Concerning the category 'religion', the basic premise of the critical approach is that

> there is no such thing that answers to the name "religion"; there are only distinct phenomena that sometimes co-occur and are contingently related to one another, sometimes in things we habitually label religious and sometimes in things that we habitually label secular. (Jong 2015, 20)

As has been implied above through my discussion of Quack's 'relational approach' to 'non-religion', and as should be quite clear from the very construction of the term itself—e.g. Lee's 'anything which is *primarily* defined by a relationship of difference to religion' (2012b, 131)—the concept is explicitly relativized to definitions of 'religion' (Jong 2015, 16). As such, any study taking a substantive approach to 'non-religion' will be plagued by the same issues associated with 'religion'. This allows Jong to quite justifiably conclude that 'The boundary between the religious and the nonreligious—whether conceived of in etic or emic terms—is not so much blurry than simply nonexistent, at least in any objective and absolute sense' (2015, 21).

Timothy Fitzgerald succinctly encapsulates the critical issue here when he states that to 'imagine that either side of this binary—"religion" or "non-religion"— can be addressed as a topic of research is an act of reification succumbing to, and reproducing, a central ideological illusion of Liberalism' (2015a, 263–64). In a footnote he continues: 'That those who study non-religion choose to confer at AAR conferences with people who study religion suggests that these are circular, mutually-parasitic sides of the same mystifying, empty binary' (2015a, 264 fn. 22). Now, it goes without saying that these are not the only conferences at which such scholars gather. Furthermore, where are they supposed to gather if not at conferences concerned with the very category their subject of interest is defined in contradistinction to? I would also argue that it is possible for good empirical work to be conducted ostensibly under the rubric of this binary with the potential or explicit

aim of contributing to Fitzgerald's critical project. Indeed, Lee does a good job of mitigating some of Fitzgerald's critique when she argues that 'giving more attention to what it means to be secular' contributes to our understanding of 'religion' (2015, 3) and, further, that it is Western cultural history itself which reifies the 'religion' from which 'non-religion', 'spiritual but not religious' etc. are differentiated (Lee 2015, 26). In other words, the study of 'non-religion' is, in many ways, simply a study of a culturally dominant reification. However, the heart of Fitzgerald's critique still stands: through not being able to shed its alter-ego 'religion', empirical studies of 'non-religion' seem doomed to be tarred with the same brush, to 'focus on the negation and not the object being negated, although we do not accept the object in the first place' (Engelke 2015a, 136).

One possible solution would be for scholars to be 'vigilantly specific about the aspect of "nonreligion" that they are interested in' (Jong 2015, 20) and clear about 'the instance to which it is applied and the meaning to which it is used' (Buckley 1987, 6; cited in Quillen 2015b, 118), resulting, once again, in radically contextual approaches. Another, however, is to take up Fitzgerald's challenge: 'Surely the only topic here that makes sense as an object of study is the discourse [on "religion" and "non-religion"] itself?' (2015a, 264 fn. 22) It is to such an approach that we now turn.

2.2.4 Discursive Approaches

Above, I alluded to some of the key findings of my Masters research, and the discomfort I have retrospectively felt concerning placing individuals into ideal-typical categories. None of the participants was easy to classify into one of the five types I proposed, and each and every one made statements which could be associated with other types. When I revisited my Masters after having placed some chronological

distance between myself and the project, and with the discussion above in mind, I realized that many of the difficulties associated with such generalizing classifications can be overcome by reframing these types in terms of *what my informants said* i.e. in terms of *discourse*. People can employ multiple discourses in particular situations; they can say things in many different ways, depending on the discursive resources available to them in a particular cultural context. A shift in focus from the individual to the discourse they employ, from the person to what they say, and how they say it, allows the social reality of the individual to be incorporated analytically into the wider societal conversation of which they are inherently a part. A nascent version of this shift can already be detected in my shift from speaking of types of non-religion in my Masters dissertation, to 'types of narrative' in a resulting publication (Cotter 2015). Reframing the key insights from this project in a discursive fashion, coupled with a discussion of other discursive studies of 'non-religion', provides the basis for the key research questions discussed at the end of this chapter. However, before this discursive re-framing can take place, it is necessary for me to introduce discursive approaches, and the benefits that they bring to the contemporary study of religion and related categories.

2.3   Discursive Approaches

Discursive approaches are directly related to more formal forms of *Discourse Analysis* which have emerged, primarily from scholars within linguistics, over the past twenty years or so (Wodak and Meyer 2009, 2–3), although the origins of a discursive line of thought can be traced to the late 1960s/early 1970s (see van Dijk 2007). In this section, I introduce this Discourse Analysis before turning to the looser discursive approaches I have in mind.

2.3.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis has been applied to many varied social situations, from the macro-level analysis of discourses on the Information Society in Romania and the EU (Fairclough 2005), or the revival of Austrian anti-Semitism since 1945 (Wodak 2011), to the more micro-level analysis of racist discourse in a conservative broadsheet newspaper (T. van Leeuwen 2008, 25–32), ethnographic studies of multilingual neighbourhoods to demonstrate relationship between local linguistic and material processes, and globalization (Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005), and a wide variety of educational contexts (Rogers et al. 2005). These distinct applications share common roots in the social constructionist epistemologies of theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu, the four basic premises of which are:

> that our understandings of the world are necessarily informed by preconceived notions which need to be deconstructed; that knowledge is always culturally and historically specific; that knowledge is produced in human interaction and communication; and that knowledge informs social interaction, and vice versa. (Granholm 2013, 47)[11]

Every study that incorporates Discourse Analysis is unique, requiring its own research design (Hjelm 2011, 142), and this study-specific nature extends even to conceptualization of discourse. Discourse can be understood to mean 'anything from a historical monument, a *lieu de mémoire*, a policy, a political strategy, narratives in a restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topic-related conversations, to language per se.'(Wodak and Meyer 2009, 2–3; cf. Fairclough 2003, 4) In this thesis, I adopt Reisigl and Wodak's 'discourse historical' understanding of discourse as 'a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action', which are 'socially constituted and socially constitutive', 'related to a macro-topic' and 'linked to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors who have different

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[11] See also Burr (1995, 2–5), Gergen (1999, 47–50), and Hjelm (2014a, 1–16)

points of view' (Reisigl and Wodak 2009, 89). However, as shall be made clear

below, such precision of language is not necessary for the exploratory and

polymethodic analysis I am proposing, and for the most part Teemu Taira's concise

definition of discourse as a 'relatively coherent set of statements (action through

speech) which produce a particular version of events' (2013, 28) should suffice.

Discourse is 'a *social practice*' (Hjelm 2014a, 6, emphasis in original). Consequently,

in this context, Discourse Analysis 'addresses the relationship among

communicational practices and the (re)production of systems of meaning', the various

conditions that underlie these processes, and their reciprocal 'impact on social

collectives'(von Stuckrad 2013a, 10). It 'considers the relationship between language

and the contexts in which it is used' (Paltridge 2006, 3).

This focus upon discourse, and the accompanying social constructionist

agenda, has encouraged charges of postmodernist 'relativism'—getting so caught up

in discourse that we forget that there 'is a real world independent of how we talk about

it' (Bruce 2009, 11). Whilst there are some who would dispute this ontological claim,

an important counterpoint to this charge is the argument that 'There is nothing vague

in defining a religious field of discourse' (von Stuckrad 2010b, 165). Discursive study

allows scholars to remain fully reflexive about the fact that their studies are entirely

contextual; discourses are both socially constitutive and socially shaped (Fairclough,

Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011, 358), and any good qualitative research must always

keep this in mind. Discourse is much more than just language, speech or text; it is

'language in action' (Blommaert 2011, 2) and a fundamental medium for the

construction of beliefs and practices (Barker 2010, 200). Far from being an

intellectualist enterprise, Discourse Analysis focuses on the constitution of social

identities, relationships and objects of knowledge (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 258).

As hinted at above, Discourse Analysis is not a specific method, but 'follows certain steps and rules that have proven useful' within certain distinct schools of analysis, such as the 'discourse historical approach', the 'sociocognitive approach', or the 'social actors approach'(Wodak and Meyer 2009, 20). For example, Reisigl and Wodak provide an ideal-typical eight-stage recursive programme for the discourse historical approach which includes such stages as 'specification of the research question and formulation of assumptions', 'qualitative pilot analysis' and 'detailed case studies' (2009, 96), which seem strikingly similar to the basic components of any qualitative analysis. Because of its linguistic focus, and a somewhat-crippling reflexivity on the power dynamics inherent in the research process, Discourse Analysis is most suited to dealing thoroughly with small amounts of naturally occurring written text (Taira 2013, 29), and does not easily lend itself to the large amounts of wide-ranging data from interviews, questionnaires, or participant observation, that have come to characterize the qualitative study of contemporary religion.[12] It is for this reason, amongst others, that scholars of religion who employ discourse analytical techniques prefer, in the main, to take a 'discursive' approach: an approach which is guided by the principles and methodological positioning of Discourse Analysis, whilst taking a more active role in the generation of qualitative data, without being bound by the more strict, detailed linguistic focus, characteristic of Discourse Analysis 'proper'.

2.3.2 Discursive Approaches to Religion

In my positioning of this thesis within the critical study of religion in **Chapter 1**, and in my discussion of the entanglement of substantive approaches to 'non-religion' with

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[12] With a few notable exceptions, for example Towler (1984).

the World Religions Paradigm, I have already introduced a dominant theme in the contemporary study of religion: the acknowledgement that 'religion' is a relatively recent, Western and Christianized construct, which serves a variety of political and ideological purposes. This historicization of the concept encourages us to

> reconsider the now widely shared, seemingly commonsense presumption that there is such a thing in the world called religion, that it takes different forms in different regions and eras, that it is a feature of all human beings, and that it is inherently or properly distinguishable from that nonreligious thing that goes by the name of politics, the secular, the profane, or, simply put, the mundane. (Arnal and McCutcheon 2012, 3)

This line of argument is generally traced back to Jonathan Z. Smith, (e.g. 1978; 1982), and to Talal Asad (e.g. 1993; 2003) who argued that 'different kinds of practice and discourse are intrinsic to the field in which religious representations (like any representation) acquire their identity and their truthfulness' and that, therefore, 'their possibility and their authoritative status are to be explained as products of historically distinctive disciplines and forces' (Asad 2002, 129).

The recognition of religion's constructed nature,[13] and also of its implication in power structures such as 'law courts', 'the hegemonic discourse of the national media', 'parliamentary forums' and so on (Asad 2003, 12), has understandably led some scholars to be increasingly wary about defining religion. One recent manner of addressing this issue 'is to move away from attempts at defining the term "religion"' (Quillen 2015a, 30) and instead focus on discourse, on 'the processes that *make certain things* [...] recognizably religious' (Bender 2012, 275).[14]

One of the most influential exponents of a discursive study of religion is Kocku von Stuckrad, who has published extensively on the area in general (2003; 2010b; 2013a; 2013b), with a particular focus upon discourses on esotericism and mysticism (2005; 2010a). Much of von Stuckrad's terminology forms the basis of the

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[13] Not unique to 'religion' of course, but to all concepts.

[14] See Wijsen (2013a) for a brief overview of discourse analysis in the contemporary study of religion.

theoretical vocabulary that will be utilized throughout this thesis and is, as such, worth introducing briefly. In von Stuckrad's model, the 'religion' that is approached via discursive study is conceptualized as 'an empty signifier that can be filled with many different meanings, depending on the use of the word in a given society and context' (2010b, 166). Von Stuckrad combines Pierre Bourdieu's notions of field, capital and habitus, with Michel Foucault's argument that epistemological categories are instruments of power, and his 'archaeological' as opposed to 'historical' approach, to suggest 'that religious studies should focus upon the analysis of *fields of discourse*' instead of attempting to 'define categories substantively' (Robertson 2016, 27–33).[15] A *discursive field* is 'a structured system of social positions, occupied either by individuals or institutions, the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants' (von Stuckrad 2010b, 160). These fields are hierarchical, may overlap, and contain multiple competing discourses which make use of forms of capital which are specific to that field. They 'contain a number of competing and contradictory discourses with varying degrees of power to give meaning to and organize social institutions and processes' (Pinkus 1996). In addition, and importantly, elements in the field interact both with each other, and with the field itself (Quack 2014, 450 fn. 12).

In order to emphasize that *discourse on religion* is the focus of analysis, he makes a distinction in typeface whereby '"religion" refers to contributions to a discourse on religion, while "RELIGION" refers to the discourse itself' or, further, 'the societal organization of knowledge about religion'(2013a, 12). Although I shall not be adopting this distinction, it is worth noting here that 'religion', in this rendering, acts as a *discursive object* (Potter and Hepburn 2008, 275). In my usage of the terms, *discourses* are 'about how a certain *object* is constructed' (Taira 2013, 29

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[15] See Bourdieu (1990; 1998) and Foucault (1979; 1989) for more on these concepts, which are secondary to my purpose at this point.

my italics). Thus, concerning discourses about religion, 'religion' is the discursive object i.e. 'descriptions, claims, reports, allegations, and assertions' *about* religion are the topic of the analysis, rather than 'religion' itself (Potter and Hepburn 2008, 275). Thus, we have *discourses* which are manifested in *discursive fields* surrounding particular *discursive objects.*

One example of such a discursive study would be Timothy Fitzgerald's magisterial *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity* (2007a), in which he presents an analysis of the historical vicissitudes of 'religion' and related categories (such as 'politics', 'secular', 'profane' and 'civility') and demonstrates that 'our ancestors had an entirely different view of the meaning of "religion"' and that 'scholarly practices tend to hide this by constructing a past which conforms too uncritically to what we assume to be the "natural" generic categories in which we think today' (2007a, 144). In a similar vein, Russell McCutcheon's *Manufacturing Religion* (1997) focuses upon a prevalent discourse in the academic study of religion, the discourse on religion as *sui generis,* demonstrating how this marginalizes naturalistic explanations of religion, and proselytizes 'for a kind of modern theology, an ideology with hidden transcendental […] assumptions and biases' (Fitzgerald 2000a, 99–100). These analyses would fall somewhere in between what Marcus Moberg refers to as 'first-' and 'second-level' discourse analytic approaches in the study of religion—those which focus on meta-theoretical issues, and those which 'highlight the character of scholarly theorizing, and its problematic aspects and flaws, within their respective sub-fields of research' (2013, 13–19). Other works, however, fall into the category of 'third-level' discursive analyses—those which employ 'actual discursive analysis' (2013, 19–22). One example would be Kennet Granholm's text- and actor-based study of esoteric currents as discursive complexes (2013). Another would be Teemu Taira's intricate portrayal

of the political discourse surrounding the application of the Finnish Free Wicca Association to attaining the status of a registered religious community in Finland in 2001 (2010). For reasons that will be made clear in the discursive re-reading below, I see this present study sharing most in common with such ground-up micro-level approaches.

With this vocabulary and background in mind, we are now in a position to turn our attention to discursive approaches to 'non-religion', beginning with a discursive re-reading of my previous research.

2.4   Approaching Non-Religion Discursively

Although discursive questions were not the driver for my Masters project, it can clearly be interpreted as having focused on the way 'religion is organized, discussed, and discursively materialized' (von Stuckrad 2010b, 166) in a particular context, by individuals who self-described aspects of their individual practice, beliefs, attitudes and/or identity as different from their subjective self-definitions of religion. As such, the project can be viewed as discerning a range of *discourses,* which could be classified as spiritual, familial, philosophical, humanistic and naturalistic, surrounding a variety of negotiated phenomena—identities, practices, attitudes, beliefs—which acted as *discursive objects*, in a *field of discourse* with boundaries dictated by the logics of the research project, i.e. substantiating the 'non-religiosity' of students, at the University of Edinburgh, in 2010–11, whose self-descriptions were 'non-religious', and so on.

Returning to the two key insights of the project—discussed above—this discursive re-reading allows them to be reframed as follows:

- In these particular narratives, these students primarily invoked five types of discourse when they engaged with a variety of topics related to religion, non-religion, and related categories. These discourses appeared to operate at a level independent of the specific terminology—the discursive objects—in question. For example, two of my interviewees—Niamh and Séverine—both employed 'familial' discourses, despite Niamh's complex mix of identifications as 'agnostic', 'atheist', 'Catholic', 'freethinker', 'humanist' and 'nonreligious', and Séverine's deceptively straightforward 'atheist'.

- Regardless of the salience of these discourses in individuals' lives, they were invoked when the students were confronted with phenomena that were deemed to be related, which meaningfully intersected with the field of discourse on religion, non-religion, and related categories.

We are now starting to see the emergence of a key motivating question for this thesis: Is it possible to flesh out these insights with more rigour, based on the analysis of a broader set of discursive data? Could this approach be expanded to include the voices of those who are ostensibly 'religious' and 'non-religious', those who are 'indifferent' to religion, and those who are 'in between'? Is there a coherent discursive field here in which all such people can participate? What does this say to academic constructions of 'non-religion'? What are these points of meaningful intersection, and just how contextual are they? But before proceeding any further, we must demarcate a more concise subject area than 'discourse on religion, non-religion, and related categories'.

2.4.1 Religion-Related Discourse

Lois Lee's definition of non-religion as 'anything which is *primarily* defined by a relationship of difference to religion' (2012b, 131 emphasis in original), is useful in creating a space for the substantive understanding of non-religion discussed above, such as she advances in her PhD thesis (Lee 2012a) and subsequent monograph (2015). However, it also excludes phenomena such as humanism, naturalism, and rationalism because they are seen as ontologically autonomous from religion (see

critique in Quack 2014).[16] In order to open up the discussion, Johannes Quack has

proposed locating non-religion in a 'religion-related' field comprising

> all phenomena that are considered to be not religious (according to the constitution of a
> concrete object of inquiry, a larger discourse on "religion," or according to a certain
> definition of "religion"), while at the same time they stand in a determinable and relevant
> relationship to a religious field. (2014, 450)

This 'determinable and relevant relationship' can take the form of criticism,

competition, collaboration, mirroring, functional equivalence, interest, and so on (see

Quack and Schuh 2016). Such an understanding sees non-religion as part of a wider

field of discourse about religion which, after all, is how non-religion is defined.

Indeed, Quack acknowledges that it is consistent to speak of the religion-related field

as part of the religious field since each can be conceptualized as extending their reach

to other fields which feel their influence through what Bourdieu would call their 'field

effects' (2014, 450–51).This conceptualization, which allows non-religion to be fully

integrated into the study of religion by virtue of their discursive interrelationship and

respective field effects, is the logical outcome of a discursive study, in a context where

the discourses on religion, non-religion, secularism, and related categories 'have

perpetuated the importance of religion in Western Europe' (von Stuckrad 2013b, 4; cf.

Asad 1993; 2003; Fitzgerald 2007b).[17]

Take materialism, for example: as Lee points out, although it is in principle

'possible to think about materialism independently of religion; in practice, however,

materialism is, in Western contexts at least, explicitly and implicitly understood in

contradistinction to religion, [and] frequently specified as or conflated with a non-

theist orientation' (2015, 33). Here, Lee is arguing that in practice, in Western

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[16] Lee has since refined her definition further, in acknowledgement of this critique: 'Non-religion
is therefore any phenomenon—position, perspective, or practice—that is primarily understood in
relation to religion but which is not itself considered to be religious.' (2015, 32)

[17] See discussion above on the parasitic nature of 'non-religion' etc.

contexts, materialism be conceptualized as 'non-religious' because of the way in which it is 'made meaningful' through a relationship of difference to religion (2015, 33). However, although many conceptualizations of materialism might have a 'non-religious' character, constructing it as such is arguably going too far. What of, for instance, the 'prosperity gospel' or the 'Protestant Ethic'? Although constructing materialism as 'non-religious' might not necessarily be inaccurate, it is much less problematic to note the *relationship* to 'religion' and conclude that in practice, in Western contexts, materialism is 'religion-related'. Quack's notion of 'religion-related' allows the analytical incorporation of *any* discourse that is contextually associated with 'religion' in particular historical contexts, whether that be discourse on evolution, discourse on secularism (which, though inherently religion-related, is not necessarily non-religious), discourse on spirituality, or indeed potentially any discourse which occurs outside of (non-)religious contexts amongst individuals who may fall under the radar of (non-)religion studies.[18] Religion-related thus effectively encapsulates the similarly motivated catch-all phrase 'religion and related categories' which has seen increased usage since the publication of Fitzgerald's *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity* (2007a).[19] In this sense, although the study of religion-related discourse can simply be seen as taking the discursive study of religion to its logical conclusion, the term usefully provides a wider encapsulation of discourse on religion which can be operationalized empirically in a non-stipulative manner and which rhetorically reminds both reader and researcher that religion need not be a dominant, normative, or positive term in the discourses studied. With this understanding in mind, it is now possible to turn to a statement of the research topic in hand.

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[18] Just as Kennet Granholm points out concerning studies of 'discourse on the esoteric'. In order to focus on such discourses, scholars must, 'instead of simply focusing on "esotericists", […] examine the whole field which engages with the esoteric in one way or another.' (2013, 51)

[19] See, for example, Engler (2011b), Enkvist and Nilson (2016), Olson et al. (2013), Stausberg (2010).

2.5   Research Topic

I began this chapter by stating that this thesis has been undertaken with the aim to critically engage with, reframe and, to some degree, rehabilitate the burgeoning body of contemporary research on 'non-religion' within the framework of the critical academic study of 'religion', and to explore the benefits of such a reframing for empirical research within this framework. I then set out my justification for a discursive approach to 'non-religion' as a means of achieving this, provided a discursive re-reading of my prior research, and argued for Quack's concept of a 'religion-related field' as a rhetorically useful nomenclature for my area of study. Combining this line of argument with the key insights from my Masters project has led to the following guiding questions for the current project:

- Could I develop an approach that would include the voices of those who might, according to certain measures, be classified as 'religious' and 'non-religious', those who are 'indifferent' to religion, and those who are 'in between'?

- Would there be a coherent discursive field in which all such people could participate?

- How dependent would the structure of these discourses be upon particular configurations of religion-related identifiers (discursive objects)?

- What would this say to academic constructions of 'non-religion'?

- What entanglements would this 'religion-related' field have with other fields, and just how contextual would they be?

In **Chapter 3**, I address the first of these questions and develop just such an approach, arguing for locality as an innovative means through which to seek relevant discourses, and for the Southside of Edinburgh as an appropriate field site. The chapters that follow address the other questions, as well as the impact of research context and method upon any conclusions that can be drawn, and present the results of my analysis of two discrete sets of interviews—those conducted as part of the mid-1990s

Peoples of Edinburgh Project (see **Chapter 4**), and those conducted in the

contemporary Southside as part of the present study (see **Chapters 5–7**).

CHAPTER 3

THERE IS METHOD TO THIS MADNESS

EDINBURGH'S SOUTHSIDE AS CONTAINER FOR RELIGION-RELATED DISCOURSE

3.1   Introduction

The previous chapter has established some of my theoretical research questions and positioned this thesis within a general discursive framework. The purpose of this chapter is to get into the specifics of my methods (of data gathering and analysis), context, and data sources. To begin with, I outline the kind of data I was looking for— namely, religion-related discourses as employed in social interaction by non-elite social actors who strategically place themselves, and are strategically placed by others, in a variety of positions within a contextual religion-related field. I then argue for locality as a productive means through which to seek such discourses, and justify the selection of Edinburgh's Southside as the container or field to form the basis of my empirical analysis. I then introduce the reader to the Southside and outline and justify my selection of data sources—the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project*, new interviews and ethnographic observation, and my Masters interviews—the specifics of my interview techniques, and discuss attendant ethical implications. Finally, I discuss my iterative process of coding and triangulation between data sources.

3.2   Locating Religion-Related Discourse

Every research project—particularly when involving the non-religious (see Lee 2012a; 2015; Cheruvallil-Contractor et al. 2013)—must cross its own methodological hurdles, and this one involved quite a few. It was intrinsic to my core research topic

(as discussed in **Chapter 2**) that discourses be incorporated from as wide a range of religion-related positions as possible. However, given my desire to get away from pre-determined 'religious' or 'non-religious' categories, it was important that these discourses be encountered at a small-scale and individual level rather than being filtered through various official channels. Furthermore, as Martin Stringer acknowledges, individuals employ different discourses in different contexts, and to rely *only* on interview data might 'force them to bring the[se] various discourses into a single space and encourage a level of coherence that may not exist in the real world'(Stringer 2013b, 168).[20] This awareness of the impact of context—particularly the 'genre' of the discourse (interview, presentation, formal worship, pub conversation etc.)—meant that it was desirable for me to explore a number of such contexts in this project. All of these hurdles, and more, had to be overcome by a single researcher working with limited resources and limited time. Fundamentally, I wished to access religion-related discourses as employed in social interaction by non-elite social actors who strategically place themselves, and are strategically placed by others, in a variety of positions within a contextual religion-related field. I see this project as addressing Johannes Quack's call for studies that in a sense 'map' the religion-related field in certain contexts:

> One of the tasks of studies of nonreligion could be to specify where there are possible landmarks, boundaries, and borderlands by researching specific kinds and ranges of relationships between a religious field and nonreligious phenomena, what one might call the "field-effects." According to Bourdieu, a field extends as far as the "field-effects" reach and that an actor or an institution belongs to a field inasmuch as it produces and suffers from its effects (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 232). (Quack 2014, 450)

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[20] This does not mean, however, that interviews should not be utilized. A precedent has been set for this by Wijsen (2013b), and as shall be seen below, I opted to utilize interviews as my primary data source.

3.2.1 Operationalizing 'religion-related'

Quack's 'religion-related' concept, understood discursively (as outlined in the previous chapter), applies to all discourse that stands in a determinable and relevant relationship to religion (including, clearly, all discourse on 'religion' itself). Predefining which 'related categories' may be considered relevant, and determining whether they are in a relevant relationship with religion, are complex and contextual tasks, and run the risk of biasing the research from the very start. Thus, I was also averse to engaging in an in-depth study of a small religion-related group, as this approach would require the pre-determination of a community that would produce relevant data—something which perpetuates prevalent reifications of what 'counts' as data for Religious Studies, and which potentially neglects those individuals who do not join religion-related communities, or even regularly gather in communities at all (Cheruvallil-Contractor et al. 2013; cf. Campbell 1971, 42). I adopted three strategies to operationalize an analysis of religion-related discourse in an attempt to minimize the effects of such biases: a polymethodic approach, prioritizing interviews, and utilizing historical data sources for triangulation; a maximum variation sampling strategy; and challenging the 'established orthodoxy' of the World Religions paradigm by sticking, in part, to its own premises (in the spirit of Baumann 1996, 32). Discussion of each of these strategies is interwoven throughout the discussion below, but it is first necessary to discuss the particular type of discursive field I elected to focus upon.

3.3   Discourse and Locality

> Material spaces matter because they bring people together in a location where abstract
> discourses and positionings in diffuse social networks become outworked as
> tangible, sedimented social relations through collective imaginaries and the production
> of community normativities (unspoken rules/codes of behaviour) and forms of regulation.
> (Valentine and Sadgrove 2013, 1982)

Given the limited timescale and resources at my disposal, it was essential that the nature of the field be such that it would facilitate access to the narratives associated with a broad range of (non-)religious identifications, within a context that could be defended as coherent. I was also keen to avoid foregrounding the very divisions between 'religion' and 'non-religion', and between different 'world religions' that my study has been undertaken to critique. Building upon my prior research, it was desirable that the field facilitate access to a broader demographic base than 'students' in higher education, and that by conscientiously targeting informants from a range of ages, educational backgrounds and socio-economic statuses I might better avoid the production and analysis of highly intellectualized discourses. However, given that my prior research had been conducted within a UK context, and given the large and ever-growing body of research that has been conducted in said context (as discussed in **Chapter 2**), it was desirable that the discursive field be connected with the UK in some way. Thus, I was looking for a UK-centric field that was not inextricably linked to societal discourses on religion, but which would facilitate access to a broad range of religion-related discourses from a diverse group of social actors.

In seeking an appropriate field, I was acutely aware of the perils of entering uncritically into 'the completely unregulated market of the "religion and..." genre' (McCutcheon 2014, 146). For example, as Tuckett and Robertson have noted concerning the study of 'religion and video games', this field is marred by a lack of conceptual clarity (2014, 103): are these studies intended to focus upon 'religious

responses to video games', critiques of 'meat-world' religions in video games, or the 'religions' that one encounters in video games themselves? However, it is possible to avoid such critiques by being specific about what we intend to study—for example, religion-related discourse in UK-centred debates surrounding certain video games. Even a quick brainstorm illustrates the sheer number of potential fields that could have been explored: the media, politics, law, the internet, fiction, conspiracist narratives, nationalism, education, etc. There is much valuable work being conducted in each of these fields, and all could potentially have been utilized as sites for investigating religion-related discourse. Some—such as 'law' or 'the media'—do not easily lend themselves to the kind of micro-level analysis desired in my present project, and many approaches to these fields (but not all) seem to uncritically construct 'religion' as having agency *in itself*, rather than taking a critical discursive position whereby religion 'does not have agency to teach or do anything' but is constructed by social actors who interpret discursive objects 'in ways that relate to their particular context and the range of interests that enliven that context' (Ramey 2014, 109).

Another type of field that presented itself as a potential 'orienting metaphor' (Tweed 2008)[21] for my proposed discursive study was 'locality', i.e. spaces, whether material or discursive, that are 'meaningful for those [actors] within it', are 'important for individual and group identity', and are 'practical working environment[s]', which are also amenable to academic study due to their size and relative internal coherence (Knott 1998, 283–84). Existing studies of 'religion' in/and locality demonstrate

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[21] I prefer to use 'orienting metaphor', 'framework' etc. in place of a prevalent alternative term— 'lens'—in order to mitigate Craig Martin's valid criticism that that 'it invites us to consider objects of study as existing "out there" in the world, independently of our vision. On this view, things exist independently of our construction of them, and different theoretical lenses permit differently useful perspectives on those things.'(Martin 2016)

enormous potential for both the 'expansion and subversion of the category "religion"' (Jenkins 1999, 12) and, by extension, 'non-religion' (see O'Mahony 2014).

As Michel de Certeau noted, discursive studies have an unfortunate tendency to extract texts 'from their historical context and eliminate [...] the operations of speakers in particular situations of time, place, and competition'(1984, 20). An approach which foregrounds locality can avoid this pitfall, by being rooted in the 'particularity [and...] complexity of its social relations and the sum of the stories told about it' (Knott 2005, 33). Space and locality have been theorized in a manner which makes them eminently compatible with a discursive approach. Spaces are 'conceived (in language)' that is read, heard and uttered (Knott 2005, 17, 40) and, like discourses, are 'socially constituted' in a manner that is dynamic and 'full of power and symbolism', making them 'complex web[s] of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation' (N. Smith and Katz 1993, 155–56). Viewing localities as discursive fields facilitates setting aside the particularities of individual and community 'identities', viewing them rather as 'operational acts of identification'(Bayart 2005, 92), as acts of positioning 'in relation to other locations, with a sense of perspective on other places' (N. Smith and Katz 1993; cf. Marten 2014).

Perhaps most importantly for my purposes, '[a]n examination of specific places (whether physical, social or discursive) [...] challenges the conception of "World Religions" as unities focused on discrete, systematic sets of traditions, and normative beliefs and practices' (Knott 2009, 159), and similarly affects conceptualizations of the non-religious. Focusing upon the discourses at work within a specific locality will therefore allow me to more easily avoid reifying the very categories I aim to examine, whilst simultaneously providing a relatively bounded and

coherent context within which to conduct my analysis. Additionally, as Joseph Webster found in his research on folk-theologies of salvation and eschatology among Scottish fishermen in Gamrie (2013a), and as Martin Stringer has noted through sitting on buses in the city of Birmingham and listening to 'discourses on religious diversity' (2013a), religion-related discourses can occur in the most unpredictable of places, and a focus upon and immersion within a locality increases the likelihood that they will be encountered by the researcher. Such a focus raises the status of the locality to much 'more than a mere context or backdrop' for the study of religion-related discourse (Knott 2009, 159). Indeed, such is the nature of all discursive fields, which invariably define the situation for their occupants (von Stuckrad 2010a, 5). Specific localities 'cannot be said to exhibit agency by [themselves]' but affect 'agency in those who experience and participate' in them (Knott 2005, 129). Thus, in pursuing locality as a framework to organize my discursive analysis, it is essential that an appropriate location be selected for data gathering, one that is diverse yet characterized by 'coherence and conceptual manageability' (Knott 1998, 283).

3.4   Edinburgh's Southside

With all of the above in mind, it was important that I find a demographically and (non-)religiously diverse locality to act as a porously-bounded discursive container which was not merely a collection of (non-)religious institutions, and where I would be able to access the discourses of individuals who exempt themselves (for whatever reason) from such institutions, as well as religion-related discourses of 'indifference', and potentially religion-related discourses being utilized outside of researcher-initiated situations. I initially considered searching for an appropriate locality in cities with 'super-diverse' (Vertovec 2007) neighbourhoods such as London, Birmingham,

Manchester or, to a degree, Glasgow. I eventually ruled this out primarily due to logistics and familiarity, but also because of the (at the time) quite under-theorized nature of such super-diverse contexts,[22] and the potential impact this might have upon my work as a distraction and by muddying some already complex waters. I turned my attention toward my adopted home of Edinburgh, and decided that the area known as the 'Southside', where I have lived for over twelve years, would provide appropriate diversity in terms of religion-related identification, age, educational background and socio-economic status, as well as a beneficial level of familiarity, and a desirable degree of continuity with my previous research. In what follows, I shall briefly introduce the reader to Edinburgh, and then the Southside, and in doing so provide justification for my unashamedly pragmatic decision.

3.4.1 Edinburgh Today[23]

Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland—populations approximately 477,000 and 5,295,000 respectively, according to the 2011 census (National Records of Scotland 2012)—one of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom. While Scotland retains notably higher levels of church attendance than England and Wales (Guest, Olson, and Wolffe 2012, 64), statistics tell a familiar story of declining church attendance and loss of normative Christian culture over the last fifty years (C. G. Brown 1992, 75–76; C. G. Brown 2000; C. G. Brown and Lynch 2012, 344; Bruce 2013, 371).[24] In 2011, 93 per cent of the Scottish population answered a question on the Scottish decennial

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[22] This situation has changed remarkably in recent years, with a veritable explosion in publications e.g. Chimienti and Liempt (2015), Eriksen (2015), Meissner and Vertovec (2015), Vertovec (2015), Wessendorf (2014b).

[23] This summary draws significantly upon a previous publication (Cotter 2015, 173–74).

[24] Other 'religious' and 'spiritual' phenomena have 'always' had a presence in Scotland (see S. J. Brown 2010, 138–42), but the narrative associated with hegemonic 'Christianity' suffices in this brief illustration.

census which asked 'What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong

to?' According to the National Records of Scotland,

> 54 per cent of the population stated they belonged to a Christian denomination (a
> decrease of 11 percentage points from 2001) whilst the proportion who stated that they
> had 'No religion' was 37 per cent (an increase of 9 percentage points from 2001). All
> other religions made up the remaining 3 per cent, an increase from 2 per cent from 2001.
> (2013, 4)

Turning to other factors, it is worth noting that, whereas in 1900 Scotland had around

3,600 Presbyterian clergy (the national Church of Scotland is Presbyterian), this had

fallen to around 900 in the year 2000 (Bruce 2013, 374; drawing on Brierley 1989,

55). It is also significant that Scotland has been alone in the UK in granting 'humanist'

weddings legal status since 2005. In 2009 there were more humanist weddings in

Scotland than those conducted by all churches except Roman Catholic and Church of

Scotland (C. G. Brown and Lynch 2012, 339). Of course, there are enormous regional

variations across Scotland in terms of religious practice and affiliation, with

conservative Protestantism remaining strong in remote fishing villages in the north

east (see Webster 2013b; 2013a), and Catholic/Protestant sectarianism, 'particularly in

the west (around Glasgow)' and 'strongly linked to the footballing rivalry between the

Glasgow teams of Celtic and Rangers', remaining a major social and political issue

(Nye and Weller 2012, 37). In Edinburgh, 45 per cent of the population selected 'No

religion' on the 2011 Census (8 per cent higher than the national average), in

comparison with 48 per cent for all other religious identifications combined (National

Records of Scotland 2013, 33), and although some Christian congregations (see

Roxburgh 2012) and other religious identifications are growing, the situation remains

one of clear decline. Although these are by no means the only potential measures of

'religion' or 'religiousness', this brief discussion indicates that Scotland, and

Edinburgh in particular, are sites in which a growing and significant section of the

population self-describe as being other than 'religious'—a prime site for investigating the constituency towards which I have directed my attention in this study.

3.4.2   Defining the Southside

Much like the very terms that form the basis for my research project, the 'Southside' of Edinburgh is a contested but meaning-infused concept. As one surveys the built environment to the south of Princes Street, one will come across pubs, letting agents, dentists, community centres and major pizza delivery chains that incorporate 'Southside' into their names (see, for example, **Figures 1**, **2** and **3**). Various groups and organizations identify with the term, from the Southside Heritage Group to the Southside Community Choir, as well as local newsletters, circulars, and art projects. The stock phrase 'once a Southsider, always a Southsider' is in the discursive repertoire of many an Edinburgh resident, and the term has found its way into the (auto)biographies of local centenarians (Edinburgh Evening News 2008) and rabbis (Daiches 2001), and the pages and titles of local histories (J. G. Gray 1962c; C. J. Smith 2000; Sherman 2000; Pinkerton 2012). As we shall see below, and in the chapters that follow, this is not to say that the term holds universal appeal, or is even universally acknowledged (due, in no small part, to an ever-growing transient student population). However, the most significant contestation surrounding the 'Southside' concerns not whether there *is* a Southside or not, but where its boundaries might lie.
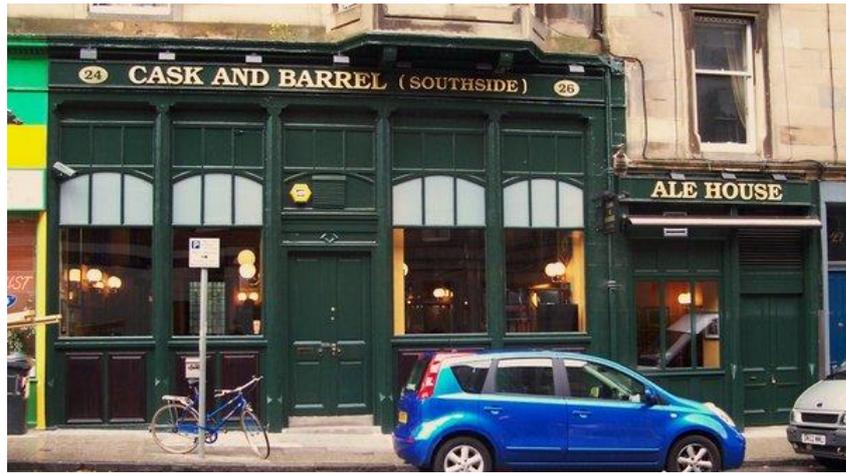
Figure 1: The Cask and Barrel (Southside) Pub

Figure 2: The Southside Guest House

Figure 3: The Southsider Pub

It is impossible to discuss the boundaries of Edinburgh's Southside without first sketching something of the history of this area within the City of Edinburgh. As far as the city itself is concerned, it is generally agreed that substantial settlement in the area began some time before the 7th century CE, with the large rock upon which Edinburgh Castle now rests being a site of fortification from at least the 12th century reign of King David. Until the middle of the 18th century, the town of Edinburgh consisted largely of what is known today as the 'Old Town', the area surrounding the historic 'Royal Mile', the High Street which runs from Edinburgh Castle in the West down to the Palace of Holyrood House in the East.

In the first centuries of the second millennium, if one proceeded south from the now High Street, one would soon have encountered an expanse of water later known as the South or Burgh Loch (now Edinburgh's popular 'Meadows' park), the northern side of which formed the southern boundary of the old town. Beyond the Burgh Loch lay the Burgh Muir, a section of the 'dense forest of Drumselch' (C. J. Smith 2000, 1). During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Burgh Muir remained densely forested, 'providing vagrants and outlaws with a retreat from the city authorities' and also serving as a quarantine area for plague victims (C. J. Smith 2000, 3). Following a 1508 charter of King James IV to open up the Muir for commercial uses, and a further devastating plague in 1585, the Muir was cleared and gradually developed (C. J. Smith 2000, 3–5). Fast-forwarding a couple of hundred years to the mid-eighteenth century, these clearances contributed to a situation where 'most citizens were residing in the Old Town', and a large 'green swath' stretched to the south 'between Arthur's Seat and Blackford Hill' (Sherman 2000, 3). There,

> [d]otted amongst the orchards and farms were small villages and hamlets such as Causewayside, the Pleasance, Powburn and Nether Liberton. There were also country estates belonging to wealthy city merchants, incorporating their prominent manor houses. (Sherman 2000, 3)

In 1772 the North Bridge was opened, which 'led to the exodus of Old Town citizens of means [...] northwards across the drained Nor' Loch to a new style of elegant residence in James Craig's classical New Town' (C. J. Smith 2000, xi). Following soon after, in 1788, was the South Bridge, a 'new southern highway' which 'stimulated a significant movement of people to the districts of Newington, the Grange and Morningside' (C. J. Smith 2000, xi), and facilitated the development of what is commonly referred to today as 'the Southside'.

This brief historical sketch provides a convenient cut off point for the Southside in terms of its northern boundary: the Southside is to the south of the Royal Mile. However, this tells us nothing of the other three boundaries, and ignores contestations surrounding where the 'Old Town' stops, and the Southside begins. Charles Smith writes that '[w]hen Edinburgh people talk of the city's 'South Side' they usually mean the relatively small area comprising South Clerk Street, St Leonard's, Causewayside, Sciennes, Newington and the Grange' (C. J. Smith 2000, xi). Robin Sherman's account is somewhat narrower, placing the Grange (to the south-east), Marchmont (east) and Gilmerton (south) outwith the Southside (2000, 3). This narrower definition is the one adopted by the Southside Heritage Group and, after a survey of a number of alternative sources for potential Southside boundaries,[25] became my own working definition. **Figure 4** (below) shows various competing conceptualizations of the Southside, with my working definition bounded by the black rectangle. **Figure 5** (below) shows a simplified map of the area that was used as a visual aid in interviews. **Figure 6** (below) shows a map generated by the website accompanying the 2011 census results, with a red line superimposed marking the

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[25] Including the areas covered by the South Central Community Council, the Southside Neighbourhood Partnership, the Southside Advertiser, Newington Churches Together, the catchment of Southside Community Centre, the relevant City Council Wards and Holyrood and Westminster Constituencies, and Postcodes.

boundaries of the EH8 9 and EH9 1 postcode areas, which is the closest

approximation to my working definition of the Southside available in the website's

interactive census data browser. Ultimately I took a pragmatic approach, calling for

people who considered themselves to have (had) a relationship with the Southside,

resulting in a wide catchment area. Yet all participants considered the same core to be

the Southside—the difference lies in the periphery.
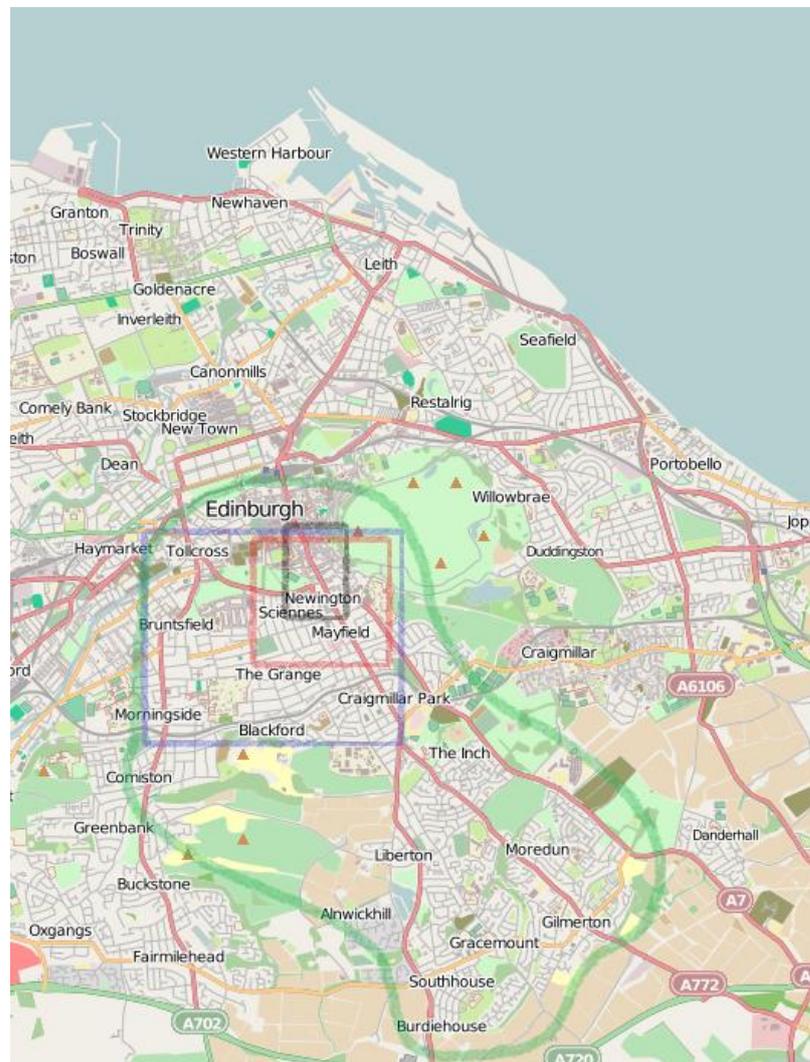
Figure 4: Map of Edinburgh showing competing boundaries of the Southside
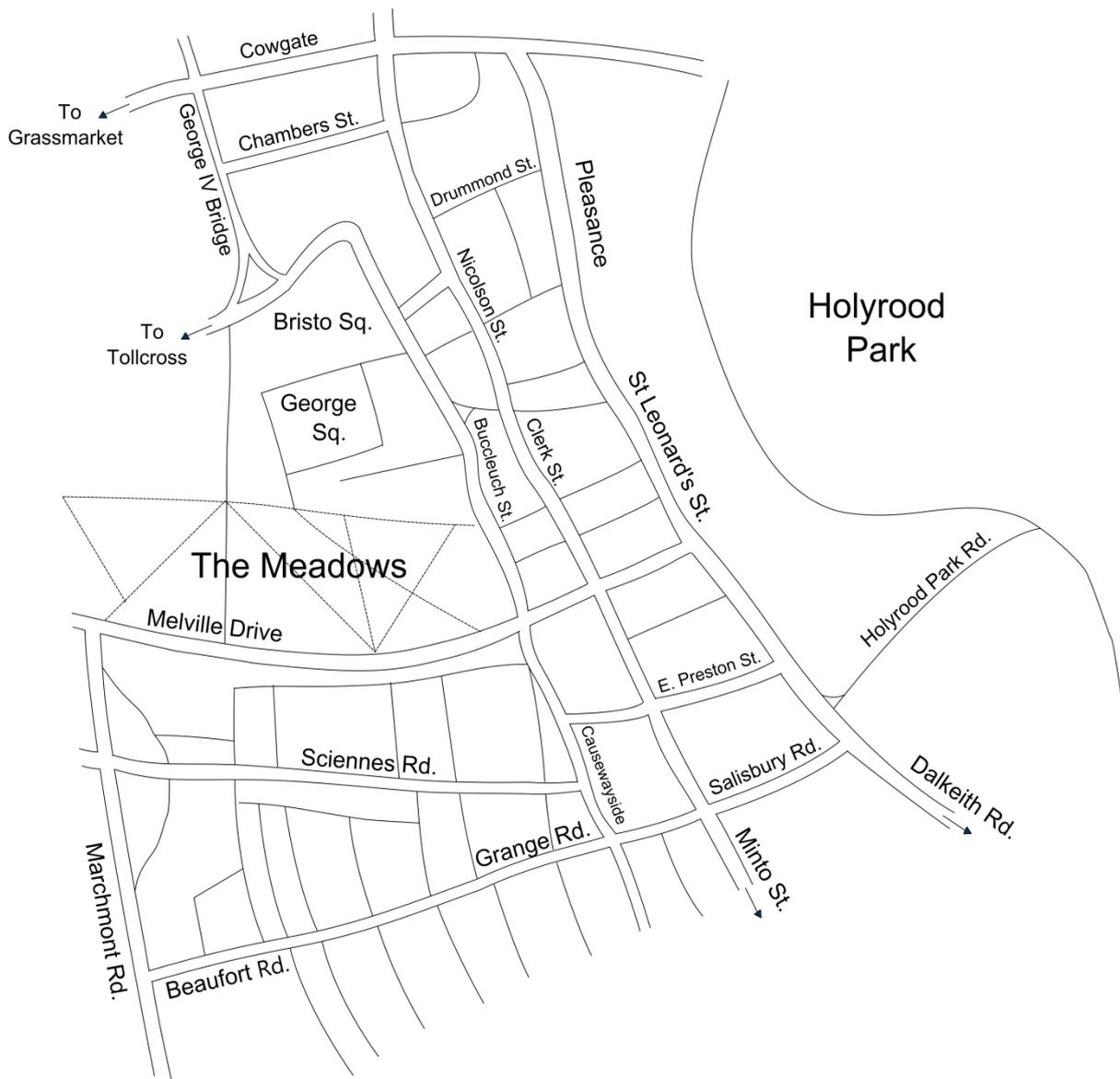
Figure 5: Simplified map used as visual aid in interviews
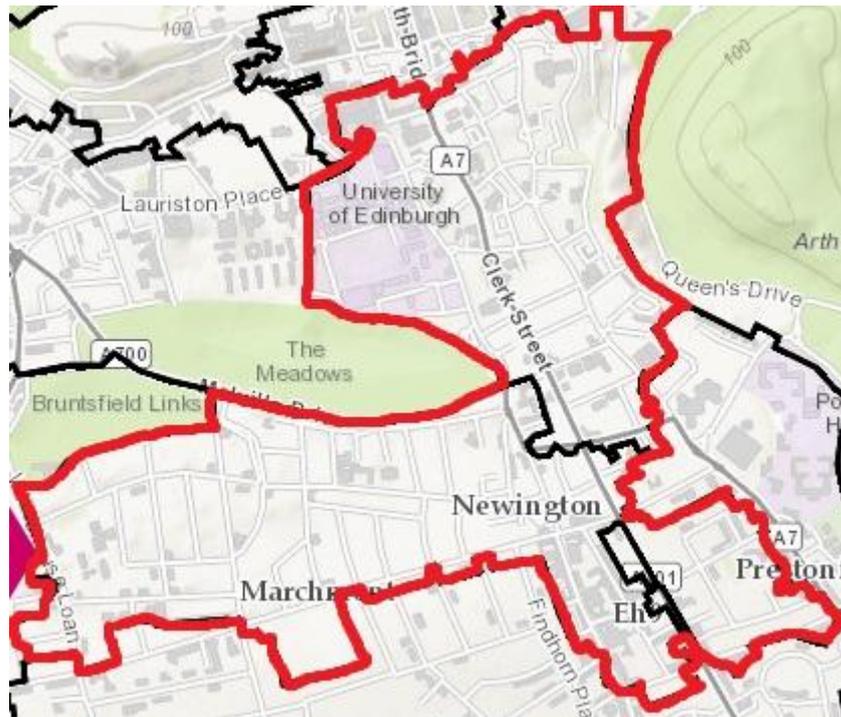
Figure 6: Boundaries of the EH8 9 and EH9 1 postcode areas[26]

With these working boundaries in mind, I can now turn to a more rich description of the area.

