

**UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE**

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**

**MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE  
AND THE CITY: THEOLOGIES, SPATIALITIES  
AND SPIRITUALITIES IN URBAN SCOTLAND.**

Thesis submitted in 2002 by Ross Andrew Loveridge  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in  
Geography.

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## ABSTRACT

The emerging geographical research field of moral geography is charting out new connections between geography and ethics. To date, the moral geographical literature has developed a theoretical apparatus for exploring the geography-ethics nexus, and has undertaken a number of empirical investigations into a diverse range of issues, particularly social justice. A sphere with which moral geography has had little contact, however, is that of the religious. In spite of Western secularism, religion remains a key feature of social and cultural relations that is practised by the majority of the world's population. Likewise, for a significant minority of the population in Scotland, the Christian religion continues to be a key source of meaning, identity praxis and ethics.

This thesis aims to fill the gap in the moral geographical literature by bringing together discourses on theology, geography, morality and social justice in an original manner. By looking at a specific set of moral geographies of *social justice and the city*, I will chart out the ways in which Scotland's churches address poverty and social exclusion in the urban sphere, through the research context of the city of Glasgow. By analysing the contribution that the churches, theologies and religion make to the pursuit of social justice, I will look especially at the manner in which theological ethics of social justice and poverty are conceptualised, translated, and mobilised into a specific spatial context.

In doing so, and by engaging with the academic discipline of theology, this thesis proposes a framework of moral geographical processes and tensions and utilises a scalar approach to analysis. By testing out this framework at urban, community and body scales against the empirical realities of the city of Glasgow and its poor inhabitants, the thesis has generated a number of conclusions

that are transferable to the study of moral geographies more widely. Its overall contribution is to illuminate the complex nature of Christian theological moral geographies of social justice and the city, and to offer a religious perspective, a scalar framework and a process- and tension-based approach to the development of wider moral geographical theory and praxis.

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# **PART I**

## **INTRODUCTORY PREAMBLE**

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

## SECTION IA

# INTRODUCTION TO GEOGRAPHY, RELIGION, MORALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

*'The use of God in moral debate is so problematic as to be almost worthless. ... We need a sensible and practical approach that will help us pick our way through the moral maze that confronts us in the pluralistic society we live in. Godless Morality offers exactly this – a human-centred justification for contemporary morality. In short, it proposes a morality without God.'*

(Richard Holloway, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 1999)

*'While morality and social justice may exist apart from religion, often, religion is the basis of morality and the impetus for social justice. Yet, how different religions may inform the constructions of different moral geographies has not been explored, and how these constructed moral geographies contradict or are negotiated or reinforced by other secular agents of morality (for example the state) requires examination.'*

(Lily Kong, Professor of Geography, Singapore, 2000)

On the face of it, the above remarks illustrate something of a paradox. There is, on the one hand, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church arguing that God, and religion, should be kept *out* of moral and ethical debates, whilst on the other, the Professor of Geography in a secular university argues that religion is so frequently the *basis* of ethics and morality, that it should be *central* to their study.

These remarks provide an introduction to the complex, fraught, and contested world of morality and ethics, where common assumptions and understandings are frequently turned on their head.

This is the world of ethics where traditional moral values, meanings and identities are being challenged and overturned on a daily basis, where old certainties are replaced by new uncertainties and moral dilemmas. This is the era of moral pluralism (some would even say *relativism*) 'characterised by discordant voices and competing claims, all asserting their right to teach the rest of us how to live and what values to hold' (Holloway, *ibid.* 17). In this context, an institution such as the Church<sup>1</sup> that has for thousands of years seen itself as the moral guardian of nations, finds itself facing 'the death of Christian Britain' (Brown, 2001), its voice and moral values merely one amongst many. Similarly, traditional ethical concepts such as social justice, that have sought universal scope, find themselves challenged by belief systems that reject any possibility of such universals.

The breakdown of moral traditions and grand ethical narratives is not new to the present period, yet there is something particularly unsettling about contemporary debates on the nature of morality. Nor is the breakdown of large value systems confined to religious traditions – the communist collapse is an obvious candidate of the non-religious variety – it is rather one of a general suspicion towards *anything* that might claim to have a total monopoly upon values. This is particularly prevalent in postmodern and poststructuralist discussions.

However, this is not to say that there can no longer be commonly-held values, or more universal moral and ethical ideals. It is, rather, the nature by which these are *enacted* which is crucial to their success. Rather than being based on *obedience*, coercion and fear, finding moral agreement in the present depends more upon the principle of *consent*. It is this fundamental tension between the *universal* tendencies of ethics, and their *particular* applications, that lies at the heart of present debates on how moralities are constructed, negotiated, contested and applied.

Underlying this fundamental moral tension is geography. Geographical difference is central to the particular manner in which moralities are constructed, negotiated, contested and applied (Smith, 2000a,b,c). Universal ethics cannot escape the complexities of geographical difference, and all that this brings for economies, social relations, political frameworks and cultural identities. This is central to the emerging analytical framework of *moral geography* (Smith, 2000c). Moralities have an uneven development, and geographical analysis is essential to unlocking the processes and tensions by which moralities work with this universal-particular dilemma.

Indeed, the universal and particular are dialectically related: Universal constructs have to come from *somewhere* – i.e. a particular spatio-temporal context; and likewise have to be applicable *to* those contexts in their particularity, in order to achieve universal goals. In religious discourses, appeal to the source of moral universals is given to the metaphysical and to God, (apparently divorced from a particular spatio-temporal context) yet such metaphysical explanation cannot escape the historical scrutiny that Christian ethics are derived from the particular spatio-temporal context of the lives of a people – the Jews. Rather than debating about the metaphysical, the geographical engagement with religious ethics must firmly locate those ethics within theological discursive frameworks that are more interested in the substance and application of those ethics, and their human origin, than in direct appeals to the metaphysical. For to do so would be to enter into the realms of philosophical abstraction far removed from the interests of this thesis.

Contemporaneous with the rise of moral pluralism and the breakdown of grand ethical narratives and traditions, has been the continuing prevalence of problems caused by the uneven development of capitalism. Throughout Europe, and in Scotland in particular, restructuring of the capitalist economy has created significant problems of unemployment, poverty and social polarisation, now frequently referred to as *social exclusion*. These problems have been

overwhelmingly *urban* in their nature, with Scotland's towns and cities suffering significantly. Nowhere has this been more the case than in Glasgow, Scotland's largest city. On a whole range of indicators such as unemployment, housing, educational attainment, poverty and health standards, Glasgow is not only marked out as the most socially-excluded urban area in Scotland, but also in the UK and indeed Europe as well (Pacione, 1995a, b; 2001a,b). This backdrop has led to renewed calls for *social justice* to eradicate Glasgow's urban social exclusion problems. These calls have come from groups as diverse as trade unions, political parties, the European Union, the Scottish Parliament, community leaders, and the churches. In a specific spatio-temporal context, then, appeals are being made to an ethical concept of more universal nature – social justice. And a specific institution – the Church – is drawing upon the vocabulary of abstract theology as a means to give moral legitimacy to such appeals for social justice.

It is into these contexts of morality, social justice and religious ethics and praxis, that this thesis is inserted. Central to my enquiry are the analytical frameworks provided by geography in general and moral geography in particular. As such, this thesis brings together discourses on geography, religion, morality and social justice in an original manner.



## SECTION IB

### AIM OF THESIS AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

In this thesis, I want to respond to the theoretical and methodological challenges set out by the pioneering research interface of moral geographies. Existing moral geographical research has attempted to develop a range of theoretical and empirical tools for investigating the relationship between geography and ethics. Substantive works of a theoretical nature have been produced under the leadership of David Smith and James Proctor (Proctor and Smith, 1999; Smith, 2000c), alongside a growing number of empirical studies of moral geographies looking at contexts as diverse as childcare, the environment, landscape, ethnicity and social justice. Though there has been some discussion (e.g. Smith's 2000c analysis of Judaism), the moral geographical enterprise has so far paid little attention to the moral and ethical beliefs and praxis of religions (Kong, 2000). There is a place then, I believe, for the insertion of a sustained theoretical and empirical engagement between moral geographical theory, and the theory and praxis of Christian theology, into moral geographical debates. Lily Kong, in her recent work, has advocated connecting moral geographies with the religious sphere, and the ethics and practices that it brings (see introductory quote to this chapter). It is to her challenge, and Smith's challenge of developing moral geography; that I respond in this thesis.

By undertaking a sustained theoretical and empirical examination of the role of Christian theology in the production, exchange and consumption of moral geographies of social justice and the city, I hope to fill the gap in moral geographical understanding of the religious. The ethical issues that I shall examine – social justice, and the city – are central to moral geography, featuring in much of Smith's work in particular. My research context is Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, and home to

some of the country's worst concentrations of poverty and social exclusion. It is in such a context that ethics of social justice and the city have to be formulated to provide understanding and practical strategies for positive change. As an important (though declining) institution in Scottish society, Scotland's churches have to formulate their own ethical understanding of these issues, drawn from Christian theologies, if they are to respond to them. In exploring the processes and tensions by which these theologies of social justice and the city are produced, exchanged and consumed, I hope that I can not only provide a rigorous understanding of the specific moral geographies of the religious sphere, and of social justice and the city, but of moral geographical theory and praxis more generally.

## **IB1 Aim of thesis**

In the light of the above, my stated aim in this thesis is **'to contribute to the development of moral geographical theory and practice by illuminating the complex nature of Christian theological moral geographies of social justice and the city'**. This aim is comprehensive in its coverage, and demonstrates the advances that I wish to make in the enterprise of moral geographical theory and praxis more generally, and to theological moral geographies of social justice and the city, more specifically.

## **IB2 Objectives**

In order to achieve this aim, I have three key objectives which I will pursue and which will represent the major outcomes and achievements of my research. These objectives form the specific contributions that my thesis makes to moral geographical theory more generally.

Firstly, my primary objective is **to understand the contested nature of abstract theologies of social justice and the city**. In doing this, I will be working essentially at the 'universal' level, where moral and ethical ideals of social justice and the urban are constructed, debated, interpreted and contested. By looking at theological literatures and speaking to theological practitioners, I will be able to gain a picture of the manner in which ethical positions are formed, contested and defended in relation to social justice and the city.

My second objective is **to characterise the moral geographical processes and tensions surrounding the translation and thickening of these abstract theologies into the particular spatial context of Glasgow: the dialectical relationship between universal and particular**.

This thesis is a process-based thesis. I do not believe that moral geographical understanding can rest upon outcomes, but rather that it has to be based upon a thorough and rigorous analysis of the processes and tensions that occur when abstract ethics are contested and grounded in geographical difference. It is the dialectical processes of universal-particular translation and thickening that lie at the heart of my research. By utilising Glasgow as a research context, I move away from discussions of social justice and the city which are abstract, and create an encounter with spatiality that reveals the fraught and complex processes of ethical negotiation.

My final objective is **to comprehend the distinctive ways in which these different theologies are thickened at three distinctive spatial scales: the urban, the community, and the body; and to understand the relationships between these scales and others**. This thesis is a scalar thesis. Scale is central to the methodologies and analytical devices that I employ in my enquiry. I make the assertion that scale creates distinctive and different moral geographies and that a scalar analysis should be a key component of all moral geographical research. In utilising these three spatial scales for the particular research interests of this thesis, I will contribute knowledge and

understanding of the part that scale plays in moral geographies more generally, which will advance the research agenda of other moral geographers.

### **I B3 Contribution to knowledge**

In this thesis I will contribute original knowledge that will enable geographers, theologians, policy makers, local communities and the Church, to better understand the nature of the encounter between moral/ethical belief systems, and socio-spatial problems and their solutions. I will make three key contributions that will enable a fuller understanding of the contested nature of moral geographies, building upon the research foundations of Smith (1999a,b; 2000a,b,c), by:

- 1. Conceptualising a typology of the processes and tensions present in these moral geographies.**
- 2. Theorising the importance of spatial scale in shaping moral geographies.**
- 3. Extending the range of enquiry into moral geographies, through an interdisciplinary encounter with religion and Christian theologies.**

These contributions will be made throughout the chapters of the thesis. However, it is in the concluding chapter (Chapter 8), that I will confirm the contribution in full. As noted above, the overall intention of this thesis is to provide an *illuminatory* account of the complex nature of moral geographies of social justice and the city. This is based upon my recognition of the partiality and situatedness of my knowledge claims. I do *not* pursue a comprehensive or evaluative approach in this account, seeking to look at all possible eventualities or to make pronounced judgements about the effectiveness of Church theories and practices. Rather, my focus is upon illuminating, or making clear the various *processes* and *tensions* at work in moral geographies, and also to

illuminate the various stances and positionalities that are taken in relation to these. In pursuing this research, I hope that this knowledge can be utilised to inform the discipline of geography in its engagement with ethics and morality, and that it can be of relevance to those in theology, the Church, local communities and policy-makers who have an interest in these discussions.

## SECTION IC

### OUTLINE OF THESIS STRUCTURE

In pursuing this enquiry, I employ a wide range of research methods, largely of a qualitative nature, including interviewing, focus groups, participant observation; all based upon the foundation of a theoretical framework grounded in thorough literature review. My discussion will proceed in a logical order, beginning with literature review and theoretical framework, followed by methodological discussion, to build a strong foundation for the empirical analysis that ensues. Beyond the theoretical and methodological base, the empirical section of the thesis works in a rational order 'down' through the three scales around which discussion is structured – the urban, the community, and the body. Finally, I will conclude with reference to my aims, highlighting the contribution of the thesis, and future research directions. In detail, my discussion is structured as follows.

**Part One** of the thesis equates with this chapter (Chapter 1) and is the introductory exploration of some of the main ideas, concepts and research areas that I shall be examining throughout the thesis. It outlines the main aims and objectives of the thesis and the contribution that the thesis will make to geographical knowledge.

**Part Two** of the thesis consists of three chapters that lay the epistemological, theoretical, methodological and contextual foundations of my research. In Chapter 2 (Literature Review), I undertake a review of diverse literatures from theology and geography at the inter-disciplinary interface presented by moral geography. By using common connection points of ethics and social justice which exist in both disciplines, I will explore four key literatures that demonstrate the links between geography and theology. In spite of their different disciplinary backgrounds, any

disparities will be overcome through their common focus on the geographical, the ethical and the theological, using moral geography as the linking framework.

To ensure that the diversity of literature examined in Chapter 2 is fully appreciated, Chapter 3 (Theoretical Framework) initially proposes a set of seven key theoretical tenets of moral geographical enquiry, in order to define and limit the scope of my enquiries. Having laid this fundamental theoretical foundation, the chapter then goes on to outline the three key theoretical contributions that the thesis makes. I conclude the chapter by proposing a set of moral geographical processes and tensions that are central to the empirical enquiry of this study, and to moral geographical research more generally.

With a robust theoretical framework in place, Chapter 4 (Methodological / Epistemological Outline and Field Study Contexts) moves on to consider the contexts studied and methods employed in the body of empirical material (Section Three). The first section of the chapter will clarify my choice of field location, justifying Glasgow as the spatial locus for my research, and giving an overview of the restructuring of society and religion, in social exclusion and religious pluralism. The second section of the chapter then outlines the manner in which I connect my theoretical framework with the Glasgow research context, by discussing the scalar research design, cultural-materialist epistemology, and qualitative methodologies that I employ. I map out the scalar nature of my research design, and discuss the different methodological approaches that I have adopted at each scale, further highlighting the importance of scale already touched upon in Chapter 3.

**Part Three** of the thesis is made up of the three empirical chapters where I analyse and discuss the results of my research undertaken in the field. In Chapter 5 (Urban Scale Analysis), I make

the initial empirical engagement of theologies with spatiality. The chapter unpacks the universal-particular dialectic by exploring the unique nature of moral geographical processes and tensions at this scale. By analysing the ethics and practices of a 'cadre of urban imaginers', I will demonstrate the way in which the urban scale acts uniquely as a discursive site for frameworks of social justice to be imagined and reflected upon. The urban is then viewed as the key scale for the theological *production* of moral geographies of social justice and the city.

Chapter 6 (Community Scale Analysis) progresses the scalar approach to a crucial intermediate scale. At the community scale, I contend that moral geographical processes move beyond the abstract world of imagination and reflection to being actually practised and lived in everyday experience. By analysing the ethics and practices of a 'cadre of community executioners', I will demonstrate the manner in which the community scale acts uniquely as an embedded site for frameworks of social justice to be applied and lived. The community is then viewed as the key scale for the theological *exchange* of moral geographies of social justice and the city.

Chapter 7 (Body Scale Analysis) concludes the scalar approach by moving beyond scales at which ethics are imagined, or practised, to the scale where they become corporeal. By analysing the ethics and practices of a 'cadre of individual disciples', I will demonstrate the manner in which the body scale acts uniquely as a site of experience, where frameworks of social justice are felt and internalised. The body is then viewed as the key scale for the theological *consumption* of moral geographies of social justice and the city.

**Part Four** of the thesis equates with the final chapter (Chapter 8 [Conclusions, Contribution of Thesis, and Further Research Directions]), and summarises my main conclusions, the contribution that I have made to geographical knowledge, and future research directions that I suggest. It is at



this stage that I broaden my discussion beyond that which is unique to moral geographies of social justice and the city, and outline the wider implications of the theories that I have employed and the conclusions that I have drawn. The conclusion, then, acts as the definitive statement of my original contribution to knowledge, and a launchpad for future geographical enterprises.

In each chapter I break down the text into a number of **Sections** in order to deal with different substantive points in a decisive manner. Dividing the text in this way will allow the reader to access the main point of many of the sub-themes that I will be exploring. This ensures that the *detail* in the argument is not lost in the overall density of the material, whilst ensuring that, simultaneously, it is possible to access the *general* points and principles being considered in a clear manner.

I am clear that the aim, objectives, contribution and structure of this thesis represent a feasible and achievable research enterprise. I also believe that my research interests are relevant and interesting to others in the academic and religious communities. I hope that in the course of reading this thesis, the reader will gain a sense not only of the life and vibrancy that surrounds moral geographies of social justice and the city, but also of my own aspirations for a more socially just world.

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<sup>1</sup> NB. At the start of this thesis, from here onwards, I want to make clear that when referring to 'Church' with a capital 'C', I am meaning the *whole* world-wide Church, incorporating all denominations such as Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. Likewise, the 'Church' in Scotland refers to all of Scotland's denominations. If I refer to 'church' with a small 'c', then I am meaning either an individual denomination (e.g. the Baptists), or a local parish / community church. Basically this is a distinction between meta- and micro- scales of Church structure.

## **PART II**

# **THEORETICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL, & METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

## SECTION 2A

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will undertake the involved task of synthesising four disparate literatures drawn from theology and geography. At this inter-disciplinary interface, religion, geography, and ethics need to be brought together in a manner that at present does not exist. For a start, geography and theology are two disciplines that have entertained little or no contact. Each operates within historically inherited discursive frameworks, utilising conceptual and theoretical vocabularies that are highly distinctive to each tradition. This makes a marriage of the theological and the geographical difficult, but not impossible.

The new inter-disciplinary interface that has been created between geography and ethics through the emergent field of moral geography is not restricted to the 'official' discipline of 'ethics', but allows geography to engage with any tradition containing ethics. Theology is an obvious candidate for such an exercise, given its strong moral and ethical underpinnings. Furthermore, ethics of social justice are particularly solid within the theological discipline, in a manner that they are also within human geography. These two 'contact points' of 1). ethics and 2). social justice, demonstrate the potential for connecting geographical and theological arguments, at least at the generic level. The task then, in this chapter is for me to review four literatures (two from within geography, and two within theology), which flesh out the theological and geographical connections more fully. Once I have reviewed these literatures, disparate though they are, I will then construct a theoretical framework in Chapter 3 to allow my empirical investigation to proceed, and where I will outline the original contributions that my thesis wishes to make. This review, then, is my attempt to provide an overview of the connections between theology and

geography in existing research that will form the backbone of the theoretical framework which I will outline in Chapter 3.

I review four distinctive literatures, in the following order:

Section 2B – Moral geography

Section 2C – Geography and religion

Section 2D – Theological and geographical ethics of social justice

Section 2E – Theological and geographical ethics of the city

Given the disparities between the different disciplines, and the difficulties of making connections, it is important for the reader to see this review as a 'reading across' the different literatures. My plan in beginning firstly with moral geography is to use this as the framework for synthesis between geography and other ethical disciplines that has been developed by geographers. By grasping an understanding of moral geography, it is then possible to see how an engagement of geography with theology can proceed. However, whilst moral geography represents the framework that I will use to pursue this inter-disciplinary engagement, other geographers have already connected geography with religion and theology in a different manner. The literature on geography and religion pre-dates that of moral geography (which is around five years old), and uses different methods to engage the different disciplines. Nevertheless, to simply ignore the insights from this literature would be to fail to do justice to the existing research. Indeed, as Lily Kong (2000), writing within the geography and religion framework shows, researchers within this field are now beginning to see the moral geography framework as a way forward for the religion-geography nexus. Therefore, whilst reviewing this literature immediately after the 'cutting edge' theories of moral geography may seem like an awkward retrograde step, it is a necessary one, for

to fail to do so is to ignore the insights which come from a more mature (though albeit small) analytical field.

In analysing the two literatures on ethics of social justice and ethics of the city, my concern is to demonstrate how a connection can be made between the moral geographical theories outlined in the first section, and real debates within the discipline of theology. Hence, in the section on ethics of social justice, I am looking at the level of meta-ethical debates about social justice within theology, and then attempting to combine them with the insights of geographical theories of social justice, in a moral geographical framework. Then, in moving to look at ethics of the city, and specifically *'urban theologies'*, I am looking at the connection between theologies of the city and geographical theories of the city, which are of a more micro-ethical nature than the macro level of the previous. In this way, I am able to make connections between geographies of social justice and theologies of social justice, which are crucial to the 'social justice' element of this thesis, and between geographies of the city and theologies of the city, which are crucial to the 'city' part of this thesis.

These two literatures require analysis as they provide basic knowledge of the core theological and geographical issues surrounding ethics of social justice and the city, which is necessary for the empirical analysis in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Discussion of these literatures follows that on moral geography, and geography and religion, because understanding the connection between the theological and the geographical in ethics of social justice and the city is far easier once the methods and frames of moral geography are outlined. Throughout, it is my hope that the reader will increasingly come to see the connections between geography and theology through the lens of moral geography, and that the 'moral' component will increasingly be seen as 'theological'.

There are other literatures that I have not examined. Literatures such as those concerning theories of power, cultural politics, ideology and urban policy are obvious candidates for consideration in such a study. However, in order to maintain a focused approach, and avoid unnecessary distractions that could easily blur the moral geographical lens, it is essential that I am disciplined about the literatures under review. To introduce writings on theories of power or cultural politics could easily provide theoretical frameworks that either contradict or confuse those asserted by moral geography. My concern is to remain clear about my framework, and remain true to it throughout. Though this represents a more narrow and focused approach than a wider reading of social theory could have entailed, it allows me to give a range of more specific and meaningful insights in my empirical and theoretical conclusions. I will therefore keep moral geographical theory central throughout, as the guiding template bringing together the diverse interests and disciplines contained within this thesis. Then in Chapter 3 I will be able to outline the contributions that my thesis will make.

## **SECTION 2B**

### **GEOGRAPHY AND ETHICS – MORAL GEOGRAPHIES**

#### **2B1 INTRODUCTION**

This section of the literature review analyses the new and growing field of moral geography, which looks at the connections between the theoretical and methodological approaches of geography and moral philosophy (Proctor and Smith, 1999; Smith, 1997a,b, 1998, 1999a,b, 2000a,b,c,d, 2001). There is an obvious connection for my thesis here, in that theology is clearly a significant form of moral philosophy, with a long and extensive history in Western thought. Theology therefore acts as the philosophical component of the framework which can then be wed to the geographical analysis to construct a 'moral geography', with theology as the 'moral' component and geographical contexts as the 'geographical'. This will become clearer as analysis proceeds throughout this section and the rest of the chapter.

#### **2B2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GEOGRAPHY AND ETHICS: MORAL GEOGRAPHIES**

The geographical engagement with ethics has been most explicit during the 1990s, and in particular following the 1991 instruction by the Social and Cultural Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers that geographers should '(re)connect their inquiries to moral philosophy' (Smith, 2000c: 5). However, it can also be argued that this interest in moral philosophy or in the normative nature of social theory and research (Sayer and Storper, 1997) dates back to the early



1970s' 'relevance debate' (see Pacione, 1999a,b,c; Johnston, 2000a), when calls were made for more explicitly normative geographical enquiry (Proctor, 1998a: 11; Smith, 2000c: 3-5).

Smith (2000d: 231), defines 'ethics...(or moral philosophy) (a)s the systematic study of morality, concerned with what it is to make moral judgements', though noting that 'what is a moral or ethical issue is itself an unresolved philosophical question'. This distinction between the moral and the ethical is the cause of some uncertainty amongst geographers. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography* Smith (*ibid*) argues that:

'both terms are taken to mean the same: having to do with evaluation of human conduct, with what is considered right or wrong, good or bad, in the senses of what people ought or ought not to do and the quality of their actions or characters, in contexts which are not merely matters of etiquette or prudence'.

However, in his *Moral Geographies* (2000c: 10), he makes a distinction between

'ethics as moral theory and morality as practical action (Rauche, 1985: 252-3). Thus, *ethics* is the same as moral philosophy, or "the conscious reflection on our moral beliefs" (Hinman, 1994: 5). *Morality* is what people actually believe and do, or the rules they follow' (emphasis added).

The uncertainty is further highlighted by another entry in *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Matless, 2000a: 523) on 'moral geographies', where it is pointed out that

'Care should...be taken to establish the way in which an author may be distinguishing between the "moral" and the "ethical". In some accounts the two are interchangeable, while in others they carry precise and different meanings. What is defined as "ethical" by one writer may be

defined as "moral" by another. The key point is to remember that the distinction between morality and ethics is a fluid one, and that understanding an author's argument will demand a clear sense of the terms upon which that argument is being made'

The uncertainty over the meanings of ethics and morality obviously poses problems for analysis. However, the broad thrust would seem to suggest that they are dealing with the same area of *human conduct* and *values*, both in terms of 'doing' and 'being' (Smith, 2000c: 10), and whether it can be judged in ways as either good or bad, right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, and so on.

In their writings, both Smith and Proctor subdivide ethics into three distinct types: '*descriptive ethics*, which identifies actual moral beliefs and practices, *normative ethics*, which proposes solutions to moral problems, and *meta-ethics*, concerned what (*sic*) it means to think and practice ethics' (Smith, 2000d: 232). In varying ways, I will engage with these three types of ethics during the thesis. Descriptive ethics form the bulk of the research material that I have gathered in the field; my own normative views are scattered throughout the thesis, and in this chapter I undertake a sustained analysis of meta-ethics. However, I will not raise these types of ethics explicitly as such, but nevertheless wish to alert the reader to the different categories proposed by Smith.

As far as the confusion between the 'ethics' and 'morality' terminology is concerned, in terms of this thesis, Smith's (2000c) distinction between *ethics* as the philosophical and consciously reflective, and *morality* as the practical and lived, is a useful one to keep in mind (although accepting that much of the literature that is reviewed may not adopt such a distinction). Similarly,

Matless's (2000a: 522) definition of 'moral geographies' as 'the study of the interrelationship of moral and geographical arguments' is sufficiently fluid and dynamic for the nature of this thesis.

Having defined what is meant by 'morality' and 'ethics' I would now like to consider the connection between each. Smith (2000c: 4), points to the 'tensions' that exist between the two disciplines:

'(there are) three crucial issues, or tensions, at the interface of geography and ethics. One is between evident cultural differences in conceptions of the good, and some apparently transcultural moral experiences. Another is between the particular and the abstract as sources of ethical understanding. The third is between the moral and the aesthetic, as expressed in the human creation of culture and especially of landscape'.

From this, the core issue is that there is a geography *of* morality, and a geography *in* morality (Philo, 1991; Smith, 2000c). This points to the way in which (i) geography is implicated in the constitution and formation of moralities in place (as argued by Sack, 1997; Tuan, 1999), and (ii) that morality itself thus carries a geography in terms of spatio-temporal variation and difference.

Likewise, that so many social scientists and geographers operate with an *implicit* rather than explicit morality (Sayer and Storper, 1997; Tuan, 1999) suggests that moral geography in its wider sense is far more extensive than the categorical literature itself. These implicit notions of good and bad, right and wrong are just as much a part of the 'geography of everyday moralities' (Philo, 1991: 16) for members of the academy as they are for the communities and streets which Philo advocates as spheres of enquiry. Hence, in engaging with moral geographies, we are engaging as much with the morality of *ourselves* as much as that of the others whom we encounter in our research. This (as I shall highlight later) has important implications for the

research process, and in part may be seen as an underlying current in the shift towards more 'confessional' forms of research.

In terms of an explicit 'moral geographies' literature, there are a wide variety of areas that have been covered, including: environmental ethics and environmental politics (Proctor, 1998b,c,d; Lynn, 1998; Bryant, 2000); urban studies (Badcock, 1998); social theory (Sayer and Storper, 1997); social relations (Birdsall, 1996); childcare (Holloway, 1998); development studies (Corbridge, 1998); health geographies (Kearns and Barnett, 2000; Browne and Barrett, 2001), and professional ethics (Hay, 1998; Proctor and Smith, 1999). Beyond this, 'race, gender, sexuality (also) raise moral questions' (Smith, 2000d: 233), as do social exclusion, and social justice (Smith, 2000c,e; 2001) – these latter two being the most significant for this thesis. Accepting Smith's broader definition of all geographies being moral creations, it becomes clear that the range of work that incorporates elements of moral geography is in a sense endless, but this thesis focuses on the broad area of social justice, and its particular application to two other discourse of interest to geographers: social exclusion, and 'the urban'. I shall turn to an examination of social justice later in this chapter, but at this point, I shall now move on to examine some of the theoretical and methodological issues associated with moral geography.

## **2B3 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN MORAL GEOGRAPHY**

There are five main concepts of theoretical and methodological concern arising from the geographical engagement with ethics. At this stage, much of the work in moral geography is being devoted to theorising the concerns, suggesting solutions to problems, and looking at the methodological outcomes arising from these. In distilling these common themes from my own

reading of moral geographical texts, I am not attempting to claim primacy for my views. Many of the concepts that I raise here represent my personal understanding of moral geographical debates and theory. Given the infancy of the moral geographical enterprise, some issues (e.g. moral power relations) have not yet been as well theorised as the reader may expect. My grouping of issues together in this manner and in this order is not to suggest that these five concepts in some way represent a 'hierarchy' of moral geographical theory. Indeed, they are arranged in no particular 'order', such as first to last, but rather are complementary concepts that overlap and sit alongside one another. Therefore, at this stage (before my theoretical framework in Chapter 3), I want to sketch out in broadest terms some of the crucial axes upon which moral geographical thought is constructed, and hence some concepts may appear to contain less detail than expected.

### **2B3.1 Moral formation, the role of geographical difference, and the universal-particular problematic**

At the heart of the interface between geography and ethics lies the crucial tension of universality-particularity (also construed as abstract-situated; homogeneity-heterogeneity; and sameness-difference). This distinction between universal and particular in moral terms is often viewed as the 'thin' morality of the universal, and the 'thick' morality of the particular / contextual (Walzer, 1994; Sack, 1999; Smith, 2000c). As Smith (*ibid*) argues, the key role for geographers working with ethics, lies in this field of a). analysing the 'thickening' of ethics in particular geographical contexts (or conversely, how 'thick' moralities become 'thin' as they move to a more universal level), and b). the way in which human diversity and (especially) geographical difference influences morality. Hence, moral geographies investigate the dynamic relationship between moral

universals or absolutes that (attempt to) transcend different spaces and times; and more relative, spatially contextual, historically situated moralities.

With the wider 'cultural turn' (Johnston, 1997; Peet, 1998; Crang, 2000) to postmodern and poststructural theories, relativism is the new challenge to the universal metanarratives of Marxism, and established Christianity (as convincingly demonstrated by Holloway, 1999). Hence, this is not simply a debate between universal and particular in moral geography, but about a far wider debate between the foundationalism, essentialism and absolutism of the Enlightenment or the certainties of pre-modern theologies; and the relativism, nihilism and anti-essentialism of postmodernism and poststructuralism. It is also important to note that universal ethics (e.g. social justice) are in *themselves* contested and open to debate and re-interpretation, regardless of their spatial application.

Smith (2000c) sees three types of relativism (based on his 'descriptive', 'normative' and 'metaethical' categories, above): *descriptive ethical relativism* which holds that there is a diversity of moral practice; *normative ethical relativism*, which holds that there is a diversity of validity in moral belief and practice (i.e. 'anything goes, as long as it's context-specific'); and *metaethical relativism*, which holds that there is no way of knowing what is right and wrong, and therefore no basis for a 'morality' whatsoever – a form of moral nihilism. Importantly, he notes three possible approaches to 'the apparent impasse between the extremes of normative ethical relativism and absolutism, or between particularism and universalism': a). dismiss the problem, because relativism is self-contradictory – to say that all things are relative is in itself to make a universal remark; b). opt for communicative / discourse ethics (e.g. Habermas, 1990) – 'principles must abstract from difference, but need not assume idealised accounts of human agents that deny their particularity'; or c). 'accept the universality of certain grand moral sentiments or values and to

recognise the spatial (and temporal) particularity of their application'. It is this latter approach which I personally favour, and which forms the rationale for much of the thesis, (although it will also look at the issues in the opposite direction – how particular contexts, such as communities in socially excluded localities, can generate ideas of a more universal nature).

This section has outlined the universal-particular problematic in its simplest form. More complex accounts of moral formation and the universal-particular relation come from Sack (1997; 1999), who uses *place* as the axis drawing together 'thick' and 'thin' moralities, in a complex theory of the good that argues for the centrality of geography to moral formation and difference. Smith also provides a highly detailed analysis of the nature of moral formation, and the substance of moral universals (e.g. principles of human reciprocity), as does Harvey (implicitly) in his (2000) analysis of 'human nature' and 'species being'. Suffice to say, the principal issue of interest for this thesis concerns the translation and thickening of contested universals (drawn from meta-theologies of social justice and the city) into concrete situations at different spatial scales. And vice-versa, the dynamics of 'thickened' theologies working themselves back into more universal theories (and politics) of social justice and the city.

### **2B3.2 Moral power relations**

Matless (2000a: 523) argues that:

'work on moral geographies has been informed by a philosophical and political assumption that senses of moral order are produced through environmental and spatial practices which are always bound up with relations of power. The connection of the moral and the spatial in moral geographies is therefore often bound up with a suspicion regarding any claim to be able to define morality, and with a critical attitude to the social power of the moral'.

Moral geographies are especially interested in the *power relations* that surround morality. This in itself is tied into the importance of *normative ethics* – i.e. prescriptions of what particular individuals and social groups believe to be good, right, and so on. Hence, a fundamental point in moral geographies is that it is never possible to view the (im)morality of others from a standpoint of self-proclaimed neutrality. All work in moral geographies gives subjective interpretations and representations of already subjective socio-spatial beliefs and practices. Power relations are therefore essential components of any moral geographical analysis. This applies as much to the moral relations between the researcher and the researched as it does to analysing power relations between social groups. Though Matless refers to power in this, his dictionary definition of moral geographies, it is not a concept which he fleshes out in great detail. One of my contributions in my theoretical framework and empirical investigation is therefore to analyse the power relations surrounding moral geographies of social justice and the city.

### **2B3.3 Moral distance**

An important concept arises from Birdsall's (1996) article on a 'moral geography of the everyday', and that is what I shall term 'moral distance'. Birdsall's argument is that human regard, respect, and responsibility for each other has diminished as, 'time and space are increasingly disregarded as they are segmented, and the here and now is privileged over other places and other times. In the process, we are disconnected from, and devalue the world' (*ibid.* 628-629).

At the heart of this lies the important notion that the growth of individualism, nationalism, and reactionary exclusionary movements are in many ways increasing the moral distance between social groups. Indeed, much of postmodernism and relativism may in fact be seen as a refusal to



engage with others in a relational manner, by erecting exclusionary barriers of difference. Hence, morally, social groups are often increasingly distanced from one another, often indifferent to the plight of others; or, refusing to pass judgement upon others as part of wider socio-spatial configurations. Both Tuan (1999) and Cloke (2002) lament over geography's failure to engage with *evil*, or in the normative side of moral philosophy which is condemnatory and judging of 'bad' practice. Tuan argues that uncritical celebrations of difference of the sort advocated by some postmodern and poststructural thinkers, remove any sense of 'bad' or 'wrong' or 'evil' from geographical judgements, leading to geographies which distort socio-spatial power relations. Similarly, Tuan argues, moral distance can segment space and time into particular places and periods when it is appropriate to condemn 'evil', (as in capitalist exploitation, or colonialism), whilst viewing many others as inherently 'good'.

#### **2B3.4 Moral transformation**

A further conceptual area contained implicitly in the moral geographical literature is that of *moral transformation*. Much social theory seems to assume that people exist in relatively fixed social categories, and that moral views and positions remain fixed. However, in his 1994 article on 'moral geography in Broadland', Matless illustrates how the moral landscape positions of individuals could change, often dramatically, as they were 'converted' to new moralities (for a geographical example, one need only look at David Harvey's dramatic shift to a Marxian outlook in *Social Justice and the City*). This notion of moral transformation is examined by Smith (2000c) in terms of how we 'learn morality'. Change may be dramatic, as in a conversion, but it may also be a slow, gentle process of persuasion, often by others, that a particular moral outlook holds the answers. By looking at transformation and change it is therefore possible to view morality as a *process*, and this fits more with contemporary notions of fluidity and complexity in social identity.

Indeed, it may be possible for people (and places) to hold 'multiple moralities' and multiple moral geographies.

### **2B3.5 Moral politics**

A final area of interest for this thesis (though again not named as such in the literature), is what I shall term *moral politics*. This shows up in the work of those such as Ó Tuathail (1999) in his examination of ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia, and Smith's examination of Jewish conflict in Jerusalem, and is tied into the issues of moral power relations outlined above. It is clear that at the heart of many conflicting visions of social life, lie moral viewpoints, and hence political action and conflict can be viewed as a 'moral politics'. This is especially important for the thesis, as much on-the-ground Church activity can be seen to be a politics of moral resistance to particular processes, or a politics which seeks moral change and transformation – e.g. in conflicting visions of social justice.

## **2B4 CONCLUSION: THE RELEVANCE OF A MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL APPROACH**

The general tone of this discussion has been one of support for the enterprise of moral geography, principally as this is the framework upon which this thesis is based. However, it is possible to note a number of critiques and shortcomings of the moral approach which will be borne in mind throughout the thesis.

Though arguing specifically 'for a normative turn in social theory', Sayer and Storper (1997) also notes the criticisms of more normative and moral approaches. Pointing to important critiques

such as the positivist desire for value-free social science, Marx's dismissal of moral questions, and the moral relativist challenge through postmodern discursive situatedness, Sayer and Storper recognise the difficulties of adopting a normative (and moral) approach. However, in countering these criticisms, Sayer and Storper point out that the bottom line is that all standpoints, writings and analysis are ultimately normative. No matter how much writers dress up their research in notions of objectivity, reduce all morals to power relations, or escape into a non-evaluative celebratory relativism, they cannot avoid the fact that their own thoughts, opinions and moral viewpoints guide their research, its production and consumption by others. Morality cannot be evaded, and is fundamental to all human conduct, whether implicit or explicit (and I show my own moral viewpoint in saying this).

Similarly, Smith (2000c) defends the relevance of explicitly moral geographical enquiry. In countering theories of ethical relativism, Smith argues strongly that a moral geographical approach must contain moral universals such as social justice, and that it should be willing to advocate that 'some moral positions are better than others' (p.204). This attempts to move beyond postmodern political correctness and concedes that everyone ultimately continues to hold their own prejudices of what constitutes good or bad or 'better', and that it is impossible to escape this fact. His challenge is that in spite of this acceptance of moral individuality and selfishness, it is in attempting to 'understand' others and 'put ourselves in the place of others' (p.209) that moral geographies of social justice can be realised.

David Smith represents a particular position, and hence a particular morality. However, he makes a very robust defence of the moral geographical enterprise, placing the pursuit of social justice at its core. In this section, I have drawn strongly upon Smith's writings, as he is the leading thinker in moral geography. In the initial part of this section, my concern was to demonstrate the

links between geography and ethics as disciplines / areas of knowledge. In the latter section, I have distilled five theoretical issues in moral geography which are of relevance to this thesis. These five issues represent tentative steps towards a moral geographical framework for analysing social justice and the city. However, alone, they are not sufficient, and it is only through analysis of the remaining three literatures in this chapter (geography and religion; ethics of social justice; and ethics of the city) that these concepts can be 'put to the test' and also complemented with further insights.

Hence, in the next chapter, I will outline *seven* key features of moral geographical research, which contain these five existing moral geographical concepts, and add to them with others from the forthcoming literatures. Having then summarised the *existing* moral geographical apparatus, my task in the remainder of Chapter 3 is to build upon this and outline my avenues for developing this apparatus in my thesis contribution and theoretical framework.

## SECTION 2C

### GEOGRAPHY AND RELIGION

#### 2C1 GEOGRAPHY & RELIGION – TOWARDS A MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL ENGAGEMENT

One of the issues that has received little attention from the current literature on moral geography is that of religion (with the exception of Cloke, 2002). Considering the continued strength of religious adherence in the majority of the world's population (contrary to Western secularism), this is a surprising omission. Though arguments relating to religion often surface in the writings of authors such as Smith and Tuan, and especially in relation to environmental ethics, the explicitly 'moral geographical' literature has so far seen fit only for passing engagement with religious arguments (Cloke, 2002). This failure to engage with religion is not confined to moral geography, and indeed is evident throughout the discipline of geography, with Kong (2000: 3) commenting that, 'cultural geographical texts from different parts of the globe in recent years have either given it (religion) scant and uneven or no attention at all. ...In many instances, in the same breath that race, class and gender are invariably invoked and studied as ways by which societies are fractured, religion is forgotten or conflated with race'. The fact that religion has not featured strongly is remarkable, given the recent movement of culture to the centre stage of geographical analysis in the 'new cultural geography' (Cosgrove, 2000: 135), and the current fascination with identity. That religion is not accorded greater importance is probably more to do with the popular (mis)conception within geography that the 'geography of religion' field suffers a 'lack of coherence' (Sopher, 1981) or is 'in disarray' (Tuan, 1976 [quoted in Livingstone, 2000: 697]), and hence not the territory of radical social and cultural geographers.

Recent research and reviews of geography and religion (Cooper, 1992; 1993; Wilson, 1993; Livingstone, 2000; and [especially] Kong, 2000), present a far more vibrant and meaningful field that is well-engaged with contemporary theorisations of space, place, culture and identity. Kong (*ibid*) points to three key avenues of religio-geographical research relevant to this thesis. Firstly, a theme of religion, power and the politics of sacred place connects closely with Smith's (2000c) analysis of religious conflict over sacred space in Jerusalem, and Harvey's (2000) analysis of spiritual-secular conflict and co-operation in fighting for social justice in Baltimore. Secondly, Kong places dialectical relationships at the heart of religio-geographical enquiry, exploring relations between public and private, politics and poetics, sacred and secular. This dialectical approach is central to the tensions which characterise moral geographies. Finally, Kong argues that religio-geographical research must explore moral geographies of social justice:

'While morality and social justice may exist apart from religion, often, religion is the basis of morality and the impetus for social justice. Yet how different religions may inform the constructions of different moral geographies has not been explored, and how these constructed moral geographies contradict or are negotiated or reinforced by other secular agents of morality (for example the state) requires examination' (p.26).

My thesis responds to this challenge.

From the above, it is clear that the field of 'geography and religion' is indeed ripe for engagement with moral geography, and that religio-geographical understanding now firmly occupies the same ground of enquiry as contemporary social and cultural geography. My intention in the rest of this section is to focus upon what the potential is for a *Christian* religious engagement with geography. This is not to deny that many other religions are considered in religio-geographical discussions (e.g. Kong, 2000, 2001; Holloway and Valins, 2002; Naylor and Ryan, 2002), but is to maintain my personal focus upon Christian theology.

## 2C2 (MORAL) GEOGRAPHY AND CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

The presence of Christian religious perspectives in geographical enquiry takes two forms: (i) theoretical and (ii) applied, with the latter being most relevant to this thesis, in its focus on poverty and social justice. The theoretical literature works on the presumption that Christian theology and praxis 'are viable sources of normative knowledge for the conduct and analysis of human life' (Clark, 1991). Whilst small in number, there are some notable geographers who have argued for the validity of a Christian epistemological project in geography, including Cloke (1992, 2002), Pacione (1992), Livingstone (1998) and Ley (1998); and, to a lesser extent, Swan (1990), Hoekveld (1998) and Aay & Griffioen (1998). In these theoretical contributions, the authors have responded to the challenges of postmodernism; the relationship between geography and theology; and the application of biblical concepts to the discipline.

In applied approaches, the work of Pacione (1990, 1991, 1992, 1999a,b,c) is of greatest relevance to this thesis. Pacione has been instrumental in demonstrating the link between a Christian perspective, and the resolution of geographical problems such as urban poverty (Pacione, 2001a,b). His key contention is that the Church has great potential to act as a vehicle of *agency* (thus bridging the theory-praxis divide).

In his seminal (1990) paper, Pacione combines the normative prescriptions of a Christian view of social justice, with an applied analysis of the actual working of the Church in addressing social exclusion. In his strong critique of urban policy's failure in the 1980s to make any real impact upon poverty and deprivation, Pacione argues that (1990: 194), 'what is required is an alternative

economic philosophy which challenges the ethical foundations of the capitalist development process'. This ethical philosophy is to be found in Christianity, and does not involve an overthrow of capitalism, as in a Marxist revolution, but a modification of the foundations upon which free trade operates. Using Griffiths (1989), Pacione comments that 'realistically, the goal in advanced capitalist states is that of converting the existing political-economic system to one which may be generally described as "a market economy bounded by biblical principles of justice"' (p.194). At the centre of this is the 'ecclesiastical community of interest' (the institutional Church and its associated bodies and agencies). Pacione reasons that the Church has a significant role in enhancing the well-being of the poor at two levels: a). on the ground, it can undertake practical initiatives to aid the disadvantaged; b). at a structural level, it can promote 'a re-examination of the goals and priorities of the prevailing political economy' (p.193).

Pacione highlights the re-awakening of Church involvement with the socially-excluded during the 1980s, through the publication of the Church of England's landmark *Faith in the City* report (1985). However, he points out that whilst the 'love your neighbour' ethic is a force for socio-political engagement, there are some sections of the Church constituency that see it instead as a force for social stabilisation and control. He is not afraid, then, to reprimand the Church for failing to carry out a properly radical critique of existing social arrangements.

The contemporary structure of the Church and the urban problems that it seeks to address present problems as well as solutions. The 'characteristic socio-spatial division' between inner and outer city is reflected in poor and rich churches, respectively. This has to be overcome by resource redistribution (p.198) between rich and poor, and so the parish system acts as both an enhancer of spatial inequality, but also a method for resolving it. Likewise, the 'restricted contact between different religious denominations operating in the same urban environment' presents



problems for a strategic response to difficulties, and for resource-sharing (p.198). This can be overcome through denominations focusing upon their common moral goals in terms of social justice.

For Pacione, a final issue, which is harder to address, concerns the tension in responding to social exclusion through either personal charity, or structural change. However, again, this is a scalar issue, and personal charity (which will tend to be in the form of local initiatives to address exclusion) need not prohibit change at the more abstract scale of the structural – the two are combined, dialectically, so that activities across spatial scales operate in tandem, and are mutually beneficial. The core problems for the Church, then, are both ideological (the failure to assert absolute Christian values), and practical (the failure of the Church to actively practice the cause of the poor and disadvantaged) (p.200). However, as I will examine in this thesis, this is changing, with reports such as *Faith in the City* representing an ideological shift, and the creation of the *Church Urban Fund* in England (a grant-awarding body for social exclusion-related projects) representing a shift in praxis.

In line with Pacione's arguments, empirical analysis of Church initiatives addressing urban social exclusion has been taken up in England (Pacione, 1991; Lawless *et al*, 1994, 1995, 1998) and in Scotland (Loveridge 1999), pointing to the potentials and limitations of Church involvement, as Pacione first advocated.

## **2C3 CONCLUSION**

In sum, religion remains an under-theorised part of the socio-spatial formation. Yet the cultural turn and moral geography have both opened up new opportunities for the (re)engagement of

religious worldview and praxis with the complexities of contemporary social geographies. Recent theorising by Kong and Pacione has marked the way for this analysis to proceed, with a concern for social justice at its heart. Pacione's analysis in particular has given a pragmatic means for analysing the Christian faith in particular, and the institution of the Church. Moving on to theological and geographical ethics of social justice gives an opportunity to explore this nexus through the lens of moral geographies.

## SECTION 2D

# THEOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ETHICS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice has been characterised by Smith (2000c) as being at the heart of moral geographical enquiry. Meta-ethics of social justice form the abstract base upon which much particularised, local theory and praxis is founded. The focus of this section will be on abstract theologies of social justice as the 'universal' component of moral geographies of social justice and the city. Consideration will also be given, later on, to key geographical theories of social justice that have relevance for this thesis. These geographical frameworks illustrate the potential for theological-geographical engagement in theories (and practices) of social justice. I am well aware that there are numerous secular theories of social justice such as utilitarianism, libertarianism, contractarianism, egalitarianism, Marxism, and communitarianism. However, their resonance with this thesis is only minor (for an excellent investigation see Smith, 1994), and theology remains the focus.

Similarly, there are many, many different theologies of social justice, and my intention in this section is to sketch them out in broad terms, looking at a few key authors for illustrative purposes. The authors chosen are reflective of my own personal reading, and whilst they make key contributions to theologies of social justice, are not necessarily the only authors active in their field. This in part reflects my non-formalised / 'untrained' knowledge of theology. (However, I did attend some theology classes in the initial stages of my thesis – see Chapter 4).

Theologies of social justice can trace their origins back to the very beginnings of Christianity itself, and to the writers of the earliest Gospel manuscripts. Under the Roman Empire and during the Middle Ages, as part of Christendom, the Christian ethic of social justice was *the* system of social justice in place in Europe. Nowadays, Christian theologies of social justice have to be content with being one view amongst many. Whilst there has been much import of contemporary social theory into theologies of social justice, there has been little reciprocity the other way. Yet theologies are not isolated from real and meaningful contexts. The Church's presence in a multiplicity of socio-spatial contexts throughout the world, means that theologies are both abstracted *from* lived experience, and applicable *to* such experience, via the Church's considerable physical network of parishes, church buildings, social centres, and individual members (Pacione, 1990, 1999a). After working through the various theologies, I shall attempt to combine them with some of the insights of geographical theories of social justice, and demonstrate the connection between theologies and the insights of a geographical framework.

## **2DI CONSERVATIVE THEOLOGIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Within Christian theology, aside from the fundamental division between Roman Catholic and Reformed / Protestant theologies (following the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century), there is a core division between 'conservative' and 'liberal' theologians and churches. This division exists within both Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions. Whilst there are many variations, essentially, conservatives take the Bible to be literally the Word of God that contains absolute truth which is applicable to all spatio-temporal contexts; whereas liberals recognise the historical-geographical specificity of Scripture, holding that it is open to reinterpretation to fit the particular spatio-temporal contexts of contemporary societies. For liberals, though there may be some core principles or 'truths', most are modified, whilst other Biblical customs are discarded as being non-

applicable (McGrath, 1993; Curran, 1998). This basic division manifests itself in the multiple ways in which theology is constructed. Conservatives (also known as 'conservative evangelical' within Reformed churches) tend to work in a top-down manner that transplants their timeless ethical universals into contemporary situations. Other conservatives take the Biblical principles and attempt to flesh them out with contemporary social theory to give contextual understandings. More radical liberals work from the bottom-up, *beginning* with social theory (e.g. Gutierrez, 1980, 1988), and only resorting to Scripture when the contextual social analysis is complete.

MacNamara (1998) outlines what he terms 'the distinctiveness of Christian morality' from secular analysis. As he comments, (1998: 151), 'the Christian understands the present reality as including sin and sinful structures, which contrast starkly with the promises of peace and justice. So the Christian ethic is revealed as a liberation ethic'. It is this willingness to acknowledge the inherent human ability to commit evil (c.f. Tuan, 1999, Cloke, 2002), and the need to set people and structures free from this, that characterises the (conservative) Christian position. Hence, at the core of conservative theological belief lies a (controversial) conception of human nature as sinful and in rebellion against God's plans for creation, and in need of redemption (through Christ). Many liberal theologians have extreme problems with this notion, especially Holloway (1999), whose devastating critique of Christian orthodoxy dares to suggest a '*Godless Morality*', where Christianity should *not* be taken as the basis of ethics. These tensions serve to illustrate that theological universals are highly contested.

However, to follow the conservative/orthodox line, MacNamara argues that the distinctiveness of Christian morality is characterised by three features. 1. 'Context' – the source of moral goodness is 'the love of God poured into our hearts' (p.152). 2. 'Claim' – Christianity is based

upon a foundational claim in the existence of God as a divine being, who is the creator of all things, and who views the 'human being (as) irreducibly valuable', and that this compels the Christian to demonstrate love towards all people, as Christ did (p.153). 3. 'Content' – this is contested, as illustrated above, but there is common agreement between Christians that:

'each human being is to be respected and loved, that life is sacred, that we be faithful to one another and to our promises, that life is a gift and is to be handed on, that we are to speak the truth in love, that we are to forgive, that the poor and weak are to be protected, that unjust structures are to be overcome, that we are to be respectful stewards of creation. Belief in the story of God's ways with us requires such a vision of society' (p.153).

Perhaps more fundamentally, Christianity is a *way of life* (p.156), as opposed to abstract ethics, that is to be demonstrated through real practical actions and behaviours that demonstrate the love of Christ for others. Christian social ethics are therefore (at least in theory) a distinct set of beliefs about the nature of social reality. The base of understanding for the Christian is human nature, and the need for liberation and redemption, as opposed to say the Marxist base of social relations around the mode of production, or the postmodern base in human situatedness and discursive communities.

From this school of theology comes what I shall term a 'pure' theological approach to social justice. The evangelical Anglican theologian, John Stott (1999), presents an excellent analysis of Biblical teaching on 'the poor'. An important point to note at the outset is that the Bible frequently refers to 'the poor' as a social group of *people*, as opposed to 'poverty' as a *condition*. This concern with the *person*, rather than simply *material needs* suggests the deeper Christian concern with the whole person (body, mind and spirit) evident in Scripture. An underlying trend

in the Bible is also that the needs of the poor are innately linked to the behaviour of the rich. The two are linked dialectically – it is not possible to separate poverty from wealth.

In a manner typical of a 'pure theology' approach, Stott is supportive of some 'sociological analysis' (p.273), but argues against Christians who 'acquiesce uncritically in the latest popular interpretations' (p.262). Stott argues that the heart of the Christian response to poverty lies in God 'himself' (Stott uses this gendered language): 'it is not primarily the wealthy and the famous with whom he delights to fraternize. What is characteristic of him is to champion the poor, to rescue them from their misery, and to transform paupers into princes'. This is illustrated in a number of Scriptures from the Old and New Testaments (Table 2.1).

Stott's theology of social justice is of 'a topsy-turvy God (whose) thoughts and ways are not ours... He turns the standards and values of the world upside down' (p.264). Through analysis of the Bible, he recognises three main types of 'the poor' (Table 2.1): the *indigent poor* who are the economic poor, and deprived of the basic necessities of life; the *powerless poor* who are the socially and politically oppressed, and the powerless victims of human injustice; and the *humble poor* who are the spiritual poor, those who are meek and dependent on God (p.264).

Ultimately, Stott sees the Christian vision of social justice as manifest in 'the Kingdom of God' embodied in the life of Christ, where all Christians should aim to be 'poor in spirit', but on the other hand 'proclaim the good news of the Kingdom to the materially poor, welcome them into the fellowship, and share in their struggles' (*ibid*) (e.g. Acts 2: 44-45; 4: 32-35).

The Kingdom of God comes at a price though – Christians should not preach a gospel of wealth, but should be content with a simple lifestyle, being generous in their giving, and contented with

what they have (p.278). Jesus reserves some of his harshest criticism for the rich: 'Any one of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14: 33); 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor'; 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! ...It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God' (Mark 10: 21, 23, 25). Stott resolutely opposes the 'health and wealth gospel' (p.276) of some of the Christian Right, and reiterates the biblical view that 'the earth was to be developed for the common good and its riches shared with all mankind'.

| Type of Poverty       | Biblical Instruction  | Scriptural Verses   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| <i>Indigent Poor</i>  | Poverty is evil   | Deuteronomy 15: 7; Leviticus 25:  |
|                       | Mosaic Law support system for the poor  | 35; Exodus 23: 10; Psalm 111: 1-9;<br>Proverbs 21: 13; Job 31: 16; Ezekiel<br>16: 49. |
|                       | 'He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their<br>Maker'.  | Proverbs 17: 5.   |
|                       | Christ's ministry amongst the poor and needy  | Matthew 25: 35-40.  |
| <i>Powerless Poor</i> | God 'stands at the right hand of the needy one'.  | Psalm 109: 31.  |
|                       | God 'secures justice for the poor and upholds the<br>cause of the needy'.   | Psalm 140: 12.  |
|                       | Jews and Christians must 'defend the cause of the<br>poor and fatherless' and 'maintain the rights of the<br>poor and oppressed'. | Psalm 82.   |
|                       | Condemnation of the powerful.   | Amos 2: 6; 5: 11-12, 24; 8: 4-7.  |
| <i>Humble Poor</i>    | Those who are spiritually meek and recognise their<br>dependence on God.  | Matthew 5.  |

Table 2.1 – The poor, and the Christian response to poverty and wealth (based on Stott, 1999).



Other conservatives with similar views to Stott include Benton (1999), Sider (1993), and the Roman Catholic Church's tradition of teaching on social justice (Hittinger, 1993). However, as Sider points out, for many conservatives, Christian ministry is about 'saving the soul', and social justice simply does not figure in such theologies. This 'absence' of social justice in the theology and praxis of many Christians is seen by more socially-oriented conservatives such as Stott as a shocking omission, and demonstrates sub tensions *within* theological conservatism, as well as between conservative and liberal.

## **2D2 LIBERAL THEOLOGIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **2D2.1 Modified secular-liberal theologies**

Though there is an evident 'pure' theology of social justice adopted by conservatives, many liberal theologians have preferred to wed their theological principles to those of secular paradigms of justice, and in particular their redistributive aspects, in modified theologies.

Bayer (1998) has attempted to combine Christian ethics with Rawls's (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Using Rawls' notion of the 'original position', Bayer argues that there is a need for the formation of a moral consensus in the circumstances of modern pluralism and that in seeking moral consensus with others, Christians must be opened to modifying or revising their position (p.57). This illustrates in particular, liberal theology's willingness to engage with wider aspects of social theory (whether liberal or radical), in a manner that theological conservatives may not.

Whilst Lebacqz (1998) is willing to engage with the liberal paradigm, and sees conversation with other traditions as essential for theology, Christian theology should have a broader focus than simply issues of distribution. Citing Amos' call for 'justice as an everflowing stream that will sweep away all iniquities', she argues that theology can move beyond the individual towards examining issues of structural oppression. Working between liberal and radical paradigms, Lebacqz argues for dialogue, but also for what she terms the 'epistemological privilege of the oppressed' (p. 168): 'Not only is injustice measured by the *plight* of the poor, it is measured *by the poor* themselves, for they have epistemological privilege – they know better than the rich what justice requires, what it would take to have "right relationship" '.

Two further perspectives work within the liberal paradigm from an egalitarian perspective, similar to that of Smith (1994). Holman (1997) (and Russell, 1995) unashamedly weds his Christian beliefs to the egalitarianism inherent in traditional ('old') socialism, for a social justice that will dramatically reform (but not replace) free market capitalism. Utilising his background as a Professor in social policy, plus twenty years spent living as a community activist in the multiply-deprived Greater Easterhouse housing scheme in Glasgow, Holman argues with deep conviction, and from first-hand experience. Holman echoes the similar biblical principles of creation, jubilee, and incarnation to Stott, but weds these to the social analysis given by socialism. He gives a comprehensive analysis of inequality in society and accepts the liberal egalitarian argument for the redistribution of income and opportunity in power relations. However, he goes further, and argues that 'redistribution alone is not enough...Also necessary are participants whose beliefs and attitudes favour such a society' (p.56). This is his principle of *mutuality* (p.60), which operates in 'the context of equality and bas(ed) on the acceptance of a common kinship', and contains these elements: a). 'the recognition that we have obligations towards others and they towards us'; b). 'the expression, as far as possible, of working harmoniously together; and c). 'the movement

towards the objective of or maintaining of equitable sharing of resources and responsibilities'. It is a 'principle, a practice, an experience, and a dynamic' (*ibid*), and hence is to be believed, felt, and ultimately lived.

Holman's is essentially then a social justice for *action*, which requires fundamental structural change, and also a change in the work of the Church with the excluded (going so far as to implore affluent Christians to alter their geography and *live with* the poor, as Christ did). Any Christian committed to justice, should be prepared to carry 'the cross of equality', and endure the sufferings and marginalisation that this may bring from the powerful. Holman presents a deeply compelling and challenging approach to justice, rooted in Christian theology.

These liberal theologies benefit primarily from the fact that they are practical, and can be lived under existing conditions of capitalism, whilst at the same time seeking to change it. However, there are more radical theologies of social justice that combine theology with Marxian and postmodern insight, for theories that require the complete overthrow of particular structures of oppression.

## **2D2.2 Radical theologies of social justice**

Theologians have not shied away from engaging with more radical conceptions of social justice of a Marxian or postmodern vein. The most significant discourse to have developed in this area is that of *liberation theology* (Gutierrez, 1974, 1980, 1988; Davey, 1998), which utilises Marxian social analysis and 'critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word' (Gutierrez, 1988), originating in the specific context of Latin American struggles of the poor against oppression by the military regimes of the 1960s and 1970s. This development reflects a long-standing critique of

capitalism by Christians, in the Christian Socialist tradition (e.g. F.D. Maurice, William Temple, R.H. Tawney) (Preston, 1993a,b; McGrath, 1993). Christian Socialists 'rejected the concept of the economic system as a natural order of cause and effect uncontrolled by any moral responsibility' (McGrath, *ibid.* 137). Indeed, Raushenbusch (1912) went as far as to argue that capitalism 'is not Christian' (p.455). Preston, however, (1993a: 80) criticises Christian socialism for having adopted too much of a 'perfectionist understanding of human nature and society', labelling Christian socialists 'soft utopians', in the sense of setting out to build an ideal social order or kingdom of God, as against the 'hard utopians' of the Marxist kind who see it arriving only after conflict and struggle'.