3.4.3 The Contemporary Southside

As the preceding discussion surrounding the contested boundaries of the Southside has indicated, this is an area that is steeped in history. The keen-eyed observer of the built environment will note plaques commemorating Robert Burns' 1787 lodgings in Buccleuch Pend (J. G. Gray 1962a, 73), or his meeting with a young Sir Walter Scott in Sciennes House Place that same year (W. F. Gray 1962c, 13). Those who take an interest in the origins of street names might be aware that the area known as Sciennes, including Sienna Gardens, Sciennes House Place, St Catherine's Place etc., is so named due to the brief presence (1518–1567) of the Convent of St Catherine of Siena, with the name being 'corrupted colloquially into Sciennes or (in the eighteenth

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[26] Source of original: http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/standard-outputs.html

century) Sheens' (W. F. Gray 1962b, 30; cf. C. J. Smith 2000, 6–7). And who could fail to notice the presence of the University of Edinburgh in and around George Square,[27] a number of imposing Victorian neo-Gothic churches, and the simple yet striking Archer's Hall on Buccleuch Street, which opened in 1777 as 'the headquarters of the Royal Company of Archers or King's Bodyguard' (W. F. Gray 1962d, 45) and which hosted the Queen, Prince Phillip and Princess Anne as recently as July 2016. Yet despite all of this, it would be misleading to say that 'historic' was a term that many would immediately associate with the Southside, with this term being more readily associated with the adjacent 'Old Town'.

Writing in 1962, John Gray lamented that it 'sometimes seems that Southsiders are unaware of their heritage and that much is being whittled away and lost simply because a generation has arisen that has ceased to care for that which is worthwhile and seeks only after material values' (1962b, 5). Much as we might be tempted to put this down to resentment directed at 'young people these days', Gray was writing at a time of enormous change for the Southside. The contemporary visitor to the Southside would be largely unaware of its former status as a thriving industrial centre, yet older residents remember a rather different place. Writing of his childhood in the 1950s, James Beyer describes how

> Biscuits, confectionery, food colouring and flavouring, heavy engineering, upholstery, cardboard box making, printing and bookbinding, mapmaking and even pipe organ construction were just some of the many enterprises thriving in Causewayside,[28] all being found within an area of less than a quarter of a square mile. (2009, 34)

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[27] Since 1583, but particularly since the late 18th/early 19th century (Anderson, Lynch, and Phillipson 2003).

[28] Causewayside is one of the constituent areas of the 'Southside'.

This narrative of a vibrant commercial and industrial neighbourhood is augmented by his description of accompanying smells, and a delicious description of the embodied boredom associated with the hegemonic 'religion' of the time:[29]

> Drifting from the factory of confectioner John Millar and Sons Ltd. was the tantalizing bouquet of boiling sugar, chocolate, fruit flavourings and, above all, mint, for this was the home of the celebrated Pan Drop, one of the most popular sweets ever to have been manufactured in sweet-toothed Scotland and a boon to bored church-goers throughout the land as they slowly sucked their way through many a long, tedious sermon, the air over the pews becoming more heavy with mint than piety. (2009, 34)

As is the case in cities across the UK, this thriving industrial scene is now no more, with demolitions or conversions into tenements being the norm (indeed, the flat in which I have resided for the duration of my doctoral study is part of a former Southside brewery).

Another change that Gray would have witnessed was the clearing of many of the more dilapidated tenements in the Southside, the moving of many Southside residents to newly constructed council estates on the periphery of the city, and the beginnings of the rapid expansion of the University of Edinburgh, with its main Pollock Halls of Residence being a major new addition to the Southside landscape in the 1960s. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, this change was felt as traumatic by many of the Southside's residents, and a resentment against both the University of Edinburgh and the City Council runs deep throughout many of my interviews with older residents.

The Southside can thus be described as post-industrial and historic, although the history is somewhat layered or sedimented, and not immediately visible to the casual user of the space. The presence of the University of Edinburgh in the area means that the Southside serves as an arrival point for many individuals who latterly

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[29] See discussion of the discourses on *Lived Religion* in **Chapter 6**.

decide to remain in Edinburgh after their period of study, but who tend to move out of the area as they seek to buy property or start families. Two dominant groups in the area are thus a core of longer established residents, and a larger more transient population who remain for a few years and arguably push up rental prices due to the demand on accommodation near the University.

As far as 'religion' is concerned, the Southside is home to many Christian groups, including Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Orthodox, and Pentecostal congregations, and also features many church buildings that have been repurposed as community centres, libraries, lighting showrooms and so on. The area is also home to the Edinburgh Central Mosque (completed in 1998), the synagogue of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, its foundation stone laid in 1931 (C. J. Smith 2000, 13) and a small Jewish burial ground opened in 1818 (W. F. Gray 1962a, 35), in addition to a number of shops offering alternative therapies, crystals and so on. **Table 1** (below) shows the census results for this area, broken down according to 'Ethnicity' and 'Religion' and compared with the results for Edinburgh and Scotland as a whole. From this table, we can see that the Southside has a much higher proportion of 'non-White' residents (15%) when compared to the Edinburgh (8%) and Scotland (4%) averages, yet still remains predominantly 'White'. In terms of 'religion', more than half of the Southside's residents identified with 'no religion' (53%) as compared to 45% of Edinburgh's population, whilst just 11% of Southside residents identified with the Church of Scotland, which is half the percentage for Edinburgh and only one third of that for the whole of Scotland. A marginally higher number of residents identified as Roman Catholic, but these percentages were also slightly smaller than the Edinburgh and Scotland averages. Finally, notably higher percentages of Southside

residents identified with Islam, other forms of Christianity, and 'other religions' than

in either Edinburgh or Scotland.

Table 1: 'Ethnicity' and 'Religion' statistics from Census 2011
'Southside', Edinburgh and Scotland[30]

	Southside Population: 22,494	Edinburgh Population: 477,000	Scotland Population: 5,295,000
'Ethnicity'			
'White'	85.20%	91.80%	96.00%
'Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups'	1.81%	^	0.40%
'Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British'	10.88%	5.50%	2.70%
'African'	0.79%	^	0.60%
'Caribbean or Black'	0.20%	^	0.10%
'Other'	1.12%	^	0.30%
'Religion'			
'Church of Scotland'	10.64%	24.30%	32.40%
'Roman Catholic'	10.79%	12.10%	15.90%
'Other Christian'	9.82%	6.90%	5.50%
'Buddhist'	1.25%	*	0.20%
'Hindu'	1.15%	*	0.30%
'Jewish'	0.62%	*	0.10%
'Muslim'	3.23%	2.60%	1.40%
'Sikh'	0.20%	*	0.20%
'Other religion'	0.54%	*	0.30%
"No religion"	53.05%	44.80%	36.70%
"Religion not stated"	8.69%	7.10%	7.00%

Aside from its more 'historic' buildings, the built environment of the

Southside is largely divided into tenement residences, and various elements of the

'service industry', including the increasingly rare independent shop, chains of (mini)

supermarkets, extraordinary numbers of takeaways, some restaurants and coffee

shops, dozens of pubs and bars, barber shops and hairdressers, betting shops, pawn

shops, a couple of Chinese supermarkets, and about a dozen charity shops. Despite

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[30] Source: http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/standard-outputs.html. 'Southside' results generated using "Local Characteristic Postcode Sectors" EH8 9 and EH9. Edinburgh and Scotland populations rounded to the nearest 1,000. All ^ are amalgamated as 'other ethnic groups' in the Edinburgh data, at 2.80%. All * are amalgamated as 'other religions' in the Edinburgh data, at 2.10%.

being quite a dense urban area, the Southside is bounded to the West by the well-utilized Meadows Park, and to the East by Holyrood Park featuring Arthur's Seat and the Crags—imposing geological formations which loom large in the Edinburgh skyline. These parks combine with a number of smaller landscaped squares and tree-lined streets to produce a general feeling of leafy suburbia, despite the more gritty urban aspects of the Southside, and its presence on a busy commuter artery between the city centre and its southern suburbs.

The Southside also never feels very far from power and privilege, with the aforementioned University of Edinburgh within its boundaries, the Scottish Parliament Building only just outside of these, and the notably more opulent areas of Marchmont, Morningside and the Grange surrounding its southern borders. This is juxtaposed by the all-too-real deprivation experienced by many in the Southside, with food banks and homeless shelters providing essential services throughout the area, and the Scottish Parliament buildings sitting firmly in the accusatory gaze of its next-door neighbour, Dumbiedykes council estate. This juxtaposition is just one of the many dichotomies— urban/green, transience/permanence, historic/contemporary, privilege/poverty, religious/non-religious—that seem to characterize the contemporary Southside and make it a particularly fascinating context in which to examine religion-related discourse.

3.5   Locating Religion-Related Discourse in the Southside

Now that I have introduced you to the Southside, discussion turns to the specifics of the data that form the empirical basis for this study, before detailing some of the specific techniques I employed during the data gathering process, and some reflection on my ethical position in relation to my informants and the field of the Southside.

Much of the data that has informed this study has emerged due to my personal familiarity with the Southside, where I have lived for the past twelve years. In addition to consulting a variety of local histories sourced through the National Library of Scotland, the Edinburgh City Library, and the University of Edinburgh's Scottish Studies Library, a major boon to my research was my regular participation in meetings of the Southside Heritage Group who maintain a large archive of texts, photographs, and assorted artefacts relevant to the Southside, and have their own library of relevant texts. I have also been paying attention to the discourses at play in the built environment, the changing landscape of advertising banners and fly postings, and news stories that have been of relevance to the local area. However, while this combination of elements has helped to contextualize my research, my discursive analysis (detailed below) has focused upon three discrete sets of interview data: in the preliminary stages, the 11 interview transcripts and 62 questionnaire responses generated in 2011 as part of my Masters project; 37 transcripts of individual and group interviews conducted in 1995/6 for the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project*; and 23 new interviews that I conducted between February and November 2014 with my research questions specifically in mind. As hinted at above, some scholars prefer the use of 'naturally occurring data' as opposed to material like interviews because this means that 'the researcher has not influenced the formation of the discourse' (Taira 2013, 29). However, I argue that my triangulation with other data sources, my being embedded in the Southside, my linking to broader national discourses,[31] and my use of the PEP material mitigate some of the issues associated with this charge. Furthermore, as I discuss in the section below on *Ethics*, the resulting reflections on my own

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[31] Much as Wijsen used 'newspapers and audio-visual sources not only to link the micro and the macro level of analysis, but also to reduce our own contribution to the production of the material' (2013b, 75 fn. 10).

involvement in the co-construction of religion-related discourse in the Southside is a further strength of this approach.

3.5.1 MSc by Research

My MSc research—which has been discussed in some detail in **Chapter 2** (see also Cotter 2015)—was carried out at the University of Edinburgh, as a broad investigation into 'non-religion' among the student body, with core aims of avoiding imposing preconceived categories onto informants (see Day 2011), and engaging with this constituency beyond institutional forms of 'non-religion'. Electronic questionnaires were disseminated to 17 student societies ('clubs') intended to provide access to a wide range of ideological and 'faith-based' perspectives[32], motivated largely by Edward Dutton's argument that student societies act as contexts where students 'assert or find a strong identity' in the face of the 'liminal' character of university life (2008, 83). Ultimately a wide net was cast over the 'non-religion' side of the presumed religion/non-religion dichotomy, and I excluded only those students who did not self-identify in terms deemed 'non-religious' *and* who scored highly on self-declared measures of 'religious' attitudes, beliefs and practices. My subject group at the time was 48 students, average age 21 years, two-thirds female, but given the nature of my current project the full set of 62 completed questionnaires can be included as discursive data. Eleven interviews of 60–80 minutes also took place with a cross-section of respondents, resulting in a rich set of religion-related discursive data to which I return in this project, with a different research objective.

As with the individuals involved in the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project*, to which discussion shall now turn, the students involved in my 2011 project did not necessarily

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[32] For example, the Young Greens, Scottish Nationalist Association, Humanist Society, Catholic Students Union, and Yoga Society

live in the Southside and, as with most student populations, might have been quite transient or remained quite 'aloof' in terms of their connection with the area. However, given that the University of Edinburgh is considered part of the Southside— even by the narrowest of definitions—and that all interviews took place in the Southside, with individuals who were clearly familiar with the area, this collection forms a coherent and bounded body of discursive data with clear connections to my present study. I thus deemed it appropriate that my Masters data, and the conclusions I drew from it, be present—if somewhat peripherally—in the present work.[33]

3.5.2 The Peoples of Edinburgh Project

The *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP) was a joint project between the City of Edinburgh Council's Museums and Galleries Division and the Workers' Educational Association. A prime example of a multiculturalist endeavour (see **Chapters 4** and **5**), the PEP ran from 1995–1996 and included one-on-one interviews and focus groups with representatives of 'as wide a range of community groups as possible' (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 3). Outcomes of the project included an exhibition, the production of resource packs, a publication for public consumption—Clark, Dick and Fraser (1996)—and 37 transcripts of individual and group interviews to which I was given access.[34] 'Religion' was one of fifteen predetermined themes to be explored in the interviews, and also features prominently in the published book.

Although the PEP will be introduced in much greater detail in **Chapter 4**, this brief overview should suffice to provide a flavour of the context from which the texts utilized in my analysis emerged. The motivation for including this data in the present

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[33] To be clear, I am not reusing earlier research analysis, but making secondary use of a pre-existing data set.

[34] Access to the transcripts was arranged through Denise Brace and, latterly, Gillian Findlay, at the *Museum of Edinburgh.*

study was firstly to allow a pilot analysis to test the analytical techniques discussed

below, and secondly to provide an historical data source that is connected spatially

and chronologically to the Southside, and which enables a degree of methodological

triangulation and accountability for the resulting conclusions. Although many of the

Edinburgh residents involved in the PEP did not have a clear connection to the

Southside, many did, and it provided a rich historical source of religion-related

discourses of a similar scale and from a sufficiently similar context to enable my

analytical framework to be rigorously established and tested, and on a body of data

that was generated independently of my agency as an interviewer.

3.5.3 The Contemporary Southside

Finally, I conducted a further 23 interviews with individuals from a variety of

'religious' and 'nonreligious' identifications who considered themselves to have a

connection to Edinburgh's Southside. I framed things in this manner, without

specifying what I understood the Southside to be, or what kind of connection I was

looking for, in order to enable potential interviewees to respond in their own ways,

and not to appear too restrictive from the outset. I set up a project website,[35] and

potential interviewees were informed that I wished to include a wide variety of people

in my study, whatever their background, and no matter how important or unimportant

religion was in their lives. The main thrust of my communications and publicity

material was on the Southside (although 'religion' was, of course, mentioned) in the

hope that this would encourage greater participation from those who might position

themselves as largely 'indifferent' to religion, or who prefer to avoid discussing it.

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[35] https://southsideedinburgh.wordpress.com/

My strategy for sourcing interviewees was multi-stranded. I made use of my own social network within the Southside, and an element of snowballing (Atkinson and Flint 2001), to disperse a call for interviewees, making particular use of Facebook and Twitter. I also capitalized upon the relationship I had built up with the Southside Heritage Group, and was invited to attend one of their Monday meetings as a warm-up for the guest speaker that week, where I was able to detail my project and successfully solicit interviewees. More passively, I strategically placed posters calling for participants around the Southside in local pubs, shops, the Southside Community Centre,[36] and the Nelson Hall,[37] and had an advert placed in the Meadows Directory,[38] and a number of local (online) messageboards. Emails were circulated around the Causey Development Trust,[39] the creative writing group, drama group and community choir who meet at the Southside Community Centre, the Southside Elderly Group, the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership,[40] the Dumbiedykes Writers Group, the Braidwood Centre,[41] and the Southbridge Resource Centre.[42] Finally, a number of religion-related organizations were specifically targeted with information and posters. I adopted a maximum variation sampling strategy, much like Lois Lee did when conducting interviews and engaging in ethnographic work with explicitly non-religious populations in and around London (2012a). This meant that, while I generally remained passive in allowing interviewees to approach me, as the interviewing phase carried on I more actively pursued interviews which would ensure

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[36] http://southsidecommunitycentre.co.uk/

[37] http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory_record/304093/nelson_hall_community_centre

[38] http://content.yudu.com/Library/A2t7ea/TheMeadowsDirectoryA/resources/index.htm?referrerUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.themeadowsdirectory.com%2Flibrary, p. 36.

[39] http://www.thecausey.org/

[40] http://www.edinburghnp.org.uk/neighbourhood-partnerships/south-central/

[41] http://www.braidwoodcentre.org.uk/cms/

[42] http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory_record/304102/south_bridge_resource_centre

a broader range of ages, socio-economic statuses, nationalities, and religion-related identifications, in addition to achieving as close to gender parity as was practicable.

Unsurprisingly, of course, the process of sourcing interviewees was not a smooth one. I frequently met with the response 'I've got nothing to say about that' or 'You wouldn't want to speak to me', and although some individuals were subsequently persuaded to be interviewed (and did, in fact, have quite a lot to say), I can only assume that many other potential interviewees were dissuaded from participating due to the focus on 'religion', or due to not feeling sufficiently knowledgeable about the Southside. I also attempted to include the perspectives of a group who might have a very different perspective of the Southside—those who are at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. I was given valuable access to a local food bank which I attended as a participant observer for four sessions, and although I had a number of incredibly valuable conversations with service users and volunteers, the logistics of the setting, difficulties in finding or arranging time to conduct a formal interview, and my uneasiness surrounding my apparent position of power over these vulnerable individuals led to no interviews taking place. That being said, the interactions that occurred here, as well as my frequent interaction with members of the Heritage Group, provided worthwhile opportunities to listen in on unsolicited conversations surrounding 'religion' (many of which were, of course, initiated in response to my presence).

In the end, I conducted 21 individual interviews, and 2 interviews with married couples, all of whom (had) lived and/or (had) worked within the boundaries I set for 'the Southside'. The interviews lasted between 45 and 100 minutes, and were conducted either in University of Edinburgh meeting rooms, the interviewees' residences, or cafes. Some demographic information on the interviewees is given

below. These interviewees (had) worked primarily in a range of industries from (higher) education and IT consultancy, to secretarial and catering work, although it would be fair to say that all were reasonably comfortable financially. The majority claimed to have, or have had, some personal connection with various forms of Christianity, or to have never identified as 'religious'. **Tables 2–5** provide demographic breakdowns of my interviewees by gender, nationality, age, and initial 'religious identification'. See **Appendix 1** for a full list of interviewees.

Table 2: 2014 Interview participants by gender

Gender	M	F
	14	11

Table 3: 2014 Interview participants by nationality

Nationality	
Scottish	14
English	5
Australian	1
Scottish/Italian	1
Scottish/German	1
Scottish/American	1
Polish	1
Syrian	1

Table 4: 2014 Interview participants by age

Age	
18-24	2
25-34	3
35-44	2
45-54	2
55-64	5
65-74	8
75+	3

Table 5: 2014 Interview participants by initial 'religious identification'

Initial 'Religious Identification'	
Church of Scotland	4
Atheist	3
Atheist/Agnostic	3
Agnostic	2
(Former) Catholic	1
None	2
Catholic	1
Episcopalian	3
Pagan	1
Muslim	2
(Secular) Jew	1
Other Christian	1
Buddhist	1

The interviews were semi-structured, and all followed a set pattern that I developed during three initial test interviews (which were incorporated into the final data set). Discussion initially focused explicitly on the Southside and the interviewee's relationship to it. Topics that were covered included the boundaries of the Southside and a free-listing (Stausberg 2011) exercise on characteristics that they would ascribe to the Southside. We also discussed a map of the Southside (that I provided) and the interviewee/s took me on a virtual tour, pointing out the places that they felt were most significant, and then, after prompting, the locations they would associate with 'religion'. Our attention then turned to a photo elicitation exercise (Banks 2001, 87–98) where three key images from the Southside were discussed: a) the Southside Community Centre (formerly Nicolson Street Church, see **Figure 7**), b) a halal meat market (see **Figure 8**), c) an advert on a local bus for the 'trypraying' campaign (see **Figure 9**).[43] Discussion then turned explicitly to 'religion', with the interviewee being

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[43] This is a non-denominational Christian initiative, describing itself as 'for those who are not religious and don't do church.' One of the major outputs of this initiative is advertising on public buses around the UK with the simple slogan 'trypraying.' Support for this initiative is voluntary and on a church-by-church basis. Many of the churches in Edinburgh have supported this initiative financially, and by

asked for a brief 'religious biography', before being presented with a pre-produced list of 'religion-related' terms and invited to provide definitions, whether or not they would consider the term to apply to themselves, any stories they might have connected with the terms, and so on. After asking any contextually relevant follow-up questions, discussion returned to the Southside, with the interviewee being directed to consider the religion-related terms in relation to their experiences there. Finally, most interviewees were asked for their opinions on David Cameron's comments concerning the UK as a 'Christian country',[44] and all were asked about their responses to and opinions of the 'religion question' on the UK 2011 Census.

The development of this interview approach was highly influenced by the schedules utilized during my MSc, in addition to the work of many other scholars engaged in similar projects, particularly Rebecca Catto & Janet Eccles (2013), Abby Day (2009), Lois Lee (2012a; 2015), and Simeon Wallis (2014). See **Appendix 2** for my interview schedule.

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placing banners similar to the bus adverts outside their buildings. See http://www.trypraying.co.uk/ and http://www.thereishope.co.uk/ for more information. (Accessed 16/05/2015).

[44] See BBC News Online (2014b)

Figure 7: The Southside Community Centre, Nicolson Street

Figure 8: Halal Meat Market, Marshall Street

Figure 9: Bus with 'trypraying' advert, South Bridge

3.5.4 Ethics

It has recently been noted that within the field of Religious Studies 'there are at present no widely recognized normative standards or guidelines, no professional code of ethics to set the standard for both how we should engage in our investigations and how we should communicate what we learn in the process.' (Bird and Lamoureux Scholes 2011, 82) In studies of this nature, focusing upon religion-related discourses, in the narratives of non-elites—co-constructed in this case with the researcher, and with other researchers in the past—it is essential that research ethics are given due consideration. As far as 'standard' ethical practice in research working with human subjects is concerned, I took measures to ensure that all personal data relating to interviewees was encrypted, any personal details that appear in this thesis or other publications are anonymized where deemed appropriate, and informed consent was sought and obtained from all participants who were free to withdraw at any time.

It goes without saying that 'religion' is constructed in popular discourse such that it has the potential to be a sensitive topic for informants. However, in the particular interviews I conducted it did not appear to be especially problematic, and informants were not encouraged to present more personal information than they desired. I am also acutely aware—particularly given my analysis of interviews conducted by interviewers other than myself—of the impact that the agenda and perspective of the interviewer can have upon the discourses that are deployed in interview situations. As Valentine and Sadgrove acknowledge, 'how the self is narrated may differ according to the specific performative encounter between a given respondent and interviewer', meaning that the interviewer 'is not merely the passive recipient of the narrative but an active, authorial agent' (2013, 1983).

There is a view among some scholars of religion that the researcher should be explicit about their own position in the religion-related field, both in their academic writing and in face-to-face contact with their informants (Neitz 2011, 61–63; Hopkins 2007; Cheruvallil-Contractor et al. 2013). Although I did adopt this practice in one of my test interviews, I decided that this was unnecessary and unhelpful. Yet I fully subscribe to the view, articulated by Kim Knott, that '[t]here is no neutral ground from which to view the field of struggle between the "religious" and the "secular". No position to take which is not implicated in its force relationships.' (Knott 2005, 89) As a researcher, who has lived and worked in Edinburgh's Southside for over twelve years, and engaged in the study of 'religion' for over ten years, I consider myself entirely implicated in the field of discourse on religion in the Southside. Consequently I have not merely analysed the statements of my interviewees, but have self-reflexively included my own statements within the analysis, and taken a perspective on the interviews as a co-construction of narrative, and as fully implicated in the

discursive field surrounding 'religion' in the Southside of Edinburgh. Given that this project involves, among other things, investigating whether the discursive field surrounding 'religion' is coherent regardless of the particular identifications of the individuals in question, I deemed it irrelevant and counter-productive to the research process for me to be explicit about my own, equally 'irrelevant', perspective. Suffice to say, I view questions of whether or not 'religion' is a force for good in the world as effectively meaningless—similar to asking whether the weather is a force for good in the world—and I prefer to focus upon the social effects of social actors' claims surrounding the 'supernatural', the 'nation', or 'morality', rather than evaluating the substance of these claims.

As with all research, but particularly research involving interviews, 'participants tend to come to the situation believing that they will learn something' from their participation, and it is therefore worthwhile to give due consideration to 'the quality of the learning experience' provided by the research process (Breen 2006, 468). In order to address this, I intend to engage in a knowledge exchange process whereby the results of my research—particularly concerning the history of the local area—are communicated through accessible publications and presentations (with the Southside Heritage Group, the Museum of Edinburgh, and in local religious institutions), and my completed thesis is circulated, with relevant summaries, to all participants.

Finally, as far as my own personal safety was concerned, the vast majority of the research was conducted in public spaces, or pre-booked meeting rooms. However, some interviews were conducted in interviewees' own homes, and to that end I adapted the lone working policy of the Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research (2010)—particularly sections 3) d) i–iv, and Appendices IV and V—and had a pool of

colleagues willing to be contacted regarding my location and safety, and in possession of an up-to-date itinerary. These ethical considerations were prepared in consultation with the Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee, who approved this project on 25 October 2013 before new empirical work was conducted.

3.6   Analysing Religion-Related Discourse

As I have detailed above, two collections of interviews— from the PEP and the contemporary Southside—provide the main empirical backbone to this project and are viewed as *particular* instantiations (texts) of multiple, intertwined religion-related discourses which surround a variety of objects (terms, buildings, individuals, etc; see Potter and Hepburn (2008, 275)), flow throughout a particular field (the Southside of Edinburgh), and are invoked by contextually relevant social actors. These discourses are entangled with each other and embedded in the text(s), and required excavation through discursive analysis (see Garling (2013) in particular). The following chapters contain the results of this excavation and relate these discourses to broader societal discourses and theoretical frameworks. However, in concluding this chapter it is necessary for me to outline my particular analytical approach.

My methodological framework was rooted in a desire to allow discourses to emerge from the data through a process of close-reading and open-coding, and Discourse Analysis in the sense outlined below. This framework was tested and refined in late 2013/early 2014 using the 37 transcripts from the PEP, before continuing to apply it to the new interviews conducted specifically for this study. In describing my approach, it makes narrative sense to describe the process mainly from the perspective of my pilot analysis with the PEP.

To begin with, I undertook an initial reading of the 37 transcripts which had been generated during the PEP, many of which were handwritten, and proceeded to make contextual notes on each interview, and to pragmatically deduce which sections could be considered 'religion-related'. I cast a wide net in making these decisions, utilizing my existing knowledge of cultural systems commonly understood as 'religious', in combination with a helpful list of categories provided in **Appendix 1** of Knott, Poole and Taira (2013, 191–95). This resulted in 135 pages containing 'religion-related' material which were then digitized, re-read, and subjected to discursive analysis.[45] This analysis was primarily informed by two sources, an article by Stephanie Garling (2013), and unpublished guidance notes for the discourse analysis undertaken in Knott, Poole, and Taira (2013). In her article, Garling suggested that texts can be approached through three levels of analysis—the thematic, the grammatical, and the argumentative—in order to extract the underlying discourses. She states:

> At the thematic level overall topics of the text and its outlines are set and the themes unfold. At the grammatical level, different linguistic means are used to make these themes understandable and plausible to the audience. And finally at the argumentative level convincing and evaluative strategies as well as presumptions are to be found. (Garling 2013, 19)

At the first level of analysis, one looks for themes which are appealed to (implicitly and explicitly) throughout a single text or a collection of discursive data and which 'connect the argument(s) with the conclusion' (19). In other words, this level of analysis corresponds loosely to what we might colloquially label as 'close reading', whereby the substantive content of the text is examined and categorized according to (multiple) emergent themes, such as 'Islam as alien to the UK' or 'religion as a private matter'. The second and third levels involve analysis of linguistic conventions,

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[45] In November 2013, Professor Knott and I performed a joint analysis on a five-page section of this material which was most helpful in developing my approach.

whereby the term 'excavation' becomes more applicable—i.e. going beyond the surface level of the text. At the second level then, one can look for 'referential strateg[ies] or strateg[ies] of nomination, membership categorization [...], metaphors and metonymies and synecdoches' (M. Meyer 2001, 26–27), in addition to 'in/out group representation', 'emotional references' and 'over-lexicalization (exaggeration)' (notes on discourse analysis, Knott, Poole, and Taira n.d.). The final level examines what are 'understood as procedures for persuasion and argumentation' (Garling 2013, 21)—essentially the use of disclaimers, comedic paradigm, decontextualization, stereotyping, attribution, and so on. Approaching the PEP and subsequent transcripts through these three levels (in a non-sequential but systematic process) allowed me to disentangle a number of religion-related discourses at play in each transcript and proceed to the next stage of analysis.

Once the relevant pages of each transcript had been analyzed in this manner, 18 transcripts were selected for further analysis, due to markedly higher occurrences of religion-related discourses. These transcripts, along with the full material from my own interviews, then underwent a process of open coding within *NVivo*,[46] and the resulting coding structure was revised and hierarchized according to emerging themes. The pilot analysis resulted in seven particularly prevalent discursive groupings;[47] the analysis of my own interviews resulted in eight,[48] with varying degrees of correspondence and divergence from the PEP material. These will be discussed in the

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[46] *NVivo* is software that supports qualitative research, and is particularly suited to the organization and analysis of unstructured data like the interview transcripts I was utilizing as my main data source. It provides a space to organize and manage material efficiently, as well as serving a secondary function as a transcription tool.

[47] Discourses on *Religion and Containment*, *Meaningfulness of Practice*, *Religion and Family*, *Embodiment of Religion*, *Religion as Traditional*, *Religion as Oppressor,* and *Religion and Community*.

[48] Discourses on *Power*, *Civic Space*, *Religion, Space and the Built Environment*, *Lived Religion*, *Religion and Social Identity*, *Religion and Containment*, *Religion and Relationships*, and *Religion, Science and Meaning*.

following chapters, with detailed examples where appropriate to provide concrete examples of the practical application of this complex analytical process.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the type of data deemed most appropriate to address my research questions i.e. religion-related discourses as employed in social interaction by non-elite social actors who are strategically placed in a variety of positions within a contextual religion-related field. I then argued for locality as a productive framework for seeking such discourses, and presented Edinburgh's Southside as an appropriate bounded container for empirical analysis. The reader was then introduced to the Southside and my data sources, the specifics of my interview techniques, and attendant ethical implications. Finally, I discussed my iterative analytical process of coding and triangulation between data sources. In **Chapter 4**, discussion turns to the religion-related discourses excavated from the PEP materials.

CHAPTER 4

RELIGION-RELATED DISCOURSES IN THE PEP

THE PEOPLES OF EDINBURGH PROJECT

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the results of an analysis of 37 transcripts of individual and

group interviews conducted in 1995/6 for the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP).

This was a two-year joint project between the City of Edinburgh Council's *Museums*

and Galleries Division and the *Workers' Educational Association*, with the

cooperation of a number of community organizations.[49] This is the first of four

chapters in which I utilize the discursive approach proposed in **Chapter 2** and

developed in **Chapter 3**. The analysis was conducted primarily to test the various

analytical techniques discussed in the preceding chapters, but also to provide an

historical data source which is connected to my primary research location, and which

enables a degree of methodological triangulation and accountability for the resulting

conclusions. What follows are sections which: contextualize the PEP; outline seven

groups of discourses discerned within the material; detail one grouping in-depth;

discuss one transcribed interview extract in-depth; and discuss these discourses in

relation to the methods, assumptions and intentions of the PEP. Each of these groups

of discourses acts as a discursive thread connecting the PEP to the contemporary

Southside, with some important developments that shall be discussed in **Chapter 7.**

The reader will notice that 'non-religion' is largely absent throughout this chapter; this

has not gone unnoticed, and shall be addressed in the conclusion.

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[49] Access to the transcripts was arranged through Denise Brace and, latterly, Gillian Findlay, at the
Museum of Edinburgh, part of City of Edinburgh Council Museums and Galleries Service.

4.2   Contextualising the PEP

The PEP was born out of a desire for Edinburgh's *People's Story Museum* to more fully 'reflect the life of all the people in the multi-cultural city of Edinburgh' (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 3). With this desire in mind, a two year project was undertaken which aimed 'to promote understanding between the peoples of Edinburgh and celebrate the richness of multi-cultural society' by collecting reminiscences from, and developing an exhibition concerning, 'as wide a range of community groups as possible', most of whom had migrated to Edinburgh at some point in the recent past (1996, 3). The project resulted in a number of outcomes, which included an exhibition which ran at the *City Art Centre*, permanent additions to the collection of the *People's Story Museum*, a number of community initiatives including resource packs for schools and group sessions, and a substantial publication—Clark, Dick and Fraser (1996)—for public consumption.

The project began with group reminiscence sessions 'with the Chinese Elderly and Residents of Cathay Court Sheltered Housing, NKS Bangladeshi Women's Group, Milan: Senior Welfare Council, Wester Hailes Asian Women's Group, Leith Sikh Women's Group, the Bengali Association, Queen Margaret College and a group of young Chinese Women at the Black Community Development Project, Pilton' (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 8), and continued to include 36 individual interviews.[50] These interviews were conducted mainly by postgraduate students at the University of Edinburgh's School of Scottish Studies, in English and a number of other first languages. The English versions of these transcripts and some of the

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[50] To avoid confusion, as stated in the introduction, the PEP material I received comprised 37 transcripts. A couple of these were transcripts of focus groups, which were in addition to individual interviews, and one of the interview transcripts (330) actually contained three interviews.

reminiscence sessions 'provided the text for the book and exhibition' (9), and the material that I was given access to.

Religion was one of fifteen themes to be explored in the interviews, with the interviewers being given the following mandate:

> 7. Religion
>
> - What is family religion?
>
> - How, where worship/pray?
>
> - Where is place of worship/how often attend?
>
> - Describe festivals, celebrations, ceremonies, customs?
>
> - Where do you obtain items for prayer/shrine at home?
>
> - Day of rest, which day, what do you do?
>
> - How does your religion affect lifestyle of self/family?

Given the broad focus of these interviews (and the nature of interviews in general), occasionally the topic of religion was not raised at all, and in other cases these particular areas were not strictly focused upon. The exhibition itself began with a section focusing on journeying—where the people of Edinburgh had come from—before turning to sections on 'ways in which people keep their culture through dress and jewellery, language, food, music, dance and entertainment, cultural organizations and religion' (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 16) and, finally, 'adaptation and integration'. Religion also features prominently in the published book, with a section entitled 'keeping the faith' running for 15 of the 66 pages, making up the majority of the central 'keeping the culture' section where 'religion' is declared to be 'part of everyday life. People keep their culture through religious observations and festivals' (Clark, Dick, and Fraser 1996, 27).

In general, the PEP was pronounced a resounding success and, in the words of Edinburgh's then Lord Provost, provided an 'opportunity for all of Edinburgh's

people to share and learn from each other. This initiative [...] enhance[s] our knowledge of one another and it represents an important step towards eliminating ignorance and prejudice' (Clark, Dick, and Fraser 1996, 4). It was decided by stakeholders that, although discussion of racism and other 'obstacles and barriers' to integration should not be ignored, 'any treatment [of these] should not detract from the exhibition's main message of celebration (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 10). Although the PEP shall be discussed further below, this brief overview suffices to provide a flavour of the context from which the texts utilized in this pilot analysis emerged.

4.3   Seven Prevalent Discursive Groups in the PEP

Discussion now turns to the seven most prevalent groups of discourses in the PEP: *Religion and Containment*, *Meaningfulness of Practice*, *Embodiment of Religion*, *Religion and Family*, *Religion as Traditional*, *Religion as Oppressor,* and *Religion and Community*. These discourses emerged when the PEP transcripts were analyzed using the approach outlined in the previous chapter, i.e. a process of close reading, open coding, and discourse analysis. The groups are discussed in no particular order and, with the exception of the discourses on *Religion as Traditional* (which are discussed in depth later in the chapter), are presented in summary form (as they shall be explicated more fully in the chapters that follow). The interview transcripts in the PEP were numbered consecutively from 309-344,[51] and numbers in parentheses

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[51] The City of Edinburgh council archive is numbered sequentially. Other transcripts are in the archive from projects which preceded the PEP. Although I was permitted to view and analyse all transcripts, I was bound by the initial permissions for re-use given by the interviewees and, as such, cannot quote directly from certain transcripts. Where more than one transcript is referenced, I place the reference in footnotes for ease of reading.

indicate transcripts that are being quoted or are explicitly related to the points being made.

4.3.1 Religion and Containment

The discourses on *Religion and Containment* **construct religion as a social, moral, and intellectual context, extending through time and space, providing boundaries for contextually relevant social action.** Religion is viewed as something which one is trained into (311); something within which one is 'brought up', and within which one is expected to bring up one's children,[52] affecting every aspect of your lifestyle (312).

The metaphor of 'a way of life' was frequently invoked in these discourses, with regular attendance at communal worship, schooling (312), dietary practices (336) and, even more broadly, the perceived atmosphere of the 'nation' and its citizens (337) being implicated. The participants' use of this metaphor extended to wider notions of 'journey',[53] with religion 'sending',[54] 'recruiting' (311), and 'marching' (312), constraining movement, fostering growth, and literally moving objects and individuals through time, social contexts, and around the globe. The all-encompassing container that guides, constrains, enables, and provides the map[55] for this journey was frequently spoken of, by interviewers and interviewees, in terms of 'community', whether a specifically 'religious' community, or a national, ethnic, or familial community conferred with a homogeneous 'religious' identity.[56] These communities provide a basis for moral instruction and policing. They are the justifiers of actions,

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[52] 312, 315 and 337.

[53] Where 'journey' should be understood as movement within a path determined by the container, rather than total freedom (much as the main character in the cult film *Donnie Darko* (2002) at one point can see the predetermined paths set out before people he encounters).

[54] 311, 312 and 337.

[55] See Tweed (2008) for more on these metaphors.

[56] See discourses on *Religion and Community* (below)—for relevant examples.

the protectors from harm, and the facilitators of celebration. When those interviewed attributed religion to a community it had the effect of extending the boundaries of the idealized community beyond physical spaces to include global and historical communities. However, this attribution can also have the opposite effect. Interviewees attested to the narrow identification of particular 'communities' with particular 'religions' *by others* leading to alienation for communities in diaspora, or the subsequent abandonment of religion by individuals who had previously identified as 'religious' in their place of origin. This is exemplified clearly in the narrative of one Sikh couple who moved from the north of England to Edinburgh, and were dismayed to find themselves initially lonely and disconnected from the Sikh community in Edinburgh (336).

Furthermore, discourses that perpetuate the assumption that a single 'religious' identifier will be accompanied by other social similarities are challenged by incompatibilities and differences in 'culture' or 'tradition' in different contexts. This is rooted in a problematic tendency for interviewers and interviewees to impart significance to religion as *the* dominant container for social interaction. Participants tended to impart 'religion' with greater significance than other potential containers, and also to construct it as singular (i.e. one cannot move within more than one 'religious' container at a time), and homogeneous (i.e. for the container to have any meaning as a dominant container it must be assumed to maintain the same characteristics for all individuals and communities across the globe). Statements which downplay the significance of religion, or those which relativize it amongst other potential identifications, perpetuate this discourse on 'religion' as an all-encompassing container through negating it.

4.3.2 Meaningfulness of Practice

Throughout the PEP there is significant emphasis placed upon practices which are deemed to be connected with 'religion'. Put simply, these discourses **construct 'religious practice' as relevant yet relatively benign social action, providing tangible instantiations of 'religious' identifications and 'religiosity'.**

To begin with, those involved in the PEP appear to move within a world in which it is normal, and indeed expected, for identification with a 'religious' signifier to be directly connected to some form of practice. *Having* religion means *doing* something with it. This conflation is made particularly in the manner in which interviewers steer conversations. For example, following one interviewee's declaration that they were a Muslim, the interviewer immediately turned to asking whether 'there was a mosque in the village' (336). In another interview, the questions 'What about religion? [...] Were you able to maintain your Puja habits?' (328C) followed directly one after the other. Perhaps unsurprisingly this dominant discourse is challenged by the experiences of *some* interviewees. Some suggested that 'religious' practices need not be indicative of 'religious' identification—e.g. one interviewee participated in Buddhist practices because their mother identified as a Buddhist (320)—while others suggested that identification need not imply practice— e.g. I'm 'a Christian [but...] just in inverted commas because I never went to Church since I was twelve.' (338) However, these experiences are generally presented as challenges to or endorsements of the dominant correlation between 'religious' identification and 'religious' practices.

There is some ambiguity surrounding whether or not engagement in 'religious' practices is construed as 'unreflective'/'insincere' action, or as symptomatic of 'inner states' of 'religiosity'. On the one hand, interviewees frequently alluded to ritual

practices being performed without the accompaniment of appropriate inner states, such as the difference between 'knowing' the Qur'an and mere repetition (326), or the accusation that individuals were 'more interested in eating the sweets at the end of the day's puja' (328). On the other, a model is constructed of practices as performances of 'religiosity', with greater levels of practice being conflated with greater 'religiosity'. For example, one interviewee states: 'Then I wasn't so religious. I never used to pray regularly. [...] So now I pray regularly. I think I am more religious now.' (317) These two models of the relationship between 'practice' and 'inner states' are held together by two complementary discourses. First of all, an underlying assumption is that if you are 'religious' this will be demonstrated physically through specific practices. And secondly, while practice *may not always* be associated with appropriate 'inner states', it ideally *should* be. In other words, where individuals acknowledge that people (including themselves) may engage in practices 'insincerely', this is presented against a dominant model where 'religious' practices are supposed to be accompanied by appropriate beliefs, inner states, sincerity etc.

Although this model of practice as providing tangible instantiations of 'religious identification' and 'religiosity' may not seem particularly surprising, the manner in which it is deployed throughout the PEP suggests that a more nuanced discourse is in play. Although this will be explored in more detail below, it is clear from the interviews that practices were considered both a 'safe' and an 'interesting' avenue of exploration. Interviewers generally steered conversations away from 'belief', 'meaning', or 'morality', preferring to dwell upon the curious physical manifestations of these potentially more contentious aspects associated with religion.[57] The practices which are spoken of are constructed as relatively benign and

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[57] Indeed, as we shall see in **Chapter 7**, these seem to be precisely the topics that will most likely prompt actors to adopt a 'non-religious' subject position.

uncontentious, with church services and dietary practices rather than 'indoctrination', 'speaking in tongues', or 'genital mutilation' being the order of the day. These observations combine to suggest that participants in the PEP, including the interviewers, were operating with a dominant discourse on religious practice as an interesting, safe, and reliable marker for 'religion' more broadly.

4.3.3 Embodiment of Religion

The discourses on the *Embodiment of Religion* **construct 'religion' as something which is not merely internalized, but something pervasive, something which one *is* and which is lived out viscerally and emotionally in bodily acts.**

Perhaps due to the PEP's focus upon the visual and the ritual, frequent reference is made to the body as a site where religion is made manifest. Externally, this is generally spoken of in terms of 'religious' food practices and clothing. For example, one lady explained that she wore a 'Western' wedding dress at her wedding in China because the wedding was held in a church (314), illustrating a perceived connection between particular 'religious' buildings, and particular clothing. In another interview, a Sikh couple made a normative connection between Sikhs and the wearing of the turban, and emphasized the importance of community meetings at the Gurdwara where shared meals occur (316), while the perceived obligation for Muslim women to dress in particular ways was also mentioned.[58] On a more holistic level, participants spoke of religion as something which is experienced (312), something which you 'are' and which takes on a particular 'form' (317), as something which demands 'purity of the body'.[59]

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[58] 317 and 341.
[59] 328 and 341.

In these discourses, religion is a regulator of behaviour. It can affect one's living arrangements (341), the manner in which one can get married (315), the length of one's working week (320), and even restrict and influence the behaviour of non-adherents to the locally dominant religion (338). Religion provides a framework within which one's visible actions are judged by the community,[60] and punishment for 'wrong' deeds: 'Don't forget the religion, don't forget God. You'll be punished for bad things.' (317) These discourses also encompass the association between religion and 'emotion'. Although the interviewers did not ask about feelings or meanings, interviewees spoke of experiences varying from the overriding happiness of Eid celebrations (341), through 'embarrassment' (328), loneliness[61] and 'upset' (317) being caused by perceived differences to the prevailing 'religious' culture, to grandmothers crying for the whole day due to the 'religious' mismatch of family marriages (312).

This group of discourses clearly speaks to the other groupings discerned within the PEP—particularly those just discussed, on *Religion and Containment* and the *Meaningfulness of Practice*—however, its discourses construct a more explicitly experiential 'religion' by locating it intimately within the embodied individual.

4.3.4 Religion and Family

Another group of discourses which flows throughout the PEP centres on *Religion and Family*. These discourses **invest the 'religion' of family members with relevance and importance, assume homogeneity in family members' 'religious' identifications, and are characterized by a focus upon parents as source, transmitter, and authority in matters 'religious'.** At their most basic, these

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[60] 326, 336 and 341.
[61] 336 and 341.

discourses are evident in the manner in which narratives are negotiated throughout the interviews.[62] Interviewers frequently probed declarative statements of 'religious' identification with 'Are all your family members [X]?' (317),[63] or with queries about whether this identification had been passed on to the interviewee's children.[64] Interviewees also freely proffered this information[65] as part of their personal 'religious' narrative. This gravitating of conversation towards family suggests an underlying discourse on its relevance and importance in relation to religion. However, this is far from the full picture.