The liberation theology discourse seeks to free the poor from exploitation and domination, based upon a notion of God's 'preferential option for the poor' (Northcott, 1998). Whilst building 'the Kingdom of God' in Latin America was seen primarily as a radical social change, based on the fundamental 'liberating message of the gospel...applied to the reality of (poor) lives' (Neuhouser, 1989: 239), Marxist social analysis was seen as a necessary precursor to understanding this reality. So though the gospel of Jesus is seen as having the primary liberating message, leading to the establishment of Christian Base Communities to critique the socio-political status quo, a Marxian analysis is essential in the first place to understand the social conditions that have created 'the poor'. The liberation theology strategy is then, a theology of bottom-up social action, grounded in a material reality, and freed from the abstraction of 'pure theology' or the liberal formulation of justice, with Gutierrez rejecting the 'liberal notion of the priority of individual rights and the ideal of justice as neutrality' (Hittinger, 1993: 291).

Liberation theology has spread throughout the world, being utilised in both national and local contexts. For example, Leech (1992), presents a particularly radical analysis of Western

capitalism. He argues that 'the Church should be urging a defiance of economic injustices created by class and nation – a defiance rooted in the sense of being a community of contradiction' (p.96). His view of Christianity is as revolutionary, seeking nothing less than a new world order, 'rejecting ideas of modification or improvement' (p.95). He argues that 'while Christianity and Marxism are the most distorted traditions in the modern world, an alliance between prophetic Christianity and progressive Marxism offers the last humane hope for humankind' (p.126). In critiquing the 'top-down' politics of political parties, he points out that 'churches on the ground, whether in Latin America or Britain, Africa or the United States, are often closer to the realities of politics, closer to the effects of political decisions and legislation, than any other groups' (p.135). For the ivory tower of the academy he points out that 'it is important that intellectuals, theologians and other academics should be brought into close practical collaboration with grass roots Christian activists. The isolation of intellectuals in academia has had seriously damaging effects on their public political responsibility' (p.137). A 'kingdom theology' (p.131) of Christ's incarnation and love for the poor, and a 'firm belief in the resurrection and in Christ's victory over all unjust powers' (p.139) should be the nature of a Christian social justice.

Other examples of concerns with global capitalism are those which have arisen in recent times in response to globalisation (Litonjua, 1999; Long, 1998). Long argues against the crushing of the poor by globalisation, and against the materialist doctrine of 'salvation' through the market, as unjust. Similarly, other radicals critique the church for its compliance in capitalism and the 'health and wealth' gospel, in a 'Disneyfication of Christianity' (Litonjua, 1999: 225).

The radical critique of capitalism (and the practice of theology and the work of the Church) from a Marxist position has been added to in recent times by postmodern and poststructuralist readings of theological thought and action. Writing from a deeply liberal interpretation of Scripture,

Albrecht (1995) uses poststructuralist theory to argue for social justice as a 'feminist ethics of liberation', critiquing Scripture and theology for its masculine dominance, and contending that 'Christian ethics must be rooted in an analysis of social locations, of differences' (p.14). Confronting the strong conservative Christian bias in the American Church, Albrecht ventures: '(is) there something fundamentally wrong with Christianity itself – something that makes it incapable of forming people who are able to respond to human differences without fear and the need to ignore, destroy or dominate?' (p.12). Noting conservative, middle class Christian ignorance of the marginalised, she argues that a dominant theology has been constructed that aims to be universal in nature, and that can oppress / turn a blind eye to marginal groups, and that there is in fact instead a historical partiality and contingency in the truth claims contained within the Bible:

'In the Christian narrative, the creation of inferior "others" is acceptable, even mandated, even understood as "God's will". ... Scriptures are selected and interpreted by the dominant to support and justify the totality of a relationship of domination... (and) the presumption that the Bible itself is above the flux of interested social interactions allows the dominant class of society to find within the Bible their own political reading of what is natural or God's will. The Bible becomes a tool of oppression when the range of conflicting discourses that might be found within specific texts is limited or made invisible' (pp. 144-149).

Albrecht's vision of social justice requires a uniting of the disqualified knowledges of the marginal with the erudite knowledges of the rich, recognising theology and justice as a power struggle between the oppressed and the dominant in society. Her critiques are shared by Holloway (1999; 2001) in his search for a new, human-centred, Christian ethics, freed from the strictures of biblical interpretation. For both these authors, their radical theologies view an embrace of

social diversity as the future of the Church, with a social justice that requires the powerful to be disempowered through living as Christians in a manner that resists oppression and suffering.

## **2D3 A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE? – CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THEOLOGIES AND GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Albrecht's conclusion echoes Young's (1990) classic critique of power relations of oppression, and contention that social justice be based upon a 'politics of difference' which empowers the marginalised. The basic problem of both of these theories is that of relativism, and the problem of how to judge what is 'good' or 'bad', or which theory of justice is 'better' than another (Smith, 2000a). Caught in an impasse between an oppressive universalism, and a disempowering relativism, that can apply equally to theology as to social theory, a number of writers have attempted to create new frameworks for analysis (Smith, 2000e; Nagel, 1999; Harvey, 1992, 1993, 1996, 2000). These writers attempt to combine the insight of postmodernism with a continuing commitment to critical analysis based on modernist notions of 'progress'.

Nagel (1999) takes Young's theories head on, when she makes an analysis of contemporary *multiculturalism* in the UK – this being the politics of identity and diversity that Young advocates. Noting that the politics of difference has 'met with increasing criticism and resistance' (p.132) in recent years, she contends (controversially) that claims are now made that 'the preoccupation with identity and difference has gone too far and has outlived its original purpose and intent, becoming less a movement of resistance and more a self-perpetuating form of self-interest' (*ibid*). This amounts to a 'crisis' (p.133) in the politics of identity. The essential problem for multiculturalism is moral relativism.

Nagel argues that the promotion of social justice relies upon looking for 'intersections' between liberal, radical and postmodern paradigms (p.139). The first common theme is the 'reject(ion of) the utopianism that characterized many nineteenth century theories of just societies' (though c.f. with Harvey [2000], below). Secondly 'while emphasizing the contexts and contingencies of justice, and rejecting universal or metaphysical definitions of justice [c.f. the 'pure theology' position], all suggest that social justice appeals to some widely-held – even if societally-specific – notions of fairness and equality'. Finally, and most crucially, 'defining and achieving social justice is a contentious matter, and ... justice emerges from debate and conflict. Justice, then is a *political* concept, and the forums in which politics take place are of critical importance' (p.140, emphasis in original).

This emphasis on justice as being about *politics* is crucial, in that it recognises that ultimately, all competing frames of reference and interest must be examined within the common framework of the polity, based upon notions of equality of interest. This leads Nagel to resonate with Smith, in an assertion that it is a *relational* understanding of society that can overcome the problems of relativism, but without recourse to universalism – the perennial 'middle ground'. Nagel concludes that this is 'a practical and realistic approach to politics which recognises that while harmony is not attainable, the management of power and conflict and debate is' (p.144). This 'managerial' approach to social justice certainly illustrates the ways in which dialogue and progress can be attained, but it still does not overcome the difficulty of how to assess what is 'right' or 'wrong', other than through debate.

In contrast to Nagel, Harvey's (1992, 1996, 2000) attempts to address social justice remain fundamentally concerned with the *material outcomes* of unjust power relations and oppressive structures in capitalist society (as in his original 1973 classic, *Social Justice and the City*). He



consequently not only identifies notions of exclusion and oppression based upon identity, but also those that are fundamentally material inequalities based upon the meta-category of class relations in capitalism. Harvey begins his 1996 analysis by arguing that 'there are multiple competing theories of social justice, and each has its flaws and strengths... - which theory of social justice is the most socially just?' (p.341). Harvey therefore recognises the fundamental moral question that underlies conceptions of justice – how to judge what is just. In a strong critique of relativism, Harvey insists that (p.347) by

'reducing everything to flows, we refuse to contemplate the construction of those 'permanences' that can give order to social being and direction to social becoming. Affirming the importance of infinite heterogeneity and open-endedness in a world of unstructured processes of infinitely complex flows, directly connects to the charge against post-structuralism that it is an 'anything goes' way of thinking within which no particular moral or ethical principles can carry any particular weight over any other. 'At some point' says White (1991: 133) 'one must have a way of arguing that not all manifestations of otherness should be fostered; some ought to be constrained'. And this presumes some general principles of right or justice'.

Harvey contends that there are four crucial issues to split away from a disempowering relativism towards wider conceptions of social justice. Firstly in what he terms 'breaking out of the local', Harvey argues that social justice issues are crucially dependent on wider social relations, and that a politics of social justice must pursue a wider objective of the 'reform or revolutionary transformation of contemporary capitalism' (Harvey, 1996: 348). Secondly, in 'not romancing the geographical stone', he argues that an over-emphasis on notions of cultural particularity negates the fact that 'cultures [are] just as relationally (and dialogically) constructed as individuals, and a good deal more porous' (p.351). Hence, the 'fetishisation' of particularity and difference

leads to a contradictory moral impasse, where 'the repudiation of all possible standards of evaluation undermines judgements of inferior worth. It is therefore destructive to the very goals that arguments of respect for particularity are supposed to support' (*ibid*). In this sense, universal standards of moral evaluation become necessary.

Thirdly, Harvey argues that wider conceptions of social justice need to pay cognisance to 'the politics of scale', where in recognising the multiple complexity of geographical reality, a simple opposition between universal and particular does not adequately capture the fact that 'neighbourhood, city, region, nation, the globe refer to quite different processes of socio-ecological interaction occurring at quite different spatio-temporal scales. Individuals have membership in all of them' (p.353). Hence,

'while we all may have some "place" (or "places") in the order of things, we can never be purely "local" beings, no matter how hard we try. And while membership in one sort of "permanence" defined at a given scale may be more important to each of us than others, such identification as we do acquire are rarely so singular as to create no conflicting loyalties' (p.353).

This highlights the important sense in which individuals are characterised by multi-scalar and multi-moral positionalities that are in constant personal and inter-personal tension. I want to expand upon this scalar theorisation as a major contribution of my research.

Finally, Harvey argues that people need to 'situate situated knowledges', whereby notions of situatedness cannot exist in an exclusionary internal manner that prevents discussion with others ('vulgar situatedness'). Rather, dialectics should be employed in a dialectical situatedness which recognises that when looking at issues of the oppressed and oppressors, 'both need the other

and both internalise a relation to the other in their own identity' (p.355). This relational understanding therefore sees 'individuals (as) heterogeneously constructed subjects internalising "othernesses" by virtue of their intricate relations to a highly diversified world' (*ibid*).

Having made a defence of a relational, dialectical understanding of life, Harvey goes on to illustrate that it is material social class issues in relation to capitalism that remain crucial to social justice. Harvey reconstructs social class as 'situatedness or positionality in relation to processes of capital accumulation' that operate at radically different spatio-temporal scales (p.359). Harvey concedes that this can be seen as something like a postmodern heterogeneity, but that by looking for *similarities* between individuals (as opposed to *sameness*), this will create a basis for differing groups to understand one another, and form alliances (primarily against capitalism). Arguing that historical-geographical materialism (Harvey's modified Marxism) will enable people to tell 'the difference between significant and non-significant others, difference and situatedness, and which will help promote alliance formation on the basis of similarity rather than sameness', Harvey (echoing Nagel) argues for a social justice based on political action.

In *Spaces of Hope* (2000), Harvey presents a manifesto for a revitalised multi-scalar politics of social justice which resurrects (and reformulates) classic socialist notions of processes of utopianism, with the imagination of alternative social futures at its heart. The Church has an important role to play in this. Whilst Harvey takes a traditional Marxist atheistic stance, he recognises the critical role that the Church can play in challenging the contemporary injustices of capitalism, through its moral position (c.f. Pacione, 1990; Holman, 1997). In commenting on his broad-based struggle of socialists, feminists, environmentalists, Marxists, anarchists (and so on), he notes a role for the Church (based on social action in Baltimore):

'Like all such struggles, as Marx observed (1976 edition, 409), the role of 'allies in those social layers not directly interested in the question' is of considerable significance. The impetus for the campaign came from the churches. This set the tone concerning the definition of moral and civilised behaviour that always enters into the determination of the value of labour power' (Harvey, 2000: 125)

This recognition of the value and role of the Church's participation at a grassroots level, illustrates the manner in which moral geographies that recycle universals of social justice into particular contexts can likewise use the politics of scale to work back from those particular contexts to universal goals.

Young (1998) from her postmodernist view, critiques Harvey's social class analysis and notions of 'similarity'. In debating, Harvey and Young both accept that universals can exist, but not a universal *justice* – they are therefore dealing with different concepts of *political action*. Harvey continues to support a justice that is progressive in terms of revolutionising the material basis of social relations in capitalism, whereas Young appears to advocate the operation of justice through debate within a modified polity that does not appear to critique the material aspects of society, but rather those based on identity (i.e. race, gender). Both authors have valid points to make, and do well to incorporate aspects of each others' theory (and also resonate with Nagel, above). However, whilst Young's vision is perhaps the more realistic and readily applicable to the contexts of the contemporary capitalist societies, Harvey's is more visionary, and more willing to grapple with the complex issues of a multi-scalar, multi-relational self and world, through exploring the dialectical relations between self, space, scale and justice.

The strength of Harvey's theory for this thesis lies in his emphasis on coalition building and *pluralism* (not relativism) in the pursuit of social justice. This suggests that in terms of the *politics*

of social justice, an analysis of the Church's role must look at co-operation and / or contestation between sacred and secular spheres. In terms of the *theory* of social justice, Harvey's account is of relevance because of its willingness to grapple with the more universal notions of social justice favoured by theologians. It is also of interest in that it attempts to find common pluralist grounds between diverse paradigms of social justice, such as liberalism, Marxism and also (potentially) theological theories.

## **2D4 CONCLUSION**

The preceding discussion has illustrated a level of richness in different theologies of social justice, ranging from conservative approaches that rely on biblical inspiration, to radical theologies which utilise social theory. The range of difference is testimony to the variety of different theological positionalities across the broad divide of liberal-conservative. Hence, for some theologians, social justice is the central focus of Christianity, whereas for others, it does not even rate as a theological concern. This basic divide, and the numerous other subtleties across the spectrum, demonstrate the extent of conflict and contestation within theological communities, let alone their attitude towards the secular.

Whilst theological conservatives will actively oppose any notions of the secular theories of Marxism or historical-geographical materialism, or even Young's pro-capitalist view of a more participative polity, Harvey's (2000) illustration of the pivotal role of the Church in organising grassroots social movements in Baltimore shows that the potential exists for a more revolutionary social justice where sacred and secular work together in pursuit of common goals. This approach has already been put to practical effect by the liberation theologians of Latin America, and is likely to appeal to liberal theologians of social justice.

At the end of the day, for either theologies or secular theories of social justice, there is a conflict between controlled political debate, and revolutionary political activism. Whichever framework is the most appropriate for churches and theologians, it is clear that social justice need not be abandoned to a formless relativism, and that through either moral debate or moral agreement; and political debate, or political activism, it is possible to construct broader, more progressive notions of this highly-contested concept that work creatively between universal and particular, local and global.

This section has only been able to sketch out the connections between theologies and geographies of social justice in loose terms, given the huge disciplinary gulf that exists between each tradition's debates. However, I have presented a clear account illustrating the basic cleavage between conservative and liberal in theologies of social justice (and indeed in theology more generally). Grasping this basic division is key to understanding tensions and contestations in moral geographies of social justice that are grounded in theology. Likewise, my analysis of geographical theories of social justice has reiterated the problematic of geographical difference and ethical relativism already pointed to in the moral geographical literature. However, the theoretically rich analysis of authors such as Harvey, with his long-standing engagement in conceptualising social justice points to means of overcoming relativism and the universal-particular problematic. Harvey's thesis also points to opportunities for wedding theological and geographical theories of social justice together, both practically and theoretically. The connections are tentative and certainly not formalised, but the combination of theological and geographical perspectives, however provisional at this stage of literature review, demonstrates that moral geographies of social justice can be made through this theological-geographical-ethical nexus.

## **SECTION 2E**

# **THEOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ETHICS OF THE CITY**

## **2E1 INTRODUCTION**

Having now analysed the abstract, meta-ethics of social justice, and their contested nature, I again follow Smith's (2000a) schema of attempting to illuminate the meta-ethical with the context that a geographical analysis brings. This section will therefore move into the specific spatial context of 'the urban' and the way in which ethics of social justice and the city are thickened in this context. It will firstly consider the nature of 'the urban problem', and the way in which this has been interpreted. It will then consider the theological response to this geography. Though I am looking at *theologies* of the city, and of urban social justice, it is important to note that much government urban policy and secular urban analysis also contains ethical and normative discourses on the city, many of which are abstracted from more 'meta' scales such as the UK parliament, or the European Union (see Burton, 1997; Pacione, 1997, 2001a; Edwards, 1997; Oatley, 1998a,b; Atkinson, 2000, 2001; Oberti, 2000; Baeten, 2001, for excellent analyses of the urban policy literature).

## **2E2 ETHICS OF THE CITY – THE 'URBAN PROBLEM'**

Urbanisation is central to the development of capitalism. It was the rapidly urbanising cities of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, and the appalling social conditions that came with them, which drove much of the creative analysis of writers such as Marx and Engels. The problems of poor housing, massive overcrowding, insanitary conditions, air pollution, congestion, workplace exploitation and poor safety (largely for the working class), drove a wealth of social commentary and investigation

(e.g. the famous 'blue books' of government commissions in the UK). As Driver (1988) has argued, much social analysis during this period was overtly 'moral' in tone, with 'moral improvement' (*ibid.* 275) a constant undertone in social action and (middle class) 'reconstruction of urban space' (*ibid.* 276), with the working classes often portrayed as idle, crime-ridden, paupers, disrespectful and (literally) filthy – a 'moral disease' to be 'cured' (*ibid.* 279).

The religious response to the problems of urban capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was similarly infused with moral imagery. Accounts tend to be polarised between the city as Babylon (and therefore sinful, wretched and damned) or the city as Jerusalem (and hence holy, pure, and immortal) (Cuthbertson, 2000). Frequently, 19<sup>th</sup> century Christians worked along Cowper's (1785) lines of 'God made the country and man made the town', with the utopian countryside viewed as idyllic, natural, peaceful and sacred, whilst the dystopian city was seen as a place of sin, corruption, and excess. Indeed Southey (1807) equates it with 'the fires of hell'. These types of views fuelled the alienation of many members of the working classes from established forms of religion (Shaw, 2000).

In spite of many positive Church initiatives to work amongst the urban poor (e.g. The Salvation Army and City Mission movements), and a wealth of material initiatives, the contemporary Church has inherited many attitudes of deep suspicion towards the urban, and the poor in particular – often evidenced in its 'flight to the suburbs' (Bakke, 1997; Davey, 2001). The metamorphosis of post-war urban renewal experiments into the contemporary dystopias of urban ghettos and sink estates (Baeten, 2001) combined with the 'rediscovery of poverty' to create a fresh 'urban problem' in the UK (and the rest of the West) by the 1970s. This rediscovery of the urban problem and urban social exclusion (see Chapter 4) paved the way for 25 years of explicit government urban policy (Edwards, 1997; Rogers, 1999), the *Faith in the*



*City* report (which gave birth to urban theology), and the creation of new moral discourses of social justice and the city.

## 2E3 URBAN THEOLOGY – ‘DOING’ MORAL GEOGRAPHIES

The publication of *Faith in the City* in 1985, marked the beginning of the explicit (re)engagement of the Church with the urban problem. Since then, there has been a flood of theological literature published that has moved theology beyond abstract discussions of social justice, and into a distinctive discourse that is now termed 'urban theology' (Northcott, 1998; Green, 2001; Davey, 2001). The Bible is full of references to the city, and it is often referred to in metaphorical terms such as 'Babylon' or 'Sodom', to illustrate the evil of the city, or as 'Jerusalem' or 'Zion' to illustrate the 'Holy City' (Brown & Carroll, 2000). It is this basic biblical inspiration that gives the theological 'universal' impetus for urban theologies. The breadth of this discourse, and the variety of perspectives contained, in many ways reflects the richness of the geographical contexts in which these theologies are situated. Urban theology is often substituted for 'social theology' or 'local theology' (A. Harvey, 1989), with the latter characterising the majority of urban theologies. These local theologies are unashamedly moral geographies of the manner advocated by Smith (2000a), in that they contextualise theological universals in their socio-spatial milieu.

The best attempts at defining the nature of urban theology come from Northcott (1998) and Davey (2001), who cut through the diversity to find some common uniting features of the new discourse. Northcott's principal contribution to demarcating the field of urban theology is to characterise it as a *contextual* theology which is 'done', rather than read, abstracted, imagined, or debated. In 'doing theology' (p.5), it is the poor themselves who are makers of their *own*

theology, thereby taking theology out of the ownership of the academy and clergy, and seeking to build a Church *of* the poor. This central contention that theology should be embodied in the everyday life experience of the poor and marginalised resonates strongly with Harvey's (2000) notion of a social justice process which empowers the poor to challenge the dominant and powerful. Likewise, it brings forth the notion that the embodied thickening of particular theological universals (such as social justice) can result in personal moral transformation for the poor, and this is a central processes in moral geographies of social justice.

To these notions of urban theology as *praxis*, as *contextual*, and as *theology of the poor*, Davey (2001), adds a spatial dimension which defines the geographical scope of 'urban', and a temporal dimension which argues for future (utopian) visions of urban change:

'Urban theology will straddle the global and local arising from the reflection and experience of people in real, concrete situations, and analysis of all the forces that are shaping their community.' (p.1) (... ..) 'The scope of urban theology encompasses the concerns of an urbanising world, and the condition of the Christian presence and witness therein, rooted in struggles of the poor to shape and own their communities' (... ..) 'It must have a vision of how the future must be different, and be committed to finding some of the mechanisms that make that a reality' (p.12).

In pointing to the wider web of spatio-temporal relations in which urban theology is situated, and the manner in which abstract 'global' issues can be translated into 'local' contexts and vice-versa, Davey implicitly highlights a crucial theme that is central to moral geographies: the scaling of theologies, and the multi-scalar utopian politics of social justice advocated by Harvey (1996, 2000). The centrality of scalar arguments to moral geographies is something that is missing from the moral geographical literature, and hitherto missing from the urban theological literature as

well. In my theoretical framework in Chapter 3, I will theorise the central importance of scale as one of my original contributions to moral geographical theory.

Davey's emphasis upon imagining alternative futures also fits strongly with notions of the way in which the city itself is imagined. Writings by authors such as Sparks (2000), Towner (2000), Meyers (2000) and Brown & Carroll (2000) have illustrated the way in which biblical metaphors of the city as 'good' or 'evil' feature strongly in contemporary theologies of the city. Moral geographies of social justice and the city have abstract conceptualisations of the *city* (as good, bad, evil, suffering) as much as they do of social justice. Indeed recent work by urban theorists such as Westwood and Williams (1997); Wilson (1997); and Donald (1997), has pointed to the way in which there are multiple cities operating in the imaginations of urban residents. As Westwood and Williams argue (*ibid.* 6, emphasis in original), 'the city is *many* cities, and place-positionality has an important impact on the ways in which subjects understand, negotiate and live in cities'. Cities then exist in memories of the past, narratives of the present, and dreams of the future. How they are imagined and conceptualised is therefore a key feature of a moral geographical enquiry that seeks to uncover theological ethics of the city and the utopian and dystopian imaginaries that are contained within theological accounts of the city, past, present and future.

The diversity of the contemporary city is reflected in the diversity of theologies constructed in response to its problems. In line with the *Faith in the City* tradition, Anglican theologians have been at the forefront of the establishment of the urban theology discourse. Three important edited collections: *Light in the City* (1990); *God in the City* (1995); and *Urban Theology* (1998) draw together a wealth of short local stories and religious interpretations that amount to 'theologies'. Each highlights the importance of *local* constructions of theological responses to social problems, but taking the themes and ideas of the Bible (either viewed as universal or as a

conservative, or as a situated basis for contemporary theory if a liberal), combined with social analysis or community audit as a starting point. Of particular interest for this thesis are the writings on: the process of constructing theology, poverty, power relations, the body, and moral transformation. These are combined with practical examples of 'doing' theology.

Authors such as Davey (1998), Green (1998) and Shreiter (1998) discuss the process of constructing urban theologies. A sense of place is central to this process, whereby 'the geographical location, the encounters, and the teaching of Jesus in the synoptic gospels all point to the marginal as the key to the coming presence of the Kingdom of God' (Davey, 1998: 9). Reflecting on personal experience through situation in place is therefore a crucial filter in mediating morality. There is a sense then, from such readings, that the processes of 'making' moral geographies do not take place in an academic vacuum, but rather that they are experienced, negotiated and lived out in real places, by ordinary people.

Urban theologies which focus upon power relations and poverty in the city (Hackwood and Shiner, 1998; Northcott, 1998; Wink, 1998; Walsh, 1998) work both at structural and local scales to critique the injustices of capitalism. The tendency in these analyses is to critique capitalism at the structural scale, but to see solutions to problems for the powerless at the local scale, where urban theology's role is to 'be alongside' the poor in their struggle for liberation. Urban theologies which essentially 'jump scales' and look at the body in the city, formulate embodied moral geographies which draw from theological understandings, local culture, and the physical environment. These accounts (e.g. Green, 1995; Holman, 1998) attempt to see God *in* the bodies of the poor, in their everyday lives, and not just in an abstract supernatural sphere. Further, in line with their liberative, empowering aims, urban theologies should be a place where the voices of the poor and socially-excluded are allowed to 'speak' (Holman, 1998). To this end,

writers such as Holman have dedicated entire written collections to allowing the poor to 'tell' their own stories. The discursive voids that often exist in debates on social justice and the city through the 'silencing' of particular embodied moral geographies, must be redressed by urban theologies giving a 'voice' to the silenced.

Whilst there is strength to be found in the diversity of urban theologies, the overwhelming focus on the local can easily divorce these theologies from broader scalar issues related to a moral politics of social justice. With this in mind, a number of theologians have argued for urban theologies of the city that take a holistic, strategic approach to the urban problem on a city-wide scale, and relating this to social justice at other scales (Bakke, 1989; 1997; Cuthbertson, 2000; Linthicum, 1991; Methodist Church, 1997; Graham, 1995; Green, 1996; Davey, 2001). This resonates with the research of Pacione (1990, 1991) who has argued that the Church must pursue social justice at both local and national spatial scales. For such authors the Church cannot simply address communities of the poor alone if it is to achieve social justice, but must impact upon all facets and sectors of city life (economic, social, political and cultural). Issues such as networking, ecumenism, multi-culturalism, inter-faith dialogue, and rich-poor co-operation are all essential features of such an approach to urban theology (Bakke, 1997; Cuthbertson, 2000), where the diversity of the city is met by a diversity of spiritualities that mirror the multiple positionalities and scales in which persons are situated.

## **2E4 CONCLUSION**

It is clear that a major difference between different types of urban theologies is in their scaling of the urban problem itself. Some approaches focus overwhelmingly upon the scales of the community and the body as the most appropriate sites for the integration of theological universals

into the fabric of urban life, arguing in large part for contextualised, situated theologies. Whilst there are demonstrable links to other scales (e.g. Schreiter, 1998; Northcott, 1998), the richness of these theologies is overpoweringly derived from their focus on the situatedness of communities and individual lives as the ideal scales to translate and thicken theological principles of justice. Urban theologies that are more holistic and strategic have a far greater recognition of the importance of the urban as a scale in its own right, situated within a far broader, more complex web of social relations spanning different scales.

In this sense, the urban is both a basis *for* distinctive sets of social relations, and a scale to *cut into* those social relations that exist at other scales. Likewise, distinctive moral geographies are formed by theological understandings of the urban as a scale, but these cannot be separated from those moral geographies constructed at alternative scales. A proper geographical analysis, then, must look at the contested nature of theological universals about social justice and the city (as I have done), and then analyse the nature of the thickening of these ethics at the urban, community and body scales, whilst paying attention at each of these scales to questions that link them to other scales – scale is a central tension in moral geographies.

It is clear, therefore, that urban theologies form a very particular moral geographical reading of two key theological universals – social justice, and the city, both of which feature prominently in biblical accounts and Christian traditions. Before moving to investigate the nature of these in urban Scotland, it is first necessary to construct a theoretical and epistemological framework upon which the empirical research can be based, and Chapter 3 will accomplish this task.

## SECTION 2F

### CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have brought together diverse literatures from theology and geography at the inter-disciplinary interface represented by moral geographies. By using the common contact points of ethics and social justice, I have explored four key literatures which I believe demonstrate the connections between geography and theology. Though these literatures are disparate, they each contain a focus on the geographical, the ethical, and the theological. Reviewing these literatures has been essential to understanding moral geographies of social justice and the city. Though these literatures are discrete and do not necessarily speak directly to one another, the common framework of moral geography is the unifying feature, and each literature contains its 'moral' component and its 'geographical' one. I believe that each literature has contributed to understanding in the following way:

#### 1. Moral geography

This is the basic literature that provides the framework and conceptual apparatus for my empirical investigations. It is a field that is relatively young within geography, and yet is characterised by a remarkable amount of diversity and a growing theoretical sophistication. Moral geography has provided a basic justification for inter-disciplinary engagement between geography and ethical disciplines, and also for empirical investigation of the geography of morality. Core theoretical concepts such as the universal-particular problematic have been developed by writers such as David Smith. The task of a moral geographical investigation, then, is to analyse the manner in which universal ideals drawn from ethics (e.g. social justice) can be translated and thickened into particular spatial contexts. Yet this analysis is not straightforward, as ethical universals at the meta

level are contested and debated, and their translation is replete with tensions of power, politics and positionality. Grasping this basic literature, and the task of moral geographical investigation, grounds the source of my thesis' aim of illuminating moral geographies of social justice and the city, in Smith's outline of the universal-particular translation process.

## 2. Geography and religion

The literature on geography and religion has taken a different approach to analysing the geographical and the religious than that of moral geographies, focusing more on sacred institutions and structures, sacred spaces, and religious rituals. However, recent work by authors such as Kong has demonstrated the potential for the insertion of religion into moral geographical research. This primary contribution, which is to justify the place of religion in moral geographies, is added to by empirical work on geography and religion by authors such as Pacione, where the work of the Church in pursuing social justice from a geographical perspective has been examined in some detail. This literature, then, provides a rationale for the development of moral geographical theory along religious lines, combined with the practical guidance of prior empirical investigations of the Church and social justice.

## 3. Theological and geographical ethics of social justice

The literature that I have examined on ethics of social justice is an essential prerequisite for understanding moral geographies of social justice. In broad terms, I have sketched out the principal cleavage between conservative and liberal theologies, and their related theories of social justice. Grasping these theologies and their contestations at the abstract, meta-ethical level is a necessary first step before undertaking empirical analysis of ethics of social justice amongst Christians in Glasgow. By illuminating the insights of geographical theories of social justice such as



Harvey's, I have demonstrated the way in which geographical theory contributes to a dialectical understanding of the universal-particular problematic that can overcome the impasse of relativism.

Harvey's theory (and that of theologians such as Holloway) allows for a moral pluralism where diverse ethical sources such as theology and Marxism can contribute towards more universal ethical goals. His argument is that this can be accomplished both theoretically, in ethics, and practically in a utopian politics of social justice. By construing arguments in utopian terms, Harvey highlights the importance of moral motifs, symbols and imaginations in pursuing social justice, against dominant dystopian situations and imaginaries. Likewise, his argument for a multi-scalar politics of social justice introduces conceptions of spatial scale which provide avenues for the connection of ethics of the urban to (e.g.) more global ethics of social justice. This analysis of theologies and geographies of social justice, then, opens up theoretical avenues for analysis (e.g. scale, moral politics, utopian processes, and moral motifs), as well as more practical issues to explore such as co-operation and coalition-building between the Church and other agents.

#### 4. Theological and geographical ethics of the city

The final literature on ethics of the city, and its particular emphasis on urban theologies, represents the most explicit moral geographical material. For theology to actively spatialise its discourse and praxis so that ethics are scaled to the city and social justice practised in explicitly 'urban' terms is in itself a moral geography of clear proportions. The range of different ethics and theologies employed, spanning a multitude of issues from spirituality to employment, illustrates the richness of this vein of theology and the many different urban contexts in which it is situated. A further down-scaling of the urban to the community and body scales, and an up-scaling to the global is evidence of a sophisticated spatial imagination that is contained within theological ethics of social justice and the city.

The manner in which these urban theological imaginaries conceptualise different urban areas, and their attendant contestations, use of utopian and dystopian constructs, scalar language, power relations and community politics are central points of enquiry for this thesis. Urban theologies rhyme with contemporary social and cultural geographies of the city with their emphasis upon difference, context, exclusion and identity. By combining the insights of both disciplines, rich and varied moral geographies of the city can be profitably illuminated through empirical investigation.

In this chapter, one of the key features of the four literatures examined has been their distinctiveness. Although I have argued that each literature is linked by the common thread of moral geography, it remains the case that as each is situated in different discursive contexts, where similar concepts can mean different things, there is potential for theoretical overlap and chaotic concepts to ensue. In order to clarify the theoretical apparatus that I will use in the remainder of this thesis, my next chapter will propose seven key features of moral geographical enquiry that give definitional precision to the terms that I employ. These terms will form the basic building block upon which I will construct my theoretical framework and original contribution during Chapter 3.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

## SECTION 3A

### INTRODUCTION

The preceding review of the literature has attempted to cover the major theoretical issues most pertinent to this thesis. The foregoing analysis has scrutinised the contribution of Christian theologies to movements for social justice. The inherently moral and ethical basis of theories of 'the good' and 'the just', and the centrality of geographical concerns in theories and politics of social justice, has combined to place moral geography at the nexus of ongoing research and theoretical development in this area. As I have demonstrated, the evolution of this emerging field can profit from an engagement with the religious moral philosophy and praxis of Christianity as it pursues strategies for social justice in the city. I have shown this through analysis of: the connections between moral geographies and religion; the contested nature of theological meta ethics of social justice; and the contextualised field of urban theology, which has created its own unique moral geographies of social justice and the city.

One of the key features of the field of moral geography is its infancy, and hence it is characterised by a remarkable diversity, as evidenced from both the explicitly 'moral geographical' literature, and the wealth of inter-related literatures that in themselves construct moral geographical frameworks, though in a more implied manner. This thesis then, can make an important contribution to the development of common frameworks for ongoing enquiry, discussion, analysis and critique. In particular, the engagement with the religious discourse represents an opportunity for greater illumination of an oft-neglected part of socio-cultural relations, which can play an important mediating and translating role in filtering the impacts of capitalist restructuring, for both individuals and wider 'communities'.

The Christian Church, in its many forms, represents a complex combination of multiple positionalities and situatedness in society, transcending class, ethnic, sexual, gender and racial divisions in some respects, and yet mirroring (and indeed, reinforcing) them in others. This diversity and heterogeneity is reflected in an historical geography of the Church that is marked by extreme spatio-temporal variations in theology and praxis. Furthermore, the difference reflected in Christianity as personal religious experience versus corporate worship; the laity versus the clergy; and the Church as people in 'the body of Christ' versus the Church as institutional structure illustrate the multiplicity of cross-cutting (and complementary) interpretations of what actually constitutes 'the religious', 'Christianity', and 'the Church'. (These are important points for further elaboration in the succeeding discussions). However, it is suffice to say that Christianity, and the Church (in whatever form it may appear or be perceived), represents a multiple combination of the 'universal' and 'particular', 'meta-' and 'micro-' ethical, theoretical and empirical, 'tensions', working across manifold scales through space and time – hence making it a key candidate for consideration in the development of moral geographies of social justice.

I structure this final section of the chapter into two key parts. Firstly, in Section 3B, I will consider the seven salient theoretical issues central to moral geographical enquiry that have arisen during the literature review in the previous chapter, as a means of summarising what I consider to be the most notable features of moral geographical theory. Whilst there is overlap between the various points, taken together, they represent my view of the most notable areas for analysis. Second, having looked at these issues, in Section 3C I will then explain the three original contributions that my thesis makes to moral geographical theory. As the peak of my theoretical development, the issues contained in these three original contributions, combined with the moral geographical theory I have so far dealt with, represent the issues that I wish to explore in order to achieve my

thesis aim 'to contribute to the development of moral geographical theory and practice by illuminating the complex nature of Christian theological moral geographies of social justice and the city'.

## SECTION 3B

# THE CENTRAL THEORETICAL TENETS OF MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL ENQUIRY

The following seven central theoretical tenets of moral geographical enquiry represent the key features of existing moral geographical research. I highlight concepts in bold in order to give definitional clarity to the moral geographical nomenclature that I use.

### 3B1 MORAL GEOGRAPHY AND MORAL GEOGRAPHIES

The overall field of enquiry into the relationship between geography, ethics and moral philosophy can be characterised as **moral geography**. As already noted, I favour Matless' (2000a) broad description of **moral geographies** as 'the study of the interrelationship of moral and geographical arguments'. Hence, for this thesis, the actual *practices* and *processes* of constructing, living, imagining, contesting, negotiating and re-interpreting this relationship between *geographies*, ethics and moral *philosophies* forms the basis of **moral geographies**.

I recognise that in any place at any one time, there are likely to be multiple moral geographies operating, and these vary with scale, and also according to individual subjectivities. Therefore, whilst a). an individual may possess a particular '**moral geography**' of the city (viewed in a '*fixed*' sense as a personal moral *view* of a particular place), b). numerous *processes* of translation, contestation, and political activism also constitute **moral geographies** as they are coming into being and (re) negotiated. Hence research is as much about 1). the *processes* and *tensions* that

characterise the relationship between geographies, ethics and moral philosophies, as it is about 2). the nature of the actual moral *views* and *characterisations* of places constructed.

### **3B2 MORAL FORMATION, GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCE, AND THE UNIVERSAL-PARTICULAR DIALECTIC**

The **formation** of morality is central to its understanding. The analysis of Smith (2000c) and Sack (1999) has illustrated the manner in which space, society and culture interact to produce and modify moralities. At the heart of this lies **geographical difference**. The **universal-particular dialectic** represents the tension between the desire for an ethics of broad scope, and a judgement that individual knowledge is partial, and hence morality is relative. Likewise, similar tensions arise between theory and praxis, abstraction and lived experience. The impasse between universalism and relativism can be overcome by a relational, dialectical understanding that views all human conduct as ceaselessly interpenetrative and intertwined. Moral universals (of the good, the bad, the just, the right, the wrong, and so on) can be accepted through notions of *human similarity* and *pluralism*, but with an acknowledgement that the geographer's role is to examine the translation and *thickening* of such concepts into particular places of difference.

### **3B3 MORAL CONTESTATION, MORAL DISTANCE AND MORAL POWER RELATIONS**

The fundamental importance of **moral power relations** in shaping 'moral orders' in society has been outlined by Matless (2000a). *Who* defines morality, and *where* they are located in the socio-spatial formation is crucial to understanding moral geographies. Moral geographies do not



exist in an empty vacuum or on a level playing field – they are challenged and enforced through **moral contestation**, and much of this depends upon power. Dominant moral geographies, then, vary across space and time, and the concept of '**moral distance**' illustrates the manner in which power relations determine moral difference, and inclusion or exclusion of others from consideration.

### **3B4 MORAL POLITICS**

Related to moral contestations, and tied into moral power relations is the crucial issue of **moral politics**, both within the Church, and between sacred and secular (Kong, 2000). The political operationalisation of moral visions of social justice is highly contentious, as different cultures and dominant moralities conflict with one another. Harvey (1996, 2000), in defence of a universal politics seeking justice, has argued for the dialectical connection of diverse, particular social movements within a universal framework, working towards a multi-scalar politics of social justice. Analysis, therefore, of what might be termed the 'moral politics of scale', or 'moral politics of social justice', can examine the way in which place-specific theological understandings of justice are contested across space, and at various scales, but likewise mobilised in pursuit of wider goals for justice, often in partnership with other organisations. Hence, whilst there is contestation both within and between sacred and secular spheres, this need not preclude the pursuit of shared, more 'universal' goals.

### **3B5 MORAL POSITIONALITIES AND MORAL TRANSFORMATION**

Moral relativism raises the awkward point of individuals being locked into fixed **moral positionalities** that are totally unique, and which preclude the interaction and modification of

personal views. Yet, if we view individuals as existing in *relation* to others, it becomes clear that individuals can adopt multiple social positions, which may indeed be reflected in multiple moralities for some. Through social interaction, individuals are not fixed into a particular positionality that precludes commenting upon the conduct and behaviour of others. Rather, this interaction allows modification of one's particular morality, and hence its development. It is clear then, that **moral transformation** can take place in the life of an individual, where viewpoints and praxis can alter significantly, often in a slow and imperceptible manner, or sometimes dramatically (as in a 'conversion' experience). The potential for individual moral transformation and the transcendence of difference through relations, points to the ways in which moral geographies can alter over time, but can also be merged or combined as people look beyond their own positionality and encounter other moralities.

### **3B6 MORAL MOTIFS, SYMBOLS AND UTOPIAN / DYSTOPIAN MORAL IMAGINARIES**

One of the major issues arising from a study of the moral geographical, social justice and urban theological literatures is the crucial part that signs, symbols, motifs and metaphors play in the construction of moral geographies. These literatures are filled with **moral metaphors** of good and evil such as 'Babylon', 'Jerusalem', 'the new heaven and the new earth', 'the Promised Land', 'the fires of Hell', and with **moral motifs** such as 'love', 'suffering', 'faith', 'perseverance', 'redemption', 'sacrifice', 'grace', and 'hope'. The use of metaphor and motif in literature reflects the wider importance of such symbols in the theorising and practice of moral geographies of social justice. Harvey (2000) uses 'hope' as the dominant motif linking his revival of utopianism as a project to replace global free market capitalism. Harvey demonstrates how vision and symbol work powerfully to generate a (moral) politics of social justice. Similarly, **moral imaginaries** of

utopia and dystopia suffuse the literatures. Moral geographies of the city are frequently characterised by dystopian imaginaries, whilst utopian imaginaries are crucial features of a moral politics of social justice (Harvey, *ibid*), and of urban theological theory and praxis (Davey, 2001).

### **3B7      NORMATIVE RESEARCH AND MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION**

The current rising interest in normative research and for the incorporation of moral frameworks within geographical theory presents important opportunities for Christians researching in geography. Not only is it appropriate to engage with the moralities and ethics of others, but also to state the importance of one's own moral positions, and how they react with the research process. As part of the general trend away from 'value-free' research in the positivist tradition, moral geography presents a new opportunity for a personal religio-geographical reflection, as well as an analysis of others', and therefore I will disclose my own positionality and epistemological outlook in Chapter 4.

## SECTION 3C

# ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL THEORY

In this thesis I wish to make three original contributions to moral geographical theory, defining my thesis' input to advancing geographical knowledge:

1. I insert a religious perspective into moral geographical enquiry, both in terms of a). my own positionality as a Christian researcher, and b). my focus upon Christian theology and praxis as a source of moral geographical production, exchange, and consumption.
2. I pursue a deliberately scalar approach to understanding moral geographies, arguing that the scalar constitution of moral geographies is under-theorised in the present literature, and that scale is in fact central to all moral geographical appreciation.
3. I construct a framework of processes and tensions which characterise moral geographies of social justice and the city. I view moral geographies as inescapably process-based, and replete with tensions. They are not fixed entities, but are rather dynamic, complex, changing phenomena which are fundamentally characterised by these vibrant processes and tensions, rather than by their 'outcomes'.

### **3C1 INSERTING A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE INTO MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL ENQUIRY**

In the preceding review of literature, I have already given great attention to my first contribution. Through analysis of moral geographical theory and the relationship between geography and religion, I have given a full account of the validity of inserting a religious perspective into moral geographical enquiry; and, by analysis of theological ethics of social justice, and a study of urban theology, have demonstrated the outcomes from such an engagement. The scant existence of prior work dealing with religion and moral geography, and definite lack of any study combining religious perspectives on social justice with geographical understanding, makes my analysis of religion, morality, geography and social justice unique. The empirical analysis that follows will build upon this initial contribution.

### **3C2 SCALING MORAL GEOGRAPHIES**

Whilst the literature on scale is vast and unwieldy, with analysis covering multiple different issues (e.g. globalisation [Brenner, 1997; Swyngedouw, 1997, 2000], gender [Marston, 2000], homelessness [N. Smith, 1993], urbanisation [Brenner, 2000], Euro-regionalism [Boyle, 2000] and governance [McLeod & Goodwin, 1999]), scale has come to the fore in recent years as a key plane for understanding socio-spatial relations. Whether seen as actively *produced* (N. Smith, 1992, 1993, 2000) or socially constructed (Marston, 2000); as an *analytic concept* and means for intersecting socio-spatial processes, it is a crucial notion foregrounding this thesis. In working with scale, I draw upon Valentine's (2001) use of the concept as a means of understanding contemporary social geographies, and use it alongside the more established arguments of 'the area-based approach' (Pacione, 1995a – see Chapter 4).

Neil Smith (2000), in his review of the scale literature, points out that, 'In the broadest sense, specific geographical scales can be conceived as platforms for specific kinds of social activity' (p.725). Arguing that it is the *production* of scale which is critical for geographical research, Smith sees different geographical scales working in a 'loose hierarchy' from the body, through the home, community, local, urban, regional, national and global. These scales work both as a means of *analysing* important spatial intersections into social relations that cut across all scales; and they are also being actively *produced* by these social relations, in a sometimes ordered manner (though see Marston [2000]; Brenner [2001] for critiques of this position).

In this thesis, I do not wish to focus upon some of the finer points of the scale literature, where recent debates between Marston (2000), N. Smith (2000), Brenner (2001) and Marston and N. Smith (2001) have become heavily 'bogged' in the semantics and idiosyncrasies of theorising scale as produced, socially-constructed, or structured, and the complexities of its conflation with pre-existing categories of bounded 'space'.

In utilising scale, it is rather Valentine's more straightforward argument that I favour. Working from the argument that 'geographical scales are ... fluid and pliable', Valentine uses eight scales of analysis, ranging from the body, through to the global, arguing that they 'represent(s) the intersection of a whole range of connections, interrelations and movements, and of different people who have very different ways of participating in, understanding, or belonging to them' (2000: 9). Thinking of the wider politics that surround different scales, each scale can be simultaneously a site of meaning, identity, oppression, exclusion, security and contestation. The 'politics of scale' (N. Smith, 1993, 2000; Harvey, 2000) can be both *inter-scalar* in terms of different scales struggling over power issues, or groups from one scale challenging issues at

another scale (e.g. community groups fighting for global environmental issues), and it can also be *intra*-scalar, between different social groups – e.g. in a city.

In terms of poverty and social justice, scale is therefore useful for understanding – a). the scale at which poverty is *conceptualised* in discourses – e.g. 'the urban problem'; or 'community regeneration'; and b). the manner in which the poor and socially excluded (and their sympathisers) can 'use' scalar strategies to pursue social justice, as advocated by Harvey (2000) in his multi-scalar politics of social justice. In favouring a scalar approach to analysis, I will justify my use of three scales (the urban, the community, and the body) for analysis in the methodological chapter of the thesis.

### **3C3 MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL PROCESSES AND TENSIONS**

The principal contention of this thesis is that there is a spatiality to morality, as exemplified by a moral geographical research approach. Ultimately, the majority of theoretical and methodological concerns in moral geography are perhaps best summed up by David Smith as sets of tensions:

'tensions running through and connecting a number the (*sic*) essays include those between general (thin) and specific (thick) moralities, between universalism and particularism, between global and local, space and place, between essentialism and individualism' or difference, between the natural and the socially constructed, between ethical thought and moral practice, and between is and ought' (Smith, 1999c).

It is these tensions that give moral geographies their creative force. The core universal-particular problematic, highlighted at length above, is also related to a further tension: that between the empirical and the theoretical. Smith has already urged that moral geography should work *between* universal and particular, and this mirrors itself in the theoretical-empirical tensions: 'the way in which observation of moral behaviour in particular contexts can contribute to the development or refinement of ethics as moral theory' (2000c: 21). However, this is perhaps too simplistic a dichotomy, as there are multiple levels of analysis, working between the many complexities which space-time and moral philosophy create in both an 'upwards' and 'downwards' direction of universal-particular and empirical-theoretical, and also in the more 'sideways' directions of spatial relations, and spatial communities working across space. This highlights more of the complexity than simply terms such as 'universal' and 'theoretical'. Thinking along the lines of Sack's (1997) 'loops' and circuits, it may be better to view moral geography as the means by which the empirical, theoretical, universal and particular are drawn together in analysis.

As I have already argued, the issue of *scale* is fundamental to many of these tensions. At heart, the 'scaling of the moral' (as I put it) would seem to be the manner in which these tensions can be theorised as manifested in *analytical* scales of morality (i.e. particular – abstract) and in *spatial* scales of geographical complexity. These analytical scales affect how we view the moral (as [e.g.] universal or relative), but also how we 'cut into' the geography, as (e.g.) 'local' or 'national'. Figure 3.1 gives a diagrammatic summary of the inter-relationship of these tensions. All the tensions are brought together ultimately in the present in place (as Sack argues), but the diagram also indicates the *processes* and tensions in moral geographies (e.g. moral politics, translation, thickening), and illustrates the dynamic manner in which morality moves between scales, across space and through time.



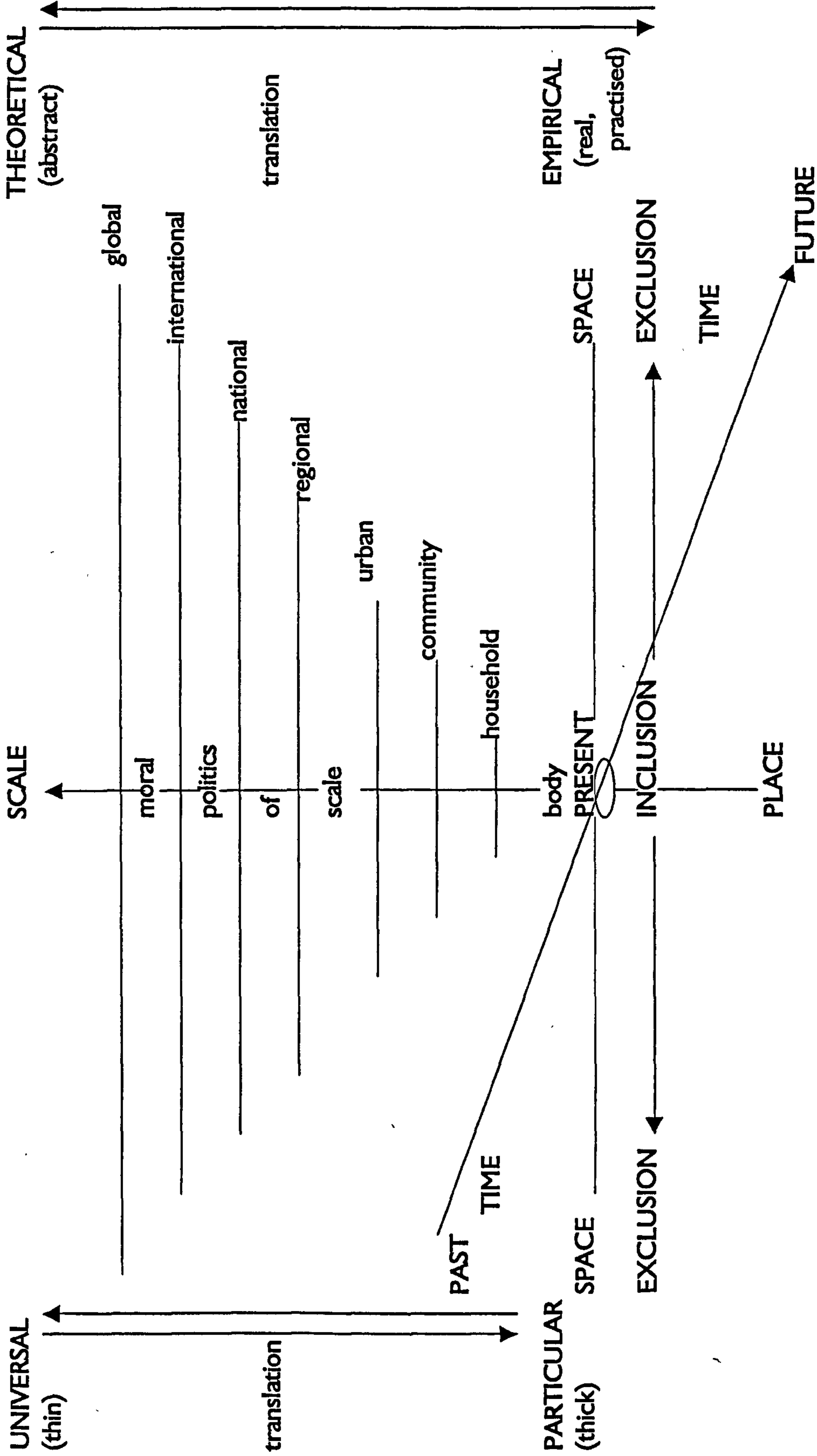


Figure 3.1 – Tensions in moral geographies and the scaling of the moral.

Figure 3.1 provides a concise summary of the range of spatio-temporal relations in the scaling of the moral. However, I wish to go further than Figure 3.1, and move beyond the general moral geographical tensions that Smith has produced, and propose a set of moral geographical processes and tensions, *specific to moral geographies of social justice and the city*. The key moral geographical *process* is the process of translation of ethics into geographical context, whilst the universal-particular dialectic is the key moral geographical *tension*. Though these processes and tensions exist generically at all scales and across all manner of contexts, the *nature* and *manner* in which they operate is different at different scales. Hence, the manner in which theologies are grounded changes and differentiates at diverse scales.

In particular, moral geographical *tensions* vary strongly according to the actors, ethics and contexts studied. Hence, whilst moral geographical *processes* can be generic to all actors, ethics and contexts (e.g. Marxist ethics are translated and negotiated and thickened into context in the same generic manner as Christian ethics are), it is the tensions *within* those processes which differentiate different contexts, actors and ethics (e.g. the peculiar relations, structures and agents within the Christian Church are very unique, and interact in a very different manner to those within Marxist groups). Therefore both scale and tensions are key differentiating features in moral geographies of social justice and the city, with the scalar contexts, actors and ethics being investigated influencing dramatically the nature of those moral geographies.

### **3C3.1 Moral geographical processes examined in this thesis**

Table 3.1 provides a complete list of the moral geographical processes central to this thesis, these being original conceptualisations based upon my own reflection about theologies of social justice

| ORDER  | PROCESS   | SUB-PROCESS     | FEATURES  |
|--------|---|-----------------|---|
| FIRST  | <i>TRANSLATION</i>                              |                 | <i>the process by which theology moves from the abstract and universal to the concrete and particular; whereby the abstract social justice ethics contained within theology are brought into encounter with the realities of a particular geographical context or the 'everyday' lives of persons.</i>  |
|        |   | Thickening      | the process by which the initial theological encounter with contexts through translation, becomes properly grounded, resulting in the deepening and enriching of this theology into a properly context-specific theology.   |
|        |   | Thinning        | the process by which context-specific theologies are broadened out into more universal applications and wider ethics.   |
|        | <i>HISTORICO-MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT</i> |                 | <i>theologies of social justice do not exist in a spatio-temporal vacuum, nor are they translated and thickened into a-historical contexts. There is hence a historical and geographical process behind the creation of abstract theologies of social justice, and these are brought to bear upon socio-spatial contexts that themselves have particular moral histories.</i> |
| SECOND | <i>NEGOTIATION</i>                              |                 | <i>the process whereby the making and doing of theology must work between numerous tensions (see below), including the universal and the particular, the abstract and the real, the sacred and the secular.</i>   |
|        |   | Contestation    | related to the process of negotiation outlined above, is the process of intra-theological disputation over the nature and desirability of social justice; and the disputation between the sacred and the secular spheres over morality.   |
|        |   | Cooperation     | the process of building intra-theological alliances (ecumenically) in pursuit of social justice; and the alliance between the sacred and the secular spheres in this pursuit.   |
|        | <i>SCALING</i>                                  |                 | <i>the process whereby theology is translated and thickened at particular spatial scales such as the body, the community, the urban or the nation state (as in 'urbanisation' and 'embodiment', below).</i>   |
|        |   | Urbanisation    | the specific process whereby theology is 'urbanised' into the particular spatial context of the city through the making of urban theology, as a means of both 'seeing' and 'doing' theology in the city.  |
|        |   | Communitisation | the process of reading community through the lens of theology, and of seeing community as a fundamental theological principle, realised at this scale.  |
|        |   | Embodiment      | the process whereby theology comes to bear upon the particular experienced, lived morality of individuals.  |
| THIRD  | <i>IMAGINATION AND REFLECTION</i>               |                 | <i>the process of critical thinking contained within both contextual and abstract theologies of social justice, particularly related to the moral motifs of hope and love (or judgement), and their inspiration in contributing to present and future utopian and dystopian theological visions.</i>  |
|        | <i>LIVING AND PRACTISING</i>                    |                 | <i>the process of acting out particular moralities in context, and negotiating and testing moral abstracts against lived experience.</i>  |
|        | <i>TRANSFORMATION</i>                           |                 | <i>the process by which individuals, communities, places undergo some form of moral change as a result of their encounter with theologies, or vice-versa when abstract theologies are transformed by their grounded encounter with individuals, communities and places.</i>   |

Table 3.1 – Moral geographical processes and their features in relation to theological ethics (sub-processes are indented in lower case type).

1<sup>st</sup> Order Moral Geographical Processes

2<sup>nd</sup> Order Moral Geographical Processes

3<sup>rd</sup> Order Moral Geographical Processes

UNIVERSAL

Contested Abstract Theologies

Thinning

TRANSLATION

Thickening

Contested Contextual Theologies

PARTICULAR

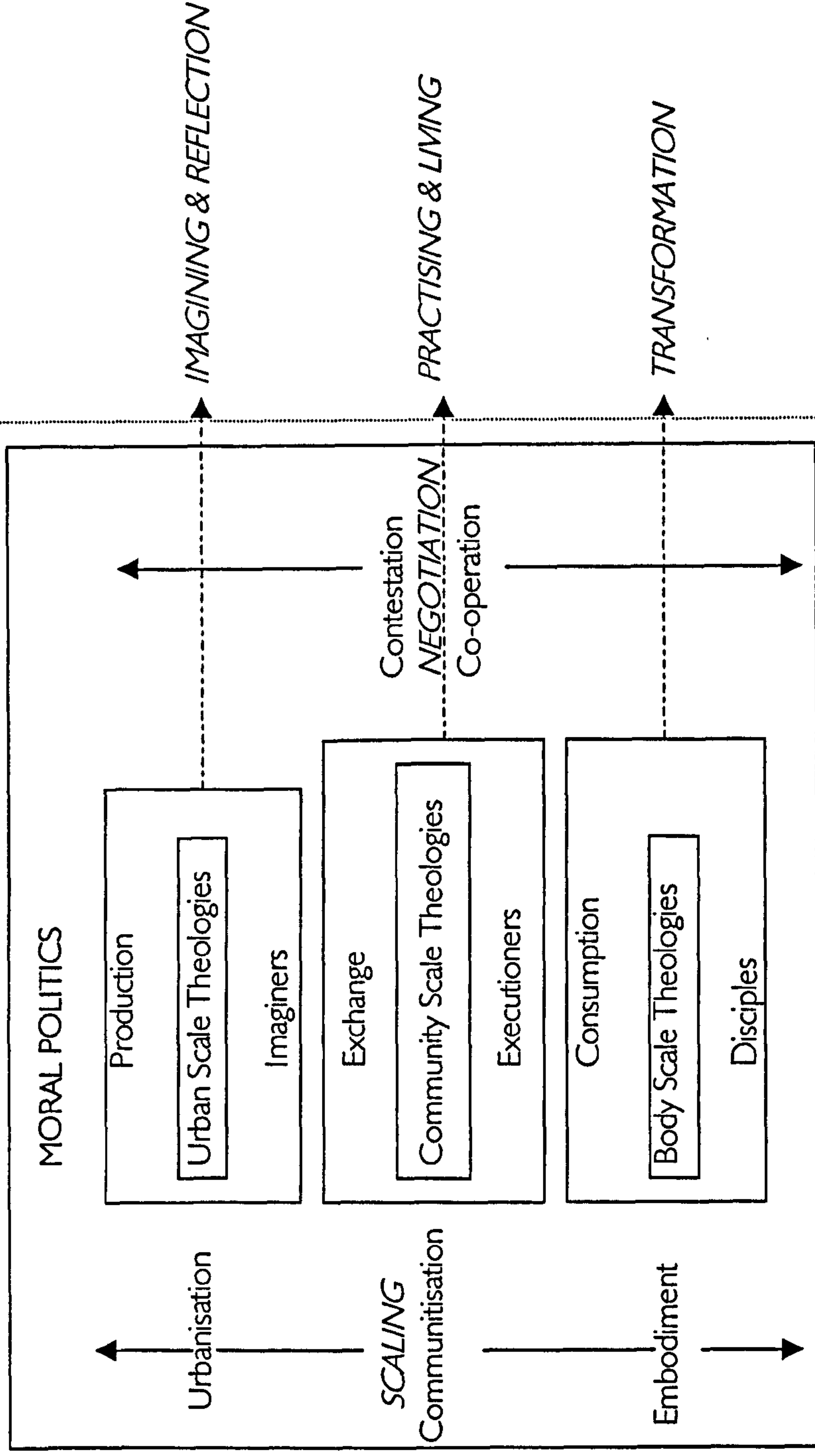


Figure 3.2 – Diagrammatic representation of moral geographical processes examined in thesis (c.f. Table 3.1).

and the city. This is followed by a diagrammatic representation of their relationships in Figure 3.2.

Table 3.1 and Figure 3.2 illustrate the variety of moral geographical processes and the nature of their relationships. In general terms, as can be seen from the diagram, the primary moral geographical process is that of the translation of ethics between universal and particular. This involves the sub-processes of ethics being either thickened or thinned. This group of processes may then be seen as the *first order* moral geographical processes. Also at this primary level, and running throughout all moral geographies is the process of historico-moral geographical development, whereby abstract ethics and thickened moral geographies cannot be separated from spatio-temporal development – contemporary moral geographical processes are situated within an historical geographical framework of moral development.

Next, there are a group of *second order* moral geographical processes, which are extensions and relations of the first order group, and these are the processes of scaling (and related sub-processes of relevance to this thesis: urbanisation, communitisation, embodiment) and negotiation (and the sub-processes of contestation and co-operation). These second order processes represent the moral politics of translation between universal and particular. They are political processes that involve the active translation of moral universals, and contain a multitude of contestations and tensions that will be the subject of the following analysis. Indeed the moral politics of translation suffuses *all* moral geographical processes, and it is this moral politics that essentially equates with moral geographical tensions.