Throughout the PEP, a view frequently encountered was that it is normal and expected for 'religion' to be inherited from parents.[66] Even if this religion is subsequently abandoned, or ceases to be of much importance, it can still remain part of one's identity (312); 'I'm a Christian [but...] I never went to Church since I was twelve' (338). This discourse on inheritance is reflected in the importance placed upon the religion of children, whether articulated by children, parents, or interviewers. In some cases, it is clear that parents see themselves as living 'religiously' through their children and simultaneously being judged for their children's 'religious' conduct.[67] In the case of one 'Jewish' lady, her grandchildren were cause for great celebration because they had both married Jews, and apparently maintained some form of Jewish culture (330). Children spoke of parents' wishes influencing their own ritual, social and marital practices,[68] with this influence sometimes lasting well into adulthood (338). However, there are also allusions to the ineffectiveness of this transmission,

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[62] Acknowledging, of course, that the interviews' life-history nature has encouraged and legitimated family-oriented stories, thereby increasing the likelihood that family will be discussed when conversation turns to religion.

[63] Also 312, 314, 316, 336 and 337.

[64] 317, 320 and 337.

[65] 314, 326 and 330.

[66] 312, 315, 317, 320, 330, 331, 337 and 338.

[67] 312, 317, 326 and 341.

[68] 311, 312, 315, 316, 317, 320 and 328.

with one man claiming that although he and his siblings were 'very religious' as children, due to their mother's agency, he is now no longer a 'believer' (314).

Finally, and perhaps unsurprisingly, given the assumed normativity of the inheritance or transmission of religion between parents and children, an accompanying discourse perpetuated a model of 'religious' homogeneity across the family. Interviewers ask 'What was the religion of your family?' (316) or 'Are you both Sikhs?' (336), and interviewees confidently declare that their family 'are all Muslim' (317) or guess that their grandmother's marriage ceremony would have been in a Catholic church with all the trimmings (312).

4.3.5 Religion as Traditional

The discourses on *Religion as Traditional* concern the perceived place of 'religion' in contemporary society. This group is composed of **two opposing yet symbiotic discursive strands which construct 'religion' as (a) a vibrant and normative aspect of individual and societal 'identity' and practice, and (b) as a phenomenon which is in decline, both in terms of numbers of 'adherents', and relative importance to those remaining 'religious' adherents and societies**. Each strand operates with a conception of religion as 'traditional'. In the first, this is a 'tradition' which connects individuals and groups to the past and to their 'identity' going forward into the future. In the second, this is one which is no longer dominant, which is not modern, and is therefore dying.[69]

Turning to the first of these strands, particular instantiations vary in terms of scope and level of application. Some interviewees unhesitatingly ascribe *particular* 'religious identities' to all members of their ethnic or national

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[69] See in-depth discussion below, particularly on 'detraditionalization' (Heelas 1996b) and the 'post-traditional' (Giddens 1994).

'community/communities', while others construct the normativity of religious identification in these communities *in general*, with one man dividing the Sudanese population into 'Mohammad believers' and 'non-Mohammad believers', stating that 'non-Mohammad believers [...] just means Christian' (338). Interviewers ask 'What was your religion?' (337)—or variations on that theme—presupposing a substantive answer and implicitly discouraging responses which might counter this narrative. Others simply assume that the interviewee identifies with a 'religion' without any previous indication: 'Is [your wife] of your faith too?' (338). Concerning 'religious practice' (see above), we see dietary practices (317) or attendance at weekly rituals (331) unproblematically ascribed to the whole 'community', conflations being made between 'Scottish weddings' and 'Church weddings' (326), and interviewers seemingly struggling to grasp what someone who claims no religion might do with their time, i.e. viewing church-going as the norm (320). Some interviewees even paint a picture of what could be described as 'reverse secularization', with 'religious' life in Edinburgh becoming easier for Muslims (341) and Sikhs (331) as their communities grow, and 'religious' identifications 'only now' becoming more important (and problematic) for community relations (316). Each of these particular assumptions, conflations, and identifications, portrays religion as something which is 'traditional', pervasive, normal, and potentially banal but also (increasingly) important for social life.

The second strand contains discourses that portray religion in decline and bears striking resemblance to academic discourses of secularization. Occasionally this portrayal is made explicitly, with interviewees appealing to specific tropes such as the 'Sixties' which were 'much freer' than the preceding decades, meaning that the 'religious' had to accept that things were changing (312), or conflating increasing

urbanization with decreasing levels of belief (340). Implicitly, both interviewers and interviewees seem to construct a picture where even the societally dominant religion is no longer practiced by most in the society (317), where specific and concerted efforts need to be undertaken to prevent 'religious' decline and ensure its transmission to children (331), and where looking to the past gives one a higher chance of encountering religion.[70] In this model, religion cedes dominance to other aspects of social life—'It is the [sic] question of time: are you available twice a day to go through the rituals?' (328)—and one interviewee saw it as sufficiently remarkable that 'the Gurudawaras' in the UK *still* provide meals for anyone who attends (i.e. it is remarkable that this 'tradition' is still maintained *even in the 'secular' UK*). Each of these particular tropes, conflations, and reductions portray religion as something which is 'traditional', embattled, declining, compartmentalized, and potentially incompatible with 'modern' social life.

4.3.6 Religion as Oppressor

The discourses on *Religion as Oppressor* **implicate 'religion' in hierarchies and power relationships, particularly those between parents and children, husbands and wives, and institutions and the individual.**

One of these hierarchies concerns the model of male dominance which was invoked and legitimated implicitly and explicitly by interviewers and interviewees, male and female, throughout the PEP, and remained unchallenged on each appearance. Women find themselves discursively placed in caring or serving roles, being 'married off' (341), and being charged with mundane, day-to-day household

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[70] 314, 317 and 337.

rituals (328). Men are constructed as social and historical actors,[71] while women can be notably absent from community histories (316), and considered responsible for men's actions upon them (317). One man claimed that, had his wife not been of the same 'religion', she 'probably would have had to accept my religion anyway because I would have insisted on that not the other way around' (315), while one woman poignantly stated that 'the ['Muslim'] culture is always kind of strict towards the woman' (341). These particular instances share much in common with the discourses on *Religion and Family* (discussed above), and with broader notions of religion and imposition. 'Catholicism' is a significant discursive object in many statements exemplifying such notions, with children being 'sent' to 'Catholic' schools (315), while their religiosity is 'seen to' (314) by the 'strictness' (312) of their parents. One Muslim mother laments that her children only practise their 'religion' because they are *told* to (317), while another feels responsibility for, and attempts to impose upon, the 'religious' conduct of her husband and children (326).

In each of these instances, the oppression with which religion was connected was of a particularly personal nature, i.e. affecting the relationships between individuals or small groups. This is not to say that larger-scale conversations did not take place; for example, one interviewee clearly viewed the connection between religion and generic hegemonic power as being of utmost importance, stating that he 'tended to see it how Marx saw it', that 'religion is like politics, exercised by individuals' (338). However, for the most part the oppression with which religion was connected was of a much smaller scale, and this can be explained in part by the general thrust of the interviews, which tended to avoid becoming drawn towards the 'bigger picture'. The majority of these conversations took place within a 'religious'

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[71] 317 and 331.

framework and, as such, religion was not generally constructed as an oppressor. Indeed, where religion accompanies major life events, celebrations, and positive emotions, this would appear to challenge the oppression model. However, oppression and imposition—particularly between genders and within families—were a major feature of the religion-related discourse of the PEP, whether religion itself was acting as the oppressor, or merely providing a framework within which oppression was taken to occur.

4.3.7 Religion and Community

In the discourses on *Religion and Community*, **religion becomes a marker whereby a particular (minority) in-group demarcates contextually relevant boundaries for group membership, assuming global group homogeneity, and with particular instances invoking connections with ideas of 'nation', 'ethnicity', 'non-Western', 'non-Christian', and 'non-secular'.** Superficially, this may appear to replicate the discourses grouped under *Religion and Containment*. However, as I make clear below, the discourses on *Religion and Community* concern the logics surrounding boundaries. These do, of course, also surround containers—the relevant in-group—but it is the boundaries that are the focus here, rather than the space within the container.

At their most basic, these discourses surface in demarcations of in-groups and out-groups. Generally this demarcation occurred in a seemingly unconscious manner, with interviewers asking questions such as 'How old were you when you first went to school?', and the response quickly jumping from personal practice to the practice of the group: 'I was so small. We had religious school where we had religious studies' (317). Such 'slippage' from the individual to the group makes sense when we consider the purpose of the PEP (discussed in detail below). These individuals knew that they

were being interviewed as representatives of particular minority 'communities', and thus a tendency to generalize from one's own experiences to those of the particular 'community' could be expected. Further, these boundaries were also drawn explicitly, with the same interviewee continuing to state 'we celebrate Eid [...] [j]ust like you celebrate Christmas', setting up a boundary between the 'Muslim' in-group, and the Western-Christian-Secular out-group of the interviewer. Other interviewees constructed in-group/out-group dichotomies as wide-ranging as idealized Sikhs/Edinburgh Sikhs (336), halal eaters/'white people' (341), and Catholics/non-Catholics,[72] while interviewers foregrounded boundaries between 'Scotland and England' and 'Muslim countries' (337), or queried whether there was any negative reaction when marrying someone of 'a different race, a different colour' (338).

As intimated above, these acts of drawing 'religious' boundaries often coincided with the demarcation of boundaries along national or ethnic lines.[73] For example, a Polish interviewee introduced (unprompted) the 'Polish Church' as an indicator of the size of the Polish community (322). An interviewer made a similar conflation, by first asking whether all members of the Chinese Elderly Association were members of the True Jesus Church, before backpedalling, stating 'I don't want to blanket everybody from Ap Chau [...] as from the True Jesus Church' (340). 'Religious' boundaries were also reinforced by ascribing global homogeneity—generally in terms of (idealized) practice—to those individuals and communities who share a particular identification. Where internal diversity was noted, it was either celebrated as a homogenizing characteristic of that group—for example, in the presentation of a worldwide Jewish community engaged in vibrant insider discourse

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[72] 312 and 322.

[73] 312, 317, 320, 322, 326, 337, 338, 340 and 341. See Baumann (1996), Day (2011), and Stringer (2013a) for particularly poignant examples of this connection.

on reasons, traditions, meanings, and the very category 'Jew' itself (330)—or noted as a disappointing digression from the norm, as was apparently the case with Edinburgh's Sikh community (336), and the 'Islam' experienced in Pakistan by a Muslim woman from Uganda (317). This homogenization had the effect of placing these 'minority communities' (in the context of the PEP) within a global community, drawing boundaries which extend beyond the physical location, subverting the apparent power structure through the exclusion of contextually dominant groups.

Given the diasporic nature of these 'communities', and interviewer assumptions concerning minorities being torn between two cultures (see discussion below), boundaries were often drawn between a geographically (and chronologically) distant context labelled 'home' and the 'alien' context of Edinburgh (or the UK generally). Many interviewees found that living in Edinburgh made it difficult to maintain their 'religion' in their preferred manner, whether due to their minority status meaning that they have less cultural capital at their disposal,[74] or to secularizing influences from surrounding society.[75] However, the discourses on *Religion and Community* were pragmatically deployed to demarcate and police boundaries, and to maintain connections to real or constructed communities across the globe and across time, which enabled interviewees to create a sense of 'home' even where they might feel far from it.

In the following two sections I examine the material from the PEP in greater depth by focusing on (a) a single discourse group (the discourses on *Religion as Traditional*) and relating it to wider analysis of contemporary religion-related discourses in literature about the UK; and, (b) a single transcript (341), showing how the various

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[74] 316, 320, 326, 331, 336, 337 and 341.
[75] 317, 328 and 341.

discourses discussed above are entwined and elaborated by 'Fatima' (pseudonym) and her interviewer. My reasoning for discussing a single discourse group in such detail at this stage is, first, to expose the substance and texture to be found in a discursive sample and the methods I used to identify and analyze discourses, and, second, to provide reassurance that the other discourse groups are grounded in similarly detailed work. The other groups will be presented more fully in **Chapters 5–7** in relation to the contemporary Southside.

4.4   The Discourses on Religion as Traditional

Towards the end of her introduction to *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, Linda Woodhead highlights some 'conflicts and contradictions' which abound in contemporary discourse on 'religion' in the UK. She describes a situation after the 1980s where there was no social formation or ideology powerful enough to suppress dissident voices, and suggests that this helps explain

> …why Britain can be religious and secular; why we think of religion in terms of the Vicar of Dibley [...] and Muslim terrorists; why the majority of the population call themselves Christian but are hostile or indifferent to many aspects of religion; why governments embrace 'faith' but are suspicious of 'religion'; why public debate swings between 'multiculturalism' and 'integration'; why religion is viewed as both radical and conservative; why we build multi-faith spaces [...] but can no longer speak of God in public. (2012a, 26)

This 'multi-layered, sedimented situation' (2012a, 26) is frequently attested to in related contemporary discourses—political, journalistic, inter-personal, academic etc—including in the discourses on *Religion as Traditional* identified in the PEP.

As stated previously, these discourses consist of two interrelated strands *which construct 'religion' as (a) a vibrant and normative aspect of individual and societal 'identity' and practice, and (b) as a phenomenon which is in decline, both in terms of*

numbers of 'adherents', and relative importance to those remaining 'religious'
adherents and societies. In the following discussion, I aim to situate the discourses on
Religion as Traditional within a broader social and academic context that will be
developed in the chapters to follow with data from the contemporary Southside. In
doing so, I shall take each strand in turn, before relating this discussion to concepts of
'tradition', 'detraditionalization', and 'retraditionalization', in order to argue for the
internal coherence of this discourse grouping.

It goes without saying that many scholars have advanced arguments which can
be invoked to support both strands of this discourse.[76] However, my focus in the
following shall be upon instances of this discourse at play 'on the ground', and
scholarly reflections on such instances, rather than upon this discourse within the
academic study of religion itself.

4.4.1 Religion as Vibrant and Normative

Within this strand, religion is constructed as a vibrant and normative aspect of
individual and societal identity and practice on a number of different levels. At its
most encompassing, 'religion' can be portrayed as something possessed by most if not
all individuals and societies. In politics, for example, from the early sixteenth century
onwards religion has been protected as a 'classical human right' (McGoldrick 2006,
23), and the contemporary Charter of the United Nations enshrines 'religion' as 'a part
of the "secular" political apparatus' such that it 'cannot therefore be ignored as a
classificatory politic in UN studies and international global governance' (Carrette and
Trigeaud 2013, 10). In social research, one need only glance at the categories

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[76] For example: Strand A—Grace Davie's 'believing without belonging' (1994) and 'vicarious
religion'(2007), Peter Berger's 'desecularization' (1999), or Edward Bailey's 'implicit religion'
(1998); Strand B—Callum Brown's 'death of Christian Britain' (2000) or Steve Bruce's passionate
defence of secularization theory (2011).

employed by major studies such as the *World Values Survey,*[77] the *International Social Survey Programme,*[78] or more recently the UK decennial census (cf. Day 2011), to see how 'religion' is viewed as a key component of contemporary society. A similar situation is evidenced for the past by surveying the contents pages of history books, from, for example, the popular *Dorling Kindersley* introductions to the Aztecs (Baquedano 2011), Ancient Egypt (Hart 2011), or China (Regan 2008), to higher-level academic histories of Scotland (e.g. Griffiths and Morton 2010; Dickson and Treble 1992; M. Lynch 2001). However, as I discuss below, this construction of religious normativity also occurs in more modest, yet no less powerful, forms.

Turning to the UK context, the political system, and the more 'right-wing' forms of media discourse surrounding it, tend to reify a connection between 'British-ness' on the one hand, and religion in general—and 'Christianity' in particular—on the other.[79] For example, concerning 'religion' in general, Singh and Cowden (2014, 134) blame a preoccupation with religious and cultural identities in talk of 'integration' in the echelons of British politics for nurturing and maintaining the power of 'organized religion' in Northern Ireland. Tariq Modood has suggested that Singh and Cowden's critique may be due to their being 'radical secularists', a designation aimed at a dominant strand in British politics which 'uniquely problematizes religion' over other social phenomena (Modood 2014a, 136). In different surroundings, Norman Bonney has argued that although *Time for Reflection*[80] in the Scottish Parliament is 'meant to reflect the balance and diversity of belief in Scotland', in practice this 'tends to be biased towards [...religious] rather than

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[77] http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/ (Accessed 24 August 2016).

[78] http://www.issp.org/index.php (Accessed 24 August 2016).

[79] For more on this, see **Chapter 5***'s* discussion of the discourses on *Power* and *Civic Space* in the contemporary Southside.

[80] See http://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/equaltimeforreflection (Accessed 18 August 2016).

secular, atheistic and humanistic beliefs' (2012, 13). And further, in a rejoinder to Evan Harris MP concerning the exemption of 'religious' groups from key elements of human rights legislation, Jack Straw—then 'Leader of the House'—declared that Harris's position 'is not the position of the vast majority of this country, 70 per cent of whom declared themselves to be Christian in the 2001 census, and there are many who subscribe to other religions' (Hansard, 25 January 2007, quoted in Day 2013, 66).

Whilst this final example clearly perpetuates the view that the majority of Britons are religious generally, it also reinforces a common connection between the UK and Christianity. This conflation is a 'dominant and popular' trope in the 'right-wing' press in the UK, which constructs Britain 'first and foremost as Christian' while recognising 'increasing diversity' and opposing 'secularism' (Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 174). In news stories, we see these ideas explicitly promoted in then Prime Minister David Cameron's comments that the UK should be 'more confident about our status as a Christian country' (BBC News Online 2014b), and implicitly in Tristram Hunt's (then Shadow Education Secretary, Labour Party) opposition to 'divisive religious extremism' (i.e. Islamic influences) in school governorship (BBC News Online 2014a). Such comments have clear connections with anxieties about the UK's national and ethnic 'identity' which have been discussed extensively in Abby Day's work (2011, 182–87). This connection between particular ethnicities and particular religions is one which is made for a variety of reasons (see MacKay 2000), and can be seen in Baumann's (1996) study of the people of Southall in London, or more recently in Gellner and Hausner's (2013) research among Nepalis in the UK.

Each of these instances evokes notions of 'religion' as 'tradition' (discussed below)—'Was it a traditional type of wedding you had or was it a small ceremony?' (338)—and act in almost complete inversion of the notion of 'traditional' evoked in

the second strand. In some cases this is 'tradition' in a generic, normative, 'this is the way things have always been' sense, and in others it is more possessive, marking boundaries between what is 'ours' and what is 'theirs' or 'yours'.

4.4.2 Religion as Declining and Irrelevant

As was seen in the discussion of the first strand above, the discourses in this one construct religion as a declining and increasingly irrelevant and unimportant phenomenon. This construction is invoked on a number of different levels, by a variety of constituencies, and in manifestations which often speak directly to the first strand.

Quite apart from 'academic' discourse on 'secularization', one does not have to look very far to find a narrative of 'decline' from sources both within and outside 'religious' institutions. David Goodhew's recent edited volume, *Church Growth in Britain* (2012), testifies to and legitimates both strands by aiming to present 'a forceful critique of the notion of secularization', and offer 'churches, church leaders, and theologians the intellectual space in which they could [...] let go of the eschatology of decline that the secularization thesis has instilled and replace it with an alternative eschatology' (Goodhew 2012, 21). This 'eschatology of decline' has become internalized by many, be they Catholic priests aiming to reinvent the Church by 'grow[ing] up and mov[ing] away from' an 'inauthentic' past 'characterized by secrecy, dishonesty and alienation' (Orsi 2005, 152–53), bestselling 'public theologians' writing on 'the end of church' (Bass 2013), or whole movements such as the 'Emerging Church' (Marti and Ganiel 2014). Unsurprisingly, this narrative is also evident in the pronouncements of contemporary 'New Atheists' (Borer 2010), as well as occupying a prime place for professionals and members of the public who prefer

the language of 'spirituality' to 'religion' (see, for example, Heelas et al. 2005; Sutcliffe 2003; G. Lynch 2007).

Returning to Knott, Poole and Taira's analysis of the UK press, the 'right-wing' media's predominant exemplification of the first strand is entangled with an anxiety about 'the crisis of the Christian nation and the marginalization of Christianity' (2013, 35). Concurrently, the 'left-wing' press tend to cast Britain 'as secular and plural, with an accompanying discourse of Christian decline and irrelevance' (2013, 174): 'With every passing decade Britain becomes more secular. Any topic is acceptable in polite conversation except religion' (Anita Rani, of the BBC's *The One Show*, in Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 57). Similar narratives are evident in the world of (stand-up) comedy, which can be seen as a useful barometer for discourses among a dominant 'left-leaning' constituency in contemporary Britain (cf. McKearney 2011; Cotter, Aechtner, and Quack 2012). For example, in an episode of popular satirical podcast *The Bugle*, John Oliver characterized David Cameron's comments concerning Britain's 'Christian' status (see above) as pushing 'the God button, while playing the Christian card and simultaneously taking a double shot of Jesus Juice', before co-host Andy Zaltzman critiqued the relevance of Jesus' teachings for contemporary parenting by postulating 'the Parable of the Kid who spent Six Hours a Day using Social Media' and 'the Miracle of the Broken Skateboard and the Tantrum' (Oliver and Zaltzman 2014).

Each of these instances evokes notions of religion as 'traditional' (discussed below) in a sense which is dying, backward-looking, and incompatible with modernity and the secular nation state. As one participant suggested, for second or third generation immigrants, 'religion' is bound to become watered down due to competing societal influences (312). They act in almost complete inversion of the notion of

'tradition' invoked in the first strand. Discussion will now turn to the concept of 'tradition(al)', and the compatibility of these two discursive strands.

4.4.3 Tradition, Detraditionalization, Retraditionalization

> Tradition, as it were, is the glue that holds premodern social orders together [...] Repetition means time—some would say that it *is* time—and tradition is somehow involved with the control of time. Tradition, it might be said, is an orientation to the past, such that the past has a heavy influence, or more accurately put, is made to have a heavy influence over the present. (Giddens 1994, 62)

In this quotation, Anthony Giddens eloquently summarizes what could be rhetorically labelled as a 'traditional' understanding of 'tradition', with an individual's actions in the present being influenced by established norms within their 'community'. Although clearly dominated by what has gone before, Giddens is keen to emphasize that 'tradition is also about the future, since established practices are used as a way for organising future time' (1994, 62). With this understanding in mind, Giddens goes on to advance an argument for describing 'Western' societies as 'post-traditional', having undergone a process that Paul Heelas terms 'detraditionalization' (1996b).

For Heelas, 'detraditionalization' is a 'shift of authority from "without" to "within"' (1996b, 2; cited in Ward 2013, 121), and in terms of religion, 'detraditionalized people want detraditionalized religion: a "religion" which is (apparently) more constructed than given...' (Heelas 1996a, 172; cited in Ward 2013, 121). This 'detraditionalization' model fits into wider discourse surrounding 'individualization' (Kirby 2008, 4) and 'is widely shared among moderns and indeed is a constitutive feature of modernity as this is normally defined' (Orsi 2005, 155). However, 'detraditionalization' is far from the full picture. 'Post-traditional' society, so the argument goes, has undergone a process of 'retraditionalization' where traditional norms can be chosen, adopted and defended not as 'something taken for

granted', but as 'traditions [which] must be justified in public discourse 'as exemplars of 'cultural heritage' and 'cultural diversity' (Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 35; cf. Giddens 1994; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994, 12; Kirby 2008). Therefore, in this model

> The need to justify a single religious tradition or to live with competing non-privileged others does not mean that tradition-based discourses have vanished, but rather that they have to be voiced and debated publicly. (Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 35–36)

Relating this model of tradition back to the two strands of the discourses on *Religion as Traditional* evidenced in the PEP, it is clear that they operate within a coherent 'post-traditional' model. Both strands may potentially contain a conception of tradition that Giddens would term 'premodern', yet each operates within a detraditionalized framework, rejecting the taken for granted maintenance of irrelevant tradition. Whereas the first strand might be invoked to justify religious traditions—or religion in general—in public discourse, or to demarcate meaningful boundaries for ethnic or national identities, the second might be invoked to (implicitly) justify alternative, 'secular' traditions, simultaneously placing religion (contextually understood) in opposition to an equally contextual construction of modernity. Here we have a discursive framework which can incorporate Linda Woodhead's 'conflicts and contradictions' with which I began this section. We see such conflicts and contradictions in the narrative of one Ugandan 'Muslim' interviewee (317) in the PEP, who digressed and spoke about Eid when she was asked about her family praying routines. In the process, she places her interviewer in a context where celebrating Christmas is normative, *traditional*, and analogous: 'you know we have got Eid celebration, that's after fasting for a month we celebrate Eid. Just like you celebrate Christmas.' Later on in the interview, however, she was asked about how her children

(in Edinburgh) 'keep the culture in their clothes' and responded by talking about how

the purpose of clothing restrictions is

> to keep the nation good and clean. But the children they don't listen, how can they listen
> when they in society there is? You can't keep them tight in the house, we are just here to
> give them instructions.

Here we have a second, symbiotic discourse on religion as traditional being deployed:

not only is this interviewee lamenting that her children are not embracing the

traditions she is trying to impart, but she is constructing an Edinburgh context that is

quite antithetical to such traditions. Such fluctuation between strands of the discourses

on *Religion as Traditional* demonstrates that they can be employed by the same

individuals and communities in two distinct-yet-interrelated ways, depending on the

identifications of the interlocutors involved, and which model of 'tradition' will serve

to best advance their goals.

Discussion now turns to a particular interview transcript from the PEP in order to

provide an example of the contextual interplay of all seven discourses.

4.5   In-Depth Example: An Interview with Fatima

In order to provide a tangible illustration of these discourses at work, the following

discussion focuses upon a five-page extract from an interview between Fatima and a

female interviewer in February 1996. Fatima was 31 at the time of the interview, and

had moved from Pakistan to Birmingham when she was 12 years old before making

the move up to Edinburgh some years later. The interview took place at Edinburgh's

Black Community Development Project and the extract, which begins at the start of

the interview, is one of the lengthiest extended sections of 'religion-related' discourse

in the PEP. For ease of discussion I have divided the extract into eight sections and

shall present and consider each sequentially before summarizing some significant

points. Numbers in square brackets indicate the relevant discourse groupings from the

earlier discussion:

1. Religion and Containment

2. The Meaningfulness of Practice

3. The Embodiment of Religion

4. Religion and Family

5. Religion as Traditional

6. Religion as Oppressor

7. Religion and Community

This is an exact replication of the transcript made available to me. Where there are

omissions or errors these took place at the original time of transcription. The interview

begins with the interviewer asking:

> **Int.** Could you tell me a bit about Eid.
>
> **Fatima:** Well normally it takes place at the end of Ramadan. So once the 30 days or 29 days of Ramadan are over, people celebrate the end of Ramadan. And it's a big celebration when people stop work. You know, my sister-in-law, she's got a factory, and she closed the whole factory, and her workers were off work as well.
>
> First thing in the morning everybody gets up. Make sure they have a bath, and they're clean. They dress up; wear nice clothes; have their morning breakfast which is kind of a special semolina they make—I have that in the morning; go to the Mosque, usually half nine in the morning or half ten... they have the prayers at various different time in the morning... So, ladies go separately, women go separate, and the children only go out with the mother or the father.
>
> **Int.** It doesn't matter what sex the child is?
>
> **Fatima**: No. If they're over kind of 12 and they're boys they will normally go with the father, and the young ones stay with the mum—daughters go with the mother. People normally just say a prayer; everybody together—you would normally pray individually at home, but here it's kind of a nice thing to get together. So hundreds of people who get together pray at the Mosque—and afterwards everybody kind of hug each other and say <...> to everyone – just be happy. And once they've said their prayers they either have something to eat, tea or coffee is provided there, at the mosque—if not people would go

home and exchange presents, give money to the children as kind of a gift, if they've not already given them presents.

This first section commences with the interviewer posing a generalized question about 'Eid' in a manner which invests Fatima with the authority to speak for *all* Muslims [7]. Fatima responds accordingly, providing an account of what 'normally' happens 'at the end of Ramadan' and what 'everybody' does [1, 7], while occasionally reinforcing this narrative with personal anecdotes—'my sister-in-law' closes her whole factory; 'I have that [semolina] in the morning' etc. Although it is unclear throughout this section whether she is referring to normal practice in Pakistan, the UK, or globally, Fatima's invocation of the practices at her sister's factory in Pakistan creates an image of Pakistan as a normatively 'Muslim' context, where the routines of 'secular' life are infused with and subordinate to the 'Islamic' ritual cycle [1, 5]. Eid is not described in terms of doctrinal justification or symbolism, but in terms of embodied social practices, routines and positive emotions [2, 3]. However, the all-encompassing nature of Fatima's description [1], the rigidly prescribed and normativized routine [2, 5], the specialness, and the strict gender separation and parental hierarchies [4, 6] imply a day that is infused with 'religious' meaning, and which is perceived by both interlocutors as distinctive from prevalent practices in Edinburgh [7].

The interview then continues to a short discussion of the Islamic lunar calendar:

> **Int.** Is it a particular time of the year—the same time every year?
>
> **Fatima**: No, it depends on the lunar calendar. I think it's the moon—that's what determines when you start. And you actually see the moon on the day of Eid as well—so we did actually seen the moon yesterday—it's kind of crescent shaped – we did see that yesterday, first thing in the morning. Sometimes people don't celebrate Eid if they don't see the moon. So in Pakistan they didn't celebrate it yesterday because they didn't see the moon, so they're celebrating Eid today.
>
> **Int.** Is that why on a lot of Islamic...<signs?> there is the crescent moon?

Fatima: That's right. So during the day, people normally just visit families, eat together, sit and you know, all the kids and the adults have got nice clothes on, and they just do; if they want to go out, they go out, visiting somewhere – play park or whatever they want to do.

The interviewer's initial question—'Is it a particular time of the year—the same time every year?'—invokes ideas of repetition, global homogeneity of practice [7], and parallels with locally hegemonic festivals such as Christmas [7]. Fatima's response not only provides information about the lunar calendar ('I think it's the moon...'), but indicates that the specific reasoning behind the timing of the festival is not something which receives much attention in her discursive community. Fatima goes on to demonstrate that, whether or not the moon is related to the timing of Eid, it is significant for her community [2]: they 'did actually seen the moon' [3] and she is aware that her community in Pakistan did not see the moon 'yesterday', and therefore did not celebrate Eid [7]. The interviewer's second question then invokes notions of a homogeneous 'Islamic' visual repertoire, while Fatima's response (she answers in the affirmative and then tenaciously ignores the question) normativizes [5] the connection between Eid, the family [4], and embodied social action [2, 3].

The interviewer continues:

Int. Yeah you said that your sister had taken her kids to MacDonald's?

Fatima: Yes, that's right. It wasn't to mark Eid, it was just a day out for them because there isn't much to do up here. Back home there would be a lot of entertainment for the children and adults and there's fun fair as well, and up here it's just a working day for everybody, so there's nothing they can go back to—no play park and fair they could go to just have a good time. So she just took the kids out to MacDonald's just so they could enjoy the day out.

Int. Is there any conflict over business like MacDonald's not using halal meat? Is there anything like that that is difficult—for the younger generation?

Fatima: Well, no' really. The reason why my sister-in-law took them to MacDonald's is because they fry the chips in vegetable oil, whereas other places don't, and also they can eat fish there, but they wouldn't eat chicken or anything like that because there's nothing

provided—halal. So that's why they have to have fish, and chips in vegetable oil, that's right. So she wouldn't have taken them anywhere else.

Int. Do they ever complain?

Fatima: Yeah, they do, but they know you're not allowed to eat it. I mean my five year old when he was at nursery, he tells me know "Mum, I didn't used to eat meat, and I didn't eat ham and pork, and I just ate vegetarian food..." and he was like four then, and he knew he wasn't meant to eat it, because you kind of tell them as you go along, that we knew that nursery, you were only allowed to eat vegetarian. These are the things you tell them. So it's in their head, they know what they should eat and what they shouldn't eat. Yeah, they accepted it – some children don't—because they didn't get tempted, when they see other children eating meat and they can't. They see why they can eat it at home, and why can't they eat when they're out with other people?

This third section focuses upon parental efforts to entertain and feed their children in a context which does not, as a rule, adhere to Islamic food practices [3, 5]. Food practices are constructed as a potent 'othering' device [2, 3, 7], with the interviewer asking if there was ever 'any conflict' over the food provided by non-Muslim businesses like *McDonald's*. The interviewer assumes a conflict between two opposing cultures, but Fatima's reply that *McDonald's* is better than most places for halal food, more or less brushes these concerns aside as irrelevant, showing her to be more of a 'skilled cultural navigator' (Ballard 1994) than the interviewer has given her credit for. However, in the Edinburgh context, where Eid 'is just a working day for everybody' [1] and 'Muslim' children 'see other children eating meat and they can't' [3, 7], Fatima details situations where parental authority [4] is invoked to enforce 'Islamic' restrictions [6] which contrast with the surrounding societal norms [7].

The fourth section engages with Fatima's understanding of 'halal', and the opportunities she has to purchase halal food in Edinburgh:

Int. Is it purely because of halal?

Fatima: That's right, yeah.

Int. What is halal—can you explain it a bit so that I have it on tape—what halal means?

Fatima: Yeah, it's just the way the lamb is sacrificed. When the lamb is sacrificed the person who does it actually reads part of the sentence from the Koran, and its only halal once he has read that and kind of cut the lambs' throat... sometimes people shoot the animals, and that's not halal, so we can't eat meat that come s from the animals that have been shot, so it has to have been cut with a knife, in a proper slaughter—and also that the saying from the Koran is read as well.

Int. Is it much easier to get that halal slaughtered meat here now?

Fatima: Yeah, definitely. It was difficult because there wasn't many shops that sold halal meat. There's a lot of Asian shops who do that now. Yeah it's easier. But its still, you know you can't go to Safeway and get halal meat, you have to go to special shops.

Int. I live near the Central Mosque so there are a lot of shops there.

Fatima: Yeah. But you know you wouldn't be able to get meat from most other big stores. You know, white people can buy meat from Safeway's, Sainsbury's or whatever, but we can't...

Fatima's whole description of halal is not one of *why* things are done, but one which focuses upon how the slaughter takes place, the embodied action [3], and places major significance upon the fact that it is done at all [2]. The focus is not on meaning but on practice. The Muslim community [7] literally 'can't eat meat' that hasn't gone through this process [3]. This very basic element of human existence [1] becomes a performance of 'religious' identity. It is a tradition—'it's just the way the lamb is sacrificed' [5]—and it marks the 'Muslim' community out as different [7]. As a Muslim 'you have to go to special shops' [7]. These shops are visible and distinctive, clustered around the Central Mosque, and serve a community which is defined not only in 'religious' terms, but in racial terms as being *non-white*: 'white people can buy meat from *Safeway's*, *Sainsbury's* or whatever, but we can't...' [3, 7].

Discussion then turns to Fatima's experiences as a child dealing with various perceived contrasts between her identity as a 'Muslim' and the Christian-Secular context of her high school in Birmingham:

Int. How did you find it yourself when you were at school?

Fatima: There's a lot of things. When I first started school here I was 11. I came straight from Pakistan and started school here. I found it really difficult. I couldn't eat half of the food that was provided by the canteen. I just got quite upset. I used to sometimes end up crying because obviously very hunger [sic], and I couldn't eat. And the things they did have I didn't like coz I wasn't used to that kind of food. So you kind of get used to it after a while, but you still, there's a limited choice—you can only go for the vegetarian stuff— you cannae eat meat, don't eat pork anyway. But there was a lot of meat dishes on normally and not much choice for the vegetarian, when I went to school anyway—there's a lot more now than there used to be. So it was usually just, like chips on a roll, and a kind of pudding.

Int. Did your school chums understand?

Fatima: No, I think they found it a bit difficult—why you can't eat certain foods. And it's difficult to explain it to people when you're young as well. And also in terms of uniform as well, we couldn't wear skirts, and the uniform was wearing skirts—we had to wear a pinafore with a trouser underneath. And, you felt strange because there's not many people dressed that way, but it was good that it was allowed, for you to wear trousers. This was in Birmingham—Queensway School.

Int. So did you feel isolated?

Fatima: That's right. There weren't a lot of people from Pakistan. Even when I did PE— you had to wear short skirts for PE—I found it really strange to wear that, with boys in the class as well, coz I wasn't used to wearing skirts, it was always trousers. There's things that you have to do that you wouldn't normally do if you were back at home...

Prompted by the interviewer's question regarding her experiences negotiating halal whilst at school, Fatima describes how 'difficult' she found it when starting school in the UK (in contrast to Pakistan where things were, presumably, easier) [1, 7]. Halal served as a site to demarcate Fatima from the other students [7]. She 'couldn't eat half of the food that was provided' [3, 6], and the 'things they did have I didn't like coz I wasn't used to that', implying that it was not the 'restrictions' of halal that were perceived as such an issue, but the context within which she was trying to follow them [7]. Discussion then turns to another aspect of Fatima's embodied 'Muslim' identity— school uniform—and how 'we couldn't wear skirts', and this made her feel 'strange' [3]. This experience was shared by the few other students from Pakistan (a conflation of nationality and 'religion') [7], whilst the rest of her 'school chums' (to use the

interviewer's phrase) also found Fatima's behaviour 'difficult' to understand [7].

Fatima commends the school for 'allow[ing]' her to wear trousers with her uniform,

but also criticizes it for making her wear skirts during mixed-gender PE classes—one

of a number of things 'that you have to do that you wouldn't normally do if you were

back at home…' [6, 7][81]

> This prompts the interviewer to ask:

>> **Int.** Does that cause conflict at home—you know with what you have to do, or what you want to do here?

>> **Fatima:** Yeah, because parents find it difficult to accept as well. You know always going on outings and trips with school... and parents didn't allow it. You know I would, or my sister would, feel left out, didn't feel part of the group... I would probably not go altogether.

>> **Int.** Is it the same for boys?

>> **Fatima**: No, it's less strict for boys. Boys can normally stay—it's not too bad... The culture is always kind of strict towards the women—they stay at home and they don't, they're not allowed to go out much. I mean I wouldn't have worked... and I came back quite late—I didn't finish till half eleven at night, and my Mum was sitting home worried sick—although I told her I probably wouldn't be back till late, but she didn't expect me back that late. She was quite annoyed – she was upset... It was horrible, I was upset.

>> **Int.** What age were you?

>> **Fatima**: I was about 20. This was like when I was working and I'm an adult you know, but they don't see you as an adult until you are married. They feel they have responsibility for you until you are married off.

The sixth section thus retains the distinctly personal focus that preceded it, with

Fatima generalizing from her own experience to other Muslims' experiences [7] of

parents acting as enforcers of gender boundaries and a 'cultural' norm which 'is

always kind of strict towards the women' [4, 6, 7]. Picking up on Fatima's reference

to 'home', the interview probes as to whether or not the tension between 'what you

have to do' and 'what you want to do here' causes 'conflict at home' [4, 7]. Fatima

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[81] A diasporic sense of 'home' as somewhere else which implies that she was out of place. The meaning of 'home' seems to change at the beginning of the next section—from Pakistan to the family home in the UK.

responds in the affirmative, stating that parents find this tension 'difficult to accept as well' and thus impose restrictions which meant that Fatima felt 'left out, [and] didn't feel part of the group' at school [6, 7]. As a Muslim woman, Fatima feels that her parents didn't see her as an adult until she was married, and that they feel that 'they have responsibility' for her, with failure to observe relevant restrictions accompanied by worry, annoyance, and upset for all parties [3, 4, 6]. She paints a picture of parents using 'religion' and 'culture' to control the spaces within which children can move, the journeys on which they can travel, and the manner in which they should conduct themselves [3]. The parents patrol the boundaries of an all-consuming religio-cultural container [1].

The penultimate section focuses on the more generalized experience of 'Asian women' in the UK (interviewer's phrase), easily segueing from 'religion' to 'culture' to 'nationality' to 'ethnicity' [7]:

> **Int.** Do young Asian women do things like move into flats?
>
> **Fatima**: Not really, no. Maybe more so now, but they didn't used to... But I see more people now, like coming over from England—girls, young girls, coming over from England and living in Scotland, getting flats.
>
> **Int.** Does it cause problems?
>
> **Fatima:** It does—in the community as well, they don't accept it—they think you know, the girls are... loose, exactly—they are not liked much in the community, as well as their parents—it is definitely.
>
> **Int.** Is it hard for you—being pulled this way and that way?
>
> **Fatima**: Yeah. You're kind of stuck in between, because when you arrived at school or college or work you're with, you know, Western people. You want to be like them and be part of what they —and lots of people go out to pubs in the evening, or after work, and girls can't go—and if you do you're in trouble from your family. And when you're at home you have to behave differently as well—respect your adults <...> try to cover your head, do your cooking and cleaning and this and that—kind of pulled in two directions. It difficult to know what you can do and what you can't...

The conversation here initially concerns living apart from family as something which might potentially 'cause problems' when the actors involved are female [3, 6]. Fatima declares that this sort of thing does cause problems 'in the community as well', illustrating the impact of individual actions upon a larger community [2]. One's living arrangements are taken to indicate deeper states of waywardness [2], and the resulting judgement from the community reflects badly on the parents as well as the child [4, 7]. The discussion then takes a spatial turn, with the interviewer asking whether it is 'hard for you—being pulled this way and that way' (again raising the conflict 'between two cultures' motif),[82] and Fatima responding that 'you are kind of stuck in between […] kind of pulled in two directions'. Here we see two competing containers [1, 7]: one, the domain of 'Western' people, has its own normative practices in which girls 'can't' indulge, even though 'you want to be like them'; the other, the 'home', where one must dress appropriately, engage in particular activities, and 'behave differently' [3, 7].

The interviewer then kicks off the final section, which focuses more closely upon (particular) 'Asian' women's experiences in the world of work:

> **Int.** What about your sister-in-law who has a factory, is that OK? She's married, is that why it's okay to be a woman who runs a business?
>
> **Fatima**: Yeah, her husband allows it, and that's OK, but if she wasn't married I don't think she would be running a factory on her own, it's not a done thing. Most women who do work actually work from home but they won't actually go out to run a business... She mainly has women [working], but her family men as well... it's a food factory.
>
> My husband is her brother—so they don't have any male from outside, it's just the family men—her brothers and her son, her husband, and the rest of them are just women. It's that kind of a job anyway, it's mainly for women—cooking, catering.
>
> **Int.** Is that seen as being quite seemly?
>
> **Fatima**: Yeah, for women.

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[82] See Watson (1977), and discussion in Arweck (2013), Arweck and Nesbitt (2010), Jacobs (2010), Knott and Khokher (1993), and Menski (2002).

Int. I have noticed that a lot of young doctors are Asian women—not mostly women, but I wonder, is it easier for young Asian women to become...

Fatima: I think its seen as a good profession to go into being the doctor, or a teacher, you know, it's because their parents want them to do that, because it's seen as a good profession being a doctor.

Int. Is it because it has status, or is it also because it's seen as a 'caring' profession?

Fatima: I think it has a high status—that's all. It must be to do with caring as well, but mainly because it has a high status, and you know, you're well paid and it's a respectable job and most people look up to you because you are a doctor—and you know, parents enjoy that.

Beginning with the figure of Fatima's sister-in-law, an apparent exception to the prevalent gender restrictions on employment [6]—'it's not a done thing' [5]—we read of how 'her husband allows' her to a run a factory, and this is deemed permissible because 'they don't have any male from outside, it's just the family men', and it's the 'kind of job' that's 'mainly for women—cooking, catering' [4, 6, 7]. Marriage is seen as a category boundary: once this is passed, normative practice may change yet, as a woman, you are still subject to another's judgement. Turning to other types of employment, Fatima and the interviewer construct an image of 'Asian women' moving within a restricted container [1], where every action is judged by the 'community' in terms of whether or not it is 'seen' to be 'respectable' or 'seemly' [6]; where social actions have deeper meanings [2]. Even into later life, daughters' actions are motivated 'because their parents want them to do that', or because, 'you know, parents enjoy that' [4, 6].

Although every point that has been made in the preceding discussion is potentially significant, I shall simply highlight a few by way of summary, selecting those which are of particular relevance to the chapters that follow. All seven discourse groups can be seen flowing through this exchange, but by far the most prevalent discourses are those pertaining to *Religion and Community*, the significance of which

was amplified in no small part by the interviewer's repeated attempts to steer conversation towards, on the one hand, the banal specificities of Islamic ritual practices, and on the other, potential flashpoints, such as dietary requirements and gender restrictions, where Fatima may have felt isolated or restricted due to her minority status. Although both parties seemed to invest Fatima with the authority to speak for all Muslims, her responses tended to centre on her own embodied experience, focusing less upon the reasons behind the establishment of certain rituals, or their meaning for Muslims in general, and dwelling instead on what is done, how it is done, and how it has affected her personally. Throughout this extract, 'Islam' is invested with a significance which, whether in-and-of itself, or at the hands of parents, husbands, or the wider community, holds the power to restrict and judge social action, and connect Fatima with a community much larger than the 'minority' physically located in Edinburgh.

Each transcript in the PEP, as well as those from interviews conducted in the contemporary Southside, was subjected to this level of scrutiny and analysis. I have sought, through this presentation, to demonstrate how the discourses involved are subtly intertwined, and are invoked and manipulated by both interviewer and interviewee in a veritable discursive tennis match. What is perhaps most worthy of comment are the mundane manner in which these discourses emerge, and the quotidian nature of the discourses themselves.

Discussion turns now to how these discourses relate to the motivation and methodology of the PEP itself.

4.6   There and Back Again: Relating the Discourses to the PEP

In the first section of this chapter I introduced the PEP, making clear that the project was undertaken in the mid 1990s as a joint initiative involving a variety of community groups, with the express intention to more fully 'reflect the life of all the people in the multi-cultural city of Edinburgh' (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 3) through the production of an exhibition, various permanent artefacts and publications, and a number of community-based events and education initiatives. My aim now is to explain the characteristics of the religion-related discourse of the PEP. In doing so, I shall engage in a more detailed discussion of some key aspects of the PEP itself, before specifically relating this to the discourses.

It goes without saying that the PEP has a 'multiculturalist' agenda, i.e. an agenda that pushes for the 'accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western countries from outside the prosperous West' (Modood 2007, 5). Indeed, it was initiated a decade or so before 'the failure of multiculturalism' fully assumed its status as a popular politics (Brighton 2007, 11; also Modood 2014b; Wise and Velayutham 2014, 406). It was undertaken to 'reflect' the (homogenized) lives of 'minority cultures', to 'promote understanding' (presumably in a context of prevalent 'misunderstanding'), and to 'celebrate the richness of multi-cultural society' (City of Edinburgh Council1996, 3) rather than, say, deride the impoverishment of a diluted indigenous culture. This agenda was further exemplified in moves taken to place Edinburgh's contemporary 'diversity' within an 8,000 year history of constant influx of 'settlers, invaders, soldiers, traders, craftspeople, students and those escaping poverty and [...] persecution' (Clark, Dick, and Fraser 1996, 6), as well as the evident pride taken in educating communities regarding other cultures *and also their own* (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 13). Although not a prominent theme in the official

publications, 'racism' clearly lurked in the shadows throughout this project. As highlighted in my introduction, the exhibition organizers engaged in 'lively discussion about racism', but decided that any portrayal of this should not get in the way of the celebratory message of the PEP (1996, 10). Additionally, the exhibition opening event reiterated a perceived need to fight racism (1996, 27), and the city's Lord Provost declared the project an 'important step towards eliminating ignorance and prejudice' (Clark, Dick, and Fraser 1996, 4), indicating that 'racism' and 'prejudice' were contextually relevant concerns for those involved in the PEP, and for those viewing the exhibition.

Against this backdrop both the exhibition and accompanying publication were constructed from the outset with the intention of highlighting

> ...the relevant themes of why and when people moved, how they kept their culture and how they and their next generation have adapted and integrated into Edinburgh society and life. (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 8)

It would appear from the report on the council-produced (and in many parts 'interactive') section of the exhibition that 'religion' was not a major focus, with much space devoted to experiential phenomena such as music, dress, food and dance which easily lend themselves to being displayed, shared and experienced. Most reference to religion occurred in the section on 'keeping the culture', and those display cases which did focus on 'religion' are described as 'very colourful', with the disclaimer that 'we were anxious not to cause any offense in this sensitive area' (1996, 16). In another major section of the exhibition—the community-led 'Textile Tent'—one of eight sections was devoted to 'religion', with a focus upon festivals, celebrations and personal meaning (1996, 24). None of the groups involved in the reminiscence sessions, and only one (the YWCA) of the 14 groups who produced materials for another major section—the 'community displays'—were 'religious' groups, with the

others representing schools, welfare organizations, and national community groups (1996, 18–24).