Finally, there are a group of *third order* moral geographical processes and these are essentially the most personalised, embodied processes, relating to imagination and reflection; practice and

living; and transformation. These processes each have their own embodiment in particular groups of people. I use the term 'cadre' to characterise these groups. This term was used strongly in communist circles, indicating 'the nucleus of trained professional servicemen forming the basis for military expansion, or a group of activists' (*Collins Concise Dictionary*, 1999). Whilst I certainly do *not* wish the term to contain military overtones, it is the notion of activist who are trained for expanding activities that I have in mind. This can apply equally to lay Christians as to the professional clergy who have been theologically trained. Each cadre is active, in an embodied sense, through their personal transformation with theology. Hence, I would argue that: a). processes of imagination and reflection are embodied by a *cadre of imaginers*, who are essentially concerned with the *production* of moral geographical understandings at the urban scale; b). processes of practising and living are embodied by a *cadre of executioners*, who are concerned with the lived *exchange* of moral geographical understandings at the community scale; and c). processes of transformation are embodied by a *cadre of disciples*, who have experienced personal transformation through the active *consumption* of moral geographical understandings at the body scale.

Whilst these third order moral geographical processes can apply as much to communities, places and theologies as they can to individuals, and whilst they are also multi-scalar, I would like to argue that for the purposes of this thesis that it is the groups of individuals – the *cadres* – which I am examining in the urban, community and body scales of analysis. Hence, in the urban scale chapter, the groups of individuals that I am analysing are the cadres of imaginers, who produce urban theologies; in the community scale chapter, I analyse the cadre of executioners, who are actively living and evaluating their theologies; and finally in the body scale chapter, I investigate the consumers of theologies of social justice and the city – the cadre of disciples – who have experienced personal transformation through theological consumption.

Obviously these categories are not as straightforward in practice. There is overlap, complexity, and differentiation, particularly in the transformational category, where theological encounter may easily provoke as much of a dystopian experience, as a utopian one. However, as an organising conceptual framework, they serve well, and along with the scaling process, serve to structure these three analytic chapters (5, 6 and 7) with a clear spatial and agent focus.

### **3C3.2 Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis**

Over and above this scalar approach, with its focus on three distinct cadres of agents, my investigation of moral geographical processes will be by means of the moral geographical *tensions* contained within those processes. There are seven key sets of tensions that I shall analyse, each of which is characterised by a number of sub-tensions, and none of which are discrete, but rather all overlap in complex manners. Hence, I do not wish this account to appear rigid or prescriptive. Instead, I see these sets of tensions as very real issues, but recognise that there may be others that I have been unable to account for through the material I have gathered, or which may arise at different times and in different places. In this sense, they are fluid and dynamic, and exist more generically, with different *natures*, in different places and at different scales. My approach then, is to uncover the unique nature of moral geographical tensions at the urban, community and body scales.

The tensions are as follows (Table 3.2):

| Meta Tensions   | Meso Tensions                                       | Outcomes                      |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| THEOLOGY & ETHICS<br>(scale = urban)                  | <i>Conceptions of theology and spirituality</i>     | Contested theologies          |
|   | <i>Conceptions of ethics</i>                        | Contested ethics              |
| POWER & POLITICS<br>(scale = community)               | <i>Denominational tensions</i>                      | Contested praxis              |
|   | <i>Sacred-Secular Tensions</i>                      | Contested ideologies          |
| GEOGRAPHIES &<br>IMAGINATIONS<br>(scale = all scales) | <i>Scalar Imaginaries</i>                           | Contested scalings            |
|   | <i>Multi-Scalar Utopian / Dystopian Imaginaries</i> | Contested utopian imaginaries |
| POSITIONALITIES &<br>DIFFERENCES<br>(scale = body)    | <i>Moral positionalities</i>                        | Contested experiences         |

**Table 3.2 – Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis.**

In ordering the tensions in this manner, I am pursuing a logical schema which 1). starts with theology and ethics as the abstract *sources* of moral geographies; 2). then looks at the political and power tensions within the Church and between the Church and secular society; followed by 3). an analysis of the *application* of these ethics to the context of Glasgow, looking at tensions in different scalar, utopian and dystopian urban theological imaginaries; and finally 4). looks at the impact that these moral geographical tensions have upon people themselves – the cadres of agents – and tensions in their own moral positionalities.

At each scale, I pursue a different focus upon different sets of tensions as follows:

- Urban scale – at this scale, where theologies and geographical imaginaries are *produced* by the cadre of imaginers, I will analyse tensions of *theology and ethics*. It is at this scale where theological translation *starts*, and likewise where theological scaling *begins*.
- Community scale – here my focus shifts to an analysis of tensions of *power and politics*. It is at this scale that theologies are *exchanged* between abstract imaginings and the realities of context by the cadre of executioners. My concern at this point, then, is to understand the tensions surrounding the practicalities of this exchange, in particular the inter-denominational and sacred-secular politics.



- Body scale – it is here that theologies and geographical imaginaries are *consumed* and *reproduced* by the cadre of disciples, I analyse tensions of a). *moral positionalities and differences*, and b). *theology and ethics*. At this scale, theological translation is fully thickened as it is embodied in the lives of socially-excluded individuals; and embodied tensions relating to understandings of theological ethics and moral codes are the central moral geographical feature.
- All scales – as one of the core theoretical contributions that I wish to make in this thesis is to develop an understanding of the scalar constitution of moral geographies, it is essential that the one common tension running through *all* scales should be the tension of scale itself. By charting the different manifestations of scalar tensions at different scales, a better understanding of scaling processes will be possible.

This clear framework of tensions, which complements the framework of processes, may at first glance appear somewhat 'neat'. However, as I have already argued, processes and tensions cannot be truncated to particular scales. Rather, they exist at all scales, but what is different is their particular *salience* or importance, so that at different scales, different tensions come to the fore. Hence, at the urban scale, it is tensions of theology and ethics that are prevalent; at the community scale, tensions of power and politics; and at the body scale, tensions of positionalities and differences. However, in order to provide the common linkage between the scales, and in keeping with the fact that this is a *geographical* thesis, I will analyse tensions of *geographies and imaginations* at *all scales*. In this manner, it will be possible to see firstly how the *nature* of these tensions alters at the different scales, and secondly to follow through the manner in which geographies are produced, then exchanged, and finally consumed. This will allow greater insight into the first order moral geographical translation process for the conclusion of the thesis.

Finally, in structuring my empirical discussions around the scalar architecture of 'urban', 'community' and 'body', and the specific 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical *processes* and sets of *tensions* unique to each I maintain a particular level of empirical focus. Hence, in Chapters 5,6 and 7, my spotlight is upon the aspects of moral geographical processes and tensions which fall into the two vertical sections of Figure 3.2 headed by '2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes' and '3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes'. These 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> orders represent more meso- and micro- analytical scales, and are more suited to the specific empirical enquiry of these chapters. In the overall conclusion of the thesis, I will abstract back from these 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes and tensions into the macro-analytical framework of 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical processes, and the universal-particular dialectic. Conclusions relating to these 1<sup>st</sup> order processes of translation and thickening/thinning (and their related tensions of thick and thin, universal and particular) are of a far more important nature to the whole enterprise of moral geographical theory, and are therefore best dealt with in the overall conclusion. However, in order to buttress my contribution throughout, at the end of each chapter I will outline the way in which the empirical material has contributed to advancing the theoretical framework proposed here in Chapter 4, and in particular how it adds to the three key theoretical contributions that my whole thesis wishes to make.

## SECTION 3D

### CONCLUSION

This chapter has engaged many literatures of considerable diversity. In looking at the relationship between geography and ethics, social justice, geographies of religion, and urban theologies, I have attempted to demonstrate the centrality of moral geography as a unifying thread linking these multiple discourses into a common framework. Central to this is the concern for social justice; the manner in which this is scaled in particular contexts; and the means by which the Church can contribute towards building a multi-scalar politics of social justice. Exploring these issues will necessarily be a contingent, partial process that seeks to illuminate, rather than totally define.

The nexus between geography, religion, culture, theology, poverty and morality is one that requires exploration in an original manner. My three original research contributions of a theological perspective in moral geographies, the scaling of moral geographies, and a framework for analysing moral geographical processes and tensions, provide a clear research agenda that advances existing knowledge of moral geographies and geographies of religion, and therefore this thesis makes an original contribution to geographical knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **FIELD CONTEXTS & METHODOLOGY**

## SECTION 4A

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will undertake two primary tasks: 1). an introduction of the 'field' contexts relevant to my empirical analysis, and 2). outline the methodological and epistemological approaches that I take to data production and data analysis. In ordering the chapter in this manner, I hope to firstly clarify important issues surrounding my choice of field issues and locations, by justifying the spatial setting of Glasgow as the basis for my research. Likewise, I wish to give an overview of my understanding of the restructuring of society and religion, and their outcomes in social exclusion and religious pluralism, respectively. In doing so, I am beginning to make firm connections between the theoretical material that I reviewed in the previous chapter, and the empirical reality of social geographies.

Following on from this initial 'setting the scene', which contextualises my research area, spatially and conceptually, I can then outline the research methods that I will employ. These link my theoretical presuppositions from the previous chapter, with the empirical contexts outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Giving a full methodological and epistemological critique, I chart out the different research designs that I utilise for each different scale of analysis in this thesis (urban, community, and body), and provide a justification for my focus on each of these scales (having already justified my use of a scalar approach *per se* in the previous chapter). The methodologies and epistemological suppositions outlined here can then be borne in mind when I undertake analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

## **SECTION 4B**

### **'FIELD' CONTEXTUAL SETTING**

#### **4B1 RESTRUCTURING CAPITALISM: POVERTY, SOCIAL AND SPATIAL EXCLUSION**

Since the mid 1970s, it has been widely recognised that Western capitalism has experienced something of a crisis from which it has yet to fully recover (Harvey, 1982, 1985, 1989; Jessop, 1994; Amin, 1994). This crisis is evident from all manner of indicators, including economic growth rates, output, property prices, profit rates and currencies, which have all shown declines and a weakening; whilst levels of unemployment, homelessness, and poverty have increased sharply – all in contrast to statistics for the 1945-75 'boom' period (Harvey, 1989). Though conditions and indicators have improved during the 1990s and 2000s, there remain deep structural weaknesses in economies such as the UK, where unemployment levels have remained high, and wealth gaps between rich and poor have increased (Scottish Executive, 2001). Whether accounts of the crisis come from the Right, chanting the neoliberal mantra of globalisation (e.g. Piore and Sabel, 1984; Ohmae, 1991); or from the Left, with many using regulation theory to explain the current instability (e.g. Harvey, 1989, 2000; Lipietz, 1992; Jessop, 1994; Byrne, 1999), it seems clear that the current period is one marked by increasing complexity, heterogeneity, fragmentation and uncertainty in capitalist economies. This is now reflected more widely in the cultural and social as well as political and economic spheres, as 'post-industrial' or 'post-Fordist' economies put on 'postmodern' cultural clothes (Harvey, 1989; Amin, 1994), as they move from being production-driven and manufacturing-led, to consumption-driven and service-led.

The effects of this economic restructuring have been particularly acute in Scotland. Like many Western economies, Scotland's manufacturing base has virtually disappeared, with a decline from 666,000 jobs in 1960, to 285,000 by 1996 (Scottish Office, 1999: 5); whilst unemployment remains at over 3% in 2003, and 670,000 people of working age (23% of the Scottish population) are living on incomes at below 60% of the UK average (Scottish Executive, 2002). Though new jobs have been created in hi-tech industries and the service sector, there remains a core of Scotland's population that has failed to benefit from / adapt to the economic changes. Of particular concern for this thesis is the overwhelming geographical concentration of unemployment and poverty within *urban* Scotland, and in particular within the Glasgow conurbation, where over 50% of Scotland's most deprived districts are located (Pacione, 1995a,b; Scottish Office, 1999).

The core outcome of economic restructuring has been a growing social polarisation between the richest and poorest sections of UK society (and indeed the richest and poorest areas). Accounts of this change, and how to theorise it, vary, but there is a general move away from 'poverty' accounts, towards the 'social exclusion' paradigm, by both government and academics. There are a number of key means of analysis:

1. *Policy critiques* – (e.g. Pacione, 1995a,b, 1997, 2001a,b; Walker and Walker, 1998; Byrne, 1999) these accounts analyse UK government welfare policies and government statistics to show the place of policy in allowing inequality to worsen.

2. *Culture of poverty accounts* – (e.g. Murray, 1990) these accounts are used by theorists and politicians of the Right to argue that poverty either does not exist; or it is a condition to be blamed upon individual failings or immorality, with single parents and youth key targets.

3. *Absolute poverty accounts* – not used by social scientists nowadays (Philo, 2000a: 627), but based upon notions of a minimum level of subsistence or 'poverty line' necessary for survival.

4. *Relative poverty accounts* – (e.g. Townsend, 1979; 1993) view needs as 'culturally determined rather than biologically fixed' (Pacione, 1995a: 116), and often move beyond material needs towards wider social needs such as family, education or recreation.

5. *Multiple deprivation accounts* – (e.g. Pacione, 1995a,b,c; Duguid, 1995; Kearns *et al.*, 2000) are similar to those for relative poverty, seeing poverty as the central element amongst many (e.g. unemployment, poor housing, low pay, ill health) that lead to deprivation.

6. *Postmodern accounts* – (e.g. Yapa, 1996, 1997; Strobel, 1996), where poverty is viewed as a subjective, discursive construct to be explored in terms of the way in which discourses reinforce particular dominant conceptions and stereotypes of the poor. This approach has been heavily critiqued by Shrestha (1997), for its failure to engage with poverty in material terms.

The number of different accounts points to the complexity of poverty analysis, and the fact that 'one of the problems of measuring poverty is that it has no agreed definition and therefore there is little consensus on how the concept should be translated into a statistical measure' (Endean and



Harris, 1998: 10). If poverty is taken as a statistical measure below a threshold, (below 50% of average income), then numbers of individuals in poverty in the UK increased from 9% in 1979 to 25% of the population by 1996. This view is often critiqued for its narrowness, whilst the multiple deprivation account is attacked for creating a uni-dimensional statistic from multi-factoral analysis (Strobel, 1996: 177).

'Poverty' and 'deprivation' remain words that are used frequently in government and academic discourse, yet the general consensus emerging in describing the social problems created by capitalist restructuring seems to be coming together around the 'social exclusion' paradigm, originally developed in France, but gaining wider currency through its adoption in policy by the European Union. Defined by Eisenstadt and Witcher (1998:6) as 'the outcome of processes and/or factors which bar access to participation in civil society' and by the UK government as 'a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown' (Scottish Office, 1999: 5), it is nevertheless a highly problematic concept.

In broadest terms there are a number of key axes on which social exclusion can be characterised:

(a). Byrne (1999) notes that in the majority of accounts, a distinction is made between *material aspects* of exclusion (such as poverty), and *social relations aspects* (concerning citizenship, power and social class). To these can also be added (after Burchardt *et al*, 1999):

(b) *social class* (as 'up' or 'down') vs. *social exclusion* (as 'in' or 'out' of society);

(c) exclusion as *voluntary* vs. exclusion as *involuntary* (Burchardt *et al* [*ibid*]); and

(d) social exclusion as a *fixed state* vs. social exclusion as a *dynamic process*.

In an attempt to take account of all of these different axes, Burchardt *et al*, propose five key 'measures' of social exclusion (Table 4.1), arguing that:

'An individual is socially excluded if (a) he or she is geographically resident in a society; and (b) he or she does not participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society.'

Whilst not as comprehensive as a multiple deprivation account is on material aspects of exclusion, it illustrates the manner by which the exclusion paradigm captures the relational issues rather better ('political' and 'social' activity).

| Dimension            | Exclusion                 | Indicator   |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Consumption activity | Low income                | Income under half mean equivalized household income   |
| Savings activity     | Low wealth                | Not an owner-occupier, not contributing to or receiving an occupational or personal pension, and no savings over £2,000                                     |
| Production activity  | Lacks production activity | Not in employment or self-employment, full-time education or training, looking after children, or retired over pensionable age                              |
| Political activity   | Politically unengaged     | Did not vote in the 1992 general election and not member of political or campaigning organisation   |
| Social activity      | Socially isolated         | In any one of five respects, lacks someone who will offer support (listen, help in crisis, can relax with, really appreciates you, can count on to comfort) |

**Table 4.1 – Indicators of Social Exclusion (Source: Burchardt *et al*, 1999: 233).**

Taking the social exclusion notion to its logical conclusion, it seems that at present it remains 'all things to all people'. Until there is more agreed definitional clarity on its true meaning, the

definition given above by Burchardt *et al* is a good working one. However, ultimately, social exclusion is probably best seen as a broad definition that attempts to cover the multiplicity of complex social outcomes created by the restructuring of contemporary capitalism, and hence 'older' definitions of 'poverty' and 'multiple deprivation' continue to have relevance, perhaps *within* the broader relational, citizenship notions of the social exclusion model, and I shall use these terms in this light.

## **4B2 GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

The fact that poverty, multiple deprivation, and social exclusion have a spatial component, has been long-acknowledged by geographers (Philo, 2000a: 627, 2000b), and policy-makers (Scottish Office, 1999; Scottish Executive, 2000). Accepting that 'poverty has to "take place" somewhere' (McCormick and Philo, 1995: 4), its geography can be explained either by focusing on 'poor places' and seeking local cultural explanations for marginalisation (e.g. Murray's [1990] 'underclass' thesis), or by seeking more *structural* arguments that look at socio-spatial relations under capitalism, and the dialectics of rich and poor places. My thesis favours the latter approach, though notes that 1). how 'exclusion' is measured, 2). how an area is 'bounded' (Agnew, 2000), and 3). the effect of 'imagined geographies' of poverty (Philo, 1995), based around popular discursive frameworks of 'good' and 'bad' areas, are all important in determining the nature of the geography revealed.

Though the social exclusion paradigm has moved arguments away from 'areas' of poverty and onto 'sectoral issues' (such as racism), a geographical approach is still possible, whether through the lens of the geography of poverty (Pacione, 1995a,b; 1997; 2001a; Atkinson & Kintrea, 2001), or spaces of exclusion (Sibley, 1995) (Table 4.2).

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>'Area Effect'</b>               | Deprivation is accentuated, if not actually caused by, geographical areas   |
| <b>Local Geographies</b>           | 'The identification of spatial patterns is an essential starting point in understanding the local incidence of social disadvantage'   |
| <b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b> | 'Analysis of the nature, intensity and distribution of multiple deprivation permits comparison within regions and cities, as well as over time, and facilitates monitoring of the effectiveness of remedial strategies'   |
| <b>Local, Short Term Benefits</b>  | 'While the long-term ideal may remain a fundamental political-economic restructuring to tackle the roots of inequality in society, area-based policies of positive discrimination can provide more immediate benefits which enable some people to improve some aspects of their quality of life'. |
| <b>Government Policy</b>           | Remains committed to an area-based focus to 'the geography of social exclusion' through the <i>Social Inclusion Partnerships</i> programme (Scottish Executive, 2000).  |

**Table 4.2 – Justifications for an area-based approach to poverty and social exclusion (quoting from Pacione, 1995b: 409-410).**

Pacione's arguments, the continuing interest of Scottish (and UK, EU) government policy in area-based issues of exclusion, and a recent empirical study by Atkinson and Kintrea (2001), which supported an area effects thesis, point to the relevance and profitability of an area-based approach to analysing issues surrounding social exclusion, and my thesis utilises this approach.

## **4B3 THE NATURE AND GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN SCOTLAND**

An ethic of social justice is at the heart of the Scottish Executive's vision for Scotland. Promising a 'lasting commitment', the Executive's strategy *Social Justice ...a Scotland Where Everyone*

*Matters*, is marked by a 'determination to lift Scots out of poverty and to confront social exclusion' (Scottish Executive, 2000: 2). As part of a comprehensive, strategic, partnership-based approach to delivering social justice, the Executive has retained a commitment to addressing 'concentrations of deprivation and exclusion' (*ibid.* 15), alongside the more citizenship, identity and 'mainstream' factors of social exclusion (note the manner in which 'poverty', 'deprivation' and 'exclusion' are used interchangeably in government discourse). In doing so, and by creating 34 area-based *Social Inclusion Partnerships\** (SIPs) (alongside 14 'thematic' SIPs which address issues such as racism and youth work), the Executive recognises the continuing importance of Scotland's geographies of social exclusion. (\*Social Inclusion Partnerships were created in 1999 by the Scottish Executive as multi-agent partnership organisations comprising public, private and voluntary sectors, funded primarily by government, and charged with co-ordinating regeneration efforts in their areas).

These geographies of social exclusion (or poverty, multiple deprivation as they are often referred to) are a long-standing, though dynamic feature of Scotland's social geography (Pacione, 1995a,b,c; 2001b; Duguid, 1995; Kearns *et al*, 2000). The most comprehensive analyses of the geographies of social exclusion are based on the decennial census. Taking into account a range of multiple variables looking at issues such as housing, economic activity, population characteristics, health, education, and income, they use a variety of statistical analyses (e.g. z-scores, chi-square analysis) to construct an index of deprivation which is then mapped at different scales such as census enumeration districts, postcode sectors, or local authority boundaries. Whilst the census represents the most comprehensive range of statistical variables gathered at a particular scale, its major drawback is the time elapse between counts. Hence current analysis is still reliant upon data that is now over a decade old.

Though there has been a clear longevity to geographies of multiple deprivation that is remarkably unchanged between the 1981 and 1991 censuses (Pacione, 1995a, b), the fixed 'snapshots' that census accounts provide prevents analysis of the dynamics of change *within* deprived areas in the inter-censal period. As a response to this Kearns *et al* (2000) have attempted to construct an index of area deprivation based upon annually compiled statistics of government agencies and local authorities. Working at the postcode scale, they utilise statistics which address issues of housing, crime/environment, health, education, labour market and poverty. Though recognising that this is not as comprehensive as the census statistics (and the way in which it illustrates the lack of statistical data collected by government in the inter-censal period), Kearns *et al*'s analysis of 1996-1998 figures concludes that 'the geographical pattern of area deprivation produced for Scotland shows little change in broad terms over a period of 6-8 years' (p.1557). This conclusion points to the continuing longevity of multiple deprivation concentrations (postcode sectors which exhibit a dramatic shift in position, notwithstanding) from the 1981 and 1991 censuses, as Pacione has shown. As such, it is possible, even at this current date when results of the 2001 census are yet to be analysed, to highlight with some degree of accuracy, the nature of Scotland's geographies of social exclusion. I will draw primarily upon Kearns *et al*'s account as it is the most recent, but Pacione's and Duguid's analyses are equally valid, though now dated.

Kearns *et al* analyse Scotland's '(not so) new geography of deprivation' (*sic*) (p.1549) along three key axes (Table 4.3 and Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate the spatial distribution of deprivation in Scotland, whilst Figure 4.3 (Loveridge, 1999) uses 1991 census material to map deprivation on a parish by parish basis for the Church of Scotland in Glasgow, showing the city's problems in more detail, and illustrating the basic geographies of social exclusion in Glasgow to which the Church has to respond.

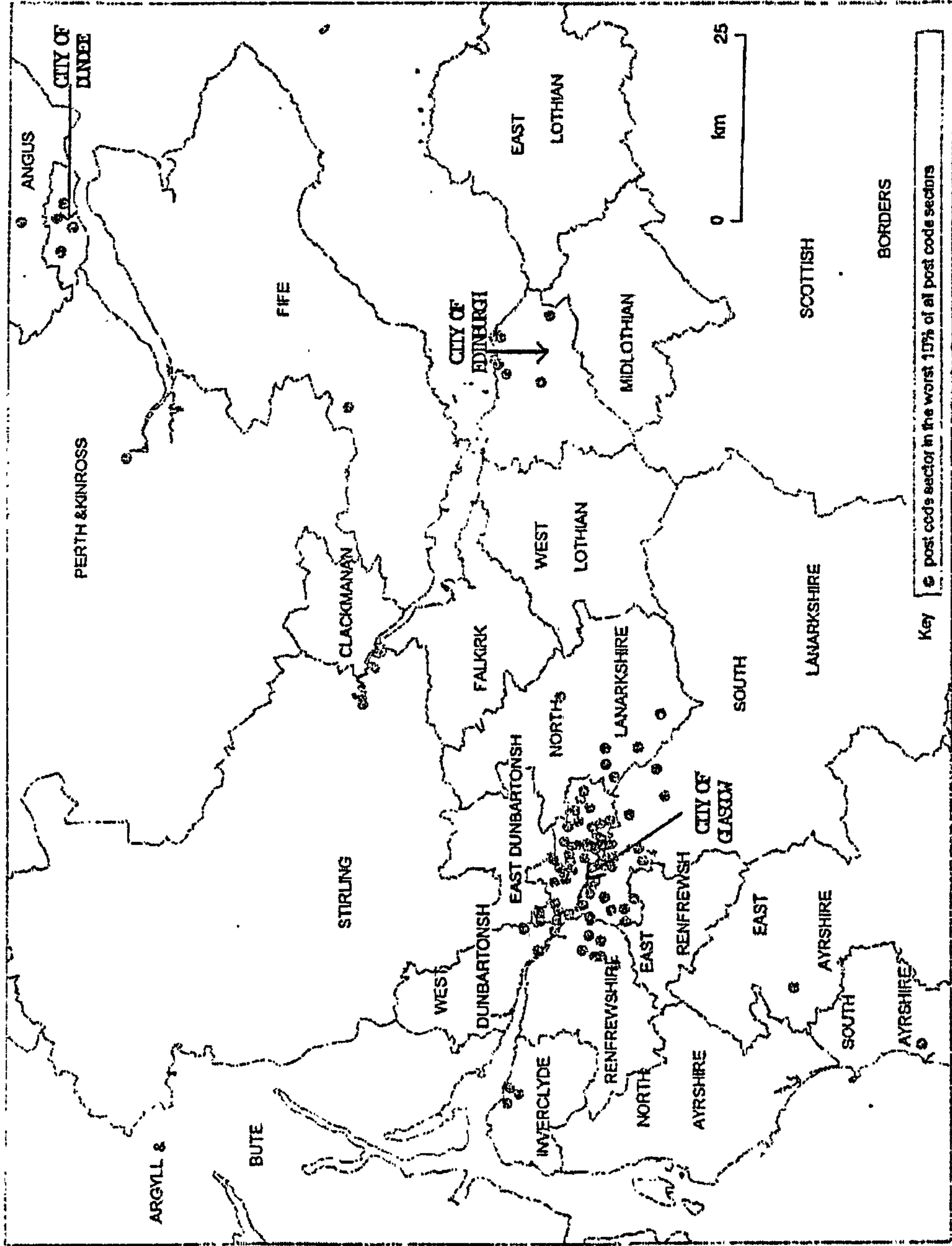


Figure 4.1 – Location of the worst 10% of postcode sectors in Scotland (Source: Kearns et al, 2000: 1550).

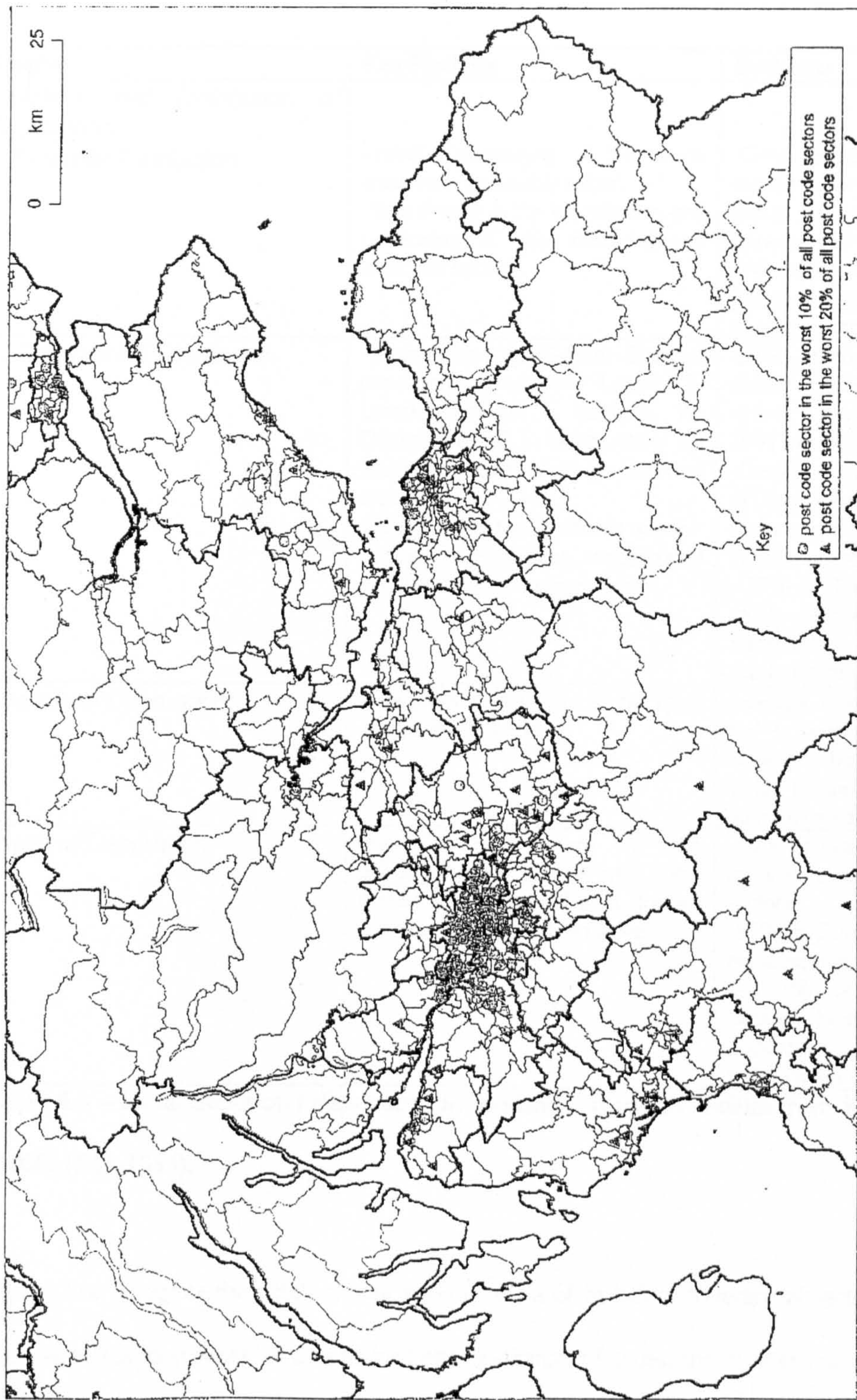


Figure 4.2 – Location of the worst 10% and 20% of postcode sectors in central Scotland (source: Kearns *et al*, 2000: 1551).



| Theme   | Key Findings  | Evidence  |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Incidence and Distribution of Deprivation:</i><br>1. Postcode Distribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-'relative positioning of the worst areas was remarkably stable'.</li> <li>-'little change in the identification and positioning of the most-deprived postcode sectors'.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Only 1% of all postcode sectors moved in or out of most deprived group (worst 10% of sectors) between 1991 and 1996.</li> <li>-Worsening of deprivation in 33 postcode sectors in the worst 20% of sectors, though poor already.</li> </ul>   |
| 2. Geographical Distribution  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Glasgow and the Greater Glasgow conurbation (incl. N. Lanark, S. Lanark, Renfrew, E. Renfrew, W. Dunbarton, E. Dunbarton.) is Scotland's most severely deprived area.</li> <li>-Evidence that the situation is worse.</li> <li>-Glasgow's deprivation concentrated in public sector housing schemes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-58% of most deprived 10% of sectors located in Glasgow.</li> <li>-this is higher than the 50% of the 1991 census.</li> <li>-Greater Glasgow accounts for 59% of the worst 20% of postcode sectors in Scotland (Edinburgh only 10% of worst 20%).</li> <li>- 27% of Glasgow's sectors that are most deprived 10% located in Easterhouse, Pollok, Possil, Castlemilk and Drumchapel.</li> </ul> |
| <i>Intensity of Deprivation</i>   | -Glasgow's deprivation is the most intense in Scotland.   | -average intensity of deprivation in the 3 worst sectors of Glasgow is close to the index maximum and 17% greater than in next local authority area (Edinburgh).  |
| <i>Extent of Deprivation</i>  | -the maximum share of the population who could be living in the context of a deprived area, though not necessarily poor themselves.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-60% of Glasgow's population lives in the most deprived postcode sectors.</li> <li>-31% of Dundee's population in the most deprived areas.</li> <li>-18-21% of W. Dunbarton, N. Lanark, Inverclyde and Renfrew populations in most deprived postcode sectors in Scotland.</li> </ul>   |

**Table 4.3 – Social exclusion / deprivation in Scotland – research findings from Kearns *et al* (2000: 1549-1554).**

Kearns *et al*/recognise the pitfalls of their index in terms of: its lack of coverage of certain domains such as access to services; of a need for better indicators of issues; the problem of choosing an appropriate scale for statistical analysis; the problems of measuring change *within* a locality; and the difference between urban and rural deprivation (Pacione, 1995c), where urban issues

naturally favour this index because of their essentially different nature to those in rural areas. Whilst these pitfalls exist, the patterns and evidence assembled by Kearns *et al*, utilising a considerably smaller dataset than the comprehensive census, continue to bear a marked resemblance to those uncovered by Pacione in his analysis of the 1981 and 1991 censuses.

The overwhelmingly important conclusion from this research is that on *all* indicators (distribution, extent, and intensity of deprivation), the Greater Glasgow conurbation is *the* location for the highest concentration of urban social exclusion in Scotland. The majority of Scotland's most deprived districts are located within the City of Glasgow authority itself, but the surrounding local authority districts of West and East Dunbartonshire, North and South Lanarkshire, and Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire also exhibit signs of severe deprivation. In large part, this reflects the region's historic industrial past, and the concomitant decline in shipbuilding, heavy engineering, steel-making, coal mining, and locomotive building felt since the 1960s. Resulting unemployment, job loss, and a lack of new job *creation* for unemployed workers from manual backgrounds, lies at the heart of Glasgow's difficulties (Webster, 2000). These massive concentrations of social exclusion exist in spite of numerous government urban policy initiatives, culminating in the present *Social Justice* strategy of Social Inclusion Partnerships. Of particular interest, is the concentration of problems in the city's large public sector peripheral housing schemes, alongside the more familiar inner city environments classically associated with such problems.

With such massive problems of social exclusion, Glasgow will form the natural focus for my analysis of moral geographies of social justice and the city. The extreme deprivation that exists in many parts of the conurbation creates a context into which the Church has to try to translate its

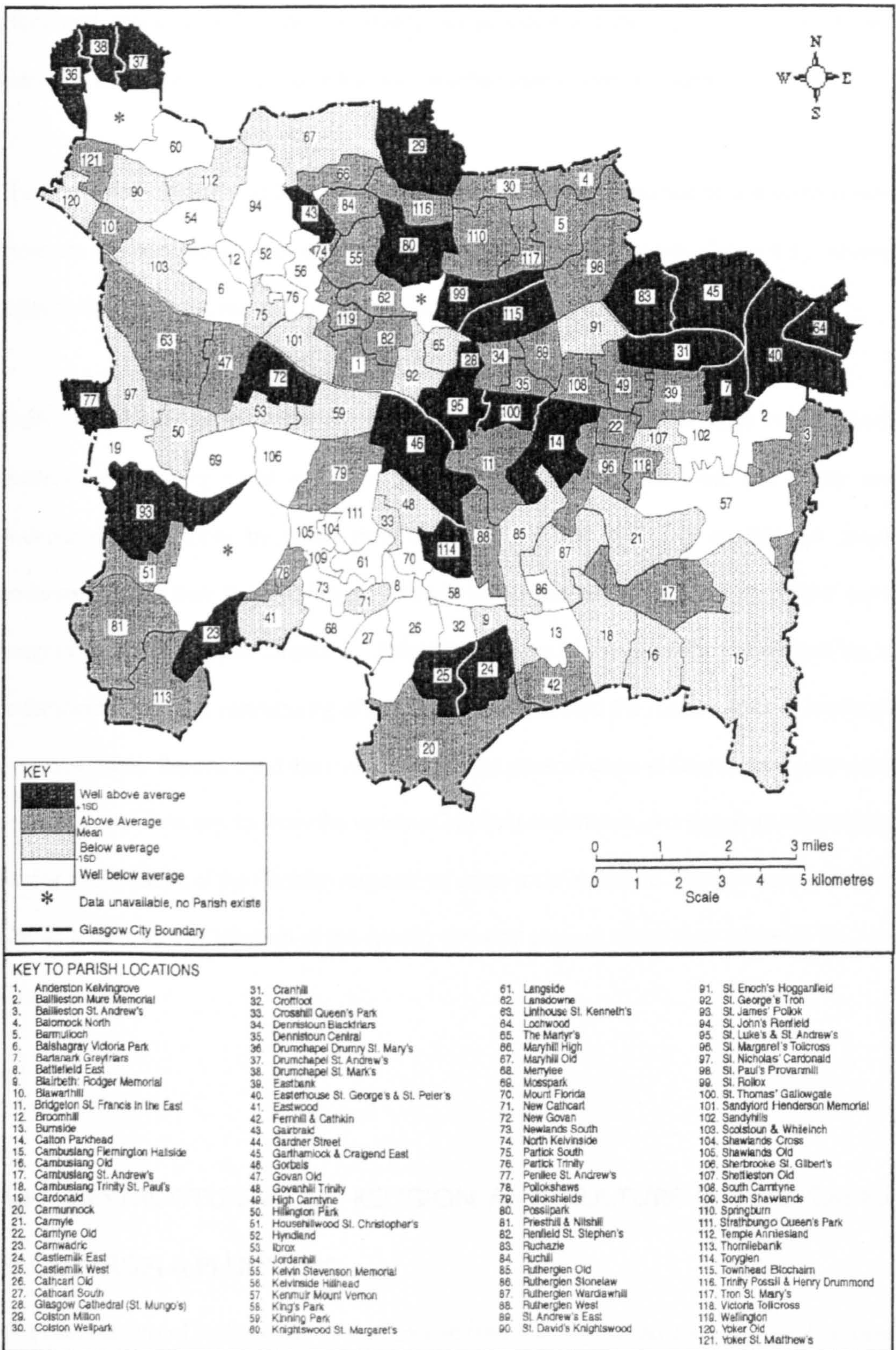


Figure 4.3 – Distribution and depth of multiple deprivation, by parish in the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Glasgow (adapted from Loveridge, 1999: 34).

moral and ethical understandings of poverty, social justice and the city, drawn from abstract theology, and this will form the backdrop for my urban scale analysis in Chapter 5.

The conclusion of Kearns *et al's* analysis that at the scale of neighbourhoods and communities, there are key concentrations of deprivation in peripheral housing schemes (Figure 4.3), naturally suggests the relevant research context for the community scale analysis in Chapter 6.

Finally, within these particular communities, there will be an opportunity to talk to individual local residents experiencing social exclusion, or life in a socially-excluded area, and to try and understand the manner by which their Christian faith acts as a lens or filter for moral understandings of their life experience. This will enable me to illuminate the embodied moral geographies of the body in Chapter 7. Before undertaking this, however, it is important first to understand the parallel restructuring of religion that has mirrored the massive shifts in Scotland's economic base. Beyond this, I then wish to profile the *general* nature of Church work addressing social justice and the city, to show the variety of initiatives undertaken, and to give an introductory flavour to the nature of the Christian response to urban social exclusion. This general profile then acts as a basis for the selection of the specific empirical analyses which then follow in the next chapter.

#### **4B4 RESTRUCTURING OF RELIGION AND CULTURE IN SCOTLAND: SECULARISM & PLURALISM**

The restructuring of capitalism and the economic crisis that has ensued since, has likewise been associated with a shift in the fundamental culture of society, often characterised as a shift from

modernity to postmodernity (Lyotard, 1984; Harvey, 1989). The trend towards social fragmentation, cultural heterogeneity, emphasis on social difference, minorities, image and identity, a culture of consumption and a general pluralism of beliefs, cultures (especially individualism) and views has presented mixed outcomes for religion (Ley, 1998, 2000a, b). The Enlightenment and modernism brought with them a rational, scientific model that rejected notions of the Divine, metaphysical and transcendent, reducing all to empirical observation and verification in positivist logic. This is widely recognised as the root of modern secularisation and the widespread rejection of a religious worldview in Western culture (Milbank, 1990; Ley, 1998).

Trends in the decline of Christian religious adherence in the United Kingdom reflect this shift in academic reason, as Enlightenment notions of rationality and rejection of the Divine have become more widely accepted in popular culture. Postmodernity (whilst in itself a highly contested and disputed term – see Harvey, 1989; Ley, 2000b) has presented mixed blessings for religion. On the one hand, the discrediting of the modernist Enlightenment project has brought a new interest in the general field of 'the spiritual', as evidenced by the rise in popular interest in Eastern religions, alternative therapies, healing, and a resurgence of pagan culture in the unwieldy 'New Age' movement. This has presented new opportunities for Christianity to receive recognition as a legitimate moral voice, but on the other hand pluralism, and extreme postmodern relativism has made Christianity (and indeed Islam, Judaism and Hinduism) merely one voice amongst many. Hence, all religious 'truths' are viewed as 'true' only within their own discursive communities, and therefore without a more universal applicability to wider society. Similarly, the old Enlightenment adage of 'don't mix politics and religion' is still a strong argument used to prevent the airing of a religious viewpoint in political debate. Hence, whilst there is a greater openness to the religious and the spiritual, the religious remains firmly 'policed' (Milbank, 1990) by the secular, with

postmodern relativism being the new means to ensure that religious views are locked firmly within their own communities and not given wider airings.

Statistical analysis illustrates the extent to which Christianity is simply 'one amongst many' voices in the UK. Whilst 'accurate statistics are notoriously hard to obtain and to interpret' (Stott, 1999: 53), it is generally recognised that participation in Christian activities in the UK (Protestant and Catholic) has fallen dramatically on virtually all indicators. As Brown – Scotland's leading expert on religiosity – comments (2001:3):

'In the year 2000, less than 8% of people attend Sunday worship in any week, less than a quarter are members of any church, and fewer than a tenth of children attend a Sunday school. ... By some calculations, as few as 3% of people regularly attend church in some counties of England, and in most, the non-churchgoers represent over 90% of the population. If church participation is falling, all the figures for Christian affiliation are at their lowest point in recorded history. Christian church membership accounts for less than 12% of the people and is falling'.

These statistics are difficult to quantify in terms of the fact that regular attendance at services of worship is likely to be considerably less than actual numbers of official 'members'. However, the large decline in Christian adherence is largely a feature of 'established' denominations such as Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Brethren and Congregationalists. Newer, more charismatic churches of Pentecostal, Black-led, and independent persuasion have seen significant growth, with 'an average of 200 members joining churches every day' (Stott, 1999: 54).

Nevertheless, Christianity is a much smaller voice than it previously was. Membership of other religious groups such as Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Jews, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses,

Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, Christadelphians and so on comes to over 1.2 million adult members, and a total community (including children, cultural adherents, etc.) nearing 4 million (Stott, 1999: 54). The total of all religious 'believers' (including children and non-practising adherents) is 70-72% of the total population, with 28-30% of the population making no religious profession at all (Stott, 1999, *ibid*). Technically speaking, then, atheists, humanists, and 'the secular' are a minority, but it is generally recognised that with so many non-practising 'residual' adherents, the 'secular' is in the ascendance in society (Brown, 1997; 2001; Bruce, 1995)

Against this backdrop of UK decline, the picture in Scotland is very similar. Indeed, given the extent of decline in its membership, the Church of Scotland itself predicted in 1997 that it would be defunct by 2033 (Brown, 2001: 5). However, overall Church attendance in Scotland has always been historically higher than for concomitant English churches (Bruce, 1995: 40; Brierley, 2000: 26).

'More than 82% of Church adherents and 84% of churchgoers in Scotland are accounted for by the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church. In 1965 there were 1,248,000 Church of Scotland communicants and 810,000 Catholics; in 1995 the figures were 698,000 and 743,000 respectively' (Brown, 1997: 161).

Brown's remark illustrates the clear Presbyterian – Catholic split in Scottish Christianity. The Scottish Episcopal Church (Anglican) has also had a strong presence, being the 'State' Church under various monarchies of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, but is much diminished today. And of course there are the plethora of 'Free' Presbyterian churches (Free Church; United Free Church; Free Presbyterian Church) and other smaller denominations such as Baptist, Methodist, Orthodox, Brethren, Salvation Army, Independent, and Pentecostal.

Historically, after the Reformation, Scotland had always seen itself as a 'Protestant' country (Walker, 1996), and it was not until 1878 and the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy that Scotland had a Catholic component. The growth of Catholicism – largely through Irish immigration – and the associated importation of Irish Protestantism and Irish Catholicism into the Scottish religious equation, have made for an uneasy co-existence, with sectarianism remaining a feature of Scottish religious life for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Brown, 1997: 193-196; Walker, 1996; Maver, 1996; Devine, 2000).

Whilst it is true to say that lingering sectarianism in Scotland is based on 'the continuing strength of religious feelings, albeit of a rather "secularised" and residual nature, in the popular culture of the nation' (Walker, 1996: 264; Cuthbertson, 2000), and hence not actively stemming from the churches themselves, 'sectarianism is still a factor in the day-to-day lives of many working-class Scots' (Brown, 1997: 195). Overwhelmingly concentrated in the West of Scotland urban-industrial region, centred on Glasgow, being 'Catholic' or 'Protestant' can still be a major determinant of football allegiance, schooling, housing, and even party politics (Brown, 1997: 195). Recent controversy over remarks made by MacMillan (1999) that sectarianism is 'alive and well' in Scotland (Dudley Edwards, 2000: 6; see also Devine, 2000) highlights that it remains a significant cross-cutting religious 'influence' in Scottish life, that neither Church ecumenism nor secularisation has destroyed (Brown, 1997: 196).

Hence, in spite of evident declines in religious practice and adherence, it seems fair to say that Christian belief and activity remains an important filtering mechanism for a significant minority of the Scottish population. Residualised religious identities also contribute to this. Christianity, though diminished, is equally as valid an area to enquire into socio-cultural identity and praxis as race, ethnicity, sexuality, or gender; and has been 'restructured' as much as the capitalist



economy and places of poverty and social exclusion in which it is embedded. The divisions and differences that exist between the variety of different religious denominations (not to mention theologies) presents a religious landscape that is abounding in tensions over structures, organisations and strategies.

This religious landscape, which is both institutional and cultural, is constantly being re-shaped through forces within the Christian community, and by relations with the secular sphere. These various axes of division present an opportunity for analysis of moral geographical tensions as outlined in Chapter 3. The manner in which theological universals are translated into a predominantly secular context will have to undergo many different negotiations with different groups and communities. It is the complexity of this religious landscape, and strategies for theological thickening, that makes moral geographical analysis so interesting.

## **4B5 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO SCOTLAND'S GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

Before moving onto epistemological and methodological outlines for the majority of my thesis, I wish to briefly outline an intermediate stage of research that I undertook between literature review and my more substantive fieldwork for urban, community and body chapters. A full discussion of this research is contained in Appendix 4.1, but at this stage I merely outline it as further proof of my empirical investigation of my research milieu, even though it does not particularly 'fit' within my scalar approach of investigating moral geographical processes and tensions. It is rather a type of 'setting the scene' research.

As a preliminary survey to give me a better 'picture' of the field of the Church's work in addressing social exclusion, and of the structure of Scotland's Christian denominations, I undertook a Scotland-wide telephone survey from March to June, 2000, to provide a profile of the range of work taking place (see Appendix 4.1 for results). I also undertook analysis of government policy and academic documents discussing Scotland's geographies of social exclusion. This was to enable me to have more information of the range of groups working, for my core analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. I used the *UK Christian Handbook* (Brierley *et al*, 2000) as the most comprehensive listing of Christian organisations and churches and contacted all those organisations based in Scotland, asking them for information on their activities addressing social exclusion. I therefore pursued a methodology of secondary data analysis using documentary sources (e.g. annual reports, strategy documents, meeting minutes, government statistical information and publicity material) to gather 'surface level information' (Hoggart *et al*, 2002: 148) on Church organisations addressing social exclusion, and on the geographies of social exclusion in Scotland.

Whilst this analysis did *not* go into details about expenditures and resources, or numbers of projects (again owing to lack of such statistical information), it does at least allow for a classification of the *range* of activities that are taking place (even if not *absolute* numbers), and for me to give demonstrative examples of such work at the more local scale. Hence, in line with the overall aim of this thesis, this Scottish profile was primarily concerned with *illuminating* the range of work taking place, rather than providing a comprehensive account of every single detail, as this is simply not possible. It was therefore not about measuring *impact*, but rather giving a *picture* of what is taking place. Therefore, it is based upon my own assumptions about how to access knowledge and the nature of presenting a moral geographical approach (see below). Reading Appendix 4.1 provides what is essentially an introductory backdrop to the more theorised accounts that will

follow in Chapters 5 to 7, and which demonstrates that I carried out full preparatory investigation before undertaking my more detailed research.

In overall terms, this Scottish profile had the advantage of extending my research scope beyond the more contextual analysis of later urban, community and body chapters, and allowing some level of access to organisations that it would be impossible to research through direct contact, due to simple factors such as geographical distance (Hoggart *et al*, 2002: 120-125). In a simple manner, it enabled me to uncover some broad themes relating to the nature of geographies of social exclusion and Church responses to this, that helped me gain an understanding of the moral geographical processes and tensions which characterise the Church. At the same time, this did not preclude more in-depth analysis at later stages. This research therefore contextualised later analysis within a macro-scalar setting. (For analysis of these results, see also Appendix 4.1).

## SECTION 4C

# EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL OUTLINE AND CRITIQUE

In this section of the chapter, I outline my epistemological presuppositions and the different methodologies that I have pursued at each of the different scales of analysis. My general research design has been to follow a *loosely* 'grounded theory' approach, whereby my data collection and theoretical development have gone hand in hand, as theory has been (re)shaped by the data, and data by the theory. As such, I will refer to my approach as *grounding* theory.

My research proceeded in a broadly chronological order from 1999 to 2002, beginning with literature review/theoretical analysis (Chapter 2), followed by profiling of Church activity addressing social exclusion in Scotland (Appendix 4.1), interviewing for the urban scale (Chapter 5), in-depth field work for community scale vignettes (Chapter 6) and finally body scale interviews (Chapter 7). I carried out analysis of original empirical data following data transcription, and alongside data collection for the next stages. I have utilised a wide range of qualitative research methods, and employed both different and overlapping methods at different scales. In the methodology discussion which ensues, I work through my different approaches on a *scale-by-scale basis*. However, where points relating to methodology under one scale are relevant to others, and to avoid repetition, common methodological critiques will be dealt with at the first scale at which they are salient, and not rehearsed thereafter.

## 4C1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

I concur with Gregory (2000: 226) that epistemology is 'any theory of what constitutes valid knowledge'. How knowledge is 'accessed' or 'produced' in contemporary human geography (and theology) has undergone the radical critique of power and objectivity that has characterised social science during the 1990s. The epistemological presuppositions that I outline below represent my own understanding of how I wish to access knowledge, and about the beliefs and worldviews which underlie and define my positionality in relation to this research.

The three key epistemological presuppositions that underlie this thesis are chiefly as follows:

1. I use what might broadly be termed a cultural-materialist approach. This is based in particular upon the writings that I have reviewed earlier in this chapter – especially those of David Harvey and David Smith. Whilst I am *not* a Marxist, I continue to have strong faith in Marxian understandings of social, economic and political structures that form the basis of relations in a capitalist economy such as Scotland. Urban social exclusion is largely explained by the wider structural forces inherent in capitalism, and the position of labour and the built environment in circuits of capital (Harvey, 1982; 1985) that play themselves out in successive waves of investment and disinvestment. I also have a strong belief in traditional egalitarian conceptions of social justice, such as those proposed by Smith (1994; 2000d) and Holman (1997). However, as the core issues this thesis is concerned about (religion, ethics, morality, meaning, identity, values) are essentially 'cultural', then I work with the insights given by postmodern theories that recognise the importance of difference, situatedness, positionality, and individual identity and meaning. In this, I follow a dialectical approach that seeks to combine structure and agency, the material and cultural, the sacred and secular, the universal and particular in my understandings. I recognise the

partiality of my knowledge claims, yet at the same time yearn for them to be applicable to broader frameworks of understanding.

As such I follow the manner in which Harvey has 'modified' his materialist approach to take cognisance of postmodern concerns with grand narratives and impartial knowledge claims, whilst still holding to a belief in wider social progress of a relational type. I therefore reject notions that all morality is relative, that social justice can never appeal to more general concepts of human need, and that all knowledge claims are so partial as to preclude wider application. This modified view is also held by theologians such as Holloway (1999, 2001). I am therefore a true moral geographer, who holds to 'universal' ideals of justice and human rights and so forth, but recognises that these are played out in different manners in different contexts, yet without precluding the possibility of alliance-building and a search for common futures.

2. In terms of my own positionality, it is crucial that I disclose the basis of my own morality. As a practising Christian, I hold to the basic teachings of the Christian faith, and in particular its emphasis on love of one's neighbour, and seeking to build a Kingdom of faith, hope, love and justice, with the poor at its heart. Though coming from the Reformed tradition of the Church, I am *not* a conservative evangelical Christian, who takes Scripture literally as God's explicit revealed truth. Rather, as a liberal Christian, I recognise Scripture as being the story of the journey of a people of faith, written as their own spatio-temporally specific understanding of their lives and God (and written only by certain members of that community, at that).

I hence recognise the potential for contemporary Christians to re-assess Scripture in the light of current knowledge, and also for the re-negotiation of particular ethics (e.g. women in the Church, homosexuality), drawing on present insights of faith, science, biblical criticism and social

theory. Therefore, I accept that there are timeless universals central to Christian belief and praxis, such as the sanctity of human life, and the need for sacrificial love of others, but there are other 'meso-ethics' that have to be re-interpreted via the lens of contemporary understanding (Holloway, 1999, 2001). I am also a deeply ecumenical Christian who yearns for unity within the Church, and who will happily worship in a Catholic or Protestant church. Likewise, I respect the faiths of others, and hope for dialogue of mutual understanding and encouragement in inter-faith relations, recognising especially the common Abrahamic roots of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

This positionality naturally 'filters' my understandings of the Church and Christian work, but biases me in a different manner than may be expected. Whilst I wholeheartedly support the Church working for social justice, I work from a position of *critique* of the Church for failing to do *enough* to help the plight of the poor, and from a position of frustration at a middle class form of privatised Christianity that neglects the public and social claims of Christ. Likewise, I condemn sectarianism of any form, and also any form of Christianity that neglects the material needs of persons in order to 'save souls'. This sense of frustration should hopefully allow me to maintain some semblance of critical awareness of the Church.

3. In being interested in issues of marginalisation, inequality, poverty and social exclusion, this thesis appears to be concerned with all social groups 'who stand outside of the socio-spatial "mainstream"', and the need to illuminate their 'exclusionary geographies' (Philo, 2000b: 752). Whilst this is the agenda that lies behind the recent government policy interest in 'social inclusion', in combating all forms of marginalisation and discrimination that apply to a wide variety of groups such as ethnic minorities, the disabled, homosexuals, women, the elderly, the unemployed, the sick, the homeless, and religious minorities, and it is the basis for current academic obsessions

with identity, difference and otherness, this is perhaps too broad a definition for the purposes of this thesis.

For a start, my primary concern is with the urban milieu, and (though interested in spatial scales from the local to the global) is therefore exclusionary of much that is 'not urban'. Furthermore, analysis by Harvey (1996, 2000), Byrne (1999), and Mohan (2000), continues to point to a fundamental *material* inequality that lies at the heart of the problems of capitalist restructuring that we can broadly term 'social exclusion'. This is not to negate concerns with identity groups such as homosexuals or racial minorities, or with the more 'relational' or 'citizenship' strand of 'social exclusion', but is to point to the fact that for many of the socially excluded, their exclusion is a material one, brought about by low wages, poor housing, 'poor area', unemployment, poverty, ill health, and general social position in relation to capitalism. From this, social class issues continue to have relevance (Byrne, 1999; Harvey, 1996; Mohan, 2000). Hence, whilst the homosexual or white feminist woman may be 'excluded' from society, it is likely that they may still have the material resources necessary for daily survival. This does not apply to the unemployed, or low-paid, or financially excluded (Leyshon and Thrift, 1996) or indeed the impoverished homosexual or single mother who is a feminist, who, relative to the rest of society, must survive in considerably worse material circumstances.

In making these assertions then, I am *not* claiming that social inclusion on the grounds of the politics of identity is not important – it *is* – but rather, the 'identity' that I look at is the identity (or even stigma) of being 'poor', taken from material indicators such as residence in a deprived area. Cultural arguments (e.g. stigmatisation of poor places as dystopian) have just as much relevance in society's labelling of 'the poor' as do more objective material indicators such as income levels. For the purposes of the thesis, then, I take what might be termed a materialist viewpoint of social



exclusion, though coupling this to a cultural reading of particular places and social groups (e.g. the incorporation of the religious viewpoint) (as outlined in 1 and 2, above).

These epistemological presuppositions suffuse the theoretical framework, and also the methodologies used to investigate these issues, to which I now turn.

## 4C2 URBAN SCALE METHODOLOGY

### 4C2.1 Theoretical premises

#### 4C2.1.1 Grounding theory

As noted above, in researching for this thesis I am employing a strategy similar to that of grounded theory, which I term 'grounding theory'. Strauss and Corbin (1999: 72) refer to the grounded theory approach as 'a general method of constant comparative analysis' that moves between theory and empirical data gathering in an iterative manner. In this approach, theory evolves during research, and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. Crang (2001: 216) refers to grounded theory as a process of 'making interpretations about others' interpretations', whereby the researcher asks respondents for initial interpretations of theoretical ideas, and then themselves interpret that data.

My approach, whilst similar *methodologically* to grounded theory, does not adopt all of the theoretical and epistemological premises that a 'proper' grounded theory approach would take, such as Strauss and Corbin's emphasis on grounded theories' rigorous comparison with 'dominant functionalist and structuralist theories' (*ibid.* 75). As moral geography is hardly a 'dominant' theory, I rather use the method of theoretical evolution in its most exploratory sense, taking the initial moral geographical theorising of David Smith, and attempting to apply it to the ethics of theology and the spaces of Scotland's cities, in a constant backwards and forwards process of refinement. The most important theoretical development to arise from this method has been the development of a schema of processes and tensions that suffuse theological accounts of moral geographies of social justice and the city (see Chapter 3).

#### 4C2.1.2 Scaling the urban

Brenner (2000: 366) comments that:

'the problematic of geographical scale – its territorial organisation, its social production, its political contestation and its historical reconfiguration – has been inserted into the very heart of the urban question in the current era... .. In the 1990s, the urban question is increasingly being posed in the form of a *scale question*' (emphasis in original).

Manuel Castells' classic *The Urban Question* (1977) and David Harvey's *Social Justice and the City* (1973) both attempted to grapple with the issues of the urban, urbanism and urbanisation, and to theorise the city's place within capitalist relations. The extent to which the urban is a separate and discrete sphere of capitalist social relations, or the extent to which it is in fact *the* all-encompassing form of these relations lay at the heart of their probings. Whichever is the case, the urban is now read in far wider terms than as simply a spatial or territorial unit (Johnstone, 2000c: 871). The urban is now viewed in terms of a multiplicity of social relations (ethnicity, race, class, gender, sexuality, religion), as a site of production or consumption, as a place of social reproduction, as a place of heterogeneous cultures, protests, carnivals, neighbourhoods, as sites in flows of goods and information, as a place of polarisation between rich and poor, and lastly, as a scale. It is also a place which is imagined, felt, envisioned and hoped for in both utopian and dystopian terms (Baeten, 2001).

As Valentine points out, '(city) diversity and the juxtapositions it produces offer many positive possibilities, but they can also produce tensions and conflicts' (2001: 205). In this thesis, my focus is simultaneously upon tensions and conflicts between the poor and the rich, poverty and wealth, social inclusion and exclusion, dystopia and utopia; and upon tensions and conflicts in moral geographies between universal and particular, abstract and realised, thick and thin. In focusing on

these issues, I am strongly aware of the 'urban problem' / urban policy literatures (e.g. Pacione, 1997; Oatley, 1998a,b; Edwards, 1997; Shaw and Robinson, 1998; Atkinson, 2000, 2001), and the continued prevalence in academic and government policy discourses of a concern for an urban problem, whether it be viewed in terms of demographics, health, educational attainment, poverty or unemployment. There has been a general consensus since the mid-1970s that cities have shown 'the most obvious and persistent manifestations' (Atkinson, 2000: 1038) of the problems of capitalist restructuring, and that a specifically 'urban' approach is needed to their solution. In focusing on the urban scale in Chapter 5, then, I am keeping in spirit with long-held academic, policy (and theological) concerns that the city remains a crucial place for understanding and enacting processes of social justice.

Brenner concludes his analysis of 'the urban question as a scale question' by remarking that:

'If the urban question is today increasingly assuming the form of a scale question, this is not because the urban has been superseded as a level of analysis and social struggle, but because multiscale methodologies are now absolutely essential for grasping the fundamental role of cities as preconditions, arenas and outcomes of the current round of global capitalist restructuring' (Brenner, 2000: 375).

In selecting the urban as a scale, I respond wholeheartedly to Brenner's assertion that a *multiscale* methodology is 'essential' for theorising urban concerns. Whilst Brenner is most interested in the place of the city within a wider web of rescaling capitalist relations, especially at the global and national scales, my concern in pursuing an urban scale methodology is to view the urban as the crucial scale for the thickening of abstract theologies of social justice. As Chapter 2 has demonstrated, urban theologies actively produce the urban scale as a site for theological translation and thickening, and view it as the core scale for addressing global issues of social justice

(because of the continuing urbanisation of the world) (Davey, 2001). Understanding urban scale moral geographies of social justice and the city, then, is central to understanding moral geographical processes and tensions at other scales also. Similarly, utopian and dystopian urban moral imaginaries form a key feature of contemporary theologians' readings of the city, and a key part of any future multi-scalar utopian politics of social justice (Harvey, 2000).