However, when this material was collated and presented in the official publication, the overriding organizational logic within the 'keeping the culture' section (Clark, Dick, and Fraser 1996, 26–49) was 'religion'. A few specific points are worth making. First of all, the 'World Religions' of 'Christianity', 'Islam', 'Judaism', 'Hinduism', 'Buddhism', and 'Sikhism' were each given two pages. However, all 'Chinese religions' were considered together in the same amount of space. Only one interview was conducted with a 'Jew', yet 'Judaism' is given the same amount of space as the other 'religions'. And the sole representative 'Buddhist' sounds dismissive, stating that 'the family religion, if it is anything, is Buddhism' (1996, 36). Such seemingly arbitrary movement from 'religious distinctiveness' to regional homogeneity (in the case of China), concern for 'equal' representation, and disregard for the 'religious' nature of the phenomena being presented, suggest a motivation which differs from providing 'accurate' and substantial representations of 'religion' in Edinburgh, and one more concerned with painting the most 'colourful', 'diverse', and thus, presumably, 'positive' picture of Edinburgh possible.

Secondly, the dominant representations of religion in the booklet are rituals, festivals, celebrations, clothing, objects and food practices. For example, the pages on 'Islam' reference 'festivals', 'prayer', 'marriage', 'ladies' celebration[s]', and 'traditional dress' (1996, 30–31). This is despite the fact that the 'keeping the culture' section concludes with further sub-sections on 'dress', 'food', 'the mither [sic] tongue', and 'music, dance, entertainment and cultural organizations' (1996, 42–49). If these aspects of culture were going to be highlighted anyway, why provide such lengthy additional discussion under specific 'World Religions', particularly given my

comments above concerning the major focus of the exhibition, interview schedules, etc? Further, as one could arguably divide such aspects of culture along 'national' or 'regional' or 'ethnic' lines, why not do so?

These observations, combined with the preceding discussion of multiculturalism and racism, suggest that religion was utilized within the PEP not as something of interest in-and-of itself, but as a positive yet benign means through which cultural diversity could be presented in less 'divisive' terms than 'ethnicity' or 'nationality'. This view is reinforced by the limitations of the printed word: the exhibition itself was able to present cultural diversity as vibrant and 'living', through demonstrations, sounds, smells, tastes, and interpersonal contact, whereas the accompanying publication required an alternative organizational logic. Having looked at the structure and approach of the PEP in more detail, we are now in a position to consider how all of this relates to, and to some degree explains, the religion-related discourses evident in the transcripts generated by the PEP.

First of all, a clear theme which flowed throughout these discourses was an emphasis upon practice as relevant yet relatively benign, embodied social action. Practice is tangible. It can be described. It visibly marks actors out as belonging to a particular group, and is taken to exemplify meaningful identification with that group. Given the prevalence of practice-based accounts within the PEP—and reflecting particularly on the typical lines of questioning in the interview with Fatima (above)— practice is seemingly easier to talk about than other aspects of 'religion'. Reducing religion to various 'traditional' practices has the effect of homogenizing, normativizing, reducing threat, and creating an image of Edinburgh as a diverse 'community' of individuals and groups who all share in the fact that they *do* 'colourful', culturally-specific things. This reflects the manner in which individuals

from different 'communities' are known to interact in situations of 'commonplace diversity' (Wessendorf 2014b): 'rather than making an effort to negotiate differences' in everyday interactions, people typically 'make an effort to focus on commonalities and ignore difference' (2014b, 100; also 46, 81–82). These cultural specificities are 'meaningful' for the PEP simply by virtue of being considered 'meaningful' to those involved, and not because of the larger complexes of meanings, ideologies, and institutions to which they are connected. While connected with religious identifications and religiosity (and hence religion-related), the specific festivals, celebrations and rituals that are focused upon are not things which tend to court disagreement and controversy from those outside the 'community' in question.[83] This focus therefore helps to 'reflect the life of all the people in the multi-cultural city of Edinburgh' (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 3) while avoiding the 'obstacles and barriers' which potentially simmer under the surface. It also helps to explain why 'non-religion' has not been particularly evident in the PEP material (see below), in that the project seems to have been operating with an 'insubstantial' approach to the 'secular' or 'non-religious', i.e. the 'secular is viewed as a context in which religion exists and is enacted' (Lee 2015, 50; see **Chapter 2**). Furthermore, perhaps occupying a 'non-religious' subject position simply does not mean as much in the face of banal 'religion'?

Secondly, it is easy to see how many of the discourses are related to the broader dynamics of the PEP. The first section of both the exhibition and the publication (Clark, Dick, and Fraser 1996, 8–25) focused upon 'moving worlds', with subtitles focusing upon 'the other country', 'coming to Edinburgh', being 'on the move', 'staying together' and 'travelling to Edinburgh' 'in search of a safe haven'.

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[83] This theme will come up time and again in **Chapters 5** and **6.**

Given that this focus was deemed a relevant theme before the project even began, it should come as no surprise that discourses emerged which focused upon bounded journeys, the transmission of 'religion' across generations and across the globe, and the boundaries which demarcate group belonging. Since 'religion' seemed to be preferred as an organizational logic for the PEP's outputs, it makes sense that interviews would assume global homogeneity across 'religious communities', discourage multiple identifications, and link religion to seemingly less contestable 'practice' and 'tradition'. It is also notable that, while some discourses touched on potentially controversial ground—from oppression within families and marriages to traumatic emotions and bodily restrictions—these are, for the most part, kept within the 'safe' arena of personal life, producing narratives to which those outside the 'community' can easily and uncontroversially relate, but which unhelpfully reify certain outsider views about gender and hierarchy, e.g. within Islam.

Finally, as was particularly evident in the dynamics of Fatima's interview, the motivation of the PEP toward greater 'integration' and cross-community 'understanding' suggests a contextual anxiety about minority communities in Edinburgh occupying an uncomfortable space, being torn 'between two cultures' (J. L. Watson 1977), rather than exemplifying a spectrum of positions illustrative of 'multiple cultural competence' (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993) and 'integrated plural identity' (Østberg 2003), through 'skilled cultural navigat[ion]' (Ballard 1994) and the 'jigsaw society' (Nesbitt 2009). Such anxieties might understandably be shared by all involved in the PEP—interviewers and interviewees (though perhaps for different reasons)—and are exemplified strongly in discourses surrounding religious boundaries, transmission, tradition and authority.

It is important to bear in mind that the PEP did not emerge out of nowhere. On the one hand, it was conceived and constructed with a specific multiculturalist agenda in mind, and as such can testify to broader conversations concerning religion and its relationship to race, culture, and community in UK and Scottish politics in the mid-1990s. Certain voices were included or excluded, silenced or legitimated, and interviewees were led down particular paths, with particular quotations being cherry-picked to produce the multicultural image that was intended. On the other hand, the PEP struck a chord with many Edinburgh residents and community groups, and incorporates personal narratives which both speak to and transcend intentions behind the project. I was in a privileged position to have access to this neatly bounded set of data, complete with methodological notes and project publications, and the insights I gained proved enormously useful when turning to my own data collection and analysis.

4.7   Conclusion

This chapter has allowed the reader to see 'behind the curtain' of my analytical process, provided space for me to introduce at length a highly relevant comparative case study for my own work in the contemporary Southside, to lay the foundations for some of the discourse groupings that emerged there, and to reflect in detail on the impact of the place of the interviewer in the production of discursive data. Before moving to my study of the Southside, it is important to ask what a discursive approach to the PEP says to the notion of 'non-religion'.

It must be stated that, due to the localized and community-based nature of the PEP, claims can only be made about religion-related discourses among a specific group of Edinburgh residents in the mid-1990s, who were either working for the PEP,

or who were affiliated with community organizations identified as serving particular 'minorities', and who were willing to participate in a project designed to produce an image of a multicultural Edinburgh community. There was a notable absence of what might now be dubbed the 'non-religious' majority,[84] and even those few who claimed not to have any 'religious belief' (320) or who endorsed Marxist critiques of religion (338), continued to speak of their relationship to Buddhism (320) or claim 'I'm Christian [but...] just in inverted commas' (338). This line of questioning was not pursued any further by interviewers who, as I noted above, seemed to operating with a model of the insubstantial secular: these interviewers were interested in 'stuff' and colourful practices, and 'non-religion' is simply not perceived to fit within this model.

All of that being said, I was able to find coherent discursive groupings related to religion within the PEP data, despite the fact that it included individuals of differing religion-related identifications and levels of 'commitment'. *All* of these discourse groups were utilized by individuals from a wide variety of identifications, i.e. there was no group of discourses which was notably absent from any particular category of identification. Twelve out of the nineteen transcripts analyzed in-depth involved all seven groups; a further four had only one 'missing'; while those with significantly fewer discourses—313, 319, and 322—were also significantly shorter than the other extracts. Although further analysis would be required to assess whether these discourses tended to be brought into play by the interviewer or the interviewee, their cogency for individuals who utilize differing religion-related identifications is significant. This is a point that shall be developed in the chapters that follow, together with the argument that many of these discourses are not inherently religion-related,

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[84] In Edinburgh, 45 percent of the population selected 'No religion' on the 2011 Census (8 percent higher than the national average), in comparison with 48 percent for all other religious identifications combined (National Records of Scotland 2013, 33).

but become so through entanglement with a particular, local, religion-related field of discourse. It is in this 'local particularity' (Jenkins 1999, 77) that we find contextual and relational notions of 'non-religion'. My arguments on these and other points will be laid out in the following chapters, in which I make comparisons between two chronologically separated yet spatially connected contexts, Edinburgh of the mid-1990s, and the contemporary Southside, with the latter arguably less dominated by concerns over racism, and more implicated in debates surrounding national identity, 'Islamification', and moderation of behaviour in civic space.

CHAPTER 5

NON-RELIGION, POWER, AND CIVIC SPACE:
RELIGION-RELATED DISCOURSES IN EDINBURGH'S SOUTHSIDE I

5.1   Introduction

In this chapter our focus shifts twenty years, from the mid-1990s *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP, see **Chapter 4**) to the mid-2010s Southside of Edinburgh. After a brief reintroduction to the contemporary Southside and reiteration of my interviewing process, discussion turns to detailed examinations of the discourses on *Power* and discourses on *Civic Space*. These discursive groupings are two of the eight prevalent groupings produced in the contemporary Southside, alongside discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment*, *Lived Religion*, *Religion and Social Identity*, *Religion and Containment*, *Religion and Relationships*, and *Religion, Science and Meaning*, which are detailed in **Chapters 6–7.** Throughout this chapter, my main concern is to demonstrate the viability and utility of treating the entire religion-related field as a coherent whole. However, through my in-depth discussions of the discourses on *Power* and *Civic Space* I go further and demonstrate that the religion-related field in the Southside of Edinburgh is entangled in discourses that are effectively 'a-religious' in that they can be 'described and analysed without any reference to religious phenomena' (Quack 2014, 446), yet with '(non-)religion' appearing as a contextually more or less useful trope throughout. I also address a further question identified in **Chapter 2** concerning the dependence of these discourses on particular configurations of religion-related identifiers (discursive objects). I conclude that, on the basis of these two discursive groupings, religion-related identifiers are theoretically interchangeable, but the particularities of the Southside mean that some

arrangements will be more prevalent than others. These conclusions will be reinforced and refined through in-depth discussions of the remaining discourses in **Chapters 6 and 7**, where we hear at much greater length from three specific interviewees, although the focus in these chapters will be upon the localized dimension of these discourses and placing them into broader context, synchronically and diachronically.

Chapters 5–7 act as concentric circles in an argumentative structure. As such, in **Chapter 5** passing reference will be made to discourses and conclusions that will be developed further in **Chapters 6** and **7** and so on, whilst **Chapters 6** and **7** will refer back to and refine the conclusions from the preceding chapters in this block. Throughout these chapters, when citing a specific interview transcript, these shall be identified by their letter (A–W, see **Appendix 1**) and the number corresponding to the sections arbitrarily created during transcription in *Nvivo* (for example, I cite section 22 of my interview with Richard (D) as 'D22' and so on).

5.2   Religion-Related Discourses in Edinburgh's Southside

This chapter begins a section of fresh empirical work focusing upon the contemporary Southside of Edinburgh. I have set out my rationale for selecting this locality as a field site at length in **Chapter 3**, but a brief reintroduction will serve as a useful *aide-mémoire* to situate the discourses and analysis which follow.

Edinburgh's Southside is a densely populated district of the city with contested boundaries, just to the south-east of Edinburgh's historic Old Town, sandwiched between the iconic Meadows and Holyrood Park. The area saw enormous growth during the nineteenth century and became a thriving industrial centre, but nowadays most of that industrial history is invisible to the casual user of the Southside. Much of the industrial infrastructure was demolished in the middle of the twentieth century,

along with dilapidated tenements, to make way for more modern housing, and to provide space for the University of Edinburgh to expand. As such, a simmering resentment against the City Council and the University of Edinburgh is clearly present amongst the older population. This older population forms the core of longer-term residents of the Southside, which is augmented by a large, transient, multicultural population attracted to the area by the University. According to the 2011 census, the majority of Southside residents identify with no religion, and the area is notably characterized by a significantly lower proportion of 'Christian' residents than the rest of Edinburgh, or Scotland as a whole, and with notably higher proportions of all other religion-related identifications. In **Chapter 3**, I proposed a number of dichotomies— urban/green, transience/permanence, historic/contemporary, privilege/poverty, religious/non-religious—as characteristic of the contemporary Southside.

My primary sources of discursive data in the Southside were interviews conducted between February and November 2014 with individuals who considered themselves to have a connection to the Southside. Demographic information about these interviewees can be found in **Tables 2–5** and **Appendix 1**. Discussion in these interviews began with a focus upon the Southside and the interviewee's relationship to it, the boundaries of the Southside, and characteristics they would associate with it. Interviewees then took me on a virtual tour of the Southside, before participating in a photo elicitation exercise with images of the Southside Community Centre, a halal meat market, and a bus advert for the 'trypraying' campaign (see **Figures 7–9**). Discussion then turned to the interviewee's 'religious biography', before focusing upon a pre-prepared list of religion-related terms, and relating these to the Southside. These interviews were transcribed and analysed through a process set out in **Chapter 3** and demonstrated in **Chapter 4**.

With this recontextualization in mind, we can now turn to the results of this analysis, beginning first with the discourses on *Power.*

5.3   Power

The discourses on *Power* are those which are most explicitly implicated in hierarchies and power relationships, and can be divided primarily into one of two strands. The first consists of discourses which construct particular religion-related terms as 'power categories' (Fitzgerald 2015b) that are applied to contexts within which power is exerted, and oppression occurs. These terms act 'in dialectical interplay with other power categories such as "politics," "science," or "nature," [to construct…] a world and our own apprehensions' (Fitzgerald 2015b, 305). Most significantly, the Southside was constructed as both normatively secular and 'post-Christian', with these two discourses frequently being intertwined in practice, reflecting a pervasive internalization of the historical roots of 'the secular' as detailed by Taylor and others.[85] The discourses in the second strand, on *Religion-Related Hierarchies,* implicate these terms, through legitimation or opposition, in hierarchies and power relationships which are not inherently 'religious,' but which are contextually entangled in the religion-related field. Due in no small part to the focus on locality in these interviews, the field is particularly entangled in power relationships pitting the harmonious locality against disruptive external forces. Although it will be clear from what follows that this discourse group encapsulates the discourses on *Religion as Oppressor* in the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP, see **Chapter 4**), the discourses below engage with the exercise of power on a much larger scale and at a more abstract

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[85] '"Secular" itself is a Christian term, that is, a word that finds its original meaning in a Christian context' (Taylor 1998, 31 ff. see also Fitzgerald 2007a; Cavanaugh 2009)

level (see comparison in **Chapter 7**).

5.3.1   Strand I: Power Categories

The discourses in the first strand apply religion-related terms to particular contexts or spaces within which power dynamics operate. Of course, I would argue with Foucault that 'power is everywhere,' not in the sense 'that it engulfs everything, but that it comes from everywhere' (Foucault 1998, 63). My point here, however, is the application of religion-related terms to *particular* contexts or spaces. The logics and scale of these spaces can vary contextually, from narrowly conceived institutions constraining and oppressing those who are discursively placed within their walls, to more nebulous localities and nations.

One discourse followed a fairly standard narrative of secularization—such as that advanced by Bryan Wilson, whereby 'religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance' (1966, 14)—constructing the Southside as normatively secular, with religion being backgrounded as a minority concern alongside a narrative of decline from a past state of 'ubiquitous religiosity' (Naomi, O20).[86] This discourse invests the 'secular' with power, and removes power from 'religion' (particularly Christianity). For example, Peter vividly remembers 'the Church of Scotland being visible' and seeing 'people milling about' in droves on Sundays, but now 'that's kind of gone […] I thought of them as much more present […] and I feel that that's been replaced, I mean in that respect I assume it's becoming more and more secular in that way' (C38–39).

Turning to the irrelevance aspect, when discussing the image of the 'trypraying' advert, Richard opined that these kinds of adverts make him laugh,

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[86] Also C18, C36, C38–39, H48–49, H63, H66–67, I34, I38, J16, J45, K34, K36, K81, L66, N19, N29, P8, Q18, Q20, R14, R17, S10, S12, T46, T48, V37–38, and W9.

because 'it's such a waste of money and time and, well you can try if you like but it doesn't actually do any good'. However, he also didn't think that such public displays should offend anybody, and vocalized the sound of rushing wind as he stated 'it sort of <whoosh> goes over my head' (Richard, D27).[87] Although acknowledging a social cost attached to this image in terms of time and money, by viewing it more as an amusing and harmless curiosity he invokes a prevalent discourse whereby, for example, the 'left-wing' press tend to cast Britain 'as secular and plural, with an accompanying discourse of Christian decline and irrelevance' (Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 174).[88] This discourse of secularization explicitly engages with religion—here Christianity—and places it outwith the realm of phenomena that must be given serious attention, into a category that can be viewed with benign—if mildly amused— indifference (Cotter 2016). Supplemental to this discourse were allusions to declining religiosity being correlated with: youth[89] and the shift from rural to urban life,[90] echoing some of the tropes of 'classical secularization theory' (Warner 2010, 7–40); and also high levels of existential security, echoing more contemporary developments (Norris and Inglehart 2004; Harskamp 2008; D. Silver 2006). These correlations are sometimes made directly, for example when Amir declared that 'atheism, uh, flourishes in the time of... in times of ease and prosperity... uh, and it's the religion of the well-fed people, the intellectuals, and […] philosophers <pause> it's not a religion for the hungry' (R35).[91] They also occur indirectly, through, for example,

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[87] For more on which messages can be ignored and which demand a response, see *Strand II* of the discourses on *Civic Space* below.

[88] Similar discourses are evident in the world of (stand-up) comedy, which can be seen as a useful barometer for a dominant 'left-leaning' constituency in contemporary Britain (cf. McKearney 2011; Cotter, Aechtner, and Quack 2012). See also **Chapter 4**.

[89] B32–33, F36, F55, J34, and P8.

[90] I31 and O44.

[91] E20, H64 and H66.

emphasizing that religion provides comfort in times of crisis.[92]

The very fact that this secularization is constructed as the result of a decline in *Christianity* means that the Southside is imbued with a Christian flavour. Prompted by the 'trypraying' advert, Peter described the Southside as

> a kind of post-Christian, or a kind of Christian society, full of Christian symbolism, it's all over the place - so you see the churches, you see those things, and you see those things all the time—but there's nothing that's actively Christian. (C23)

It is 'post-Christian' not in the sense that Christianity 'has become irrelevant per se' but that 'its effects are diffuse and indirect' (Lee 2015, 30). For example, Naomi saw the contemporary space of the Southside as being claimed by 'stony fingers, Christian steeples' (Naomi, O19),[93] and Alistair recalled the Southside of his childhood, where a particular form of Christianity was perceived to dominate: 'you just weren't allowed to go out [on a Sunday], because if you went out to play football the police used to chase you' (Alistair, F19). According to this second discourse, (Protestant) Christianity is granted hegemonic—i.e. 'dominant' (Martin 2010, 161)—status, being seen as embedded in local and national rituals,[94] in institutions such as scouts and schools,[95] in the very fabric and skyline of the Southside itself.[96] Indeed, the 'skyline itself is an important indicator both of past history and present developments' (Davie 2014, 615) and 'the overwhelming presence of Christian buildings in this country' creates expectations and in some senses 'impinges on the secular' (Davie 2015, 72, 78). The particularly 'Protestant' flavour to this hegemony seems to reflect an internalization of the relative marginalization of Roman Catholicism in Scottish history in the modern period, due in no small part to Catholicism's historical connection to Irish

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[92] C30, C41, G31, G33, G37–38, H40, K32, K74, T35, U22, V46 and W21.

[93] Also B34, C23–24, K20, L63–64, N24, N32, O20, S11, V38, and W40.

[94] G42, K89, R34, T46, T48, and V66

[95] B30, C37, E23, E31, F48, F57, F61–62, F64, G29, G41, I42, J41, K81–85, N14–15, P7, P13, P17–18, Q5, Q34, S17, &33, T48, and W18.

[96] See interview references in fn. 93.

immigration (see Bruce 2014a, 41–79). However, according to the 2011 census results for the area roughly corresponding to the Southside (see **Table 1**), Roman Catholics currently make up around 35 percent of the Southside's self-identifying 'Christians' (a proportion almost identical to those self-identifying as 'Church of Scotland'). In addition, the number of self-identified Catholics in Scotland increased slightly between 2001 and 2011, in contrast to the ten percent decline in the numbers identifying with the Church of Scotland (Bruce 2014a, 234–35).

Much as would be the case in contexts with relatively homogeneous 'Christian' identification across the populace, many of these manifestations of Christianity are viewed as inoffensive, unproblematic, banal, or simply not comment-worthy.[97] This scans with Sullivan's observations on the 'naturalization' of 'religion' (read 'Christianity') in the US, which is increasingly seen as a 'natural, and largely benign—if varied—aspect of the human condition' (2009, 2). Those interviewees who positioned themselves as in some way connected to Protestantism, or as 'secular'—invested or uninvested, active or inactive—felt unthreatened by placing themselves in, or being placed in, these categories: 'I think that's absolutely fine, I don't have a problem with that' (Fiona, K91).[98] After all, when one identifies as part of a majority, one need not feel threatened by this act of identification.[99] For instance, although Lily acknowledges a general reticence in Scotland for people to say '"Yes, I'm a... I'm a Christian" unless they're [...] a born-again Christian', she acknowledges that because she has 'grown up being Church of Scotland and things like that' she doesn't feel that

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[97] C23, C35–36, D26–27, D29, E21–22, E29, G20, H72, H78, I7, J21, K71, K73, K75, L63, M29–31, N17, N24, N31–32, N50–51, O15, O27, P7, P12, P16–17, P19, Q11, Q15, Q17, Q46, S17, S19, S30, T17, T20, T30–31, T33, T39, T40, U19, U22, and V36.

[98] Also D37, H89 and P27–28.

[99] See, for example, Barth (1998, 31–32) on majority-minority dynamics in social interactions between different ethnic groups, or Vassenden and Andersson on the contextual 'faith information control' possessed by an individual 'in regard to how s/he is, and whether or not s/he wants to be, seen as religious', and its relationship to whiteness/non-whiteness in Grønland, Oslo (2011, 577 ff.).

she has to make this kind of statement (Lily, U19). She is part of the norm, whereas

those who primarily identified with a 'minority religion' felt quite differently. As a

'cultural marker', Christianity 'continues to frame the borders of inclusion and

exclusion' in UK contexts (Wells and Watson 2005, 268). Those who are positioned

in the majority might view Christianity as a positive social force,[100] a benign

curiosity,[101] or a laughable non-problem,[102] yet feel threatened by mere perceived

manifestations of Islam: 'if Muslims advertised on public things such as buses, there'd

be quite an uproar […] you know? Saying, "oh, look at these Muslims trying to

convert us all to Islam"' (Aisha, N37).[103] On the other hand, those in minority

positions can perceive state apparatus and local dynamics to be denying diversity in

their respective communities—diversity that *is* granted to Protestant Christianity—and

indeed can feel that they have something in common with *all* religious minorities,

regardless of identification, in contrast to the hegemonic norm.[104] This feeling of

threat permeates the UK, due to the 'public and collective nature of Islam' as a 'non-

European' religion (Poole 2012, 187).

A further example helps us get an even more nuanced picture of these

discourses. In the same photo elicitation exercise discussed above, each interviewee

was presented with a photograph of the Southside Community Centre, which now

occupies the former building of Nicolson Street Church.[105] Most of my interviewees

struggled to recognize where the Centre was located, despite the building's location

directly opposite a popular supermarket on the Southside's busiest thoroughfare, a

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[100] A39, B33, F32, G37, G38, H47, H52, H64, H73, L33, L42, N37, P21, Q10 and W18.

[101] A24, D27, D29, E20, G33, J21, K32, M22, M29, M31, O27, O40, P17, S19, T36, T39 and U22.

[102] D26 and J20.

[103] C35, J34, N38, N52, Q32, S14–15, T38, T46 and U21.

[104] D24, J42, N24, N30–31, N56, O24, O34 and O48.

[105] The congregation that met in the church merged with two other congregations in 1969 (Pinkerton 2012, 32) and the Community Centre opened in 1986 (Palmer 2007). In the interim, the building served as a saleroom.

place that is very familiar to Southside residents. Upon being told where it was, Fiona—who serves as an extended example—acknowledged that she did recognize it, although she 'would have carried up and down past it for many a long year' (Fiona, K18). Her statements implicitly construct the presence of churches as unremarkable, as part of a typical Scottish background. She continued, suggesting that because Nicolson Street is such a 'shopping parade, you wouldn't really expect a big church to be there' but then immediately began to correct herself, acknowledging that 'there's actually quite a lot of churches up there reused. [...] Yeah, there's a heck of a lot of churches there' (K20–21). Not only do these comments echo the background and normative character of an unobtrusive Christianity, they also place Christianity outside the hustle and bustle of the vibrant modern city, locating it in rural, traditional, or historical urban contexts.

The spatial metaphor of centre-periphery can help to conceptualize the discursive dynamics or 'knowledge-power strategies' (Knott 2008, 55) in operation here. Many of the illustrative discursive fragments above place 'Christianity' as an historically central component of the built environment of the Southside. However, it was Fiona's perception of this historical centrality that led her to place this very Christianity on the periphery. According to her account, this physical manifestation of Christianity does not intrude upon her everyday experience of the Southside. However, when prompted in the context of the interview to consider this building, and to consider it as religion-related, when it was brought from the peripheral status to which it been assigned back to the centre of Fiona's construction of the Southside, its presence—and with it, the presence of other such (former) churches—stimulated expressions of surprise at this 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966) in her constructed version of Nicolson Street as a busy and important local site of secular capitalism.

Here we see a paradox whereby Christianity occupies a peripheral position in many of my informants' mental models of the Southside, whilst simultaneously retaining a central position in the physical environment and historical imaginary (in other words, it is simultaneously *not* 'matter out of place'). This very centrality is what allows Christianity to be assigned to the periphery—to a category of phenomena that can be viewed (locally) with indifference. It is perhaps little coincidence, then, that the nearby Edinburgh Central Mosque was not treated with such indifference throughout my interviews:[106] clearly indifference acts to mask the hegemonic status of certain representations of Christianity in the Southside as 'normal', instituting 'a regime of privilege that benefits [this] group over others' (Martin 2010, 161).[107]

Power dynamics such as those outlined above are connected to the notion of 'religion', which can itself be seen to be a cause of oppression, whether the focus is upon the way in which religion in general spreads by being 'drilled in' (Fred, W18) to people at a young age, or more upon specific religions, with Ivan criticizing the Jehovah's Witnesses for being 'very tight [with] no room for manoeuvre' (Ivan, B33), and Aisha recalling past encounters where her identity as a Muslim woman elicited responses akin to 'she's a woman and she's gonna be oppressed and forced to wear things, and, you know, chained to the kitchen sink' (Aisha, N35).[108] The very term 'religion' can be understood to oppress, with Alan effectively banning conversations on the topic in his pub because 'it leads to arguments' (P25), and many individuals who identify with established 'religions' (such as Ella with Roman Catholicism, and

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[106] A6, A11, B18, B22, C20, C35, C39, E15, E18, E28, F28, F51, G24, H51, H66, K26–27, L38, M14, M24, M42, Q23, S17, T9, T18, T23, U21–22, W6–7 and W39.

[107] This dynamic is elaborated upon in the discussion of the discourses on *Civic Space* (below) and *Religion, Space and the Built Environment* (**Chapter 6**), but is intimately connected to a dynamic whereby forms of Christianity that are seen as 'historic' and 'traditional' are relatively 'unmarked' in the Southside—unmarked, that is, until events trigger a religion-related interpretation.

[108] Also C42, D38, F18, F33, H65, I46–47, J37, K84, L40, L67, M35, M38, N46, O31, P25, Q40, Q46, Q53, V11–12 , V42, V69, W35 and W46.

Naomi with Judaism) feeling an aversion to being described as 'religious', seeing

religion as a 'toxic brand' (Woodhead in Elgot 2014; cf. Lee 2015, 5): 'I don't

consider myself "religious", that seems <pause> no I don't. <hushed> I go to church

but that doesn't necessarily make me very religious, I've never seen it like that' (Ella,

E26).[109]

Notions of religion and conflict were intimately bound together. Whether the

individual saw religion as a/the cause for conflict, a (potent) contributing factor, or as

nothing to do with it at all, these notions were intimately connected in such 'discursive

knots', where 'several discourses are entangled' (Jäger and Maier 2009, 47; cf.

Garling 2013, 22). These associations between 'religion' and 'conflict' are common

parlance in the West, even if their empirical basis is much more complicated and

rhetorical (see, for example, Cavanaugh 2009; Francis 2015; Gunning and Jackson

2011; Murphy 2011; Schäfer 2004). The connection with power and oppression

extends to other terms in the religion-related field, with an (implicit) dialectic often

being constructed between the religious and the secular, with some viewing the

secular as an empty, agenda-free notion from which religion differs,[110] and others

inverting this, seeing the secular as inherently violent and anti-religious.[111] Spirituality

was also implicated in this dialectic, being invested with notions of freedom from

oppressive religion.[112] Conversely, John (Q38, Q47–48) and Amir (R33) inverted the

discourse, seeing the spiritual and secular as groundless, and religion providing

tradition, meaning and actual freedom.

In summary, the discourses in this strand involve the mapping of religion-

related terms onto contexts within which power dynamics operate. This mapping can

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[109] A25–26, C26, D28, D38, F47, H41, O38, Q43 and W31.
[110] C39, J31, K46, K67, K85, K91, M43, S39 and W31.
[111] N42, N46, Q33 and Q46–47.
[112] B30, D38, F55, J30, L57, M46, N46, O40 and S30.

occur quite explicitly, as in those discourses associating religion with conflict, or in the discourse of secularization. It can also be tacit and implicit, as in those discourses that background Christianity in the Southside as 'normal' and not comment-worthy. And it is even connected to the more generalized notion of 'religion', with some discourses investing power in the deployment of the term itself.

5.3.2 Strand II: Religion-Related Hierarchies

The second strand of the discourses on *Power* implicate the religion-related field in hierarchies and power relationships which are not deemed 'religious' in and of themselves. In the context of these interviews, these power relationships most significantly concerned the machinations of the nation state (and the relationship between the individual and said state), and the perceived effect of external forces on the locality.

Positively or negatively, the state was invested with power over the regulation or monitoring of religion at the level of the individual—primarily through official state apparatus such as the census—and through legislating for the freedom of, or protection from, expressions of religion in public spaces depending on the perspective of the interlocutors concerned. This sits well with Woodhead's description of the post-war UK, where 'religion is positioned, represented and actively constructed as a minority interest […] in politics, the media, state services, education and professional bodies - the effect being to maintain religion's minority status by regulation, opposition, exclusion and silencing' (2012a, 25; cf. chapters in Stack, Goldenberg, and Fitzgerald 2015). Here, 'religion' is constructed as a social domain over which a totalizing state exerts, or should exert, control.[113] Indeed, it seems that in these

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[113] D37–38, E33–35, H80–81, J43, N55–57, O47–49, P28, Q32, Q47, S37, U22, V54 and W45–46.

discourses 'only the liberal secular nation state and its agents have the right to decide what is and is not a genuine "religion"' (Fitzgerald 2015b, 306). Religion can also be conceptualized as a resource that can be both co-opted by the state for its own ends and utilized by social actors in their interactions with the state. For example, depending on one's position within the religion-related field, David Cameron's much-reported comments (in mid 2014, when my interviews were being conducted) that the UK is a Christian country can be seen as 'really disappointing because he is one of the only people in the country who has that true responsibility not to dismiss huge groups of other people' (Aoife, L67), or as a tired rehashing of 'the conflict between atheists and Christians' that can unproblematically be ignored by those in minority communities (Amir, R34) who benefit from the relative anonymity and autonomy granted by the demotic, non-hegemonic status of their religion-related discourse (cf. Baumann 1996).

A further power dynamic in this body of interviews concerned a perceived conflict between the locality of the Southside and external powers. The Southside itself was routinely constructed positively as a coherent,[114] vibrant,[115] tolerant,[116] safe,[117] friendly[118] and diverse[119] locality, with occasional negativity directed towards how people are now 'more wrapped up' in their own lives (Moira, F9) or how 'the shops are really pretty crummy there nowadays' (Samantha, H30).[120] Where this

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[114] C5, D3, D12, E6, F2, I10–11, J11, K3, K8–9, K11, K13–14, M4, M6, N6, N9, O2, O6, O9, R3–4, R8, S8, T8–9 and V24.

[115] A7, E3–4, E14, E31, G6, G13, J6, J9, J14, J20, K7, K13, K53, L3–4, L7, L10, L17, M8–9. N5, N9–10, O3–4, O9, O25, Q16, R2, R5, R8, S8–9, S11, T11, T13, V21, W7, W14 and W16–17.

[116] A7, A44, B20, b33, H37, L53, M52, P18, P20, S17 and W41.

[117] D10, H37, I22, J9–10, L10, L16, L22, N9, O3, P10, S6, U12, U20, V22-23, W15 and W17.

[118] A7, A37, A39, B33, C4, H37, J7, K14, L5, L7, L10, N8–9, P3, S6, U12, V22 and W15.

[119] A5, A11, A19–20, B18, B33, C21, D13–14, D24, D33, E8, F16, F29–30, F39, F48, F63, J7, J16, J18–19 , J31, J34, K28, K78, K89, L14, M9, M42, M46, N24, N28, O8, O10, P9–11, Q24, R5, S32, T8, T23, T44, U13 and U19. For further references which were inflected with a particularly positive assessment of this diversity, see footnote 129.

[120] Of course, given my recruitment strategy this positive image isn't particularly surprising.

positive image of the Southside was disrupted, the source was frequently traced to something considered external to the Southside[121]—whether that be the University of Edinburgh destroying the area through rapid expansion of infrastructure, and the attendant government-fuelled influx of students,[122] or multinational supermarkets gradually eating away at the Southside's character one shop at a time.[123] This discourse on the local versus the external—the centre versus the periphery (see above)—was instantiated in our discussions surrounding 'religion' in the Southside. The presumed decline of churchgoing and subsequent closure of many Southside churches was not solely blamed on a *sui generis* secularization narrative, but also upon the declining sense of community in the Southside[124] brought about by the aforementioned student industry, and upon the 'decanting' of much of the population to council estates on the outskirts of Edinburgh, traced to an alliance between the University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh City Council (Alistair, F24; John Q13). In other words, just as the discourse on the state versus the individual was not inherently religion-related, but became contextually entangled in the religion-related field, so too the discourse on the local versus the external is entangled with the discourse of secularization in the Southside.

Where religion-related conflict or intolerance was discussed, this tended to be placed outside the Southside, or at least traced to external sources. Informants referred to the 'hardship' (Aisha, N43) connected to 'the whole Israel thing' (Naomi, O33)

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[121] A6–7, A14, A18, A40–41, B22, B33, C34, D23, E15, E35, F7, F11, F17, F19, F24, F27, F42, F56, H81, I11, I15, I22, I28, I34, J19, J35, K4, K83–84, K89, L25, L70, M9, M35, M38, M43, M50, N22, N43, O11–12, O20, O29, O37, P4, P20, P24, Q13, S20, S41, T10, T16, T46, U21–22 and W22.

[122] The University of Edinburgh occupies a precarious place within the conversations I participated in, appearing at many points as an integral part of the Southside, a source of pride, history and connection to the area, and at others as a blight, destroying architectural heritage and encouraging an influx of transient, loud, dirty and disrespectful students.

[123] A similar dynamic was encountered by Wells and Watson in their London neighbourhood, but there the dominant external forces were 'corporate capital' and 'immigrants' (2005, 275).

[124] F24, F40, F55, H50, H63, H67, I31, J23 and P8.

affecting (potential) Jewish-Muslim relations in the Southside, and to the conflict in (Northern) Ireland, and subsequently Glasgow, affecting the Southside through (infrequent) appearances of the Orange Order (Peter, C34). In some cases, particular individuals were at focus, such as Alan's nephew who was 'brought up round [sectarianism, in Northern Ireland], and then he moved to here, and he carried it on through here' (P20). In contrast with these problematic contexts, the Southside is overwhelmingly viewed as a context where 'we do cater very well to quite diverse faiths [...] and all within a very close proximity of each other, which is very positive to see in terms of respect and, um, understanding of each other's ways of life' (Aoife, L38).[125] Those actors seen as implicated in the religion-related field but who are deemed to belong to the Southside are not seen as problematic, whereas those who cause problems are discursively designated as outsiders (thus preserving the harmonious Southside image).[126] Seemingly, neighbours—even very 'different' neighbours—are preferred to outsiders. This scans with studies acknowledging a 'positive attribution' of the 'political or cultural nation' to 'members or institutions in a given scheme of the local civic society' (Kurczewska 2008, 147), or a 'proximity bias' in charitable giving (Bowen 2015; Songhorian 2014, 61). In this way, and as we shall see in the discourses on *Civic Space* below, the Southside is an exemplum of Kaplan's account of the 'rise' of religious tolerance, which 'has a circular, self-confirming power' and 'encourages us to view intolerance as someone else's vice, not our own' (2007, 6).

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[125] See also footnote 116.
[126] See references in footnote 121.

5.3.3 Summative Discussion

When considering the discourses on *Power* in relation to the theoretical questions

developed in **Chapter 2**, and reiterated at the top of this chapter, the second strand—

Religion-Related Hierarchies—provides a simpler access point to the discussion,

which can then be developed through a discussion of the first—*Power Categories*. I

proceed in 'reverse' order simply to be pragmatic.

In the most basic of senses, the hierarchies and power relationships that make

up *Strand II*—the individual versus the state, the local versus external forces—can be

understood as 'a-religious' in that they can generally be 'described and analysed

without any reference to religious phenomena' (Quack 2014, 446). 'Religion' was,

indeed, constructed as both a domain over which the state should exert control and as

a resource that could be co-opted by the state, but I contend that the key dynamic here

is that 'the state' is being constructed as the regulator and legitimate user of resources.

'Religion' is but one domain with which the state is perceived to interact, and through

which it regulates the behaviour of individual citizens. 'Religion', whatever it is, *need*

not be entangled in this power relationship, but the particular thrust of my

conversations with these Southsiders led to an intersection between the discursive

fields of 'religion' and 'politics', centred on the dominance of the state over the local

and the individual. Similarly, the discourse on the local versus external forces appears

to be essentially a-religious, i.e. it is not inherently religion-related, but it is

contextually entangled with the discourse of secularization in the Southside, and with

discourses on religion and conflict.

Turning to the theoretical questions in hand, the fact that the discourses in

Strand II are not inherently religion-related demonstrates that, in theory, they have an

independent existence and *should* remain intact regardless of the particular discursive

objects in play. However, whilst this might be the case theoretically, the contextuality of these discourses, the organizing dynamics at play, and the broader discursive resources available in this socio-historical context, seem necessarily to entail particular discursive objects. Further, in these instances, the religion-related discourses grouped under this second strand are invoked at points of entanglement with other discursive fields.

These dynamics are further clarified when we turn to the discourses of *Strand I*. The unifying feature of these discourses is that they involve the mapping of religion-related terms onto contexts within which power dynamics operate. However, it quickly becomes apparent that in this local context, many of these dynamics are particularly inflected with Christianity: we have discourses on secularization (i.e. Christian decline), discourses reinforcing Christian hegemony, and discourses positioning Christianity on the periphery of the Southside. What do these particularly Christian-centric discourses do to my observations above concerning the theoretical interchangeableness of discursive objects? In a similar manner to the discourses in the second strand, the central topos of these discourses is not 'Christianity' *per se*, but the loss and maintenance of power in the religion-related field. The prevalence of 'Christianity' in these particular discourses is due to the particularity of the Southside. We can imagine the dynamic being quite different in other national contexts, such as the USA, France, former USSR, India, Saudi Arabia etc, or in different local contexts in the United Kingdom (see, for example, the discussions on Comberton, Highgate and Handsworth in **Chapter 6**). Additionally, the majority/minority dynamic that is evident in this strand, whilst clearly being implicated in the religion-related field, is made up of elements that are *specific to the Southside*, not to the dynamic itself.

Furthermore, in *Strand I* I also noted how the very category 'religion' and the notion of specific 'religions' can be perceived as oppressive. Whilst there was a distinct bias in this dataset towards constructing particular 'World Religions' as oppressive, there were also instances of a variety of 'non-religions' being constructed in a similar fashion,[127] and so the general argument that the discourses remain intact regardless of the particular discursive objects populating them still stands (with important contextual caveats, both spatial and temporal). Here, religion-related terms are invested with significant power, especially when considered in terms of group identity. Whether individual social actors consider themselves insiders or outsiders to specific religion-related groups, the designation of a group as 'religion-related' carries with it the potential for oppression—being oppressive as well as being oppressed—regardless of the specific terminology involved.

From this discussion of the discourses on *Power*, it is clear that we stand to benefit from looking beyond the terminology, and beyond the supposed 'religious' or 'non-religious' character of the discourse. Indeed it makes little sense to refer to these discourses as 'religious' or 'non-religious' as they are utilized from a whole variety of religion-related subject positions. This allows us to see the underlying structure, and to avoid reifying one section of the religion-related field. But further still, we should avoid reifying the whole religion-related field: in this *particular context* religion-related discourses are implicated in these other discursive dynamics, but in other contexts religion-related discourses might not be implicated at all, or might be implicated in a wholly different way. I will develop this line of argument further after I have presented a second group of discourses—the discourses on *Civic Space*.

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[127] N42, N46, Q33, Q46–47 and W29.

5.4   Civic Space

The *Discourses on Civic Space* are those which relate to the Southside as a shared,

local space, the character and atmosphere of that space as experienced by its users,

and the social norms and expectations that accompany that experience. Although the

term 'public' could arguably be substituted for 'civic', I have opted for 'civic space'

as this conveys more of the sense of shared ownership of the Southside felt by my

interviewees. This is not merely public space, this is the Southside, and everyone has a

stake in the 'shared commons' (Amin 2006). Those discourses which most explicitly

intersected with the religion-related field can be separated into two strands: discourses

of multiculturalism, and discourses of moderation. I shall now consider each of these

strands in turn before relating this discussion to the discourses and theoretical points

detailed in the preceding section.

5.4.1   Strand I: Multiculturalism

The first strand concerns multiculturalism, and comprises discourses which: construct

the Southside as multicultural; propose strategies for managing multiculturalism;

promote it (i.e. multicultural*ist* discourses); and express opinions on this state of

affairs. Here multiculturalism is understood as it was in **Chapter 4**'s discussion of the

PEP, as 'the political accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western

countries from outside the prosperous West' (Modood 2007, 5). As was the case with

some of the discourses on *Power,* these discourses were not exclusively invoked in

relation to 'religion,' but the link was frequently made. Indeed, when it comes to the

broader discourses on 'multiculturalism', it is quite difficult to imagine these *not*

making reference to 'religion',[128] at least in the UK and Western Europe (R. H.

Williams 2015). As I will suggest below, the connection may not be made explicitly,

but the discursive baggage associated with 'multiculturalism' seems to necessitate it.

At the most basic level, interviewees were open and unambiguous about the

diverse and multicultural nature of the Southside, and in many cases were very keen to

emphasize how positively they viewed this multicultural mixing in the Southside,[129]

instantiated in the mundanities of day-to-day commercial transactions[130] in 'public or

associational space' (Wessendorf 2014a, 12). Much as Martin Stringer discovered in

his longitudinal work within the city of Birmingham, this multiculturalism was

negotiated by many through a form of convivial 'indifference to difference,' whereby

the heterogeneity of the locality is celebrated as allowing individuals and groups the

space (a beneficial anonymity?) to manifest their 'identities' without fear of censure

(Stringer 2013a, 54–55, 65–67). For instance, according to Aisha:

> I could pick other parts in the city where I've had some negative experiences [due to my
> visibly 'Muslim' identity], but within Southside itself I think... because I think even just
> the people within Southside are so diverse, you know, you have a melting pot of students,
> different people from different places of the world [...], I think we're, we're really quite
> open and accepting of people, so I've never had very many bad experiences... (Aisha, N8)

Going further, Sebastian described how one eventually learns to ignore 'extreme'

opinions as 'just kinda city life' (S20), and in some cases it appears that there is a

certain social desirability to appearing indifferent, to not being perceived to have

opinions on matters relating to cultural—including 'religious'—differences:

> I'm not one of these people who come straight out and sort of just have conversations.
> And although I'll have known them [her corner-shop keeper] for years in terms of using

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[128] See, for example, Brown et al. (2015), Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007), Levey and Modood (2008), Modood (2007; 2014b), Modood and May (2001), Valentine and Sadgrove (2013), Vertovec (2007), Wells and Watson (2005), and Wessendorf (2014a; 2014b). I will return to this point in the summative discussion below.

[129] A6–7, A17–18, B6, B19–20, C20, D22, H52, J20, L3, L5, L7, L10, L38, L53, N8, N43, O4, O9, O13, O24–26, Q26, S7–8, S41, T13, T24, U16, U19, U21, W7 and W15–16.

[130] O33, S6 and T65.

the shop, but have never done that sort of […] Yeah, kind of more intimate, I suppose. And sometimes... how do you ask the question? Why do you ask the question? […] Do you need to ask the question? (Stacey, M26; also C23 and T49)

However, entangled with this positive multiculturalist discourse there lurked a more oppressive discourse of political correctness. This was exemplified through hints of a pressure to be seen to be celebrating diversity,[131] to not be seen to be intolerant or to have negative views of 'others',[132] and to place intolerance outside the Southside, both spatially[133] and temporally.[134] 'Minority' positions in the religion-related field such as Catholicism (H38), Islam (N32) and Secularism (N42) were viewed as particularly problematic, as prone to intolerance,[135] yet despite each interviewee having fairly well-articulated stances relating to 'religion'—implying, therefore, that they disagreed with some other related stances—only one interviewee, Amir, was willing to express consistently negative opinions about the religion-related stances that he viewed as incompatible with his own. This demonstrates a remarkable internalization on the part of the other interviewees of a discourse of moderation that demonizes strong views[136] and exclusivity claims,[137] under the guise of 'tolerance' (see the second strand below). This is not to say that interviewees refrained from offering negative comments on particular expressions of difference with, for example, Alan criticizing those who 'don't want to integrate, don't want to speak English' (P11), or Brian lamenting the 'Islamification' of Nicolson Square (V39). However, such comments were a relatively minor thread in these interviews and were—importantly,

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[131] As demonstrated by the tone of many of the comments cited in footnote 129, such as Julian's comments that the Southside has, in recent years, 'become more ethnically mixed, and, um, which is... is a good thing' (A6).

[132] B23 and E18.

[133] B33 and L38.

[134] A7 and P11. See the discussion of the external versus local dynamic in the discourses on *Power*.

[135] Or, as Fitzgerald would argue, prone to challenging the 'ideological fictions' of secular liberalism (2015b).

[136] A35, C31, Q48 and R31.

[137] B20 and G34.

as we shall see in the discourses on *Lived Religion* in **Chapter 6**—focused upon isolated *expressions* of difference, and not upon particular groups of people etc. Although I would hesitate to apply the label 'British' to the Southside (due to the cogency of current debates around Scottish nationalism), the prevailing reification of 'tolerance' ties into official and media constructions of tolerance as a 'British value' (HM Government 2015b; cf. 2015a; 2012), posited in opposition to 'a fantasized Islamic world of pure intolerance', perpetuating a civilizational, integrationist discourse (Brown in W. Brown et al. 2015, 161; also Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 99).