In Chapter 5, then, I will focus in particular on the urban as a scale for the discursive and the imaginary, as much as a scale for moral politics. Bearing in mind a multi-scalar framework throughout, however, I am well aware in this thesis, that individual scales cannot be privileged or separated from other scales, or reified in any particular manner. Rather, in spite of the obvious significance of the urban for this thesis, I see different scales as overlapping, bleeding into one another, and blending seamlessly in different ways at different times. This dynamic conception of scale fits neatly with a dynamic conception of moral geographical processes and tensions and demonstrates again the partiality and contingency of the accounts I give in this thesis.

#### **4C2.1.3 Interviews as representations**

All of the data produced in the urban chapter comes from 42 in-depth interviews with Glasgow clergy and church leaders (those in managerial/project direction capacities) undertaken between November 2000 and April 2001 (see Appendix 4.2). These interviews lasted on average 1-1.5 hours, were recorded on audio cassette, and were transcribed afterwards.

An interview-based method of gathering data is the singlemost popular qualitative approach in the present 'interview society' in which we live (Silverman, 1998; Hoggart *et al*, 2002). The major advantages of an interview is that it allows the opportunity for a 'close encounter' between

researcher and participant (Hoggart *et al*, 2002: 205), which allows opinions, relationships, ideas and values to be tested and understood. Interviews can bring a richness and depth of understanding that is not possible in attitudinal surveying or questionnaire exercises, and provide a useful balance in temporal terms between a 'quick fire' questionnaire, and a lengthy ethnography. An interviewing method is a textual strategy of constructing representations of reality through the medium of interactive discourse. As Holstein and Gubrium (1997: 114) suggest, interviewing is a constitutive, active process, where interviews act as 'sites of, and occasion(s) for, producing knowledge'. In this sense, data is not so much gathered, as *produced*, and through notions of intersubjectivity (Ley and Mountz, 2001), both interviewer and interviewee are seen as active subjects who *create* knowledge, rather than simply 'collect' it from a hidden, internal repository.

I have adopted an interview-based approach for data production at the urban scale because it allowed a range of individuals to be met in a relatively short time scale, without the need for deep immersion in sub-urban scalar contexts, and yet with the opportunity for gaining greater power of insight than through (e.g.) a postal questionnaire approach. As the questions that this thesis asks are far more to do with values, beliefs, ethics and opinions, than simple descriptions of activities and behaviours, interviewing is the most appropriate method for teasing out such information. It allows a reasonably wide range of viewpoints from different denominations and theologies to be tested, without requiring the commitment that (e.g.) participant observation would entail.

In-depth interviews have always been criticised by quantitative researchers on grounds of their ability to be shaped greatly by researcher bias in both question formulation, and in the nature of conversation. This is seen as making them too subjective and open to contamination. Likewise, depending upon sample size, the reliability and validity of the accounts produced cannot be guaranteed as representative of wider group opinions, and the reporting back of findings (i.e.

quotations) is always a selective process, influenced by the researcher. Following on from these long-standing critiques, qualitative researchers (e.g. Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Silverman, 1998) have also critiqued interview approaches for showing a lack of 'rigour' and 'quality' in making the research process transparent to the reader. Issues such as power relations between the researcher and the researched, positionality, notions of insider and outsider 'bias', and reflexivity have all combined to create a 'crisis of representation' (Rose, 1997; Ley and Mountz, 2001; S. Smith, 2001). This crisis constitutes extreme researcher 'anxiety, that "we" should be speaking for "them", and that "they" should represent "themselves" ' (S. Smith, *ibid.* 30), and presents the danger of sliding into a 'narcissism where nothing can be said without a string of provisos, qualifications, and auto critique' (*ibid.* 16).

In response to this crisis, researchers such as Rose (1997), Ley and Mountz (2001), and Mohammad (2002) have become far more pragmatic about the continuing need to acknowledge the limitations of one's positionality, of the situated nature of all knowledge production, of the partiality of interview accounts, and the limited claims to knowledge which can be made from such accounts; whilst at the same time recognising that this should not prevent conclusions being made, as all human knowledge claims are ultimately partial. Hence it is a feature of human relationships that opinions given and points made will always be highly subjective, power-laden, 'biased', and 'interpretive' rather than 'fact', but this does not mean that such accounts are of no value or interest to others. As such, being as transparent as possible about one's position, and recognising the limitations of that, is crucial, but it need not be to a point that prevents representations of others being made, or attempts to return to some notion of objective neutrality. This is the approach that I have adopted in all of my research. I have attempted to be as transparent as possible with all interview respondents and people that I have worked with, about my positionality as a Christian researcher, my background, my opinions, and why I am

conducting this thesis. Below, I defend this in terms of the practicalities of my data production and analysis strategy.

#### **4C2.1.4 Learning urban theologies**

As a final theoretical premise, it is important to note that as part of my wider situating of my research, I attended two taught classes at the International Christian College in Glasgow from October 1999 to June 2000 looking at *The Church in the City*, and *Urban Theology and Social Concern*. Attending these classes enabled me, as a social scientist, to undertake some basic theological learning, where I was taught in a theological environment by trained academic theologians. The *Church in the City* class looked at the Christian engagement with poverty in the city from a historical and sociological perspective, looking at the institutional strategies of social justice. The *Urban Theology and Social Concern* class was far more concerned with the abstract, ethical sources of theologies of the city, and with the academic processes of 'reading' and 'imagining' the city, and 'doing' theologies, than with the more statistical and pragmatic teaching of the first class.

By attending these classes I feel that I am now better qualified to discuss urban theological issues, and that as a result I also have a good grasp of theological concepts and literatures. To add to my knowledge of urban theology, I also attended a week long residential conference called *Jesus in the City* during September 2001, which enabled me to refresh and update my theological understandings at a particularly useful time when beginning my thesis write-up. This conference was attended by both academic theologians and practising clergy and church leaders from urban areas. Speaking to fellow delegates allowed me to triangulate some of my empirical findings and check that my conclusions were reasonable.



Further to these classes and conferences, I was also asked by an ecumenical grouping of Scotland's denominations to participate in discussions looking at the future of the Church's work in deprived urban communities from 2000 to 2001. This allowed me again to test some of my theories out against people who were actively theorising the nature of Christian urban theologies and praxes. Similarly, by joining an academic advisory group for the Evangelical Alliance in London in May 2001, helping them to undertake a piece of social research investigating Christian social action throughout the UK, I have gained further insight into the processes and tensions surrounding theologies of social justice. I feel that all of these various 'extra-curricular' activities have given me a broader understanding of moral geographical processes and tensions, and allowed me to triangulate the results from my empirical research in a number of different contexts.

## **4C2.2 Data production methods**

### **4C2.2.1 Interview-based approach: participants, locations, structure**

As noted above, in total, I interviewed 42 clergy and church leaders from Glasgow across a six month period between 2000 and 2001. A key question to answer is 'why only speak to clergy/leaders?' In choosing clergy at this urban scale, I recognise their key role as the active translators and negotiators of abstract theologies into the context of the city of Glasgow. In this sense, clergy and leaders represent a cadre of 'urban imaginers' who actively produce moral geographies of the city at the interface between their abstract theological ethics and situated readings of Glasgow (see section on processes and tensions, Chapter 3). My strategy is therefore not to deliberately exclude other voices thickening moral geographies at this scale, but rather to

recognise the crucially important leadership role of clergy in doing this first and foremost. As part of my broader scalar approach, the voices of Church workers, volunteers and local residents will come more greatly to the fore at the community and body scales (Chapters 6 and 7).

In selecting 42 clergy/leaders, I have tried to ensure a big enough sample to be representative of the different denominations and theologies present in urban Scotland. Whilst my 'weighting' is not absolutely accurate (again owing to problems of Church statistics being incomplete), broadly speaking I have interviewed more Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland leaders than for smaller denominations such as Brethren or Pentecostals. The lack of definite representative weighting is not a problem in theoretical terms, as I am working with the assumption that my knowledge accounts will always be partial, and therefore it is not proportionate *numbers* of interviewees that is most crucial – it is the *quality* of what they say. However, I have attempted to give proportional weighting, and Table 4.4 provides a breakdown of interviewees by denomination and location. Interviewees were selected from a range of locations across the city of Glasgow (see Figure 4.4), some from deprived areas and some from affluent. Likewise, I contacted a number of the prominent non-denominational organisations from Appendix 4. I do so as to ensure that their views were also heard. The resultant mix I believe to be reflective of the different theologies, areas, denominations, organisations and individuals that make up the cadre of urban imaginers in the city of Glasgow.

| <b>Denomination</b>                                   | <b>Location</b>              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <i>Church of Scotland</i>                             | Calton                       |
|   | Cardonald                    |
|   | Carmyle                      |
|   | Castlemilk                   |
|   | City Centre                  |
|   | Drumchapel                   |
|   | Easterhouse                  |
|   | Langside                     |
|   | Mount Florida                |
|   | Pollok                       |
|   | Possil                       |
|   | Urban Priority Areas Worker  |
|   | <i>Roman Catholic Church</i> |
| Cambuslang  |                              |
| Crosshill   |                              |
| Dalmarnock  |                              |
| Drumchapel  |                              |
| Nitshill  |                              |
| Pollok  |                              |
| Justice and Peace Commission Worker                   |                              |
| Social Care Commission Worker                         |                              |
| <i>Scottish Episcopal Church</i>                      | Hillhead                     |
|   | Newlands                     |
|   | Woodlands                    |
|   | Social Responsibility Worker |
| <i>Baptist Union of Scotland</i>                      | Castlemilk                   |
|   | Easterhouse                  |
|   | Queens Park / Crosshill      |
| <i>Salvation Army</i>                                 | Easterhouse                  |
|   | Gorbals                      |
|   | Social Services Worker       |
| <i>Methodist Church in Scotland</i>                   | Shettleston                  |
| <i>Free Church of Scotland</i>                        | City Centre                  |
| <i>Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland</i>           | Woodlands                    |
| <i>Brethren</i>                                       | Bothwell                     |
| <i>Pentecostal</i>                                    | Govanhill                    |
| <b>Non-denominational organisation</b>                | <b>Location</b>              |
| <i>Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)</i> | Dunblane                     |
| <i>Evangelical Alliance (Scotland)</i>                | City Centre                  |
| <i>Glasgow City Mission</i>                           | Bellahouston                 |
| <i>Glasgow City Prayer Canopy</i>                     | Bellahouston                 |
| <i>Iona Community</i>                                 | Govan                        |
| <i>Scripture Union Scotland</i>                       | City Centre                  |

**Table 4.4 – Clergy and Church leaders interviewed, and their locations, by denomination, and non-denominational organisation.**

I recruited clergy/leaders via a combination of existing knowledge from previous research (Loveridge, 1999), snowballing, and random sampling of denominations that I had not previously dealt with. This makes for a messy selection strategy, which is open to problems of bias in terms of personal knowledge, and also respondents suggesting colleagues who may share similar views. However, I pursued a deliberate strategy when snowballing of asking respondents to suggest others with very different views to theirs' who I could interview. This has resulted in a sufficiently wide range of views across the interviews.

Without exception, I conducted interviews in the location where clergy/leaders worked, this often being a church office, or attached manse/chapel house. By interviewing in a familiar location that clergy would associate with 'thinking theologically', I hoped that this would make for a more honest discussion about theological concepts. I conducted some interviews during the working day, some at evenings, and some at weekends, trying at all times to make the interview at an opportunity that best suited the interviewee. Again, this was to try and allow a more fruitful discussion by having conducive times. On average, interviews were 1 to 1.5 hours long, usually coming to a natural conclusion, and only on one or two occasions being cut short early. By allowing interviews to flow as naturally as possible, I believe discussion was less controlled, and therefore more able to focus on concepts of meaning to respondents.

All interviewees were happy to be taped on audiocassette, and none expressed a feeling of being threatened by the presence of the recorder. In common with critiques of structured interviews for imposing a rigid logic on respondents (Burgess, 1984), and of unstructured interviews for becoming too contextualised to prevent comparison with others, I adopted a semi-structured approach that had 4 or 5 key themes / areas for examination (see Appendix 4.2), with rough

sketches of issues as an *aide mémoire* (*ibid*) for questioning. Hoggart *et al* (2002: 236), refer to this as the 'planning a holiday' approach, where you 'know where you want to go, but you are not locked into a fixed itinerary. You are happy to explore what you come across along the way'. This meant that I did not have so many categories that it would prevent interviewees raising their own meanings of importance, but that there was sufficient 'common ground' to allow for later inter-interview comparison.

In common with Baker (1997), I recognise that my questions are not neutral, but that they actively shape the data produced in the interview. As such, I did not circulate interview themes beforehand, preferring rather to let the conversation 'flow', and to allow for more spontaneous, unprepared responses. In some instances, my questions were deliberately provocative, at other times I would present an alternative point of view in order to probe further justification for a respondent's view. Again, recognising that neutrality is impossible, and indeed undesirable, and that I come to the interview situation with my preconceived theoretical ideas, I view the interviews as much as an active discussion where opinions are modified and changed, as a rigid giving and extraction of information. Throughout the interviews I posed a variety of additional questions to clarify meanings, steer the conversation, and encourage elaboration of viewpoints. Hence, not all responses are taken at face value, and a greater degree of nuance and subtlety of viewpoint is therefore present in accounts.

#### **4C2.2.2 Power relations: politics, positionality, reflexivity**

In carrying out these interviews, I concur with Hoggart *et al* (*ibid*), that the research process is inherently political, and suffused with power relations. I come to the research process with my own political agenda of social justice, with my own ethics as a Christian, with my own moral

geographies of Glasgow, and with the power to control questioning and shape data interpretation. As noted above, I have attempted to be transparent throughout the interview process about my positionality. I actively advertised my Christian background, and actively criticised the Church when I saw fit, and deliberately made clear my own views on ethics such as social justice. Yet, as Hoggart *et al* note (p.226), strong reflexive awareness of my positionality, both by myself, and presented to the researched, does not dissolve problems of power relations. Ultimately, I have the power to shape the representations produced in interviews.

As a student researcher, I was generally received warmly (and sometimes enthusiastically) by interviewees. I encountered little suspicion, and did not feel that I was rendered powerless by a theological elite. This may have as much to do with my questioning of individuals being focused on the urban scale, who do not represent the elites of the theological world, who tend to be located in the academy or in national scale Church positions of power. Nevertheless, in spite of this respect, and lack of discrimination, and the commonality of Christian background between myself and interviewees, the contested and divisive nature of the Church, a principal area of my analysis, was itself my greatest problem in terms of power relations. Clergy were frequently keen to know if I was Protestant or Catholic, if I was ecumenical or not, what denomination I belonged to, and if I shared their liberal or conservative beliefs. Whilst I was more than willing to disclose these, at times I felt I had to hold back my liberality particularly to allow conservatives to put their views across without the interview turning into a sermon on the sins of theological liberalism. In this sense some interviewees did have power over my ability to be transparent, but in general terms, I think there was a reasonable equality.

### 4C2.2.3 Research ethics

In terms of the ethics of data production, I have made confidentiality and anonymity a key part of my research at the urban scale. Any discussion of interviewees' opinions and responses and work practices is kept strictly anonymous in this analysis. This was not at the request of all interviewees, some of whom were only too happy to go on record with their views. Anonymity in the urban chapter contrasts with transparency in the community scale chapter, where case study pastiches are so detailed that it is impossible to protect individual identities, and in this case, respondents have given consent for anonymity to be waived. By protecting confidentiality in this chapter, I remove the opportunity to give a full biographical account of the individuals interviewed. However, given the brief nature of an interview, a full biography would not be possible even if individuals were fully 'on the record', and hence I have rejected a biographical approach on these grounds also, preferring to look more at the differences and contestations between viewpoints, rather than between the people who hold them.

In terms of the dissemination of research findings such as transcripts and results, I have returned transcripts of dialogue to those individuals who so requested, whilst others have declined the offer. It is my intention to provide a summary account of the key interview findings to all interviewees when the thesis is published.

Finally, I recognise that at times in these interviews, I have been in a situation where an interviewee has made a sectarian, sexist, homophobic, class or racist remark on an assumed consensual basis of shared political beliefs (Hoggart *et al*, 2002: 248). In these circumstances, I may not have spoken up, or made clear that I disagreed with the remark, and accept that in these cases my own personal ethics are compromised. In doing so, I have pragmatically accepted that

sometimes in order to elicit a full response, one has to appear compliant with a particular viewpoint, and recognise the unethical nature of such a stance.

## **4C2.3 Data analysis methods**

### **4C2.3.1 Transcription and theoretical development**

Hoggart *et al* (*ibid.* 238) point to the traditional analytic process being broken down into two stages – mechanical and interpretive. In common with their dislike of this rigidity, and recognition of the fluidity and complexity of the research process, I would concur that 'theoretical vision develops' as the research process unfolds. It is the iterative, grounded process of moving backwards and forwards between theory and empirical data, modifying theoretical presuppositions and questioning techniques whilst going along. Hence, in undertaking these interviews, initial conceptions that I had of urban imaginaries and ethics of social justice, drawn from literature and the national scale profile material, were modified to incorporate a series of tensions and contestations. With further interviewing and transcription, these moral geographical tensions, common to the processes referred to within interview accounts, became the fundamental organising principle of my data. As this was the case, in later transcriptions, I did not transcribe the conversations fully, as I had done in earlier examples when I was still developing theoretical concepts. Strauss and Corbin (1999) and Hoggart *et al* (*ibid.* 240) note that this is normal research practice when pursuing an iterative analysis where, 'as time progresses, improved understanding of theory-data links should reduce the need to transcribe all'.



#### 4C2.3.2 Coding and theoretical development

One of the key features of critiques of the lack of 'rigour' in qualitative analysis (Baxter and Eyles, 1997), is that the process by which data makes its way into the analytical narrative is not made clear, with quotes seemingly 'emerging' (Jackson, 2001) in an opaque manner. In this research, I do *not* go as far as some have, in moving into the subtleties and nuances of language, intonation, pausing, silences, sentence structure or flow of conversation. My concern is not with the structure of conversation and language, but rather with the meanings, values, beliefs expressed through that language. How far it is possible to separate the two is difficult, but an over-emphasis on language structure, in my opinion, obscures the more theoretical issues of morality, ethics, and theology that I am trying to explore. I am more interested in *what* is said, and *why*, than *how* it is structured.

In terms of coding, then, I have not coded data according to the style of conversation, or the subtleties of language structure. As such, I have not used discourse analysis, or content analysis, or any computer application to assist in interpreting the data. Rather, my coding has continued the initial iterative process of theoretical-empirical negotiation. Hence, after developing my initial theories of tensions from transcription, I was then able to code the material with these meta-level tensions, followed by a second-level coding that was able to pick out sub-tensions within each, and from which I was then able to group material into four key discursive repertoires (c.f. Jackson, 2001). Therefore, whilst material quoted in Chapter 5 may appear to have 'come from nowhere', it has in fact been situated in an analytical framework that has evolved in a rigorous manner through constant interplay between theory and empirical data.

### 4C2.3.3 Writing representations

In line with the above points about my attitude towards language structure, the writing strategy that I adopt in this chapter may easily stand accused of returning to supposed academic distance and objectivity, as a detached 'view from nowhere' (Rose, 1997). Rose would advocate a writing style where every comment was contextualised with notes on emotions, tone, expressions, and biographical details of the individuals concerned (Butler, 2001). Whilst I accept such criticism, it is clear from the above that I have tried to be as honest as possible in disclosing my own positionality in relation to the researched. Therefore, comments that I make, and text that I select for inclusion in the discussion, come with full cognisance of the situation in which they took place, and the power relations that were present. With issues of anonymity at stake, such detailed situational and biographical cues are not possible.

Again, my writing style is concerned more with exposing tensions which exist in moral geographies and in theoretical constructs, than it is with the manner in which comments on these issues are made. I am more interested in what is delivered, than in how it is delivered. I recognise that all of the accounts written in this chapter are partial and situated, and that they are merely representations of meaning and reality – interpretations of interpretations – but this is in line with my desire to *illuminate* moral geographies, rather than fully comprehend them (if that were possible).

## 4C3 COMMUNITY SCALE METHODOLOGY

### 4C3.1 Theoretical premises

The points noted in my urban scale methodological outline relating to grounding theory and interviews as representations apply fully to this scale also, and underlie this methodological discussion.

#### 4C3.1.1 Scaling the community

The term 'community' is perhaps the most oft-quoted and yet simultaneously misunderstood term in the social science literature. Drawing from the original Latin word, *communitas*, which means 'fellowship', community has been used to describe all manner of social (and spatial) relationships. As a term, it has been used by urban ecologists such as the Chicago School of Urban Sociology to imply a 'natural' element to the organisation of urban society; for communitarians it has been seen as a utopian ideal that offers the cure to the problems of contemporary urbanism; and for others it symbolises all that is narrow-minded, oppressive and 'bad' about present-day living (Valentine, 2001). It has been defined in so many different manners, by so many different groups, that for some it has become a 'meaningless concept' (*ibid.* 117) or romantic notion of a by-gone era. Its use by geographers has presented particular problems.

For Johnston (2000b:101), in *The Dictionary of Human Geography (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)*, 'community' is 'a social network of interacting individuals, usually concentrated into a defined territory'. It is this latter emphasis on territory which gives the geographical slant to community, and at the same

time creates difficulties. In traditional geographical thinking, this association of community with territory has led to the correlation of 'community' with the geographical concept of 'neighbourhood'. Hence, for many geographers, until the 1980s, 'neighbourhood' and 'community' were taken to be synonymous. However, studies during the 1960s and 1970s pointed to the fact that it was very possible to have a 'community' without being part of a neighbourhood (e.g. communities of interest and association), and it was equally possible to have a neighbourhood without 'community' (Valentine, 2001; Johnston, 2000b: 102; see also Kearns & Parkinson's [2001] excellent collection in *Urban Studies* on issues of neighbourhood) (e.g. commuter-belt areas where people are largely in their houses for dormitory purposes).

From these studies it became clear that 'community may have had different meanings for different members, and the extent to which the meaning of community may have been contested, negotiated and reworked by particular groups in different times or places' (Valentine, 2001: 123). This recognition that community is a fluid, dynamic and contested concept then links with Anderson's (1983) notion of 'imagined communities', where 'communities are imagined because members carry an image of communion, even though they will never know all their fellow members and because they have a sense of comradeship despite unequal and exploitative relations between them' (Valentine, 2001: 127).

It is this notion of communities being imagined that I want to pursue in Chapter 6. Firstly, from the urban scale interview accounts, it became clear that certain communities are imagined as being poor or dystopian, within Glasgow (see Chapter 5). Hence theological imaginations actively produce notions of 'community' that are attached to particular places. Secondly, urban theologies discussed in the literature have a particular attachment to 'the community' as a scale or place for 'doing theology' (see Davey, 2001; Northcott, 1998), and hence it is in line with these

imaginaries that a community analysis is appropriate. Thirdly, many Church structures conceptualise 'communities' as geographical territories or parts of cities, as this is how they organise their parish structures. Hence parishes are equated with defined spatial areas, again suggesting a theological spatial imaginary of community<sup>1</sup>. Fourthly, the government's approach to addressing social exclusion through Social Inclusion Partnerships is to continue to focus on neighbourhood communities as the scale for addressing regeneration activities (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001), and hence there is a secular scaling of poverty to the neighbourhood community scale.

With the emphasis in urban scale interview material on incarnational theologies, and their desire to be present to a *place*, as well as to a *community*, in the community chapter I will pursue an unashamedly traditional 'neighbourhood community' approach to defining my communities of study. In doing so, I accept the criticisms that neighbourhoods such as Easterhouse or Castlemilk may not necessarily be 'communities' in a cohesive, homogenous sense, and that many of their residents may prefer to identify with other 'communities' as their primary associations. However, accepting Valentine's point that community has different meaning to different members, and that it is a negotiated and contested concept, I work on the notion that the neighbourhood

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<sup>1</sup> That said, I do not equate the community scale directly with the parish in this thesis. The parish would seem to be an obvious scale for analysis, given its historical significance within Church structures. However, with the rapid decline of established churches such as the Church of Scotland and Scottish Episcopal Church, the parish has become an increasingly irrelevant concept. Parishes have been forced to close, merge, or extend their geographical area significantly. Parishes in different denominations such as the Roman Catholic Church and Church of Scotland do not have matching boundaries, which makes comparison difficult. The parish problematic is compounded by the fact that many other denominations do not adopt a parish system at all (e.g. the Baptist Church). Finally, the geographical parish is declining in significance as people 'commute' across urban areas from their place of residence, to the parish where they feel 'at home'. This is particularly significant in evangelical and charismatic churches where the existence of a particular preacher or theological position can often lead to the creation of new communities of interest.

None of this is to say that the association between community and neighbourhood has been superseded. Indeed within geographically-poor communities such as Glasgow's peripheral housing schemes, 'community' is not only strong, but a guiding concept that has replaced 'the parish' with a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between Church and place at the community scale.

churches/parishes I am studying themselves work around notions of neighbourhood communities, and hence I am exploring a conception of community that they themselves 'imagine'.

With these caveats in mind, I see the community scale as fluid, pliable, linked to other scales, and not fixed or 'given'. Therefore, the contemporary urban theological scaling of neighbourhood communities is a particular spatio-temporal interpretation of community that exists for different reasons to the more historical notions of neighbourhood community contained within territorial parish structures. Likewise, my understanding of the scaling of community is not just simply to view it in spatial terms (although I *am* concerned with spatial *practises* in this chapter), but to see the community scale as Valentine does as 'a structure of meaning which provides a useful way of thinking of social relations at a national or even a global scale' (*ibid.* 10). It is this *combination* of the imagined and the spatial which generates my own notion of 'neighbourhood community' and its status as a scale that is simultaneously spatial and imagined.

#### **4C3.1.2 Painting community vignettes**

Chapter 6 is largely structured around a series of six different vignettes or pastiches, which aim to paint a number of diverse pictures of community scale moral geographies (in Easterhouse, Possil, Drumchapel, East End, Pollok and Castlemilk). In this sense, these vignettes are classic examples of 'case studies', but unlike in that they do not conform to some of the comprehensiveness often found in *in-depth* case studies. I see the vignettes as being vivid, informed, rich, thick descriptions that cut into a particular scale of social relations in Glasgow, and provide a partial snapshot of moral geographical processes and tensions. My accounts are deliberately not comprehensive. In keeping with the spirit of this thesis, which is to provide an illuminatory account, they attempt to

give a glimpse of the richness and dynamism of community scale moral geographies. This approach to 'picture painting' is common in contemporary geographical research (S. Smith, 1993 being an excellent example), and indeed a 'case study' method forms the basis for Smith's (2000c) approach, so I am following his moral geographical precedent also.

I accept fully that these accounts are limited, that I have not taken into account many of the deeper issues at stake, and that the fleeting nature of my encounter with each community (apart from Pollok, see below) can be critiqued as failing to allow a full understanding of community relations. In response to these criticisms, however, I would like to argue that *any* account that I form is likely to be partial, no matter how long I spend in contact with a research context. Likewise, my intention is deliberately to paint snapshot pictures. I do not want a comprehensive account, but rather to paint a *number* of pictures, which would simply not have been possible with deep ethnographic research over a long period. Having a variety of partial pictures to compare and contrast is to me more satisfactory than one picture that is far more complete.

Of course, a fully-fledged case study of one community such as Pollok could potentially yield a different set of conclusions and theorisations, fleshing out the vignettes in more detail. In practical terms, this would not have been problematic, given my sustained in-depth involvement in Pollok over a period of two years. It may have been possible to paint a far richer picture, of a more ethnographic and critical nature, digging more deeply into the processes and tensions present. Yet I have rejected such an in-depth approach on three key grounds:

Firstly, the very fact that I *did* have such a sustained engagement in Pollok gave me a confidence that the framework of processes and tensions that I have proposed *is* relevant at the community scale. With this observation clarified, I felt it would be inappropriate simply to rely upon my own

very personal involvement in Pollok as a basis for assessing community scale processes and tensions *across the city*. Further observation, using the vignette approach, was necessary to ensure triangulation and comparison across Glasgow, to satisfy me that the framework was truly robust.

Secondly, my remit in this thesis is to explore moral geographical processes and tensions. The full range of processes and tensions that I wanted to explore were not sufficiently manifest in one place. That is not to say that they do not exist *at all*, but rather that in certain communities, certain processes and tensions assume a particular salience at a particular time. To capture this richness, and to illuminate the diversity fully, a vignette approach was most appropriate – I simply did not have the time or resources to undertake full case studies in all six communities in order to retain the comparative approach.

Finally, in essence, my rejection of an in-depth case study at the community scale is an epistemological decision. The whole nature of my approach to moral geographies is to *illuminate* processes and tensions. A vignette method is entirely in keeping with this spirit of seeking to illuminate and paint vivid pictures, rather than undertaking a detailed critical analysis. Such an in-depth approach to moral geographies is laudable, but outwith the remit I have set myself in the rationale for this thesis.



## **4C3.2 Data production methods**

### **4C3.2.1 Vignette locations and groups studied**

As already noted above, I base my selection of the six communities studied in the community chapter upon the dystopian spatial imaginaries of Glasgow's clergy, where communities such as Castlemilk and Possil acted as recurring spatial motifs synonymous with poverty and social exclusion. My choice of the actual six locations (Easterhouse; Possil/Ruchill; Drumchapel; Dalmarnock/Calton; Castlemilk and Pollok) was based on the desire to analyse first and foremost Glasgow's four peripheral housing schemes (Easterhouse, Pollok, Drumchapel, Castlemilk), as these are the areas where concentrations of poverty have been greatest in recent years (see above), but also to look at some 'inner city' areas often mentioned such as the East End (Dalmarnock/Calton), and North Glasgow (Possil, Ruchill) (see Figure 4.5).

Deciding the topics and groups/churches to study within each of these communities was again drawn from my urban scale interview material and existing knowledge. All of the contexts studied were areas where I had interviewed clergy during my urban scale research, and where I had asked if it might be possible to do some more in-depth analysis of certain issues relating to their parish work, or projects that they were organising. Hence recruitment for these vignettes took place during my urban research. I deliberately targeted communities where I established a good rapport with clergy in my first round of interviewing, where people were interested in assisting me further, and where I was interested in particular aspects of their church's work or life in their neighbourhood communities. I was fortunate that in these communities, there were a range of different issues that were important for analysis, and that I was able to use these to explore diverse moral geographical tensions. Hence the topics that I study (such as

ecumenism/sectarianism) derive from the urban interview analyses, and the fact that in certain communities, these are important issues.

In terms of denominational biases, in all contexts I interviewed a Church of Scotland minister as part of the research. In three contexts I interviewed Roman Catholic priests; in one a United Reformed minister, in two I interviewed project workers, and in two I had focus groups with local residents. Again, my concern was not to have representative samples from different denominations, but to try and have a spread of different Church groups. I accept that the Church of Scotland figure is high, but this reflects the willingness of six ministers to participate in further research, whereas not so many Roman Catholics in the same contexts were willing. Bearing in mind that my concern is to analyse general moral geographical tensions that are applicable to all denominations, this over-rides concerns about denominational bias. Lastly, the individuals that I interviewed represent a range of different statuses in the Church, whether clergy or project leaders, or project workers, or ordinary church members. In interviewing/talking to these individuals, I have attempted to capture something of the richness of Church life in communities, but recognising again my focus in speaking to the cadre of community executioners (see Chapter 3) as those individuals/groups engaged in processes of living and practising theologies of social justice.

#### **4C3.2.2 Methods employed**

The community chapter employs the greatest variety of different research methodologies of the thesis. My primary method remains interviewing, with all its noted difficulties (see above). My interviews for this chapter did not follow a standard thematic plan as in the urban interviews, but

rather were tailored specifically to the issues that were relevant in each community, and 'snowballed' to investigate topics of interest to interviewees. In this sense, they pursued a highly open-ended format. All of the associated criticisms of my urban interviews are equally applicable to this setting, with the added issue of my familiarity with interviewees I had already met, and therefore our preconceptions of one another.

I also used focus groups in two communities (Drumchapel and Dalmarnock). These focus groups were basically used for strategic reasons, whereby it simply wasn't possible to interview the range and numbers of people on a one-to-one basis, given time constraints. My Drumchapel focus group included two clergy (Church of Scotland and United Reformed), and two church community project workers. My Dalmarnock focus group was constituted by the local Roman Catholic priest and 10 local church members. In each of these focus groups, my aim was to look for common concerns in issues of sectarianism/ecumenism, and divergences in opinions. My focus group approach was not a rigorous one, then, which was highly pre-planned, but rather a more ad-hoc logistical arrangement in conjunction with the local clergy, to allow me to speak to a wide range of individuals at the same time. That said, I worked with rules for managing focus group discussion, for focusing on individual topics, and being provocative/interventionist in the debates.

The primary advantage of the focus group method was in its allowing me to explore tensions between individuals in their views and opinions (Kitzinger, 1999), and to analyse intra-group differences. The two groups were as 'natural' as possible, being composed of individuals who 'chose' to be there (after being asked by their priest/minister), and hence this seemed to dispense with any inhibitions in airing opinions. I would like to have been able to use focus groups in the Easterhouse and Possil settings as well, but this was not possible after enquiry with the

leaders/clergy that I interviewed, who were concerned about me taking up too much of their time, and so I had to settle for interviews.

In the Castlemilk and Pollok vignettes, I use two further research methods. In Castlemilk, my analysis is a textual analysis looking at media representations of Castlemilk and poverty when a local minister was appointed as the Moderator of the Church of Scotland during May 2001. In the spirit of a pastiche, I do not use a rigorous discourse analysis or content analysis, but rather work on comparing the signs, symbols and imagery of the accounts, and the moral geographies that they contain. This approach is sufficient for painting a sketch.

In Pollok, my approach has been one of observant participation. In spite of my desire for a variety of sketches *across* Glasgow, I considered it best that I became a full participant in a Church-based community project in a deprived community, in order to try to understand better moral geographical tensions at the community scale. Also, this comes from a personal motivation towards an 'action research' (Hoggart *et al*, 2002: 288), to working as part of community organisations in their political struggles for social justice. In autumn 2000, I contacted the minister of St. James' Pollok Church of Scotland, whom I had already interviewed, and asked if there was any way I could help in the church's community project called *The Village*, as it was near to where I lived, and would help me with my research. In December 2000 I was interviewed and asked to become a volunteer working in the project two mornings/afternoons per week, working with children and older people.

From the start I was up-front with project staff and other volunteers that this work was part of my research interest, but also that it came from a personal motivation to work in a deprived community. In this overt strategy, I encountered little suspicion or opposition, and even gained

an amount of interest in my thesis from some church members. As part of this overt strategy, the project became very interested in my skills and expertise, and in September 2001 asked me to join the project's management committee, to help with making funding applications and development planning. This took place after I conducted my interviews for the vignette, in May 2001, and hence did not influence that research. I am now in the privileged position of being a decision-making member of this project, but this has given me unique insights into the nature of more general community scale moral geographical tensions, and has helped greatly in my grounding theory development for writing Chapter 6.

#### **4C3.2.3 Reflexivity, positionality, and representations**

The latter point about my position as a covert observant participator in a community where I now hold a position of power, illustrates again the importance of disclosing my positionality. As with my urban scale interviews, I made clear to all interviewees that I myself am a Christian, and that I was undertaking a research project looking at social justice in Glasgow's deprived communities. Mirroring the urban interviews, I encountered no opposition and little suspicion from interviewees. Perhaps this was people 'being nice', or that they felt less threatened in discussing faith issues because I myself have a Christian faith. Nevertheless, in spite of these 'successes', I am still in a position of power when it comes to writing the vignettes, in terms of what is incorporated, what is not, and they very much represent my impressions, and my representations of the moral geographies of these six communities.

Whilst checking interview transcripts with respondents, I have not returned my analysis in the vignettes and concluding discussion of this chapter to the participants as I wanted to be able to make critical remarks without threats of censorship. In this sense, the accounts are *very much* my

own impression, and may be disputed and contested by those with whom I have worked. As with the urban chapter however, it is important to continue to recognise that all my knowledge claims are partial, they are interpretations, and are suffused with my own particular biases and opinions. Just as the moral geographies which I aim to illustrate are contested, so all knowledges are contested products, replete with tensions, contradictions and subjectivity. Recognition of this fact cannot change it, but can serve to make it more obvious and transparent.

## 4C4 BODY SCALE METHODOLOGY

### 4C4.1 Theoretical Premises

#### 4C4.1.1 Introducing the Body

During the 1990s and 2000s, the body has become an 'object of fascination' (Pratt, 2000: 48) to social scientists in general, and geographers more specifically. As a site for analysing various issues such as identity, gender, sexuality, power, ethnicity, disability and exclusion (Pratt, 2000: 49), geographies of the body attempt to move beyond abstract, rational notions of socio-spatial relations, and focus more on the intimate, experienced, physical, felt, emotional and mental as more meaningful referents for the individual's encounter with space. Likewise, studies of 'religious bodies' by theologians (in conjunction with sociologists), have pointed to the historically important place of dominant religious discourses in framing moral codes, behaviours, emotions and feelings which are internalised within individual bodies (Mellor and Shilling, 1997). It is this element of the *consumption* of abstract theologies and moral codes by individual, non-theologically-trained bodies, which I wish to explore in the body chapter. Mellor and Shilling (1997: 190), when referring to the historical grip of Protestantism as a dominant (religious) culture in Anglo-Saxon Europe and North America, and its concomitant decline, point to the manner in which moralities are embodied in moral geographies of the body:

'Debates about whether we are living in a modern or postmodern society are giving way to more serious questions about the very possibility of a rational social order. The Protestant modern form of embodiment made such a social order imaginable. It did this by encouraging a highly cognitive and rationalist account of what it means to be a human being, and by seeking to replace the corporeal bonds of medieval Catholicism (volatile and violent though they sometimes were), with an idealised conception of human beings bound

together by shared cognitive commitments. This form of embodiment, which 'sublimated' the effervescent character of sociality just as it sought to subjugate the dangerous potentialities of flesh, provided a moral basis for modernity which is steadily ebbing away across important tracts of social space. Based on an inherently fragile attempt to deny positive value to the desires, passions and sensations which are an inevitable part of embodied humanity, and an idealistic misconception about the nature of human sociality, this form has become progressively more unsustainable as its sacred referent has disappeared. Without it, contracts may have become increasingly important for many people, but they are also increasingly meaningless: contracts are no longer merely profane, which implies a relationship with the sacred, but are thoroughly banal, indicating their myopic self-referentiality' (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 190).

This quotation raises the obvious issues of a historically different Protestantism that saw the body and the flesh as evil, sinful and corrupt, and a Catholicism far more willing to touch the sensuous and the corporeal in its worship and theology. The extent to which each holds true now is questionable, but points to basic varieties in embodied religious experience. What the quote also illustrates, though, is the manner in which even in spite of secularisation, the religious mindset (of Protestantism) can still be implicated in much of the contemporary crisis of meaning created by contemporary pluralism and capitalist consumerism. This chimes interestingly with my previous discussions of residualised religious identity, and its associated sectarianism.



#### **4C4.1.2 – Problematizing the body**

Given the quite simply vast literature on the body, it is essential to problematise 'the body' and clarify the manner in which I approach it. In coming to an understanding of this highly contested concept, which has spawned vast literatures in sociology (Shilling, 1993), anthropology (Cavallaro, 1998), gender studies and cultural studies, (Pratt, 2000: 48), I have read key, up-to-date references from within geography, where geographers have attempted to provide their own contributions to this broad debate (Longhurst, 1995; Pile and Thrift, 1995; Nast and Pile, 1998; Butler and Parr, 1999; Teather, 1999; Shatzki, 2001; Valentine, 2001). I cannot promise to fully cover this literature, as it is not the central focus of my enquiry, which remains to assess the processes and tensions apparent in scaling moral geographies of social justice and the city. However, clarification of my use of terminology, and my understanding of 'the body' is critical before proceeding with the empirical material.

#### **4C4.1.3 – Geographies of the body**

Geographical analyses have pointed to two 'classic' accounts of what is 'the body' – a *naturalistic* view that 'conceive(s) the body as pre-social, as a biological entity, upon which society is layered', and a *social constructionist* view which 'understands the body to be a result of interactions within society, either it is shaped, constrained or invented by society' (Moss & Dyck, 1999: 161). Geographical accounts tend to favour the latter view of the body as 'a surface which is marked and transformed by our culture (Valentine, 2001: 23). This is the view that I adopt, though without many of the deeply nuanced subtleties that exist within social constructionist views of the body (where some see the body simply as a discursive, theoretical space, with no physical connection to a 'reality' [Shilling, 1993:10]).

Debates on the body are, however, not as straightforward as this. In a remarkably clear early analysis of this issue, Pile & Thrift (1995) contend that discussions of 'the subject' give way to a whole set of terminologies where 'certain words are bandied around with thoughtless abandon, such as body, self, person, identity and subject' (p.2). They argue that terms which often have different meaning are frequently used interchangeably and not adequately theorised by academics in their work. Hence, 'the body' can be anything from 'a part of a general temporal and spatial logic', through 'an origin' to a 'site of cultural consumption' (pp. 6-7). Each of these meanings is valid and not necessarily complementary. To further confuse the picture, 'the self' is often viewed as a form of 'folk psychology', a thing of 'character', or a distinct form of personal identity, in which "I" does not necessarily refer to a unity of experiences between body and self (p.7). Add to this the classic Cartesian mind-body dualism, and more contemporary terminology on 'identity' and 'the subject', and the field is ripe for confusion.

Having ploughed through this literature, it has left a feeling of deep dissatisfaction about the distinctions in terminology employed, particularly in relation to differences between the body and the self. Given that my analysis in this thesis is concerned with the religious, where embodied religious experience is in many ways *internalised* (see Chapter 7), it could very easily be argued that it is concerned with the *non-corporeal* aspects of a person – i.e. the self, rather than 'the body'. This split between body = corporeal = flesh; and self = non-corporeal = "I" is common in the literature, and could easily be adopted, so that my references are always to 'the self', rather than to 'the body'.

I do not take such an approach. It is evident from my reading of the literature that many authors are not clear on the distinctions between terms such as body and self, and that they are used interchangeably. There is no commonly-agreed definition of either term, and hence who the

author is, and what they say is what matters. Neither of these terms is set in stone, and they are 'up for grabs' so long as they are carefully defined.

I adopt a dialectical approach throughout this thesis, and am highly uncomfortable with approaches that separate and disengage terms such as 'the body', 'the self' and 'the mind'. Rather, in relation to the specific difficulty that a discussion on the religious creates between 'self' and 'body', I wish to adopt a dialectical approach which views 'body' and 'self' as one and the same thing for the purposes of my research. Hence, any reference made to 'the body', 'embodied' or 'corporeal' should be taken to mean 'body' and 'self' together. 'Body' is simply an over-arching term that can apply to discussions that might (to others) seem to be specifically about 'the self'.

In drawing this dialectical view of 'the body' as an over-arching term that encompasses 'identity', 'the self' and 'the mind', and defining it as 'a surface which is marked and transformed by our culture' (Valentine, *ibid*), I wish to make the following key contentions:

1. *The body is dialectic.* I concur with Teather (1999), who argues that body and self retain some form of distinctiveness within an 'embodied self', whereby 'body and self seem impossible to untwine – they are pleated together'. This sense of the dialectical relationship between body and self is central to my understanding in this thesis. I do not wish to make a distinction between the two as I do not believe that they are separate, though there may be distinctive aspects to each. Therefore, when referring to 'the body', 'embodied' or 'corporeal', I use these as shorthand terms for the 'embodied self' to which Teather refers.

Hester Parr (1999) supports this view, in relation to her studies of mental illness, where the body-mind dualism rears its head. Parr's argument is that this dualism of terms has to be rejected in favour of a *continuum*. As with Teather, this is not to say that there cannot be distinctive elements of a person such as a 'mind' or a 'body', but to point out that they are inter-related and inseparable. Parr argues that 'feelings, impulses and thoughts' (which many would refer to as 'the self' or 'the mind') 'are somewhere in the flesh' (which others would refer to as 'the body') (p.184). So it is therefore impossible to separate these terms (except in a purely theoretical manner), as there is a 'mutual importance and inter-relationship of physicality and emotion, of the corporeal and the imaginative, and of the bodily and of identity' (Parr, 1999: 14).

2. *The body is a scale*. Scale is central to my thesis, and yet 'the body' has not featured strongly in scalar debates, nor does scale feature strongly in literatures on the body. Valentine (2001) is one of the first authors to actively utilise 'body' in a scalar manner. However, earlier works by Nast and Pile (1998) refer to the body as 'the geography closest in' (p.408), and to a 'spatial hierarchy of scales of oppression, from the body outwards, to the global'. In this sense, the body is at the centre of a web of spatial relations and connections that span the globe. Bodies are the connection point for sets of social relations that can be simultaneously internal, inter-personal, communitarian, urbanised, and globalised. Given that the emerging literature on the body-scale connection refers to 'the body', rather than 'the person', or 'the self', this gives an added justification for my use of 'the body' as the term for my analyses of religious experience in Chapter 7.

3. *The body is political*. Ultimately, it is the politics that surround the body, the very 'marking and transforming of its surface' that is central to any understanding of it. The body (embodied self) does not sit divorced from other bodies and human social relations. Processes and tensions of

politics and power and central to its understanding. Nast & Pile (1998: 4) summarise neatly by pulling together scale, politics and power relations in a dialectical, relational understanding of the body:

'Bit by bit, bodies become relational, territorialised in specific ways. Indeed, places themselves might be said to be exactly the same: they, too, are made-up out of relationships between, within and beyond them; territorialised through scales, borders, geography, geopolitics. Bodies and places, then, are made-up through the production of their spatial registers, through relations of power. Bodies and places are woven together through intricate webs of social and spatial relations that are made by, and make, embodied subjects'.

Viewing the body as political allows the argument to move away from the nuanced subtleties and semantics between different understandings of the terms, and back onto the ground that this thesis is concerned with – the moral politics of social justice. Indeed, it is crucial to recognise that bodies, in their most physical sense, can bear the scars of social exclusion, through malnutrition, poor health, bad housing, domestic abuse, street violence, suicide and so on. These embodied markers of social exclusion have been of great interest to theologians (Northcott, 1998), (as have other embodied markers of religious praxis such as fasting), and I am unwilling to divorce the body from these potential material markers (as well as their 'internal' counterparts), and from the rich theorisations of scale and scalar politics on the basis of the semantics of 'self', 'mind' and so on.

4. *The body is the researched.* For interviewees, academic distinctions such as 'self', 'body', 'person', 'mind', 'subject' or 'identity' do not rate in the same way that they do in the ivory tower of the academy. For the very 'down-to-earth' people that I spoke to, this form of internal crisis over 'what am I' was not something that was alluded to. Deep questions about '*who* am I' were

articulated by those experiencing poverty, unemployment and traumatic personal experiences, but these were far more likely to be thought of in terms of religious experience or life purpose, than as questions of 'Am I a self, or am I a body?'. Rather, people would be far more likely to concur with Valentine (1995) that 'I am what I am', and that's that.

In referring to my interviewees as 'bodies', then, it is not a term that they themselves would use, but then neither is 'self' or 'subject'. They would probably say that they are a 'person' or a 'human being'. Hence, in terms of interviewees' language, 'person' may be a more appropriate term to use in Chapter 7. However, as all academics must do, I have made a choice that 'body' (in its dialectic, relational, scalar sense of 'the whole person') fits best into my theoretical framework, and the arguments that I am making, and so I shall persist with its use, bearing in mind the interviewee 'problems' noted.

#### **4C4.1.4 – Scaling the body**

In sum, my consideration of the body as a scale continues to follow Valentine's (2001) approach to scaling that I have followed throughout this thesis. For Valentine, the body can be viewed as a space in three manners: as 'a surface which is marked and transformed by our culture', as 'a sensuous being', and as that which 'bounds the space of the psychic' (Valentine, 2001: 23). It is the first of these definitions that I wish to explore, namely that the body is 'a surface of inscription – a surface on which we inscribe our identities, and a surface upon which cultural values, morality and social laws are written, marked, scarred, or transformed by various institutional regimes' (*ibid*).

My task is to analyse the way in which religious morality is inscribed into the lives of people living in Glasgow's poor communities, and to analyse the way in which the institutional regime of the Church does so. This sense of the institutional regime connects the body to wider scales and places it at the centre of a web of multi-scalar power relations. As such, I do not see the body as a disconnected, social construct, but rather, with Valentine, as a 'relational thing' – 'the product of interactions, as constituted by constellations of other social relations' (Valentine, *ibid.* 38). In taking this view, I recognise that I am pursuing a view of the body that emphasises regulatory controls 'from the outside' (*ibid.* 28) more than individual freedom and sensuous experience. However, it is precisely these elements of power and dominant moral codes which I am attempting to analyse in this thesis, to see the connections between universal and particular, and which predicate such an approach. My aim then, is to situate the body within my wider moral geographical framework of processes and tensions, and to see the manner in which those tensions characterise the scaling of moral geographies at the body level in a variety of differing religious life experiences.

## **4C4.2 Data production methods**

### **4C4.2.1 Interview locations and individuals interviewed**

My choice of interview locations is a continuation of the community contexts chosen for the vignettes of Chapter 6. This is to continue to focus on the geography of poverty and social exclusion, and to focus on individuals living in Glasgow's poorest *areas* (see earlier). I have interviewed individuals in each of the six communities studied in Chapter 6, to varying degrees of emphasis: four from Pollok; five from Easterhouse; two from Possil; one from Drumchapel; one

from Dalmarnock, and one from Castlemilk. The numbers reflect my success in recruiting individuals, and the assistance I received from local clergy in locating them.

In denominational terms, I have interviewed 11 Church of Scotland members, two Roman Catholics and a Baptist. This split, with its overwhelming bias towards Presbyterians, need not be problematic. In terms of theologies and denominations, I have already demonstrated that there are as many divisions *within* denominations as there are between them. Likewise, speaking to individuals from one denomination does not preclude them speaking about others, as many do. Indeed, the majority of individuals that I spoke to had reasonably good ecumenical relationships with friends from different denominations. The denominational split is not to say that I did not *try* to recruit more Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Pentecostal or Methodist volunteers, but reflects the extreme difficulty that I had in doing so. As my research timetable meant that the majority of these interviews were carried out across summer 2001, contacting priests/ministers who were themselves on holiday made it doubly difficult to contact their lay members, many of whom were engaged likewise.

In terms of numbers, I believe that fifteen individuals gives enough variety of viewpoints for the level of analysis that this chapter requires. If the entire thesis were looking at embodied moral geographies, then a greater sample size would be required. However, there is sufficient depth and variety in the accounts to sketch clear tensions in religious experience. In gender terms, I interviewed five men and nine women. This reflects reasonably well the dominance of women in the attendance of religious activities (Brown, 2001). In age terms, I have interviewed a spread of individuals from a young man in his early 20s through those with young families, those who are middle aged, to older people in their 70s and 80s. Out of choice, I would like to have



interviewed one or two more young people, but this was not possible due to lack of response. It also reflects the dominance of older people in the church's membership.

A final issue that is of obvious importance is the issue of poverty itself. Merely interviewing those who live in poor areas does not mean that those individuals are themselves poor (the ecological fallacy). This was a major concern during my recruitment, and a source of anxiety. I did not feel that it was appropriate to ask people if they were poor (as if they could define that anyway), nor did I want to have to go through the complex process of using social security benefit records to target such individuals. Rather, whilst recognising the strong criticisms made of the ecological fallacy, I work on the assumption that individuals living in socially excluded areas, even if they are not themselves officially 'poor' or 'excluded', have their lives so bound up in the problems and difficulties faced by their neighbours, friends and other residents, that they cannot escape the overarching effects of social exclusion.

Indeed, these individuals may not be *materially* excluded, but in Chapter 5 I will show that they are *discursively* excluded, through the labelling of communities such as Easterhouse as morally dystopian. This form of exclusion is bound to have an effect on peoples' self-perception and feelings. Furthermore, as my approach to interviewing is biographical, it is entirely possible that interviewees will have experienced significant, real poverty at previous points in their life histories, or have been bound up in the poverty circumstances of others. These caveats aside, it is true that there is something of a 'discursive void' in this area which is as much to do with my concerns not to embarrass people, patronise them, or invade their privacy as it is to do with people not being poor. Whilst this situation is not ideal, I feel that the interview accounts, and the tensions that they point to, give a sufficient level of information to understand body scale moral geographies of social justice and the city.

#### 4C4.2.2 Methods employed

The research method that I employ in this chapter is in-depth one-to-one interviewing. All of the criticisms of this method that I have already made for the urban scale also apply to these interviews. My method of interviewing worked on a basic plan to take a biographical approach to questioning interviewees about their life histories, and then linking these stories of life trajectory with experiences of faith and religion. The intertwining of these two strands of life experience and faith is an attempt to understand the dynamic nature of embodied moral geographies and their temporal unfolding. My questioning followed a fairly standardised format around these two broad themes (see Appendix 4.3), although again if certain issues appeared to be of importance to interviewees, I would explore these more fully. Similarly, my questioning approach continued to evolve in the grounded theory manner that characterises my urban method.

As noted above, I recruited interviewees via clergy that I worked with in Chapter 6. I did not advertise for recruits in church bulletins, nor stand up in front of congregations, but rather trusted clergy to have a good overview of their congregations so as to give a good *range* of individuals, rather than people who have a tendency to volunteer for such things. The only situation in which I attempted to recruit interviewees directly was in Dalmarnock after my community focus group, where I had hopes of recruiting four or five Roman Catholics. When I asked if people would be willing to be interviewed, only one lady came forward, and the others were not interested. Learning from this, I found that if interviewees had been approached by their minister or priest, there was more of an element of 'pride' in having been asked to participate, than if it was me asking directly. My decision to adopt an interview approach reflects my desire to gain deep

testimonies of personal biography. I did not feel that this was possible in a focus group situation where people may have held back personal details. As it was, I felt that I established a good rapport with my interviewees, once they knew who I was (again I was honest about my Christian background), and people were very willing to discuss deeply meaningful (and often traumatic) life experiences.

### **4C4.3 Data analysis methods**

My approach to data analysis in Chapter 7 is consistent with my data analysis in the two preceding chapters in that I continue to analyse moral geographical tensions. Hence, my coding of interview material maintains a breakdown of common themes on a tension-by-tension basis. This approach can be criticised both on the grounds of imposing an a priori framework on the data and also for negating a biographical approach. In response to the former criticism, I would like to re-draw attention to the grounded theory aspects of my theoretical development, which have seen my framework of processes and tensions evolve and change throughout the data production and analysis phases of *all* the chapters in this thesis. In this respect, my framework has been fluid and dynamic and open to change. Similarly, at the body scale, my focus more on tensions of moral positionality and difference, rather than (e.g.) upon scale, illustrates that material in this chapter is unique and meaningful to this scale alone.

For the latter criticism, my concern with adopting a fully biographical approach comes on two grounds. Firstly, I simply do not have enough information on each individual to fully contextualise or write their biography. I would have to have pursued a far more in-depth oral history or biographical diary method in order to capture fully the richness of each individual's life, and explored important people and events more fully. This was not possible in the space of the

interview, nor is it possible, given the space restrictions of this thesis, for me to do justice to such an approach. Secondly, as with Chapter 5, because of issues relating to confidentiality, it is impossible for me to be fully biographical without compromising individuals' anonymity. As such, I accept that 'imposing' tensions on biographical accounts, and writing this chapter on a tension-by-tension basis, rather than as the story of unfolding life biographies, may seem more 'artificial', and taking away from biographical richness, but I consider it necessary for the reasons outlined above, and in keeping with the spirit of my work's focus on tensions.

In terms of my own reflexivity, as I have noted, I was transparent with all interviewees about my motivations for contacting them and about my own position as a researcher and as a (Protestant) Christian. I asked for permission to tape interviews and to transcribe the results. I also said that I would return transcripts if requested to individuals. The vast majority have declined this, either through embarrassment, or through lack of time to continue in the research process. As such, the transcriptions remain my own work, although I have attempted to be as faithful as I can to the original material.

## SECTION 4D

### CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have provided plain evidence of the rationale behind my choice of field study area, case studies, and interview material. It is abundantly clear that the Greater Glasgow urban area represents the most overwhelming concentration of poverty and social exclusion in Scotland, making it an excellent location for the analysis of the theoretical issues in this thesis. Added to the social exclusion created by capitalist restructuring, Glasgow has a complex and contested religious landscape that reflects an inherited Christian history and a rising secularism. The local religious geographies of the city are constantly being re-worked and re-woven through theological re-interpretations, religious decline, the rise of the secular, sectarianism, ecumenism, and a set of residualised Catholic and Protestant identities that continue to ensure that religion is an important feature of Glasgow life, if only nominally. Together, these geographies of social exclusion and religious change make Glasgow an excellent location for analysing moral geographies of social justice and the city.

In outlining an epistemology which is broadly cultural-materialist, and a methodology which is qualitative, and scalar focused, I have demonstrated clearly how my theoretical framework has been operationalised by 1). a chapter-by-chapter focus on three important spatial scales; and 2). a process/tension-based methodology that has evolved in a grounded manner for each of those spatial scales. I use a range of research methods including interviewing, focus groups, and observant participation and have attempted to be as transparent and reflexive as possible about my positionality. I have also attempted to be as ethical as possible with those whom I am researching in disclosing my research strategy and Christian faith, as well as reporting back

research findings to those who are interested. I believe that my methodological approach is robust and fits strongly within the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 3, and that in its variety, represents an original approach to the empirical investigation of moral geographies.

# **PART III**

# **EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS**

# CHAPTER 5

## URBAN SCALE ANALYSIS



## SECTION 5A

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I engage with one of the most important scales for analysing moral geographies of social justice and the city – the urban scale. As the scale at which theology has theorised ethics of social justice, and where social exclusion is most commonly found – in reality and in government policy discourses – the urban is a key site for exploration of the themes of this study. In this chapter I will focus on a set of 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of *imagining and reflection* (and their associated moral geographical tensions of *theology and ethics*, and *geographies and imaginations*), which I analyse exclusively at the urban scale. In doing this, my focus is upon the cadre of *urban imaginers*, who are the initiators and producers of theologies and moral geographies of social justice and the city. I engage with the imaginers through in-depth interviews conducted with as wide a group as possible to represent different denominations, theologies, areas and age groups (see Appendix 5.1 for list of interview themes).

As I have stated already in my methodology chapter, and wish to re-iterate at the outset of this chapter, I am *not* pursuing a biographical approach to analysis in this chapter. As noted in Chapter 4, this is essentially because of issues of confidentiality. Furthermore, however, whilst I give information such as area of residence, and whether this is socially-excluded or not (to highlight rich-poor differences in attitudes to social justice), my second main reason for not adopting a biographical approach is that there is quite simply no one biographical model that emerges from the material that (e.g.) a middle-aged male priest in the Roman Catholic Church who lives in a socially-excluded area and is theologically conservative will think 'x, y and z' about particular issues. Such trends are not detectable in the data, and preclude such a writing strategy,

over and above my concern to preserve confidentiality. I will, however, by pursuing a tension-based approach, attempt to highlight such differences of *positionality* as I can, even if it cannot be done along full biographical lines.

My principal objective in this chapter is to chart out and illuminate the manner in which abstract theologies of social justice and the city are translated and thickened into the urban scalar context of Glasgow. My focus is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of imagining and reflection which is an essential preliminary activity that theologians must undertake before they can translate and thicken theological principles in practice. It is this process of critical thinking that Harvey (2000) has argued is central to envisioning a utopian politics of social justice. However, the contestations that surround theologies of social justice ensure that this 3<sup>rd</sup> order process is characterised by strong tensions of *theology and ethics*, which will form the backbone of the analysis which is unique to this chapter and this scale (see below). Alongside my analysis of this 3<sup>rd</sup> order process of imagining and reflection, I am likewise concerned in this chapter to explore the unique manner in which the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of scaling and negotiation (as part of a moral politics which is present at *all* scales) are present at the urban scale (see Figure 5.1). In pursuing this analysis, my approach to examining the interview material is to focus on the moral geographical tensions that I outlined in Chapter 3 (see Table 5.1).

My unique focus at this scale is to analyse tensions of *theology and ethics*. In this thesis, with its focus on social justice in an urban context, it is at the urban scale that critical thinking on theology and ethics takes place. If this study were a focus on a national or global theology of social justice, then it would be at the national and global scales that this process would take place. Yet for this thesis, it is at the urban scale that this most fundamental process of ethical reflection occurs. My concern in analysing first, tensions of theology, and second, tensions of ethics, is to uncover their

1<sup>st</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

2<sup>nd</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

3<sup>rd</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

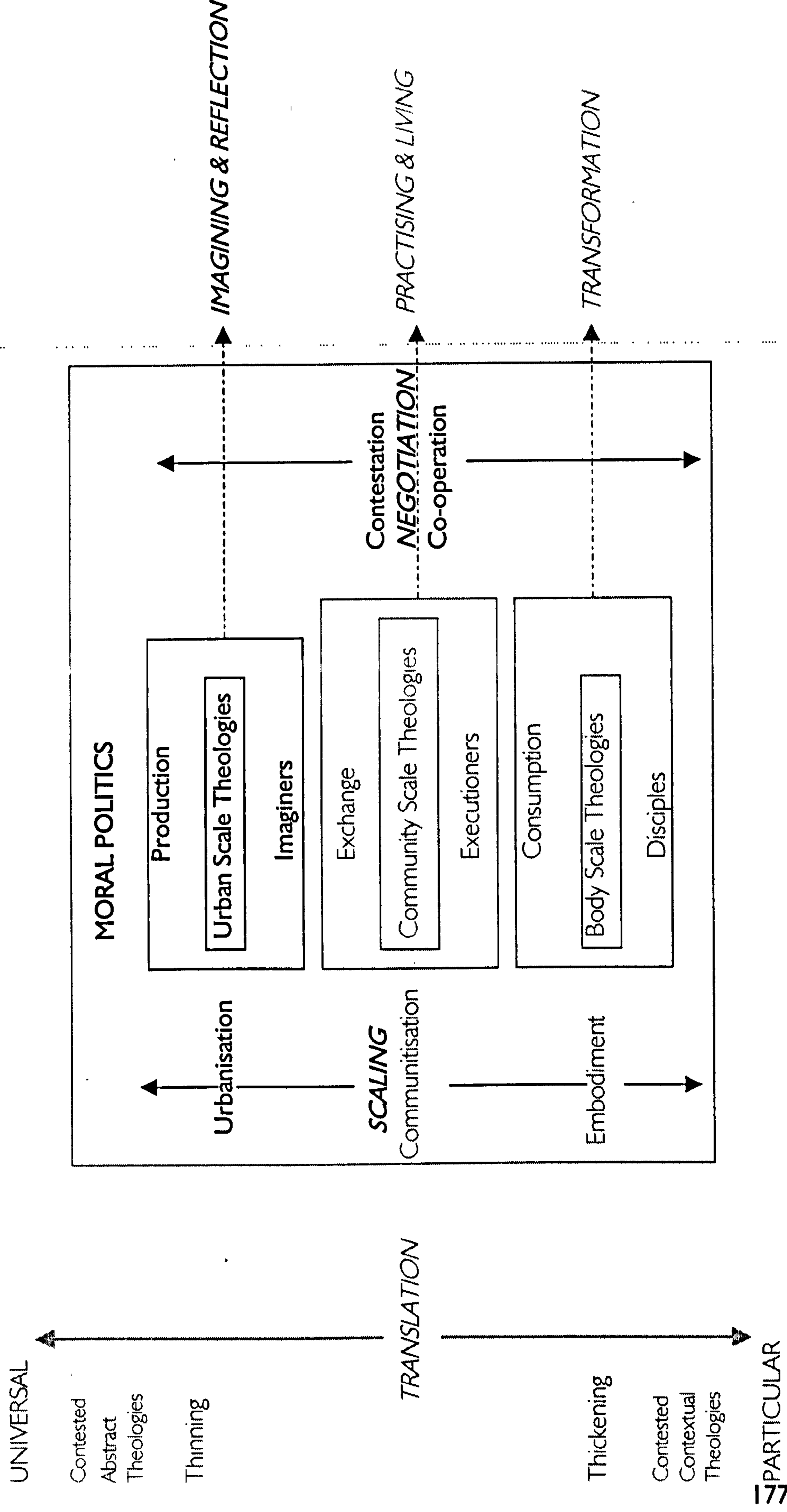


Figure 5.1 – Diagrammatic representation of moral geographical processes examined in thesis (Copy of Figure 3.2).

contested nature, and the manner in which this aids/prohibits moral geographies of social justice and the city. Analysis of these tensions will give insight into the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of negotiation, as theologians contest and co-operate with one another in the development of spatialised, contextual theologies.