There is also a clear discomfort over who owns the public space[138] within which multiculturalism is instantiated. Is the space value free? Is it owned by all? Or are its characteristics dictated by the dominant post-Christian secularity discussed in the *Discourses on Power*? Such questions are particularly relevant to adherents of 'minority religions' in the UK, who can encounter social and political forces that 'have a strongly secular hue, and seek to confine them' to marginal spaces, and others that are more 'moderate' and 'multicultural', offering 'greater opportunities of influence and accommodation' (Woodhead in Bluck et al. 2012, 144). In addition, there are undertones of a view that, in making interactions with 'others' unavoidable, multiculturalism simultaneously forces a 'coming to terms' with one's own self, which some individuals clearly find quite unpleasant and traumatic.[139] As Fred put it,

> there would be a lot of people who are maybe kind of pushing against the multicultural stuff [...], but, uh, I for one would embrace that kind of thing and think that, you know, being able to see these things up close will, uh, broaden your knowledge and, eh, your reception to other things. (Fred, W37)

Whilst this multiculturalism may be experienced as oppressive, here this is entangled

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[138] See discourses on *Lived Religion* and *Religion and Social Identity* in **Chapter 6.**
[139] C20, F53, H72, and O33–34.

with the discourse that multiculturalism is positive; it is good for the individual, and good for the Southside. On the one hand these discourses of multiculturalism combine to construct a Southside that is dominated by a political correctness, where immigration and diversity *must* be celebrated, and where the 'other' *must* abide by the rules of *our* secular public space: 'they' should speak 'our' language, not promote messages or ideas that 'we' don't agree with, and certainly not try to change anyone's mind. These negative aspects of the discourses were clearly evidenced in the PEP discourses on *Religion and Community* (see **Chapter 4**)*.* However, as exemplified in Fred's statement, and many of the discursive fragments above, these discourses also construct a Southside that is vibrant, welcoming, both celebratory of, and indifferent to, difference, and a place where encounters with the other facilitate positive, life-enhancing changes. Thus, much as Wessendorf found in her ethnographic study of Hackney, in the Southside we see the 'co-existence of positive attitudes towards diversity more generally, and stereotypes against specific groups' (2014a, 18), with residents able to develop a sense of belonging 'because they can find their own "niche" of like-minded people' (2014a, 32).

5.4.2 Strand II: Moderation

The second strand—the discourses of moderation—essentially relates to what are deemed acceptable incursions of religion-related phenomena into public space, although it is clear from the interviews that these standards do not apply solely to 'religion', but to conduct in public spaces in general. The manner in which these discourses are invoked in my snapshot of the Southside can usefully be viewed through the conceptual lens of Michel de Certeau's 'strategies' and 'tactics' as discussed in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). After a brief explanation of what I

take de Certeau to mean by these terms, I will argue that the religion-related field in the Southside is dominated by *strategic* discourse of moderation, entangled with and negotiated through *tactical* discourses of indifference.

For de Certeau, a 'strategy' is the 'calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power […] can be isolated (1984, 35–36). It is a 'prerogative of the powerful', and demands both time and space, with panoptical vision (Woodhead 2012b, 7). By contrast, 'a tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus' that must be utilized in the space of the 'other,' as demarcated by the contextually relevant hegemonic power (de Certeau 1984, 36–37). It does not have the option of general strategizing or taking stock of the adversary, but 'operates in isolated actions, blow by blow' (1984, 37). Strategies are utilized by the powerful, with the benefit of foresight and planning, while tactics tend to be more improvized and reactive, occurring on the 'battlefield' as opposed to in the war room.

Returning to the Southside, my informants' claims surrounding the points at which the religion-related field impacted upon their interactions with civic space reflected these dynamics. For example, although Fiona was quite able and willing to discuss her own perspectives on religion in our interview, she claimed that she 'wouldn't be articulating' these things in her everyday life (Fiona, K71). She claimed 'I'm not involved in conversations like that' (K71), and although she thought that among her friends 'I might know the odd person who is religious […] we don't have too much of a conversation about it' (K72–73). She also couldn't recall any particular 'encounters with religion', or with particular people where her perspective on it would have come to the fore. Similarly Aoife commented that, although religion does come up in conversations, the topic 'isn't necessarily any more prominent than

conversations about existential philosophers and conversations about politics [...] and whatever else. So it [...] isn't a huge part of what I've done while I've been in Southside' (Aoife, L64).

Although we cannot read too much into the factuality of such statements, I contend that, given their demonstrable and sometimes notably strong opinions on certain matters such as 'faith schooling' (Fiona, K81, K83–84), L. Ron Hubbard's 'nonsense' (Richard, D39), or David Cameron's comments concerning the UK as a 'Christian country' (Aoife, L66–67),[140] such *tactical* claims to indifference are entangled with a dominant,[141] *strategic* discourse that is evident throughout all of my interviewees' narratives (and alluded to above). This is a form of liberal secularist discourse that extols 'moderation' concerning questions of religion in interpersonal interaction, and demonizes 'militancy' or 'extremism': to quote Samantha, 'I'm definitely not a fundamentalist' (H40). This discourse is detailed by Fitzgerald, who summarizes: 'Good religion is what conforms to, and does not challenge, liberal secular principles. Good religion stays out of "politics." Bad religion takes a critical stand against liberal categories and is, therefore, fanatical.' (2015b, 306; also Casanova 2009, 139)

Holding—or, more importantly, expressing—'strong opinions' was dubbed by many as inherently problematic,[142] although this view was frequently articulated alongside the notion that it is not the substance of the message that matters, so much as the manner in which it is expressed.[143] Immoderate assertions of exclusivity were dubbed 'extremism,' and whilst tendencies to extremism were generally viewed as an

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[140] See BBC News Online (2014b).
[141] See Baumann (1996) for more on 'dominant' versus 'demotic' discourses.
[142] A35, C31, F53, G29, H16, I28, M30, O35, U22 and V19.
[143] D27, E20–21, E27, F53, H73, Q28, T27, T46 and U19.

inherently human problem,[144] some viewed 'religion' or 'being religious' as potent correlates with such extremism.[145] Nevertheless, others railed against this popular exhortation to moderation, holding that one should be unafraid to speak one's mind if one's message is worth hearing:[146] I... I... but I, you know, political correctness I kind of view as a kind of extremism' (Julian, A40). Some thought that it is only those who are already primed with the relevant cultural capital that might be affected by such evangelism in the first place.[147]

This portrait scans well with Stephen Bullivant's observations concerning the Papal visit to the UK in 2010, where he suggested that 'people had [...] "internalized" the *perceived* indifference not only of the nation as a whole, but of people like themselves' (2012, 104), or Bagg and Voas's comments concerning how 'unusual' declarations of faith are among the British who 'pride themselves on their self-proclaimed "moderation" (2010, 94; cf. Beckford 1999, 34; Davie 2015, 179). The 'perceived indifference' acknowledged by Bullivant is part of a tactical discourse deployed in the face of the pervasive, powerful and strategic discourse of moderation that demonizes those who take 'religion too seriously' (Bruce 1995, 3), that encourages Britons to keep quiet 'on the subject unless formally prompted' (Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 120), and discourages 'the open expression of religion in many public arenas' (Woodhead 2012a, 25). Whilst Wessendorf (2014b, 44) prefers to avoid talk of indifference in her study of Hackney because 'difference is acknowledged and people are aware of the manifold cultural differences around them' (i.e. they are *not indifferent*), I argue that the *performance* of indifference is a prominent tactic for

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[144] A37 and B27.
[145] D36, E26, H41 and J30.
[146] H68, L42, P13 and R21.
[147] B23, R28 and T30.

'dealing with diversity' (B. van Leeuwen 2010, 639) in the Southside, rather than necessarily implying an ideal-typical state of being indifferent.[148]

It is important to acknowledge at this point that indifference is not the only possible response to this discourse of moderation. One need only think of moderation's 'other'—'extremism'—to see that that this is not the case. Also, what of ridicule and chastisement, as in the case of *Charlie Hebdo*? There were certainly acknowledgements in my data of *others* engaging in ridicule and extreme behaviour,[149] of interviewees being on the receiving end of some of this, or at least witnessing it, and there are also hints of ridicule in some statements.[150] These 'exceptions to the rule' raise questions as to why alternative tactics did not emerge in my data. Some methodological reasons for this might be that, for reasons discussed in **Chapter 3**, I did not have access to groups who could be described as particularly 'marginalized' in the Southside. These alternative tactics are also caught up in the dominant discourse of moderation and so are othered: indifference is a more 'acceptable' response, in this context, when speaking about the positives of an area to a stranger[151] and it also befits the genre of the conversation (a formal interview). Sociologically, the discourses above also attest to the relative, perceived invisibility of 'religion' in the Southside—with, therefore, the concomitant invisibility of 'bad religion' against which to more forcefully articulate one's position. More important, however, is the nature of the 'community' in the Southside (as discussed in **Chapter 3**). Although there is a significant core population, the area is marked by transience, with students coming and going, and the area serving as an intermediate stage in

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[148] For more on this, see Cotter (2016).

[149] A42, J20, Q51 and T47–48

[150] K63, L66, M20 and S34.

[151] And we must remember that my sampling technique involved finding informants who were invested in the Southside in some way.

young families' moves up the property ladder towards the leafy suburbs. As such, although there are significant numbers of people who might be classified as 'ethnic' or 'religious' minorities, the constant flux of the area, and the dominance of the student industry, mitigate against the segregation of the Southside into different 'communities', and thus diminish the attendant mobilization of resentment that might be expected in other areas of the city that might be 'split along one central, typically ethnic or religious, fault line' (Hewstone et al. 2007, 108). Further methodological reflection will follow in **Chapter 6**, but suffice to say there may be more going on here than meets the eye.

To sum up the discourses on moderation, it is helpful to return to an example already discussed: the 'trypraying' advert. When discussing this advert, Richard described how the image 'doesn't offend me, [...] it's not getting at people, [...] it's not one of these "We're right, you're wrong" type of statements' (Richard, D28), implying that this is an area where it is inappropriate to make normative statements. Aoife placed it alongside similar 'religion-related' campaigns, stating 'I don't necessarily think it's any worse than certain bus adverts that atheists have put up as well,' but emphasising that 'it is good that people of any faith are interested in outreach of some kind' (Aoife, L41). Here, Richard invokes the dominant discourse of moderation, whereby moderate expressions of 'religion' that do not make demands or impose upon the generalized user of civic space can be viewed with indifference. Conversely, public expressions of 'strong' or 'abnormal' religion[152]—when judged against a hegemonic, moderate, post-Christian secularity—are problematic. Aoife's extolling of 'religious outreach' invokes this discourse through an inversion—there is

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[152] Or, one could argue, of *any* religion, given that the public expressions that are noticed are not those of 'mainstream Christianity' which has essentially become a 'private matter' (Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 57–78; also Bruce 1995, 92; 2014b, 17).

a presumption of indifference on the part of 'people of any faith' towards civic space, and this presumption is challenged by the advert in a manner that Aoife deems of relevance and benefit to the general (secular) populace.[153] Aoife's comments also allude to similar reservations in the UK media, a 'dominant discourse in which some versions of atheism and secularism are conceptualized as unwanted and a potential threat to society' (Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 116). This is, they argue, a relatively recent development, as back in the early 1980s 'atheism and secularism […] were not seen as a threat or enemy of the Churches' (2013, 169).

As evinced in the discourses on *Power*, this further invokes a pervasive underlying discourse on liberal and moderate, Christian or secular, messages as acceptable and inoffensive; they are compatible with the secular state and with the norms of civic space and can thus almost be ignored. However, alien messages, such as those of (non-moderate) Muslims, Atheists, Scientologists, or American televangelists cannot be ignored so easily. They should, according to the dominant discourse of moderation, keep themselves to themselves and steer clear of the liberal, tolerant public space of the Southside. This is a perfect exemplar of what Aaron Hughes calls the 'rhetoric of authenticity' that is dominant in public discourse about religion, whereby 'good religion' which is 'egalitarian, progressive, pluralistic, democratic, and so on' is constructed as 'the real or authentic version' and set against its dichotomous opposite, 'bad religion' (2015, xiv–xv). We also see this rhetoric in, for example, the writings of 'New Atheists' such as Sam Harris (e.g. 2007) and philosophers such as Rawls and Habermas (see March, in W. Brown et al. 2015). Similar analysis has been offered by Bruce (2014a, 119–35), Fitzgerald (2015a; 2015b), Hjelm (2014b), Martin (2010), Modood (2007), Swain (2016), and others.

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[153] As we shall see in **Chapter 6**, here we have a hint that 'the secular' in the Southside might be discursively demarcated by its absence, i.e. in the presumed position of the unmarked 'normal'.

5.4.3 Summative Discussion

I began my discussion of the discourses on *Civic Space* above by referring to the discourses of multiculturalism and moderation as those discourses which most explicitly intersected with the religion-related field, clearly emphasizing that these discourses pertain to the religion-related field in the Southside in a similar manner to the discourses on *Power*.

The first strand constructed the Southside as multicultural and heterogeneous. For the most part this diversity was celebrated as good for the Southside and for the individual, with intolerance and extreme views discursively placed outside its boundaries. Other discourses in this strand inverted this positivity, seeing multiculturalism as oppressive political-correctness, and negatively assessing some of the manifestations of this multiculturalism. The second strand focused on strategies and tactics for managing this diversity, with a dominant strategic discourse of moderation marginalizing exclusivity claims and 'extreme' positions, being negotiated through entangled tactical discourses of indifference. This brief summary demonstrates once again that these discourses are not inherently religion-related: they concern the nature of (appropriate) interpersonal interaction in general, in the Southside and beyond. However, it is also clearly the case that these discourses are not only entangled in the religion-related field in a manner reflective of the Southside's 'local particularity' (Jenkins 1999, 77, see **Chapter 6**) but, in the case of the discourses on multiculturalism, this entanglement runs much deeper.

In the discourses of multiculturalism, the diversity that was being 'accommodated' by the Southside is discussed in terms of the 'other' sights, sounds, smells and—particularly in the case of the Mosque Kitchen—tastes experienced by

social actors in the Southside's shared public spaces.[154] As Vassenden and Andersson found in their research in Grønland, Oslo, in particular contexts 'religiosity' can, in many ways, be 'hidden by whiteness' resulting in differences in 'interactional freedom and constraints, when compared to non-white religious persons' (2011, 590). Similar dynamics can be seen in the interplay between the religion-related field and the discourses of multiculturalism in the Southside. These dynamics extend beyond non-normative skin colour to non-normative clothing, language, food, practices, etc. in such a manner as to construct the Southside once again as post-Christian and secular. Despite the theoretical interchangeableness of religion-related terms, in the Southside the normative position from which levels of multiculturalism are judged is one of white, Scottish, post-Christian secularity. Further, despite the discourses on multiculturalism being theoretically 'a-religious', it remains the case that (as acknowledged above) in academic, policy, and popular discourse in the twenty-first century UK, it is remarkably difficult to speak about cultural difference without invoking 'religion'. It remains in the popular imaginary as a prominent arena for clashes of cultures (cf. Huntington 2011), despite this discourse arguably lacking an empirical basis (Sharify-Funk 2013).

Turning to the discourses of moderation, similar dynamics are in operation, whereby non-moderate, normative, religion-related discourses are demonized through the strategic discourse of moderation. This discourse constructs the Southside along liberal, post-Christian secular lines, yet simultaneously demonizes non-moderate expressions of all religion-related phenomena, be they 'Christian', 'Islamic', 'Atheist' or 'Secularist'. Indeed, as Knott, Poole and Taira argue, this correlates with a dominant view in the UK whereby both 'campaigning atheism and creationism are

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[154] More specifically on this in the discourses on *Lived Religion* in **Chapter 6**.

unwelcome' in public space (2013, 110). However, the very standards for what counts as 'moderate' or 'non-moderate' are inflected by the particular make-up of the religion-related field in the Southside. 'Defining social problems and their solutions then becomes a question of power: who gets to define "bad" and "good" religion?' (Hjelm 2014b, 214) In this case, these discourses further demonstrate the importance of looking beyond the terminology and supposed 'religious' or 'non-religious' character of the discourses, in order to see the underlying structure, and to avoid reifying (one section of) the religion-related field.

5.5   Conclusion

I began this chapter by reintroducing the reader to my inductive process and to the Southside of Edinburgh, before presenting two groups of discourses at length, those on *Power* and *Civic Space.* These discourses included those focusing on hierarchies and power relationships (individual versus the state, and local versus external forces), the place of Christianity in the Southside (decline, hegemony, and peripheral status), the oppression connected with 'religion' and 'religion-related' terms, multiculturalism, moderation, and indifference. In each of these cases, I argued that these discourses—even those on Christian decline, etc— were effectively 'a-religious' in that they can be 'described and analysed without any reference to religious phenomena' (Quack 2014, 446). These 'a-religious' discourses were entangled with the religion-related field in the Southside in different ways, with some of these connections seeming much more entangled than others. Indeed, much as this 'a-religious' description and analysis can occur at a theoretical level, the local particularity of many of these discourses (or the 'national particularity', in the case of the discourses on multiculturalism), means that it would be difficult and disingenuous

to give an account of these discourses without making reference to 'religion'. What we can say is that a) these discourses were contextually coherent, lending support to my broader argument for treating 'religion' and 'non-religion' as part of the same 'religion-related' field of discourse; and, b) that this religion-related field was entangled with a number of other discourses that were theoretically 'a-religious', but became religion-related due to points of entanglement dictated by the specificities of my data, i.e. the Southside of Edinburgh.

A further question that I sought to address above was whether the religion-related discourses in Southside maintained their structure irrespective of the particular cluster of discursive objects involved. In some cases, this appeared to be the case, with the strategic discourse of moderation and tactical discourses of indifference remaining intact regardless of the identifications of the interlocutors. In other words, the dominant model of 'appropriate' conduct in the civic spaces of the Southside is such that it applies equally to all subject positions within the religion-related field. However, in other cases, as with my point above concerning the 'a-religious' character of these discourses, this interchangeability of discursive objects remains more theoretical than empirical. Discourses on secularization in the Southside, whilst theoretically concerning the loss and/or maintenance of power in the local religion-related field, are intrinsically inflected with Christianity in this context. Thus, we return once more to 'local particularity' (Jenkins 1999, 77) and the importance of looking beyond the specifics of the terminology in play to more fruitfully map the discursive dynamics and entanglements in the 'religion-related' field.

It is to this 'local particularity' that we turn in the following chapter, in which I further develop these arguments through presenting the discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment, Lived Religion,* and *Religion and Social Identity.*

CHAPTER 6

DISCOURSE, (NON-)RELIGION AND LOCALITY

RELIGION-RELATED DISCOURSES IN EDINBURGH'S SOUTHSIDE II

6.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced two of the religion-related discourse groupings in the contemporary Southside, the discourses on *Power* and *Civic Space*. These discourses were utilized to address some of the theoretical questions with which I began this thesis, particularly focusing upon the utility of treating 'non-religion' as part of a contextual religion-related discursive field, the intersections of this field with other fields of discourse, and the potential interchangeability of religion-related discursive objects in the field. I concluded that, in the case of the discourses on *Power* and *Civic Space,* these were discourses that were not inherently religion-related, and which did not necessitate particular configurations of religion-related discursive objects. However, I also argued that the particularity of the Southside (both as a locality, and within a UK national context) meant that some discourses were more entangled in the religion-related field than others, and organized with particular configurations of religion-related discursive objects, *in the context of the contemporary Southside.*

In this chapter, I aim to do three things: first, to present the discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment, Lived Religion,* and *Religion and Social Identity*; second, to assess the role that the Southside has played in the production of these discourses, as well as those outlined in **Chapter 5**; and third, to reflect on the conversation this allows between studies in different contexts. It is not insignificant that it is 'religion' and not 'non-religion' that features in the titles of this chapter's

discourses. Indeed, as shall be seen below, non-religion is conspicuously absent throughout these discursive groupings, a point that will be explored at the end of this chapter in relation to the conclusions of **Chapter 5.**

A key concept in this chapter is 'locality', which I introduced in **Chapter 3** as a framework for organizing my discursive analysis. There, I drew on Kim Knott's work to define a locality as a material or discursive space that is meaningful for the social actors within it, 'important for individual and group identity', and is also amenable to academic study due to its size and relative internal coherence (1998, 283–84). I argued that viewing localities as discursive fields facilitates a social constructivist approach to group and individual identifications, and helps us to avoid reifying contested religion-related categories, whilst simultaneously providing a relatively bounded and coherent context within which to conduct analysis. In order to more fully assess the role that the Southside has played in the production of religion-related discourse, this chapter places the present study into conversation with other locality-based studies. Although reference will be made to other studies throughout,[155] I begin by briefly introducing studies by Martin Stringer (2013a) and Timothy Jenkins (1999) which act as my main comparative cases, and which receive significant attention later in this chapter. I make these introductions at this point in order to encourage the reader to begin considering the impact of locality upon religion-related discourse, to contextualize the references I shall make to these studies in the coming sections, and to facilitate a smoother transition to the comparative exercise that follows.

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[155] Particularly to studies in Hackney (Wessendorf 2014b; 2014a), Amsterdam (Beekers and Tamimi Arab 2016) and an anonymous London neighbourhood (Wells and Watson 2005).

6.2   Comparative Case Studies

In Martin Stringer's *Discourses on Religious Diversity* (2013a), and in further elaborations (2013b; 2014)*,* he paints a picture of some of the prevalent everyday discourses on 'religious diversity' which he and his doctoral students encountered over several years working in Birmingham, Manchester, London and other cities, bringing a large body of variously 'circumstantial data' (Stringer 2013a, 2) into conversation with new and innovatively gathered material (Stringer 2013b)[156] and broader academic literature from anthropology and urban studies. It is worth noting that Stringer downplays interview data due to a desire to access unprompted, everyday discourses, and as such the voices of the people of Birmingham and elsewhere are somewhat absent from his text, resulting in a book which purports to be analysing discourse yet engages in comparatively little formal discursive analysis. Despite these differences in methodological and substantive focus—'discourses on religious diversity' as opposed to 'religion-related discourse'—Stringer's work shares much in common with my own, and his book offers a highly relevant contemporary source for comparative material. In particular, my comparison will focus upon his presentation of the discourses on religious diversity in the Birmingham districts of Highgate and Handsworth.

As presented by Stringer, Highgate is an inner-city residential area that is clearly defined geographically, 'relatively simple' in terms of religious diversity, and has had a relatively stable population since the 1970s—something which is 'unusual for an inner-urban area of this kind' (2013a, 40). The area is dominated by the towers of St Alban's Anglican church and of the Central Mosque (these forming the locus of discussion in the third chapter of his book), although it also includes an active but

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[156] See discussion in **Chapter 3**.

visually unobtrusive Baptist church, and a Roman Catholic church on its periphery. According to Stringer's reckoning of the 2001 census figures, less than half of the area's population identified as 'White', with roughly 45% identifying as 'Christian', 27% as 'Muslim', and 22% being placed in 'None or not stated' (2013a, 41). However, due to disparities between boundaries in census areas and what Stringer reckons to be Highgate 'proper', he estimates that the 'non-religious' population could be anything from one third to fifty percent (2013a, 44).

In the grand scheme of the United Kingdom, Highgate might therefore seem to exemplify high levels of diversity. However, this pales in comparison to the district of Handsworth, which Stringer conceptualizes using the notion of 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007) which is 'obvious and celebrated through the stores of the Soho Road' (Stringer 2013a, 56). The Soho Road—the main artery of Handsworth— has received increased attention in recent years (Hingley 2011) due to the clustering of 'religious and community spaces reflecting considerable diversity' (Stringer 2013a, 54) in a manner which Stringer judges to be much more fluid and integrated than the 'ethnoracial enclaves' encountered, for example, by Livezey in Chicago (Stringer 2013a, 53–55; cf. Livezey 2000). According to Stringer's reckoning of the 2001 census figures, Handsworth's population identifies as roughly 32% 'Christian', 29% 'Muslim', 12% 'Sikh' and 8% 'Hindu', with 17% being placed in 'None' and 'Not stated' (2013a, 59). A relatively high proportion of the area's residents (35%) were born outside of the European Union, and around 20% of residents identified as 'White British' (2013a, 58). The (super-)diversity of the area is surrounded by a variety of competing discourses, being seen as 'something to be proud of' (2013a, 63) by many of the residents, while the 'Handsworth of popular discourse [...] is characterized by its reputation for the level of racism and riots that were associated with the area'

(2013a, 64) in 1981, 1985, 1991, 1995 and more recently in August 2011 (2013a, 57–58).

As presented by Stringer, and as we shall see below, Highgate and Handsworth act as useful, contemporary comparative localities for my work in the Southside, sharing much in common with it in terms of the discursive dynamics at play, yet beneficially differing in their 'local particularity' (Jenkins 1999, 77) and notably higher measures of (super-)diversity. It is with this notion of 'local particularity'—the 'local ways of doing things and of thinking, ways of organising continuity and coping with misfortune which, while they are not in fact unique to any particular locality are tied in to the actors' perceptions to the experience of that locality' (Jenkins 1999, 77)—that we move to my final comparative case study, as presented in Timothy Jenkins' *Religion in English Everyday Life* (1999).

The key chapter here, 'The Country Church—The Case of St. Mary's, Comberton' (1999, 41–73), provides a stimulating examination of the 'stereotype of the country church' as both flourishing and in crisis and decay, demonstrating that discourses surrounding the notion of 'the village' are, in this context, intimately entangled with discourses on 'the country church' (1999, 43–45). Comberton lies four miles south of Cambridge, and its population grew from a relatively stable 300-600 individuals in the decades up to the 1950s, to over 2,300 by the time of Jenkins' study in the 1990s (1999, 45, 49). This population explosion has seen a change in the social composition of the village (1999, 60) that is recognized by all residents (1999, 50), resulting in an 'economy of fantasies' surrounding an opposition between 'villager' and 'incomer'. The village church, which has been located on the same site in some form since 1100, is caught up in this 'economy of fantasies', whereby

> each model of the village perceives Comberton in terms of villager and incomer, but [...]
> in each case the distinction means different things. While from above the class divide, the

> difference can appear to rest upon differing life styles, aspirations and use of
> opportunities (for instance), from below, it appears to be about power, privilege and those
> things to which one is subjected. (1999, 57)

Although the nature of Jenkins' text is such that he doesn't provide percentage breakdowns of the population in terms of 'religious identification'[157] and other characteristics, it is safe to say that Comberton would be placed towards the more homogeneous end of an imagined continuum of diversity, with the Southside and Highgate respectively being placed further towards the heterogeneous end, and Handsworth acting almost as a synonym for 'diversity'. These differences in levels of diversity and in local particularity, combined with a discursive thrust and an interest in the 'everyday', make Jenkins' presentation of Comberton, and the discursive entanglements of St Mary's, a further intriguing comparative case study for my work on the Southside of Edinburgh. As discussion now turns to three further groups of religion-related discourses in the Southside—the discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment*, *Lived Religion*, and *Religion and Social Identity*—these differing contexts should be kept in mind as we reflect on the 'local particularity' of the discourses presented below.

6.3   Religion, Space, and the Built Environment

In order to provide a tangible illustration of the discourses at work in relation to *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment*, and to allow the voices of Southsiders to be heard, I begin with an extract from my interview with Ella and present my analysis of it, before proceeding to a broader discussion. I adopt this same strategy later in this chapter, with an extract from an interview with Naomi, and in **Chapter 7** when I introduce the reader to Alan.

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[157] Indeed, this question wasn't asked on the census at the time of publication.

6.3.1 'It looks too much like a church…'

The extract presented here is a section of roughly three minutes from my interview with Ella, recorded at the Southside Community Centre in May 2014. Ella is in her mid-seventies, identifies as a 'Roman Catholic'—or rather, as she jokingly states, 'we're roamin', roaming Catholics, I go anywhere […] I go all over the place. […] My husband's in a choir and it sings in different places so wherever they're singing we go' (E24). Although she currently lives by the seaside in Portobello, a half hour bus journey away from the Southside, she describes her relationship to the area as follows:

> Yes, well to me the Southside as, em, <name> used to say […] "Do you really get sick when you're outwith the Southside? Do you really feel ill?" […] And in a way I sorta do. […] I really love the Southside, and I'm not here now, and I would love to get back. […] I was brought up here. My father was born and brought, brought up in the same stair actually. My grandparents stayed in that stair. My great grandparents stayed in that stair. Eh, so it goes back to the nineteenth century. (E3)

This extract begins about twenty minutes into the interview, and we have just begun the photo elicitation exercise, and are discussing the image of the very building where our interview was taking place:

> **C:** Yeah, um, I guess one way I can ask about these images is sort of why do you think, knowing what I'm studying, why I might have included that as part of the interview?
>
> **E:** Well, I wonder whether you think it should still be a church, or whether it, it... to me, em, I think they should change the front of it because... and make it into a, a Community Centre, em, <hushed> it looks too much like a church. […] Okay, I don't care [that] it's a listed building, I really don't care, I don't know why it's listed to be honest, but that's my personal opinion. But I think you could change the front. I think you could leave the gothic pinnacles and everything but they could change the front and make it more inviting.
>
> **C:** Mmm. So this sort of...
>
> **E:** It could put some people off.
>
> **C:** Yeah.
>
> **E:** It certainly put the, uh, the uh, <pause> what do you, what's the, one of the, uh, from the Mosque... the new man came up...

C: Okay?

E: And he came in here coz he thought this was a church. He went looking for the priest. Now that says something that that still looks just like a, like a church...

C: Yeah.

E: Which might stop some people coming in.

C: Mmm. Well, yeah, just like, yeah when I was here a few weeks ago and you were discussing the whole foyer and...

E: Yeah.

C: And there's something about the, the, the grills and everything and the... it just looks quite prison-like as well, they're not...

E: Mmm hmm. I would, I would completely change it.

C: Mmm. But sort of thinking then around that into the, the broader, broader issue there of, of church buildings being re-used for, for other purposes, so... what, what do you think about that? There are other examples, and...

E: They're only a building. They're only bricks and mortar, you know? Em, but I don't, I [...] well, I think if they took it down and put up [...] the Appleton Tower... If they brought that down and put up [...] the Appleton Tower I would not be pleased. That is better than the Appleton Tower.

C: Mmm. Like what they did at the, the Dick Vet... wasn't there a church on the corner there?

E: It was a beautiful church...

C: Yeah.

E: Yeah, it was a, it was a lovely church, it really was. It was, it was quite outstanding where it was, you know, with the, the sort of Melville Drive and all the trees and everything and this church on the corner. I always thought it was a sort of red stone church but that might be my imagination colouring it, but it had steps at the front up to the, the front door, because I always ran up the steps and down the other side, I remember. And I did the same with the Dick Vet steps, I'd have to run up and down. I never walked right along.

C: I love, I love it when you have those sort of little memories of things...

E: <Laughs>

The first time we hear from Ella in this extract, she is responding to a question that I asked each interviewee after initially asking them to describe to me what was going on in each picture: 'Why do you think I […] might have included that [image] as part of

the interview?' Her initial response indicates a tacit assumption that someone who is interested in the study of 'religion' is likely to have an invested, conservative, Christian agenda—'I wonder whether you think it should still be a church'—and conflating 'religion' with Christianity.[158] Furthermore, this statement implies that this building is no longer a church—it may be a *former* church building, but its function has changed. Its identity comes from its current function, from the use to which it is put.

Ella continues to focus upon the Community Centre's appearance, claiming that 'it looks too much like a church' and that because of this 'it could put some people off' and isn't as inviting as it could be. Her hushed tone combined with her mitigating 'to me' and 'that's my personal opinion' suggest that she is aware that this might be perceived as a controversial opinion.[159] This could be due to a perception that others might consider interfering with a church building, or the notion that a church building might somehow be uninviting, to be in some way sacrilegious. The implication, however, is that former church buildings are confusing and infused with their former role, implicated in discourses on 'church' as 'not for us', and that Ella sees the exclusivity claims that are associated with 'religious' buildings as inappropriate for a building that purports to serve the (whole) community.[160] Furthermore, there is some negativity here directed towards the 'they' that *could* do something about the building's uninviting appearance but have, instead, granted it 'listed' status. These outsiders are blamed, presumably through a lack of local knowledge, for reinforcing boundaries and divisions.[161] Although we can tell from other points in Ella's interview that she is very invested in the preservation of local

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[158] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand I.*
[159] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Civic Space: Strand II.*
[160] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand I.*
[161] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand II.*

heritage, her views here clearly indicate that this should not come at any cost—her desire for preservation is functional and community-focused, and not solely directed towards the built infrastructure of the Southside.

At 'It certainly put the…' Ella turns to what she sees a paradigmatic example of the confusion surrounding the building's identity. She grapples for the word 'Imam' or equivalent, and recounts a story of how 'the new man […] came in here coz he thought this was a church. He was looking for the priest.' Whether or not there is any truth to this story, there is a lot going on here. First of all, this is a story that has circulated among users of the Community Centre, suggesting that the appearance of a 'Muslim' leader was considered an unusual occurrence. Not only was this unusual, but it is explained away by his apparent interest in connecting with another *religious* community, and not with 'the community' in general. Here we can detect perceptions of the visible 'otherness' of Islam in the Southside, and perhaps an underlying discourse on 'religion' not being particularly relevant to or interested in the wider community.[162] Secondly, an underlying implication is that if even a religious leader thought that this building was still functioning as a religious building, then there must be something very religious about its current appearance. Not only does this invest certain individuals with authority over, and expertise in, the whole religion-related field, but it also adds nuance to Ella's notion that the building might 'put some people off'. Here, the 'new man' from the Mosque is constructed as only being interested in the building because he thought it was a church, and being 'put off' by discovering its current function. Ella's problem is thus not with churches or religious buildings—far from it: her problem is with ambiguity, and with this ambiguity getting in the way of the Community Centre fulfilling its purpose for the whole community. *In this context*,

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[162] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand I* and *Civic Space: Strand I.*

religion has become a barrier and source of division.

My interjection concerning the foyer and the grills, referring back to a previous gathering at the Community Centre, serves two main purposes. First of all, it can be read as a means of empathizing with Ella, showing her that I share her view, that I am not one of 'them', and also recalling a shared experience as a means of enhancing rapport and my own legitimacy. Secondly, it seemingly comes from a desire to add nuance to the discussion: it's not that this building is uninviting simply because it looks like a church, but also because it is seemingly particularly grim, fortified and uninviting apart from its former function. This is not insignificant, in that it once again places some of the blame for this unfortunate appearance upon the City Council, and upon the 'powers that be' who have listed the building and limited the ability of the local team to do their jobs more effectively.[163]

I then turn discussion back to 'the broader issue […] of church buildings being re-used for […] other purposes' and ask for Ella's opinion. Her immediate and candid response that 'they're only a building' indicates that this is a premeditated thought, and that she sees nothing inherently sacred about a church any more than any other building. Presumably, how a building is used is more important to her. In her further comments, we once again see the ominous, hypothetical 'they' being constructed as thoughtlessly interfering with the built environment of the Southside, and potentially tearing down this structure to erect something inappropriate (like the Appleton Tower).[164] Once again, it is external forces that are granted the agency in this

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[163] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand II*.

[164] The Appleton Tower is one of the University of Edinburgh's most prominent buildings in the Southside, and a prime example of 1960s post-war architecture. It is widely renowned as the University's 'ugliest' building (Edinburgh Evening News 2015), and tied to an embarrassingly premature demolition of tenements on Crichton Street and Marshall Street which, due to lack of funds, resulted in a large 'gap site' for over forty years (Fenton 2002).

hypothetical scenario,[165] but we also gather that Ella considers preservation of heritage to be quite a good thing. Presumably, however, if a better or more useful building was constructed in the place of the Community Centre this would be okay by her.

In the final section, I raise the spectre of an analogous incident in the Southside, where the former building of Hope Park United Presbyterian Church (1867) was demolished in 1948, and a tower block erected in 1972 as part of the expansion of the University of Edinburgh's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.[166] Immediately, this invocation triggers pleasant and vivid memories for Ella. Not only does she remember the building in its surroundings, but she internalizes and re-experiences this memory through her recollections of running up and down the church steps. Although she admits that her imagination may be providing some of the specifics of this memory, clearly the destruction of this former Southside landmark is bound up in memories and embodied experiences that are quite distinct from its status as a 'religious' building.

6.3.2 Discourses on Religion, Space, and the Built Environment

Given that the focus of these interviews was upon a particular locality, and that the incorporation of a photo elicitation exercise utilizing visual representations of 'religion' in the Southside into the interview schedule (such as we have just seen in Ella's discussion), it is not surprising that a major theme in these interviews concerned the interplay between religion, space, and the built environment. However, Knott has argued that, despite tensions in local specificity and global connections, historic presence and new innovations, 'if you ask people to identify religion in an urban

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[165] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand II.*

[166] At the intersection of Hope Park Terrace, Melville Drive, and Summerhall Crescent. See http://www.ed.ac.uk/vet/about/history and Wright (2011, 23).

context most will point to a building' (2015, 18). Given that interviewees in the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project*[167] were not asked such questions, with interview schedules that were much more focused on the individual than on 'religion' in general, it is somewhat unsurprising that this is the first time we have encountered these discourses in this thesis. In the Southside, these discourses were primarily invoked in three discursive strands, relating to a) utility and heritage, b) the 'identity' or 'character' of the Southside, and c) the subjective inner experience of users of the Southside.

Strand I: Religious Buildings, Utility and Heritage

The first of these strands focused almost entirely upon the (former) church buildings in the Southside, and their place within an 'urban heritage economy' (Knott, Krech, and Meyer 2016, 127). Ella's evocative and romanticized description of running up and down the steps of Hope Park United Presbyterian Church is suggestive of the tone of this strand. My Southsiders were unanimous in the view that the historic churches of the Southside are beautiful buildings that are embedded in the (hi)story of the area and thus, by virtue of these two attributes, worthy of preservation. As Ivan demonstrates, this is quite apart from their perceived status as (former) religious buildings: 'I don't always look at them as places that I associate with faith or spirituality or anything like that, I just view them as local landmarks. And making sure they're in use can be a really important thing' (Ivan, B15).[168] This echoes Knott, Krech and Meyer's observation that this 'heritage presence rarely renders the theological or ritual particularities of religious traditions, but it does foreground the place of religion

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[167] See **Chapter 4.**

[168] Although, as shall be seen below, this 'religious' factor was more significant for some than for others; see also A16-17, B14-15, D19, E13, H63, I30, M19, O20, and U15.

in the history of cities' (2016, 127). Indeed, as we have seen in Ella's invocation of the infamous 'Appleton Tower', the Southside's churches were symbolic for many of an idealized past where buildings were built to last and have character, as opposed to modern 'architectural abominations' (Naomi, O20).[169] Significantly, the (former) churches that were granted this 'beautiful' and 'historic' status were those that *looked like churches*, i.e. like 'a rocket with two afterburners' (Peter, C19). Other veritable churches, such as the *True Jesus Church* (which has occupied a former tenement block on Gifford Park since 1976),[170] or the *Salvation Army* premises on East Adam Street (which was opened in 1987), didn't feature in anyone's 'religious map' of the Southside.[171] The two most prominent buildings associated with 'other' religions in the local imaginary—'the synagogue' and 'the mosque'—were not constructed in quite the same manner. The synagogue is much less visible due to both its design, and its location on Salisbury road (a relatively quiet, one-way, residential street). However, when it was mentioned at all, it was either simply acknowledged[172] or constructed as an important part of the Southside's history: 'to me the synagogue always has been [part of the Southside]' (Julian, A6).[173] The Central Mosque, on the other hand, whilst occasionally being mentioned off-handedly,[174] features much more prominently in the imaginary of the Southside, being variously described as 'new' (Peter, C35),[175] 'in your face' (Aisha, N24), 'obvious' (Eileen, J34), and associated with (potential) controversy[176] or the local institution of Mosque Kitchen,[177]—points

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[169] Also A14, A16 D19–20, E14, K28 and M8.

[170] http://www.tjc.us/library/DetailLibrary.aspx?langid=1&itemid=12702 (Accessed 20/09/2015).

[171] John did mention the Salvation Army premises as a geographical marker in his map of the territory covered by 'Newington Churches Together' (Q4). It is not insignificant that John, being a church leader, was the only interviewee to mention this.

[172] A11, C13, E28, F29, I28, J35, M42, N43, O17, O22, R12, T18, and U13.

[173] Also F30, Q25–26.

[174] A6, A11, E16, E21, F51, H51.

[175] Also E18, U21.

[176] D22, H77

to which I shall return in the second strand below.

Related to this universal desire for church buildings in the Southside to be preserved is another cluster of discourses on their perceived usefulness for the broader community. For instance, when reflecting on the image of the Southside Community Centre, all of my interviewees expressed positive views towards the fact that this particular (former) church, and many others like it, were being used by the community,[178] and through this use were being preserved as part of the Southside's architectural heritage. This reuse as a community centre was seen as 'a great idea because it's sorta still based on what it was built for' (Alan, P8),[179] reflecting broader discourses on churches as resources which are, and *should be* resources for the whole community, and on 'proper' Christianity as something which is oriented towards 'good works'.[180] Such notions echo Davie's analysis of a correlation between long-term establishment of national churches and a 'welfare-view of religion' (2000b; cf. Schenk, Burchardt, and Wohlrab-Sahr 2015, 6; Woodhead 2012a).[181] One interviewee wryly stated that 'it's better used as it is now than as a church' (Richard, D17). Others invoked a clear hierarchy of (in)appropriate potential uses, some for moral or religious reasons—'if you then take what was a religious place and [some]where people went to worship God and change it into something like a club, I'm […] not so comfortable with that, […] it's my religious view […] you know, like the consumption of alcohol and things is forbidden within Islam' (Aisha, N21)[182]—and still others for more 'practical' reasons—'this building was used as a carpet storage centre at one point and I didn't like the thought of that, but now it's *a useful place*' (Eileen, emphasis my

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[177] G24, I27

[178] For example, B15, D16–17, H63, R17 and U15, even if the 'church-like' appearance might 'put some people off' as Ella suggested (E15 cf. J16).

[179] See also B15 and T19.

[180] H73, J29, L41–42, Q10–11 and T29.

[181] And also Greg Smith on Tony Blair and David Blunkett instantiating this view (2004, 193–95).

[182] See also M20, N20, and R16.

own).[183] Whatever the specifics of the discourses invoked, a common theme among these Southsiders was that these buildings should be for the whole community, regardless of (non)religious identification. Seemingly they can best fulfil this function in the contemporary, multicultural and multi-religious Southside either through no longer being exclusively occupied by a single religious group (or any religious group at all),[184] or through broadening their remit and opening their doors to serve the whole Southside community (L33): '[That] their buildings remain central to many communities without, without the religious aspect is, em, is a good thing' (Ivan, B15)

Although we can already sense that underlying these discourses on heritage and utility there 'may lie deep differences about how religious sites should be maintained and for what purpose' (Knott, Krech, and Meyer 2016, 127), it is significant that these differences do not dominate in the Southside, and that these discourses appear to be part of the discursive repertoire across the religion-related field.

Strand II: Religion, the Built Environment, and Southside Identity

> Edinburgh 'is full of these stony fingers, Christian steeples poking up... the odd minaret just showing we've maybe moved on a little…' (Naomi, O19)

Jan Blommaert argues that physical spaces are also social, cultural and political spaces: they influence patterns of social behaviour, always belong to someone, are filled with history, and are 'space[s] of power controlled by, as well as controlling, people' (2013, 3). The second strand concerns such dynamics, focusing on the entanglement of perceived manifestations of religion in the built environment with the 'identity' or 'character' of the Southside. These discourses are intimately bound up

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[183] See also A16, T21, U15
[184] D16-18, E15, H63, J16, P8, S12, U15, contra R17.

with the discourses on *Power* discussed in **Chapter 5**, as they relate to the power that buildings deemed 'religious' were perceived to exert over the locality. There I demonstrated at length how the Southside is imbued with a lingering Christian character for many of my informants—there are 'traces of the Christian past in [this] urban space'(Knott, Krech, and Meyer 2016, 129). The statement above from Naomi contributed to my case in that context; however it also serves to neatly illustrate a key dynamic whereby 'religious' buildings in the Southside are perceived as making spatial claims on territory by dominating the skyline. Not only do these symbolically serve as contested markers of belonging,[185] but they also act as potent indicators of religious diversity[186] in a manner similar to the dominant view encountered by Kong in Singapore, whereby the diverse array of religious buildings was seen as 'evidence' of 'tolerance and acceptance' (1993, 33).[187] Yet despite this, Christianity retains its hegemonic position. In Fred's words,

> …multicultural is a word that I've used quite a lot obviously, but at the same time you're still, it's still quite obvious about its Christian roots. […] There's still quite a lot of kind of an idea of, eh, historically it being quite Christian based and it, it still is these days. (W40)

As alluded to in the first strand, non-Christian buildings—where acknowledged at all—seemed particularly worthy of comment, with an underlying discourse of the threat of Islam 'taking over' certain parts of the Southside (and Edinburgh more widely). Indeed, the 'appearance of mosques in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee may be the most striking visual sign of change in Scotland's religious culture' (Bruce 2014a, 3). For example, when discussing the image of a halal butcher in Nicolson Square, Brian hesitantly stated '…that, to me, I think could almost be

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[185] O20, R19-20, S33, T23, V28, W7 and W39. See also Beekers and Tamimi Arab on the Fatih Mosque in Amsterdam, and the hopes of some that it would join the rank alongside other 'important symbols with regard to dominant narratives about Dutch identity' (2016, 157).

[186] A6, E18, J18, L53, N25, and P10.

[187] See also Gale (2004) on Birmingham, UK.

perceived as being the last straw for that square. And I say that because <pause> of the Islamification of, of that square…' (Brian, V39).[188] While such attitudes are reflective of a UK-wide anxiety about Islam (see, for example, Gilliat-Ray in Bluck et al. 2012, 117–18; Wells and Watson 2005, 268), the manner in which these dynamics generally played out was intimately tied to the particular identifications of the interlocutors concerned: Naomi also saw the area as intimately bound up with Jewish history (O14–15); Fiona, as highly secular (K20–21); John, through his relationships with the former churches (Q4, 7, 15–16, 18, 20, 24–25); Aisha perceived the churches to all be defunct *unless* there were some further evidence of their ongoing use, such as a 'Trypraying' banner (N29); and, as we saw above, Ella viewed the area through the lens of her childhood, lamenting the disappearance of particular churches not as 'religious' buildings, but as buildings long gone that belonged to the Southside. In other words, certain buildings or types of buildings in the Southside were bound up in particular discourses on religion, dependent on the particular lens through which the individuals in question viewed them.

Strand III: Experiencing Religion in the Built Environment

Taking up this subjective element, the third strand concerned the more visceral aspects of my informants' interactions with religion in the Southside, how they *feel* when they interact with elements of the built environment that they deem to be religious. These feelings were once again multifarious, ranging from feelings of threat and intimidation (whether associated with *all* religious spaces, or merely *others'* religious spaces),[189] via feelings of majesty, awe and transcendence,[190] to feelings of togetherness and

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[188] Also H66, K88, N27, N36 and Q32.
[189] E28 and J16.
[190] A27, B18, C18, and V36.

belonging,[191] or of exclusion,[192] that were traced to the community associated with a space, synchronically and diachronically, rather than to the space itself. And, of course, feeling *nothing* (Walter, T36). As a particularly powerful illustration of the complex web of feelings associated with such buildings, Brian said of the Community Centre that

> …that building to me is threatening, it's intimidating, it's inspiring, it's, uh, grand, it's beautiful, uh, it's gothic, it's pointing accusingly at the sky, uh, it's also reaching up to the sky, reaching up to a deity that's being perceived to be up there. (V38)

Most frequently, these perceived manifestations of religion in the built environment were associated with (former) houses of worship, but they were also associated with less obviously 'religious' sites, including graveyards, the Labyrinth in George Square and public houses. For instance, Julian described experiencing similar feelings in *specific* churches—'I don't find that in every church I go into'—and in his Southside back garden (A26–28). However, despite this clear range in the specificities of the feelings involved, and the spaces considered 'religious', each informant operated with a working model for identifying religion in the built environment, associated this model with remembered, embodied and emotional experiences, and was able to utilize this model as a lens through which to retrospectively analyze their experiences in the Southside (cf. Mumford 2015). For example, when Aoife was asked whether she could think of any 'particular points or moments' in the Southside 'that maybe make you feel more, say, agnostic than' other aspects of her 'identity' (Chris, L61), she answered that religion

> …hasn't particularly shaped my experience of the Southside. There are a lot of areas, for instance that community centre that I've walked past pretty much every day that I've lived there… um, I notice the buildings […] especially because some of them are really stunning buildings […but] I never actually went to one, so I can't say what it's like for

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[191] A28, J41, N27, O14, O22, Q20, and R2.

[192] N50

> me going to church in Southside coz I never have. Um, the only real time that I've
> noticed religious feeling is around Christmas, and especially Christmas carol services and
> that kind of thing. Because although I don't necessarily identify as Christian any more, I
> still love Christmas carols. And I still absolutely love carols by candlelight. So I do still
> notice that and I still attend that, and I think it's […] really fun to go to. But […] it isn't a
> huge part of what I've done while I've been in Southside. (L63–65)

As Birgit Meyer argues, perceptions are 'always subject to cultural framing' and 'people learn to direct their attention, tuning out certain stimuli while emphasizing and developing a sensibility toward others, generating certain emotions in the process' (in B. Meyer et al. 2014, 217). The 'cultural framing' in the Southside includes the language of 'religion', which is attached by some to elements of the built environment that 'do more than merely represent' but that 'interplay with bodily sensations' (Beekers and Tamimi Arab 2016, 152; see also B. Meyer 2015, 20). Put simply, 'religion' and 'religious' were meaningful terms for understanding embodied experience in the Southside.

In summary, the discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment* focus on the interaction between the religion-related field and the built environment of the Southside. Southsiders operated with clear understandings of what constituted a 'religious' building, and consistently constructed said buildings as ideally *useful* for the community. These buildings—predominantly churches, due to the history of the area—were perceived to exert power over the area, and to contribute to the Southside's identity, but this perception was also influenced by the subject position of the actors involved. Connected to this were discourses on experiencing religion in the built environment, which demonstrated that 'religion' and 'religious' were meaningful terms for understanding embodied experience in the Southside.

6.3.4 The Role of the Southside

It goes without saying that the specific configurations of these discourses, and the particular objects involved, are the result of the local particularity of the Southside. The discourses in the third strand are focused upon individuals' subjective experiences of the built environment of the Southside and are thus highly idiosyncratic, making it difficult to extrapolate much further at this stage without focusing on a particular site as an in-depth case study. However, the discourses of the first and second strands can be much more easily discussed in relation to this particular locality.

The Southside, as I have already discussed above and in **Chapters 3** and **5**, is imbued for my informants with a 'post-Christian' character, with a significant number of visible church buildings for what is a relatively small area of the city, many of which are no longer being used for 'religious' purposes. The area is also rich with history, but this history is for the most part quite hidden in amongst the urban sprawl, and is spoken of nostalgically by my informants whilst being perceived to be under threat from a variety of malevolent agents such as the City Council and the University of Edinburgh (which, paradoxically, owns and maintains many of the more 'historic' spaces in the Southside). With this context in mind, it is unsurprising that my Southsiders should be so invested in preserving (former) church buildings as heritage. These buildings act as symbols of an idealized past in the face of more recent architectural developments; as connections to a past that is otherwise hidden in the sedimented layers of the Southside story. As these are historic sites, and a significant proportion of the few existing large indoor spaces in this built-up area, Southsiders feel justified in their sense of ownership over these buildings, seeing them as their right; ergo, the desire that they be 'useful' in some way.

That the Southside's churches are implicated in these discourses on heritage

and utility contributes to the general tendency for active Christian congregations in the Southside to fall somewhat under the radar. Yet simultaneously, the sheer dominance of church steeples in the skyline is internalized and felt as spatial claims to territory by Christianity—albeit *historically.* As far as the 'other' religions are concerned, the historic presence of the synagogue on Salisbury Road has allowed it, in many respects, to sink into the unproblematic background alongside the historic churches. This contrasts markedly with the recently perceived arrival of 'Islam' in the built environment of the Southside, instantiated by the mosque and various 'ethnic' shops. That this 'community' has not been granted 'historic' status in the Southside means that the built infrastructure associated with Islam is perceived by many as a threat to the identity of the Southside, and this, combined with broader discourses on the 'problem' of Islam, has perpetuated discourses on the 'Islamification' of the Southside.[193] It is significant that this same threat was not as evident in Handsworth or Highgate, which each have more than five times the proportion of resident 'Muslims' as the Southside. It is also worth noting that 'non-religion', 'the secular' and other concepts were not invoked in these discourses. Indeed, it seems to be that these go unmarked in a (remembered) visual assessment of the Southside—a point to which I shall return at the end of this chapter.

In Highgate, Handsworth and Comberton, the built environment was similarly one of the key areas in which 'religion' was located by residents, yet in each case the discursive dynamics surrounding these buildings were quite different. Turning first to Highgate, Stringer describes a situation whereby 'religion' is primarily perceived through the built environment, by what he estimates to be a majority of 'non-religious' residents, and is generally constructed as foreign, and in negative terms (2013a, 44–

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[193] We must not forget, of course, the positive discourses surrounding diversity in the Southside, as seen in **Chapter 5.**

45). Much as there is a distinction in the Southside between local and external forces, there is a distinction in Highgate between buildings that are 'for us', i.e. for the community, and those which are not. As far as the buildings of St Alban's and the Central Mosque are concerned, the dominant discourse tends to, a) 'link the two together and use the same language about both', and b) hold that 'neither community, neither building, neither religion is "of us"' (2013a, 50). On the other hand, the Baptist church, which doesn't *look like* a religious building, is constructed as being for the community due to high levels of perceived engagement (Stringer 2013a, 46). Thus there is a discursive knot between the communities that use the buildings, the buildings' appearance, and their perceived embeddedness in the locality, that leads to the construction of certain buildings as 'religious' and thus not 'for us' (2013a, 44–48). The Central Mosque and St Alban's are 'representational spaces' in Highgate discourse, in that they are associated with 'preconceived ideological understanding[s] of religion' that lead to their classification as 'religious' and 'therefore to […] a negative attitude to "religion"' (2013a, 52; cf. Knott 2005, 38–40). This is markedly different from the situation amongst my informants, where a much greater number of 'former' church buildings are generally viewed as important historical sites that should be for the whole community, where the 'invisible' religious buildings are precisely that, and where the mosque is singled out for different treatment.

The situation is also markedly different in Handsworth, a district with a much higher degree of diversity, exemplified in its 'sheer multiplicity of religions' (Stringer 2013a, 63). The dominant perception here is that this is an area with religious populations that are resident and active, as opposed to the outsiders who are perceived to use the religious buildings in Highgate (2013a, 69). This 'super-diverse' context facilitates a sense of pride in the diversity of the area, which is accompanied by a

general lack of interest or literacy in the specifics of the religions in question (2013a, 63, 67, 69). In this context, 'sheer multiplicity' facilitates the incorporation of 'religion' into the positive image of the area in a very immediate sense. This contrasts with the generally negative discourse in Highgate, where 'religion' was associated with two particular buildings that were not utilized by the local community, and the more nostalgic, historical and utilitarian discourse that dominates in the Southside.

Finally, we turn to the other end of the 'diversity spectrum' to the situation in Jenkins' presentation of Comberton, where we find the church and the vicar constructed as having obligations to the village as a resource, a right, and a rich patron (Jenkins 1999, 57, 63, 65, 69). As mentioned above, this church is bound up in the dichotomy between villagers and incomers: villagers don't participate in the parish council as a rule, yet expect the patronage of the church; incomers, on the other hand, are aware of their position and do participate (1999, 57, 69). The villagers resent St Mary's as a 'religious' institution (1999, 63), yet expect it to act unequivocally as a social institution (1999, 69). Thus, we have a situation where the discourses on utility, heritage and local identity that are evident in the Southside are also evident in Comberton, but to much more pronounced degree. In Comberton there is a single church, which has a much lengthier historical presence in a much more 'closed' community—it is little wonder that the 'villagers' feel a sense of ownership over this building, and that the 'incomers' recognize its symbolic power and are inclined to greater participation.

To conclude, this brief discussion of the place of the Southside in the discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment,* and comparison with analogous discourses in Highgate, Handsworth and Comberton, has demonstrated that, although the general dynamics of the discourses seem to be mirrored across these

contexts, it is the particularity of the Southside that gives these local discourses their form and content. Some of this local particularity is specifically religion-related in the minds of my informants, such as the number of churches and other 'religious' buildings, while other aspects, such as the sedimented history of the Southside or the local versus external dynamics, are not. For this first group of discourses, it made narrative sense to address the role of the Southside head on, separately from the presentation of the discourses themselves. In my discussion of the discourses on *Lived Religion* and *Religion and Social Identity* below, consideration of the role of the Southside infuses my presentation of the discourses.

6.4   Lived Religion and Social Identity

In the section below, I outline in detail the two groups of discourses that I have titled the discourses on *Lived Religion* and *Religion and Social Identity.* Of particular relevance to this section is the concept of 'conviviality', which has been developed in recent years in studies of urban diversity to describe 'a low-intensity but nevertheless very real (and important) level of social cohesion characterized by the avoidance of conflict and a "live and let live" attitude' (Blommaert 2014, 16) and focused on 'the many small connections we make with others that may just make us feel happier or part of a population as a citizen' (Fincher 2003, 57).[194] As above, in order to provide a tangible illustration of these discourses at work, and to allow the reader to engage more deeply with my informants, I turn first to an extract from my interview with Naomi, before presenting a brief analysis of this extract, and then proceeding to an in-depth discussion of these two discursive groupings.

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[194] See also Gilroy (2004), Knott (2015), Watson (2006),Wessendorf (2014b; 2014a), Wise and Velayutham (2014), and others.

6.4.1 'I don't necessarily discuss with them the fact that I'm Jewish...'

The extract presented below is a section of roughly three minutes from my interview with Naomi, recorded at the University of Edinburgh in October 2014. Naomi is a 'retired' writer in her late sixties who described herself as a 'secular(ish) Jew' when she signed up for interview, and as 'a dedicated Southsider who considers it the most interesting neighbourhood in the city.' In her own words:

> Edinburgh is really the city of my heart. I do come from [...] the suburbs of New York, so I grew up there, so I have... I have a fine sense of cities. And I've lived in London, I lived in Glasgow, and... um, Edinburgh itself is a city I've always loved.

Having come and gone a number of times since first coming to the city as a student she

> was extremely happy to move back about 14 years ago into the Southside proper, because I think it is an extremely interesting, multi-layered, properly urban area in this city which is a city of such historic richness, high romance, but deeply complicated socio-economic stories.

This particular extract was chosen as there is a lot going on in a relatively compact block of co-constructed narrative. Although discourses from all eight groupings highlighted in **Chapters 5–7** can be discerned in this extract, it is particularly rich in terms of the discourses on *Lived Religion* and *Religion and Social Identity*.

The extract begins about two thirds of the way through the interview, following immediately upon a discussion in which Naomi described the feeling of a delicate balance in the Southside whereby she feels able unproblematically to *be* a Jew. Although 'it's not like being a [...] Hasidic woman walking all around *Mea She'arim* [...] in Jerusalem', she begins to tell of particular spaces where her 'Jewishness' is activated by a visceral sense of meaningful connection to a historic Jewish community in the Southside.

Chris: ...yeah, so you're not necessarily walking around feeling <pause> particularly conscious of the fact that you are "a Jew" as you're walking..

Naomi: Indeed, no... in the Southside...

C: Um...

N: Except when I'm doing things like passing the little syn... the little cemetery.

C: Yeah...

N: Then I'm, you know, I kind of like to kind of, as I say, send a little message, but yeah...

C: Yeah, so yeah there are particular points which...

N: Yeah.

C: Have that sort of embodied memory...

N: Indeed. Yeah.

C: Yeah. Okay, and... in terms of just, while we're still on it... in terms of interaction with, let's say, non-Jews, in the Southside.... like, does it... does it ever come up? Is it something that comes up in conversations or interactions?

N: Mmm not really so much about my Jewishness, I mean it's like obviously our corner shopkeeper's, you know, it's a really good corner shop that you try to get as much as you can there and not buy it in the supermarket <inaudible> um, you know, he's... he's... he's not obsessively religious, but I know he did make the Hajj... um, and he, you know the guy who's the sort of... the boss guy, you know, his nephew who's in more often, I think, I've never really talked much about religion with him at all, but you know, with <name> we will, you know... "Oh, it's coming up for Eid" or "How you doin' on the Ramadan fast? And how's it going this year?" and, you know, that sort of thing [...] you know, there's that sort of casual thing. But I think I would probably... I don't necessarily discuss with them the fact that I'm Jewish, [...][195] partly because it brings up "the whole Israel thing" [...] and as I say, I am not particularly a Zionist [...] I mean, I'm not a Zionist, I'm a... you know, I think Israel has a right to exist [...] but it, you know, I'm profoundly uncomfortable with it, so unless I were in a situation where there was an actual sort of inter-faith, sort of "Hey, I'm Jewish", you know... because I think it becomes... people, you know, make assumptions and [...] I, you know, I think probably, you know, I'm not assuming that people would automatically go "Oh well, you know, you must be Netanyahu's niece", but <pause> you know, it's just... it's not something I would necessarily be rushing around... and, you know, I was not brought up to wear a Jewish

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[195] Where [...] has been inserted in this paragraph, it is indicative of redacted affirmations such as 'Yeah' and 'Mmm' from the interviewer which were unnecessary obstructions to the flow of Naomi's narrative in this context.

star, nor would it occur to me to do it. My [...] in fact, I remember my mother being quite appalled when people did that sort of thing. She felt it was kind of shoving your religion in people's faces. But I'm quite happy, say, to talk with my corner shop guy [...] because it's sort of something that's important to him, I think he really likes the fact that people are interested, but you know it's [also] an area where I know there is more cousinship between us, and that I can understand certain aspects of what it feels like to be, you know... you go home from your day of running the shop, and then there's going to be some big religious... you know, some family dinner because it's a big important religious festival, [so I know what] that feels like. [...] You know, but I, you know, I won't necessarily say "Ah, yes, this is... just like, you know, you're goin' home to break your Ramadan fast, well I'll tell ya, Yom Kippur, when we broke the fast, this is what we did..." you know, it's not that sort of relationship.

C: Yeah. But it's like, yeah, an empathy of some...

N: Yeah, yeah there's an empathy...

This extract begins with me somewhat awkwardly summarizing what I understand to be Naomi's position: her identification as Jewish isn't something she is consciously made aware of in her day-to-day walks around the Southside. Her response—'Indeed, no... in the Southside'—indicates that she has experience of being in other urban spaces where this aspect of her identity is brought more clearly into focus. Indeed, it turns out that the Jewish Cemetery on Sciennes House Place is just such a place, and by her account its effect on her is not purely intellectual.[196] Indeed, she tells of journeys being interrupted by ritualized interactions with members of Southside Jewry from days gone by. In our discussion, I dub this 'embodied memory'.

Sticking with this train of thought, I was interested in the impact of Naomi's identification as Jewish upon her interactions with others—with 'non-Jews'—in the Southside, with the underlying assumption that 'religion' is, or at least might be, of such social significance as a boundary marker that it manifests itself in the mundanities of day-to-day life. Naomi's immediate response indicates that, although she is aware that she invests particular places in the Southside with religion-related

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[196] See above, discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment: Strand III.*

meaning, this is not obviously the case in the rhythm of her regular interactions. As was the case for the majority of my interviewees, her go-to mental space to locate multicultural interaction is the stereotypically superficial and short-lived social and commercial transactions that occur in shops and restaurants between social actors who are deemed to represent different cultures, religions, nationalities and so on.[197]

In this instance, she turns to a member of staff at her local corner shop, implying that he is Muslim—not only Muslim, but *'obviously'* Muslim—yet without feeling the need to explicitly use the word 'Muslim' itself: although this is implied shortly through her discussion of Islam-specific rituals, there is an underlying discourse shared between the two of us of corner shops being commonly owned and/or run by individuals from the Indian subcontinent and who can relatively safely, in the Southside at least, be assumed to have some connection with Islam. This shopkeeper is designated as 'not obsessively religious'—the implication being that this is a good thing,[198] and that were he 'obsessively religious' this would be evident from their day-to-day interactions—although his Islamic identity is deemed to be more than nominal due to his having participated in the Hajj, and Naomi being privy to this knowledge. Because Naomi is able to place the shopkeeper within an Islamic container, she feels that she has enough cultural capital to engage in conversation with him about this. The fact that she invokes the distinction between the shopkeeper and his nephew suggests that she feels that she can more easily talk about 'religion' with someone who is closer to her age, and that the younger individual is less likely to be, or is at least less obviously, 'religious'.[199]

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[197] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Civic Space: Strand I.*
[198] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Civic Space: Strand II.*
[199] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand I.*

Naomi then continues to describe her interactions with this shopkeeper as a 'casual thing'. He is, apparently, happy to discuss aspects of his 'religion' with Naomi, who is equally happy to engage in this discussion, yet not to reciprocate with similar information about 'the fact that I'm Jewish.' In this scenario, the implication is that the shopkeeper has instigated these conversations through some form of public display of his 'religion,' whilst Naomi desires to keeps hers private as she considers it contentious—at least in interaction with a 'Muslim'—due to its connection with the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine, and thus it might cause issues.[200] There is no pressure here for Naomi to divulge information she does not wish to—these are casual, convivial interactions, and their very superficiality is what makes them safe and unthreatening.[201]

Naomi's uneasiness with declaring her religious identification is connected to a feeling that 'people [will...] make assumptions' that she is a 'Zionist.' Clearly, for her, 'Zionist' is a bad word—or at least has the potential to be interpreted in a negative manner by others. She appreciates that the label might apply to her—she does, after all, think that 'Israel has a right to exist'—but she is 'profoundly uncomfortable with it.' The wider discourse surrounding the State of Israel, and her perceptions of how others engage with it, mean that, despite her overwhelmingly positive view of the freedoms granted to her (and to all) in the Southside, this is still an oppressive space where she cannot simply be her authentic self.[202] The label 'Jew' carries discursive baggage and the threat of negative social consequences. Indeed, later in the interview Naomi quite plainly states: 'I am Jewish, but, you know, [...] I worry, because, to a lot of people, Jew means a lot of things that it doesn't mean to all

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[200] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand II.*
[201] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Civic Space: Strand I.*
[202] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand II.*

of us' (i.e. all 'Jews'). Thus, she remains guarded about embodying and announcing her 'Jewishness'. Indeed, this is how she was 'brought up' and she seems to share her mother's distaste for those who publicly 'wear' their religion, castigating this as 'shoving your religion in people's faces'—an assault and invasion of privacy and personal space that is inappropriate for the public square.[203] This guardedness is exemplary of a form of 'tactical cosmopolitanism' whereby 'pragmatic considerations of achieving practical goals' are balanced by restricting one's 'openness' with others (Wessendorf 2014b, 69), and by selective (and protective) self-exclusion (Landau and Freemantle 2010, 387).[204]

Towards the end of this extract, Naomi focuses largely upon the unspoken empathy that she feels with this shopkeeper. Due to some unspecified indicators, Naomi infers that 'religion' is 'something that's important to him' and thinks that 'he really likes the fact that people are interested' (implying, therefore, that interest in such matters is not the norm in the Southside). She describes a feeling of 'cousinship' with this shopkeeper, of understanding 'certain aspects of what it feels like' to engage in analogous, highly ritualistic religious practices in a local context where one is in a minority, and where participation in 'big important religious festival[s]' sits uneasily alongside the hegemonic (post-)Christian calendar.[205] Interestingly, this feeling is not explicitly articulated in their interactions. Indeed, it may be entirely of Naomi's construction. But although it is not seen as the 'sort of relationship' where such articulations might occur, these brief moments of convivial connection are clearly invested with significance and meaning.

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[203] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Civic Space: Strand II.*
[204] See discussion on 'tactics' in **Chapter 5.**
[205] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power: Strand I.*

6.4.2 Lived Religion

The discourses on *Lived Religion* consist of two main strands: the first consists of discourses surrounding the meaningfulness of individual and social practices that are considered 'religious'; the second consists of those surrounding the embodiment of religion. I have utilized the term 'Lived Religion' intentionally so as to bring these discourses into conversation with academic discourse on the subject, i.e. on 'religion as expressed and experienced in the lives of individuals' (McGuire 2008, 3). As shall be outlined below, the notion of 'lived religion' as 'real religion' that circulates among some scholars,[206] and which has gained popularity in recent decades, also permeates discourses in the Southside, suggesting that the turn to the everyday from the elite model exists in popular as well as academic discourse.

Strand I: The Meaningfulness of Practice

> …it is apparent that what counts in the public visibility of religion is practice, not belief. Beliefs are not very interesting per se (beyond the occasional tabloid story about the "weird" beliefs of new religious movements). The practices putatively arising from particular beliefs are. (Hjelm 2014b, 218)

A cornucopia of competing, complementary and overlapping discourses surround the meaning(s) with which practices deemed religious are invested or not. Mapping almost exactly onto the discourses on the *Meaningfulness of Practice* in the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP, see **Chapter 4**), at times the sincerity of social actors' religious beliefs and/or religious identifications was measured by their (regular) engagement in specific practices such as participation in communal acts of worship,

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[206] This relatively recent move to acknowledge and theorize religion 'in the lives of individuals' as opposed to exclusively in the systematized theologies of male elites was certainly a welcome and necessary move for the field. All-too-often, however, this focus results in 'the loss of a vantage-point "from outside"' (B. Meyer 2015, 9) and the reification of one particular aspect of religion as somehow more authentic or more real than others such as history, tradition, theology, and institution (see Cotter and Robertson 2016b, 12), and thus we return to the sui generis model of religion so thoroughly critiqued by McCutcheon and others.

the observing of festivals and food taboos, or enrolling in a religious school, the consensus seemingly being that belief and identification *should* be accompanied by practice,[207] and that practice would be the first thing to 'slip' if social actors became 'less religious'.[208] Indeed, for some, practice—the 'living out of belief'—was seen as much more significant than (mere) belief,[209] mirroring findings of other recent studies that see a 'shift in emphasis from belief as correct doctrine to belief as embodied action or performance' with, for example, performance becoming 'an authentic—or even the most authentic—way of being Christian' (Vincett et al. 2012, 278, 282; also Day 2010). This discourse was invoked by interviewees in relation to their own (lack of) practice as well as that of others. In a similar manner, 'the complete inverse' of this discourse was invoked when interviewees 'defended' their own participation in certain practices as mere 'tradition',[210] or as 'keeping the peace' with family members,[211] judged certain practices to be meaningless, harmless or benign,[212] or castigated others for their unthinking or disrespectful practice.[213] I quote the phrase 'the complete inverse' here in reference to McCutcheon's reflections (2015) on Foucault's concept of the episteme (1973, 168), the argument being that dubbing some acts as 'mere' or 'inauthentic' practices is bound up in the same discourse on meaning and authenticity, and the boundary-making that entails (i.e. where one wishes to position oneself in relation to other contextually relevant actors).

It should also be noted that there is nothing particularly 'religious' about this discourse. Returning to Hjelm, he continues that '[r]eligion becomes interesting when it is seen to contribute positively […] or negatively […] to the broader society' (Hjelm

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[207] E24, F55, H17, H50, I45, J40, N33, N37–38, N44–45, P27, Q33 and R13.
[208] See **Chapter 5,** discourses on *Power: Strand I.*
[209] B25, P14 and T32.
[210] O14, O22 and T36.
[211] G32–33, L47, L64, O28, P16 and U4.
[212] D26, F32, H17, I45, M44, Q28 and T32.
[213] E20, F32, H44, H69, N47, Q33, Q43, R21 and S23.

2014b, 218), i.e. when the 'beliefs' are *practised* in some way: isn't this the case for all 'beliefs'? Whilst this conclusion might be tempting, it is also the case that—as with the discourses on multiculturalism in **Chapter 5**—although such manifestations of difference are not inherently religion-related, it remains difficult to talk about cultural difference (in the Southside at least) without invoking 'religion'. In this context, religion seems to remain a major fault line along which people articulate social difference, regardless of whether they are talking from 'experience' or in the abstract.

The discourses that make up this strand are somewhat abstract, referring to 'religion in general', and are thus not particularly tied to the Southside. This contrasts with the situation in Comberton, whereby the 'egalitarian' view of the 'incomers' demands participation in the church, whilst the 'conservative' view of the 'villagers' expects patronage: the incomers hold to a model that invests practice with significantly more meaning (Jenkins 1999, 69). Jenkins also tells of how 'the vicar is criticized for not participating more in village affairs', that 'in the villagers' minds, the vicar is not doing what he should' (1999, 62). Here we have a 'religious' figurehead being criticized for not practicing that religion in the way that is locally expected, for not practicing enough. Jenkins also notes that 'were the vicar to respond to these criticisms, another set would be formulated: he has nothing better to do than call on people, he does not mind his own business, he exudes a false bonhomie, and so forth' (1999, 62). Thus, we see similar discourses being given a particular Comberton twist.

Strand II: Embodiment (of Religion)

The second strand consisted of discourses pertaining to the visibility of religion in the Southside (usually the religion of 'others') and to individuals' subjective embodied experiences of religion, which similarly map onto the discourses on the *Embodiment*

of Religion encountered in the PEP in **Chapter 4**.

I have already discussed how religion was located in the Southside due to its perceived presence in the built environment, but the other major location for this religion was in the Southside's inhabitants. It must be said that for the most part, religion was in this sense perceived to be largely invisible—given that religion was understood for the most part to imply Christianity, and most 'Christians' in the Southside are not perceived to stand out from the crowd, due to the post-Christian hegemony discussed in **Chapter 5**. Where religion was frequently located in the Southside's inhabitants was in unusual dress[214] and in visible practices such as those discussed in *Strand I* above. Thus, the Southside sits comfortably in wider scholarly constructions of cities as 'prime arenas in which the public presence of religion—through, for instance, modes of dress, buildings, sounds, rituals and performances—is displayed and discussed' (Knott, Krech, and Meyer 2016, 125).

Unsurprisingly, it was Islam that stood out the most in terms of visibly different dress,[215] although allusions were also made to the stereotypical Church of Scotland 'Sunday best' (Brenda, I38) and to the visible presence of clergy from the Orthodox Community of St Andrew in Edinburgh (Naomi, O32; O44), which is located on Meadow Lane in the Southside. Furthermore, the Central Mosque was singled out by many as a place of visible religious activity,[216] in conjunction with somewhat wistful allusions to similarly visible activity being an historical staple of the Southside, and the UK more broadly, on a Sunday morning.[217] Arguably, the visibility of attendance at the Central Mosque is due to the miss-fit between Friday prayers and the hegemonic post-Christian calendar—i.e. the attendance of hundreds of people at

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[214] C14, C38, D36 and O34.

[215] J34, K27, N37, Q23, S14, S32 and U16–17.

[216] See **Chapter 5,** discourses on *Power: Strand I*.

[217] C36, C38–39, F24, H48, I31, I38, O20 and references in **Chapter 5,** discourses on *Power: Strand I*.

the mosque on Friday lunchtimes is much more visible to 'other' residents and users of the Southside, due to its occurrence during the 'normal' working week.

Reflecting further on the history of religion's visibility in the Southside, it is worth noting that the dynamics surrounding 'Islam' in this context can be viewed as a contemporary instantiation of dynamics that historically surrounded 'Catholicism'. Longer-term residents recalled divisions between Protestants and Catholics in the Southside being similarly embodied and pertinent, with children attending different schools,[218] the smell of steak emanating from particular residences on Fridays (E31), and particular surnames (D24) identifying individuals as 'different'. Over time, and as Ella suggests (E31–32), these differences have become less visible or meaningful, and new differences—new 'out groups'—have arrived on the scene. This final point helps to emphasize that it isn't essentially 'religious difference' that is embodied in this manner, so much as 'difference' in general. Informants attested to encountering difference in the soundscapes of the Southside—particularly in the languages that were spoken—and in the shops, restaurants and eateries of Nicolson Street and its environs.[219] These manifestations of difference aren't *inherently* connected to religion, but they are markers of difference that were frequently invoked as indicative of diversity. This acknowledgement of diversity and difference brings with it the *assumption* of religious diversity (and thus we return to the implication of 'religion' in discourses on multiculturalism discussed in the previous chapter).

These discourses also serve to emphasize the importance of the Southside's local particularity. In Handsworth, 'religion' is similarly perceived through the embodied actions of others, particularly through dress and visual images (Stringer 2013a, 70), yet, while the Southside seems to be imbued with a 'post-Christian'

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[218] E31, F61–63, P18 and T23.
[219] A19, C20–21, D14, E8–9, F29, G24, K27, M13, O9, O25, P11 and T23.

hegemony, in Handsworth the norm is 'an acceptance of the diversity of the neighbourhood and hence of religious diversity as a fact of life' (2013a, 69). Here, Islam does not stand out because it is seen as simply one religion among many. This generally 'positive' attitude, also meant that 'there was much more overt religious language and religious reference within conversations in this neighbourhood' than in the Southside or in Highgate (2013a, 69). In Highgate, activity associated with the churches *and* the mosque 'does not really register' with the 'non-religious' populace (2013a, 44), and this contrasts markedly with the position of Islam in the Southside. Stringer's explanation for this is that due to the mosque's location on the periphery of Highgate, 'the people of the neighbourhood […] tended to exclude the Mosque itself, as a building, from what they consider to be Highgate proper, and so recognize its continued 'otherness' without specifically rejecting the religion it represents' (Stringer 2013a, 47).

By way of contrast, whilst 'other' religions in the Southside, with which interviewees had limited personal experience, were discussed primarily in terms of sights, sounds and smells, religions that were subjectively more familiar were frequently discussed in terms of emotions and embodied experience. I am well aware that sights, sounds and smells are embodied in the sense that they are experienced by the senses of embodied individuals, but my distinction here is between discourses that were focused on the external (the triggers for experiences) and the internal (the experiences themselves). As we saw in the discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment* above, interviewees spoke of particular places as triggering particular feelings and emotions that were connected with 'religion' or 'spirituality', of buildings acting upon users of the spaces of the Southside, and of particular locations or objects triggering embodied memories. Personal encounters with

religion—positive, negative, or banal—were spoken of in terms of emotional content and feelings, not with intellectualized notions and theological discourse. Some spoke of enjoying the experiences associated with 'religion' and 'spirituality' without feeling especially connected to a tradition, and/or without subscribing to the substantive content.[220] And connected to this, and to those discourses surrounding 'other' religions, was the notion that changes in subjective 'beliefs' were unproblematic in social interaction, but that (attendant) changes in behaviour and practice—which can be observed by others—are thus disruptive to the hegemonic order in particular contexts, and can have profound impacts upon individual lives.[221]

I now turn to the fifth group of discourses evident in the contemporary Southside, on *Religion and Social Identity*, where we can clearly see the Southside playing a similar, active role.

6.4.3 Religion and Social Identity

The discourses on *Religion and Social Identity* concern the relationships between religion, the individual, and society. Discourses on these constructed relationships can be usefully placed into three strands: first, those that focus on the relationship between religion and society, constructing religion as a social force—positive, negative, or benign; second, those focusing on the subjective relationship between religion and the (autonomous) individual; third, those that focus on the individual's place in relation to ideal-typical constructions of religion-related (including 'non-religious') identities as mediated by society.

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[220] B27, G41, L64 and T35.

[221] See references for, and discussion of, the discourses on *Religion and Relationships* in **Chapter 7.**

Strand I: The Social (Ir)relevance of Religion

The first of these strands constructs 'religion' and 'society' as substantive entities that interact and exert power over each other. In discussing this strand, I should note the impact of my position as researcher from the outset. Given the context of these interviews—in a study focusing on religion in the Southside—it goes without saying that we cannot read much into the amount of time spent discussing religion in these interviews. However, there are also numerous points throughout the interviews where, simply through my line of questioning, I raise the status of religion to something which must be considered, something about which one should have an opinion, something which will most likely produce an emotional reaction. Conversely, there were also points where I downplayed the significance of religious identifications—e.g. 'these aren't terms which <pause> although people may identify with them, they don't identify with them necessarily 100% of the time, um, consciously, you know (Chris, K69)—thus implicating myself in a complex and confused discourse on the social significance of religion. That being said, despite my all-too-frequent reification, to say that my informants merely followed my cues would be doing them a disservice. Discourses encountered ranged from 'common sense' statements of religion's centrality to society[222] and its importance for governments and academics to monitor and study,[223] through various forms of indifference,[224] to feelings that religion is only relevant to insiders[225] and plays little to no part in day-to-day interactions in the Southside.[226] As we saw in **Chapter 5**, Christianity in particular was constructed in a paradoxical position as a force which needs to evangelize, and is therefore no longer

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[222] A23, A42, D35, F30, H42, H78, I18, J19, K85, L41, L50, L67, M46, N36, O32, O48, P25, Q9, Q11, Q15, Q29, Q33, Q46, T6, U19, V40, V73, W28 and W37.

[223] A45, D37–38, G42, J44-45, K92, L70, N56–57, O49, S37–38, U22 and W45–46.

[224] See the discourses on *Religion and Power* in **Chapter 5**.

[225] C37, D39, K45, O41 and T27–29

[226] C18, C36, C38–39, H48–49, H63, H66–67, I34, I38, J16, J39, J45, K34, K36, K81, L61–62, L66, M51, N19, N29, O20, P8, P19, Q18, Q20, R14, R17, S10, S12, T40, T46, T48, V37–38, and W9.

significant in the lives of many, but which can also evangelize relatively

unproblematically, therefore enjoying a privileged position in society.[227] To

complicate matters further, another common discourse in these interviews was that

religion is a fundamentally private matter for the individual[228] (see *Strand II* below),

and that it is generally an inappropriate conversation topic[229] in polite interaction—

thus paradoxically constructing a private matter as something surrounded by a

significant social taboo.[230]

Echoing similar findings to Stringer's in Highgate and Handsworth, although

the specifics are not necessarily clear cut, these discourses can be placed along a

continuum addressing 'the question of whether the discourse is essentially positive or

essentially negative' (2013a, 33). Religion was castigated as a source of social

division and strife,[231] and for inducing unnecessary anxiety in its adherents,[232] or for

acting as a false refuge from life's very real anxieties.[233] Others praised religion as a

motivator to charity and a force for good in the Southside,[234] with activities such as

prayer being constructed along a continuum from harmless curiosities[235] to positive

socially conscious acts. Some felt religion to be of such importance that changes can

irrevocably alter intimate relationships.[236] Essentially, 'religion' was generally viewed

as a potent enabling mechanism (Victoria 2013) for positively- or negatively-

evaluated social acts, with much of the blame for acts deemed problematic being

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[227] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Power*: *Strand I*.

[228] C41, D35–36, E28, E34–35, F57, F59, G40, H81, M26, M30, M47, P28, T46, U7 and U19.

[229] C32, D36, K71, O33, P25, T40, U7 and W42.

[230] These discourses on privilege and privatization also echo both strands of the discourses on *Religion as Traditional* encountered in the PEP (**Chapter 4***).

[231] C27, C34, C37, D22, D24, E27, H65, H74, J37, K70, N31, N38, N41–45, O30, O34, O42, P24–26, R23, S28–29, T46, U19, U21, V68 and W46.

[232] H38, H40, and I26.

[233] B23, L40–41

[234] B33, C41, G37, H52, J21, L33, L42, L51, L67, P21, and Q10–11.

[235] D26, F32, H17, I45, M44, Q28 and T32.

[236] J40, N36–37, N55 and R27.

placed at the feet of 'extremists' who misinterpret their religion, or take their religion too far.[237]

To summarize, despite being surrounded by such seemingly contradictory discourses, questions of the relative social significance of religion in the Southside, and the nature of this significance, clearly made sense within this discursive field, and constructed religion as a social force to be reckoned with regardless of the perspective of the individual social actor. Much of this strand is comparatively abstract, concerning the relevance of religion to academics, schools or governments, religion's status as a public or private matter, and as an enabling mechanism. However, the Southside is far from irrelevant here. The particularities of the Southside, bound up with its post-Christian built environment, its mixed, semi-settled/semi-transient population, and its tactics of indifference, precipitate the view that religion is generally irrelevant to convivial social interaction, and that it *should be* a private matter. A similar resentment towards being made to discuss religious matters was encountered by Jenkins in Comberton (1999, 63).[238] Simultaneously, while 'religion in general' might be associated with negative social consequences, and while individual biographies might be entangled with similar notions, when anecdotes become *specific to the Southside* 'religion' becomes conceptualized as anything from a benign curiosity to a positive social force. Once again, we encounter the dynamic of the local versus the external that played such a role in **Chapter 5**, and in the discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment.*

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[237] See discourses on *Civic Space* in **Chapter 5**.

[238] Conversely, many of Vincett and Olson's young informants in Glasgow felt 'that religious beliefs cannot be discussed or admitted among peer groups' (2012, 201).

Strand II: Religion and the Individual

The discourses in the second strand focus on the relationship between religion and the individual, particularly concerning questions of individual choice and autonomy, and the subjective nature of belief and practice.

Turning first to individual choice and autonomy, in my conversations I regularly encountered discourses echoing Rational Choice Theory (RCT)[239] whereby the idealized individual was constructed as an autonomous social actor in the religious field, picking and choosing how they position themselves within that field based upon seemingly idiosyncratic criteria: 'I always thought that a man has a choice whether to follow this religion, or that religion' (Amir, R24).[240] As discussed in **Chapter 5**, where particular individuals or groups were perceived to limit the individual actor's autonomy in this regard, these limiters were frequently dubbed intolerant or exemplars of 'bad (non)religion' by many in the field.[241] However, as we will see in **Chapter 7** when we turn to the discourses on *Religion and Containment*, and as we saw likewise in **Chapter 4**, groups were also perceived as complementary to the individual's religion-related journey, providing resources, comfort, meaning and a context within which to interpret material and make decisions.

These discourses on religion as a choice were further supported when interviewees highlighted a felt conflict between their own personal choice/satisfaction and a sense of duty,[242] or reflected on whether religion was a choice[243] or a 'state of being', a way in which one was brought up, 'hard-wired into my DNA' (Naomi,

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[239] See Stark and Bainbridge (1985; 1987) and Stark and Finke (2000).

[240] Also H18, J23, J34, J37, K88, L70, M41, N30, N35, Q32, R24, T34-36, U5, U22, V46 and W27–28.

[241] E20, Q36, S37, U22, V59 and W25.

[242] See **Chapter 7**, discourses on *Religion and Containment*.

[243] D39, E24, E27, E29, H14, h16, H68, I24, J23, J34, J37, L70, N30, N35–36, O29, Q32–33. R32–33, T34–35, U5, U22, V46, V59, W25–29 and W35.

O32).[244] This dynamic was strengthened when 'non-religious' interviewees implied

that, while the non-religious are free to make their own decisions in matters relating to

religion, the religious are not.[245] Conversely, when some of my 'religious'

interviewees reflected on this view, they asserted that the non-religious merely *like to*

think of themselves as free (R32–33, Q38). As highlighted in *Strand I*, these

discourses on the autonomy of the individual were complicated further through

common assumptions that religion is inherently personal, a matter between the

individual and their 'god', and thus also something which is private, not anyone else's

business, and certainly not a topic of polite conversation.[246]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a related discourse with which my informants were

conversant was that religion is primarily about belief,[247] and hence, again, a notionally

private matter for the individual. Simultaneously, informants were highly aware of the

performative aspects of belief,[248] paradoxically entangling *Strand II* with *Strand I* (and

with the discourses on *Lived Religion*), with the 'totally private' beliefs of the

individual being subject to scrutiny by others—implicit or explicit, within or outside

one's own 'community'.[249] This belief-oriented model of the relationship between

religion and the individual was further nuanced by the construction of a variety of

belief-based dichotomies or spectra: from 'normal' to 'credulous' (Julian, A29),

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[244] Also E29, G40, G42, K66, M45 and Q42.

[245] K93, L36, L40, V58–62, V68 and W20.

[246] See references in footnote 228.

[247] 'I found myself having to argue quite a lot, both with atheists and with other Christians, about whether my beliefs fitted into either category' (Aoife, L45; also A21, A31, B27, D36, D39, H40, I42-44, K74, K92-93, L55, L70, M25, M39, N45, O31, S35, and U17).

[248] 'I'm a Catholic because I'm baptized and confirmed a Catholic, I went to Catholic school, I'm part of that culture and my ancestors were part of the culture... and you know, just because I don't believe in God, that can't be taken away' (David, G41; see also C26–27, D31, G41, K63, P14, P22, S32, T32, U7).

[249] Much as the subjective 'inner' lives of Jews are subject to scrutiny by others, within and outside the Jewish community, dependent on their use they make or don't make of *eruvs* (Cousineau 2010) or delicatessens (Merwin 2008).

'proper,' 'practicing' or 'extreme' belief.[250] In other words, although the 'religion' and the 'belief' might be the same in theory, in practice every individual is different.

As with *Strand I* above, these discourses on individual choice and autonomy in the religion-related field, on the negative perception of groups that limit this autonomy, and on the public performance of private belief seem on one level to be rooted in generalities and have little to do with the local dynamics of the Southside. On another level, however, the Southside is being constructed here as a neutral space where 'autonomous' social actors can chart their own paths within the constraints of their own subjective containers, yet without being constrained *by the Southside*, provided that these social actors are deemed by the majority to moderate the performance of their chosen beliefs and identifications.

Strand III: The Individual and Religion-Related Ideal Types

The third and final strand consists of those discourses that focus on individuals' relationships with ideal-typical constructions of religion-related identifications that are dominant in society. Some instances consisted of a general positing of an idealized non-/religious individual by an interviewee as a kind of foil—'I haven't met many "real" Buddhists' (John, Q36), 'I would still define myself as a pretty secular or secular-ish Jew' (Naomi, O30), and so on—or, occasionally, with negative connotations, the implication being, once again, that those others who 'really live up to the name' are too extreme in their dedication to the identification, reflecting a prominent theme in contemporary atheist discourse and a general distaste for the 'deeply religious' in contemporary UK society (Clements 2012, 421).[251] Significantly,

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[250] For example, Sebastian described how his partner 'used to be super religious, believing in God' (S35; see also A32, B37, C21, H50, J25, L45, N41, N47, U4, U19, and W7).

[251] See **Chapter 5**, discourses on *Civic Space, Strand II: Moderation*.

this also applies to the 'deeply non-religious', e.g. 'I'd say I'm an atheist, but I'm open-minded' (Sebastian, S26). More often, however, these discourses concerned the paradoxically normative deviation of individuals from presumed norms of consistency in identification and ideal-typical behaviour.

Many interviewees acknowledged fluidity in their identification with certain religion-related terms,[252] painting their identifications as tactical and contextual discursive acts rather than permanent states of being, with some expressing profound discomfort with labels in general (the feeling that one's 'true identity' is inadequately represented by particular identifications),[253] and with particular situations in which one feels forced into making declarative statements.[254]

> Um, <pause> and maybe that's lazy <laughs> um, but there's part of me that actually just doesn't want to... to actually have... "I am this" you know? Partly because I... and it also feels like it actually then excludes... "I am this, I am not that". (Stacey, M38)

In many cases, this 'mismatch' was traced to a perceived divide between particular identifications as 'lived' or 'everyday', and the 'official' or 'dominant' discursive baggage attached to them (see discourses on *Lived Religion* above). This general willingness to impart fluidity and individuality to oneself and to others sharing one's identifications (one's 'in-group') was somewhat less evidenced in interviewees' discussions of others. Muslims, for example, were more readily portrayed by non-Muslims as being much more likely to live up to the ideal-typical Muslim norm, presumably because Muslim-like behaviour is much more visible to non-Muslims in the Southside than that of 'normal Christians' or 'secular' individuals.[255] However, as evinced in the discourses on *Lived Religion*, there was also a dominant expectation that particular identifications *should be* accompanied by certain behaviours and

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[252] A25, B27, D2, D31–32, D37, G41, H76, L47, L69, O34, V56 and W28–29.

[253] A25–26, C26, D28, D38, F47, H41, I42, L53, M53–54, O38, O47, Q43, W28 and W31.

[254] See discussion in **Chapter 5** on religion-related terms as 'power categories.'

[255] K88, R19 and T45.

practices.[256] This was further supported by many individuals discussing how engagement in particular practices, by themselves or others, is not *in reality* an accurate measure of their full, or even partial implication in the identification(s) associated with those practices and the range of connected baggage that might entail.[257]

With this presentation of the discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment*, *Lived Religion*, and *Religion and Social Identity* fresh in the reader's mind, I shall now draw them together with the discourses on *Power* and *Civic Space* presented in **Chapter 5** to assess: first, the role of the Southside in the production of these discourses; and second, what these discourses say to **Chapter 5**'s theoretical conclusions relating to 'non-religion' and the religion-related field.

6.5 Conclusion I: Context, Context, Context

Each strand of the discourses on *Religion, Space and the Built Environment* was entangled in broader discourses on, for example, the urban heritage economy, a welfare view of religion, and anxiety about Islam, and also with the subjectivities of the biographies of individual interviewees. Whilst none of these entanglements seem to depend significantly on the particularity of the Southside, I argued above that it was its local particularity that gave these discourses their form and content. Due to the Southside's history, the contemporary built environment is imbued with a lingering Christian character, as well as particular histories relating to Judaism and Islam, meaning that 'religion' and 'religious' were meaningful terms for understanding

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[256] E24, F55, H17, H50, I45, J40, N33, N37–38, N44–45, P27, Q33 and R13.
[257] G32–33, L47, L64, O14, O22, O28, P16, T36 and U4.

experiences in the Southside. The first strand of the discourses on *Lived Religion* was, admittedly, somewhat abstracted from the particularities of the Southside, but those of the second strand, when compared with similar discourses in Highgate, Handsworth, and Comberton, were once again inherently connected to the history and demography of the Southside. The discourses on *Religion and Social Identity* were similarly imbued with the Southside's post-Christian built environment, semi-settled/semi-transient populations, and tactics of indifference, as well as the tendency for interviewees and interviewer to construct it as a neutral, secular space.

Returning to **Chapter 5**, my conclusions there made frequent reference to the dependence of the particular discursive dynamics in my data on the particularities of the Southside itself. The discourses on *Power* were bound up in, and contributed to the construction of, the post-Christian character of the Southside, and included discourses on the local versus the external which related to dynamics particular to Edinburgh City Council and the University of Edinburgh that cannot be abstracted from this local context. The discourses on *Civic Space* involved dominant discourses on multiculturalism and moderation which, although effectively national discourses, were indelibly imbued with the Southside in the manner in which they were tactically subverted by my informants.

Regardless of the degree to which the discourses that have been presented in this thesis thus far have been produced by the Southside, the essential conclusion from the above is that they are products of this particular locality. Viewing the Southside as a coherent discursive field has provided a relatively bounded and coherent context for the analysis of religion-related discourse which both feeds into broader societal conversations around 'religion', and illustrates the benefits of thoroughly contextualizing one's data in its local, as well as broader socio-historical context.

Through comparisons with Highgate, Handsworth and Comberton, I have shown the Southside—and locality in general—to be much 'more than a mere context or backdrop' in which discourses are manifested (Knott 2009, 159), but an inextricable constituent part of those discourses. Indeed, such is the nature of all discursive fields, which invariably define the situation for their occupants (von Stuckrad 2010a, 5). Thus, whilst choosing locality as a 'container' for my discursive analysis brought an element of 'coherence and conceptual manageability' (Knott 1998, 283), it also represented the artificial containment of a fluid field of discourse on my part. By placing boundaries on the field, my own organizing rubric impacts upon and, in some ways, *constructs* the field itself.

6.6   Conclusion II: Non-Religion and Religion-Related Discourse

In **Chapter 5**, I argued that, because the discourses on *Power* and *Civic Space* were contextually coherent, this lent support to my broader argument for treating 'religion' and 'non-religion' as part of the same 'religion-related' field of discourse. The discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment, Lived Religion,* and *Religion and Social Identity*, presented above, complicate matters. Indeed, it is not insignificant that I chose to place 'religion' in the titles for these groups of discourses. Throughout the discourses on *Lived Religion*, for example, a pertinent question to ask would be: Where is the non-religious and/or secular? Given that most of these discourses were populated by 'religious' discursive objects, it might be tempting to fall back on naïve discourses on the insubstantial nature of 'secularity', 'non-religion' etc (see Lee 2015, 49–69) and declare that because 'religion' has substance, it is what is felt, embodied, seen, encountered, and assessed. However, it should be clear from a minority of the examples discussed above that interviewees were aware of

instantiations of the non-religious, in the form of 'atheist' bus adverts and irreverent material culture, and of a feeling of oppression in 'secular' public space—a feeling whereby one is limited in one's ability to manifest one's religion-related identity (see Lee Forthcoming). Furthermore, there is indeed some truth to the notion that in the discourses on *Lived Religion* it is 'religion' which is perceived as having substance, but it is the position of the speaker, the presumed shared perspective within which our interviews took place, that is constructed as the 'neutral' secular space which provided the context for differentiating between 'religion' and 'non-religion'. Likewise in the discourses on *Religion and Social Identity* the Southside was constructed as a neutral, secular (and post-Christian) space from which pronouncements could be made, or exceptions to the rule noted. And the discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment* made no reference to 'non-religion' or 'the secular', suggesting that these concepts go unmarked in a visual assessment of the Southside.