This theological contestation is not quite as abstract as the contestation that occurs in 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical processes (which I shall use the conclusion of the whole thesis to discuss) which are really the most abstracted form of the more contextualised processes at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> orders. Rather, because this contestation takes place in a specific scalar context (as opposed to being about general theological universals that may be non-spatially-specific), negotiation is *with that spatial context* as much as it is with different theological principles.

Hence, it is essential also to analyse tensions of *geographies and imaginations* within the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of *scaling (urbanisation)*, if an understanding is to be gained about what makes the urban context in which this negotiation takes place so unique (see Figure 5.1 and Table 5.1). I will analyse meso tensions which explore the scalar imaginaries that are unique to the urban scale, and those meso tensions of multi-scalar utopian and dystopian imaginaries. The first set of meso tensions will allow me to construct a picture of the uniqueness of the urban scale and of moral geographies of the *city* in particular. The second set allows an exploration of the utopian and dystopian tensions central to the multi-scalar view of social justice advocated by Harvey (2000), and which I outlined as an important analytical and practical framework in Chapter 2. As the issue of scale is so central to my thesis, these processes and tensions of scale are the common set that I analyse at all scales: urban, community and body. The other sets that I examine are considered exclusively for each scale.

My chapter is structured around an analysis of the empirical interview material, and structured around the two major sets of tensions that I am analysing. Hence, in Section 5B, I will firstly consider tensions of theology and ethics, with a sub-section on contested theologies, and a sub-section on contested ethics. In Section 5C, I will then move onto tensions of geographies and imaginations, with a sub-section on urban scalar imaginaries, and then a sub-section looking at multi-scalar utopian/dystopian imaginaries (see Table 5.1). In Section 5D, I will conclude the chapter by looking at the way in which these tensions give a greater understanding of the 3<sup>rd</sup> order *process* of imagining and reflection, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes of scaling and negotiation. I will then demonstrate the manner in which this chapter has advanced the three theoretical contributions that this thesis wishes to make (as outlined in Chapter 3).

| Meta Tensions                             | Meso Tensions                                       | Outcomes                             |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>THEOLOGY &amp; ETHICS</b>              | <i>Conceptions of theology and spirituality</i>     | <b>Contested theologies</b>          |
|   | <i>Conceptions of ethics</i>                        | <b>Contested ethics</b>              |
| POWER & POLITICS                          | Denominational tensions                             | Contested praxis                     |
|   | Sacred-Secular Tensions                             | Contested ideologies                 |
| <b>GEOGRAPHIES</b><br><b>IMAGINATIONS</b> | <i>Scalar Imaginaries</i>                           | <i>Contested scalar imaginaries</i>  |
|   | <i>Multi-Scalar Utopian / Dystopian Imaginaries</i> | <b>Contested utopian imaginaries</b> |
| POSITIONALITIES<br>DIFFERENCES            | Moral positionalities                               | Contested experiences                |

**Table 5.1 – Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis, with community scale tensions highlighted in bold (Copy of Table 3.2).**

## SECTION 5B

# TENSIONS IN MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CITY: THEOLOGY AND ETHICS

## 5B1 CONCEPTIONS OF THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

### 5B1.1 Introduction

Throughout the urban interview accounts, the most significant tension was the basic tension of theological and spiritual understanding itself. Grasping the manner in which abstract theologies are conceived, from the outset, is crucial to investigating their application to the urban context. Scrutiny of the interviews reveals three key sub-tensions that exist within conceptions of theology and spirituality: 1). *tensions over the nature and understanding of Scripture*; 2). *tensions over the understanding of the role and purpose of Christianity*; and 3). *tensions in conceiving the character of Christian spirituality and ministry*. Each of these sub-tensions points to the fact that abstract theologies are *contested theologies*, and that the universalising objectives of theology (e.g. charting the role and purpose of Christianity) are therefore disputed.

### 5B1.2 Tensions over the nature and understanding of Scripture

Differences in the understanding of Scripture lie at the heart of theological contestation. From my literature examination (Chapter 2), I have already shown a fundamental distinction between what may be termed a 'conservative/evangelical' view of Scripture, and a 'liberal/critical' view. As a set of documents with thousands of years of human history and theological wrangling behind it, the

Bible remains the principal source of Christian ethical inspiration. Yet how it is read, valued, and utilised, is dramatically different, depending upon theological understanding.

On top of the basic conservative vs. liberal cleavage, there is another difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations, in that the Roman Catholic Bible contains the 15 books of the Apocrypha, whilst Protestant versions do not, rejecting these 15 as documents without divine inspiration. Likewise, another division between Protestant and Catholic concerns the status of the Church and Christian teaching down through the ages. Whilst (conservative, not liberal) Protestants take the Bible as the fundamental source of Christian teaching, (conservative, not liberal) Roman Catholics see the tradition of Church teaching (through the early Saints and Holy Fathers [Popes]) as of equal validity to Scripture. With these denominational divisions complicating matters, it is possible to see a spectrum of contestation between conservative Protestant and liberal Protestant, conservative Catholic and liberal Catholic, and conservative Protestant and conservative Catholic.

The majority of conservative clergy and leaders that I interviewed within either Catholic or Protestant denominations were traditional orthodox conservatives. In its Protestant incarnation, this view is frequently summed up in terms such as:

'Well our church would definitely believe in the infallibility of the Word of God' (young-aged male church elder, conservative theology, Brethren church, non-socially-excluded Bothwell).

or

'Well, I regard it as the Word of God, and I regard it as the *only* ultimate rule for of faith and one's behaviour' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Free Church of Scotland, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre).

Scripture is taken as 'infallible', meaning that this group of Christians believe it to be *literal truth*, in that the world *was* created in seven days, and Adam and Eve *were* the first human beings, and Jonah *was* swallowed by a whale, and so on. Hence, for orthodox conservatives, Scripture's stories, laws, principles, prophecies and doctrines are true as they have been captured by human hands writing documents under the authority and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For orthodox conservative Catholics, Christian Scripture is accorded the same status as for Protestants, but with the added dimension of the Church's Tradition of teaching:

'It's the Word of God which is based on, that and so the Church is the servant of the Scriptures, and where we would be distinguished from other Christian denominations, is in the respect that we wouldn't see the Scriptures *alone* as the Word of God – that we would also see the Tradition that's been handed down as part of the Word of God, and also the current teaching of the Church' (middle-aged male priest, conservative theology, Catholic Church, socially-excluded Nitshill).

For this group then, the current teaching of the Pope in his papal encyclicals, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, are taken as similarly infallible to the teaching of Scripture, as truth given by God and spoken through the teachings of the Church. Yet for Protestant conservatives (and Catholic and Protestant liberals), this notion of the infallibility and truth of the Church's teaching is unacceptable – for the former in terms of the historic Protestant rejection of the authority of the Catholic Church; and for the latter in terms of a rejection of notions of infallibility in *any* accounts, whether written or spoken.



Traditional orthodox conservatives contrast slightly with a group of more 'open' conservatives that I interviewed. For these conservatives, Scripture is still the truthful Word of God, but there is room for some measure of interpretation within that:

'The supreme rule of faith and conduct is the Bible. That is our highway code. That's what we go by, and we want to go by the book. And I think where churches, ministry, Christians have minimised that, and gone their own way and done their own thing, they have not seen the change, either individually or corporately, that that we need to see desperately in our nation. So I think first of all, it is vital we have a commitment to the Bible as the Word of God. We believe that, because the Bible itself teaches that all Scripture is inspired by God. And Jesus said 'Thy Word is truth'. And so I think we need a strong conviction that the Bible... But there is a width *within* that strong conviction for people to come at the Bible in different ways, and make it relevant in ways that are appropriate for today's world. In other words, I don't think it's a question of parachuting a text into an issue, and I think that's always a danger, and it gives Christians a bad name, if they come over as narrow and there is only one viewpoint, when they are talking about secondary issues. But on fundamental issues, in terms of issues of faith – what we believe about God, about Jesus, about why we're here, about what we're called to do as a Church, I don't think Jesus or the Bible leave us in any doubts. So I'm committed to the Word of God, and to *living* it, as well as believing it' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Evangelical Alliance, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre).

The above comment makes two interesting points. The first, which comes later in the text, is to make a separation between 'fundamental issues' and 'secondary issues' in the truth of Scripture. In doing so, this 'open' conservative is making an ethical classification between meta ethics and meso ethics, between issues that are central, true, and universally applicable, and those which are

of less central importance. The second point, however, is to critique both orthodox conservatives for coming across as 'narrow', and liberals for '(going) their own way and (doing) their own thing', with both groups damaging the Church's influence. This point illustrates the multiple tensions that understanding of the Scripture creates, so that not only do conservatives criticise liberals, but also other conservatives as well – there are inter- and intra-theological contestations.

The clergy who I interviewed who were of liberal / critical persuasion saw the Bible in radically different terms to their conservative counterparts. Rather than seeing it as a truthful, inerrant, infallible Word of God, liberals see the Bible as the product of a particular spatio-temporally specific culture, modified over centuries by human interpretation and negotiation, suffused with contradictions, and a source more of metaphorical, narrative and poetic *illumination*, than of literal rules and doctrines:

'I I guess the sort of official thing would be the Bible, Word of God... but so many people translate that so many different ways. I see it as God's message to us, but I wouldn't believe *literally*, you know, word for word, everything that is in there. I think it gives us a ... probably an *example*, often by looking at how people deal, and how people face situations, and what things happen to them. I think it's very much a *people* book, and often by looking at people you see where things go. I think that the Bible changes in morality, and I think the Bible adapts, and faith adapts, to society. I don't think it sets out black and white rules, because I think if you take it from the Old Testament beginning, right the way through, you see that there's lots of changes in morality there.'

RL. 'Negotiations and stuff?'

'Yeh, yeh. I mean whole areas of how society works, sexual morality – those things change quite dramatically through the Bible, and I think God does not stop talking to people *today*. I

don't think he's been silent for two thousand years (laughs). So I would think that that yeh, the Bible gives us a a guide for where we should be, but I think we, we have to take that and translate that into where we're at today.' (young-aged male minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Drumchapel).

The above quotation illustrates a clear principle of a liberal theological approach – that of an unfolding Revelation (from God) and (re)interpretation. In his example, the minister shows how his conception of God, Scripture and Christianity, is of dynamic entities that are constantly changing, requiring new ethical and moral interpretations and understandings. Hence, Scripture can serve as a 'guide' or an 'example' of how to deal with particular situations, or give useful moral principles, but it cannot be interpreted in rigid black and white terms. For other liberals, Scripture is a 'fountain' (mid 50s male minister, Church of Scotland, deprived Castlemilk) of inspiration and poetry, but not literal truth; and for nearly all, it is a source to be struggled with, and not simply dismissed:

'I think it's a constant struggle, and I think the ways through the text are sometimes to read it literally. Sometimes to read in in a historical context, which thereby distances it from where you are now. Sometimes to read it analogically, figuratively. But I think biblical interpretation involves a lot of fancy footwork, basically, dancing about and *playful*, But with *reverence* as well. It's not just sort of, it's not playing fast and loose with it and it's got to allow, you've got to allow the text to challenge you and disturb you and shake you up. And it's going to be costly. It's not just a way of spotting loopholes to to wiggle through the demands, because I think the love of God *does make demands on us*.' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Catholic Church, non-socially-excluded Crosshill).

From this account, it is clear that liberals have not abandoned all sense of ethics or morality as derived from Scripture, and descended into ethical relativism (as often insinuated by conservatives). Rather, through active struggle with the text, and through different strategies for 'reading' it, liberals actually use Scripture as a source of rich theological inspiration, but without a literalism 'where every comma and full stop was taken seriously' (middle-aged female minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, non-socially-excluded Cardonald). A liberal interpretation of Scripture, then, is not morally *relative*, but rather morally *plural*, pursuing a number of different interpretations.

### **5B1.3 Tensions over the understanding of the role and purpose of Christianity**

Derived in strong part from the reading of Scripture adopted, interviewees pointed to a strong tension in the role and purpose of Christianity. In general terms, this boils down to a contestation between a 'spiritualised' Christianity, of which the purpose is to 'save' souls, and a 'practical' Christianity, more concerned with service of the body.

In the former case, clergy see their role as a proclamatory one, where the Word of God has to be preached in order to present the Christian faith to unbelievers, to encourage repentance and conversion to Christianity. The work of Christianity then, is to preach salvation:

'People just engaging with the *Word*, you know this is what my ministry's all about. If I can get people to engage with the Word, the Word does the work.

RL. OK. And what kind of issues would you preach on?

(... ...) Whatever...I very much believe whatever comes up in the Word is what I preach and sometimes that, you know, it touches chords in peoples' lives hopefully.' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Carmyle).

This notion of Christianity's role as proclaiming God's truth contrasts sharply with a more practical understanding of Christianity. In this understanding, it is the life and ministry of Christ that is the central source of moral inspiration:

'If you were going to ask me what *my* theology was, I would tell you it was *incarnational*. OK. If God becomes a human being, then all human beings are sacred, and if God loves the world so much that he gives his own *Son*, then people who commit themselves to Christ as a *living* person therefore have...there's a social and a moral implication about feeding the hungry, and binding up the broken-hearted, and putting into practice what Jesus believes he fulfils by reading the prophet from Isaiah (...). So my own take on things if you like is very incarnational, and it's very hands-on kind of Christianity' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Scottish Episcopal Church, non-socially-excluded Newlands).

This incarnational notion of Christianity sees the Church's role as to serve others, to meet the needs of communities, to be relevant to life's needs, and to work for positive transformation of individuals and communities through action. This list of roles, drawn from across a wide number of interviewees, illustrates the essentially practical nature of this Christian reading. In attempting to bridge this classic 'soul' vs. 'body' tension, a number of clergy talked of a need for holistic ministry, that deals with both body and soul (older-aged male priest, liberal theology, Catholic Church, non-socially-excluded Anderston). In spite of these attempts, those on both sides of the divide seemed fairly entrenched in their positions. This suggests that these radically different interpretations of the universal of Christian mission, will create significantly different contextual moral geographies.

#### 5B1.4 Tensions in conceiving the character of Christian spirituality and ministry

The final tension in the field of contested theologies relates to the theological understanding of the character of Christian spirituality and ministry. A strong division, which largely mirrors the soul-body dialectic, above, exists between a traditional spirituality, and a more contemporary one.

For those clergy and leaders holding to a traditional theological interpretation of Christian spirituality, it is tasks such as Bible study, worship, preaching and prayer that are central to their ministry. Hence:

'my ministry would be the same here as it would be anywhere, and that is just to – not just to – but to preach the *Gospel*. There are people who hold the opinion that you have to alter the Gospel, not alter the Gospel, but your message has to be tempered by the situation in which you're preaching. Now that's true to a certain extent, but I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit is able to work in different situations. (... ..) I believe that if the Gospel, as someone once said, doesn't work here, it doesn't work anywhere' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Church of Scotland, socially excluded Carmyle).

In this traditional reading, context is seen as largely secondary to the fundamental universal principles contained in preaching the Gospel. This faith in a 'one size fits all' model remains a strong current in contemporary theology, and contrasts with current geographical discourses on difference.

More contemporary spiritualities take diverse understandings of ministry, ranging from creating 'sacred spaces' for rest and reflection, open to people of all faiths or none (mid-50s male priest, Catholic Church, deprived Anderston), to a ministry of spiritual 'deliverance' of people from 'evil' problems such as poverty or addiction (young-aged male priest, conservative theology, Scottish

Episcopal Church, non-socially-excluded Woodlands). Within these contemporary accounts there are two main schools of thought – a). an incarnational school that through physical embodiment in an area, seeks to 'be Christ' to that place:

'Well I'm kind of more and more convinced, and it's and I'm still trying to work out just what this means, but I think it's simply being *present* to it. (... ..) So there's something about how you're *present* to a place like this, just by simply being here' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Catholic Church, deprived Dalmarnock).

This school of thought is found particularly in deprived communities, where church congregations are small, and there is little success for a 'preaching' ministry. Instead, these clergy compare their role to the biblical metaphor of being 'a light in the darkness'.

b). A more radical school within the contemporary camp takes a charismatic approach to spirituality. In theological terms, charismatic theologies believe fully in a spiritual realm that suffuses the material world, and see a constant struggle between hidden forces of good and evil that Christians must combat through using the 'gifts' of the Holy Spirit. This contrasts with more orthodox accounts (both conservative and liberal) that view such 'gifts' as having ceased during biblical times. The following comments from clergy illustrate this view in vivid terms:

'Some people feel very much there are there are aspects of of spiritual things behind the social needs. There are, some people might see a *demon*, you know, and in a sense I wouldn't have a problem with that as long as we don't, we don't switch on auto pilot and see it at every point and turn, because it's not always like that. It can't be (laughs). ... ..We would certainly see, and we would certainly have time for, the perception that a given area that is run down and depressed, and you know I was in one yesterday, in Toryglen...

RL. '...Toryglen, uhu...'

'...there wasn't a window that wasn't smashed in the close I was walking up. Now my immediate reaction, there's a *spiritual* thing there as well...'

RL. '...OK, how would you describe that?'

'An *evil* presence in a geographical area, that would, yeh, that would be seen and be visible, certainly in a horrible, horrible area....' (young-aged male pastor, conservative theology, Pentecostal Church, non-socially-excluded Govanhill).

'...but I I think there are definite spiritual powers at work, that are *territorial*, that people invoke, you know that people *invite* to come and do stuff. And we're oblivious to that largely, because we live in a *material* world.' (young-aged male priest, conservative theology, Scottish Episcopal Church, non-socially-excluded Woodlands)

'I think a lot of ordinary folk actually believe very much in the supernatural. I think there's a huge increase in belief in the supernatural. Unfortunately, a lot of that is people seeking other sources than the Church. The Church has not been very supernatural over the last few decades. But I think there's a phenomenal belief in that, and I think there's a lot of people in our society believe you know that there are evil forces where they've got certain crimes. We had a situation in Castlemilk where a wee boy of four was battered to death by a man. The guy had no recollection of doing it. And from what people said, they couldn't believe that this man actually... he had a serious drink problem, but just seemed to, whatever happened, something cracked out. You could explain it psychologically or psychiatrically or whatever – something happened. But I think a lot of people just thought 'this is just a work of *evil*. This is nothing but evil, and I think a lot of people then see the need for Christians praying well *yeh*, because we need someone objecting to this.' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Baptist Church, socially-excluded Castlemilk).



The first two accounts refer to what I will call an 'evil geography' (c.f. Tuan, 1999; Cloke, 2002), in that they vigorously read the spatial through a spiritual lens, seeing 'territorial spiritual powers' standing behind, or suffusing spatial structures. The response to this evil is shown in the latter account, where prayer is seen as a vital 'weapon' in the fight against evil spiritual control of particular places. Another tool is Christian prophecy, which was recounted to me by the minister from Castlemilk who said he had visions of Glasgow being 'set on fire for God' if Christians prayed against 'evils' in the city such as drug abuse, alcoholism and poverty; and also of 'waves' sweeping the evil away, with the Church riding on their crests.

This highly spiritualised language, and active belief in the causes of urban problems, and the power to change things, coming via spiritual means, is a fascinating reaction to both theological reading, and contextual assessments of the urban condition. Whilst these accounts appear to take a sensationalised approach to understanding and addressing contemporary problems, in part drawn from highly dystopian readings of the modern city, they illustrate clearly the unique manner in which particular theological principles can be utilised in constructing moral geographies of the city. Furthermore, these particular moral geographies are strongly contested by other clergy whose theology gives a far more positive reading of place, or by those who have no faith in such things as an 'evil geography'. Tensions of spirituality, then, are a crucial feature of theological moral geographies.

## 5B2 CONCEPTIONS OF ETHICS

### 5B2.1 Introduction

Following on directly from analysing the tensions in theologies and spiritualities, it is clear that given the contested natures of the sources and applications of those theologies, that the ethics that they espouse will also be contested. Two key sub-tensions exist in conceptions of ethics: 1). *the nature of ethics and their sources*, and 2). *the approach to their application*.

### 5B2.2 Tensions in the nature and sources of ethics

In interviewing, I was interested in exploring ethics of poverty and social justice. Hence, I attempted to probe the ethics that individuals attributed to the *causes* of poverty, and the *response* to poverty – i.e. social justice, to test the contested understandings of these issues, and in particular to look at the sources from which they drew understanding (e.g. the Bible, Marxism).

As far as poverty is concerned, views on the causes of poverty were largely split into the classic individualist and structuralist accounts, with some more pragmatic, and others sounding like a New Labour 'Third Way' approach. In the accounts that see poverty as the result of individual (mis)conduct, issues such as the breakdown of relationships, the break-up of the 'traditional' family unit, alcohol abuse, gambling, drugs and irresponsibility are all blamed for the problem. In these accounts, which tend to come from conservative interviewees, biblical ethics of personal responsibility, hard work, and faithfulness to family are referred to. In this sense, poverty is looked down upon, not with anger or a sense of pity or injustice, but rather as a condition of personal *shame*, which can only be rectified through personal effort, or (and note the conservative 'saving souls' agenda here), through a conversion to Christianity, and a restoration to a life path of 'righteousness'. A particularly conservative minister went 'back to basics' in referring

to poverty as a natural result of the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden – in this sense, a punishment from God for human sinfulness. Illustrating the tension between these individualist and more structuralist accounts, a minister in a prestigious city centre church commented that:

'I mean I don't move in these worlds, but I observe what flaming anger there is among people if anything is suggested by way of personal responsibility in any kind of dimension of poverty. I think it ought to be an axiom of our thinking – certainly an axiom of the Christian faith – that you know, actions have consequences. And we can't minimise the fact, that a lot of our actions, you know a lot of actions do come home to roost in poverty – of our own actions. Although I wouldn't, I'm not saying that if you're poor it's your own fault. ... .. Paul says to the Thessalonians, within the Christian community those who don't work, don't eat. People might throw up their hands in horror, but that's a Christian principle' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Church of Scotland, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre).

This comment illustrates the 'personal responsibility' position particularly well, and also shows the manner in which particular Christian principles taken from Scripture, can be used to justify the ethic espoused.

Accounts in which poverty is seen as a result of unjust social structures are more common amongst interviewees, and especially amongst liberals. Issues such as greed, power, unjust wealth distribution, a rich-poor divide, unemployment and lack of resources are all cited in these accounts. What is particularly interesting (and ironic) about these accounts (coming as they do from more liberal parts of the Church), is the fact that in spite of much of the liberal/critical scepticism of using the Bible to justify particular ethics, it is the Bible which is most often referred

to by liberals to justify their structuralist view of poverty (alongside a number of references to Marx, liberation theology, feminism and Black theology). An illustrative comment would be:

-'The Gospel makes it very clear that there should be a bias towards the poor, the Scripture does do that, and I think the Church is better at it – *society's* not biased towards the poor. I think the Church is beginning to open up, but at the heart of the Gospel it was those that were vulnerable, and those that were needy, those that were *unclean*, the untouchables, that Jesus spent the most of his time with – not *exclusively*, but most of his time.' (older-aged female minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Pollok).

Ethics of *social justice* referred to include a desire for equality, for inclusion in society, and for liberation for the oppressed. Biblical principles used to advocate this include the Old Testament principles of Jubilee and the Sabbath (notions of cancellation of debts, and rest and restoration for the poor); and the New Testament principles of an inclusive Kingdom of God where the first are last and the last first; and the principle from Acts where the early Church shared all possessions in common.

'Yes I mean again I think that *is* crucial and that is central, and that if if we are all created equal, which I think you know from Genesis we *are* you know, male and female, God created them man and woman, and and we are all equal, regardless of who we are and where we've come from. And so much that you read in the *Prophets*, you get Amos is very much 'forget your rituals, your sacrifices. If there's no justice in you, it's worthless and it means nothing'. So yeh, that I think is is absolutely central, and I think the values of the Kingdom are very much about bringing in a society which which is just and it's not necessarily *fair*. Life is never fair. But there is always inequality. I don't think God is fair. I think God is generous, which is different, but yeh justice is something that maybe we have a right to

*demand of one another.*' (middle-aged female minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, non-socially-excluded Cardonald).

The majority of these social justice ethics come from people who take a structural view of poverty. For many of those giving a personal responsibility view of poverty, there is simply a discursive silence as far as an ethic of social justice is concerned. This is interesting in that it highlights that the fundamental tension in theological ethics of social justice lies between either having those ethics or not. There is very little contestation *within* the Church community about what social justice ethics *should be*. Rather, the contest is between whether there should actually *be* ethics or *not*. This relates to the earlier point about a middle class wealthy Church disinterested in poverty and social justice, and illustrates how social embeddedness can prevent certain ethics even being considered, let alone applied.

### **5B2.3 Tensions in the application of ethics**

In exploring the *application* of ethical principles from universal to particular with interviewees, two important themes emerged. The first lay in the whole notion of whether ethics could be universal, whether there could be moral absolutes, and how they could be conceptualised. For some clergy ethical universals are an obvious given – non-negotiable, and applicable to all places and times:

'Yes. I mean I think God has set down for all creation, his desires, and I think they're applicable both to Christians and non-Christians. Marriage for example. You don't take the neighbours out in the back garden and chop them up, you know that sort of thing. These are universal truths. Stealing, things like that. I think there *are*. There are principles there

that are applicable for all ages for all time'. (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Carmyle).

In this case, because the Bible says it, it is right, so to speak, and the Ten Commandments are often referred to by those who have no problems with ethical universals. For others, finding universal ethics in the Christian tradition is more difficult, and they are more about *general guiding principles* than black and white absolutes:

'Yes, I think there *are* (universals), but I don't know that we necessarily always see them, or are necessarily always able to identify what they are and I think it's difficult to come down to things which are universal because these books were written over such a long period of time and by different people in different situations. But I think Christ points us to things which are universal. I think Christ points us to the nature of love, to a God who is love and points to the kind of love that that is. I think Christ points us to the nature of power and shows us how power can be used and abused. I think also Scripture does point us to justice, and equality as things which we should aim and strive for.' (middle-aged female minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, non-socially-excluded Cardonald).

'I think I would probably say "the truth is out there", X-Files stuff (both laugh), and would feel that together we *search* for that truth. I don't think we ever *own* it, because I think as soon as we think we own it, we've lost it. That I think truth is a continual search, and it's something you do *together*. I think probably life is a lot more about *questions* than about answers. And I don't feel it's my job to give people answers'

RL. So you're on a sort of journey together?

'Yeh, yeh, very much so. I think I've come a long way *myself*, and a lot of that is by asking questions with other people, and often finding that it's questions that lead to other questions, as opposed to answers. I suppose my hang up on answers is that answers are full stops –

they're a destination – whereas questions drive you; they take you somewhere.' (young-aged male minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Drumchapel).

These two accounts show the difficulty that some Christians have in finding ethical universals within the Christian tradition. In particular, the latter account, with its notion of 'searching' for truths and ideals, and taking a critical questioning approach 'to all situations, exhibits a more contextualised, situated approach to constructing morality. This is not to say that there cannot be guiding principles such as equality or love, (as the quote from the female minister illustrates), but it is whether these are conceived in the *abstract* or in the *context* that is crucial. By deriving universals from *human experience*, rather than abstracted, reified texts, divorced from their contextual situation (i.e. the Bible), these clergy merely approach universals in a different manner, preferring derivation from experience, dialogue and questioning, than from absolute, external approaches (a method strongly advocated by Holloway, [1999, 2001] in his approach to morality).

The second important theme appearing in the interviews was a tension in *how* universals could be applied. This mirrors the two positions towards conceptualising universals taken from the first theme. Hence those clergy who take their ethical universals as directly given in Scripture take a 'top-down' approach to their application. Those who prefer to take universals from general principles or human experience adopt a more 'bottom-up' approach to their application.

For those pursuing a top-down method, the approach is as follows:

'We have people with *horrendous* problems in life. I mean, just toe-curling, but our perception of them is *this*. We try and meet them from where they're *at*. We don't expect

them to *leap a chasm* of moral absolutes, because they can't do that, and suddenly if they try and do that, they find themselves in the abyss, and they're rejected...'

RL. '...is that that barrier thing you were talking about religion and....'

'...it's the barrier, it's the barrier thing. I mean, obviously we're talking in analogies, but so, essentially we believe that at the same time here's a paradox. We believe at the same time there are absolutes, however, also there are five billion people in the world with five billion different sets of problems. Five billion different viewpoints. Now, if we microcosm that right down to where Glasgow is in all of that, a lot less people, but equal amount of problems, equal amount of life issues. We deal with everyone on merit, everyone individually. Everyone with their own set of problems. We will deal with them all with the love of God. ... So, we take those absolutes, we take it from there, you know, we don't shift the boundary lines of morals or standards or whatever. If there are situations where people need to know clearly, we will tell them. But at the same time we are also there to be practical about how we can help them through that, you know, because one person might come from a very *low* moral standard, *very low*, because they know *nothing else*, and who can blame them? (... ..) so we do it with *love*. It sounds woolly, but there's... how else can you do it? And that's how we do it.' (young-aged male pastor, conservative theology, Pentecostal Church, non-socially-excluded Govanhill).

This account shows in particular the process of negotiating ethical universals into context, and how formidable the tension between universal and particular can be.

More 'bottom-up' approaches to applying ethics follow an approach that is now quite fashionable in urban theologies – that of contextual theology. The basic principle of a contextual approach is that theology must be made, and 'done' in context. Hence, whilst universal ethics are appropriate, they are negotiated and decided by people reflecting on sacred texts or poetry, *in*



*context*, and often by ordinary, lay members of the Christian community, and not trained academic theologians:

'RL. Yeh, and I mean you've talked about looking or talking, or preaching the Scriptures about being *contemporary*. In what sense then, do you see as the role of theology in the context that you're in in *Pollok*, then if it's contemporary or what you see the issues are?' ...  
'What I would... what I *aim* to do is, in a sense, people have to decide what their theology is, so you're almost *making* theology for the local people, helping *them* to kind of create theology. Now, all right, it's a case... the Church and the theologians say you're on pretty dangerous territory here because, does it make a difference? I think it *does* make a difference. Em, but I think if people can *do* theology and make theology, create theology around the basic principles, then something very practical happens, there's a real expression of the Gospel, *truly* being lived and not being applied. Does that make sense?' (older-aged female minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Pollok).

In her comment, the minister talks about contextual theology still using 'basic principles' or ethical universals, but that these should be 'lived', rather than 'applied', and this is the key difference with the top-down approach. The bottom-up approach sees the thickening of ethical universals as a dynamic, lived experience, where the *ethics themselves* can be negotiated and questioned. On the other hand, the top-down approach does not question the ethics, but questions the manner in which they might be applied. The contextual approach is not without its critics, and even some of its practitioners worry about ethical relativism:

'Where really what this is trying to do is to say well here's a story – a parable or a miracle story or whatever – and what is this saying to me today, living in Dalmarnock? So yes it is context-specific, grassroots theology. My one kind of reservation about that, or just as we're

talking, this thing that kind of flashes into my mind, is I have an anxiety that a context-rooted theology might be in danger of losing that *other* dimension of theology or of Church being Church, which is about being the exact opposite of context-specific. That part of what we're about is being aware of the fact that I am *more* than just this particular context. Do you know what I mean? That it's getting beyond even the sense that all I am is just this thing that happens to live in Dalmarnock.' (late-30s male priest, Catholic Church, deprived Dalmarnock).

From this, it is clear that the application of ethics through negotiation between universal and particular, remains fraught with tensions, whether it be relating to the types of ethics espoused, their sources, their nature, and whether this application is contextualised or not. The process of thickening theologies and ethics into moral geographies is replete with tensions and contestations.

## SECTION 5C

# TENSIONS IN MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CITY: GEOGRAPHIES AND IMAGINATIONS

## 5C1 INTRODUCTION

Crucial tensions exist within geographies and imaginations in interviewee accounts. Moral geographies of social justice and the city are situated within wider scalar processes and spatio-temporal utopian and dystopian imaginaries. In this section, I explore some of the tensions that exist in the scaling of theologies to the urban, followed by the utopian and dystopian moral geographies constructed. At all points in this section, the permeability and relationship of the urban to wider scales, and of the present to the past and future becomes clear.

## 5C2 URBAN SCALAR IMAGINARIES

### 5C2.1 Introduction

Given the nature of urban theology, and its explicit creation of an urban moral geographical framework for the contextual thickening of theological ethics, an exploration of scalar themes, and the theological interest in the urban, were key areas for my interview questioning. Four sub-tensions are referred to in the interview accounts: *1. tensions over the appropriate scale(s) to pursue social justice; 2. tensions in the scaling of the urban; 3. dystopian urban imaginaries of*

*Glasgow, 4. utopian urban imaginaries of Glasgow.* These sub-tensions help to illuminate the more general geographical tensions that characterise the scaling of theology to the urban.

### **5C2.2 Tensions over the appropriate scale(s) to pursue social justice**

In my discussions of the scaling of theology to the urban level, creating urban moral geographies, a tension emerged concerning the place for urban social justice in relation to processes of globalisation. There was strong concern amongst theologians that simply focusing upon one scale was not sufficient – ethics of social justice had to be translated and thickened at different scales. In virtually all accounts, the privileging of a particular scale as a site for theological thickening and praxis was viewed in terms of its relation to other scales, and in terms of the need for co-operation between scales, rather than their opposition. There was a common argument that social justice should be both global and local. For some, this presented a difficult tension where the global was too 'big' to 'cope' with, and the local scale was more manageable.

'obviously it is an issue, and I mean people like Peter Townsend you know and I, they are convinced that poverty can only be tackled in a *global* way. But because we're becoming so much *larger* I mean we need to be concerned with the *European* poor and not just with the British poor. I would certainly go along with that and as I've indicated already, you know you *can't* change poverty in Britain unless there are structural changes in Britain. Yet, in turn, the economic health of Britain is dependent upon the economic forces throughout, at least throughout Western Europe, and probably throughout you know the the world. So you know Britain has got to be a player on the global stage and hopefully informed by Christian values. But, having said all *that*, I don't think a low income person in this area gets a sense of identification or a sense of satisfaction by being a *global person*...'

RL. 'Yeh exactly'.

'...no matter how much his life is shaped by global forces. Therefore I think that local groups, not just like us but many other groups including the *Church* – they are the the key institutions which give people *meaning*. They're the institutions where people find *fellowship* and friendship. They're where they worship together or organise together. And that's why I think that localisation is *key* you know to the whole process of combating inequality.' (older-aged male Church project leader, liberal theology, socially-excluded Easterhouse).

This argument illustrates clearly the difficulties for praxis created by the tension between global and local. This sense of scalar detachment from global forces which clearly affect a poor person's life experience, illustrates the difficulties of constructing a utopian politics, when those who have most to gain see no value in such an approach. Hence, the emphasis on the local seems to indicate that the Church's main role is to pursue an embodied strategy of social justice, that gives meaning and value to the individual's life, though at the same time continuing to be mindful of the global dimension. Another priest spoke more positively of a genuine multi-scalar politics where people could meaningfully connect global with local:

'I think it needs both. I think it needs both. I mean I think we were talking about Jubilee 2000 earlier on, and I think that is an example where the local can be connected with the global, and I think both have to happen, and for me Isaiah's vision of all of us sitting under the vine tree and enjoying the fruits of our labour and all those sort of things is, I mean, a sort of utopian vision of society, but it's also a nightmare vision, because I mean that's what it's like in the suburbs at the moment, you know, people sit under their vine trees and enjoy the fruit of their labour and the young don't die in infancy and the old live out their years. You can't *do* that in isolation from people under the other, you know, the vine tree over here and the fig tree over here. So I think it's got to connect at both levels, and I think that's the mistake. I mean I think quite often liberals kind of have a bolt hole in the social justice things at world scale and forget the local. Conservatives concentrate on the local, and sort of forget world

structures and things, and I think you probably need both.' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Scottish Episcopal Church, non-socially-excluded Hillhead).

This emphasis on a relational understanding of social justice, and the illustration used of the *Jubilee 2000* two-thirds world debt campaign, shows that the global-local scalar dialectic can be viewed more positively and progressively in the construction of theologies of social justice.

A final group of accounts see the urban as the most appropriate site to pursue a social justice that is simultaneously global and local:

- ' *All the time* I think cities *are* places where you become much more conscious of the international, the global village or the global city, whatever. You *are*, because that's where the international connections seem to be.' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Catholic Church, non-socially-excluded Crosshill).

From this view, the urban is the key site where the national, global, community and body meet in a complex web of inter-scalar connections between theologies, ethics, cultures, economies and politics. This sophisticated scalar analysis (and its counterparts above), demonstrate that some members of the cadre of urban imaginers have a good grasp on socio-spatial processes, and that inter-scalar tensions over ethics of social justice are well conceptualised and often resolved.

### **5C2.3 Tensions in the scaling of the urban**

The latter point above, seems to exemplify very well the key role the urban scale has in making inter-scalar connections between theologies, ethics, cultures, economies and politics. This would

seem to justify the urban theological focus on the city as the key scale for addressing issues of social justice. However, in talking about these issues with interviewees, it is clear that there are a number of tensions relating to this scaling of the urban, and that urban theology itself is not unproblematic.

In justifying an urban theological approach, those who adopt this method defend it in terms of the sheer numbers of people contained within the city, and the wider scalar impacts that changes in a city can create:

'So we have to sort out what we *believe* about the city, how we understand the city, and how we understand the present situation for example that Glasgow or Edinburgh is facing. So we need a combination of theological tools and analytical tools, research, and the two need to go hand in hand if you like – sociological analysis; some other things thrown in there – academic; alongside you know, a Christian understanding of the city. So for me, urban theology is absolutely crucial, because unless we translate what we believe about God about Gospel about people, into the city situation, then we're just going to try this and try that and try the other without any criteria and without any direction in the long term. I think that's a mistake. ... .. but for spiritual reasons, the city is very important, because what happens to the city generally determines what happens elsewhere in the nation' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Evangelical Alliance, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre).

This justification for the urban theological focus is a common one, and the moral geographical translation process is even referred to explicitly. A more radical justification for the urban theological approach refers not to the impact that cities have on wider scales, but rather to the critique that urban theology makes of academic theology:

I understand urban theology as theology written from the perspective of the city. But probably more correctly, theology written from the perspective of the disadvantaged in the city. I don't think there is a lot of urban theology about which comes from suburbia. (... ..)

I daresay what makes it a specific context is the fact that it's *urban* (laughs). That sounds really stupid, but I think that we've kind of existed for an awful long time thinking that theology is a universal activity, and so what is announced, or what is developed as a doctrine somewhere, can then be rolled out as a doctrine everywhere, but I think as we actually analyse why people made that doctrinal statement, we recognise that it was partly to do with the *context* out of which they made it, and there would be examples of that all the way through Church history. And so *urban* theology, I daresay, is challenging that, in terms of saying that sort of theology does not have the right to talk for all of us, because it's contextual, it's contextual over *there*, but very little of theology has ever been written or done among communities which are *poor*, and yet, if that's a place that Jesus chose to *live*, if that's the place that Scripture tells us, God has a special affinity with, then maybe as we seek to make sense of God in our urban hard places, we will be doing something of value. Now, it won't be universal theology, it'll just be *local* theology, but all theology is local theology - it's just that we've not really recognised that. (middle-aged male minister, adviser, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded areas of Glasgow).

This comment unpacks the nature of the universal-particular dialectic for what it really is. In an incisive analysis, the minister points to the fact that all universal theologies, however universal they might claim to be, have arisen out of specific contexts, and in this sense are contextual theologies. This way of understanding the universal-particular dialectic says that all theology starts with the contextual before it can move to the universal (echoing Smith's [2000c] notions of the scope of ethics). Hence, rather than looking at how universals can be *thickened* in particular contexts, he is arguing that we should look at how contextual theologies are *thinned* into universals which then



claim authority. The minister seems to take a sceptical view of anything approaching a 'universal' theology if it were a *standardised*, homogeneous form, instead preferring discrete, local theologies. However, 'universal' theologies would be dialectical contextual theologies, working together in partnership through discussion and debate (similar to Harvey's [2000] ideas of coalition-building), whilst maintaining their unique 'take' on issues. This dialectical view confirms that all 'universals' will ultimately be contested, complex and heterogeneous ethical concepts that will vary dramatically in their application, and the central place of theologies of the urban in aiding theologians to reconfigure the nature of their enterprise.

In their scaling of theologies to the city, many clergy draw inspiration from biblical accounts of the city and city metaphors:

'A motif that has become more and more important to me, is the fact that Jesus wept over the city. Now he didn't weep over it because he thought God, to hang with them! - he wept over it out of *compassion*, and I daresay that the other thing is that very crudely, Scripture begins in a garden, and ends in a city. Now, sadly, most of church thinking, if you were to paint the picture of the ideal church, I think it would be a church in a village somewhere, with a tall spire and green fields all around, whereas you know, if we're gonna get real about this, we're probably going to have a church in the middle of high-rise flats as the picture of our ideal church, if we're actually in the business of trying to work with God to make this vision of the new Jerusalem a reality. We can't constantly be taking folk back to the garden.' (middle-aged male minister, adviser, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded areas of Glasgow).

This account illustrates the way in which urban theologies draw upon biblical metaphors of the city, particularly the account of the biblical narrative beginning in the Garden of Eden, and ending

in the New Jerusalem. This prophetic sense of there being an 'urban future' is a key motif that has been translated into theological discourses. These impressions of urban life stand in contrast to contemporary utopian theologies of rurality, set against a dystopian city. The point about 'taking folk back to the garden' is in itself a metaphor for the Church becoming an escapist utopian world in which people can 'forget' the tough realities of the world around them. Urban theologies advocate a more gritty, 'hard' utopianism, that is political and not simply escapist.

However, in spite of urban theologians' enthusiasm for the city, a number of individuals had strong reservations about an urban theological approach, one of which was a concern that the urban could eclipse the rural. This concern for the rural was joined by criticisms from other quarters, profoundly sceptical about urban theologies, and any scaling of ethics that privileges the urban scale. From a liberal quarter, the critique is that urban theology is not radical enough, and by spatialising poverty to conflate with 'the city', 'there is a danger that urban theology can easily drift into suburban theology' (middle-aged male minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Possil).

Other liberals were concerned that too much of a focus on the poor and the city would take the Church away from a more egalitarian ethic where 'God has no more concern for the city of Glasgow than he has for *any other place* where people are gathered' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Scottish Episcopal Church, non-socially-excluded Newlands). Other clergy, again liberal and supportive of social justice and working with the poor, were concerned about the merits of direct biblical applications of urban imagery, given their concern with the status of biblical texts. Finally, some conservatives rejected urban theology totally as a 'distrust of the Gospel' and its universal applicability, looking on it as something of a 'cop-out' from Scriptural truth.

All of these various tensions illustrate the multiple and contested manners in which the urban is conceived as a scale for theological thickening (or thinning). Sophisticated scalar imaginaries and politics sit alongside biblical imagery and more traditional notions of an urban-rural divide. The urban is painted as a key site for the thickening of theologies with multi-scalar implications, whilst at the same time rejected as anti-rural, too broad, or not privileging the poor *enough*. These tensions illustrate that the urban is a genuinely important scalar construct for a cadre of urban imaginers negotiating tensions between universal and particular, global and local, urban and rural, imagination and reality.

#### **5C2.4 Dystopian urban imaginaries of Glasgow**

When asking clergy to discuss their thoughts on the contemporary condition of Glasgow, it is a largely dystopian picture that emerges (though see 4., below). This is not an approach that derives from the style of questioning, which was simply asking for comments on what interviewees thought were important 'issues' in Glasgow, rather than 'problems'. I suspect that given the general tone of the discussion, looking at issues of poverty and social exclusion, that most clergy will have automatically focused upon the negative side of the city, rather than its positive.

This caveat aside, dystopian imaginaries of Glasgow categorise two sets of problems that can broadly be termed as 'social/material' and 'moral/spiritual'. The former group includes the following issues that recurred with high frequency throughout conversation: bad housing; unemployment; poverty; poor education; drug abuse; high suicide rates; poor health; deprivation; addiction; sectarianism; debt; asylum seekers; pollution; and loneliness – basically a

socially/materially dystopian reading. The latter group (not as often expressed as the former), includes issues such as 'immorality', AIDS, single parents, violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, anger, hopelessness, and 'moral confusion'. These dystopian readings focus far more on personal misconduct, and equate with more conservative accounts of poverty, as the former group equates with more critical ones.

Conservatives cited the causes of Glasgow's dystopian condition as an increase in personal immorality, family breakdown, adultery, sin, and people failing to adhere to 'Christian' moral standards. As one conservative comments, in his theological reading, there is a direct correlation between declining Christian values and the decline of Glasgow – the city reading is entirely moral:

'The *vision* of Glasgow in the motto of Glasgow is 'let Glasgow *flourish* by the preaching of his Word and the praising of his Name'. And I think that where Glasgow has had that priority and that focus, and its leadership has had a Christian vision and carried Christian values into progress, into reality, that has made a big difference to the city. Eh, I think in the last 20, 30 years, speaking only of what I know, being a young man of about 50, I would say that it's lost that leadership and that vision, and it's no coincidence at this particular time that it is suffering dreadfully, almost worse than most cities in Western Europe.' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Evangelical Alliance, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre).

More critical thinkers saw the city's decline as on the one hand economic – it simply being 'redundant' and 'peripheral' to areas of prosperity, but also with a spiritual underbody (of a different nature to the conservative spiritual reading):

'There's that, I think there is also, as I said earlier, this deep spiritual thing within people that, I sometimes think we've lost in the West of Scotland. Because we've become much less of a church-orientated society. I also think sometimes we're *discovering* it, *because* we're far less of a church-orientated society, but it concerns me that there is not nearly enough *thinking* happening, either within the Church or beyond it about the spiritual regeneration of communities. I've got a friend who who spent a couple of years in Guatemala, and worked in the refugee camps there. And she said - she was a music therapist, or a musician who happened to do music while she was there - and she said that her job was to get people to sing the song that was in their heart. I've probably said that to you before, but it seems to me that that's something that we've just not focused nearly enough on, in this changing Glasgow.' (middle-aged male minister, adviser, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded areas of Glasgow).

In this reading, it is not the loss of *Christian values* that is the moral reason for a dystopian reading of Glasgow, but rather a loss of a general *spirituality*, of an intangible nature, not specific to the Church, that is a large issue in the city's problems. This focus on issues such as personal pain, hopelessness, feelings of insecurity and worthlessness as the outcomes of Glasgow's material decline, represents a move away from narrow moral critiques of personal immorality towards more compassionate spiritualities that seek to regenerate the city via ethics of love. The most radical account of this spiritual-material dystopian dialectic comes from a charismatic minister:

'Over a city itself, I think you know certain things *form* over a city, and I think if you look at Glasgow, you see certain things that are *peculiar* to Glasgow. (... ..) I mean Glasgow is a disproportionately *addicted* city. ... And it's not just eating greasy chips, so you've got to ask questions about *why* is Glasgow such an *addicted* city? ... I would see it as something spiritual, though I think even folk who aren't believers could see you know a kind of corporate identity that forms over a city, that grips it. Now whether they see it as a spiritual

thing, or just a structural thing, or a social structure or whatever, but there's clearly something *there*. (... ..) So I think people can see that. But we would say that you know there is an entanglement of spiritual problems within that – demonic problems that binds up the city'.

RL. 'OK. What do you mean by that, by binding up?'

'I think... Well, something forms over the city. I think there are levels of spiritual activity, you know that can work in a person's life, can work in a family, can work over an area. And, if over Glasgow there is a kind of, you know, using the term 'canopy' – you know, we're seeking to form a canopy of prayer having blessing, to have *goodness* – because I believe there is a canopy there of of certain aspects of darkness. There appears to be a kind of canopy of addictiveness that affects Glasgow, and some people would say that, you know, they've found for example that giving up smoking was very much easier when they moved out of the city, than it was when they lived in the city. There's this something over the city that you're up against.' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Baptist Church, socially-excluded Castlemilk).

This comment was made by the same pastor who is part of the group that discussed the 'evil geographies' that characterise the modern city. What is interesting about this account is that it presents a human behaviour-spiritual forces dialectic that almost gives a sense of the city having *asked* for its current situation due to the 'sins' of past generations. Notions of the city being 'bound up' by demonic forces of darkness that have formed a 'canopy' over the city paint a particularly bleak dystopian picture. This dystopian moral geography has to be dealt with by recourse to a 'prayer canopy', and becomes a classic Christian account of the struggle between good and evil. Whilst this account evokes a fair amount of scepticism, it is an excellent illustration of the depths to which theologies can deconstruct the contemporary urban condition.

My final exploration of dystopian Glasgow was a deliberate one, where I asked interviewees specifically where they thought the 'poor', 'deprived' or 'bad' areas of Glasgow were located. Unsurprisingly, the two (by now well-known) groups of 'the inner city' and 'the peripheral schemes' were the most commonly cited, with individual dystopian areas cropping up time and time again (in order of frequency), being: Easterhouse, Castlemilk, Drumchapel, Pollok, Gorbals, East End, Govan, Possil, Cranhill, Maryhill, Blackhill, Sighthill, Springburn, Rutherglen, Darnley, Nitshill, Royston and Ruchazie.

These areas referred to suggest a reasonably good knowledge of the spatiality of poverty in Glasgow (c.f. Chapter 3), with the four 'monster' peripheral schemes of Greater Easterhouse (including Cranhill and Ruchazie), Castlemilk, Drumchapel and Greater Pollok (including Darnley and Nitshill), being the most frequently cited examples. This in part reflects the high profile given to these schemes in recent years as part of regeneration initiatives, but it is also a reflection of the notoriety that they have achieved in popular city imaginaries as dystopian spaces. Inner-city areas such as Govan, the East End, Springburn and Possil were also referred to, demonstrating an awareness that poverty is not simply concentrated on the city's edges. Gaining knowledge of where clergy conceive the dystopian spaces of the city to be allows me to then select some of these contexts for more detailed analysis in the community scale chapter that follows.

### **5C2.5 Utopian urban imaginaries of Glasgow**

In spite of the overwhelmingly dystopian characterisation of Glasgow as a city of multiple problems, there were one or two accounts that either saw the city in a much more utopian, hopeful light, or were at least able to see some positives alongside the negatives. Those giving more qualified accounts pointed to the huge success that Glasgow has had in attracting tourism,

new service sector jobs, university students, and the strength of its cultural life and the warmth of its people: 'Oh, for some it's absolutely marvellous – it's a vibrant city' (older-aged female minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Pollok) and 'I mean I think that eh Glasgow is a, is an incredibly exciting place to be. I mean I think there's a real buzz and a warmth, and it's a great city... Em, but having said that, I mean it's it's also a town within which there's kind of massive deprivation' (older-aged male minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Govan).

For others, utopian imaginaries are about conceiving about better futures for dystopian communities. The comment below comes from a minister who was himself a low-paid resident of Easterhouse, until recently becoming a minister:

'Well I hope for places like Easterhouse on a practical level, on a human level, that the standard of life will go up for people. That the housing stock will continue to get better, that employment will come, wages will come in. That families will be helped to become more stable families. That child abuse will go down, that alcohol abuse will go down, that drug abuse will go down. You know, sensible things that people would not have to live in deplorable conditions. I mean I lived in a house that was riddled with dampness and was an awful place to live at times. Em, the people made it bearable, but the house itself was terrible. But to be fair to the council, I mean they poured a lot of money in with double glazing and all the rest of it, so peoples' conditions are better. I would like to see more investment in young people for the future. I think education, recreation, and planning for jobs of the future. But on a spiritual level, I would love to see Easterhouse just set ablaze for Christ, and people, I would love to see that church bursting at the seams with people. And we need to pray on and pray on. It's happened before in places. It can happen again. If I didn't think that was possible, I wouldn't be doing this, because you know as someone says



'I'm not a museum curator', I mean ministers aren't museum curators saying, or we're not in the geriatric wards. We're interested in new birth.' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Carmyle).

This comment is based on lived personal experience of life in a 'dystopian' community, and hence represents a genuine utopian vision for its future. Conceived of in material and spiritual terms, it points to a dynamic motif of hope that lies at the heart of some of Glasgow's most depressed communities. That it is a spiritual vision is testimony to the continuing strength of theological ethics in underpinning visions of more positive urban futures. It also presents a glimpse of a final utopian urban imaginary – that of finding utopia in dystopia.

In his account, the minister notes that 'the people made it bearable' to live in the midst of the difficult conditions of Easterhouse. In a number of interview accounts, places that appear from the outside as 'dystopian', actually contain real utopian strengths for building better urban futures (c.f. Baeten, 2001). Another comment from an interviewee in Easterhouse makes the point:

'It's always had a *reputation* for being a place of violence and poverty, and I think in some ways, *undeserved*. Because you know although there *is* much higher poverty – it's the sixth most unhealthy place in Britain, etc, etc, *those* kinds of figures and statistics have to be put alongside the *strengths* of places like Easterhouse, where there are for instance many stable families, even stable one-parent families. And people, some of the people involved in *us*, I mean their families have been in Easterhouse for two or three generations. And they're the kind of people, they they may well be on low incomes themselves in so they're financially socially-excluded, but they've also got a *commitment*, not only towards their own families, but towards their *community*. So Easterhouse *has got* tremendous strengths, you know

with the people who are here.' (older-aged male Church project leader, conservative theology, socially-excluded Easterhouse).

It is this ability for theological readings<sup>1</sup> to ascribe hope to communities which are otherwise written off as excluded dystopian spaces, that points to the strength of Christian groups in attempting to build a utopian politics of social justice. By presenting different, insurgent moral geographies to the dominant moral geographies of the powerful, these utopian imaginaries can perhaps serve to bring about changed perceptions and changed lives.

## **5C3 MULTI-SCALAR UTOPIAN/DYSTOPIAN IMAGINARIES**

### **5C3.1 Introduction**

A further key tension contained within the interview accounts relates to the other spatial scales in which the urban is situated. In exploring some of Harvey's (2000) ideas of a multi-scalar utopian politics of social justice, I was able to look at the manner in which Christian faith, moral motif and characterisations of the Church and society interlinked around these ethics of social justice. Indeed, wider scalar concerns permeate urban scale accounts, and demonstrate the importance of other scales in the formulation of urban theologies. There are a number of sub-tensions that

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<sup>1</sup> In making reference to a 'theological reading' or 'spiritual reading' at this point, and throughout Chapters 5-7, I acknowledge that my comments are reminiscent of many humanistic geography studies of community where 'sense of place' and 'spirit of place' were uncovered during the 1970s and 1980s. The parallel between the two kinds of accounts is strong, and there is indeed overlap.

This is not to diminish, however, the significance of the theological and spiritual reading of place. In this thesis I am *illuminating* what people say, rather than interpreting it. The notion that place is being read in spiritual and theological terms comes very much from clergy themselves. Hence, whilst a spiritual reading of place can parallel a humanistic counterpart, its *roots* are very much in theological concepts of justice, fairness, equality, and the reading is arrived at via an active process of theological reflection. A humanistic reading may arrive at the same conclusion, but starting from different points. That said, the parallel is a useful one to bear in mind throughout Chapters 5 to 7.

relate to these themes: *1. moral metaphors, motifs and the Christian faith; 2. utopian/dystopian characterisations of society and its future; 3. utopian/dystopian characterisations of the role of the Church and its future.*

### **5C3.2 Moral metaphors, motifs and the Christian faith**

The cadre of urban imaginers use theological metaphors and motifs, combined with a particular understanding of the value of the Christian faith, to assist in their understanding of the urban situation. Large numbers of moral metaphors were referred to in the accounts, but the most significant recurring motifs were 'hope' and 'incarnation'. The sense that even in the midst of difficulty and despair, there were grounds for looking forward to the future, of believing that change could be possible, that there is a long-term value and meaning to life, pervades a large number of the urban accounts, whether from conservatives or liberals, wealthy or poor areas. Similarly, the motif of the Incarnation of Christ, as God become human flesh, living amongst the poor and needy, is a powerful source of inspiration to clergy working in poor communities, seeking to understand their ministry in the urban context. The comment below illustrates how these two motifs are often linked:

'My quote comes in here - I was trying to think of a place where it could come in. In Sao Paulo, I was there, and I was asking people what they thought the Church in Brazil, or in that bit of Brazil might have to give to the Church in our bit of the world, and this woman said, 'what we can give you is *hope*', and I kind of looked confused, for I'm thick, and she followed that up by saying 'but you have to understand that hope is not the same as optimism, because here there are no grounds for optimism, but still there are grounds for hope, for hope comes from God'.

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RL. 'So that's what's the core then, there's a *hope*?'

'There is a hope, and I sense for me increasingly, also a *solidarity*, that, isn't it incredible that out of all the places that God might have chosen to be born into, he chose to be born into a situation of poverty. It's where God has kind of *put* himself. Now, I think when when the poor of our world recognise that God became one of *them* - not that God became one of *us* in our nice wealthy middle class establishments and jobs and all of that, but God became one of *them*. It says...well it relates to hope, doesn't it? But it certainly relates to *dignity* - if this is good enough for God. That doesn't become then, well 'I'm happy with my lot', anything like that, but it's about, gosh, you know this is where God *chose* to be. And that's where the challenge is for the rich, of course, because the Incarnation is not about God becoming one of *us*, if by us we mean white, middle class males, because he *didn't*. He could have, but didn't. Why not?' (middle-aged male minister, adviser, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded areas of Glasgow).

This comment shows the depth of inspiration that the Christian Incarnation can draw in the construction of urban theologies. Along with other motifs such as 'death', 'resurrection', 'new life', 'crucifixion' and 'journey', these are not simply vague dreams, but active, real, meaningful constructs that serve clergy in their everyday work.

### **5C3.3 Utopian/dystopian characterisations of society and its future**

In seeking to explore utopian and dystopian imaginaries of the city, I felt it was appropriate to ask more general questions about the manner in which clergy conceptualised the present condition of wider Scottish society, and its future. In some fascinating accounts, there were clear tensions between dystopian and utopian readings of past and future. In general terms, this translated, paradoxically, into a majority picture of present society as highly *dystopian*, whilst at the same

time painting the future in far more utopian terms. This in large part illustrates the application of the motif of hope to multi-scalar understandings of urban futures.

Dystopian accounts of contemporary society recounted the same list of issues time and time again: that society is a slave to consumerism and market forces; that it is individualistic and selfish; that it is secular; that it is characterised by superficiality and a lack of depth; with conservatives adding that it is becoming more and more 'immoral' and 'sinful' (e.g. through the increasing divorce rate, single parents), and liberals that it is a society of increasing wealth and inequality between rich and poor. This list of complaints is not surprising, and is not particularly theological. Such a reading of society could come from any person. What is interesting, however, is the general dystopian focus of the majority of interviewees. In trying to explain these negative views, it is either the case that theologically speaking, clergy are following a traditional line of Christian moral standards that have all but disappeared from society, and are lamenting the loss of the Church's control over such issues; or that they are so personally overwhelmed by the difficulty of their own ministries/apparent lack of success, that their outlook is understandably bleak. (I will explore the reasons for this dystopian characterisation further in the section on characterisations of the Church, below).

In spite of these dystopian views, a number of clergy had very positive understandings of contemporary society, referring to it as an 'exciting' or 'marvellous' time to be living in, with advances in technology and education and standard of living. Yet these views were rare, and usually tempered by a greater willingness to focus on the problems of contemporary society. Others, though equally ready to lambaste society's dystopian features, referred to their belief in the 'deep goodness' (middle-aged male leader, liberal theology, Catholic Church, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre) of people, and an underlying spirituality within people that was

positive. Though these accounts recover something positive, and taken alongside the view that Christianity *values* people, show that more affirmative views are possible, the pervasiveness of dystopian moral geographies suggests that the Church has serious difficulties in engaging with contemporary society (and the contemporary city), in a positive manner.

This finding stands in contrast to clergy's thoughts on the future of society, where utopian visions fuelled by the theological motif of hope demonstrate a clergy that continues to have faith in a Christian image of society. There were two main types of utopian vision:

1. 'Materialist'. For some clergy, their utopian vision of the future of society was that with education, improved health, technology and environmental sustainability, that inequality in society would decrease, and that people would rediscover the importance of the common good in humanity. Materialist visions such as this, that focus upon improvements to standard of life are common, and frequently seen as achievable. More in terms of a wish list, are utopian visions of the future that see a world of peace, harmony, love, justice and prosperity. Clergy who articulated these notions were generally cautious about the prospects for their achievement, but nevertheless they were (theologically) sound principles to pursue.