Thus, the discourses presented in this chapter further support treating 'religion' and 'non-religion' as part of the same 'religion-related' field of discourse, but with the added caveat that the 'non-religious' might be implicit in the subject position of those actors utilizing religion-related discourse, rather than explicitly articulated in the discourses themselves. In other words, once having taken up a position in relation to religion, 'a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant' within the religion-related field (Davies and Harré 1990, 46)

I also argued in **Chapter 5** for the importance of looking beyond the particular terminology in play in order to more fruitfully map the discursive dynamics and entanglements in particular religion-related fields. In doing so I demonstrated that *some* religion-related discourses maintained their structure irrespective of the

particular cluster of discursive objects involved. Whilst the discourses presented in this present chapter certainly benefit from an analysis that brackets out the specific terminology in play, the preceding discussion demonstrates that the majority of these discourses are dependent upon particular configurations and the 'invisibility' of 'non-religion', 'the secular' etc. Nevertheless, the third strand of the discourses on *Religion and Social Identity*, focusing on the individual and religion-related ideal-types, arguably maintained its structure regardless of the configuration of religion-related terms involved. Individuals felt profound discomfort with being identified with the prevalent terminology across the religion-related field, and with those situations where identifications were necessitated. Again, it would seem that *some* religion-related discourses maintain their structure irrespective of the particular cluster of discursive objects involved.

Finally, I argued that the religion-related field was entangled with a number of other discourses that were theoretically 'a-religious', but became religion-related in the context of my analysis due to points of entanglement dictated by the specificities of my analytical container, i.e. the Southside of Edinburgh. Here, the current chapter's discourses add further nuance. For example, although aspects of the discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment* were not inherently religion-related, such as its sedimented history and local versus external dynamic, other aspects were much more entangled in the religion-related field. Indeed, it makes little sense to speak of a post-Christian hegemony, or a welfare view of 'religion', as not being religion-related. In a similar manner to the discourses on multiculturalism discussed in **Chapter 5**, in the discourses on *Lived Religion*, on *Meaningfulness of Practice* and *Embodiment (of Religion),* 'religion' seemed to remain a major fault line along which people articulated differences and, although many of the differences weren't inherently

religion-related, the acknowledgement of diversity seemed to bring with it the assumption of religious diversity. Thus we can conclude, once again, that the theoretically a-religious character of some discourses is rendered effectively meaningless in particular contexts.

In **Chapter 7**, I present the final three discourse groupings in the contemporary Southside—*Religion and Containment, Religion and Relationships,* and *Religion, Science and Meaning*—before returning to the PEP in order to further reflect on the methodology of this project, on discursive change in the Southside over the past twenty years, and on the conclusions developed above.

CHAPTER 7

DISCURSIVE CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

RELIGION-RELATED DISCOURSES IN EDINBURGH'S SOUTHSIDE III

7.1   Introduction

In the previous two chapters I presented five discursive groupings that emerged from my empirical study of religion-related discourse in the contemporary Southside of Edinburgh. In this chapter, I begin with an in-depth analysis of an extract from my interview with Alan, in which the final three discourse groupings—discourses on *Religion and Containment, Religion and Relationships,* and *Religion, Science and Meaning*—are particularly well-evidenced. I then discuss these groups before placing them into conversation with my conclusions from the preceding chapters on 'non-religion' and the local particularity of religion-related discourse. I conclude the chapter by returning to the religion-related discourses produced by the *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP), as discussed in **Chapter 4**, in order to examine discursive change in the Southside over the past twenty years, and reflect upon the position of the researcher in the production of discursive data.

7.2   '[A]s I've got older, I've gone to more and more funerals…'

The extended discussions of particular interviews that have featured thus far have focused upon individuals who would have ticked a 'religious' box on the UK 2011 census: first, Fatima,[258] who identified as Muslim and was brought up initially in

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[258] See **Chapter 4.**

Pakistan and then Birmingham; second, Ella,[259] who was Southside born and bred, and a proud Roman Catholic (although not necessarily wanting to be portrayed as 'religious'); and third, Naomi,[260] who identified as a 'secular(ish) Jew' and was brought up in the suburbs of New York before coming to Edinburgh temporarily as a student, moving permanently to the UK shortly thereafter, and settling in Edinburgh in recent years. As a final example, I have chosen a different voice, belonging to Alan, a man in his late forties who is Southside born and bred, has lived there for almost his entire life, has managed a pub in the area for many years and claims to have never been 'big on religion.' The following extract provides an in-depth example of the discourses on *Religion and Containment, Religion and Relationships,* and *Religion, Science and Meaning* at work. It is a section of roughly five and a half minutes from our conversation in November 2014. This extract follows immediately upon the photo elicitation exercise conducted at approximately the same point in every interview.

> **C:** …but we've been talking a little bit around religion there, and you've said, um, that you're not really religious, and you've said that you went to the church there for some school stuff...
>
> **A:** Aye.
>
> **C:**…so maybe if you could just tell me your, sort of, story relating to religion... just, you know like <pause> you know, yeah just tell me a bit about you and religion. It doesn't have to be... there doesn't have to be anything, but em...
>
> **A:** Right. I never, em, <pause> I was never, I was never big on religion. Eh, I've probably been in... I've probably been in Catholic churches more now, coz my wife's Catholic, so I'd probably be more at church now, eh, with her and her family, than I have been <pause> for anything else. I notice as I get, as I get older I seem to be going to more funerals as well [...] eh, which is weird. I'm getting to know hymns a lot better. But, me... but me growing up, I was... I was never. I wasn't... my mother and father weren't religious either, so we weren't... we were never a religious family and, em <pause> em, not that I had any, I never had a faith, but eh... when I lost my mum and dad to cancer [...] that just sorta put [an end to it], coz they weren't, I mean, they were a good age but then I just

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[259] See **Chapter 6.**
[260] See **Chapter 6.**

sorta... any interest, any interest I had <pause> I probably lost [...] eh, when they died, aye. And, various other members of my family. So... <pause> But [saying that] I suppose since I met my wife and gone to... Catholic church, and... a couple of times, four or five times, em... I've probably, <laughs> I've realized I'm glad I'm not a Catholic, because they're very long-winded [...] services, so <laughs> eh, yeah... but it, it doesn't inspire me to change my religion and become a Catholic [...] after being there. Em, as I was saying, as I've got older, I've gone to more and more funerals [...] em, and I've found <pause> that's probably the closest I've got to religion is being... is going to funerals. [...] More and more funerals, eh <pause> and I just, I just find... they always seem to use the same sermon, which doesn't... which never makes it feel, em, very personal. [...] Which puts me off as well. Em <pause> yeah, it puts me off.

C: Alright. How do you... <pause> so, how do you end up going along like with your, with your wife and stuff... like, does she go like every week? Or...

A: She doesn't... no she doesn't go as regular, I mean we go to, em, what's it? We go to her nephews' and nieces', eh, communion, em... and, we were at her father's funeral not that long ago. Em, and a couple of other things, and [that's just... <inaudible>] what's that thing the kids get? It's not communion. Is it communion they have?

C: Aye they have the, the first communion...

A: Aye, yeah so and she's got a lot of nephews and nieces, so we've been to 5 or 6 of them, funerals... maybe a couple of other things that I didn't know what they were.

C: That's alright.

A: They have to... but when they go, I mean they're from East Kilbride, so when they go it's the family thing, the... the family chapel, church... em, and they've all got, you know, it's like the family seat…

C: Right.

A: …eh, but then my wife, my wife's mother, she's very religious. Eh, she's in, she's in church twice a week, 3 times a week. Eh, so when we go to see where, we sometimes go, go on a Sunday and then we go, go to church with her [... any time we go on a Sunday <inaudible>] But, eh, she's very religious.

C: Yeah. Um, and how did you find <pause> how did you find it growing up? Like, you know, so the school would have things, and things like that... so was there <pause> yeah, like what was... what was the normal sort of thing for you?

A: I mean it was... when we went with the school it was, it was, eh... we always went at Christmas, we did a... just at the church up the road, we did all the carols and stuff, and then we went at, em, <pause> I can't remember what it's called now, at harvest time [...] went then. Easter, went then. Em <pause> yeah, I mean I'm, I'm going back to... I'm going back 30-odd years [...] it was, eh <pause> I liked going and singing the songs, I

don't think I would... it would never, it would never, eh <pause> it wasn't like a crowd-puller for me... you know what I mean? <laughs>

C: Yeah.

A: <inaudible> To make me go back. And then we, I did, I had a, eh, we did RE at secondary school, eh <pause> I didn't pay much attention in RE. It was just a... it was something that I've never ever got, got involved in. [...] Although, as I say, as I've got older I've probably been involved with more, em <pause> and sometime... eh, especially if it... let's say, if we're at funerals, especially if, you know, if it's close friends or family, and you sitting there... especially if they were young, and <inaudible, pause> I don't understand why, I don't... I still don't understand why people, some people have to die so young [...] when there's arseholes still alive, like you know what I mean? That's the bit I don't get. [...] I don't think anybody could ever explain it to me, so...

The extract begins with me asking—in a somewhat long-winded and tentative manner—for Alan to 'just tell me a bit about you and religion.' My evident uneasiness was repeated almost uniformly in each interview when asking this question, and can largely be explained by my reticence about reifying 'religion' unnecessarily in these individuals' lives and about potentially leading the interviewee to construct a 'religious narrative' that had not previously been formed or articulated.[261] In this particular instance, this reticence was magnified by Alan's indication that he had little investment in the notion of 'religion,'[262] and a clear worry that he would feel obligated to construct a narrative that might be pleasing to me—'there doesn't have to be anything.' Alan responds that he 'was never big on religion,' creating a narrative of continuity in his personal (non-)engagement with this area of discourse.[263] Religion is, indeed, something that he has been aware of throughout his life, but this response positions Alan as 'indifferent': he's not *anti-religious*, or even *not religious*, but 'not big on religion.' In this context, this deprecating phrase implies that being 'big on

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[261] See **Chapter 6**, *Religion and Social Identity.*

[262] In retrospect, however, I need not have been so reticent, as the point of these interviews was to generate religion-related discourses, and not to obtain some form of definitive or 'authentic' picture of these individuals in relation to religion. See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I.*

[263] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I,* and **Chapter 6**, *Religion and Social Identity: Strand II.*

religion' means going to church (i.e. greater religiosity is attributed to those who engage in social practices deemed 'religious').[264] It also invokes the notion that others *are* 'big on religion,' setting up a dichotomy between 'normal' and 'excessive' or 'immoderate' interest.[265]

Alan continues to explain that 'I've probably been in Catholic churches more now, coz my wife's Catholic.' The normative framework within which Alan positions our interaction is thus non-Catholic,[266] and this simple statement hints at wider societal discourses on Catholics being more inclined to be 'active' in their religion— or, indeed, that Catholicism demands more of its adherents.[267] Similarly, the unelaborated manner in which he attributes his church attendance by recourse to his wife's identification invokes common sense notions that spouses and family members engage in 'religious' activity because of the desires or habits of other members of the family and, potentially, to avoid causing offence. It is also worth noting that, throughout this extract, the individuals who are singled out as being particularly 'religious' are female.

Alan describes how he perceives his interactions with 'religion' to be increasingly dictated by attendance at funerals as he gets older.[268] In an upbeat aside to this 'weird' situation, he jokes that he's 'getting to know the hymns a lot better,' emphasizing the significance of hymns and other learned behaviours as banal but important indicators of 'proper' insider status, and also further driving home that he was unfamiliar with the context.[269] He traces this unfamiliarity to his family—'my mother and father weren't religious either, [...] we were never a religious family'—

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[264] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*

[265] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Civic Space: Strand II.*

[266] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I.*

[267] A view bolstered by the fact that '[a]t 62%, the Catholic Church's retention rate is the strongest of the main British denominations' (S. Bullivant 2016, 185).

[268] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*

[269] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*

constructing his upbringing, his personal journey, as a non-religious context or container, and placing significant weight upon the religiosity of parents influencing that of their children. This phrase further emphasizes that Alan does not consider his current or past participation in 'religious' activities as making him 'religious'—yet, as we shall see, he is willing to use the participation of others as a barometer of their subjective religiosity.[270]

Completing the narrative arc of this section, Alan explains that the death of his parents caused him to 'probably' lose 'any interest I had' in religion. Clearly, religion is implicated in discourses on death and mortality and, in the case of this particular individual and the loss of his parents, it has been tried and found wanting. Alan feels the need to mitigate the significance of religion in his life prior to this event by stating that he 'never had a faith' before this occurred—notice the easy slippage from 'religion' to the more subjective, intellectualized, and 'Protestant' notion of 'faith'—tracing his own movement from a position of disinterested indifference to the field of 'religion,' to one with more hard-and-fast boundaries.[271]

At 'I suppose since I met my wife', the discussion turns specifically to Alan's increasing familiarity with Catholic church services. Once more he explains that this due due to his relationship with his wife, and jokes that the services are 'very long-winded' and that he isn't inspired 'to change my religion and become a Catholic after being there.' Notice that theological aspects are not discussed here; what Catholicism means to Alan is an experience that is uninspiring and boring.[272] He sees himself as an outsider experiencing another's community, and this experience has made him 'glad I'm not a Catholic.' That being said, he doesn't feel overly negatively towards this

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[270] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I* and *Religion and Social Identity: Strand III.*
[271] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I.*
[272] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand II.*

infrequent attendance, and makes no reference to any ideological aspects or disagreements. His aside about not changing his religion invokes a variety of discourses, from the basic idea that Catholics/Christians have an agenda directed towards changing or supplying him with a religious 'identity',[273] to the notion that attendance isn't enough,[274] that there is something deeper that needs to change or a declaration that needs to be made, to the implied distinction between Catholicism, Church of Scotland, and 'not big on religion,' as different religions.

Discussion then returns to funerals and mortality, which Alan sees as his major point of interaction with religion: 'the closest I've got to religion is [...] going to funerals'.[275] At funerals he gets engaged and pays attention; indeed, the times he claims to have shown any interest in religion are where he perceives a connection to his personal relationships. We have already discussed how he explains his attendance at Catholic services by recourse to his wife. Similarly, he attends church funerals because of the relationships that he wishes to commemorate. Here, 'they' are castigated for preaching sermons 'which never [make] it feel [...] very personal, which puts me off'.[276] Thus, religion *should* be personally meaningful and relevant. If the experience of these funerals produced the 'right' feeling, and if the material were judged to be more relevant and personalized this might make a difference to Alan, but here churches are judged to be superficial and cynical, as going through the motions, and not concerned with the individuals 'they' are supposed to be commemorating, the very individuals who have necessitated his encounter with church in the first place. This further compounds the barrier between Alan and 'religion' that was precipitated by the death of his own parents. What is also significant here is what is *not* said: Alan

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[273] See **Chapter 6**, *Religion and Social Identity: Strands II and III.*
[274] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*
[275] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*
[276] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand II* and *Religion and Social Identity: Strand II.*

neither questions the right of churches to perform this social function, nor does he engage with potential reasons why these commemorations occurred in churches in the first place (those who have died aren't described as having been particularly 'religious,' for example). Here we have an example of 'the Church' being constructed as the hegemonic default option for life cycle rituals, while at the same time being found wanting in this regard.[277]

Picking up from a natural break in conversation, I was keen to understand Alan's motivations for attending services with his wife, and the manner in which such attendances come about. My interest in the frequency of her attendance invokes discourses of authenticity, salience, and the meaningfulness of practice: how observant is she? Is she a 'real Catholic' or 'merely' a 'cultural' or 'rites of passage' one?[278] In Alan's response we gather that he is aware of an 'insider discourse' with specific terminology and understandings of specific rituals, but that he does not consider himself part of this discourse. The Catholics are a 'they,' and while he clearly positions himself as not part of the group, he doesn't indicate that this is of any great significance. For Alan, being married to a Catholic means that certain events happen as a matter of tradition; because his wife and her family participate, he does so too.[279]

At 'They have to…' Alan expands on what he sees as the reasons for his wife's desire (and, indeed, that of her family) to participate in Catholic life cycle rituals. First of all, he explains this behaviour by her family's geographical origin— 'they're from East Kilbride'—implying that this is an area with a different religious hegemony (Catholicism), and a greater proclivity to displays of religiosity than one

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[277] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I,* and **Chapter 6**, *Religion and Social Identity: Strand I.*

[278] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand II* and *Religion and Social Identity: Strand III.*

[279] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I.*

would expect to encounter in the Southside:[280] 'They're from East Kilbride, so when they go [to East Kilbride] it's the family thing.' In other words, this is *what they do;* they go to the church that they've always gone to, and sit in the 'family seat'. Indeed, this disclosure is prefaced by the phrase 'they have to,' suggesting that there is an element of obligation and coercion involved.[281] Not only is this behaviour constructed as characteristic of East Kilbride, it is apparently motivated by the maintenance of family tradition and a desire to appease Alan's mother-in-law. She is described as 'very religious'—exemplified solely by her multiple attendances each week[282]—and thus he and his wife attend church when they visit her, the implication being that this is not something that they would choose to do, that it will make her happy, and that they do not see any harm in the practice. Thus, Alan 'explains away' the 'religious' behaviour of his immediate family as a matter of obligation and keeping the peace with an older family member who (still) places significant weight upon such behaviour.[283]

At another natural break in Alan's narrative, I ask about how he found 'it growing up,' drawing attention particularly to the interaction between 'religion' and 'school.' This emphasis ties into discourses surrounding the importance of children to religious institutions, religion and education, and religion in the public square.[284] Alan describes a situation where he and his classmates 'always' journeyed to 'the church up the road' at points throughout the year, in order to participate in particular rituals such as Christmas and 'harvest time'.[285] Here, Alan constructs an unproblematic and hegemonic link between the practices and routines of (certain) schools and (certain)

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[280] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I* and **Chapter 6**, *Religion and Social Identity: Strand I.*
[281] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I.*
[282] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*
[283] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*
[284] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Civic Space.*
[285] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I* and **Chapter 6**, *Religion and the Built Environment: Strand I.*

churches in the Southside.[286] His uneasiness with terminology, and his mitigating phrase 'I'm going back 30-odd years' indicate a) his awareness once more that there is a vocabulary that comes with regular participation, b) that he hasn't regularly participated, c) that insiders will know what these terms are and what they mean, and d) that even when he was participating on a semi-regular basis—as was everyone in the school, it would seem—there was no explanatory or credibility enhancing discursive framework for him as a child.[287] What he remembers is the relatively benign experience of some appealing songs and little else—certainly nothing to encourage him to investigate further. Could this be indifference *par excellence*?[288] Similarly, Religious Education (RE) is remembered merely as something that everyone had to go through; it just happened. His memories of RE aren't invested with any particular negativity—indeed, it is barely remembered at all, as he 'didn't pay much attention'—and this view is echoed in his contemporary construction of 'religion' as both harmless and boring.[289]

Finally, we return to the theme of death and mortality. When Alan begins by stating 'as I've got older I've probably been involved with more,' the implication (given his following remarks) is that he has been involved in *thinking about religion* more, due to his attendance at many funerals. Because of these interactions in particular, religion is connected with death, mortality and theodicy, and is perceived to be attempting (inadequately) to provide solace, comfort and explanations for why people die and where they go after death. Ultimately, Alan dismisses such attempts: 'I still don't understand why […] some people have to die so young when there's arseholes still alive.' For Alan, 'religion' is deeply implicated in societal discourses on

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[286] See **Chapter 5**, *Religion and Power: Strand I.*
[287] See Lanman (2012) on 'credibility enhancing displays'.
[288] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand I.*
[289] See **Chapter 6**, *Lived Religion: Strand II* and *Religion and Social Identity: Strand I.*

death, mortality and morality. He clearly has an ideal model of what religion *should* be, yet his subjective experiences stand in stark contrast with this model and thus 'religion' is found wanting.

With the preceding discussion in mind, I now turn to the final three groups of discourses that have emerged from similar exchanges with Southsiders—the discourses on *Religion and Containment, Religion and Relationships,* and *Religion, Science and Meaning*. Just as I have demonstrated that the discourses presented in **Chapters 5** and **6** were present in Alan's interview, I shall continue to make reference to his words in my analysis of the remaining discourses.

7.3 Religion and Containment

The discourses on *Religion and Containment* concern the interaction between various constructions of 'religion,' particular social actors, and the metaphor of containment. These discourses construct religion as a container, as a context within which action happens, within which social actors move, where their movements are constrained, which strongly influences social interaction, and which cannot be abandoned lightly. Furthermore, 'religion' is constructed as one container among many, acting in combination and competition with other contextually relevant containers such as 'culture', 'education', 'gender' and 'sexuality', which similarly influence and constrain social action. Discussion below will focus first on the logics of the 'religious' container, before turning to points of interaction with other containers (including those others explicitly demarcated as 'religious').

As in the PEP, the metaphor of containment was extensively invoked throughout these interviews, through a variety of mutually reinforcing discourses.

Religion was frequently described as analogous to a context in which social actors interacted with and made sense of the world. For example, Moira stated 'I always say "I'm trying to live a Christian lifestyle"' (F33), David's Catholicism is justified 'because I feel like I'm part of that heritage' (G41), and John builds his own model of religion through his critique of Freethinking, asking 'If you're a Freethinker, where does your authority come from? Where does your guide for living come from?' (Q38).[290] Religion is something within which one can be brought up[291]—or not, in Alan's case—a tradition stretching back through time and made manifest through the broader context in which one finds oneself—indeed, it forms and informs that context. Many individuals related positively to these notions, finding (or hypothesising that others might find) grounding, meaning, continuity and a positive lineage in religion,[292] or describing religion in terms of comfort, safety, contentment, and freedom.[293] Many others related more negatively to religion, focusing on the (potentially) restrictive nature of the container,[294] conceptualizing 'traditional' as 'backward,'[295] and feeling constrained or misrepresented by religion-related terms—indeed, even the designation 'religious' itself.[296] Indeed, think here of the manner in which Alan portrays his wife's engagement with Catholicism, and the sense of obligation she (and, by extension, he) feels both to the tradition and to her mother. The metaphor of containment provides

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[290] Also C27, C42, D24, E2, E23, F37, G29, J34, K36, N49, N51-52, O13, O16, O28, O31, Q2, Q18-19, Q22, Q24, R21, R23, and U5.

[291] A31, F55, I16, K85, O28, T33, and U4.

[292] A25, H73, N44, O16, Q39-40, Q42, Q47-48, Q51, R28, and R33.

[293] For example, Peter 'justified' the crucifix he had subtly displayed in his living room by stating that this image tells him 'I'm a victim. I'm with you. I have nothing to do with grandness or anything like that.' (C41 cf. D28, G30-31, G38, J36, J41, O15, P14, T35, U5, and W21)

[294] D38-39, E23, F18, F33, I25, I39, J24, J35, J37, K93, L36, L40, N13, N41, O31-32, R32, V58, V60, V63, V68, V73, V76, W5, W19-20, and W34.

[295] 'I think it may be things to do with church with a big "C", with the whole hierarchical massive historical traditional lumbering structures.' (Stacey, M34 cf. C43, F19, I38, J37, J44, L66-67, O21, O46, P16, Q33-34, Q43, S33, T36, T46, and W27).

[296] Understanding 'religion' as 'having to do with external, dogmatic authority set over the individual' (Vincett and Woodhead 2009, 320). See discourses on *Power: Strand I* and on *Social Identity: Strands II and III.*

the link between these varied discourses, regardless of whether this containment is conceptualized positively, negatively or more 'neutrally'.

As was indicated above, however, the positioning of social actors in religion-related containers also raises the possibility of these containers interacting with others, whether these are explicitly understood in 'religious' terms, or as religion-related by virtue of the interactions. An especially good example of the interaction between containers explicitly related to religion is the notion of (de-)conversion, which tended to be conceived as moving out of/into a container and potentially into/from another. If these containers were perceived to overlap, sharing a significant portion of dimensions in common, this change would conceivably be less problematic.[297] Indeed, Walter's views on the 'trypraying' adverts were that such evangelism will only work on those who are already primed with some form of related religious capital (T27–29). However, other 'conversions'—such as Aisha's (from 'secular Scot' to 'Muslim', N33–38), David's (from 'active' to 'lapsed Catholic', G28–32) or Naomi's (from the centre to the periphery of 'Judaism,' and back again, O28–30)—were loaded with much more meaning and trauma. That these conversions involved containers that are more 'marked' in the Southside (i.e. viewed as different from the hegemonic norm) is discursively significant.[298] Any change in a social actor's habitus is going to leave a lasting impression, yet some of these changes were invested with much greater significance than others.

In many cases, this significance was rooted in the entanglement of explicitly religion-related containers with other forms of containment, including ethnicity,

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[297] I am here reminded of my parents' frequent light-hearted quips that my father led my mother astray when she 'converted' from her familial Presbyterianism to his familial Anglicanism.
[298] See **Chapter 6**, discourses on *Lived Religion*.

culture, education, gender, sexuality and nationality.[299] Immigration in particular acted as a locus for these discussions in relation to the Southside, being visibly linked to the changing 'religious' character of the area, with many individuals being at pains to emphasize what a 'good thing' this was for the Southside (implying that the pervading view may not be quite so positive).[300] Indeed, I frequently encountered unselfconscious allusions to an idealized historic time when 'Scottish society' and 'Christianity' used to map onto each other almost identically.[301] At a more individual level, religion was viewed as a particularly gendered and heteronormative container,[302] with resulting misalignments meaning that some felt the need to reassess their relationship to religion in the light of these competing 'sacreds' (Knott 2013). Whilst the PEP data also spoke to similar dynamics, there 'religion' tended to be reified as *the* dominant container for social interaction, whereas in the contemporary Southside it is more relativized as one among many.

In summary, the *Discourses on Religion and Containment* construct religion-related identifications as socially significant containers acting in combination and competition with other contextually relevant containers which similarly influence and constrain social action.

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[299] A43, B28, C20–21, C42–43 ,D14, D24, E18, E30, E37, H46, H55, H73–74, H76, H79–81, H84, I44–45, J19, J21–23, J31, J35, J37–38, J44, K82, K84–85, K89, K96, L66–67, M32, M43, M50, N27–28, N41, N43, N46, N53–55, O19, O22, O31, O34, O39, P9, P21–22, P26–28, Q23, Q33, Q36–39, R34, S33–34, T27, T38, T42, T47, U21–22, V41, V43 and W6.

[300] A6–7, A17–18, B6, B19–20, C20, D22, H52, J20, L3, L5, L7, L10, L38, L53, N8, N43, O4, O9, O13, O24–26, Q26, S7–8, S41, T13, T24, U16, U19, U21, W7 and W15–16.

[301] C36, C38–39, F24, H48, I31, I38, O20 and references in **Chapter 5,** discourses on *Power: Strand I.*

[302] A37, B19, B25, B28, B33, B38, H40, H53, H55, H81, I17, I38, J20, J37, M44–45, N35, N56, O29, O31, O34, O37, O39–40, S35, U8, V60, V65 and V68.

7.4 Religion and Relationships

In the discourses on *Religion and Relationships*, the religion-related field is entangled with a number of binaries—unity and division, homogeneity and heterogeneity, belonging and exclusion—across three main strands: one's family, one's friendship circle, and the broader community. My presentation below will focus on each of these in turn, although it must be emphasized that these divisions are not clear-cut, and boundaries will vary in terms of rigidity and visibility from individual to individual. It is also important to note that 'non-religion' is somewhat less peripheral here than in some of the previous discursive groupings, and thus the 'religion' in the title of this group can be taken to refer to the whole religion-related field (as ever, with particular nuances, as shall be made clear below).

7.4.1 Strand I: Family

As far as 'family' is concerned, it is no real surprise that the connection between 'family' and 'religion' was frequently made. Interviewees were generally asked a question such as the following, asked of David: 'so maybe if you could just tell me a bit about your, we'll call it your "religious journey" for want […] of a better term?' (Chris, G28). Such questioning in turn tended to produce autobiographical responses that began with family, with David responding 'Well I, yeah I would consider myself an atheist now. […] my mum comes from an Irish Catholic family, and so I […] went to church from probably from a baby' etc. (G28–29).[303] Yet, despite the normative convention of beginning one's autobiography with one's family, this type of response is suggestive of three themes in my data relating to family.

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[303] Also B25, D17, E23, J23, K63, L44, M32, N33, O28, P14, Q33, R24, S21, T31, U5 and W18.

First of all, as we saw exemplified unequivocally in Alan's narrative, family members' relationships to 'religion' are constructed as relevant to one's own. In many cases, family members' religion-related identifications were simply mentioned in passing—e.g. 'my grandparents were Protestant, Church of Scotland' (Ella, E23)[304]—while others described in much greater detail just how relevant family members were to their own engagement with religion: 'I refuse to go to church if [my husband] doesn't go to church' (Samantha, H17), 'I'm married, and my wife […] shares my faith, and actually we have three kids who have grown up now, and they're also a part of this community, and are continuing to share our faith too' (John, Q34), and so on.

Secondly, we see the dominance of the 'transmission' model, whereby religion (and 'non-religion') is presumed to be passed on from parent(s) to children down a family line (see Arweck and Nesbitt 2010; Regnerus, Smith, and Fritsch 2003; Voas 2010; Woodhead 2010),[305] regardless of how 'sticky' this transmission might ultimately be (see S. Bullivant 2016; Woodhead in Academy of Social Sciences 2016).

And third, we have the notion that issues arise when there is a mismatch between family members concerning matters relating to religion. Some described particular issues that have arisen due to changes in identification, with Eileen sorrowfully saying 'I'm quite sad that neither of my sons go to church, but then that's their, you know, that's their life now' (J40) and Aisha quipping that 'I told my [secular] parents I wanted to be a Muslim at 16... as you can imagine, that didn't go down well' (N36).[306] Others spoke of particular arguments concerning 'religion',[307] or

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[304] Also A31, C33, E30, F55, I42, J25, K46, P15, Q37, S22, and S34.

[305] A31, C42, G29, G33–34, K63, N33, O33, O35, P14, P17, P20, U19, V63, and V66. See discourses on *Religion and Containment* above.

[306] Also N37, N55 and R27.

[307] C27, C32, C42, E23, and T32.

of mitigating their opinions out of concern for family members,[308] with prime

examples of both coming from Peter when I asked him about a crucifix displayed on

his wall:

> I've got two of these crosses and, em, I will give, I mean I've got two nieces, I've got no
> children, and they're both, you know, they're both secular, they're both brought up by my
> sister. They're beautiful, they're wonderful girls. And I'll give one each, because they
> loved their grandparents […] and that's the sort of thing that actually is a difficulty with
> me and my sister. She hates these expressions of that, that sort of religion. […] I kind of
> feel as though if I give these two things it will be secretly at some stage when I'm with
> my two nieces, I don't want my sister to know because I feel my sister would be upset.
> (C41–42)

Here Peter vividly demonstrates the emotion and pain induced through mismatched

religious identifications, the desire to transmit traditions down the generation, and the

lengths that some individuals will go to keep the peace (just as Alan attends Catholic

services with his wife and her family). Although notions of what counts as 'family'

are subjective and extend beyond simple biological relationships, it is worth

highlighting that these discursive themes were also present in the PEP (*Religion and

Family*) and in my previous research (Cotter 2015), and that it appears that it is not the

specifics of the religion-related identifications that matter here, but changes and

differences within family groups.

7.4.2 Strand II: Friends

Turning to the second strand, from the more narrowly conceived 'family' to the

broader friendship circle, the discursive dynamics are somewhat similar, yet with

much of the negativity absent.

A significant theme for a minority of my interviewees was that 'religion' is,

among other things, about shared experiences and relationships, with William

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[308] G32–33, L47, L64, O28, P16, and U4.

describing how he and Samantha ended up choosing their church 'coz the rector was very friendly' (H17), and Eileen telling me that 'a lot of my close friends are Episcopalian, so when we're together although we're not actually talking about church things […] we just feel we're, we're in it together […] you know? And it's quite nice' (J41).[309] Although they by no means represented all of the self-identified 'religious' interviewees, the only individuals to positively invoke this discourse were Moira, William, Eileen, Aisha and Naomi, each of whom participated in religion-related communities at the time of interview. As we have seen above, the discourse was also negatively invoked by Alan when he criticized church funerals because 'they always seem to use the same sermon, which doesn't... which never makes it feel, em, very personal' (P14). It is not insignificant that this point was made by someone claiming not to be religious, but who participates occasionally in church services: like those who positively invoked this discourse, Alan is speaking from experience, and not in the abstract. Similarly, when these same individuals spoke with a more than passing familiarity about religions with which they had no *direct* personal experience,[310] their accounts were framed around friends' engagement with them: religion was still being constructed *relationally*. For many of my other interviewees, particularly for those who were not involved in religion-related groups, a dominant claim was that the topic simply did not tend to come up in conversation in their friendship groups, suggesting that in matters of 'religion' one tends to gravitate to those of a similar mindset (when one feels oneself to have a *choice*).[311]

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[309] F36, J23, J30, J38, N4, N13, N28, N34, N38, O29–30, O34, O41, Q20–21, Q28, and Q33.
[310] N44–45, O34, P27, Q25, Q36, Q39, and Q42.
[311] E32 and U19.

7.4.3 Strand III: Community

Finally, the third strand concerns the interaction between the religion-related field and 'community', which shall be discussed first in terms of religion/s *as* community, and second in terms of the interaction between religion/s *and* (the) community. There is continuity between both of these aspects and elements of the discourses on *Religion and Community* in the PEP (discussed below).

It was not uncommon to encounter the view that religions act as communities for those who are involved, with Aoife stating that 'a huge message of [Christianity is] that... it's about community, and about support, and about communal faith just as much as individual faith' (L42), and Aisha attesting to finding herself part of 'a community within the mosque' (N4).[312] For some, these communities were conceptualized as extending beyond the Southside, exemplified by Ella's identification as a 'roaming Catholic' (E24) as discussed in **Chapter 6**,[313] yet William described how when he and Samantha moved to another area 'we stopped going to church' (H16–17). This view of religion/s as communities, is the notion that they provide 'somewhere to belong' (David, G35).[314] Seemingly this is something that even the 'non-religious' might long for, with Eileen defining 'secular' as 'someone who's a bit on their own' (Eileen, J31), and Fred speculating

> One of the things that I've heard about is […] the great sense of community that [religion] kind of gives. People kind of working towards common ideals and goals and coming together under those beliefs, which is perhaps something you wouldn't get as much of in a strictly secular society. (W19)

This notion of a 'secular' void is furthered by the entanglement of the presumed decline of religion as encountered in the secularization discourse discussed in

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[312] Also G30, I31, J24, Q41–42, Q47, Q53, T21, U5, U22 and V38.
[313] Also E23, Q21, R30, and S26.
[314] Also G36 G38, G41, H44, O15–16, Q4, and Q18. See Abby Day (2011) and Spencer Bullivant (2015) on (non-)religion and belonging.

Chapter 5 with a discourse on the decline of community in the Southside. This connection was made whether religious decline was considered the causal factor—one of the 'reasons for having church is it keeps people together in communities and groups' (Samantha, H50)[315]—or vice versa— 'when people moved out [...] a lot of these churches all closed down' (Alastair, F24–25).[316]

This connection to the Southside brings us to those discourses surrounding the interaction between religion/s and the local community, or community in general. On the one hand, there was a clear emphasis in many of my interviewees' narratives that 'good' or 'proper' religion should be oriented towards the local community: 'I'm always banging on about, you know, if God's given us this place in the middle of a community, he means us to connect and relate to the community that we're in' (John, Q10).[317] On the other hand, there were many more references to religion being connected with division and militancy,[318] whether historically,[319] contemporaneously, or in more general terms.[320] Particular 'brands of Christianity' (Stacey, M28) were understood to be at loggerheads.[321] Likewise with Islam (N25) but, unsurprisingly, not Buddhism (S27). The religion-related conflict in Northern Ireland also made a few appearances: 'You coming from Northern Ireland, you'll know how ridiculous it is' (Fiona, K82).[322]

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[315] Also F19 and R16.

[316] Also H66–67, O20 and P13.

[317] Also B15, H63, J16, L32–34, L42, M45, P8, Q9, T19–20, U15 and the discourses on *Civic Space* discussed in **Chapter 5**.

[318] A36, J46–47, K81, K83–84, L55, L67, M48, M62, O27, P20, P24, P26, V37, V73, V76 and W37.

[319] '…being Catholic in a predominantly Protestant country, em, did have its moments as well. Eh <pause> I don't think that you'd get anything like that these days, I really don't' (Richard, D24).

[320] '"Hindu", "Muslim" and "Sikh", em, I've never understood, I think... I dunno if they all hate each other, or all love each other' (Alan, P21).

[321] D17, G25, L51, P27, Q42, T26, and U8.

[322] Also H74, P22, and T26.

Some of my interviewees seemed to view the contemporary Southside as free from such divisions,[323] whilst others were not so sure,[324] with Islam receiving particular attention and Muslims being referred to as a distinct out-group—a 'they'—even if, for example, the annual Islam Festival[325] at the Central Mosque was viewed as 'a good thing, [as] they're not […] hiding it away from people, making it more... scary than it is... not that it's scary, but you know...' (Lily, U21).[326] Much of this tension seems to reside in how 'local' certain groups are considered to be, with allusions to the liminal position of Catholics[327] and Episcopalians,[328] and to generalized other non-local religions: 'I'm very glad we're living in Scotland and not being run over by everything else, so there's liable to be wars, you know, internal conflict... we have less of that in Scotland...' (Samantha, H74).[329] Blame was also laid at the feet of particular, non-adaptable forms of religion,[330] segregated education,[331] or a general human tendency to dislike difference.[332]

Regardless of the specifics, a common theme above is that 'religion' has the potential to serve as a boundary marker,[333] whether between 'religion' and the 'secular' world,[334] or between different groups—as exemplified by Aisha's comments on churches:

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[323] A38, E30, F63, H61, J32, N28, U16, U20 and W41.

[324] F30–31 and F62.

[325] To coincide with the *Edinburgh International Festival*, *Edinburgh Festival Fringe*, and other festivals that take place in the city in August, the Central Mosque runs an *Islam Festival*, with an exhibition, events, and activities each year.

[326] E18, H66, J34, K88, M43–44, N38, N52, U16 and U21.

[327] H76, J42, K84 and P27.

[328] J37.

[329] Also J19, N56 and U21.

[330] H75, J37, L66, M48 and U21.

[331] K81–85, P18 and T23.

[332] T42, V43, V72, and W46.

[333] D24, E15, E22, K88, L33, L55, L67, M50, M62, N16, N25, N44, N49, O28–29, and S33.

[334] 'I'm aware that religious people... people of faith can be discriminated against and... <pause> despite being post-religious, em, I feel that isn't a good thing' (Ivan, B38; also O14, O22 and Q10).

> I myself have never walked into a church. So part of it may also just be a feeling of just feeling like... because you're not part of that faith, kind of like that hesitant to go in and just ask, or just see what it's about, and maybe that feeling like you wouldn't be welcome there because you don't follow the faith... (N50).

In the Southside, it seems, religion is a potent source of both unity and division,[335] demonstrated no more clearly than in an amusing exchange with Sebastian who, when discussing David Cameron's remarks on the UK as a 'Christian country', delighted in motioning to the list of religion-related identifications we had discussed earlier in the interview:

> **S:** …no we're not a Christian country, you know. This is our country <motions to list>. Oh <realization>, this is our country!
>
> **C:** The list.
>
> **S:** Pointing to the list <laughs> (S33)

Here one divisive discourse of Christian hegemony is contrasted with a multiculturalist discourse of 'unity in diversity', emphasizing the complex entanglement of the religion-related field with notions of community in the Southside.

Thus, the third strand of the discourses on *Religion and Relationships* shares with the others a common focus upon boundaries of belonging and exclusion, and the contestations that occur when subject positions are marked, or become marked, as 'different' from contextual norms. I now turn to the final group of discourses produced by the contemporary Southside—the similarly controversial discourses on *Religion, Science and Meaning*.

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[335] G34, I46, O29, and U19.

7.5   Religion, Science, and Meaning

The discourses on *Religion, Science and Meaning* encapsulate two main themes: the first is that of religion versus science or rationality, and the second is that of religion and what I term 'The 4Ms'—mystery, meaning, morality and mortality.[336] None of these themes was explicitly raised in questioning,[337] but discussions frequently turned to issues of epistemology, ontology and ethics. It is worth noting at this point that despite what we might describe as a common sense connection between the religion-related field and these topics, these discourses were remarkably absent from the PEP material. I shall return to this point at the end of this section.

'Science' and 'religion' were particularly entangled in this body of data, with a prevalent theme concerning the conflict, or lack of it, between the two, or their (in)compatibility. In some instances, (bad) religion, or being highly spiritual or religious, was associated with credulity, naivety and irrationality,[338] with intentionally restricting science and knowledge (particularly in educational contexts),[339] or with being 'based on faith' rather than an 'historical or analytical' approach (Brenda, I42):

> ...my mother [...] considered her[self] very religious. I would describe her as totally and utterly, um, <pause> um superstitious and, eh, [...] credulous. She, you know, um, she believed absolutely. (Julian, A29)

At other times religious belief was viewed as the only rational choice,[340] with science

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[336] My use of 'The 4Ms' is not only a convenient designation, but is a direct play on 'The 3Ms', an ecumenical church grouping in Marchmont, Morningside and Merchiston. These are three districts in Edinburgh that are on the periphery of what would generally be considered 'the Southside', and the grouping is roughly analogous to 'Newington Churches Together' which performs a similar role at the centre of the Southside.

[337] Vincett and Olson also found these topics organically coming to the fore in their interviews with young people in Glasgow (2012, 199).

[338] C26, H41, K32, K63, K82, K89, N38, P21, Q36, S22, S34, S35, T35, V47, V52, W27, W28, W29, W33, W35, and W36. It is worth noting, as with all references, that the individuals were not necessarily articulating *their own* view, but in some cases the perceived views of others.

[339] H43, I18, K84, U7, W36.

[340] 'I mean it's like Pharaoh, [...] he saw all the signs, you know, and he still says "Nah". [...] and people still see the signs today, and they say "Oh, nah". No difference. No difference.' (Amir R23, also R22 and R33)

being castigated for its fallibility[341] and its inattentiveness to experience, feelings, and mystery.[342] Further, some individuals attested to feeling little conflict as they navigated between these two domains, or to this so-called divide having little to no meaning in their subjective lives:

> I mean, yes I believe in God, Jesus... but then I know, I mean... you don't turn a blind eye to Darwin and the theory of evolution and things like that <laughs>… (Lily, U7 cf. A31 and A32)

However, the unifying feature of these varied and oppositional discourses is the conceptualization of science and religion as separable realms or 'magisteria' (Gould 1998, 269–83), and the reification of the distinction(s) between them. Whether these are constructed as (partially) overlapping, or as 'non-overlapping magisteria' (Gould 1998, 269–83), these discourses concern the seeming (lack of) competition and boundaries between science and religion as epistemological frameworks.[343]

These discourses concerned the construction of 'religion' in relation to epistemology, as a particular *episteme*: 'a specific, contingent "configuration" within the epistemological field' (Robertson 2016, 45; on Foucault 1973, 168). It is unsurprising, therefore, that they were closely related to discourses on 'the big questions,' suggesting an entanglement between the perceived domain of religion and those 'gaps' that are (currently) perceived to be beyond the grasp of empirical reason. Religion was discursively connected with questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life,[344] and frequently with death, the afterlife,[345] and existential

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[341] D32 and R32.

[342] 'You can't tell me I'm gonna go through everything in this life, um, to end up dead in the soil and it essentially then meant nothing.' (Aisha, N34, also A31, C26–27, C32–33, D35, H44, N40, and Q47)

[343] D32, G32, N34 and V58. See Hervieu-Léger (see 2000, 17, 99–100), Harrison (2010), and Burnett (2012).

[344] C26, C27, C30, C41, D40, H44, N46, S26, T36, U19, and W20.

[345] J36, J40, O36, P14, R26, and T38. It is worth noting that many of these references were to humanist funerals. In some instances, the only mention of funerals and death was when the term 'humanism' was specifically discussed. This term itself was generally conceptualized first and foremost in relation to

(in)security:

> ...we've been very lucky in our generation, living in a period of comparative peace. I mean I was born before the war, but um, during the war the churches were obviously very full, and religion was very important to people. (Samantha, H64) [346]

It was also caught up in moral issues and theodicy,[347] and with the very notion of the unexplained/unexplainable—the ubiquitous *gap in our empirical knowledge.*[348] For each of these 'questions,' the religion-related field could be positively or negatively implicated in the issue at hand. This includes 'non-religion', with Knott, Poole and Taira citing new stories which castigate 'bad secularism and atheism' as exemplified by Richard Dawkins for not allowing 'space for imagination and fantasy, for the sense of mystery, myth and morality' (2013, 115). For example, for those who turned to, or claimed that others would turn to, religion at times of crisis and when dealing with death,[349] there were (a smaller number of) others who cited crises and dealing with death as the reasons they, or others, would not be interested in, or ceased having any interest in, religion (see the discussion relating to Alan, above).[350]

To summarize, it appears that 'religion' in the Southside is deeply embedded in social thought concerning mystery, meaning, morality and mortality. It is constructed as an episteme whose (in)compatibility with the dominant cultural ethos of science and empiricism must be accounted for in the narratives of social actors in the Southside and beyond. Before concluding this section, let us return to my observation that these discourses were remarkably absent from the PEP material,

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funerals and weddings, and in most cases little else (see, for example, Copeman and Quack 2015; Engelke 2015b).

[346] Also E20, H66, N40, R26, V46 and V51.

[347] With the general thrust being that religion *should be* about morality, even if many/most 'religious' social actors (occasionally) act immorally (D34, K90, K91, L67, N33, P18, P27, R11, R15, R32, and S28).This instantiates a dominant discourse in the contemporary UK described by Bruce, whereby 'religious people are not condemned for having the wrong religion: they are condemned for misunderstanding the proper nature of religion, which is simply to be nice' (Bruce 2014b, 18).

[348] D33

[349] H64, J40, J41, N38, N40, O41, R21, R25, R34, S29, U22, V46, and V51.

[350] D34, P14, and P18.

which raises two important points.

The first point is methodological, and concerns the motivations behind the PEP (as discussed in **Chapter 4**, and below). Death, mystery, morality, meaning, and the relationship between religion and science are controversial and emotional topics, at least in the UK context. They are not typically the topic of polite conversation, and typically relegated to the 'private' realm of 'belief' (see discourses on *Civic Space* in **Chapter 5**). It is little wonder that the mandate of the PEP—'to promote understanding between the peoples of Edinburgh and celebrate the richness of multi-cultural society' (City of Edinburgh Council 1996, 3)—did not encourage conversations on such topics. Indeed, as I noted in **Chapter 4**, interviewers actively steered conversations away from them. However, the corollary is also true: studies which are guided by questions on 'what it means to be' (non-)religious or secular (e.g. Lee 2012a), or on what (non-)religious people believe (e.g. Day 2011), are seemingly much more likely to encounter such discourses. In these cases, we end up with typologies of 'existential culture' (Lee 2015, 161–72) or, in the case of my own Masters project, four of five 'types of narrative' which would all fall under my current heading of *Religion, Science and Meaning*—'naturalistic', 'philosophical', 'spiritual' and 'humanistic'(Cotter 2011b).[351] Given that these discourses appear as but one strand among eight in the contemporary Southside, and given that they were entirely absent in the PEP, this suggests that an unwitting reification of these discourses is at work in studies of the other-than-religious.

That being said, my second point is that this reification is perhaps rooted in the significance placed upon these issues by people 'on the ground'. In previous publications focusing upon my Masters typology (Cotter 2012; 2015) I explained the

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[351] An argument could certainly be made for also including the fifth, 'familial', type under this heading.

prevalence of these types of discourse by working with Kim Knott's concept of the 'secular sacred' (2013). Holding that the 'sacred' is not 'a uniquely religious category' (Anttonen 2000, 274), Knott argues:

> Various things, places and people are set apart according to time and context. The boundaries that become the focus of sacred-making discourse and activities have the potential to erupt as sites of struggle but for much of the time lie dormant and, as such, invisible.' (2013, 214)

For the sake of clarity, I shall resist the temptation to digress on a number of issues surrounding the usage of the nomenclature 'sacred' (Owen 2016). However, the fact that these discourses arose in the contemporary Southside, without prompting on my part, suggests that they are heavily implicated in the religion-related field as 'sites of struggle', and are much more likely to provoke the positioning of social actors in religion-related subject-positions when compared with the more 'a-religious' discourses presented in **Chapter 5.**

7.6   Conclusions I: Returning to Non-Religion and Local Particularity

Now that I have presented all eight of the prevalent discursive groupings in the contemporary Southside, I wish to return to my conclusions from **Chapters 5** and **6** and reflect on them in the light of the present chapter's discourses.