2. 'Spiritual'. A large contingent of conservative and charismatic clergy have a genuine hope that there is going to be a 'revival' in the fortunes of Christianity in Scotland, and that in the future, many will convert to Christianity, and there will be a restoration of Christian moral 'standards' in society. This vision is in part based upon the prophetic strand of charismatic Christianity, and in other part on a growing 'prayer movement' in these types of churches throughout Glasgow, where clergy are actively *asking* God to improve society in future. Those clergy who maintain an optimistic outlook on present society, based upon a sense of peoples' goodness, have a similar

view of the future, that good will triumph, in some ultimate, almost apocalyptic sense. This was based on a sense that 'all things are possible' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Catholic Church, non-socially-excluded Cambuslang) because of Christ's life and example. This returns to the importance of hope, as the driving motif of Christian utopian vision:

'The Christian hope is a hopeless one, in that it doesn't look as if it's winning. (laughs). And we sound crazy if we say it, but we have hope because we believe that Jesus rose from the dead. And despite everything that is happening, we're not letting go of that hope. So that allows us to do things. That is the biggest hope in the universe. And that biggest hope in the universe allows us to do what we do at a very local level – at the very micro level. How you translate that into hope for British society in the next two decades, I'm not entirely sure, but the over-riding hope, the *huge* big hope, the enormous hope gives us the strength to carry on at a very micro level, and work away and to do it cheerfully and joyfully and even stupidly (laughs) when it doesn't look very sensible to keep on doing it, and when the whole of society seems to be going in the other direction in terms of disengaging with other people and we think this is the right way to go because we have seen this, we retain a hold of that greater hope and a belief that the Kingdom of God *is* coming, and that it is already *here*, and that it *is* growing up and there's a lot of weeds there, but the wheat is growing. And we believe the wheat is growing, even although we can't see it. So yes, we have hope, we know it, we firmly believe it's going in the right direction even although frequently we can't see it'. (middle-aged male minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Possil).

This sense of an abiding faith in the theological ethics associated with the 'Kingdom of God' is an exceptional demonstration of the importance of hope in the construction of utopian moral geographies of social justice and the city. The way in which this hope is conceived as 'over-riding', and big enough to sustain initiative, even when the overall picture is not very clear,

illustrates the manner in which theological universals, even when vague, can continue to have resonance at even micro-scalar contexts, constructing different moral geographies at each scale, sustained by the over-riding ethic.

In spite of this encouragingly positive outlook, some clergy continue to see the future in terms equally as dystopian as the present. For most, the lack of a positive outlook is based on a sense of not simply having time to imagine a hopeful vision:

'I've never given it a thought. I've got enough trouble trying to get through from day to day. But I suppose in the end I do hope for the Second Coming. No, I don't hope for the Second Coming because it will be a terrible day, a day of darkness and not light. But I *rely* on the Second Coming. I think as I said before, I don't really think that society has changed in my thirty years here, any more than it's changed in the 2,000, 3,000 years since the New and the Old Testaments were put together. And I don't expect it to change radically between now and then, ... ..The return of all things to God. I don't have, I don't have dreams about 'ooh, imagine!' I think that kind of idealism has no place in my... I haven't got *time* for that. I'm too busy trying to get on with it. That's not a very admirable answer, but that's I think I'm too busy trying to trying to get on with what on earth is it all here, to spend much time dreaming'. (middle-aged male minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, socially-excluded Castlemilk).

This comment demonstrates the extent to which utopian vision can be obscured through the pressures of day to day life, and the extent to which forming a utopian imagination needs time and effort that is not available to certain clergy. A final group of clergy have little hope at all for the future of society, using the apocalyptic visions contained in passages such as Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation as their guides:



'Yeh, I mean, I wouldn't *be* utopian actually. I think the Bible suggests things are going to get better before they get – sorry get *worse* before they get better. Although that's not to say that we don't live in hope and we try to offer transformation as much as possible, although I think that will be against the background of a general (laughs) decrease in society, you know or diminishing of good things in society. So there is a constant tension actually. You know it's not a sitting back and saying well let's, it's going to get worse, just let it get worse. It's a kind of recognising that it may well get worse but our responsibility's always to say 'but it could be better'. And it could be different under God. But we're all you know, Christianity's a forward-looking faith, you know, we look to the future and we look to to the past but we live in the present.' (young-aged male priest, conservative theology, Scottish Episcopal Church, non-socially-excluded Woodlands).

In this example, the priest explores the intricacies of matching the theological prophetic tradition to the realities of contemporary society. The sense given is of one or two lone groups in society trying to maintain hope and goodness against a general background of social and moral decline. Whether this 'lone ranger' type of vision is correct or not, remains to be seen, but it does demonstrate that in spite of a perception that things in future *will* become worse, this has not created a sense of despair, and hope continues. It is this ringing motif of hope that runs through all accounts of present and future society, both utopian and dystopian.

#### **5C3.4 Utopian/dystopian characterisations of the role of the Church and its future**

Underlying many of the dystopian accounts of the present and future condition of society is the manner in which the role, status and position of the Church is viewed. This was not an original theme on my interview schedule, but quickly arose as a hugely important issue. The decline in

religious adherence, praxis, and the growth of secularism (residual identities notwithstanding [see above]) have created massive changes for the Church.

In some quarters, the Church itself is blamed for its own decline, and few clergy have much that is positive to say about the contemporary Church. Liberal/critical clergy lambaste the Church for becoming too middle class, consumerist, self-indulgent in its own traditions, and individualistic to the point of failing to undertake social action of any radical magnitude. Others class the Church as 'an irrelevance' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Catholic Church, socially-excluded Dalmarnock), marginalised through its own failure to engage in any meaningful manner with the world around it, other than a(n increasingly) hard-line conservative stance on 'sin' and 'immorality'. For conservatives, the Church is to blame for dropping its standards, and fudging on moral absolutes in bowing to liberal theology. More blame lies at the door of society, however, for abandoning the way of the Church for the pleasures of the world, with various Scriptural verses from the Prophets and the Epistles used to illustrate the social sinfulness of a society fulfilling its own lusts.

Other accounts are more measured, seeing a continued role for the Church as a place for 'building community' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Evangelical Alliance, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre), promoting justice and social inclusion, and for performing works of service amongst the poor and needy. Indeed, most interviewees *do* see the Church as having this role, but most are dissatisfied with its inability to practice what it preaches, or live up to its ethical ideals. Such dystopian concerns amongst the clergy represent a fundamental problem for the Church in translating ethics of social justice into urban contexts such as Glasgow. If there is a sense of inevitability that the Church will fail to contribute, then this will prevent much work being achieved. However, this dystopian characterisation does not seem to

bear out in relation to some of the more optimistic remarks made in earlier sections about the Church's role and activity, or against much of the good work that is taking place in local communities (see Chapter 5). Perhaps this is another example of it being fashionable to 'knock the Church', or perhaps there is a genuine dissatisfaction with the Church. Either way, clergy feel generally powerless to change neither this, nor secular society's perception of it.

This general dystopian image is a powerful one to try and counteract, and it has presented significant difficulties for clergy trying to imagine what the future is for the Church at community, urban, and national scales in Scotland. Though most have utopian views regarding the future of society, and there are many who continue to have a utopian hope for the future of the Church, there are many more dystopian voices, in a real tension between apocalyptic dystopian vision and utopian hopeful vision.

Those clergy with a utopian hope used a number of signs to justify their view. For some, the 'power of the Gospel' (mid-50s male minister, middle class Church of Scotland, Glasgow city centre) and the continuing relevance of the Bible assure the Church of a future (as the Church has always been, so it always shall be):

The Bible will just not *go away*, you know. We are confronted by a book, no matter *how* secular we become, and how much we think that man's in control and is the measure of all things. You know, the Bible will just not go away!' (middle-aged male minister, conservative theology, Free Church of Scotland, non-socially-excluded Glasgow city centre).

Others placed continuing hope in the city prayer movement to enact a genuine reversal in the Church's fortunes, whilst others spoke of the increase in spiritual awareness in society, and the growth of evangelical and independent churches as signs that the Church is in fact reviving, and

faces a future of greater strength. From a more liberal point of view, some clergy maintained a hope that the Church could become more incarnational and more willing to work with the poor and needy, and that through this it would rediscover the authentic voice and ministry of Jesus.

Yet for greater numbers of clergy, in spite of their more positive views of the future of society, the future of the Church (though not necessarily Christianity) is far less certain. For conservatives, the future is negative because the Church is under the prolonged judgement of God for becoming too liberal. For liberals, it is because the Church will 'retreat into a right wing ghetto' (middle-aged male priest, liberal theology, Scottish Episcopal Church, non-socially-excluded Hillhead), refusing to change its hard-line moral stance, or its traditional doctrines and practices in line with the changes in society. Indeed (for different reasons), there is a general concern that the Church will become even less and less relevant to the needs of society in future, and that in spite of an increasing interest in spirituality, it will lose out to other religions or New Age groups. These views are not expressed within a vacuum of power to enact change. However, they seem to reflect a sense of powerlessness amongst clergy to prevent the Church's further decline.

A final group of accounts is apocalyptic:

'I find the future very dark. That's not even just saying I can't quite see what the future is. I think it's more positively dark than that.

RL. 'Right. OK. What's, what's your meaning of dark?'

(pause). 'Total eclipse. I...(sighs)...I *do* see the Church as it has been known for the last hundred and fifty years virtually at an end. ... So, in simple projected terms, you can't see the future. There simply will not *be* a Church like the one that your parents stayed away from or went to, whichever. So I think, from that point of view, the Church as we've been accustomed to seeing it, is not going to exist. And I don't, I can't see...I think there is going

to be a sort of night time for the Church, when it's very hard to see it. But that's not the same as saying that the Church is *dying*. I am sure it that I see it as a kind of re-forming, a process of re-forming, it's going to be re-formed. It's not that faith makes no sense. Although it's not rational, faith, in some ways does still make sense, it's still a concept that is viable. ... Faith is now, and church-going is a serious business for people who seriously think about life. And it raises more questions than it answers very often, but nonetheless they still hang onto it. This thought that there's a fellowship of people who hold to this core of beliefs that will keep each other faithful and that that's worth not losing touch with. But it's a serious business. It's not a thing you go along to enjoy. It's not your sort of focus of light-hearted activity and recreation, as it used to be, but that's part of the re-forming, it's the place where people with a profound sense of life feel that there's yet still something to be gained.' (middle-aged male minister, liberal theology, Church of Scotland, non-socially-excluded Castlemilk).

These accounts are indeed apocalyptic, pointing to the 'total eclipse', or even 'death' of the Church as an institution. Yet they maintain that sense of hope which continues to undergird even these most dystopian of accounts. Hence even in situations of real despair, an ethic of hope can prevail, in however partial a form, so that moral geographical futures remain open, with a potential for change. Beyond this, there appears to be an abiding faith in the very *ethics* of Christianity, of justice, peace, love and equality, that is its strongest asset. So that even if the *Church* dies, the way of life, or moral beliefs that make up Christianity (however contested or marginalised they may be) can be of continuing relevance.

## SECTION 5D

# CONCLUSION: THEORISING THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF URBAN SCALE MORAL GEOGRAPHIES

## 5DI INTRODUCTION

My principal objective in this chapter has been to chart out and illuminate the manner in which abstract theologies of social justice and the city are translated and thickened into the spatial context of Glasgow, and to do this via analysis of moral geographical processes and tensions in these accounts. My argument is that although these processes and tensions characterise moral geographies at all scales, the nature in which they manifest themselves, and their salient characteristics, are unique to the particular scale at which they are studied. In this chapter, I have pursued a tension-by-tension approach to uncovering the contested nature of moral geographies of the urban scale. In the course I have been able to illustrate the way in which general moral geographical *processes* running through all scales are affected by a number of *tensions* contained within them that are marked differently at individual scales. In this urban scale chapter, the groups of individuals that I have analysed are the cadres of imaginers, who produce urban theologies, and the general third order moral geographical processes of imagination and reflection.

In concluding, I wish to firstly tease out the moral geographical tensions that are most salient at the urban scale, and secondly, those moral geographical processes that exist at this scale. This will allow me to highlight the unique nature of these tensions and processes. To complete the

discussion, I will emphasise the manner in which this urban scale research contributes towards the three areas of advancement that I wish to make in this thesis (as outlined in Chapter 3).

## **5D2 MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL TENSIONS AT THE URBAN SCALE**

In this chapter I have pursued a deliberate analytical strategy of writing out interview material in terms of the tensions that are contained within. Given the scalar focus of this thesis, it is my contention that whilst moral geographical processes and tensions are general and can (to some extent) be applicable to all scales, their *manifestation* can be different at different scales. In terms of my analysis of the urban scale, the focus has been on two sets of tensions: tensions of *theology and ethics*, and tensions of *geographies and imaginations*. The first set I analyse exclusively at the urban scale; the second set I analyse at all scales to maintain the common thread of the centrality of scalar arguments in this thesis. My exclusive analysis of tensions of theology and ethics at the urban scale derives from the fact that in terms of the types of moral geographies that I am analysing (social justice and the city), the urban scale is the 'highest' or most abstract scale that I encounter, as the initial scale at which abstract theologies encounter spatial reality. The material that I have analysed, then, is strongly characterised by contested theologies, contested ethics, contested scalar imaginaries, and contested utopian imaginaries.

| Meta Tensions                    | Meso Tensions                                       | Outcomes                             |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>THEOLOGY &amp; ETHICS</b>     | <i>Conceptions of theology and spirituality</i>     | <b>Contested theologies</b>          |
|                                  | <i>Conceptions of ethics</i>                        | <b>Contested ethics</b>              |
| POWER & POLITICS                 | Denominational tensions                             | Contested praxis                     |
|                                  | Sacred-Secular Tensions                             | Contested ideologies                 |
| <b>GEOGRAPHIES</b> &             | <i>Scalar Imaginaries</i>                           | <i>Contested scalar imaginaries</i>  |
| <b>IMAGINATIONS</b>              | <i>Multi-Scalar Utopian / Dystopian Imaginaries</i> | <b>Contested utopian imaginaries</b> |
| POSITIONALITIES &<br>DIFFERENCES | Moral positionalities                               | Contested experiences                |

**Table 5.1 – Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis, with urban scale tensions highlighted in bold (Copy of Table 3.2).**

## **5D2.1 TENSIONS OF THEOLOGY AND ETHICS**

### **5D2.1.1 Conceptions of theology and spirituality – contested theologies**

Contested theologies undergird all of the other tensions contained within urban moral geographies. They are fundamental because the manner in which theology is conceived profoundly influences how it is applied and practised. There is a basic tension between a conservative theology, grounded in a literal reading of Scripture, pursuing a strategy of preaching the Gospel in a 'one size fits all' model; and a more liberal theology where Scripture is interpreted in a plurality of manners, pursuing a practical strategy of Incarnational Christianity in a multi-faceted, changing manner. This basic tension influences how Scripture is understood as a



source of ethics, the purpose of Christianity, and the character of Christian spirituality and ministry. Alongside this fundamental cleavage, more subtle distinctions emerge, such as groups of 'open' conservatives who are willing to allow some room for biblical interpretation, clergy who attempt a more holistic understanding of ministry that combines the spiritual and the practical, and, most radically, charismatic clergy that see urban geographies as frequently 'evil geographies' where communities and indeed entire cities, can be under the grip of 'territorial spiritual powers'.

These latter understandings of theology are unique to the urban scale, where moral geographies of the city are constructed on starkly spiritual lines, where theology is used to provide sensational accounts of urban decay. In more general terms, the nature in which contested theologies are unique to the urban scale is the manner in which they are removed from the abstract discussions of the academy. All of the accounts given have to engage their theological understandings with the urban context, and therefore issues such as the status of Scripture, the ethics which it espouses, and the ministry that a church pursues, are all negotiated and decided in relation to the city. Even for conservatives, drawing universal ethics, their decision to view Scripture literally is taken as a reaction to their context, and their sense of its applicability to understanding that context – e.g. applying Scripture passages to 'evil geographies'.

### **5D2.1.2 Conceptions of ethics – contested ethics**

The basic tension between conservative and liberal continues to run through the field of contested ethics, as one's theological persuasion determines the sources from which ethics are taken, and the manner in which they are applied. Ethics of poverty follow this basic distinction, between conservatives who see poverty as a result of human sinfulness and personal misconduct, and liberals for whom poverty is caused by oppressive social structures created by the wealthy

and powerful. Conservatives use Scripture to justify a view that says 'the poor will always be with you', and which lambastes human 'laziness', whilst liberals take an approach to Scripture that espouses ethics of equality, God's 'bias' to the poor, and where the Prophets and Christ rail against social injustice. These basic differences in understanding poverty present problems for ethics of social justice, whereby liberals readily argue for social justice and a theological basis for it, rooted in Scripture and the Church's tradition of helping the needy. Some conservatives, on the other hand did not even *consider* the need for an ethic of social justice, let alone its application, preferring to leave matters of justice to personal consciences. This demonstrates a most stark distinction in contested ethics – not simply that there are differences of opinion about the nature of certain ethics, but whether or not there should be such ethics at all.

These differences are carried into theological understandings of how ethics should be applied, with conservative clergy advocating black and white ethical universals, applicable to all places and times, in a 'top-down' approach; and liberals arguing for general ethical principles that can serve as guides, but which must be rooted, reformed and contextualised in human experience, in a more 'bottom-up' approach. The nature of these ethical tensions is especially unique to the urban scale as the nature of urban poverty, and its associated multiple deprivation/social exclusion is so intense, especially in Glasgow, that it undoubtedly influences the ethics that are espoused. Clergy at the urban scale were highly willing to offer their 'take' on poverty largely because it is such a prevalent issue, which they are sufficiently 'close' to, as to be unable to ignore. For liberals in particular, advocating a contextual approach, the nature of these ethical tensions at the urban scale is unique because the urban as a *context* is unique, and therefore informs their understanding. These ethics are able to be wider in their scope than community scale ethics as in discussing poverty and justice in a city, they must consider rich and poor together, and the contestations between conservative and liberal. In the context of a poor community (or a rich

one), clergy can more conveniently 'ignore' wider ethical contestations, and focus on intra-community differences, rather than their wider urban counterparts.

## **5D2.2 TENSIONS OF GEOGRAPHIES AND IMAGINATIONS**

### **5D2.2.1 Urban scalar imaginaries – contested scalar imaginaries**

Contested scalar imaginaries are a key feature of urban moral geographies. Many clergy recognised that the urban is a site in a complex web of scalar relations. In terms of their scalar imaginations, the majority viewed the global scale as an increasingly important influence upon all aspects of the Church's ministry and ethics. For some, this was taken in negative terms, as a level of oppression and distance far removed from the everyday lives of the poor. These clergy argued for the Church to maintain a local focus as the best response to globalisation – to focus on its *impacts*. For others, a genuine multi-scalar politics of social justice that touched the *causes* of urban poverty was not only desirable, it was also very possible to achieve. This progressive view of the global-local dialectic saw the Church as operating at a multitude of levels from global to local, with the urban as a key intermediate filtering scale in a politics of social justice. In these views, the urban is seen as simultaneously global and local, as the site for the meeting of ethics, cultures, economies and scales in a dynamic interplay. The city is a place that can have impacts far beyond its own scale. This dynamic understanding of the urban underpinned some understandings of urban theology, and their willingness to draw upon biblical parallels of the city and its influence. However, the inherently *contextual* and *pro-poor* basis of urban theology presented problems for conservatives worried about a 'watering down' of the Gospel's universal applicability; for a 'rural backlash' concerned at a pro-urban focus; and by more radical insurgent imaginers concerned with urban theology being a cover for a 'suburban theology' of the rich.

These critiques illustrate that there are tensions surrounding the nature of urban theology, and its relation to other scales, other spaces, and theological universals. However, the level of discussion surrounding the urban suggests that it is a very important scalar construct for theology.

There is not so much a tension between dystopian and utopian theological imaginations of Glasgow, as a dominance of the former over the latter. Whether this was as a result of the general focus of the interviews on 'negatives' or not, it was an important issue. Dystopian theologies are again split along conservative and liberal lines, with conservatives pointing to the (im)moral problems of Glasgow, and liberals taking a more material understanding of the city's difficulties. These dystopian moral geographies are profoundly influenced by the type of theologies adopted, their ethics, and the manner in which they are translated. Conservative theologies produce considerably different dystopian moral geographies to their liberal counterparts. Utopian moral geographies were less prevalent, and where in existence, were often tempered by a reference to the dystopian side of the city. Utopian moral geographies focused on imaginaries, and the potential to create new urban futures, though some clergy were able to see evidence of utopia within dystopia in deprived communities such as Easterhouse. Dystopian moral geographies continued to focus upon the 'classic' dystopian spaces of peripheral housing schemes and the inner city of Glasgow. These spaces will form the focus for chapter 5. The unique nature of the tension of scaling dystopia and utopia to the urban scale, therefore, lies in the tendency for downscaled dystopian communities to be upscaled into a dystopian image of an entire city, and the construction of a dystopian moral geography as a result.

### **5D2.2.2 Multi-scalar utopian/dystopian imaginaries – contested utopian imaginaries**

As noted above, whilst the urban scale is a unique site for the dynamic interaction of a multiplicity of different processes, it cannot be divorced from issues at wider spatial scales. It is situated in far wider scalar processes and relations. As such urban scale tensions between utopian and dystopian moral imaginaries cannot be separated from imaginaries at other scales – either the community (in the case of characterising dystopian spaces such as Castlemilk), or the national scale (in terms of characterising the utopian/dystopian nature of 'society'). Central to the multi-scalar moral geographical imaginaries espoused is the moral motif of hope. Hence, in spite of the preponderance for the moral geographical imaginaries of the present condition of society and the Church to be dystopian, theologians remain hopeful about the future and are able to construct more utopian imaginaries. These utopian hopes are based in a common belief amongst all clergy, of whatever theological shade, of the importance of the Christian faith as a source for bringing hope, meaning and value to the life of the individual. Utopian imaginaries tend to be based upon either a hope for more individuals to experience this meaning through a religious conversion, or for the Church to become more like its other great motif – incarnational. Again, in spite of these imaginaries being multi-scalar and hence thinner or thicker than simply 'urban', it is the fact that they are constructed at the urban scale that makes them unique. Issues such as the future of the Church and the future of society are inescapably read through an urban lens, and dystopian imaginaries are as much based on characterisations of Glasgow as they are on detailed analysis of national society. The tension between a dystopian present and a future utopia is a creative dynamic that enables theologians to continue driving forward for change in the hope of better prospects.

## 5D3 MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL PROCESSES AT THE URBAN SCALE

Looking again at Figure 5.1, this chapter has focused exclusively on the 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of *imagining and reflection*, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of a *moral politics of negotiation (co-operation and contestation)* and *scaling* (urbanisation).

These moral geographical processes operate in a unique manner at this scale, as follows:

### 5D3.1 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of imagining and reflection

At the urban scale, moral geographical processes of imagining and reflection are central to the translation of theological principles into context. Whether in terms of conceiving theologies, utilising Scripture, classifying areas in a dystopian manner, or holding out utopian motifs for a future social justice, it is this sense of critical thinking which permeates all accounts. The type of imagining and reflection undertaken is hugely dependent upon theological position. Conservative theologians (again), tend to take a 'top-down' approach to theological reflection. They draw down their theological principles, stories, motifs and exemplaries from Scripture and Christian tradition. Imagination and reflection for such theologians is being able to translate these universal abstracts into the urban contexts in ways which ensure that their timeless essence is not brought into question or challenged, yet at the same time retaining a degree of contemporary relevance that will secure ready support from other church members. Liberal theologians prefer a far more contingent, 'bottom-up' approach to imagining and reflection. Theology can only be 'made' or 'done' or 'performed' in the context in which it is situated. Liberal theologians prefer to start with spatial context and work back to theology in a more abstract sense, particularly through global concerns with the poor in other countries.

What seems clear in all accounts, is that urban scale processes of imagining and reflection are not conducted in a reified, sterile atmosphere. Active theological reflection or utopian / dystopian imaginings are inescapably linked to the context in which they are situated. Hence, the overwhelming nature of problems of urban social exclusion in Glasgow, means that for many, their urban imaginings are inescapably dystopian, in a manner that they may not be were these clergy situated in a more affluent urban context. Likewise, as theological reflection cannot be divorced from the socio-economic context of the urban, it cannot either be divorced from the *institutional* context of the Church. This contributes to very negative reflections of the current condition of the Church.

However, what is particularly encouraging for a progressive politics of social justice, is that, in spite of these contemporary negative imaginaries, the imagination process has far more utopian and hopeful conceptions of the future. Both conservative and liberal clergy continue to maintain faith in the future. It is this ability to remain hopeful in the face of adversity that demonstrates the unique nature of a Christian faith that espouses ethics such as resurrection and new life. It also demonstrates that the more abstract nature of the urban scale, detached as it is from the practical difficulties encountered by clergy in their community scale work, perhaps allows sufficient 'distance' or 'perspective' from the pressing nature of social problems, to allow imagination and reflection to remain hopeful. The urban, then, serves as a crucial distancing point which allows abstract imagining and reflection, yet retains a firm grip on context, neatly combining universal and particular, abstract and real.

### **5D3.2 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes**

Moving to the intermediate level of 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes which are more general than their 3<sup>rd</sup> order counterparts, there are a number of key cross-cutting themes for the urban scale:

### **5D3.3 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of negotiation (co-operation and contestation)**

The moral politics of negotiation at the urban scale are conducted along the lines of the broad liberal-conservative theological cleavage that has shown itself to be so central to this chapter. Though I have not assembled evidence of any face-to-face theological 'combat', given that my research comes from individual one-to-one interviews, it is clear that there are major theological contestations surrounding issues such as poverty, social justice, and the future of the Church. The main way in which the *process* of contestation seems to occur is through the various structures of the churches such as presbyteries in the Church of Scotland or dioceses in Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches. In these contexts, clergy are able to debate with their colleagues and superiors the merits of various viewpoints and strategies.

However, in spite of this urban scalar structural framework existing, it seems clear that many clergy and church leaders contest different theologies in a more ad-hoc manner. This may be through one-to-one contact with other church members with whom they disagree; by joining informal networks pushing for a particular view (i.e. the network of charismatic churches in the Glasgow Prayer Canopy, or the Iona Community); or through more localised ecumenical initiatives. For many clergy that I interviewed, their process of contestation (and indeed co-operation) took place largely in a vacuum, with many citing a sense of personal isolation and lack of time to engage in proper debate or discussion with colleagues of similar or differing views.



Hence, they contest others more within the hypothetical confines of their own heads, whilst often feeling powerless to speak out or act.

In terms of processes of co-operation, it is possible to see interesting theological alliances forming that transcend denominational boundaries, being along conservative-liberal lines. Hence, it is possible to find Roman Catholics and Free Church of Scotland Presbyterians feeling that they have more in common than a conservative Presbyterian would have with a liberal Presbyterian. These sometimes bizarre juxtapositions illustrate the manner in which theological alliances at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are far more complex than their historical counterparts. This kind of 'theological ecumenism', rather than 'denominational ecumenism' tends to be issue-based and more 'temporary' in nature. The unique nature of processes of negotiation at the urban scale, then, continues to be this theme of their essentially more discursive nature – alliances and contestation of words and ideas is far more the type of activity that takes place at this scale, than alliances of a more practical nature.

#### **5D3.4 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of scaling (urbanisation)**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of scaling the urban through the 'urbanisation' of theologies is replete with tensions, as I have demonstrated, above. These tensions ensure that the process of scaling the urban is contested and debated at every turn. The core scaling process that is undertaken at the urban scale is the combined scaling of imagination and discourse to allow theological principles to be 'read' in an urban light. Hence, the urban scale acts as a key site for the filtering and understanding of theological principles which are then either up-scaled to national and global contexts, or down-scaled to community and body scales. The process by which theology has been scaled to the urban is not only a contemporary phenomenon, but part of a

historical process which has gradually come to privilege the 'urban' in theology as a discourse in its own right. However, this urbanisation process is not merely a matter of academic recognition of a discrete new area of theological debate, but is rather part of a much wider theological acknowledgment that the entire history of theological production has been inescapably contextually-based, and that therefore much of what in the past has been viewed as 'universal' theology is in fact equally as 'urban' as its more explicit siblings. Viewing the urbanisation of theologies in this manner, it is possible to see the way in which the urban truly is the nexus between global, local, past and future in terms of theological production. Re-conceptualising theology in this manner as essentially 'universalising the contextual', goes a long way to giving a far greater understanding of the two-way traffic that exists in the universal-particular dialectic that is central to 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical processes. Understanding the urban scale in this manner, as the primary 'starting point' for ethical-spatial engagement, can be broadened out to see the way in which *any* scale that is the 'start point' for ethical-spatial engagement is the nexus between a multitude of different scales and times. The scaling process at the urban scale, then, is particularly dynamic, and it is the fact that it is so focused on issues of imagination and reflection that permits such dynamism and breadth of multi-scalar concern in a way that is not possible where scaling is more concerned with *practice*.

## **5D4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have attempted to advance my theoretical understanding of moral geographies of social justice and the city through an initial empirical investigation of moral geographical processes and tensions at the urban scale. More widely, in relation to the three key contributions that I wish to make in this thesis, I can make the following conclusions at this stage:

#### **5D4.1 Inserting a religious perspective into moral geographical enquiry:**

The analysis which I have undertaken in this chapter has demonstrated clearly that religions form clear moral geographies. Ethics and principles are drawn from religious discourse and sacred texts and translated into spatial situations. The variety of manners in which the religious sources of ethics are contested and disputed demonstrates that even at this abstract scale, religion is very much a 'live' element of socio-cultural relations. By pursuing this engagement, I believe that I have clearly demonstrated the validity of incorporating a religious perspective into geographical enquiry, and the richness of material that it can generate.

#### **5D4.2 A scalar approach to understanding moral geographies:**

This chapter has advanced a scalar understanding of moral geographies in three ways. Firstly, it has demonstrated that scale matters in moral geographies. Urban theologies and their contested production by the cadre of urban imaginers are perfect examples of a deliberate scaling process in theology, which not only exists in the academy, but in the discourses of clergy in a city such as Glasgow. Secondly, it has demonstrated that a sophisticated conception of scale which is multi-scalar and process-based is essential to understanding moral geographies. Moral geographies cannot be divorced from the scale at which they are produced, nor can they be 'cut off' from contact with other scales. Finally, this chapter has demonstrated that scaling is as much a process of *imagination and reflection* as it is about a real, practical politics. The key role that a scalar imagination plays in a politics of social justice has been argued by Harvey (2000), and the empirical material from this chapter confirms that it is indeed central in theologies of social justice.

### **5D4.3 Constructing a framework of moral geographical processes and tensions:**

The production of urban scale moral geographies is a complex and contested process, and this chapter has demonstrated the importance of analysing moral geographical tensions in order to uncover that complexity. *Any* analysis of the production of moral geographies, then, must take into account the very fact that production is a *process*, and that this process is suffused with tensions and complexities. My focus on 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of imagining and reflection has demonstrated the initial importance of imagination in any moral geographical production, and likewise that this imagination is replete with tensions and contestations of theology, ethics and scale. Adding empirical 'meat' to the 'bones' of this framework has confirmed its robustness and relevance to furthering moral geographical enquiry in this field.

In theorising the unique nature of urban scale moral geographies of social justice and the city, it seems clear that the urban is peculiar as a discursive and organising level for Glasgow's clergy. In this respect, the urban is unique not simply because of the nature of the tensions which take place at this scale, but also because it is a site that has been actively produced by the cadre of urban imaginers in their discussions of urban theologies and urban moral geographies. As a scale at which discussion can still operate in an abstract manner, yet also take account of the peculiarities of context, urban scale moral geographies provide a 'jumping off point' for the thickening of abstract theologies into context, whilst still retaining a sufficient 'breadth' to act as a discursive level for abstract conceptions such as utopian imaginaries. The semi-abstract nature of these moral geographies allows the urban to act as much as a scale for organising and categorising ideas and principles, as a place for thickened moral geographical praxis. From this it is possible to conclude that the unique nature of moral geographies of social justice and the city at the urban scale is that

they are characterised by multiple tensions that are far more concerned with the 3rd order moral geographical processes of imagination and reflection than with the processes of living and practising. Though there is evidence of a bleeding of different scales into the urban, (whether it be in global discussions of social justice, or embodied discussions of moral transformation), it is this essentially more strategic, reflective, imaginary nature of the urban as a discursive, organising site for many discourses relating not just to the urban, but upscaled or downscaled, that makes urban scale moral geographies unique.

## **CHAPTER 6**

# **COMMUNITY SCALE ANALYSIS**

## SECTION 6A

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I move my empirical discussion to analyse the contested moral geographies of the community scale. Drawing upon theological commentaries in the previous chapter that have highlighted the importance of this scale and of 'community' more generally as a site for practising urban theology, I move beyond the processes of *imagination and reflection* (and their associated tensions) to the moral geographical processes of *practising and living*. In doing this, I focus upon the cadre of executioners who actively live and practice their theologies. My concentration at this scale will be upon six geographical communities in Glasgow which are multiply-deprived/poor/socially-excluded. The geographical location of these communities is shown in Figure 6.2.

I have chosen these six communities because of their deprived nature, as communities where theologies and ethics of social justice have to find resonance if they are to be practised, and also because these six communities have all featured strongly in the dystopian moral geographies of Glasgow deriving from the urban scale analysis. Again, my methodology for this chapter is the continuation of the grounding theory approach where I allow my *a priori* theoretical conceptions to work with existing empirical material from the urban scale, and new material from the community scale, in an iterative manner.

In this chapter, my focus is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of *practising and living*, which is central to the exchange of theology at the community scale by the cadre of executioners. The more practical, interactionary, political nature of moral geographical processes is particularly

1<sup>st</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

2<sup>nd</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

3<sup>rd</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

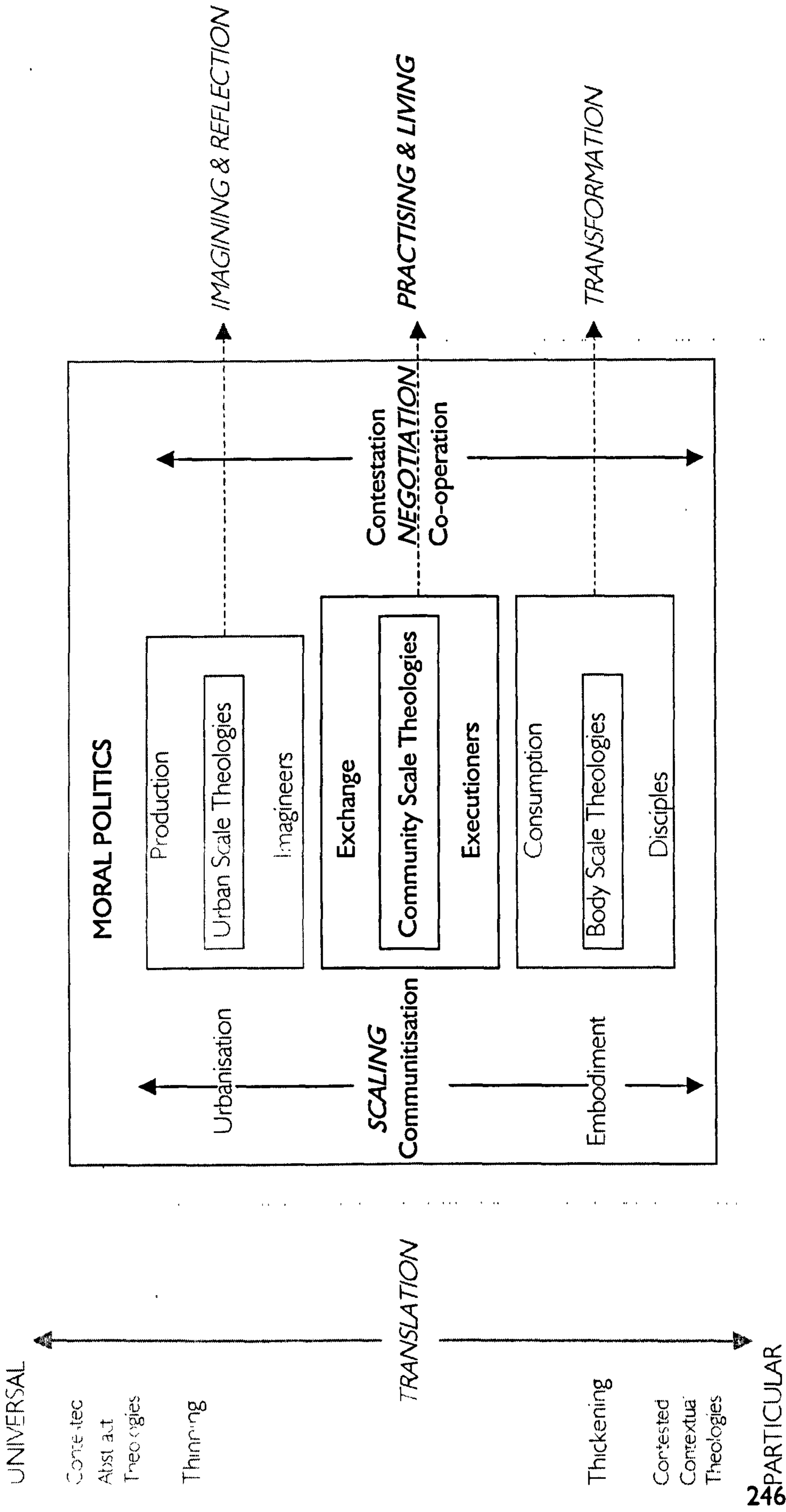


Figure 6.1 – Diagrammatic representation of moral geographical processes examined in thesis (Copy of Figure 3.2).



important at the community scale, in contrast to theologies' concentration on the urban as a scale for imagining. Alongside my analysis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes of practising and living, this chapter is also concerned with the unique manner in which the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of scaling and negotiation are present at the community scale (see Figure 6.1). In order to undertake this analysis, I again focus upon the moral geographical tensions outlined in Chapter 3 (Table 3.2 [repeated as Table 6.1, below]).

At the urban scale, my focus has been on tensions of *theology and ethics*, and *geographies and imaginations*, and their contested outcomes. At the community scale, I will focus upon a new set of tensions, not yet considered – those of *power and politics*. I will look at both sacred-secular tensions and their contested ideologies; and denominational tensions and their contested praxis, these being the key features of power and politics at the community scale. Analysis of these tensions gives the insight into the 2<sup>nd</sup> order process of negotiation (and the sub-processes of co-operation and contestation – Figure 6.1). In order to evaluate the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of *scaling* (communitisation), which is central to this thesis, it is again necessary (as with the urban and body scales), to analyse the tensions of scalar imaginaries which make contested scalings of the community unique. These processes and tensions of scale are the common thread running through the urban, community and body chapters in order to fully probe the issue of scale that is one of the three central theoretical contributions that I will make in this thesis.

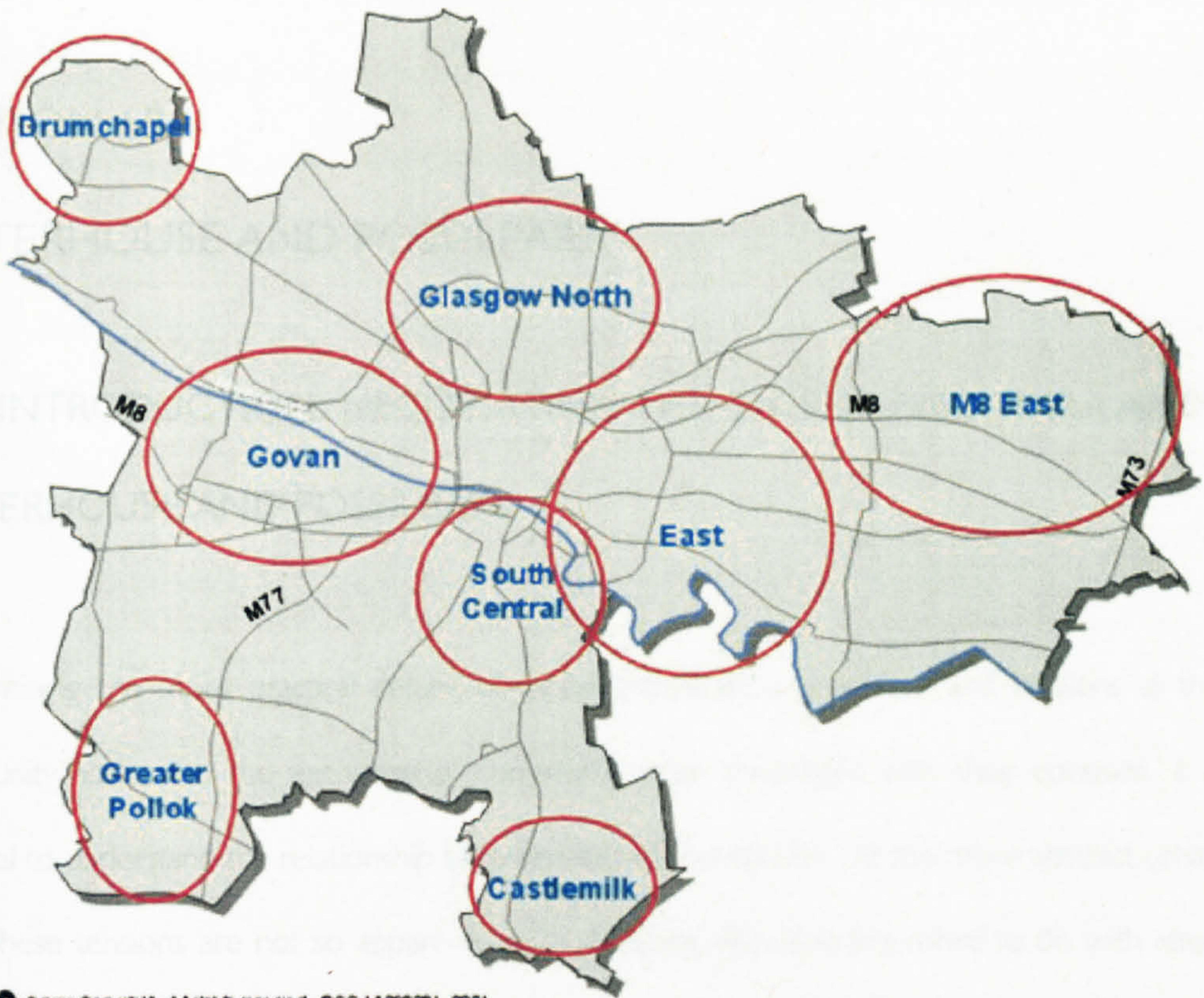
I pursue my analysis via three pairs of pastiches / vignettes (see Chapter 4), each looking at different processes and tensions. In Section 6B, which looks at tensions of power and politics which concern sacred-secular tensions, I investigate the communities of Easterhouse and Possilpark, analysing the processes of negotiation (co-operation and contestation). In Section 6C, to analyse denominational tensions of power and politics, I consider the East End of Glasgow and

processes of contestation in sectarianism; and Drumchapel, where processes of co-operation are underway through ecumenism. Finally, in Section 6D, a pair of pastiches set in Castlemilk and Pollok, analyse the processes and tensions of scaling that are present at the community scale.

The chapter is structured around this basic order of three Sections (6B, 6C and 6D) which each comprise sets of pastiches dealing with specific tensions. At the beginning and end of each Section, I outline the theoretical issues to be explored and concluded, as a means of distilling out the more analytical points from the otherwise more vivid description contained within the pastiches themselves. Finally, in Section 6E, I will then conclude by considering how the theoretical outcomes relating to moral geographical processes and tensions at this scale, advance understanding of the core 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical framework in the existing literature, as outlined in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

| Meta Tensions                 | Meso Tensions                                       | Outcomes                            |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| THEOLOGY & ETHICS             | <i>Conceptions of theology and spirituality</i>     | Contested theologies                |
|                               | <i>Conceptions of ethics</i>                        | Contested ethics                    |
| POWER & POLITICS              | <b>DENOMINATIONAL TENSIONS</b>                      | <b>CONTESTED PRAXIS</b>             |
|                               | <b>SACRED-SECULAR TENSIONS</b>                      | <b>CONTESTED IDEOLOGIES</b>         |
| GEOGRAPHIES & IMAGINATIONS    | <b>SCALAR IMAGINARIES</b>                           | <b>CONTESTED SCALAR IMAGINARIES</b> |
|                               | <i>Multi-Scalar Utopian / Dystopian Imaginaries</i> | Contested utopian imaginaries       |
| POSITIONALITIES & DIFFERENCES | <i>Moral positionalities</i>                        | Contested experiences               |

Table 6.1 – Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis, with community scale tensions highlighted in bold (Copy of Table 3.2).



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Figure 6.2 – Map of Glasgow, showing the location of the six Social Inclusion Partnership areas studied for community scale analysis (M8 East [Easterhouse]; Glasgow North [Possilpark, Ruchill]; Drumchapel; East End [Calton, Dalmarnock]; Greater Pollok and Castlemilk). (Source: Glasgow City Plan, 2001).

## SECTION 6B

### EASTERHOUSE AND POSSILPARK

#### 6B1 INTRODUCTION: NEGOTIATING THE SACRED AND SECULAR IN EASTERHOUSE AND POSSILPARK

In examining the more practical nature of moral geographical processes and tensions at the community scale, and the exchange of community scale theologies with their contexts, it is essential to understand the relationship between sacred and secular. At the more abstract urban scale, these tensions are not so apparent, as issues being discussed are more to do with ideas than concrete realities. At the community scale, the practical, political nature of pursuing social justice means that theologies and Christian groups have to either contest or co-operate with their secular counterparts as they negotiate between abstract principles and the particularities of context. I have already noted the manner in which many theologians of a liberal persuasion combine secular theories of social justice with theological principles in their formulating of moral geographies of social justice and the city (Chapter 2 and Chapter 5). Understanding the tensions between sacred and secular, then, is crucial to moral geographies at all scales, but particularly at the community scale where local politics are often messy and complex.

I have chosen Easterhouse and Possilpark as the sites for analysing these issues. As outlined in the methodology chapter, these communities were frequently referred to by interviewees as imagined 'dystopian' communities. Likewise, according to official government statistics, they are significant geographical concentrations of urban social exclusion. Over and above this, my

peculiar interest in sacred-secular relations in these communities again relates to my 'grounding theory' approach. Through contacts that I made during urban scale interviews, I became aware that in Easterhouse, significant local tensions existed around sacred-secular relations, particularly in terms of community development initiatives. For Possil, strong media coverage of Church clashes with the secular local authority and regeneration initiatives over housing redevelopment proposals, meant that I was already well-aware of sacred-secular conflicts in this community.

In these two pastiches, I aim to paint a vivid account of some of the key issues in sacred-secular tensions of power and politics in the Easterhouse and Possil communities. Throughout, two key recurring themes that I shall address are firstly an 'incarnational Christianity' theological approach of 'seeing the sacred in the secular', where the boundary between sacred and secular becomes blurred and often contradictory. Secondly, these complex sacred-secular relations are characterised by two competing types of moral geographies – dominant moral geographies of the powerful, and insurgent moral geographies of the powerless. These are related to some of the utopian and dystopian motifs discussed in the previous chapter, and demonstrate that moral geographical tensions are as much to do with contestations of power as of contestations between sacred and secular. Bearing these two points in mind will help to keep the two pastiches firmly linked to my theoretical framework of Chapter 3.

## **6B2 EASTERHOUSE – CHURCH AND COMMUNITY**

### **6B2.1 Introduction**

Easterhouse forms the central core of the largest of Glasgow's four peripheral public housing schemes. Situated in the north east of the city, Greater Easterhouse comprises the

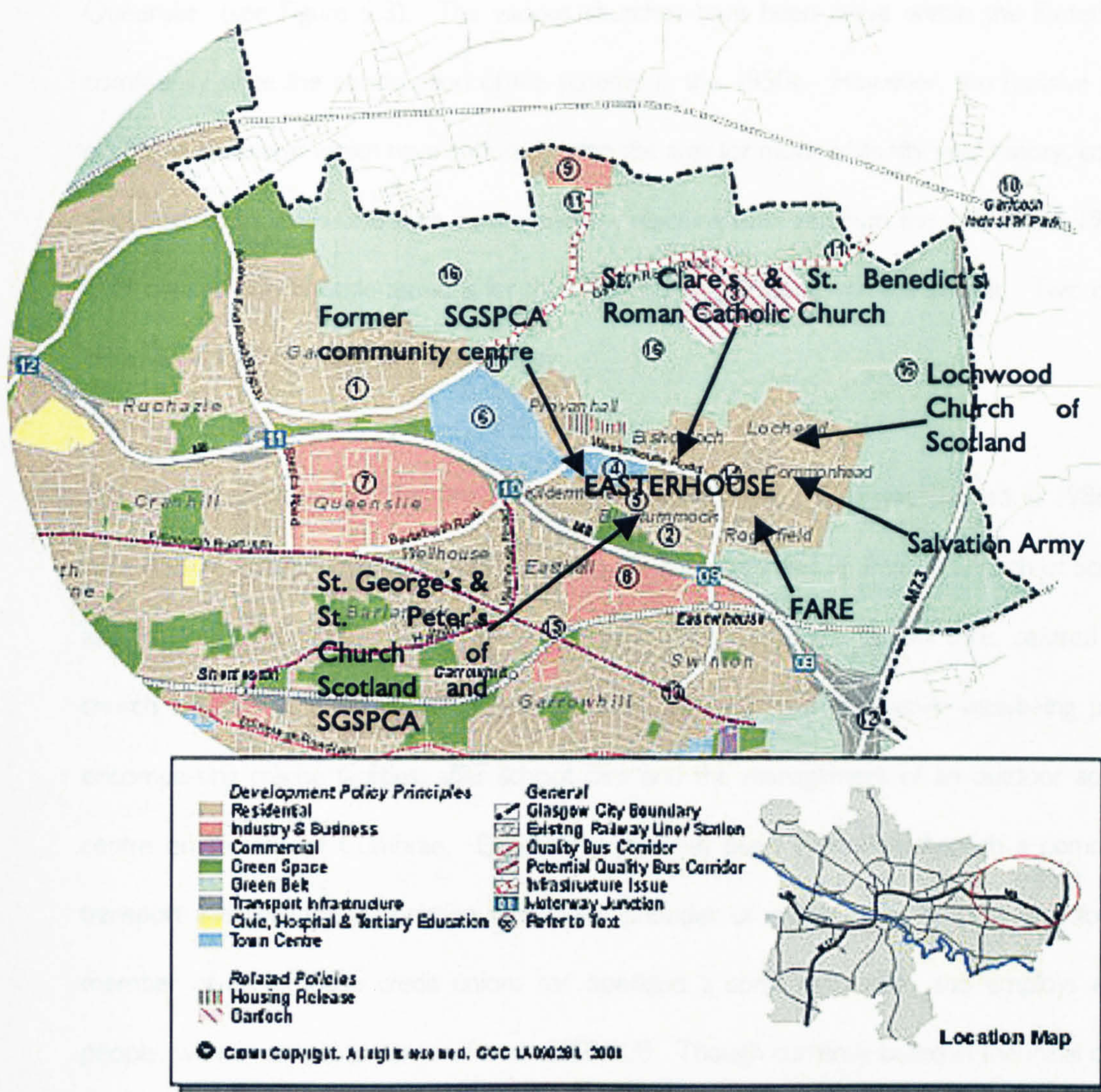


Figure 6.3 – Map of Greater Easterhouse Social Inclusion Partnership, showing Easterhouse in the north east area (Source: Glasgow City Plan, 2001).

neighbourhoods of Easterhouse, Garthamlock, Craigend, Cranhill, Ruchazie, Barlanark and Queenslie (see Figure 6.3). The various churches have been active within the Easterhouse community since the construction of the scheme in the 1950s. However, the massive socio-economic problems which have endured within the area for much of its fifty year history, coupled with declines in levels of church commitment – reaching their zenith in the 1980s and 1990s – have created considerable tensions for the Church's engagement with the secular. Two church initiatives will serve to illustrate this strategy:

The *St. George's and St. Peter's Community Association (SGSPCA)* was created in 1986 as a joint venture involving members of Easterhouse St. George's and St. Peter's Church of Scotland and the local community. From an early emphasis upon child and elderly care, centred upon church buildings, the Association has grown into a major child and family well-being project encompassing crèche facilities, after school care and the management of an outdoor activities centre on the Isle of Cumbrae. Elderly day care has been expanded through a community transport initiative; the Association is a major provider of employment training; is a founder member of Easterhouse credit union; has operated a community café, and employs eleven people, with an annual turnover of over £250,000. Though currently based in the initial church premises, the Association until recently (following withdrawal of city council funding) operated Glasgow's largest community centre.

*FARE (Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse)* is a local community organisation based in the Rogerfield neighbourhood of the Easterhouse scheme. Formed in 1989 by local residents the project aims to 'enhance the lives of the inhabitants of Rogerfield and Easterhouse' (FARE, 2001). In a similar manner to SGSPCA, FARE has an especially strong emphasis upon work with young people and families, providing various youth clubs, a breakfast club, money advice project, health



**Plate 6.1 – FARE community centre and headquarters in converted local authority flats, Easterhouse.**

**Plate 6.2 – Salvation Army hall and community centre, Easterhouse, showing new and modernised housing constructed as part of Social Inclusion Partnership regeneration activities.**





assistance, courses helping education and training, and a community café. Initially without premises, since 1995 the organisation has occupied a block of six tenement flats in the Rogerfield area as the base for its activities. Whilst being an ostensibly secular organisation, a number of individual Christians have had key roles in shaping and developing FARE's work and vision.

The work of these two individual initiatives will provide a contrasting example of different tensions surrounding sacred engagement with the secular. At the heart of this lies a key difference in strategy adopted by each project. In seeking to thicken moral visions of social justice into the Easterhouse context, SGSPCA has opted for a strategy of a Christian project peopled by non-Christians (as well as Church members); whilst FARE is a secular project staffed and envisioned by a number of key Christian members (as well as non-Christian community members). Each project then represents a particular dialectic between the sacred and the secular, and the intertwining of Christian theologies with secular practice, negotiating the complexities of local place to create thickened moral geographies.

The account which follows is based upon three interviews carried out in May / June 2001, with Rev. Malcolm Cuthbertson<sup>i</sup> (minister at St. George's and St. Peter's since 1984); Bob Holman<sup>ii</sup> (initiator of FARE), and Matt and Diane Hall<sup>iii iv</sup> (Christian community workers with FARE). I have attended the projects on a number of previous occasions for preliminary research and urban scale interview work, and have a basic personal feel for the nature of the work taking place. I shall initially focus upon the particular reasons *why* the structures and strategies were adopted, looking at the key features of each approach. From this I will then look at the tensions that have been peculiar to each project; followed by a concluding comparative discussion. Figure 6.4 and Plates 6.1 to 6.6 give a flavour of the Easterhouse landscape, SGSPCA and FARE promotional material, and the sites encountered in the text.

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**F.A.R.E.**



Figure 6.4 – FARE and SGSPCA promotional material.

## 6B2.2 St. George's and St. Peter's Community Association – uniting the sacred with the secular

At the heart of SGSPCA's approach is the notion of uniting the sacred with the secular, and indeed *seeing* the sacred *in* the secular. The congregation which Cuthbertson inherited in 1984 had (in his analysis) adopted an 'escapist' mentality whereby the sacred was seen as a means of flight from the secular. In spite of one or two activities such as the youth and elderly work, the congregation was essentially small, old, and refused to confront the realities of the contemporary Easterhouse scheme. The pressing needs of the local community, and the church's opportunity to assist, were therefore going by unnoticed. Cuthbertson saw it as a crucial part of his work to engage the sacred with the secular, working with the schemes disaffected young people, drug addicts and unemployed.

His primary concern was, step-by-step, to 'push the boundaries' of the church out to include the secular as an integral part, taking his membership with him. This is grounded in theology. As Cuthbertson shows, it is the active *translation* and thickening of abstract theological principles, which has led to this style of church work:

MC. 'I am theologically of the opinion that God or the Holy Spirit, or Christ himself or whatever way you want to look at it, is active in peoples' lives, without the specific confessing of Christian faith and Christian activity. Now, the way / translated into my own activity, ministry, and particularly the Association, is that two things: *one*, it does not need the name of Christ to be *confessed* in activity that is positive. If we bring elderly people together, or if we bring a crèche place to a needy family, then that is a good and Godly thing, and we don't need to specifically write the name of Jesus Christ across it. (...) I think the second thing is that in terms of the ability to produce that, the Christian Church does not have all the answers or all the people or all the



**Plates 6.3 & 6.4 – New housing sits alongside abandoned tenement blocks awaiting demolition, and the urban wasteland left behind in which some continue to live.**



skills and interests invested in it to deliver the best of care or the best of facilities. And therefore we do not hire staff on the basis of Christian allegiance. We hire staff on the basis of their ability to deliver the best of service.'

This radical theological approach which dares to suggest that the ostensibly 'secular' is indeed sanctified and Christ-like, shows that Cuthbertson's moral geographical reading of Easterhouse is an *inclusive* one, and that not only the *good*, but indeed the *Godly* can be seen in the place and its people, whether churched or not. This certainly stands in clear opposition to conventional modes of church structure and mission strategy which view the need for personal conversion and the redemption of communities. Hence, Cuthbertson's theology is radical in its suggesting that God is *already* there in the lives of the marginalised and oppressed, and that it is the Church's role to embrace this as its own. SGSPCA was the clear response to this – though not without its problems.

### **6B2.3 FARE – Christians in the secular**

When Bob Holman moved to Easterhouse in 1987, he had already taken the dramatic step of giving up a prestigious academic position in social policy to become a full-time resident and community worker living in the deprived Southdown housing estate in Bath, England. With a deep Christian commitment, and a profound egalitarian vision of social justice, Holman has written extensively (e.g. Holman, 1997; 1998), and gained a reputation as a radical in both academic and Christian circles.

When choosing to live in Easterhouse, Holman was making a conscious choice to live amongst the poor in an *incarnational* view of Christianity. He was however, unemployed, and used most



**Plate 6.5 – Religious iconography in Easterhouse: St. George's & St. Peter's Church of Scotland, showing land in foreground where original sanctuary building was demolished due to lack of money for maintenance.**

**Plate 6.6 – Uninhabitable Easterhouse: boarded-up tenements and the former community centre occupied by SGSPCA before withdrawal of funding.**



of his first two years in the community simply 'hanging around' and getting to know local people. After a local residents' meeting in 1989, FARE was created. However, in spite of his strong (and publicly-known) Christian beliefs, working in an ostensibly 'church' or 'Christian' setting was not the way forward, and Holman pursued a strategy of being openly 'Christian' within a secular organisation.

For Holman, as with Cuthbertson and SGSPCA, the sacred is seen as contained within the secular, and the manifest difficulties and problems of Easterhouse do not preclude a fundamental theological reading of the community as a place where God is present in the secular:

'It gave *me* a sense that God was present. And I think God is present, and you do see. I mean in this place where you see you know, so much trouble and drug abuse and violence, you do see some *wonderful* acts of self-sacrifice, of caring for neighbours, of people who've got very little money, who give that to other people. And I mean so this has been you know, a *learning* experience, a learning curve for me in the way in which God *works* amongst humanity. I now don't believe that he keeps Christianity to Christians. And therefore I think what I'm getting at is I think that you know Christians shouldn't necessarily keep themselves within Christian agencies, and shouldn't only promote Christian agencies, but as Christians, they should work in secular agencies, but also *promote* you know, social services'.

Holman's moral geography of Easterhouse is particularly radical in his 'I now don't believe that (God) keeps Christianity to Christians'. This illustrates the manner in which abstract models of theology, and inherited structures of Christian involvement with place, have had to undergo considerable re-working as they negotiate the peculiarities of context. SGSPCA and FARE may have different approaches to engaging the secular and the sacred, but each shares a common

moral geographical reading of Easterhouse, and the nature of sacred presence within the community.

#### **6B2.4 Tensions encountered in engaging sacred and secular**

In general terms, tensions between sacred and secular have been far more severe for SGSPCA than those at FARE. The main tensions outlined by Bob Holman and Matt and Diane Hall relate to issues such as financing of the project, cliqueiness and parochialism amongst some project users, and how to translate Christian moral ideals into an engagement with secular culture. The Hall's both outlined in particular the tensions which often come from the local community in relation to their notion of 'sharing your life with other people'. Motivated to live in Easterhouse and work in FARE because of their background in community development and social work, Matt and Diane appealed to a strongly incarnational notion of Christianity – that of a real, physical presence in a place – as at the heart of their understanding of the Church's mission amongst the poor.

Working around a model of '*service*', rooted in theologies of the servanthood of Christ, they talked frequently about not being seen as 'experts', and walking graciously and humbly *with* the people of Easterhouse on their journey through life. They pointed out that often they are not 'up-front' about their faith in verbal terms, but prefer to embody Christ's presence. However, when the Christian faith *is* verbalised, Easterhouse's dominant moral culture presents tensions and difficulties:

'There's a stronghold, especially with the males in an area like this, about pressure to conform. It exists in all cultures, but the pressure to conform here is about not always expressing yourself emotionally. Not always being honest about how you're feeling and being frightened... And



that's a challenge you know. But if it is about young people and their age and development, then maybe they'll kind of grow out of that, you know. But if it is a stronghold, then it prevents people from... strongholds are spiritual and they affect the physical world, and they affect relationships, and they affect the way people.. but then you want to kind of impact the leaders and the strong personalities in an area, because they can sometimes then influence people for the right reasons'.

The notion of 'strongholds' is an interesting one as it shows that dominant moral cultures are often interpreted as being a 'spiritual' issue, having roots in the Christian notion of the perpetual struggle between good and evil (c.f. 'evil geographies' in Chapter 4). Yet rather than lament the (im)moral condition of Easterhouse, the Hall's view the tension which is created by the dominant culture positively, and as something which is potentially transformative. This illustrates that the negotiation of theologies with local moral geographies of place can be highly creative, and is not necessarily about conflict.

For Malcolm Cuthbertson and SGSPCA, engaging sacred with secular created significant tensions *within* the sacred. Cuthbertson's interview was a remarkably frank and honest account of his own personal struggles with members of his congregation, and with the power structure of the Church of Scotland. His major conflict with the secular sphere related to Glasgow City Council's decision to withdraw funding from Easterhouse Community Centre, effectively making SGSPCA homeless; and their refusal to then allow the Association to build a new community centre on any other site in the area. The real conflict caused between sacred and secular has been manifested *within* the Church itself: with some of his congregation; with other local churches; and with the regional and national scales of Church government: Glasgow Presbytery, and the department of National Mission.

Cuthbertson spoke of early difficulties in getting his congregation 'on board' about engagement with the secular sphere, which led to tensions within the congregation, and some prominent elders resigning or leaving the church altogether. Whilst not wishing to lose members, he was candid that 'growth is always about conflict at certain times', and the result has been that church and SGSPCA are now integrated.

It is in the area of relations with the Presbytery and National Mission department that conflict has dogged Cuthbertson for the seventeen years of his ministry in Easterhouse. In most part, he said, these two scales of Church government were:

'not the slightest bit interested, and have shown *no* interest in what the Association has been doing, or indeed the church has been doing, for some considerable time'.