Turning first to the 'local particularity' (Jenkins 1999, 77) of the religion-related discourses presented above, we have seen the Southside implicated throughout. For example, Alan described a normative framework in the Southside that is non-Catholic, and positioned Catholicism as spatially distant, in East Kilbride. Along with his contemporaries at school, Alan journeyed through the Southside to a nearby church at various points in the local ritual calendar, and continues to make these

journeys to this day for various life-cycle rituals, but particularly funerals. Without these particular spatial configurations and power relationships, different shifts between religion-related containers would prove problematic, the discourses on the decline of the local community would not necessarily be entangled in discourses of secularization, and diversity would be conceptualized in alternative configurations. Whilst those discourses centred on the relationship between science and religion can be relatively easily abstracted from this local context, the other discourses presented in this chapter emphasize once again the entangled relationship between locality and the religion-related field.

Second, the discourse groupings presented in this chapter provide further support for the theoretical conclusions relating to non-religion and the religion-related field developed thus far. Indeed, the 'religion' in the titles of all three discourse groups could effectively, if inconveniently, be replaced with 'religion-related field'. In each case, discourses implicated the entire field of religion-related subject positions in problematic 'conversions', family disputes, morality, mortality, etc. The metaphor of containment was applied across the religion-related field, with subject positions being constructed as lenses for making sense of the world. In actors' relationships, it was marked *differences* or *changes* in religion-related beliefs, practices and identifications which were invested with meaning and not the particular configurations of these differences and changes. Not only do these discourses further support treating the religion-related field as a coherent whole, they also further support the argument that some religion-related discourses maintain their structure irrespective of the particular cluster of discursive objects involved. My analysis of the discourses on *Religion, Science, and Meaning* demonstrated that although many discourses on 'science', 'morality', 'mortality' etc might not be inherently religion-related, these fields are

intimately entangled in popular discourse, and in what it 'means' to be 'religious' or 'non-religious'. This adds further nuance to the conclusion that the theoretically a-religious character of some discourses is rendered effectively meaningless in particular contexts.

As a final analytical exercise, I turn in the next section towards an assessment of the apparent continuities and changes in religion-related discourse between the contemporary Southside and the PEP material, over a period of roughly twenty years. This serves the purpose of further drawing together the material presented in **Chapters 4–7**, as well as facilitating reflection upon the position of the researcher in the production of discursive data.

7.7   Discursive Continuity and Change in the Southside

Before considering the continuities and changes in religion-related discourse between the contemporary Southside and the PEP material, it is first helpful to briefly focus on some of the major themes and changes in 'religion' and religion-related discourse in the UK over the past twenty years or so. Much of this discussion has been seeded throughout the preceding chapters, and it is not intended to be comprehensive, nor is it the result of rigorous research on my own part, but serves as a useful contextualizing survey of others' work.

7.7.1 Religion-Related Discourses in the UK

A persistent theme in the sociology of religion in recent years is that the 'nature of religion' has been changing in the contemporary UK, 'a country with a deeply embedded Christian culture, which at one and the same time is becoming increasingly secular and increasingly diverse with regard to its religious profile' (Davie 2015, xii).

There has been a shift in the particular 'discursive objects' in UK discourse surrounding religion, due to 'significant events' such as the Dunblane massacre, the death of Princess Diana, and the sacking of Glen Hoddle, 'all of which provoked—or were provoked by—an unexpected "religious" response and associated debate' (Davie 2000a, 117), and, of course, 9/11, 7/7, and other acts of violence associated with Islam. In the twenty-first century UK, religion is increasingly associated with a whole range of social issues, such as leadership, party choice, abortion, homosexuality, foreign policy issues, free speech, terror, moral panics, gender equality, environmentalism, euthanasia, stem cell research, dress, views of the body, discrimination, immigration, community relations (see Clements 2015, 7; Nye and Weller 2012; Guest, Olson, and Wolffe 2012, 161; Ganiel and Jones 2012, 308; C. G. Brown and Lynch 2012, 342; Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 82). A succinct entry point into this complex situation is provided by Linda Woodhead's introduction to *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (Woodhead and Catto 2012), which has already been invoked in my discussion of the discourses on *Religion as Traditional* in the PEP (**Chapter 4**).

Woodhead describes a variety of changes in UK society in the post-war period, including the rise of the welfare state and the eventual loss of faith in socialist institutions (2012a, 10), combined with the diminishing prestige of science in the face of epidemics, rising natural disasters, competing holistic therapies, entanglement with big business, etc (2012a, 9–10). In the post-9/11 and 7/7 world, the UK has seen 'an attempt to extend greater state control over religion' (2012a, 22), which was somewhat paradoxically prompted by a prolonged phase of deregulation and disinterest (2012a, 24) which led many to the view that religion had somehow 'reappeared'. This bureaucratic situation is compounded by new legal measures and

equalities legislation introduced via the EU, changes in charities law, and the 'state's growing concern from the late 1990s onwards to enter into more regularized forms of consultation with a range of "faith communities", rather than simply relying on historical forms of relationship with the major churches and with the long-established Jewish community in Britain' (2012a, 23).

Early twenty-first century discourse has seen a rise in 'New Atheism' (potentially in response to the aforementioned diminishing prestige of science) (2012a, 8) and a neoliberalism that is increasingly willing to make alliances with religion (2012a, 11)—think of David Cameron's short-lived 'Big Society' agenda, for example. As we have seen in previous chapters, these alliances map onto a dominant dichotomy in UK discourse between 'good' and 'bad' religion, whereby 'good' correlates with socially beneficial, private, moderate and tolerant, and 'bad' correlates with public, extreme, intolerant, demanding, interfering, and fundamentalist (Hjelm 2014b; Fitzgerald 2015a; Hughes 2015). This period has also seen the continued shift from the communal to the individual, with institutions being invested with less authority (Clements 2015, 25), 'religion' being viewed as field in which individuals engage in choice (Bruce 2014a, 131), and the more 'open' and 'individualized' language of 'spirituality' being preferred over the rigidity and traditionalism of 'religion' (Vincett and Woodhead 2009, 320; Davie 2015, 37). And, as discussed in **Chapter 4**, it has also seen the rise of 'the failure of multiculturalism' discourse in popular politics (Modood 2014b).

Woodhead summarizes the contemporary religion-related setup in the UK in four key points. First, the visibly or actively religious have become 'a numerical minority, and the open expression of religion in many public arenas […] became highly contentious' (2012a, 25). Second, 'the fastest-growing forms of religion' are no

longer 'those which are most closely allied with political power and social prestige' (2012a, 25). Third, religion has become 'the place where some of the tasks which are not being carried out by other social actors are attended' (25). And fourth, religion is increasingly constructed as a 'minority interest' (2012a, 25) with weakened linkages to the state and increasing ties to 'consumer capitalism and a wide range of media' (2012a, 27). Yet despite the fact that Christianity and 'the Church' are becoming a distant memory for many, or a vague cultural memory for others, this has left an indelible imprint on UK discourse, with 'legacies of the past remain[ing] deeply embedded in both the physical and cultural environment' (Davie 2015, 4), and in the rhythms of everyday life and the national ritual cycle (Davie 2014, 615; Bruce 1995, 46, 70; Knott, Poole, and Taira 2013, 57–78). Furthermore, all of this is occurring in the face of 'growing indifference' among the population as a whole (see **Chapter 5**), described by Bruce as 'the biggest change' in Scotland's religious culture in recent decades (2014a, 3).

With this brief portrait in mind, we can now turn to a comparison of the PEP with the contemporary Southside, before proceeding to a discussion of what this all says to the conclusions of **Chapters 5** and **6**.

7.7.2 The PEP and the Contemporary Southside: Continuity and Change

The *Peoples of Edinburgh Project* (PEP) presented in **Chapter 4** was produced as part of a much broader multiculturalist project in the mid 1990s. As I discussed, 'religion' was a relatively minor feature of the conversations in this body of data, and was present alongside other more prominent topics such as family, education, food, leisure time, and 'integration into Edinburgh society'. As such, the discourses that were excavated from that body of data were somewhat more circumscribed than the multi-

stranded groupings produced by the contemporary Southside. That being said, every

discourse presented in discussion of the PEP was present, in some form, in the

contemporary Southside (along with some 'new' discourses). With this in mind, I

shall first detail the commonalities, and then the differences, between the discourses

excavated from each body of data, and offer an analysis of the situation.

Continuity

Despite pragmatic changes to my preferred nomenclature for the various discursive

groupings excavated from the PEP and the contemporary Southside (CS) material, and

despite my own interviews in the CS not being consciously guided by the outcomes of

my analysis of the PEP, there was a significant amount of discursive continuity

between the two bodies of data.

The PEP and CS contained discourses which constructed religion as a context

that provides meaningful boundaries for social action, as something within which one

can be brought up and trained into, as a 'way of life' which cannot be abandoned

lightly. This 'religious container' was also implicated in or mapped onto other forms

of containment, other 'communities', such as ethnicity, culture, education, gender,

sexuality and nationality.[352] Each body of data also encapsulated discourses on the

inheritance of a religious habitus, with an emphasis on the role of the family, whereby

(de)conversion is constructed as involving a change in habitus that leaves a lasting

impression, of greater or lesser significance depending on the specific context of the

individual actor.[353] PEP participants spoke of how religion affected living

arrangements, marriage traditions, the length of the working week, and even restricted

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[352] Discourses on *Religion and Containment* (both datasets), *Religion and Community* (PEP) and *Religion and Relationships: Strand III* (CS)

[353] Discourses on *Religion and Containment* (both datasets), *Religion and Family* (PEP) and *Religion and Relationships: Strand I* (CS).

and influenced the behaviour of non-adherents to the locally dominant religion, providing a framework within which one's actions are judged by the community.[354] With my framing of 'power categories', the CS was constructed as a context within which religion-related terms were invested with power, constraining and oppressing social actors, whether through the 'diffuse and indirect' (Lee 2015, 30) effects of its 'post-Christian' heritage, the unsympathetic machinations of 'secular' state apparatus, or the encroachment of more 'closed' or 'militant' minority positions.[355] These discourses on the containing or constraining nature of particular 'religious' contexts were further compounded by many interviewees feeling constrained or misrepresented by religion-related terms in general, and even the designation 'religious' itself.[356]

As far as the general social significance of religion was concerned, the PEP and CS each contained discourses which engaged with the interaction between the religion-related field and 'community', in terms of religion/s *as* community, and in terms of the interaction between religion/s *and* (the) community.[357] This was combined with a 'discourse of secularization' which backgrounded religion as a minority concern alongside a narrative of decline, placing Christianity in particular outside the realm of phenomena that must generally be given serious attention.[358] A further similarity concerned the place of embodiment and practice, with religion constructed as something that is embodied—both internally, through emotions and experiences, and externally, through clothing and other practices[359]—and with the sincerity of perceived religious beliefs and/or identifications being measured by

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[354] Discourses on *Embodiment of Religion* (PEP).

[355] Discourses on *Power (CS)*.

[356] Discourses on *Religion and Containment* (both datasets) and *Religion and Social Identity: Strand III* (CS).

[357] Discourses on *Religion and Community* (PEP) and *Religion and Relationships: Strand III* (CS).

[358] Discourses on *Religion as Traditional: Strand II* (PEP) and *Power: Strand I* (CS).

[359] Discourses on *Embodiment of Religion* (PEP) and *Lived Religion: Strand II* (CS).

engagement in specific practices.[360] The consensus in each temporal context was seemingly that belief and identification *should* be accompanied by practice and that declining religiosity will be most clearly evinced through declining levels in individual and societal practice.

In some ways, these discursive commonalities might not seem as interesting as the differences we'll discuss below, but there are nevertheless at least three important points to note. First of all, the interviews in the PEP and CS were, for the most part, one-to-one interviews with *individuals,* or occasionally with couples or small focus groups, with participants speaking *for themselves* (i.e. not as officials representing particular groups). As outlined in the preceding section, all speakers in these interviews (including the interviewers) are operating in a UK context where 'religion' is predominantly considered taboo in polite, everyday conversation. Therefore, the prevalence of discourses focusing on the embodied experiences of individuals is not entirely surprising. Nor is the presence of those that reified practice: if one does not speak to 'others' about religion, religion can only be assessed through others' visible practices.

Second, each project took place in a context of diminishing but hegemonic Christianity, the effects of which were felt quite strongly in the CS, and were amplified for those of 'minority' traditions in the PEP. This helps to explain the continuities in discourses of secularization, and those that constructed religion-related terms as 'power categories'. Third, as has been discussed throughout this thesis, the PEP was conceived at a time when 'diversity' and 'communities' started to be conceptualized along 'religious' lines, rather than by country-of-origin or ethnicity. The CS, particularly through the impact of contemporary discourses on Islam-related

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[360] Discourses on *Meaningfulness of Practice* (PEP) and *Lived Religion: Strand I* (CS).

violence and the 'resurgence' of religion, is very much still working within this framework, and thus 'almost inevitably prioritizing religious over other features (such as occupation or locality, for example) and promoting religious Muslims [for example] as the representatives of Muslims as a whole' (Modood 2007, 133). With this consistent thread in the conceptualization of diversity, comes consistency in metaphors of containment being associated with 'religion', and in discourses on religions as/and community.

Discussion now turns to focus on the differences between the discourses evident in the PEP and CS. Due to the additional space required when describing difference, my analysis shall be interspersed throughout this discussion. My presentation focuses on five major areas of change, before concluding with some important 'new' discourses that were evident in the CS.

Change

The first area of change concerns the discourses on *Religion and Containment*. In the PEP these discourses were dominated by constructions of religion as *the* preeminent container in social interaction. An overriding assumption here was that religious identities were discreet and decontextualized silos into which social actors could be placed. By way of contrast, the discourses on *Religion and Containment* in the CS tended to relativize 'religion' as one container among many, acting in combination and competition with others that were contextually relevant, such as culture, education, gender and sexuality. The CS thus speaks to a much more fluid, multiple, and contextual understanding of religious 'identification' (as opposed to 'identity'). This is largely to be explained by my own critical position and its influence upon conversation, and also by the extended focus upon 'religion' in my interviews as

compared to the more peripheral engagement in the PEP. However, it also fits with the continued shift in UK discourse on 'religion' towards more open and individualized models, the exercise of choice, and the rise of neoliberalism discussed above.

Second, and in a similar manner, the discourses on *Religion and Community* in the PEP frequently ascribed global homogeneity—generally in terms of (idealized) practice—to those individuals and communities who share a particular identification. This stands in marked contrast to the CS, where many interviewees acknowledged fluidity in their strategic and contextual identifications with certain religion-related terms (although this was somewhat less evidenced in interviewees' discussions of out-groups in the Southside and beyond). This unevenness can be somewhat explained methodologically, due to a differing emphasis in interview contexts. Although I argued above that both contexts involved interviews with individuals, the participants in the PEP were of interest to the project because they identified as *members of particular 'minority communities' with explicit links to communities overseas*. Whilst these individuals might well have been speaking for themselves, the line of questioning pursued by the PEP interviewers, and the manner in which interviewees' narratives were presented, resulted in a greater prevalence of discourses of homogeneity.

Third, while the PEP discourses on the *Meaningfulness of Practice* were augmented by a discourse on the near-exclusively benign to positive, or 'safe', quality of said practices, the CS material[361] had more of an ambiguous flavour. Furthermore, although both bodies of data contained discourses on religion's continued relevance to the Southside and beyond, discourses in the CS tended to construct this relevance largely in terms of novelty and difference from a hegemonic and (admittedly, 'post-

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[361] Discourses on *Lived Religion: Strand I* (CS)

Christian') 'secular' norm.[362] The first of these points can be explained by the fact that participants in the PEP were commenting on *their own* practices, and as representatives of *their own* 'community', whereas the contemporary Southsiders were focusing upon 'religion' in general, and on manifestations of this 'othered' religion in the Southside. Due to attribution biases, a focus on the conduct of one's own religion-related group is much less likely to prompt negative discourses than those focusing on the religion-related groups of others. Furthermore, the twenty years between these two projects has seen the rise of public discourse on 'good' versus 'bad' religion, which will undoubtedly have been a factor. The second point, on the shift from religious relevance to religious novelty and difference, makes sense in the context of the rise of the 'failure of multiculturalism' discourse discussed above, as well as increasing indifference to religion-related matters.

Fourth, due to the guiding principles behind selection of PEP interviewees, the majority of the discourses on *Religion as Oppressor* were invoked by individuals who identified as 'religious' and, as such, 'religion' in general did not tend to be constructed as the oppressor, and the power relationships with which religion was connected were of a particularly personal nature. While these discourses were certainly not absent in the CS, the second strand of the discourses on *Power—Religion-Related Hierarchies*—also featured hierarchies and power relationships on a much bigger scale, most significantly concerning the machinations of the nation state, the relationship between the individual and said state, and the perceived effect of external forces on the locality. Furthermore, whilst the CS and the PEP both evinced a coherent discourse associating religion with individualized experiences of patriarchy and heteronormativity, this tended to remain unchallenged in the PEP material (i.e. it

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[362] Discourses on *Religion as Traditional: Strand I* (PEP) and *Religion and Social Identity: Strand I* (CS).

was described rather than criticized). The most obvious explanation for these shifting

dynamics is the prevalence of 'non-religious' subject positions in my data from the

CS, but we must also think to the changing local, global and national context. The CS

exists in a context of increased state control and regulation of religion, controversies

and legal cases surrounding more established forms of religion, the rise of popular and

vocal critics of religion, and a general cynicism surrounding the entanglements of

religion with power, capitalism, and so on. It is little wonder, in this context, that the

very notion of 'religion' itself is diminishing in popularity, as individuals and groups

find alternative, less tarnished, terms to describe their beliefs, practices, traditions,

ideologies, etc.

Fifth, the discourses of the PEP were often inflected with an emphasis on the

boundaries between a geographically (and chronologically) distant context labelled

'home' and the 'alien' context of Edinburgh (or the UK generally). Many interviewees

also invoked a discourse whereby living in Edinburgh made it difficult to maintain

their 'religion' in their preferred manner.[363] This discourse was clearly invoked in the

CS in the more negative aspects of the discourses on *Civic Space,* however these

discourses also contained much more in the way of positivity whereby diversity

brought benefits for the individual and the Southside, where the Southside was

welcoming and celebratory of difference, and where the performance of 'indifference'

acted as a viable tactic for negotiating a dominant, *strategic* discourse that extols

'moderation' concerning religion-related questions in interpersonal interaction, and

demonizes 'militancy' or 'extremism'. Given that the interviewees in the CS were

explicitly solicited on the basis of considering themselves as having a connection to

the Southside, no matter how tenuous, and given that locality was my chosen means to

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[363] Discourses on *Religion and Community* (PEP).

approach religion-related discourse, it is unsurprising that the main spatial dichotomy in the CS was between local and external forces, rather than between an 'alien' Southside and some longed-for 'home'.

Finally, it is worth noting that a number of discursive groupings were evident in the CS that were largely or totally absent from the PEP data, including: strands I and II of *Religion and the Built Environment—Religious Buildings, Utility and Heritage*, and *Religion, the Built Environment, and Southside Identity*; strand II of *Religion and Relationships—Friends;* and all of the discourses on *Religion, Science and Meaning.*

As far as those discourses on *Religion and the Built Environment* are concerned, my main explanation for their effective absence in the PEP would be to point to Knott's argument that 'if you ask people to identify religion in an urban context most will point to a building' (2015, 18). The participants in the PEP were not asked about 'religion' in general or in Edinburgh, nor were they asked about the spaces in which they practised their 'religion'. This is not to say that 'religious' buildings weren't mentioned at all in the PEP—we saw Fatima's interviewer mentioning living near the Central Mosque in **Chapter 4**—but simply that they were more peripheral to discussion. This could also be connected to the 'minority' status of the individuals who were spoken to as part of the PEP— regardless of factuality, interviewers might justifiably have assumed that minority communities are less likely to have made 'permanent' or 'significant' additions to the urban landscape. Furthermore, as we saw in **Chapter 6**, the religion-related built environment in the Southside is entangled in discourses surrounding Southside identity; it is a site of contestation. A project which sought to celebrate Edinburgh's diversity, at a time when such a celebration was presumably felt to be needed, would be understandably

unlikely to focus on an area where 'locals' might feel particularly threatened by said diversity.

The absence of discourses connecting religion with friendships can once again be explained by looking to the rubric of the PEP. The interviewers' schedules contained prompts on the 'family religion' and how religion affects 'lifestyle of self/family', but nothing about friendships. It was also noted in the CS that interviewees tended to speak about *other* religions relationally, through the experiences of their friends and acquaintances. Once again, the PEP participants were not asked to speak about 'other' religions—a topic much more likely to encourage negative commentary than one's own religion. Finally, I have already written at length above about the discourses on *Religion, Science and Meaning*, where I argued that due to the controversial and emotional nature of these topics, it was little wonder that the PEP interviewers actively discouraged related conversations. However, I also suggested that had the organizing rubric been different—focused on meaning or belief, for example—these discourses might have made an appearance in the PEP. Furthermore, the shifting UK discourse on science and religion, with the attendant rise of 'New Atheism', might have contributed to a heightened sense of urgency surrounding these issues.

7.7.3 Conclusions II: The Role of the Researcher

In the preceding discussion I have suggested a number of explanations for the changes and continuities in religion-related discourse in the PEP and CS data. These explanations are not intended to be comprehensive: indeed, my own closeness to the material may have blinded me to some alternative explanations that the reader might perceive. However, these explanations have been made possible by the unique

comparative opportunity provided by the PEP material, the common analytical approach applied to both datasets, and my privileged position as an 'outsider' to the production of the PEP.

Many of these explanations were centred upon the local particularity of the Southside (already discussed in detail throughout this thesis) but also upon the national particularity, relating the contemporary Southside to broader religion-related discourse in the UK. This demonstrates that whilst locality has provided an effective means through which to approach religion-related discourse, localized discourses do not operate in isolation. As outlined by Wijsen, drawing on Fairclough,

> discourse analysts distinguish between different dimensions of one and the same practice and look at them from different perspectives: the individual dimension or micro perspective, the institutional dimension or meso perspective, and the societal dimension or macro perspective. (2013b, 72)

The focus of this thesis remained upon how the micro level discourses of Southsiders interacted in a localized discursive field, although these Southsiders clearly employed meso and macro level discourses throughout our interviews. The preceding analysis suggests that a fruitful avenue for future studies might be to focus on the inter-relationship between discourses at different levels in order to more fully map the religion-related field and the discursive agency of social actors and of localities.

Furthermore, many of the explanations discussed above centred on the role of the researcher in the production of discourse. The participants in the PEP were approached by the researchers as representatives of minority communities, who predominantly felt a connection to a distant homeland, and were asked to speak on their own practices which were deemed to be 'religious'. Furthermore, the PEP was invested in producing positive discourses about diversity in the city of Edinburgh. By way of contrast, my own interests in 'identifications' as opposed to 'identities', in speaking to individuals who felt a connection to the Southside, in speaking about

'religion' in general, and in prioritizing non-religious subject positions, was shown to have affected the discourses produced in the contemporary Southside. Indeed, this is why I strategically referred to the 'new' discourses encountered in the contemporary Southside, with the 'scare quotes' indicating my awareness of my role in their construction. Reflecting on the discourses on *Religion, Science and Meaning* in comparison with the discourses of the PEP and my Masters project, led to the suggestion that different organizing rubrics produce different discourses, or, at least, a differently configured map of the discursive field. However, my conclusion is not that such mapping is therefore pointless. It is simply to highlight that researchers working in these areas must be aware of their own agency. Discourses have been constructed here, but they also haven't been constructed from nothing—they were co-constructed. This further emphasizes the centrality of relentless self-criticism to the academic study of religion and related categories. And it is with this focus on relentless self-criticism that I begin **Chapter 8**, where I present the conclusions of this thesis, and look to the future.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: THERE IS NO DATA FOR NON-RELIGION

I began this thesis by positioning myself firmly within a critical strand of Religious Studies, arguing that 'there are no disinterested, external positions' (Knott 2005, 125) from which to examine 'religion' (whatever that might be) but rather, scholars perpetuate and shape the 'discipline of religion' (McCutcheon 2003). At the heart of this critical strand is Jonathan Z. Smith's famous statement that

> …while there is a staggering amount of data, of phenomena, of human experiences and expressions that might be characterized in one culture or another, by one criterion or another, as religious—*there is no data for religion*. Religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study. It is created for the scholar's analytic purposes by his [sic] imaginative acts of comparison and generalization. Religion has no independent existence apart from the academy. (1982, xi)

The six word italicized phrase 'there is no data for religion' has been dubbed 'the most frequently cited sentence in theoretical/methodological discussions in the field of religious studies during the last two decades' (Benavides 2003, 895), and can easily be taken out of context and critiqued in the face of the data 'out there' that is so obviously 'religious' (e.g. Hedges 2016).

To be fair, as Kathryn Lofton observes, 'there is something dazzlingly absurd about such a claim' which 'could seem utterly idiotic, argumentatively important, or perfectly axiomatic, depending on your own relationship to religion as a problem for humanistic inquiry' (2014, 536). In my reading, Smith is not arguing that this means that scholars should therefore cease all empirical work on social phenomena deemed 'religious', nor that they should abandon the category altogether, nor that 'religion' is uniquely problematic when compared to some of the other categories that are 'created

for the scholar's analytic purposes'. I argue that a key element in Smith's argument lies in the sentences immediately following this oft-cited passage. Smith continues:

> For this reason, the student of religion, and most particularly the historian of religion, must be relentlessly self-conscious. Indeed, this self-consciousness constitutes his [sic] primary expertise, his foremost object of study. (1982, xi)

It was in this spirit of relentless self-consciousness that I undertook this project in order to critically engage with, reframe and, to some degree, rehabilitate the burgeoning body of contemporary research on 'non-religion'—a term that is definitively 'the creation of the scholar's study'.

I began the theoretical component of this thesis in **Chapter 2**, with a critical assessment of four dominant approaches to the 'non-religious', which I dubbed 'subtractionist', 'radically contextual', 'substantial' and 'discursive'. 'Subtractionist' approaches were critiqued for operating within a framework that is dominated by secularization theory, and focused upon 'religion' as something substantial and interesting, as opposed to the insubstantial, empty, baseline norm that remains when 'religion' is removed from the equation. 'Radically contextual' approaches were assessed more positively, yet their rootedness in specific contexts makes it very difficult for scholarly comparisons to take place, or for these studies to contribute directly to contemporary debates on category formation within the critical study of religion. 'Substantial' approaches were praised for providing in-depth, qualitative and quantitative, studies relating to a neglected population, yet critiqued on three levels. First, I argued that these approaches are problematically implicated in the 'World Religions Paradigm' and its associated baggage. Secondly, I argued that the plethora of new and idiosyncratic terms that has accompanied these approaches makes fruitful collaboration between scholars all the more difficult. Finally, I demonstrated that substantial approaches to 'non-religion' seem unable to shed 'religion', and thus seem

doomed to be tarred with the same critical brush. I concluded that discursive

approaches provide a fruitful way forward for the critical study of 'non-religion',

combined with a discursive adaptation of Johannes Quack's concept of a 'religion-

related field' (2014).

Through a discursive re-reading of my previous research, a specific focus for

the present study emerged, and I proceeded with the intention of investigating the

viability and utility of treating the entire religion-related field as a whole.

- Could I develop an approach that would include the voices of those who might, according to certain measures, be classified as 'religious' and 'non-religious', those who are 'indifferent' to religion, and those who are 'in between'?

- Would there be a coherent discursive field in which all such people could participate?

- How dependent would the structure of these discourses be upon particular configurations of religion-related identifiers (discursive objects)?

- What would this say to academic constructions of 'non-religion'?

- What entanglements would this 'religion-related' field have with other fields, and just how contextual would they be?

In order to address these questions, I argued in **Chapter 3** that this research

agenda would best be served by working with religion-related discourses that are

employed in social interaction by non-elite social actors who (strategically or

tactically) place themselves, and are placed by others, in a variety of positions within a

contextual religion-related field. I decided to utilize 'locality' as a framework for

organizing my discursive analysis, arguing that viewing localities as discursive fields

facilitates a social constructivist approach to group and individual identifications, and

helps us to avoid reifying contested religion-related categories, whilst simultaneously

providing a relatively bounded and coherent context within which to conduct analysis.

I then introduced my chosen field site—Edinburgh's densely populated Southside—

and outlined and justified my selection of data sources: the *Peoples of Edinburgh*

Project (PEP), new interviews and ethnographic observation, and interviews from my prior research.

After outlining the specifics of my interview techniques and my iterative analytical process of coding and triangulation between data sources, the four chapters that followed presented, first, an analysis of the PEP material (**Chapter 4**), and then three chapters focusing upon the contemporary Southside (in conversation with the PEP) with each chapter having a slightly different thrust (theoretical, contextual, reflexive) and presenting different discourses. This has led to the following conclusions.

8.1   Conclusions

This study set out to develop an approach to empirical research within the critical study of 'religion' which would facilitate the inclusion of potentially all social actors, regardless of how they positioned themselves, or were positioned by others, in relation to this contested category. The preceding chapters, in which I discursively adapted Johannes Quack's theorization of a 'religion-related field', and set it to work empirically in a localized context, provide just such an approach. Setting aside questions about what it might mean to be non-religious, and focusing instead on religion-related discourse, allowed me to map some of the discourses at work in a particular field—the discursive resources available to all actors to contextually position themselves and others in relation to 'religion'. My main conclusions are summarized in the following five key points.

First of all, in mapping the religion-related field of discourse in the Southside, I showed that it encompasses a wide variety of discourses, and is significantly entangled with other discursive fields. In some cases, these discourses were

effectively a-religious, in that they could be 'described and analysed without any reference to religious phenomena' (Quack 2014, 446), and were quite loosely entangled with the religion-related field. This was exemplified in the second strand of the discourses on *Power—Religion-Related Hierarchies*—discussed in **Chapter 5**. Here, discourses constructed the state as regulator and legitimate user of resources, and pitted the locality against malevolent external forces, with religion appearing as but one element in a larger picture, and not as inherent to the structure of the discourses. In other cases these discourses were shown to be *theoretically* a-religious, but not to be so in practice. This was exemplified in the first strand of the discourses on *Civic Space—Multiculturalism*—discussed in **Chapter 5**. Here, it was shown that discourses on multiculturalism in the twenty-first century UK are such that talk of 'cultural difference' is almost inevitably religion-related, despite being theoretically a-religious. Going further, in other cases these discourses were shown to be inherently religion-related, in that they cannot be described without recourse to contextual constructions of 'religion'. This was exemplified in the first strand of the discourses on *Religion, Space, and the Built Environment—Utility and Heritage*—discussed in **Chapter 6**. Here it would make little sense to speak of discourses on post-Christian hegemony, or discourses connecting religion and welfare, in isolation from the religion-related field. These conclusions demonstrate the importance of looking beyond the surface of discourses in order to understand the tightness of their entanglement in the religion-related field, and the significance of the acts of positioning taking place by relevant actors. They temper the temptation to reify religion-related field simply because it is entangled in particular discourses, and focus our attention instead on the nature of these entanglements.

A second central theme of this thesis is that the particular entanglements and configurations of discursive objects in the religion-related field are heavily influenced by 'local particularity' (Jenkins 1999, 77). Factors that were specific to the Southside—its post-Christian built environment, a semi-settled/transient population, the prevalence of convivial social interaction, the local versus external dynamic, etc— were written into the structure of the religion-related discursive field, meaning that its influence extended beyond merely providing the discursive objects, the hooks on which to hang some independently existing discourses. This leads to the conclusion that locality is 'more than a mere context or backdrop' (Knott 2009, 159) for the religion-related field, but actively participates in its construction by affecting the agency of local inhabitants (Knott 2005, 129). An alternative methodological approach in another conceptual space would have produced a different map of the religion-related field. This further emphasizes the importance of being relentlessly self-conscious about the limits we have set on our vision and how these impact upon our conclusions.

Turning specifically to the relational category of 'non-religion', a third point to emerge from my analysis of the religion-related discourses in Edinburgh's Southside is that it makes no sense to refer to the discourses encountered here as 'religious' or 'non-religious'. What can be said is that these are resources that are utilized by social actors to contextually position themselves and others in relation to 'religion'. Some of these contextual acts result in the positioning of phenomena as 'non-religious', in Lois Lee's sense of being 'primarily understood in relation to religion' but not being 'considered to be religious' (2015, 32). However, in many of the discourses in the Southside, 'non-religion' was seemingly much less visible than 'religion'. Methodologically, this can be explained to a degree by the approach taken in my

interviews, and what my interviewees deemed my research to be about—the nominal focus was, after all, 'religion'. Yet I go further and argue that in some cases the 'non-religious' is implicit in the subject position of those actors utilizing religion-related discourse, rather than explicitly articulated in the discourses themselves. Once having taken up a position in relation to religion, 'a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant' within the religion-related field (Davies and Harré 1990, 46), and thus we should avoid taking naïve discourses on the insubstantial nature of 'secularity', 'non-religion' etc (see Lee 2015, 49–69) at face value.

Fourth, I discussed at length in **Chapter 5** how religion-related terms have the potential to be constructed as 'power categories', acting 'in dialectical interplay with other power categories such as "politics," "science," or "nature," [to construct…] a world and our own apprehensions' (Fitzgerald 2015b, 305). However, as we saw in the PEP material, and much of the contemporary Southside data, this is not always the case. Some discourses, such as those surrounding the built environment, utility, and heritage, were clearly entangled with the religion-related field, but this entanglement was relatively uncontroversial and peripheral to their central themes. In my presentation of these discourses, we do not really see a 'non-religious' position being constructed, adopted or spoken from. Seemingly, it is not so important to be 'non-religious' when confronted with 'banal religion'. However, other discourses, such as those on *Religion and Containment, Religion and Relationships,* and *Religion, Science and Meaning*, were entangled in the religion-related field in a much more contentious and disruptive fashion. In these discourses, the religion-related field is invested with power, and this investment carries with it the potential for oppression and being

oppressed. Here, religion-related categories serve very much as power categories, and thus the 'non-religious' subject position becomes much more meaningful (as do all related positions). Each of these discourses involves contextually normative configurations of religion-related categories—'religion' and 'science' as competing epistemological frameworks, transmission of 'religion' from parents to children, and so on—meaning that the discourses function by positioning phenomena relative to this standard model. Quite simply, being positioned as religious or non-religious means more in certain circumstances than it does in others.

Finally, I began this thesis with a quotation from physician and science writer Ben Goldacre, in which he forcefully articulates a position which Lee has dubbed 'engaged indifferentism', whereby 'disinterest in religion [... is presented as] the core aspect of an individual's "religious" identity and is something they are invested in and committed to' (2014, 474). Such a perspective presents a problem for studies of 'religion' and 'non-religion' in that it is clearly related to both categories, yet involves the speaker positioning themselves in neither. Although I cannot speak to Goldacre's specific case, my analysis of religion-related discourse in the Southside suggests that, in some instances, the *performance* of indifference is a tactic for coping with contextually meaningful difference. In such cases, indifference can conceal positive and negative attitudes, particularly in the face of the dominant discourse of moderation. In the religion-related field in the Southside, discourses of indifference are entangled with, and mask, the hegemony of Christianity, and contribute to the maintenance of what Fitzgerald would call 'liberal secular principles' (2015b, 306). These conclusions combine to strengthen calls for studies of 'religion' and 'non-religion' to incorporate religion-related subject positions, such as positions of 'indifference', without disingenuously labelling them as 'religious' or 'non-religious'.

With these core conclusions in mind, I now turn to how we can move forward with this thesis, what some of its limitations are, and what is has to say to the place of 'non-religion' in the contemporary study of 'religion'.

8.2   Moving Forward

A consistent theme throughout this thesis has been that the logics of particular research projects both limit the scope, and influence the content of, any conclusions that can be made. This project is of course no different, and my conclusions are limited by the project's discursive nature and by methodological factors.

By utilizing discourse and locality as my framework for approaching 'non-religion', I have left many potential aspects unexplored–including, but not limited to, material culture, psychology, cognition, ritual, and embodiment–and could potentially be charged with producing quite an intellectualized account of the religion-related field. These limitations I fully acknowledge, and hope that my work can be seen as but one approach amongst many in the arsenal of the critical study of religion. That being said, it is worth pointing out that, as argued in **Chapter 2,** discourse is 'a *social practice*' (Hjelm 2014a, 6, emphasis in original) in itself, and that much of what my informants spoke about centred on identity formation, the built environment, embodiment, emotion and more. Thus, my study sits alongside and complements other studies focusing on these areas, and provides a useful bridge for triangulation between different theoretical and methodological approaches. It is worth highlighting that doctoral work has recently been undertaken under Johannes Quack's direction, and adapting his religion-related approach with different methodologies, in Sweden, the

Netherlands, and the Philippines, which has the potential to provide highly fruitful comparisons in the future.

From a methodological perspective, it goes without saying that that this study has only produced a partial—yet by no means insignificant—map of the religion-related field of discourse in the Southside. Whether we are considering the PEP or my own interviews in the Southside, the discourses present in the data were employed by the particular participants in each study. The interviewees in the PEP were selected as representatives of minority communities with particular links to homelands outside the UK—what of longer-term residents, and those who identified with the Church of Scotland or with 'no religion'? My own study prioritized individuals who were in some way invested in the Southside, giving the discourses a somewhat different, but similarly 'celebratory' flavour. For a variety of methodological reasons—discussed in **Chapter 3**—I did not have access to groups who could be described as marginalized in the Southside, meaning that social class is a factor that is largely absent from my analysis (on this, see C. G. Brown 2017). Despite speaking to almost as many women as I did men, gender—which is known to significantly impact upon social actors' engagements with the religion-related field (Trzebiatowska and Bruce 2014)—remains largely absent in my analysis. Indeed, I cannot escape the charge that the very interviews I conducted were gendered, due to my own subject position as a white male, and my privileged position as the interviewer. Through making my interview transcripts available through the *Southside Heritage Group* and, hopefully, the *Museum of Edinburgh*,[364] it is my hope that other researchers will be able to analyze my data with different research questions in mind—much as I did with the PEP—and thus provide further insights into these and other absences.

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[364] I shall also be exploring knowledge exchange opportunities, particularly with these two interlocutors.

Another limitation—discussed in **Chapters 2** and **3**—is that the discourses that have been mapped were not naturally occurring, but were produced mainly in the context of interviews, and were thus influenced by my necessarily pragmatic pre-determination of topics that were likely to encourage 'religion-related' discourse, and the localized boundaries I constructed around the field. Much as in the PEP, interviewees were at times clearly being led by the interviewer, and it is clear from some responses that interviewees had not necessarily noticed things or thought about them (in relation to 'religion') before the interview. Furthermore, the very genre of these conversations—formal interviews—arguably led to the production of 'acceptable' discourses. Indeed, the fact that in the final months of writing up this thesis I became embroiled in a heated argument in a Southside pub with some strangers who were loudly expressing anti-Muslim sentiments was a particularly stark reminder that the strategic discourse of moderation does not dominate in all Southside spaces. One counter-argument to these critiques would be that the discourses that I have mapped have not come from nowhere: even if the interviewees had not thought about issues before, or were mollifying their responses, they were still drawing on the religion-related discursive repertoire available to them in the Southside. That being said, the charge still remains that my map of the field is partial.

In order to more fully map the religion-related field of discourse in the Southside, and in other contexts, research would benefit from bringing in a more focused ethnographic element, whether online or offline, in order to explore discourses which emerge in more anonymous settings, or the kinds of statements individuals are more prone to use in social situations where they are more likely to feel comfortable or less guarded. Discourses surrounding the experiential side of the religion-related field could be more fully explored by augmenting similar studies with

an extended focus upon particular sites, much as others have done with the Fatih Mosque in Amsterdam (Beekers and Tamimi Arab 2016), the 'Cross Bones' graveyard in London (Berns 2016), or the Berlin site of Luisenstadt (Engelbart and Krech 2016), albeit with different guiding questions in mind. Furthermore, this study has demonstrated the utility and analytical advantages of utilizing data sets such as the PEP, in which 'religion' was not a central concern, with which the researcher was not directly involved, and which can be more easily placed in historical context with the benefit of hindsight.

This study has demonstrated that religion-related discourse is a discursive repertoire that has the potential to be activated to a variety of ends when social actors are confronted with related or entangled fields of discourse, regardless of their religion-related subject position. Now that I have mapped some of the significant entanglements of the religion-related field, and suggested that some might be entangled in such a manner as to make the positioning of phenomena as 'non-religious' more meaningful and indeed likely, future research might proceed with the intention of researching these entangled discourses, in order to map the other discursive repertoires that can be brought into play and, in the process assess the relative significance of the religion-related field. This sort of work could be of particular relevance to public actors and policy makers outside of the academic study of religion, who are interested in better understanding the implication of 'religion' in particular issues, policies, narratives, and so on, and the potential for religion-related conflict surrounding these.

This study has also further facilitated the academic recognition of the legitimate position of those in society who wish, for whatever reason, to distance themselves from 'religion,' whilst simultaneously avoiding pigeon-holing (to our

analytical disadvantage) social actors as definitively 'religious', 'non-religious', 'indifferent' and so on. This recognition ties in with a broader disciplinary acknowledgement that the identifications of social actors are fluid and complex. My approach blurs the boundary between 'religion' and 'non-religion' demonstrating that they are dynamic subject positions, and phenomena can occupy both positions at the same time, or neither, depending on who is doing the positioning, and what issues are at stake. By conceptualizing such acts of positioning discursively, we see that from moment to moment social actors are not necessarily operating with a coherent or set understanding of what 'religion' is, nor are they necessarily invoking a discursive repertoire relates to 'religion' at all. Rather, they assign specific phenomena or encounters to particular fields of discourse (where 'religion' is one potential but not necessary field), and engage with them by negotiating a repertoire of contextually relevant entangled discourses. Understanding this acts as an important corrective to naïve ideal-typical approaches, particularly in public discourse, which deny the 'situational' (Stringer 2008) nature of religion-related discourse and its 'local particularity' (Jenkins 1999, 77).

I have argued forcefully for an approach that looks beyond the supposed 'religious' or 'non-religious' character of particular discourses. This thesis has not taken a position on what 'non-religion' is, or claimed that anyone is 'non-religious', or that this would have any particular meaning in their day-to-day lives. What it has done is emphasize that 'religion' exerts enormous power in certain contexts in contemporary society, and that therefore certain positions are placed into conversation with religion, and might contextually considered to be 'non-religious'. This approach avoids reifying 'religion' as in some way unique, whilst also fully incorporating religion-related subject positions—including the 'non-religious'—into the academic

study of religion. Timothy Fitzgerald has criticized empirical studies of 'non-religion', stating that 'Surely the only topic here that makes sense as an object of study is the discourse [on "religion" and "non-religion"] itself?' (2015a, 264 fn. 22) My present study has built a strong case for conducting empirical work ostensibly under the rubric of this binary, but also with the explicit aim of contributing to Fitzgerald's critical project. It is my hope that it can act as a bridge between two increasingly entrenched positions in the contemporary study of religion-related phenomena—one that is interested in understanding 'religion in the real world', and the other in understanding the discursive processes by which that statement makes sense (Cotter et al. 2016, 98).

The field is currently going through a transition, whereby the compound phrase 'religion and non-religion' is seeing increased deployment in calls for papers, the titles of conferences and panel sessions, and in the titles of scholarly books (cf. Cox and Possamai 2016). This has been a useful rhetorical move for the field, and is testament to the growing body of scholarship in this area. However, my closing admonition is that it is now time for us to move on from this cumbersome phrasing, and fully embrace the position whereby the critical study of 'religion' includes all phenomena which are discursively placed in a meaningful relationship of difference to this constructed category. Just as with its 'semantically parasitic' other (Fitzgerald 2007a, 52), and to adapt Jonathan Z. Smith's famous phrase: *there is no data for non-religion.* But as long as we can remain 'relentlessly self-conscious' in our approach, this need not be a problem.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEWEE DEMOGRAPHICS

	Gender	Age	Religion	Job	Nationality
A	M	65-74	Church of Scotland	(Former) Company Director	Scottish
B	M	35-44	Agnostic/(Former) Jehovah's Witness	Communications Officer	Scottish
C	M	65-74	(Former) Catholic	(Former) Professor	Polish
D	M	79	Quaker/None	(Former) Technical Author	Scottish/Italian
E	F	75	Catholic	(Former) Secretary	Scottish
F	M & F	65-74	Church of Scotland	Postal Worker/Civil Servant	Scottish
G	M	25-34	Agnostic/Atheist/Catholic	Lecturer	English
H	F & M	65-74	Episcopalian	Company Director/Dentist	Scottish
I	F	76	Agnostic	(Former) Teacher	English
J	F	Mid-70s	Episcopalian	(Former) Nurse	Scottish
K	F	55-64	Atheist	Teacher	Scottish
L	F	25-34	Atheist/Agnostic/(Former) Church of England	Administration	English
M	F	Mid-50s	Pagan/Unaffiliated Christian	Therapist	English
N	F	21	Muslim	Student	Scottish
O	F	65-74	(Secular) Jew	Author	Scottish/American
P	M	45	Non-religious	Pub Landlord	Scottish
Q	M	55-64	Evangelical Christian	Church Leader/Insurance Salesman	English
R	M	35-44	Muslim (Former Christian)	IT Consultant	Syrian
S	M	25-34	Buddhist	Software Developer	Scottish/German
T	M	55-64	Atheist	(Former) Insurance Broker	Scottish
U	F	64	Church of Scotland	IT	Scottish
V	M	61	Atheist	Business Owner/Lecturer	Australian
W	M	24	Atheist/Agnostic	Social Care	Scottish

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<u>Basic Demographics</u>

- Age, Gender, Religion, Ethnicity, Nationality
- Job
- [Relationship to the South Side? Work, Home, Socialising etc.]

<u>South Side</u> (**10 mins**)

- What is the South Side for you? What area of the city is that referring to?
  Street names etc. What is your relationship to the South Side? How much do
  you know of the history etc.

Free Listing Exercise (emphasize not positive or negative)

- Characteristics of the South Side – e.g. my flat – cosy, bright, cluttered, book-
  laden, incense

Mapping Task

- (Regular) interactions with the South Side; most significant buildings;
  landmarks; eyesores; have you ever been in?

<u>Photo Elicitation 1</u> (Zoo, Al Raheem, Trypraying) (**10 mins**)

- How would you describe what is going on here? What do you think about that?
  How does that make you feel? What does that tell you about Edinburgh? Do
  you think that is typical for any Scottish city? Etc.

<u>'Religion'</u> (**20-25 mins**)

Free Listing Exercise (emphasize not positive or negative)

What is the first thing that comes to mind when I say the word 'religion'?

- e.g. ' sport' – teams, competitive, watching in the pub, rules, uniforms, fans,
  danger, excitement, tribes
- Features, characteristics, emotions, experiences, etc. of (ideal) religion

Identification Exercise

Do you consider any of the following labels to apply to you? You can select multiple labels or none at all. Make some sort of mark etc.

- Agnostic, Anglican, Atheist, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Freethinker, Hindu, Humanist, Jain, Jew, Materialist, Muslim, Orthodox, Non-religious, Pagan, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Protestant, Rationalist, Religious, Roman Catholic, Sceptic, Secular, Secularist, Sikh, Spiritual, Spiritualist, Zoroastrian, Other (write in).

Follow ups:

- How do you define them etc? Are you a typical _____? How frequently, and in what situations, do you find yourself identifying with these labels? What about some of the others? What makes you a _____? What characteristics do you share with others?
- What does this term(s) *mean* to you? What use is it? Why do you identify with it? Could you rank them in order of importance? Where did the term come from?
- Are you a member of any institutions relating to these labels? Why (not)? Etc.
- Approximately when did you first start to identify with this term/these terms?
- Is this term/are these terms something which you share in common with your family? Has this always been the case? Role of aunts, uncles, grandparents? Differing 'effects' upon siblings? Movement away from home?
- Long-lasting friends, Acquaintances: how many of them would also identify with this label/these labels? How important do you feel that these labels are in your choosing of friends? Have you ever lost a friend because of issues surrounding these and similar labels? How do you know someone is/isn't 'religious'?
- Thinking of all of these terms – where do they come up in daily life? Where do you hear them?
- Make sure to bring up 'others' – spiritual, atheist, non-religious, Christian, religious...
- What do you put your faith in?
- What would you consider to be your most valuable beliefs?
- Are there any other similar terms that you...?

<u>Religion and the South Side</u> (**10 mins**)

Mapping Task

- Religion in the South Side; places typically ascribed with 'religious' or 'spiritual' significance; why; have you ever been in etc.

- How would you describe 'religion' in the South Side? Do you know much about it? Integration? Diverse? In your face?
- How do the various cards fit? Do you know others who identify with different labels? How would you describe the South Side? Could you do this exercise again but thinking about the South Side in general? Etc.

2011 Scottish Census Religion Question (**5 mins**)

Answer + Discuss

- Did you answer? Would you answer? Why do you think this question is on the census? Can you foresee any issues people may have with answering this?

Photo Elicitation Task (Buccleuch, Mosque, Board) (**if time, 10 mins**)

Discuss what it was that I was looking for etc.

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