However, the process of quinquennial 'visitations' by Presbytery and National Mission auditors (to assess the parish's 'performance') resulted in severe criticism of Cuthbertson for pursuing a secular 'partnership' agenda, and not one dedicated to increasing church membership and attendance. When the St. George's & St. Peter's sanctuary was demolished following storm damage in 1999, and simultaneously SGSPCA was made homeless, following the closure of the community centre, Cuthbertson approached the National Mission department to see if a new building could be constructed which would incorporate the sanctuary and community centre together. However, after two and a half years' negotiation with the department, his plans have been rejected persistently on the grounds that it did not see a strategy of sacred-secular partnership work as the mission of the Church. Since Cuthbertson refused to pursue the traditional Church agenda of 'converting' people to the Christian faith, he was informed not only

that no new building would be constructed (leaving him with a half-demolished church hall), but that (in March 2001):

'I was asked to leave my charge. And I was told there would be legal proceedings were I *not* to leave the charge. And I was further told that they wouldn't put me out the manse immediately'.

This was founded upon a basic accusation that:

'There seems to be an assumption that I've *failed* in seventeen years of ministry. The reason why they're wanting to leave, let me go, is that you know "Malcolm just, you know, you've done your best and so on and you've failed" '.

Nevertheless, as a man who admits that 'growth is always about conflict at certain times', he consulted his congregation, who gave him full support; other UPA ministers; and the Moderator (John Miller), Principal Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly who said that the legal basis for his removal is 'practically impossible'; he has decided to remain, and contest the national agenda. By his own admission, this will create 'huge distractions' from carrying out his pastoral work, that will take 'years' to iron out, with no possibility in sight of the new building that the congregation and SGSPCA requires. Reflecting on the accusation of failure, Cuthbertson pointed out realistically:

'I have *no* impression whatsoever in terms of failure. At the outset the first thing ministers have to do within UPAs is to *survive*. Many ministers don't. I've been seventeen years here, and I've no intention of going anywhere or doing anything... .. the situation is that I have absolutely no issue at all, that based on the resources with which I have been able to gather – and most of those resources are non-Church resources – we have achieved a significant amount in relation to

the support of individuals and families within the Easterhouse community. Of that I've no doubt. (examples given)... ... We have moved people *markedly* in terms of their capacity to integrate into community and society, and to make significant changes with it. So this is not a failure. There is no way that this can be seen as a failure'.

At the bottom line, the major contestation between Cuthbertson and the Church's structures over sacred-secular engagement, is one of *theology*, whereby a dominant abstract theology is in conflict with a local grounded theology:

'The Church structures, as I understand it, are looking for people who have a very specific experience of Christianity. They would normally have, or require, some kind of conversion experience, that would lead them to become experts in the capacity to *pray* and to read the Bible. And part of that capacity would be an intellectual assent to the major creeds of the Church, and signing on the dotted line in terms of Church membership, which would normally mean attendance in a congregation on a Sunday morning. And if I can produce that kind of person here, New Charge Development would have no hesitation in building the buildings here. That's my understanding of the situation. *My* understanding of the situation, in terms of theology, is that I can't find an atheist in Easterhouse. As far as I'm concerned, my community, to a *person*, is already signed up in understanding the importance of God and Jesus Christ for the world. The *problem*, that they have, is not with their *faith*, but with the Church... ... Our expectations of what it means for these people to be a Christian, is inappropriate to their particular situation. What we *need* to do is to encourage them in the faith they *have*, and to allow them to seek to be the best that they can be, within the limitations and circumstances in which they find themselves'.

The depth of disagreement over theological vision – fundamentally related to the nature of the connections between the sacred and the secular – which is so severe as to lead to the threat of the *expulsion* of a parish minister from their charge, is an unsettling example of moral

geographical tension. Universal and particular clash in such a dramatic fashion that compromise seems impossible. Moral power relations are exercised to the full.

### **6B2.5 Conclusion**

In summary, the work of SGSPCA and FARE in Easterhouse, provide an illuminating study of the tensions surrounding the nature of Church structure, organisation, and mission strategy. Whilst there is a fundamental difference between the organisations in terms of how sacred and secular are linked, each holds a moral geographical reading of Easterhouse that views the secular as somehow sacred through God's presence in the community, and each presents a challenge to traditionally dominant theologies that view Church mission as about taking people 'out' of the secular and into the sacred. Both projects have a far more creative understanding of the relationship between the two spheres.

Each organisation has encountered tensions relating to financing, local agencies, and membership. Both *have* struggled, in different ways, to relate to the local community. Yet FARE's strategy appears to have created far fewer tensions with other Christian organisations. Cuthbertson and Holman both have a good working relationship, and SGSPCA and FARE work together on a number of youth work initiatives. The relative independence of FARE as a local voluntary organisation, detached from formal Church power structures has made it far easier for Holman to pursue his theological vision of secular engagement, without being in any way ostensibly 'Christian'. In contrast, Cuthbertson has experienced significant local success and support, but by remaining tied to Church structures, has been a victim of dominant power sources. The SGSPCA case illustrates the massive gulf between abstract and realised theologies of sacred-secular engagement, and the way in which this generates moral agenda of the powerful which can so easily attempt to crush those of local groups. Whatever the future for SGSPCA's and

FARE's work, it is abundantly clear that moral geographical tensions surrounding sacred and secular have the potential to cause significant difficulties in local contexts.

## **6B3 POSSIL & RUCHILL – 'THE WEST END GOES NORTH'**

### **6B3.1 Introduction**

Ruchill and Possil, in North Glasgow, are two of the city's oldest working class communities. Figure 6.5 shows their location and Figure 6.6 and Plates 6.8 to 6.12 give a flavour of the communities and the problems which form the focus of this Section. With a heavy industrial base, the communities have been party to the rise and concomitant fall of all that Glasgow's industrial revolution was built upon. The haemorrhaging of industrial employment from the areas from the 1950s onwards, left severe unemployment problems, derelict factory sites, and a leaking away of the economically active populations. Around 40,000 people lived in Possil alone at the end of world war two. By the late 1980s this had fallen to 18,000, as a result of the industrial decline, and out-migration to peripheral schemes in the 1960s. The areas' nineteenth century and inter-war tenements quickly gained the reputation as the most notorious concentration of drug abusers in Scotland. The classic dystopian image that this created led to the areas' becoming the archetypal 'dumping ground' for anti-social tenants, and 'problem' households, leading to further out-migration of existing residents frightened of the new 'drug culture'. By the late 1990s, Possil's population had halved again to 9,000, following systematic demolition of by now empty and derelict public housing stock.

In October 1999, the newly-created *Glasgow Alliance* regeneration partnership (made up of Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Development Agency, Greater Glasgow Health Board, Scottish

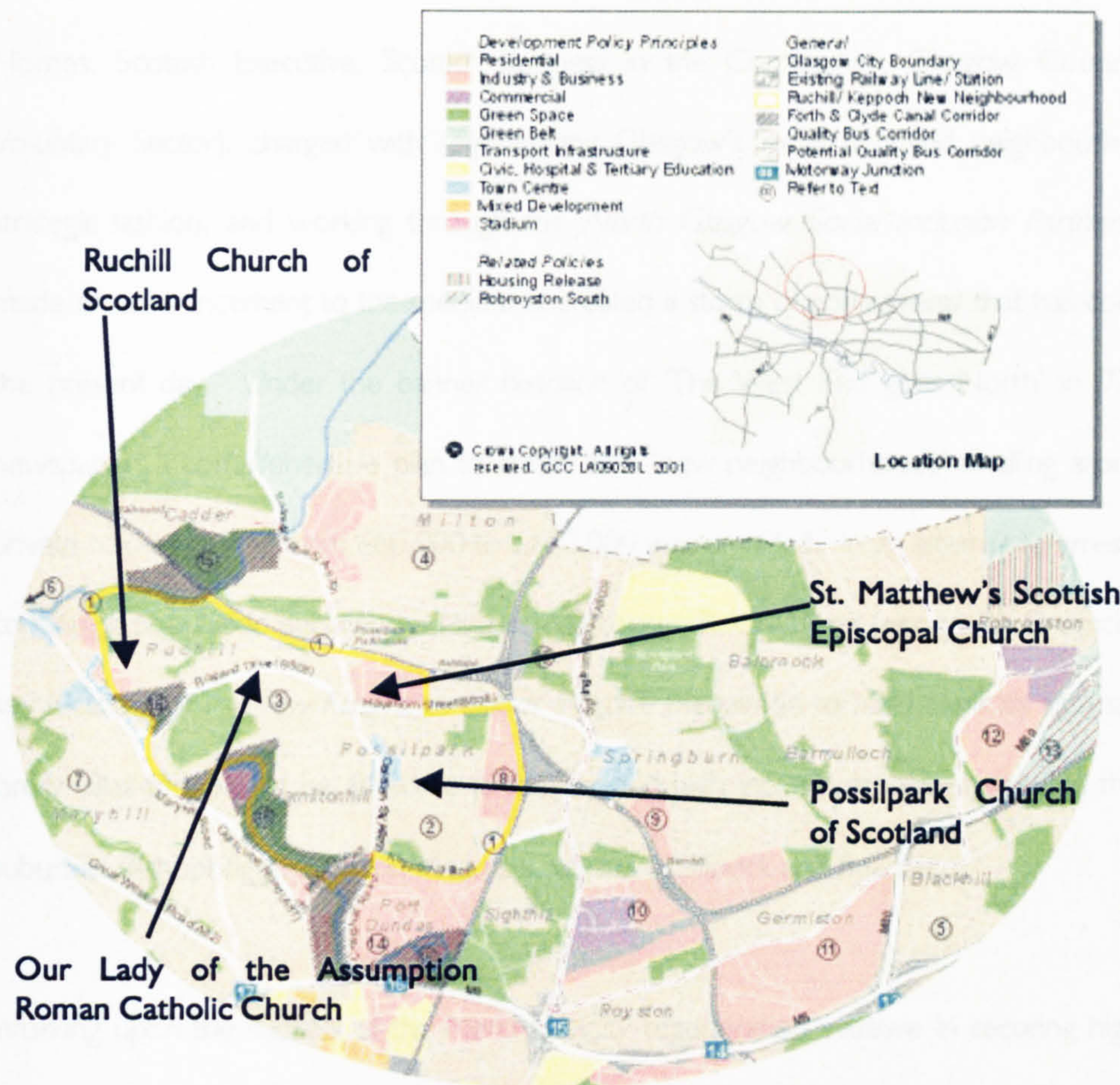


Figure 6.5 – Map of Glasgow North Social Inclusion Partnership area, showing Possilpark and Ruchill in the centre and west, with the Ruchill/Possil *New Neighbourhood* bounded in yellow. (Source: Glasgow City Plan, 2001).

Homes, Scottish Executive, Scottish Business in the Community, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector), charged with regenerating Glasgow's most deprived neighbourhoods in a strategic fashion, and working through the *North Glasgow Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP)*, made an announcement to the media that created a storm of controversy that has continued to the present day. Under the banner headline of 'The West End goes North' in *The Herald* newspaper, a comprehensive plan to create two 'new neighbourhoods' totalling around 1,000 private houses costing from £60,000 to £120,000 was unveiled. In an attempt to arrest the city's continuing population decline, the Alliance had chosen Ruchill/Possil (along with Drumchapel) as a key location for its *New Neighbourhoods Initiative* that aimed to build explicitly up-market large family villas that would be attractive to families and high income groups engaged in the flight to suburban Bishopbriggs, Newton Mearns, Clarkston, Giffnock and Bearsden.

Working upon the success of the Merchant City regeneration initiative in securing high income residents within the city boundaries, and the 'overheated' nature of the West End and South Side property markets illustrating a ready demand for housing from such income groups, the proposal argued that 'new spaces' were necessary to enable the continuing demands to be met, given the space constraints of the West End in particular. That this should be proposed to take place in Glasgow's most notorious 'drugs' areas seemed surprising. That it was proposed without any consultation with the Ruchill and Possil communities, was a source of bitterness, and set the scene for a highly public and damaging confrontation between local groups and the Glasgow Alliance.

For weeks afterwards, the letters section of *The Herald* was filled with argument and counter-argument between local residents and the Glasgow Alliance / Glasgow City Council. Highly-emotive language speaking of 'ethnic cleansing', 'imperial colonisation', the erection of a 'Berlin



Wall', 'apartheid', and 'the Glasgow lowland clearances' sprang from furious community activists, to be met by put-downs of being 'misinformed', and a 'lesson' from Glasgow City Council's Director of Housing about 'the real issues involved' in the state of the city's housing market. Throughout the ensuing debate, the most fervent critics of the proposals were the local clergy from Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches.

The strength of community opposition to the proposals led to an alternative *Ruchill and Possilpark Community Plan* being created, following full consultation with local residents, as a direct challenge to the Alliance's plans. However, in spite of a 'breathing space' for the Alliance to consider the alternative proposals, their implementation is by no means certain. The conflict that has taken place represents an illuminating exploration of the tensions and contradictions between sacred and secular, rich and poor, that surround utopian and dystopian moral geographical visions for poor communities.

Following initial contact with Rev. Martin Forrest<sup>v</sup> of Possilpark Church of Scotland in April 2001, a further interview was undertaken in late June 2001, alongside an interview with Roddy Byers<sup>vi</sup> of the Glasgow Alliance's North Glasgow SIP office. Drawing upon the wealth of published media material in *The Herald*, *The Glaswegian*, *The Evening Times*, and *The Northender* community newspaper; and in official Alliance and community documents, I will examine a number of key tensions surrounding sacred-secular relations, and competing utopian and dystopian moral geographical visions for the poor communities of the West of Scotland. My analysis is by means of exploring key themes in the processes of negotiation and contestation, as a full account of the various twists and turns of the story is simply not possible in this space.



**Plate 6.7 – The ‘Glasgow Lowland Clearances’: Possilpark, following wholesale demolition of local authority tenement housing.**

**Plate 6.8 – Possilpark Church of Scotland, showing the extent of cleared housing, stretching away from sight in the background.**



### 6B3.2 Consultation and community participation – moral revanchism?

At the core of the sacred-secular conflict in Ruchill and Possil has been the notion of community consultation and participation in the regeneration process. Virtually every letter written to *The Herald* from residents of Ruchill and Possil speaks of the complete failure of the Alliance and partners to consult the local community about their proposals. Of particular concern to residents was the way in which 'fast-track' planning permission had already been given to the Alliance plans, meaning that construction could have started almost immediately, had opposition not been so vocal. Whilst the Alliance eventually agreed to undertake a comprehensive community consultation, there was concern that this would be 'a hastily arranged cosmetic consultation which would not be allowed to affect in any significant way plans which the Council and its partners were determined to make happen' (Ruchill and Possilpark Joint Strategy Group, 2001).

When I put issues such as lack of consultation, and the communities' particular concern that the original proposals had been a form of 'clearances' and 'ethnic cleansing' to Roddy Byers, he was honest enough to admit that:

*'clearly mistakes were made. Definitely mistakes were made, and you cannot take what might be a policy that's good for a city, which impacts on communities, and then roll it over the top. And particularly where you're working with traditional communities who are traditionally organised, with strong values and a strong sense of community, you're going to meet more resistance'*.

According to the community, the very notion of 'partnership' upon which the Glasgow Alliance is founded is made a mockery of, by the New Right-style urban regeneration approach of imposing a grand plan from above. Byers recognised this, noting that all staff involved would do this differently if they could do it again, and that the largest problem for partnership was entrenched

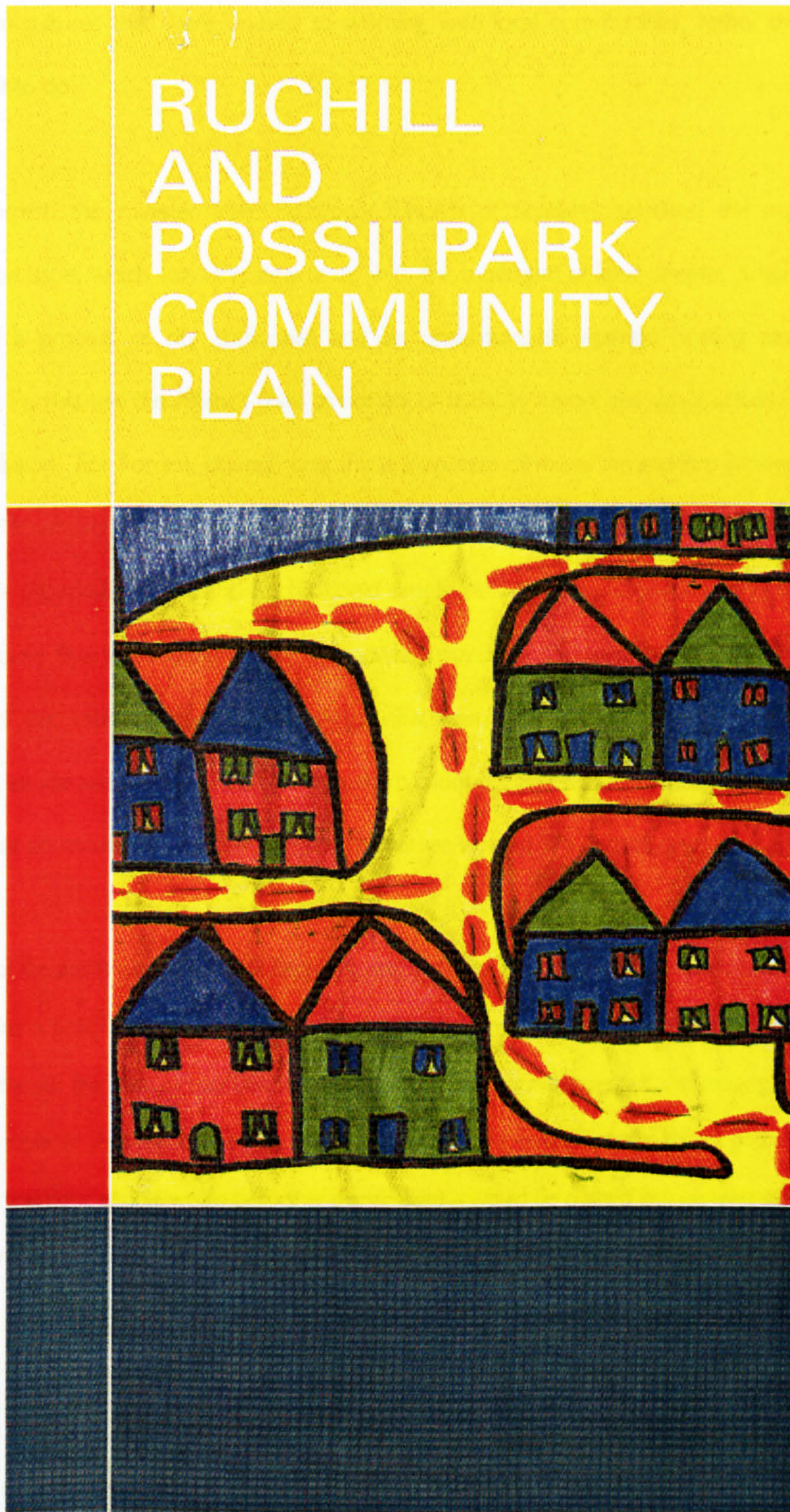


Figure 6.6 – The Ruchill & Possilpark Community Plan, created as a result of the political campaign against *New Neighbourhoods* led by the churches.

institutional cultures that were unused to working *with* local communities, rather than telling them what to do.

Martin Forrest, the minister from Possilpark Church of Scotland, touched the nub of the consultation issue, which was ultimately to do with the treatment of local people. Characterising events as a process of city authorities and an unaccountable quango holding residents in contempt, Forrest saw the Alliance plans as not about social *inclusion*, but about actually widening social *exclusion*. For Forrest, undergirding this is a process of moral revanchism (drawing on N. Smith, 1996) whereby city authorities didn't feel that they *needed* to consult the local community about their proposals. Possil and Ruchill could simply be viewed as 'virgin territory' or 'add on bits' (to quote Byers) for conquest by the onward march of 'the West End', representing the triumph of the utopian moral geography of that particular bourgeois space, and all of its associated ethical and emotional values. In a sharp critique, Forrest points to revanchism in moral terms – that communities such as Possil and Ruchill are viewed in a (morally) negative light:

'One of the points we made at the beginning was that what they were doing – the initial *Alliance* plan was a policy of social *exclusion*, because they were moving poor people... they weren't doing this for the sake *of* poor people; they were moving poor people out and moving middle class people *in*. And the result of this – the invisibilisation and revanchism that would go on here, meant that poor people would be further marginalised – would be pushed into communities that wouldn't have the same kind of SIP status,

'I think revanchism is a good concept, because there is a *feeling*... I've got a feeling that there is a real sense of revenge going on. I think... I'm trying not to be too critical of the Labour Party, but I think there is a sense in which the Labour Party are *annoyed* at poor people, because their main vote doesn't come from the poorest people in society now. Their main block of votes comes



**Plate 6.9 (above) – Ruchill Church of Scotland: centre of political resistance to revanchist moral geographies.**

**Plate 6.10 (below) – Dystopian moral geographies in Ruchill: the appalling condition of local authority housing which continues to be inhabited in spite of this.**



from middle groups..... They're left with communities in every city of the country, and every big town of the country, like Possilpark and Ruchill, which are really communities of the left-behind: People who have *not* been able to lift themselves up. And they're *hacked off* with these people.....Anyone who's poor now is 'undeserving'. Anyone who is poor in Britain now is poor because they have chosen to *remain* poor'.

Using such strong terminology, Forrest hints at a return to Victorian moral notions of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, and the moral geographical divisions that such language created (c.f. Driver, 1988). The irony is that it is the *secular* agents of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Glasgow that are the forefront of such moral revenge, and not their Christian counterparts who led bourgeois moral crusades two centuries earlier.

Forrest also talked about the original lack of consultation being about the 'invisibilisation' of the poor, so that by creating a new 'West End', the remaining poor members of Ruchill and Possilpark would be hidden from view in all the statistical indicators of the by now 'wealthy' community. This he viewed as a cynical attempt by the Labour Governments and Council to 'make it *look* like they've eradicated poverty', when in reality the (moral) respectability of the 'new neighbourhood' would act as a cloak, concealing the true nature of social exclusion. This vision contrasts sharply with Church attempts to make known the reality of the *real* moral geography of the community.

### **6B3.3 'New Neighbourhoods' – competing moral geographies**

In my view, the conflict that has taken place in Possil and Ruchill, is fundamentally about two competing moral geographies of utopia and dystopia struggling for the ascendancy. On the one



Plate 6.11 – Building revanchist moral geographies of utopia: new middle class housing in Ruchill.

Plate 6.12 – No entry: security fences on the disused Ruchill Hospital site are a precursor of gated communities to come with the *New Neighbourhoods* proposals..





hand, there is Glasgow Alliance and Glasgow City Council who hold the view that private housing, high income households and re-building are inherently *good*.

'It's a fact that demand for rented housing in Glasgow has fallen substantially, and continues to fall. The demand for owner occupation is rising. These two facts, and not mis-management of the council's housing stock, together provide opportunities to create mixed-tenure sustainable neighbourhoods which will *benefit the city in general and the residents of the areas in particular*, including those who continue to live in rented housing' (David Comley, Director of Housing, Glasgow City Council, *The Herald*, November 4, 1999, emphases added).

'There was a lot of debate at the start, and there was issues about community culture, what communities were about, and certainly I've heard Ruchill and Possilpark people saying "do we *want* these types of people coming into our community?" If you speak to people now who've been involved in the *process*, they'll say 'OK, if what we're going to get is integration and if what we're going to get is well-functioning communities, then they don't have a problem. What we don't want to do is is have disparate communities' (Roddy Byers).

The comment from the Director of Housing points to the inherent '*benefits*' of the new housing, whilst Byers' remark seems to illustrate that this vision of what's 'best' has won the day, and secured the agreement of residents who were previously opposed. Possilpark and Ruchill are viewed in classic dystopian terms by the official agents as ghettos of bad *housing*, where their human and community identities can be ignored behind the veil of 'failed' physical environments. The Glasgow Alliance's utopian solution to Possil's dystopia is strictly in middle class, affluent terms, carving out a utopian, gentrified space through the active displacement of 'dystopian' residents to other dystopian areas such as Drumchapel or Milton, avoiding a utopianism of social justice, yet masquerading under a banner of 'social inclusion'.

On the other hand, there is the notion of 'new neighbourhoods' taken by the local community and clergy:

'It dawned on us half way through the process, and I think I've said this to you before, that *their* understanding of new neighbourhoods and ours was different. That we... Initially when.. we thought new neighbourhoods meant the *renewal* of our existing neighbourhoods. What they meant was the demolition, the clearing of the land, the moving out of all these poor people, and the planting of completely new communities of completely new people – *middle class* people who worked in the city centre, or who wanted to live in the West End. The two areas would be re-marketed, eh as near the city centre, or near the West End, eh or maybe would be re-marketed, and eh to a different class of people altogether. They wanted to move out one class of people, and move in a different class of people. That's easy to do if you've got a philosophy that believes that now there's a classless society. Eh, that's not how it feels from the Ruchill and Possilpark areas'

The sense from Forrest's comment above is of the complete *erasure* of one geography, and it's replacement by another. Whilst this is a literal, physical geographical process that has involved massive demolition of social housing, and the emigration of local populations, it is also a moral one:

'The Aspirations of the middle class are taken into account. The basic needs of the poor are taken into account. The *aspirations* of the poor are never taken into account'.

It is the triumph of middle class *aspirations*, values, morals that is the ultimate achievement of the Alliance vision. The imposition of this moral geography of aspiration upon a freshly cleared landscape where any traces of the old moral order have been swept away is a clear example of

moral power relations, and the crushing of a weak moral vision by bourgeois ascendancy. Forrest argued fervently that the moral history of Ruchill and Possil, in terms of their cultural values, beliefs and meanings was not something that could simply be swept away. In a clever contrast, he points to what the middle class community of Bearsden would feel like if a similar process were to occur there:

'I mean we wondered how people in *Bearsden* would feel if land was cleared, and... even *empty* land in Bearsden was used to to move people from *Possilpark*, who's houses had been demolished, so that they could live in a nice part of the periphery of the city. How would *they* react? *They'd* be in the streets, so we were saying 'you can't regard it like that...It's part of our community; part of our history there, and that has to be honoured' '.

The deepest sense in which Forrest construes the moral geography of Possil and Ruchill is by recourse to his own moral values drawn from religious tradition:

'I think we feel as churches, is that this was not simply a case of where people live; where they put their beds and their kitchen table and so on... it's not simply a case of what bricks and mortar are used to house people, because the council I think have tended to see.... It's a *spiritual* matter. Peoples' connection with their home and their territory and their community, for them is a *spiritual* connection – it's what defines *who* they are, how they understand themselves, and how they see their relationship with the world. ... .. Place is important and *deeply* emotionally and spiritually important to people ... I'm not talking about a spirituality in a Christian sense, but by connecting with the struggles of ethnic groups or minority groups like the American Indians... By that being peoples' initial *reaction*, i it showed how strongly they felt these ties were important, and these ideas have not played any part in the Council's thinking whatsoever'.

The intrinsically 'spiritual' nature of people's association with place illustrates the intertwining of the sacred and the spatial in a manner that is of great meaning, fundamentally moral geographical,

and yet not necessarily based upon a 'Christian' reading of spirituality. The fact that a deep spiritual connection can be made with struggles in different parts of the world illustrates not only that Harvey's (2000) multi-scalar geography of social justice is *political*, but it is moral as well. These spiritual concerns in the scaling of justice illustrate the working back of local particularised moral geographies into their wider global counterparts.

#### **6B3.4 The dialectics of sacred and secular**

The basic tension being explored in this pastiche is that between sacred and secular. Previous discussion has woven the spiritual into the discussion to some degree, but not in a manner that makes the moral geography of Ruchill/Possil's churches distinctly different from that of the local community, and hence ostensibly distinctive from the secular. Hence whilst 'the secular' is opposed in terms of agencies and the City Council, it is embraced when it concerns the community. Is there really a difference then between sacred and secular? Is it not simply the case that the local moral politics is a classic case of class struggle or powerful vs. powerless?

This is true, but there is something distinctive about the sacred engagement. Drawing on an Incarnational theology, the local clergy see Christ as present in the sufferings and oppression of their community. Hence, they view siding with the 'secular' community, as actually to meet with Christ, and to minister to his needs, as in the classic 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...' from Matthew's Gospel (Ch. 25). In a subtle sense then, a particular constituency of the secular is sanctified, and made 'Christian' by the distinct theological reading of local struggles, again being privileged in a utopian manner, drawing on Christian ethics of servanthood. This has its roots in Forrest's and John Matthews' (Ruchill's minister) understanding of the role of their churches in relation to the local community:

'we wanted the community to feel that this is *their* church and not just *our* church. ... Making it clear that the churches belong to the community, and are here to serve the community and that people in the community have a right to feel that these are their churches, and a right to approach us for ways that we can help them'.

This blurring of the boundary between sacred and secular in church-community relations is one that requires care, however, to prevent the Church believing that it has a *right* to speak for the local community, and to use its social position to sideline local people. As Forrest comments:

'The Church is acting *with* the community. There is no sense in which Church people are spokespeople for the community. ... We're not putting words in the mouth of the community... So churches have to be very... we are not representatives; we don't have mandates; and however annoyed we might be about political representatives at times, *they* have a mandate.'

'So we feel vindicated that although we stood up and spoke out on our own at first, without consulting anyone – we admit that we did that – we had to react quickly. We very soon put ourselves under a community discipline, and ensured that we were giving and speaking our own ideas and our own thoughts, and we feel vindicated that the whole consultation process has borne out that what we said originally... what we *suspected* the community felt has in fact been proved that this is in fact what the community wanted.'

Whilst Forrest's 'theological correctness' gives him the modesty to downplay his contribution to local debates, his and Matthews' have been key voices at all points in the debate. On the one hand, this is the hard-earned result of years of becoming embedded in the local politics of Possil and Ruchill, but on the other, there is a deeper sense of spiritual calling, and it is at this point that

we see the translation and thickening of moral universals drawn from theology as the *absolute* reason for their being so vocal – it is a call from *God*.

'This is where we differ from left wing politicians, where they would speak on behalf of the people. We're then at that point saying, we're speaking on behalf of *God*. That is the Christian value. Now that's hugely risky. Because you're either right when you're doing that, or you're a total nutcase'.

The call to be prophetic is one that sets the sacred apart from the secular – recourse is given to moral absolutes of justice and human dignity, sourced in a fundamentally *spiritual* reading of place – one that differs in substance from its secular counterparts. Forrest and Matthews, then, whilst pursuing their politics pragmatically, foreground that absolutely in theological universals:

'Can it ever be "just" to clear a community from their place of birth and scatter them to the four corners of Glasgow while at the same moment planning to take the land on which their houses stood and sell it to a group of private developers to build row after row of houses for sale without – and this is the injustice – any plans for social rented accommodation to go ahead *at the same time* for the ordinary folk who live there at present?' (Rev. John Matthews, Ruchill Church of Scotland, *The Herald*, November 7, 1999).

### 6B3.5 Conclusion

Analysis of the unfolding story of community opposition to *New Neighbourhoods Initiative* proposals in Ruchill and Possil gives an excellent insight into the politics and practicalities of moral geographical tensions between sacred and secular. Sacred and secular cannot be clearly demarcated in this account, and are characterised by many sub-tensions which either reinforce or

break down this overarching cleavage. Thus, parts of the secular can be re-visioned as 'sacred' (i.e. the rights of local communities), whilst at the same time the secular (in the form of official agencies) can be vilified. Likewise, the secular can see the sacred as a key partner (the local community working with churches to fight proposals), or as an 'enemy' which has stirred up unnecessary agitation. The moral geographical tensions which run through such relationships are therefore far more subtle and nuanced than a first glance reading would suggest.

The complexity of sacred-secular relations in this pastiche points to the crucial importance of analysing processes and tensions when theorising moral geographies. An analysis that glosses over such processes and tensions as contestation and sacred-secular, risks painting an oversimplistic picture of key issues, by reducing moral geographical conflict to simple binary opposites. To prevent such neglect, it is essential to look more deeply at relations between agents and different moral viewpoints, and this account has demonstrated, in a small way, the profitability of a richer engagement for theoretical advancement.

## **6B4 CONCLUSION: THE TRANSLATION AND NEGOTIATION OF MORAL GEOGRAPHIES IN EASTERHOUSE AND POSSIL: SACRED MEETS SECULAR**

Though geographically very different – Easterhouse as a post-war peripheral scheme; and Possil / Ruchill as older working class communities – these two communities share a number of common attributes when concerned with moral geographical tensions between sacred and secular. The translation and negotiation of moral geographies in these communities present an illuminating dialectics of the sacred and secular. In the pastiches, both situations are dealing with different

issues. My analysis of the work of SGSPCA and FARE in Easterhouse is primarily concerned with two organisations that undertake practical initiatives addressing social exclusion. In Possil / Ruchill, my concern is more with organisations which have adopted directly political campaigning action.

In both communities, church work is undergirded with a particularly strong translation of Christian theological principles into the local context. Cuthbertson, Holman, Forrest, Matthews and the Halls all testify to a strongly *incarnational Christianity* that 1.) sees the need for a real, living Christian presence in deprived communities; and 2.) sees Christ himself as actually *present* in the ordinary lives and suffering of each place. Each leader has an active commitment to residence in Easterhouse and Possilpark, not wishing in any way for the sacred to be seen as separate from the secular, and appealing to biblical notions of Christ's work amongst the marginal of Jewish society. What is perhaps even more significant, however, is that the sacred-secular distinction is challenged, not simply by a desire to live *in* and work *with* the community, but by a theological lens that actually sees the sacred in the secular in a kind of 'Christianising the secular'. Hence for Forrest, Cuthbertson and Holman, 'secular' places (and their people) are not merely viewed as 'suffering' or requiring 'help' or 'moral correction', but are in fact viewed as inherently *good*, and indeed *Godly*. This highly positive moral geographical reading is a pronounced feature of both pastiches.

However, the secular does contribute competing moral geographies of place. In both communities, it is possible to detect *dominant* and *insurgent* moral geographies (echoing Harvey, 2000). These are tied into moral power relations and reflect the complexity of social relations within these communities, and indeed between the community scale as a whole and other scales. In the case of Possil, a dominant moral geography adopted by Glasgow City Council and the Glasgow Alliance viewed pre-existing Ruchill and Possil as dystopian spaces, peopled by anti-social



tenants, drug dealers, and youth offenders. A utopian *moral revanchism* (to quote Forrest) was thus pursued as a means of 'correcting' the 'problem' in the form of a new neighbourhood proposal that offered little for existing residents. This revanchism was acutely moral in its pronouncements on personal responsibility, culturally 'acceptable' behaviours, and definitions of what constitute 'good' citizens and 'good' neighbourhoods. In this case, the dominant moral geography of the powerful was viewed negatively by local theologians and the community, and an insurgent moral geography used in opposition.

In the Easterhouse example, whilst people like Hall and Holman point to difficulties for Christian expressions in a dominant community moral geography of 'conformity', they view this tension with the secular as positive and creative for the place. So the 'secular' can be both the Church's friend and its foe. Issues of embracing some types of secularity and opposing others perhaps point to social class or power being a greater division than sacred-secular. However, most interviewees noted the importance of the prophetic tradition of Christianity, and that ultimately, whilst the secular could be seen as Godly, it was to God that they were accountable, and that would sometimes require making painful decisions that set them apart from the secular (and indeed the sacred). The negotiations between sacred and secular, and the moral geographies they produce, are therefore more complex than at first glance.

## **SECTION 6C**

### **EAST END AND DRUMCHAPEL**

#### **6C1 INTRODUCTION: SECTARIANISM AND ECUMENISM: DENOMINATIONAL CONTESTATION AND CO-OPERATION IN THE EAST END AND DRUMCHAPEL**

As with tensions that exist between sacred and secular, those between the different denominations which make up the Christian Church (most fundamentally, Catholic and Protestant) are a central cleavage that affects moral geographies of social justice and the city. As noted in Chapter 4, sectarianism, and a divide between the two main sets of Christian denominations, remains an important feature of religion in Scotland, and the Glasgow area in particular (Brown, 1997). The historical sectarian problem, which can manifest itself in ways as diverse as football allegiance, employment, housing allocation, education and political loyalty, is strongly associated with Glasgow's East End, and its historic location for Irish immigrants, bringing with them the pre-existing sectarian difficulties from the North of Ireland (see below). This makes the East End districts of Dalmarnock and Calton a natural location for me to analyse tensions surrounding sectarianism. Again, in urban interviews, material that I have not included in Chapter 5 pointed strongly towards the East End as an area associated in clergy's minds with sectarianism. Both clergy that I interviewed were people that I met during this first stage of research, as I began to realise the extent to which sectarianism often prevented the Church from working to promote social justice in local communities. They each spoke of their difficulties, and persuaded me of the importance of exploring these issues further.

Ecumenism in Scotland has a formal institutional structure implemented in 1990 by the creation of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), which includes all of the major denominations in Scotland, apart from the Baptist Union of Scotland, The Free Church of Scotland, and the Free Presbyterian Church. As an ecumenical body, ACTS performs largely as a forum for discussion and co-operation on issues of doctrine and common public initiatives such as Christian Aid week. It is not a ruling body, and does not constitute a formal union between the denominations. Nevertheless, it has an important role in facilitating ecumenical relations throughout Scotland, removing suspicion and fostering understanding.

At the community scale, ecumenism is much more likely to be informal and based upon local congregations making decisions to share in work with one another, on issues such as youth work or mission strategy. However, during 2001, the Church of Scotland published a booklet and video entitled *Patterns for Partnership* in which different examples of ecumenical co-operation of a more formal nature were pointed to as an encouragement to local congregations wary of ecumenical work. A key initiative featured was the Drumchapel Churches Partnership where local Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland, Congregational and Episcopal congregations had covenanted to work with one another in this socially-excluded community. After having watched this video, I decided that Drumchapel would be a good community to analyse ecumenical issues, and the way in which processes of co-operation could help in building social justice. Since I had already interviewed a local minister, this provided an existing contact in this community.

Ecumenical and sectarian tensions are therefore crucial to moral geographies of social justice and the city, as they represent the fraught internal politics of co-operation and contestation within the Church. Though sectarianism is a feature of the imaginings of the urban scale, and the personal

embodiment of the body scale, it is at the community scale that it is best analysed, as it is here where it is most often *practised* and lived out in streets and neighbourhoods. Likewise for ecumenism to succeed, it cannot simply be discussed at the national and urban scales, but has to be practised in a meaningful manner in community. Understanding sectarian and ecumenical denominational tensions at the community scale, then, will give the best insight into their wider effect as a cleavage in moral geographies of social justice and the city.

Throughout the two pastiches, there are a number of key issues that should be borne in mind. The first concerns the dialectics of ecumenism and sectarianism, whereby they should be viewed as being inextricably linked and bound together in relationship. A second key feature, which complicates this dialectic, is the extent to which sectarianism has become residualised and secularised away from the Christian community, so that ecumenical initiatives may not be sufficient to prevent it, as it is outwith Church hands. A third feature which also complicates the picture, is a tendency for poor communities to be marked by internal divisions and schisms, which further undercut denominational divides. This makes building alliances for social justice particularly difficult. Finally, these pastiches are written in the context of a discursive 'silence' around issues of sectarianism in the communities concerned. Though interviewees are willing to talk about these controversial topics, there is a sense that certain issues are avoided by other members of their communities. This further inhibits co-operation in building for social justice. By considering these points throughout the following discussion, the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of co-operation and contestation can be fully understood.

## 6C2 SECTARIANISM IN THE EAST END – DALMARNOCK & CALTON

### 6C2.1 Introduction

The term 'East End' of Glasgow, conjures up thoughts of many institutions that have passed into Glaswegian folklore – the 'Barras' market; Celtic football club; Beardmore's Parkhead 'forge' – and other 'institutions' that remain notorious – unemployment; poor housing; dereliction; and sectarianism. It is this latter 'institution' that has often been one of the area's most divisive.

The notion of the 'East End' is in itself a difficult concept to define. Whilst 'East End' has always been used as a metaphor for all that is 'bad' about Glasgow – in direct contrast to the affluent, Bohemian West End – the homogenous 'East End' of official discourse which has been recognised by numerous post-war urban regeneration initiatives (culminating in the current East End Social Inclusion Partnership) is actually composed of a number of historic geographical communities that are markedly different. Whilst communities such as Bridgeton, Calton, Dennistoun, Camlachie, Parkhead, Dalmarnock, Tollcross and Shettleston can all claim distinctive histories (usually beginning as industrial villages which were swallowed up by the rapid growth of Glasgow), they do share a common industrial heritage based on weaving, heavy engineering, chemicals, mining, and steel-making; a social condition of poverty, poor housing, and unemployment; and a cultural inheritance, often marked strongly along religious lines. Figure 6.7 shows the current East End Social Inclusion Partnership area and the location of Dalmarnock and Calton, the two communities to be studied in this Section.

The East End has historically been the part of Glasgow with the largest concentration of Irish immigrants and their descendants, and the context in which the clash between 'imported' Irish



Figure 6.7 – Map of East End Social Inclusion Partnership area, showing Dalmarnock, Calton and the churches studied in this pastiche (Source: Glasgow City Plan, 2001).

Catholicism and indigenous Scottish Presbyterianism/imported Irish Protestantism has been sharpest. The historic and on-going sectarian problems between Catholics and Protestants in the North of Ireland became a particularly marked feature of life in Glasgow, given that the overwhelming majority of Irish immigrants settled in the city when demand for labour was high in the city's boom years of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Issues ranging through separate schooling, football, inter-marriage, workplace discrimination, Orange marches, and the Irish question, have all been flashpoints for sectarian conflict over the years throughout the city of Glasgow, and to differing degrees. However, it is in the East End of the city that sectarianism has often been at its most marked and violent, culminating in a number of high profile murders in recent years.

The synonymous association of 'East End' with sectarianism in public discourse, makes it an excellent context in which to explore the extreme tensions that often surround relationships between the historic Christian traditions of Catholicism and Protestantism. In this section, I utilise material taken from an interview with Father Jim Lawlor<sup>vii</sup>, a Roman Catholic priest working in Our Lady of Fatima parish, in what he viewed as a symbolically 'Protestant' part of the East End – Dalmarnock; a focus group with Catholic residents in that community; and an interview with Rev. Ian Fraser<sup>viii</sup>, a Church of Scotland minister based in St. Luke's and St. Andrew's parish in (what he saw as) the more 'Catholic' Calton district. All fieldwork was carried out during June 2001.

The section will draw upon the material to explore the basic thesis that whilst the Christian response to poverty and injustice is a universal moral norm, when encountering the realities of geographical context, the very *nature* of Christianity (as either Catholic or Protestant) can often contribute to being a force of *division*, rather than bringing (universal) solidarity and cohesion. Hence the solidarity of poor communities is often undermined by the very Christian groups who



Plates 6.13 & 6.14 – Sectarian flashpoints in Glasgow's East End: St. Luke's & St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Calton (above) and Our Lady of Fatima Roman Catholic Church, Dalmarnock (below).





would be seeking to build that unity. Exploring the moral geographical tensions and conflicts of sectarianism will provide a fuller insight than of how churches can often create more *problems* in poor communities than they solve. I will structure the discussion around a number of key sets of sub-tensions that characterise these sectarian tensions. A flavour of the physical environment and religious spaces of these two communities is given in Plates 6.13 to 6.16, which should be viewed in conjunction with the text which follows.

## 6C2.2 Instances of sectarianism

Sectarianism is not an imagined concept, and both Lawlor and Fraser had experienced it in their communities, though to differing degrees. Fraser had experienced petty vandalism around his church building, whilst Lawlor's encounter was in 'the fire bombing of the house, the back doors being burnt off, there's been human excrement through the letter box, em crank calls...and throwing fireworks at the volunteers who live downstairs'. Our Lady of Fatima is now surrounded by CCTV security cameras, has wire mesh on all the windows, and has to be protected by the police whenever an Orange march takes place during the summer. Whilst these are the flashpoint issues that both clergy have had to deal with (along with high profile issues such as the murder of a local teenager at nearby Bridgeton Cross in 1999), both point more to the *subtle* difficulties that they face in simple things like being ignored at meetings, having abuse shouted in the street, or having members say that they will never return to church because of Fraser's co-operation with the local Catholics:

JL. 'It hasn't worked with everybody because there's a real dyed in the wool kind of thing that absolutely nobody will change, and so there are still some people who will just cross the street, or shout abuse and that kind of thing'.

JL. (At meetings and projects) 'But in fact, immediately somebody says "I'm not going because x is going for whatever reason", or "that's just an initiative...that that church – they're only there to get you in and convert you". That kind of thing. Immediately people start to put those blinkers on and pull those shutters down it becomes a community that starts to *exclude* each other, and automatically reduces its efficacy for good and for change.'

Lawlor's strongest point is that sectarianism is not about specific instances, or flashpoints, however, but rather that it is an *underlying*, all-pervasive issue that is imperceptibly helping to suck the life out of the community:

'Lots of energy that we need to kind of keep Dalmarnock together is frittered away on the fight for survival, and the whole sectarian thing. And because of that Dalmarnock really is on the *edge* now.'

For Lawlor, the underlying tensions created by sectarianism have undermined solidarity in Dalmarnock to such an extent that plans for massive housing demolition in the area could lead to the remaining community being effectively wiped off the map.

### **6C2.3 Causes**

The causes of sectarianism/flashpoints seem to centre around issues of: housing, Ireland, Orange marches, denominational schools, and football. As sectarian moral geographies have secularised (see below), local housing associations have been accused of favouring Protestants over Catholics in allocation policy, whilst local school closures have been interpreted in sectarian terms. The continued importation of the Irish question into the local community, and its associated Orange and paramilitary issues has likewise ensured a continued set of flashpoints for sectarian grievances.



**Plates 6.15 & 6.16 – Dividing the poor against themselves: dereliction and demolition in Dalmarnock, where sectarianism has been one of the factors that has prevented political action to fight housing demolition to make way for the M74 motorway extension.**



However, the Old Firm football rivalry between Rangers and Celtic, (which have historically drawn from Protestant and Catholic constituencies, respectively), was viewed as perhaps the core sectarian issue by both Lawlor and Fraser. Fraser referred to it as 'pollution', and Lawlor despaired that 'I don't understand what it does to people that it's got a hold on their heads to the extent that they would I think probably *kill* sometimes for football'.

From the range of these issues, it is interesting to note that at no point did Lawlor or Fraser see *theology* or Church policy/pronouncements as responsible for continuing sectarianism. Lawlor in particular pointed out that 'officially, there's *no* sectarianism. ... I think fundamentally we're about religious freedom and toleration'. It is *secular* issues which are seen as the causes, and it is this 'secularisation' of religious moral geographies that seems to lie at the heart of the sectarian problem.

#### **6C2.4 Residualised sectarian moral geographies**

By far the most important issue that explained the prevalence of sectarianism was whether people were active Church participants, or simply clinging to a residualised, nominal 'folk religion' version of Catholicism and Presbyterianism. However, whilst Lawlor seemed largely 'positive' about his church members being non-sectarian, Fraser spoke more openly about the theological 'gulf' that still exists between him and his congregation where 'There are a substantial number who get very upset by any ecumenical approach', and on numerous issues where Fraser has engaged with the Calton community - "oh that proves he's a Catholic". Tensions *do* exist within the actively religious community, then, but sectarianism seems more now to be a *cultural* phenomenon associated with those who are nominally from either side of the divide:

JL. 'That may be because they're people who believe, and who come, and who because they come, are having *their* preconceptions challenged, and are having a Gospel message of tolerance and forgiveness and mutuality and all those other things, and they've grown up into that message. People who don't come, aren't exposed to that message. ... .. (Members) they're people who're keen to live with their neighbour, keen to improve the quality of Dalmarnock, people who deplore sectarian violence of any kind and so on, so I... and I would *like* to think, although I wouldn't have any great way of *measuring* this, except by presumption, that that part of the way that they've reached that, is partly through their life experience, but partly through being exposed to the *core* Christian message. Now, immediately you are not exposed to what Christianity *really* is, but know about it secondhand, or let me say more correctly what Catholicism is or Protestantism is. But if your only exposed to that secondhand, or through daft you know caricatures, you know, then then immediately it's open to all sorts of misunderstanding and misrepresentation, and can be set up for vilification.'

In many ways, it is sadly ironic that sectarian division that began life as an internal Church issue, rooted in theological disputation, should now essentially be absent from that Church context, where the theological emphasis is on unity and tolerance, and rooted now in cultures detached from any of the theological teaching that could overcome the suspicion and distrust. As Lawlor points out in relation to discussions on repealing the Act of Settlement (which bans a Catholic from marrying or becoming the UK monarch), and issues such as Church-state relations, and egalitarianism:

'But you know, we're having *that* kind of discussion. People on the street wouldn't see it like that. It's "no way are we having a pape on the throne, or even somebody *married* to a pape". That's the kind of level that it operates. It's nothing to do with the kind of more broad spectrum discussion that *we're* maybe thinking about'.

Hence sectarian moral geographies that are the creation of academic theological disputation have now been (largely) abandoned by that very academic and clerical group which created them, leaving behind residual local moral geographies which are an ocean away from their origin. This illustrates the gulf between academic / clerical and lay theological understandings, which may not be possible to recover, given that these local 'theologies' are now in the hands of those for whom active religion is a distant memory.

### **6C2.5 The divisiveness of East End communities**

Whilst sectarianism is the key issue that I explored during the interviews, what became clear is that the East End communities of Dalmarnock and Calton suffer from a number of other internal divisions which also contribute to a break-up of solidarity. Jim Lawlor, the Roman Catholic priest in Dalmarnock pointed to a general factionalism within his community that often destroyed common working on critical local issues such as council plans for demolition of half of the area's housing. This view was echoed by Ian Fraser, Church of Scotland minister in Calton, who referred to a 'tribalism' in the local community. For both, issues such as territoriality, working class 'respectability' and factionalism are equally as pervasive as sectarianism, as illustrated by the comments below:

JL. 'My experience here after four years is that people have found it very difficult to unite here against, or in the face of important changes in the community, because they perceive one another to be different. Now that for me has meant on religious lines, or denominational, or indeed sectarian lines. But I see it happening in other ways as well. It happens even like one group won't be involved with another group because they're both based in different community centres. So they're vying for business. So that kind of pattern is seen across the whole board'

IF. 'Yeh. I think territoriality is definitely an issue for young people. ... ..People who've got something together are feeling very threatened by people who might take that away from them. Statistically they're very similar in class and economic circumstances, but they actually find it easier to slag each other off. I think it's respectable working classes against unrespectable working classes. Or "we've made it, why can't *they*?"'

These comments illustrate the extent to which different local moral geographies of place operate in competition with one another – the 'respectable' working class citizen in employment 'reads' Calton differently to the 'non-respectable' person that is unemployed – moral outlooks of 'good' and 'bad' cut across the common economic conditions that both experience. What seemed clear from both of the accounts, though, is that these notions of 'respectability' were often viewed in sectarian terms – so if you are a Protestant, 'it's the Catholics that are unemployed', and particularly concerning schooling, the closure of the local non-denominational secondary school in Bridgeton was viewed by Protestants as 'victory for another Catholic conspiracy'. And so on...

A wider issue of sectarianism that Lawlor pointed to was the extent to which sectarianism in the West of Scotland has often been rubbished by the middle classes as 'merely' a working class problem. Keen to correct this notion, Lawlor pointed to high profile incidents related to sectarianism involving prominent Scots, Donald Findlay QC and James Macmillan (national composer), and spoke of his frustration at this kind of 'dumbing down' of the realities of sectarian tensions in Dalmarnock. This further illustrates the divisive cleavages of sectarianism where it is again perceived as being something for the 'unrespectable' working classes, that is rejected by 'respectable' middle class citizens. The extent to which moral codes are perceived as 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable' then, is closely related to geography, as shown in Lawlor's final remark below:

'In other words the implication is it's all right for you to hate your neighbour if you're uneducated and don't have much in terms of ready money and so on and so forth. But it becomes less acceptable as you move up the social scale. Now I don't agree with that personally. I think it's patronising to people in an area like this to say 'well, you're poor, and you're in a rotten deprived area, therefore it's OK to hate each other'.

Geography legitimates (im)morality in some cases, and forbids it in others.

### **6C2.6 Role of clergy / Church issues**

In response to the sectarianism in their communities, I asked Lawlor and Fraser what they thought about their respective churches' response to sectarianism. Lawlor pointed out that the Catholic hierarchy had given no official advice in relation to sectarianism, but that Vatican II was pro-ecumenical and anti-sectarian. He saw his own role as threefold:

1. 'challenging the people who come here, you know, my congregation, challenging them where appropriate about their preconceptions and so on'.
2. 'I need to show commitment to the community in the widest sense, because I believe *that* is fundamentally what we're about – building community'.
3. 'there is something em about calling to task, and informing people of the *reality* of this' (sectarianism).

Whilst echoing Lawlor's viewpoint about his own personal responsibility, as far as the wider Church of Scotland was concerned, Fraser pointed to the fact that sectarianism between *denominations* was no longer a real issue, and that it was rather a 'sectarian' struggle between



liberal and conservative *theologies* within the Church of Scotland that was the debate pre-occupying theological attentions. In this internal struggle, the Church is 'missing' the fact that sectarianism remains a problem:

IF. 'I don't think that we've realised that it's an opportunity, and I suspect that we're more timid than we should be. The *real* struggle that's taking place in churches is between fundamentalism and liberalism. And most people would say that the opportunities of taking a strong anti-sectarian stance are being *missed*. Em all four Church of Scotland churches in the East End are in retreat and are struggling. Em, the same would apply to the Roman Catholic churches. We're all delaying making the economic decisions which are essential. And at some point one or more of these churches is going to have to close. The idea of sharing a building, as happens in Aberdeen – we're light years away from that in the East End. Conducting joint worship, I would say will *never* happen; never happen. In fact after last night's Presbytery I would say it's just a question of time before the Church of Scotland becomes *completely* right-wing, lines up to have a go at women ministers, gays, and anyone else that's vaguely against a male-dominated view of what the Christian faith is. It sounds awful but...'

Fraser's concern that a right wing conservative theology would come to dominate the Church of Scotland, could also be a warning shot for a future sectarianism emanating from theological circles, as it is traditionally the conservative section of the Kirk that has been most vehemently opposed to Catholicism. If this dominance were to happen, and attitudes to filter into local congregations, sectarianism may become *worse* and not better. This point in particular illustrates the way in which changing tensions of power within the Church are central to the (re)making of moral geographies at the local level.

## 6C2.7 Conclusion

In concluding, both clergy recognised sectarianism as a real and important issue in their communities. However, whilst Lawlor saw it as a very real threat to local solidarity, Fraser was less certain, placing more emphasis upon territorialism and divisions of respectability:

IF. 'I would have said that territorialism is more divisive of solidarity, and so is the respectable / unrespectable division of those in poverty – or to put it another way – those in work are very scornful of those who aren't in work.'

JL. 'Well I think it is. Because for as long as, you know, as long as I'm more concerned about the football team that you follow, or the church that you go to or don't go to, or your religious, and if I can say ethnic in the broadest sense, background. If I'm more concerned about those issues than about the quality of your life, or your employability, or the addictions that might be afflicting you and your life, and all those other things that a Christian would be concerned about, you know in the same spirit as the Good Samaritan. If I'm more concerned about the colour of football shirt you wear, then then that's always gonna divide the energy that a community would have, like the Good Samaritan, to pick people up who're lying at the side of the road. So I definitely think, from what my experience has taught me here, and from what we've been saying today, that yes sectarianism definitely does undermine the ability to be community.'

The issues discussed above raise a number of important points for understanding intra-Church tensions in moral geographies of social justice and the city at the community scale.

The core issue concerns the gulf that exists between the abstract theology of the academy and Church structures; and the more localised folkloric 'theologies' that subsist in communities such as Dalmarnock and Calton. In terms of theological moral power relations, communities such as

Dalmarnock have been profitably exploited by academic theologians, bolstering their 'success' in defending their arguments about Church structure. However, as with capitalism, the 'product' which is marketed for consumption within theology changes with time, and so hence whilst many theologians of both Catholic and Protestant persuasion would now favour ecumenism and Church unity, communities such as Dalmarnock and Calton are left behind, clinging to their theological heritage, in much the same way as they have also had to do with their industrial heritage when capital has 'flown' elsewhere. The powerful can afford to create their new theologies and moral geographies, whilst the powerless are left clinging to the dominant moral geographical discourses from the past, with local 'prophets' such as Lawlor and Fraser attempting to translate the new discourse of the powerful in meaningful ways.

The result of this process has been the secularisation of moral geographies that once had their origins in the dominant theological discourses of the day. This combined *residualisation* of sectarianism to a folkloric understanding of Catholicism and Protestantism, and its *secularisation* outwith active Church membership, presents severe difficulties for churches in future, as they no longer have any meaningful connection with the majority of residents in these communities, thereby severing opportunities for the transformation of moral norms. Where people *are* still actively involved in church, both clergy can point to large constituencies that have embraced an ecumenical understanding of the Church's future. However, this remains small compared to the folk religion versions of Christianity that exist in street culture. Hence whilst sectarian moral geographies of place have been abandoned by the powerful within the Church, and are being increasingly challenged by 'prophetic' local clergy, and some of their more open-minded members; at the same time, they seem to be becoming increasingly *entrenched* in local cultures that no longer have any meaningful contact with Christianity in its practised form. This simultaneous abandonment and entrenchment of sectarian moral geographies creates a complex

picture for the future, which is likely to continue to undermine the Church's attempts to build meaningful solidarity amongst the poor in Glasgow's communities.

## 6C3 DRUMCHAPEL – CHURCHES IN PARTNERSHIP

### 6C3.1 Introduction

As with the majority of Glasgow's post-war peripheral public housing schemes, Drumchapel has become notorious as a by-word for failed urban planning, and as a massive concentration of socio-economic difficulties. Situated in the far north-west corner of the city (see Figure 6.8), it is currently undergoing huge changes as the population falls rapidly, and the damp, grey tenement blocks characteristic of Glasgow's schemes are demolished to make way for new housing association and private houses. Visiting the scheme, a feeling of change is all-pervasive, as it is literally ripped apart and put back together again (see Plates 6.17 to 6.20), coming full-cycle from the slums of inner city Glasgow that it was designed to replace.

This feeling of change and the need to re-build has not escaped the community's churches. Drumchapel is currently being trumpeted by national churches as a leading example of innovation in ecumenical relations (e.g. the Church of Scotland's *Patterns for Partnership* video which was shown at the General Assembly of 2001, and is being distributed to every parish in Scotland, and features a detailed look at Drumchapel).

On Pentecost Sunday, 1999, St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Drumchapel Essenside United Reformed Church, Drumchapel Episcopal Church, and the *Emmaus* child and family project held a service at which each signed a mutual covenant, to form the *Drumchapel Churches*

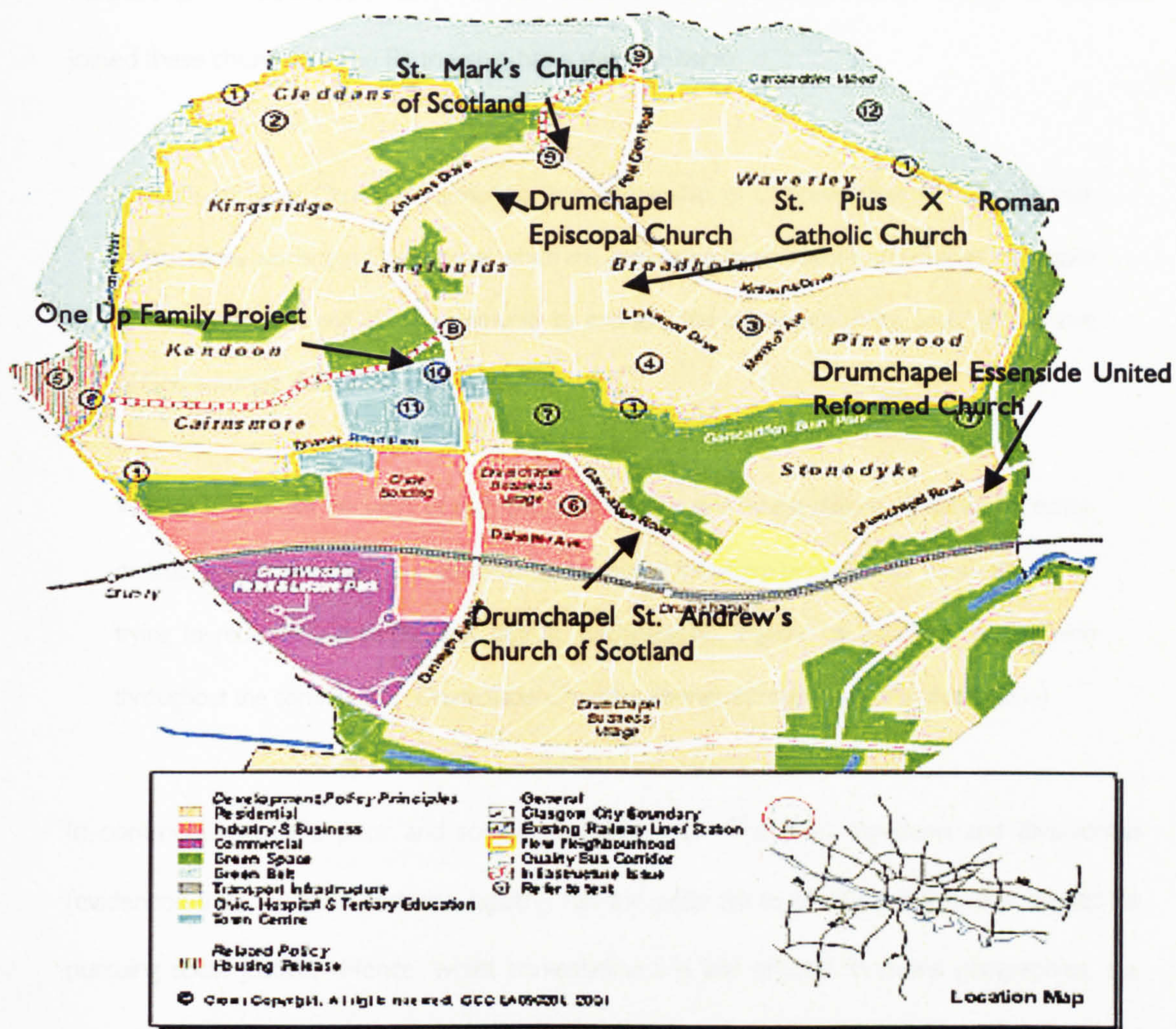


Figure 6.8 – Map of Drumchapel Social Inclusion Partnership area, showing location of the churches and projects in the Drumchapel Churches Partnership.

*Partnership.* In 2001, St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church, and St. Mark's Church of Scotland joined these churches. The Partnership has a stated mission:

'The Drumchapel Churches Partnership is a partnership of Christian churches and Christian organisations working in Drumchapel which are committed to co-operate to enhance the quality of life of individuals and of our community by enlarging the experience of the unconditional love of God amongst the people of Drumchapel.

We aim to improve the work of each church or organisation by the sharing of resources, by co-ordinating and rationalising our activities, by promoting friendship between our members and by trying to reduce misunderstanding, distrust, discrimination, bigotry, or any form or exclusion throughout the community.' (*Drumchapel Churches Partnership* publicity leaflet, April, 2001).

In communities of the poor and socially-excluded, inter-Church competition and divisiveness (evidenced at its worst in sectarian bigotry) has the potential to preclude effective strategies for pursuing social justice. Hence, whilst contestation is a key process in moral geographies, *co-operation* is often a highly profitable route to achieve social justice (Harvey, 2000). An analysis of ecumenism in the Drumchapel Churches Partnership will help illuminate these processes of co-operation and alliance-building, and likewise the denominational moral geographical tensions of contested praxis.

In this section, I use material gathered from a focus group meeting with Rev. John Purves<sup>ix</sup> (St. Andrew's Church of Scotland), Rev. Carolyn Smyth<sup>x</sup> (Essenside United Reformed Church), and two project workers from the *Emmaus* project; and an interview with Rev. Michael Savage<sup>xi</sup> (St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church), both conducted in June 2001. I will draw upon this material to highlight a number of tensions surrounding ecumenical relations in Drumchapel, looking at the



*The Drumchapel Churches Partnership is a partnership of Christian churches and Christian organisations working in Drumchapel which are committed to cooperate to enhance the quality of life of individuals and of our community by enlarging the experience of the unconditional love of God amongst the people of Drumchapel.*

*We aim to improve the work of each church or organisation by the sharing of resources, by coordinating and rationalising our activities, by promoting friendship between our members and by trying to reduce misunderstanding, distrust, discrimination, bigotry or any form of exclusion throughout the community.*

Figure 6.9 – The Drumchapel Churches' Partnership logo and mission statement, demonstrating the theologically-symbolic nature of ecumenical activities.

reasons behind ecumenical working, the benefits and tensions of working together, and some of the barriers to ecumenism. This will help me to paint a fuller picture of the significance of processes of practising and living for the cadre of community executioners.

### 6C3.2 Why ecumenism?

'Once upon a time packed churches were at the centre of our community. Our display suggests mistakes which have made us seem irrelevant in today's Drumchapel. We think we do have an important role, but only if we get our act together. We have made a start, and plan to move ahead quickly'.

These words form a centre-piece of the covenant made between the members of the Drumchapel Churches Partnership (DCP). It is this recognition of past *mistakes* and difficulties, which seems to have provided the major impetus for sowing the seeds of ecumenical relationships. Commenting on the pre-DCP relationships between local churches, and what got DCP going, John Purves comments:

'The very initial thing was a huge *negative* actually, because we were asked to do a service at the Garden Festival, which would be about 1988 or so, and at that point we had a sort of Churches Together and a sort of Churches Council. So, and we did superficial stuff, but when it came to that, there were some ministers who were very fundamentalist, and refused to work with Catholics. And that was just a major blow out. The fraternal of clergy just split in half at that point because some of them said "we will not do a service if Catholics are taking part". The rest of us went ahead and did the service, which was really good, but from then on in obviously it was going to be inconceivable that fraternal could continue, because there had been so much ill-feeling.'





**Plates 6.17 & 6.18 – Drumchapel old and new. Row after row of tenements await demolition as the post-war utopian dream crumbles, whilst new and refurbished stock provides some hope for the socially-excluded.**



This huge *split* became the impetus for initial one-to-one working between parishes, and then a desire to move to a fuller Partnership by 1998. This suggests that such a major example of *disunity*, actually caused a far *greater* desire for *unity*, than may have been the case had the 'superficial stuff' continued as per before 1988. Hence the more 'extreme' the conflict between churches, the more 'extreme' any solution to the problems requires to be.

Ecumenism was also born out of a desire to work with the community. As John Purves commented, 'we don't want to do on our own what we can do with other people'. The importance of partnership between sacred and secular, and between church and church was strongly emphasised by everybody who I spoke to. It is viewed by DCP as the foundation for their work, and has its practical application in the *Emmaus* family and child well-being project, which is also a member of the Partnership.

Other key 'seeds' crucial to the formation of the ecumenical partnership include the strength of friendship and personal bonding between individual clergy and lay church members on DCP's lay and ministry teams. This builds up trust and mutual understanding. More importantly, all clergy spoke of a theological belief in the importance of unity, and the sense of taking 'small steps' towards this bigger goal of ultimate Church unity. However, whilst this crucial theological universal plays its part in facilitating a co-operative spirit; it is the desire for community engagement, and the strength of local friendships which makes the major reasons for ecumenism highly localised in origin. This highlights the important theoretical point that the particular can lead to the universal just as much as the opposite, so that particularised geographical situations work in a manner that builds a moral universal such as Church unity.



Plates 6.19 & 6.20 – Building ecumenism in Drumchapel: the ecumenical *One Up* project in the Drumchapel Shopping Centre (above), and the church in the midst of urban dereliction (St. Pius X Roman Catholic Church, below).



### 6C3.3 Tensions in ecumenism

My discussions helped to reveal a number of the key tensions surrounding the process of co-operation in the Partnership. The general tone of these discussions was very positive, and it is interesting to note that outright negative experiences were not really mentioned by any of the interviewees (see below).

#### (a) Positive features of ecumenism

The focus group discussion had a resolutely positive view of ecumenism, and spoke of it in glowing terms. In particular the clergy spoke of the strength of their personal friendships with one another as a key benefit of ecumenism, and also of the value in being able to share a common vision for the community, and for their ministry. Of the lay members, Barbara Ford spoke in glowing terms of the Drumchapel community's acceptance of the *Emmaus* child and family project:

'I spoke to a woman last week at a project I went to visit, and she was almost in tears because she was amazed at the work the churches are doing, that Emmaus is doing. She says "I just, I think the churches are just fantastic. I didn't know you were doing this, and if you had a gold medal I would give you one". And she was really emotional about what we're doing, and she says you know, "I left the Church years and years ago, because I didn't think the churches were going any place, and you know talking to you would be enough to to make me go back, because the churches in Drumchapel are doing a fantastic work" '.

It is perhaps natural that both clergy and laity will reflect positively upon initiatives that they have been instrumental in setting up and are deeply involved in. Michael Savage, the Roman Catholic priest, whilst echoing the positive 'line' in his interview, was more willing to point to some of the

tensions that exist within ecumenism, and some of the future barriers that may lie in the way of closer co-operation.

(b) Negative features of ecumenism

Carolyn Smyth, the United Reformed minister commented that, 'I can't really think of any negatives so far', with John Purves agreeing that 'Nope. I wouldn't say there's been any negatives at all'. The only 'difficulties' that Smyth had encountered, were from older-established residents of Drumchapel, who saw themselves as 'respectable' in comparison to 'undesirable' incomers (such as drug addicts), and who were concerned about any form of inter-church or church-community co-operation. Savage pointed out that he didn't really feel that 'negative' was the correct word to use, but was at least willing to discuss some of the difficulties. As the sole Catholic representative (there are two other Roman Catholic churches in Drumchapel that are not Drumchapel Churches Partnership members) within a Partnership that is otherwise made up of denominations from the Protestant tradition, it is understandable that co-operation may be more difficult, given the continued separation between Rome and the Protestant churches over many substantial theological and institutional issues.

The key tensions mentioned by Savage related to superficiality and apathy. The comments below illustrate his concerns that ecumenism has to be 'deep', and not simply superficial, and that in order for this to happen, the churches must continue to be aware of their own historical traditions, and look to the Cross as the symbol of the 'pain of our separation'. Hence he argued that painful historical differences inherited in each tradition couldn't be ignored, or glossed over by 'a polite handshake'.

'it's a question of basically kind of pushing, you know sort of *digging down*, rather than just simply going *out* all the time, you've got to actually dig *deep*. You know that to kind of find out what you actually share in common, and what actually can be *done*. People think of it as just simply... often sometimes think of ecumenism as just kind of ticking off 'now we share that, now we share that'. You know. People tend to think of the *superficial* elements. I mean again a bit like say intercommunion and all the rest of it, people say 'oh well if you get rid of that, then everything will be fine'. If you changed it tomorrow, things *wouldn't* be fine. It would actually still... basically what you're actually going for is the kind of, is a coming together of *hearts and minds*. And also theology. But that involves digging *deep*, rather than just simply pushing *out* the way all the time.'

When I asked if he had experienced any direct opposition from other parts of the Catholic Church, both lay and clerical, Savage said that there was no official 'problem' with his work, but rather a feeling of apathy, indifference, and 'laziness' on the part of his colleagues. They were more than happy to let him 'do the job' for them, thereby salvaging their consciences and letting them off the hook.

Whilst ecumenism has not been viewed in a negative light then, there remain some difficulties contained within the moral geographical process of co-operation. What is interesting is that these tensions do not appear to have taken the form of explicit opposition to initiatives, but rather that there is a silent indifference and apathy that is a far greater obstacle to the pursuit of unity. However, this conclusion remains interesting given the (supposed) sectarian difficulties of the West of Scotland. It is perhaps the case that silence and indifference is perceived as the least threatening form of opposition within such a (potentially explosive) context.

### 6C3.4 Conclusion

The above account illustrates the importance of processes of co-operation in moral geographies of social justice and the city. Too often poor communities are divided internally along parochial lines which preclude solidarity, with religion being a key feature of this. A highly positive account has been given of the benefits of ecumenical working, and the issues involved in building ecumenical relationships. Any tensions which are present seem more to do with apathy and indifference than active opposition. To what extent this apathy belies deeper tensions around ecumenical relations remains open to speculation. A hint of this was given when Purves asked me specifically *not* to interview any clergy from other local churches which had not signed up to the partnership. He said that this was because he did not wish to make life difficult for clergy who might wish to join DCP in future.

As the ethics of the situation naturally dictated that I would not interview these other clergy, it seems probable that there have been significant local difficulties which have not been aired, and possibly strong theological opposition to DCP from the more 'fundamentalist' churches that Purves referred to in the 1988 incident. What this 'silencing' illustrates is that in spite of obvious successes in church co-operation in local geographical contexts, the tendency still remains for many local churches to appeal to moral absolutes drawn from theology, which prevent co-operation, and entrench division. Whilst co-operation is then a key feature of moral geographies, it remains tempered by continued contestation (and also indifference), which though often silent, conspires to ensure that complexity and difference remains the order of the day, and unity elusive.

## 6C4 CONCLUSION: DRUMCHAPEL AND DALMARNOCK – NEGOTIATING SECTARIANISM AND ECUMENISM

As noted earlier, the process of negotiation in Drumchapel and Dalmarnock / Calton is not so much about co-operation and contestation between the sacred and the secular, but about the moral geographical denominational tensions of contested praxis. In focusing on sectarianism in the East End, theological *contestation* was the key focus; in looking at ecumenism in Drumchapel, *co-operation*. However, Christian unity and disunity are dialectically related to one another, and whilst the East End may play up sectarianism more than Drumchapel, and Drumchapel downplay it in favour of ecumenism, the two work side by side. As such, a number of common issues surface in each community.

In both Drumchapel and the East End, divisiveness seems to be a feature of the communities, with complex internal schisms creating difficulties – between different churches in the case of Drumchapel, and along territorial lines in the East End. Notions of 'respectable' and 'unrespectable' are part of each community, with Carolyn Smyth pointing to 'respectable' churchgoers being anti-ecumenical in Drumchapel, and Ian Fraser pointing to 'respectable' working class members looking down on their 'unrespectable' unemployed neighbours. These tensions of intra-community division act as further intersections in the sectarian/ecumenical debate.

The impression given of the nature of sectarianism, and the challenge of confronting it with ecumenism, is one of an apathy and indifference in both communities (though not their leaderships) to both issues. Hence in Dalmarnock, there was a feeling that in spite of some notorious sectarian flashpoints (e.g. Orange marches), sectarianism was so all-pervasive and



underlying that it was simply no longer acknowledged directly in many cases. Likewise in Drumchapel, there was no real opposition to the ecumenical initiatives as such – just an indifference and lack of interest. The unwillingness in particular of the Drumchapel interviewees to talk about opposition to their initiatives points to a discursive void surrounding sectarian tensions. Though Lawlor and Fraser were far more frank and open in giving their views, they hinted that sectarianism was always felt in their community, but little discussed. This gives a sense that 'you don't talk about these things', and suggests that whilst the ecumenical stance adopted by all the clergy in both communities (particularly courageous in terms of Lawlor's petrol bomb incident) is a true example of moral leadership in translating newer Christian discourses of unity in place of the old mantras of division, it may not be having the wider impact needed.

This is related in particular to a key feature of trying to create moral geographies of ecumenism that combat sectarianism. One cannot help but notice the fact that there is a huge gulf between active Church members and the wider community in terms of attitudes towards ecumenism (if interview accounts are to be believed). The *residualisation* of sectarianism to a form of folk religion is combined with its *secularisation* outside active Church membership, creating a position whereby a theological moral geography is now no longer advocated by the religion that created it (notable bigots aside), and has no real means of 'contacting' those individuals who still retain it. As a result, ecumenism seems to be the 'nicey-nicey' preserve of active Church members and their leaders. Whilst this is not to denigrate the 'prophetic' and 'heroic' qualities of Church leaders such as Lawlor or individuals in their congregations such as Lindsay, and their potential to make a positive impact, the gulf between sacred and secular in this instance seems very hard to breach. The fact that so much seems to depend upon the personality of local clergy is also a cause for long-term concern. Whilst these pastiches have uncovered very positive *attitudes* towards ecumenism, and encouraging practical work, it seems the case that denominational moral

geographical tensions will continue to undermine attempts by churches to encourage solidarity in pursuing social justice at the community scale.

## SECTION 6D

### POLLOK AND CASTLEMILK

#### 6D1 INTRODUCTION: SCALING MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN POLLOK AND CASTLEMILK

As I have been arguing throughout this thesis, scale is central to understanding moral geographies of social justice and the city. In these three empirical chapters (5, 6 and 7), scale is the one tension and process that I wish to keep consistent throughout all three. It is already clear from the urban theology literature (Chapter 2) that the community is a scale privileged by theological discourse. Furthermore, urban scale moral geographies paint pictures of the community scale in often dystopian terms. Whilst at the urban scale, scale is something that is imagined and situated within the wider web of multi-scalar relations and configurations, at the community scale, scale is more grounded, and far more about practical issues concerning a politics of scale. Hence in analysing tensions of scale in these two pastiches, and looking at the communitisation of theologies, it is this essentially political dimension to scaling that will be most crucial to examine. This in particular will demonstrate the manner in which scale can be used in the manner advocated by Harvey (2000) in pursuit of social justice.

In choosing Castlemilk and Pollok as contexts for the analysis of scaling issues, there were a number of considerations. As far as Pollok is concerned, as a volunteer at *The Village* project, I had first hand access to the project's strategy, and its interesting conception of scale contained in its aims and objectives (see below). The particularly imaginative use of scale employed in Pollok, and some of the tensions of scale surrounding *The Village's* implementation, convinced me that it

would make an excellent case study. For Castlemilk, 2001-2002 marked the year when the Rev. John Miller, a minister in this socially-excluded scheme for thirty years took the position of the Church of Scotland's highest office – that of Moderator. Miller's background in Castlemilk, and all that that particular community symbolically represents for poverty and social justice, meant that his juxtaposed national scale positionality from powerless to powerful made for an excellent analysis of the power relations and politics involved between the community scales and other scales. I was able to gain easy access to media representations of Miller, and hence analyse the way in which he used his 'jumping scales' in a political fashion.

In reading the pastiches, a number of theoretical issues should be borne in mind throughout. Firstly, there is a simultaneous process of up-scaling positive images of the 'poor' community scale to the powerful at the national scale; and of down-scaling difficult issues, so that inadequate abstract theology is abandoned in favour of a contextualised community approach. Secondly, the scalar imaginations that are employed in Pollok and Castlemilk are particularly sophisticated, and used in a more political manner than their urban counterparts. Finally, the scale politics of power relations within the Church are central to both accounts, illustrating the essentially political nature of community scale moral geographies of social justice and the city.

## **6D2 THE VILLAGE PROJECT, POLLOK**

### **6D2.1 Introduction**

*The Village* is a community development project instigated in 2000 by St. James' Church of Scotland in Pollok. Greater Pollok (see Figure 6.10) is yet another of Glasgow's peripheral housing schemes that has become synonymous with social exclusion and urban decay. Plates



Figure 6.10 – Map of Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership area, showing Pollok in the north and the location of *The Village* project (Source: Glasgow City Plan, 2001).

6.21 to 6.24 give a flavour of the Greater Pollok landscape and some of the religious spaces contained within. Focused upon a purpose-built facility in a renovated space in the church sanctuary, *The Village* utilises the ancient tradition of storytelling, combined with crafts, music, drama and multimedia technology in an arts-based approach. The project aims 'to release social and spiritual energy by offering something people will feel good about and encourage a sense of pride in Pollok'; 'enabling in a creative way, the exploration of life's choices'; and 'involving the marginalised in shaping their future' (The Village, 1999). This creative, spiritual, arts-based approach to urban regeneration lies at the heart of *The Village* vision (see Figure 6.11).

The project works with two core groups in Pollok – primary school children and older people. All of the primary schools in the Greater Pollok area (including Nitshill, Priesthill, Darnley, Kennishead and Carnwadric) send children from each of their years to *The Village* on a weekly basis as part of their curriculum, exploring local history, world development and religious issues. Older people from local residential centres and living at home attend regularly for reminiscence discussions with friends and volunteers. Over and above these core groups, *The Village* also provides a space for monthly evening storytelling 'ceilidhs' where local residents and church members get together to share their own stories and life experiences. Out of school 'storytelling clubs' are being developed in the afternoons and weekends, and greater involvement with local secondary schools, adult education and training, and opening a storytelling 'café', are the next stage of the project's development.

*The Village* is funded by a £55,000 grant from Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership, plus funding from the former Church of Scotland *Priority Areas Fund* (now merged into the ecumenical *Scottish Churches Community Trust*), central Church funds, and other grants from local organisations and charities. *The Village* employs a full-time project manager – Rachel Smillie



## The Village

a unique  
storytelling  
experience!



### the Bible village

The Bible village gives an insight into the life and values of people living 2 - 3,000 years ago, through the telling of Bible stories, drama, craft and computer based activities.



Be taken back in time and find out what the experiences of Bible characters have to say to you!

### the local village



A visit down 'memory lane' - a chance for older people to reminisce. The 'Pollok Village' both recreates traditional tenement housing and harks back to the early days of the community in Pollok.

How did *you* come to live in Pollok? Come and tell us your stories in a welcoming atmosphere.

### the global village

Come and hear traditional stories from around the world. Take the opportunity to look at global and development issues.

Celebrate the wealth of cultures throughout the world, while recognising the common experiences we share with people from very different backgrounds.



Figure 6.11 – *The Village* publicity material, showing the different scaling processes employed by the project.

– who is a professional storyteller with considerable experience in developing community arts initiatives; and is otherwise staffed by a large number of volunteers drawn from the church and the local community.

Based around the spatial metaphor of 'the village', the project works around themes relating to three dedicated 'villages', utilising the converted space of the former church gallery. The 'Pollok Village' or 'Local Village' 'is Pollok itself reflecting on the history and concerns of this Glaswegian community; on another it is the 'Global Village' facing similar issues of poverty, community development and inclusion. But the Global Village also shares many characteristics of the Bible Village where values of faith, hope and love make St. James' an important part of the Pollok community' (The Village, 1999).

*The Village* is an excellent example for studying the moral geographical process of scaling, and its related moral geographical tensions of geographies and imaginations. The following analysis is taken from two interview accounts in May 2001: with Helen Hamilton<sup>xii</sup>, the church minister, and Rachel Smillie<sup>xiii</sup>, the project manager. It is also based upon my experience working as a project volunteer since December 2000. The most salient themes in The Village 'story' which I wish to analyse concern tensions surrounding spatial scale. Analysis of these tensions will help to illuminate the wider moral geographical process of scaling.





**Plates 6.21 & 6.22 – Geographies of social injustice in the city: crumbling social housing in Greater Pollok in Nitshill (above) and Corkerhill (below) creates an especially tough environment for scaling moral geographies of social justice and hope.**



## 6D2.2 Tensions of spatial scale

The story of The Village is characterised by two very different tensions surrounding spatial scale – one positive and the other negative. The positive conception is rooted at the core of what The Village is about; the negative, reflects tensions between different scales of the Church's power structures.

For the positive conception of scale, the heart of the very concept of 'the village' is itself a tension of spatial (and temporal) scales, as global is woven together with local, past with present (and future). The three different 'villages' of the 'Pollok village', 'the global village' and the 'Bible village' each represent the complex interaction of different geographical scales for understanding history, community, spirituality and social justice. Fundamental to the comprehension of this is the very notion of 'village' itself. As Helen Hamilton comments, the church membership thought long and hard and struggled to come up with an adequate concept to express their linking together of church and community, history, faith and social justice:

'We kind of teased out on what we *did* want, and the idea was to kind of create a sense of belonging in... and a village speaks of something that's small, something that's more intimate, something that is to do with relationships. So you know it was so people weren't lost ... 'Village' itself is meant to be ambiguous so that it can flow and not be totally watertight. At its heart are *people*'.

As Rachel Smillie adds, 'The Village gives a focus', and it is this notion of 'focus' which is central to the project's approach to tackling issues of history, community, spirituality and social justice. It is this focusing of all of these issues with the global and local scales through the storytelling, crafts, music and reminiscence activities that allows The Village to work creatively with tensions of spatial



Plates 6.23 & 6.24 – Scaling moral geographies of social justice and the city: *The Village* project, St. James' Church of Scotland, Pollok (above) and its ecumenical affiliate, St. Bernard's Roman Catholic Church, Nitshill (below).



scale. To give an illustration, Smillie talks about the reminiscence activities with the older people of Greater Pollok:

'One thing I have wanted to do with the reminiscence groups is to bring them together with some of the older people from Pollokshields (a nearby South Side suburb) – Asian folks, who were born in, probably in Pakistan maybe and India, and compare for example wash day fifty years ago in Pakistan and wash day in Glasgow fifty years ago. And also I know so many of our local folks came from really quite extreme poverty, and it would be very interesting to see how the poverty of fifty years ago in Glasgow compared with poverty in Pakistan fifty years ago. But of course when you're bringing together older people like that, you're also not only looking at their pasts, you're giving them bridges in the present, and that's something... So again that would sort of be a way of bringing together the global village and the local village, and even I think there's a link there with the Bible village too, because of the similarities between rural poor communities throughout the world'.

Hence the 'global' context of Pakistan is woven together with the local scale of Pollok and Pollokshields; past Pakistan with past and present Glasgow; and the world of the Bible with the globalised world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through a process of remembering, imagining and storytelling, to help give value and meaning to the lives of older members of Pollok. This sophisticated spatio-historico-theological reading of The Village's purpose to provide 'focus' for Pollok is an excellent example of the scaling of theology into a properly 'thickened' context-specific theology, and similarly demonstrates the creative potential for pursuing a multi-scalar politics of social justice, as Harvey (2000) has advocated. As Hamilton points out, The Village's social justice strategy is: 'If people feel good about themselves they are more likely to go on and do things'. Hence the project strategy is about touching the intangible, non-material aspects of poverty by helping people to reflect upon their situation and imagine better possibilities for their

lives: 'It's about dreaming dreams but taking little steps to do that' – Helen Hamilton's vision rhymes well with Harvey's (*ibid*) notions of imagination and hope at the heart of strategies for social justice.

In marked contrast to the positive manner in which tensions of scale are approached in the activities of The Village, the manner by which the project was itself created illustrates a far more negative scalar tension – that of the scale politics of Church power relations.

Having reached the final stage of planning for The Village – that of securing funding – the congregation and minister turned to the central Church of Scotland headquarters in Edinburgh to ask for funding for the project under the 'new forms of ministry' scheme. The application was rejected, with no explanation. Helen Hamilton's sense of frustration is clear as she recounts the rejection and making her point felt when officials from the Church then came to visit Pollok for an 'urban hearing' in March 2001:

'The Church, I feel, at one level, has not been supportive – the *wider* Church. We had an urban priority hearing in our church in March. There were four of these throughout Scotland and one of these was in ours... and we did a presentation and I did what I don't think I've ever done before, and that was tell them what it was *like* to be a minister in Pollok. You know, I've always kind of – you're always *praising* where you are because that's your *job*, encouraging people. But I just told them what it was like and I think some of them were absolutely shocked. And then I you know, came to the end and I said "and where is the Church in this?" And they were not really supportive. Because we'd put forward an application, having had eighteen months' discussion with Presbytery, we'd put forward a request under new forms of ministry. I don't know whether I've said this to you before, because we're in...we felt that that might be the way

to carry it forward, and Edinburgh just sent it back – “did not concur”. I mean that was *it!* They didn't come back asking *questions*. They didn't eh ask for clarification! Eighteen months debate and they “did not concur”. And and I just *told* them, you know. I said this – “look we're trying to do something different, trying to engage in an imaginative way, in a fresh way with the community” – and Edinburgh “did not concur”. They were furious at me! *Absolutely*, because this was a national meeting and down went the heads. ... You know, and I said what life was *really* like in Pollok and where was the Church, you know? Just cutting us off and truncating us! And so I really felt that the structures of the Church did not, have been, *nowhere* – *no idea* what it is like to have been a minister in Pollok'.

The politics of scale in this event is clear – the local Church, clear that its mission and calling is to be active at the community scale, is effectively ignored and brushed aside by a national Church more interested in preserving its own agendas (and budgets). The inability of the local Church to be able to overturn this decision of the national Church then results in localised resentment with Church structures and a public critique of the national Church by the local minister. This incident illustrates in particular the extent to which the national scale is privileged within the institutional, financial and decision-making structures of the Church of Scotland, and that in spite of *theology* being able to adapt and ground itself at the community scale, Church structures struggle to match this fact. This raises questions about the relationship between idealised abstract theologies which can easily be translated into geographical contexts, and rigid, fixed Church structures and powerful vested interests that pay little regard to such trends. Moral geographies at one scale are then constrained by moral geographies at others illustrating the extent to which scale matters.

Over and above these inter-scalar tensions, a further set of tensions surrounding the Church's decision to work in the community, which are *intra-scalar*, are apparent. These tensions relate to a desire to protect and privilege the community scale in a reactionary manner against the

perceived threats of having contact with groups and issues at the other scales which The Village is attempting to do. When *The Village* idea was first mooted, Helen Hamilton points out that the majority of congregation 'could see where it was going' and that nobody in the Kirk session voted against the idea. However 'when people realised that it might actually be *happening*, em there was a real difficulty, and em it was the idea of touching something in the sanctuary which absolutely just terrible' – 'not a brick should be touched'. From this a determined 'band of resistance' to *The Village* was created to oppose the plans going any further. Things came to a head in a public meeting to outline the project to the local community, where a couple of church members grabbed the microphones and told the minister exactly what they thought of her proposals – ' "I'm *telling* you! This will be the end of the church if we allow this to happen! ... The church should die gracefully" '. Whilst the project was 'overwhelmingly' approved, the issue of what the church sanctuary is about, and how Christian mission and worship should be conducted, remains 'live' for some in the congregation. As Hamilton comments:

'On the church, I suppose it's a sense of dignity. There aren't...the church is the oldest building in Pollok, and it's almost gone, the building has gone into folklore I think, because it was moved stone by stone, and people saw this wee lorry coming back and forward with great big stones all numbered and you know it just *rose*. And so you know that kind of thing you don't forget. So there was really a sense of worship of the building. And also a great commitment to the building'.

These tensions, rooted in the politics of local culture and folklore, demonstrate how a politics of protecting and privileging a particular scale from contact with 'outside' influences can be a barrier to the pursuit of genuinely multi-scalar change.

### 6D2.3 Conclusion

In summary, *The Village* provides an excellent example for exploring tensions surrounding moral geographical processes of scaling, in the thickening of theologies of social justice and the city. Spatial scale is on the one hand utilised in a sophisticated and imaginative manner to form the template for the weaving together of theologies, geographies and histories into the everyday lives of people in Pollok. In this sense tensions of scaling relate to scalar *imaginaries*. On the other hand, scale becomes implicated in a complex politics of power relations locked into Church structures which privileges one scale whilst disempowering another. In this manner, scale is (ab)used *politically* to both simultaneously challenge and reinforce existing intra-Church power relations. This serves to illustrate the complexity of relations between moral geographies at different scales, and the gulf between abstract and realised theologies, passive and active spiritualities, and between the 'high' theologies of national scale Church structures, and the 'low' theology of community scales. *The Village* therefore serves as an outstanding context in which to analyse the complex practicalities of trying to engage with scale creatively in pursuit of social justice.

## 6D3 CASTLEMILK – MODERATING THE KIRK

### 6D3.1 Introduction

In October 2000, the Rev. John Miller<sup>xiv</sup>, minister in the Castlemilk East parish church in Glasgow, was named as the new Moderator-Designate of the Church of Scotland, assuming the full role of Moderator at the Church's General Assembly in May 2001. Rev. Miller was one of two



candidates nominated for the post and was selected following a vote by the Church's various presbyteries throughout Scotland.

The post of Moderator is largely a symbolic one – in contrast to the episcopal model of the Catholic and Anglican churches, where bishops and archbishops possess authority over church affairs, the Presbyterian model vests power in the annual General Assembly whereby ministers and elders of parishes and presbyteries meet to undertake the role of the church's government. The Moderator presides over the Assembly, chairing debates and leading the worship, and then spends the rest of their year in office undertaking a series of visits to various church parishes, projects, presbyteries, and on overseas and 'official' church business. Whilst the term of office is limited to one year, and is largely symbolic in contrast to the genuine powers of figures such as Archbishop Conti in the Catholic Church's Archdiocese of Glasgow, the need for a figurehead and 'voice' on church affairs (in these current days of media obsession with image and leadership), means that the post of Moderator is constantly in the public spotlight. This affords whatever individual occupies the position, an excellent platform from which to give their particular views upon the state of the Church and the nation. Given the flexibility of individual moderators to choose the parishes and locations they visit (on top of pre-standing 'official' engagements) each moderator will usually adopt a particular 'theme' or focus for their year's work. These 'themes' tend to generate media interest, as do the pronouncements from the Moderator on particularly topical issues of the day (see Figure 6.13).

John Miller's election as the Church of Scotland's Moderator from 2001-2002 represents a unique opportunity for analysing some of the scalar tensions surrounding moral geographies of social justice. As the first Church of Scotland Moderator in fifty years to come from a deprived urban area (*Life and Work*, May 2001), during this year, Miller becomes the scalar embodiment

of the Church's work amongst the poor, on the national stage. By analysing media representations of Miller's 'spotlight' as Moderator, I will glean an assessment of the scaling of a poor community in representations at the national scale.

I structure my account around an analysis of media representations of Miller in the period from October 2000 (when he was elected) to May 2001 (when he became Moderator). This epitomises the crucial period when Miller became 'known' and evaluated in the public sphere, and received maximum exposure in the run-up to his appointment. I will do this by looking at Miller's history, the reasons for his acceptance of the position of Moderator, and his plans for his Moderatorial year.

My analysis draws upon as wide a range of media sources as possible. I searched all of the major broadsheet newspapers in circulation in Scotland for articles relating to John Miller (*The Herald*, *The Scotsman*, *Sunday Herald*, *Scotland on Sunday*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*), and also the tabloids (*Daily Record*, *Sunday Mail*, *The Sun*, *News of the World*, *The Evening Times*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*). Whilst searching the broadsheets was fruitful, owing to good internet and CD ROM archives, the same cannot be said of the tabloids. None of the above newspapers has an archival search facility and so it was decided that manual checking of newspapers from October 2000 till May 2001 would have to be limited to the largest circulating titles: *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail*. In addition, Glasgow's *Evening Times* is a large circulating tabloid daily in the West of Scotland area from where John Miller comes. In addition to newspapers, magazine commentaries were obtained from *The Big Issue* and the Church of Scotland's *Life and Work* magazine; and TV analysis from the BBC's and ITN's websites. Whilst this list is not exhaustive, it provides a range of different perspectives upon Rev. Miller's appointment and is sufficient to provide the more

*general* analysis of this section with raw detail. Although I had already interviewed Miller during my urban scale investigations, my concern in this section is with how he chose to represent himself *publicly*, and hence I only draw on the published interview material in the media.

### **6D3.2 The challenge of Castlemilk – scalar representations of poor communities and the re-scaling of abstract theologies**

As one of Glasgow's (and indeed Western Europe's) largest public housing schemes (with a one time population of 46,000), Castlemilk has become synonymous with urban decay, dereliction, poverty, vandalism, crime, poor health, bad housing, unemployment, drug addiction and poor education. Even in spite of a massive population exodus (current population is now 15,000) and considerable regeneration of its housing stock, Castlemilk is still represented in the media as 'one of Glasgow's biggest and toughest housing schemes' (*Daily Telegraph*, 17.5.01). Figure 6.12 shows the location and structure of Castlemilk, and Plates 6.25 and 6.26 illustrate the residential and religious landscape of the community.

John Miller took up his post in Castlemilk in 1971 and has been minister there ever since. There are a number of key features of John Miller's lifestyle and his ministry that have come to the fore in media assessments of his new position which serve to illustrate both Miller's own non-conformity to his own (and the Church's) tradition and background; and also the challenge which his embodied theology presents to both the sacred and secular spheres. Firstly, the media has been particularly interested in the material modesty of Miller's choice to become a 'council house Rev' (*Daily Record*), and leave behind his middle class manse in Rutherglen for a Castlemilk four apartment tenement. Secondly, the decision of Miller and his wife, Mary to bring their children up in Castlemilk schools was particularly contentious for the media, with the *Sunday Times*

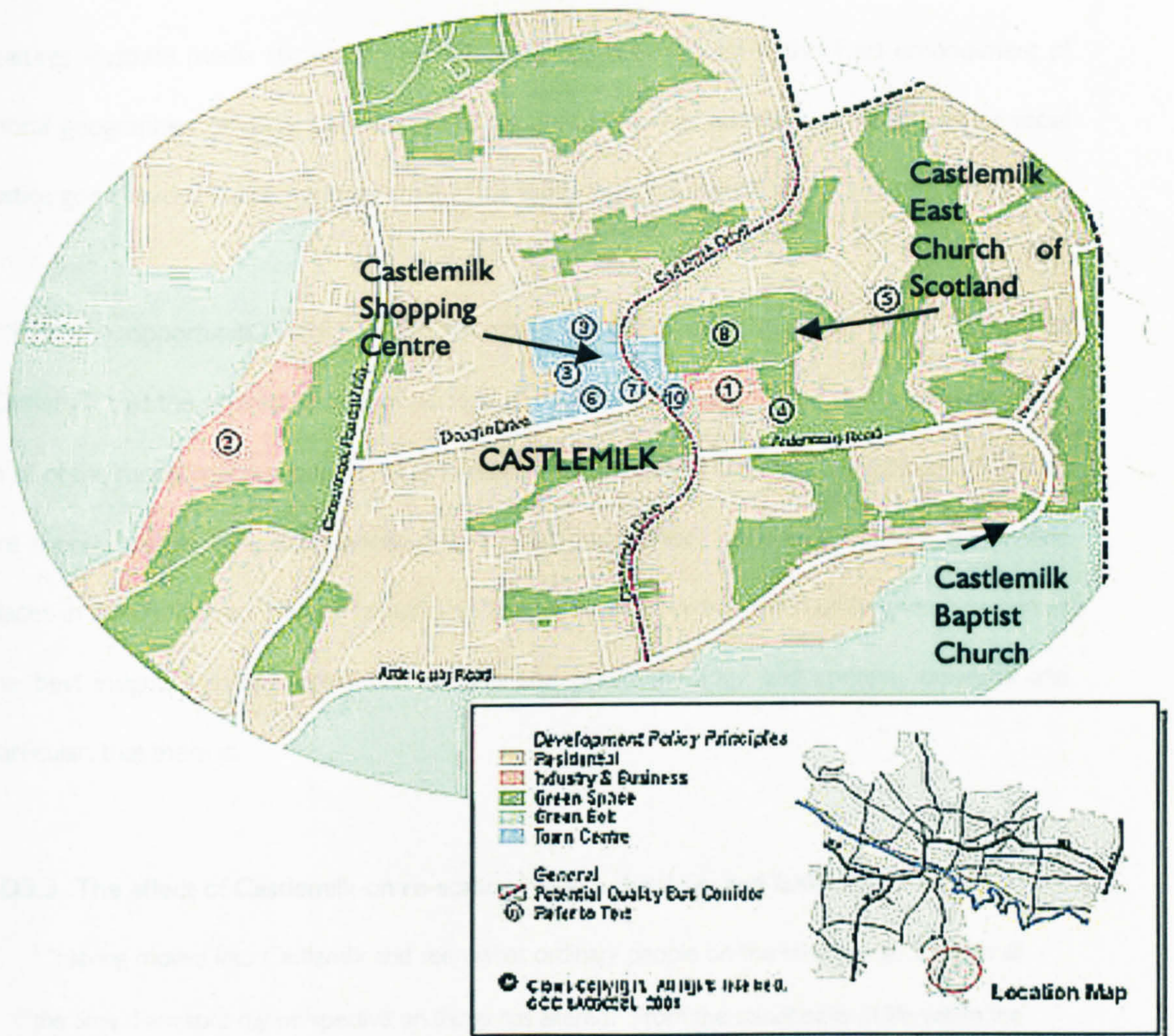


Figure 6.12 – Map of Castlemilk Partnership area, showing Castlemilk East Church of Scotland (Source: Glasgow City Plan, 2001).

commenting that the decision was 'at best bold, and at worst irresponsible'. These two key features illustrate media fascination with the stark choices involved in the lived embodiment of moral geographies of social justice and the city that Miller has adopted, as his scaling of social justice goes beyond the community scale to his everyday embodied life.

It is in the opportunities which Miller has taken to reflect upon his thirty years' ministry in Castlemilk that the clearest picture of his style of ministry and scaling of the community emerges. In all of the media representations Miller is keenest to debunk: 1. the myth that faith and theology are merely middle class experiences, and 2. that communities such as Castlemilk are terrible places in which to live. Miller's remarkable embeddedness in the community gives him one of the best insights into the interaction of faith and place, theology and context, universal and particular, that there is.

### **6D3.3 The effect of Castlemilk on re-scaling Miller's theology and faith**

' "Having moved into Castlemilk and seen what ordinary people on the schemes go through all the time, I am sure my perspective on things has altered. From the standpoints of life within the schemes, you see the operations of society as they impinge on life here – not as a deliverer of services but as a receiver – that has certainly had an effect on how I look at all the institutions of society. I think my move here has probably made me less judgmental because I know how hard it is to live just day by day" ' (*Sunday Herald*, 20.10.00).

' "Castlemilk has been here for 45 years, and the people came from the Gorbals. They saw their homes pulled down and they have learned that you can live with that level of change. You can watch the things that are important to you being taken away and yet go on living. Faith keeps people going, that has been shown so clearly. From the church's point of view, the thing that I have found important is that structures are secondary. The heart of what the Church is about is

# No dog collar, no airs and graces. The new Moderator is just an extraordinary man from a Castlemilk council house



JOHN MILLER, the new Moderator of the Church of Scotland, outside his Castlemilk home

In John Miller, the Church of Scotland has elected a new Moderator possessing the common touch to guide it through a

**Council house rev is Kirk No 1**  
 BY MARIE SHARP  
 A MINISTER from one of Scotland's most deprived areas has been named as the new Moderator of the Church of Scotland.  
 The Reverend John Miller, of Castlemilk East Parish Church in Glasgow, lives in a council house and travels everywhere by bike.  
 He has worked in the area for 20 years and has been elected to the role with 120 votes, the highest in the history of the office.  
 Mr Miller is a member of the Moderator's Council, the governing body of the office.  
 The Moderator's Council is made up of members from all the dioceses of the Church of Scotland.  
 The Moderator's Council met in Glasgow on Monday night to elect the new Moderator.  
 Mr Miller was elected by a vote of 120 to 118.  
 He is married with two children and lives in a council house in Castlemilk East.  
 He has worked in the area for 20 years and has been elected to the role with 120 votes, the highest in the history of the office.  
 Mr Miller is a member of the Moderator's Council, the governing body of the office.  
 The Moderator's Council is made up of members from all the dioceses of the Church of Scotland.



## Miller time

on the scheme rather than say in a large house in affluent Rutherglen. And while conducting services modest people always apologised to him when they came up and I was wearing it. I think they did that because they felt they weren't measuring up to whatever it was they felt the church expected of them," he says. "It communicated very loudly to people and I sensed they were hearing things from the dog collar that I wasn't saying. "It didn't say the things I wanted

to say. That was 25 years ago and since then I haven't worn it at all." The honest move, the absence of a dog collar and the bicycle as his preferred mode of transport were measures he took to establish himself as part of the community and not to be seen as one of the many professional people who came to Castlemilk to help - and then go home. His three children Sarah, 29, Anna, 27, and James, 24, all went to the local comprehensive. He admits that it was quite a wrench for him to leave the community he

has been so close to to take up the Moderator's post for a year, during which time he and Mary will live in the Moderator's official residence of Rothsay House in Edinburgh's New Town. But he says it was an opportunity he could not miss - in particular because he is one of only two Moderators ever to have come from deprived urban parishes. I ask him why this is the case. He replies rather diplomatically. "The church does tend to choose people from parishes that are different to mine and from church adminis-

## How Castlemilk will help shape the Church of Scotland's future

By Kathleen Nutt

THE radical minister appointed as the next Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will bring his experience of witnessing suffering and poverty on a deprived Glasgow housing estate to his new role.  
 The Reverend John Miller, who moved his wife Mary and baby daughter into a council flat in Castlemilk in 1972, said the years he spent on the south side scheme had made him more understanding of people and less judgemental.  
 He added that seeing people come to terms with tragedy and catastrophe had played a profound role on his spiritual beliefs and influenced his faith.  
 Miller, 50, the minister of Castlemilk East Parish Church,

will be the youngest Moderator in recent years when he takes over in May next year.  
 He underlined how, on a daily basis, people in Castlemilk came up to him wanting to talk about the existence and nature of God and said he believed this urgency to talk about spiritual matters was prompted by the hardships and extremes of life in the area.  
 "I think it is in the realm of spirituality that living in Castlemilk all these years has had an effect on me. One of the things that has been a continuing and constant feature here is the way that people retain an ability to live in spite of catastrophe," he said.  
 "I think people in the schemes, because of the difficult nature of life, recognise the validity of discussions of God. I find myself engaged in

conversations about the nature and existence of God and the universe daily, and many times almost instantly after meeting somebody."  
 Miller, who gave up his large, comfortable manse in Rutherglen because he wanted to be close to his parishioners, led a deputation to the Supplementary Benefits Commission in 1974 to enable DSS claimants to have their rent and rates paid directly after witnessing the number of people in his area falling into debt.  
 He said it was the first major problem that struck him after moving to the estate. It made him realise the importance of having enough money and motivated him to campaign for social change.  
 "Having moved into Castlemilk and seen what ordinary people on the schemes go



Figure 6.13 - Scaling moral geographies of social justice and the city: media representations of Castlemilk, poverty and John Miller's year as Moderator.

in the gospels. In the schemes we have faced problems with a lack of money for buildings and it is those lessons I will take me" ' (*Evening Times*, 27.4.01).

From these and other quotations, Miller plays up the *strengths* ('vitality', 'community') of Castlemilk, whilst at the same time illustrating how the *difficulties* faced in such communities have humbled him and changed his personal perspective. In this, Miller's theology had to be re-scaled away from an abstract, universal method, to a more partial and embedded understanding of the realities of a poor community. Therefore Miller abandoned the privileged scales of the abstract and the national, and focused on the scale of the community alone as the place to 'make' theology work. Similarly, Miller's representation of Castlemilk in positive terms, talking of its strengths, stands in direct contrast to predominant Church and media representations of communities such as Castlemilk in a negative light. This again illustrates how theology is constantly having to be (re)negotiated and re-scaled when confronted with the realities of place.

#### **6D3.4 The scaling of poor communities within the Church of Scotland's power structures**

The election of John Miller as the next Moderator of the Church of Scotland (CofS) was greeted in a number of ways by the media: 'Council house Rev is Kirk no. 1' proclaimed the *Daily Record* (18.10.00), in contrast to the BBC's more bland 'Kirk names new moderator' (17.10.00). Perhaps the most interesting headline came from the *Sunday Herald*, which was more prescient: 'How Castlemilk will help shape the Church of Scotland's future'. From these initial headlines, the references to 'council house' and the role of Castlemilk in the future of the CofS point to the media's interest that John Miller was a *different* type of Moderator. The presence of 'Castlemilk'



**Plates 6.25 & 6.26 – To Castlemilk and beyond: scaling moral geographies of social justice from Castlemilk East Church of Scotland to new housing, and beyond to the rest of Glasgow and Scotland.**





in the headline suggests that what 'Castlemilk' stands for is (probably) well-known by the *Sunday Herald's* readership, given its infamous reputation (along with Easterhouse, Pollok and Drumchapel) as one of Glasgow's peripheral housing schemes (see below). Hence, the community scale of communities such as Castlemilk is synonymous in national scale representations with poverty.

Whilst the media and other stakeholders may have greeted Miller's election in a positive manner, the man himself was remarkably hesitant in accepting the role:

'Miller refused several times to put his name forward to be Moderator and when told of his appointment last November he greeted the news with "disbelief and anxiety". He said "The only way I can make sense of it is to believe it is God's calling. I have prayed about it but have no clear answer" ' (*Daily Telegraph*, 17.5.01).

'So when he was first approached to consider putting his name forward as a candidate for the Moderator's post, he was stunned. "I found it almost impossible to think of it," he says, still looking surprised at the way events have turned out. After months, even years, of deliberation, he came to the conclusion that "it seemed as though it was such an unlikely thing that someone from a housing scheme would be asked seriously to consider this that I thought it would be important for someone from a housing scheme, if the opportunity came, to say that they would do it' (*Life and Work*, May 2001).

Whilst the above comments illustrate John Miller's natural *modesty*, and his deep thinking, more importantly they also point towards the positionality of 'housing scheme' parishes as they are scaled within the power relations of the Church of Scotland. That a housing scheme parish minister should ever be Moderator was an 'unlikely thing' points to the marginalisation of poor

places at the community scale within the power structures of the Church. The historical favouring of older, high profile, wealthy parish ministers suggests an embedded preference for the powerful within the Church of Scotland. The scaling of communities to the national scale is therefore an exclusionary process, whereby only certain types of communities (i.e. wealthy or middle class) are permitted to participate in this most prestigious of national scale Church roles. Poor communities are scaled in a far more negative rhetorical light, and seen as synonymous with poverty.

In the light of this, Miller's appointment as Moderator has indeed 'ripped up the rule book' (*The Scotsman*, 18.5.01) and points to insurgent elements within the power relations of the Church. Though as Ron Ferguson (*The Herald*, 4.5.01) points out, Miller's appointment may be so that he 'will become co-opted by the ecclesiastical establishment and be paraded up and down the land as a kind of "pet radical" ', suggesting that the vote for Miller may have been as much to salvage (guilty) consciences as to point to any real change in the Church hierarchy of power. On the other hand, it may signal the beginnings of genuine change (see below).

What is perhaps most important about John Miller's appointment as Moderator is that it is highly symbolic at a critical point in the Church of Scotland's future. Responding to decades of decline in its membership, admissions to ministry, and its perceived influence on the life of the nation, a radical new commission was set up in 1999 to consider the future of the Church and recommend a new way forward. The resulting *Church Without Walls* report was presented to the General Assembly and called for massive changes to the inherited structures and procedures of the Church of Scotland, with an emphasis on 'turning the church upside down', making it far more fluid and dynamic, and re-scaling decision-making power away from the national scale to

regional and urban scales, as a response to the uncertainties and complexities of contemporary modernity.

As a minister who has been at the sharp edge of the massive socio-economic restructuring that has taken place in Scotland since the early 1970s, in a place that many would consider to be the 'bottom of the pile', Miller is the example *par excellence* of an upside-down, re-scaling Church. His chairing of the General Assembly debates in May (at which I was present) and the comments which he was able to make in sermons and speeches delivered during the period (along with media interviews) illustrate how Miller's overturning of conventional power relations, and his creative use of scale, mark him as a prophetic voice within a wider Church aching for change:

'Mr Miller said he hoped his experience in Castlemilk, where people lived with constant uncertainty, would enable him to lead the Kirk through its upheaval. A radical report, *A Church Without Walls*, to be debated at the General Assembly on Monday, proposes to overthrow existing structures and take the Church out of its buildings and onto the streets. "There is an acceptance that the Church must change and that it cannot survive as it is," said Mr Miller.' (*Daily Telegraph*, 17.5.01).

Miller's desire to place Castlemilk, and all that it symbolises for the community scale, at the centre stage of national scale debates was especially evident in his keynote sermon to the General Assembly on 20.5.01. Here, Miller argued passionately and persuasively that the massive difficulties facing the Church did not represent 'total eclipse' (Miller, 2001), but that 'everything can go, except the Gospel' (*ibid*). Pointing to the guidance of Christ and the Prophets, Miller cleverly combined biblical universals about 'the spirit of the poor' with his own localised knowledge of Castlemilk into the national context of the General Assembly – weaving together past and present, local and national in a rich vision for the future of the Church. His constant

emphasis upon working with the poor and working in communities such as Castlemilk, continued to drive home his point about the re-scaling of the Church away from the national scale and the powerful, towards the community and body scales and the poor.

### 6D3.5 Conclusion

The above analysis has highlighted a number of tensions associated with the primary moral geographical process of the *scaling* of theologies of social justice. John Miller's role as Moderator of the Church of Scotland provides a platform for the scaling of issues relating to poverty and social justice to a national level. Castlemilk has become symbolic of Scotland's continuing struggle with poverty; Miller of the Church's struggle with poverty, and with itself, as it wrestles with the difficulties of living out a radical Gospel calling in the face of diminishing social influence. Hence in these debates and media representations, Castlemilk has been 'nationalised' for a period and become the focus for intense public scrutiny; whilst in contrast, the whole Church of Scotland is being urged to become 'communitised' by its radical Moderator and *Church Without Walls*. Miller and Castlemilk are thus symbolic of what the Church hopes to become, providing a prophetic vision of the way ahead. Miller's use of the national platform to do this (combined with his commitment to return to Castlemilk after his year of office) is timely and effective, and has been well received by Church and media alike.

Likewise, Miller's personal testimony and his way of life have pointed to the key tensions surrounding the scaling of moral geographies of social justice and the city. For the theological constituency, the media was right to note that Miller occupies the dangerous 'moral high ground' and that this may cause friction with the rich and powerful within the Church. However, the willingness of the Church of Scotland to embrace the *Church Without Walls* report, and Miller's

steadfast unwillingness to be co-opted into the traditions of the ecclesiastical establishment, points to the possibility for a thorough shake-up and re-scaling of the Church's dominant power relations and structures. Whilst some of this is reactionary, much of it is proactive and theological, as the Church's dominant moral visions and indeed its geography are shaken up and a new, looser, more contingent moral geography of Church structure takes shape, with the community scale at its heart.

## **6D4 CONCLUSION: CASTLEMILK AND POLLOK – SCALING MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Moral geographical processes of scaling theologies of social justice at the community scale are replete with intra- and inter- scalar tensions. The pastiches of Pollok and Castlemilk have examined this in detail, and a number of salient issues emerge in the stories from these South Side schemes.

Both Miller and Hamilton adopt theologies which echo their counterparts by giving a highly positive theological reading of their communities. In Miller's case, his moral geography has been carefully up-scaled to present Castlemilk as an illuminating example of the good that is present in poor communities – in deliberate contrast to the normal accounts of such places in the national media. Whilst Miller has had success in up-scaling Castlemilk in a positive manner, both he and Hamilton have experienced difficulties in down-scaling theology into their communities. For Miller, this was the personal anxiety and soul-searching created by the inadequacy of academic theology in explaining the realities of life in a poor housing scheme; for Hamilton, the difficulty of persuading a significant proportion of her congregation that a theology which embraced the

community was the way ahead. Scaling theology, then, can be problematic in a number of manners.

The greatest difficulties in translating a theological strategy into the urban community context concerns the scale politics of Church power relations. Miller's appointment as one of only two Moderator's *in a century* to have come from a deprived community, illustrates clearly the positionality of poor communities within the power relations of the Church. A dominant moral geography, cast in the mould of the powerful and rich is hard to break, and whilst Miller is an insurgent radical, it is tempting to see him as a one-off in the long run of bias to the powerful. The positive moral geographies of communities such as Castlemilk, are likely then to remain concealed behind the dominant moral geography of the powerful.

However, whilst in the long term, the concentration of Church power at the national scale presents difficulties for poor places at the community scale, Hamilton and Miller both pursue an effective strategy of social justice that uses scale imaginatively and creatively. In Pollok, Hamilton has pursued a strategy of 'scaling the imagination' to dream dreams and think hopefully of the future by focusing on global scale social relations and connections of social justice. In this, the Pollok strategy echoes Harvey's (2000) urge that we must become architects of our own destiny, with imagination to the fore. For Miller, his strategy has been to pursue social justice through 'scaling the politics' of the Church to allow Castlemilk to 'speak' on the national stage. These insurgent elements demonstrate that whilst moral geographical tensions surrounding scale can be in many ways repressive, strategies that employ scale creatively, can actively seek to build a meaningful social justice that links community with national and global issues.

## SECTION 6E

### CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

#### 6E1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding pastiches have each given a unique insight into the nature of moral geographical processes and tensions at the community scale. Each pastiche generates its own distinctive insights, but there are common related threads running through the accounts. I have grouped the studies into three pairs which focus on specific moral geographical tensions. The vignettes of Easterhouse and Possil/Ruchill concentrate on the moral geographical process of negotiation and moral geographical tensions between sacred and secular; those for the East End and Drumchapel look at the moral geographical process of negotiation surrounding tensions of ecumenism and sectarianism between denominations; and finally, the Pollok and Castlemilk studies look at the moral geographical process of scaling, and its related tensions (see Fig. 6.1 and Table 6.1, below, for re-iteration of processes and tensions).

In concluding, I wish to draw out firstly, the moral geographical tensions that are crucial to the community scale, and secondly, the moral geographical processes which exist at this scale. In doing so, my aim is to illustrate the unique nature of moral geographical processes and tensions at the community scale, and at the end I will delimit the manner in which the research in this chapter contributes towards the theoretical advancement that I wish to make in this thesis.

| Meta Tensions                 | Meso Tensions                                       | Outcomes                            |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| THEOLOGY & ETHICS             | <i>Conceptions of theology and spirituality</i>     | Contested theologies                |
|                               | <i>Conceptions of ethics</i>                        | Contested ethics                    |
| POWER & POLITICS              | <b>DENOMINATIONAL TENSIONS</b>                      | <b>CONTESTED PRAXIS</b>             |
|                               | <b>SACRED-SECULAR TENSIONS</b>                      | <b>CONTESTED IDEOLOGIES</b>         |
| GEOGRAPHIES & IMAGINATIONS    | <b>SCALAR IMAGINARIES</b>                           | <b>CONTESTED SCALAR IMAGINARIES</b> |
|                               | <i>Multi-Scalar Utopian / Dystopian Imaginaries</i> | Contested utopian imaginaries       |
| POSITIONALITIES & DIFFERENCES | <i>Moral positionalities</i>                        | Contested experiences               |

Table 6.1 – Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis, with community scale tensions highlighted in bold (Copy of Table 3.2).

## 6E2 MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL TENSIONS AT THE COMMUNITY SCALE

The above accounts have illustrated the richness of moral geographical tensions at the community scale. It is the contention of this thesis that scale matters – moral geographical processes and tensions apply to all scales, but certain issues take precedence, or take on unique characteristics at particular scales. It is therefore the case that the community scale has thrown up some particularly salient characteristics of processes that differentiate them to the preceding urban scale of analysis. The most important overall point is to remember that the tensions focused upon at this scale largely concern power and politics, as it is the community scale at which theologies of social justice tend to embed themselves practically. Hence, whilst tensions at the urban scale are



more about contested theologies and ethics, tensions at the community scale are largely about contested *praxis*. A number of points can be made for each tension studied:

### 6E2.1 Tensions of power and politics

Tensions surrounding power and politics at the community scale are myriad:

(a) The moral politics of individual congregations is different to that of theologians operating at urban, national and global scales. At the community scale, theology moves 'beyond' the internal structures of churches where it can be debated in a 'formal' manner, and encounters the messy realities of local politics amongst both Christian and secular circles. The contests within congregations; between congregations; and between churches and secular agencies work differently at the community scale as they are highly dependent on the nature of local personalities (see below), many of whom do not share the abstract theological language or sentiments that clergy encounter at 'higher' scales. Though sectarianism and inter-denominational division remains an important issue creating tensions around Church structure, it is as likely at the community scale for *intra*-denominational rivalries and disputes to break out (e.g. Easterhouse). This local politics is as much tied into residualised religious discourses and understandings within the secular as it is within Church circles. The result is a far more 'messy' set of moral geographies that do not fit into the more structured debates at urban and national scales.

(b) The nature of tensions between sacred and secular at the community scale is interesting. Whilst an incarnational *reading* of poor places is possible at the urban scale and others, and it is perfectly possible for theology to recognise the good and Godly in non-Christian groupings, it is at

the community scale that a *living* of incarnational theology becomes most meaningful. The community is the context in which academically trained theologians find themselves on a day-to-day basis in their parish work. *Being* amongst the poor becomes the primary means of translating theology into practice. The incarnational approach creates a set of complex and messy tensions between the sacred, the secular, the 'sanctified secular' (e.g. 'the community' in Easterhouse), and the 'secularised sacred' (e.g. residual sectarianism in Dalmarnock). Though sacred and secular relationships are not distinct, and it is possible to see an overlap between both spheres at most scales, again it is the *everyday* nature of the moral geographies which is a distinguishing feature of the tensions at community scale.

(c) The nature of moral power relations at the community scale is such that it can make a real, felt, and tangible difference to the lives of local communities. Whilst the community story seems to be one of top-down power from higher scales being able to threaten the individual makeup of local communities – whether it be from Church structures or from secular agents – it is also one of sometimes successful local resistance to the imposition of agendas from above (e.g. Forrest in Possil, and Cuthbertson's survival in Easterhouse). The empowerment of local individuals in cases such as Pollok, Possil and Drumchapel to start to take positive decisions and dream positive dreams for the future of their communities is a tangible achievement of theologies at the community scale (even if small). At the urban and national scales, this opportunity for lay involvement in theological enterprises is highly limited. In the community, however, using theology to actively challenge powerful others is a process that can genuinely impact individuals in a manner more widespread than at urban or national scales.

## 6E2.2 Tensions of geographies and imaginations

The moral politics of scale that occurs at the community level is one of using scale creatively to challenge wider issues from a local base. All of the communities such as Drumchapel (ecumenism), Pollok (community-building), Castlemilk (politics), and Easterhouse (justice) encourage communities to challenge broader scale issues from where they are, whether it be through political activism, prayer, relationship-building, or imagination. Whilst this is not an especially unique feature of this scale (i.e. there are community-building, justice and ecumenical initiatives at urban and national scales), the manner in which it is approached is again different. For example, from the East End and Drumchapel studies, there is a sense in which issues surrounding ecumenism at the community level resonate more profoundly with local residents.

Although the ecumenical initiatives in Drumchapel and the East End can be accused of being divorced from a secularised sectarianism and remaining 'nicey nicey' like their Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) counterparts at the national scale, there is a sense in which they touch people whose day-to-day existence is clearly affected by such initiatives. Hence whilst organisations such as ACTS can talk for hours about sectarianism in Scotland, they are unlikely to ever experience it in the manner that a resident in Dalmarnock does when there is an Orange march. In the cases of Pollok and Castlemilk, spatial scales actively challenge one another, and (e.g.) moral geographies created at the national scale (by the Church of Scotland's departments and boards) bleed down into the community, and are likewise challenged back by local theologies. The politics of local communities are far more sensitive to personal moral crusades, and their influence is far more direct than at a more bureaucratic, structural level. It is this *everyday* nature of moral geographies that makes tensions over spatial scale so unique at the community scale.

## 6E3 MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL PROCESSES AT THE COMMUNITY SCALE

Returning to Figure 6.1, this chapter has focused specifically upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of *practising and living*, which I have argued is unique to the community scale, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of *negotiation* (*co-operation* and *contestation*), and *scaling* (*communitisation*). These moral geographical processes operate in a unique manner at this scale as follows:

### 6E3.1 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of practising and living

A key feature of the moral geographical processes of practising and living in the deprived communities analysed is a deliberate playing up by clergy of *positive* moral geographies of the community scale, in direct contrast to popular (mis)conceptions. Hence, Miller trumpets the positive virtues of Castlemilk to the media; Purves is 'excited' about being in Drumchapel and the Easterhouse workers deliberately flag up a positive interpretation of the community in contrast to the often negative perceptions that residents have of it. The ability to have such a decisive view of the communities illustrates the central importance of incarnational theologies that sees the value of living amongst the poor and excluded, and also the inherent good and Godliness of such places, at the community scale. Appeals to biblical stories of Christ amongst the poor have a real resonance, then, with the realities of life in Glasgow's poorest communities.

The overwhelming focus amongst clergy and interviewees at this scale upon incarnational theologies raises a second point about moral geographical processes at the community scale. The active translation of theologies that engage with the needs of the poor seems wholly

dependent upon the makeup of the cadre of executioners. Without exception, *every* person that I interviewed, and every initiative, adopted such an incarnational approach. This is, quite simply, because all of these individuals had very definite liberal or critical theologies. The absence of any theological conservatives in my analysis at this scale either points to my failure to be inclusive, a reluctance amongst conservatives to be interviewed, or, a more general deficiency in conservatives working amongst the poor at the community scale in Glasgow. The individual biographies of the cadre of executioners, then, and in particular their theological persuasion, has been crucial to the moral geographical processes of practising and living adopted.

Related to this makeup of the cadre, in every community studied, initiative in strategies of community engagement has come (naturally) from clergy, with lay members following on (Holman perhaps being an exception, but with his status as a professor making him essentially a leader). The Drumchapel example is a case in point. St. Mark's Church of Scotland has recently joined the Drumchapel Churches Partnership (DCP). When DCP was initially set up, St. Mark's was totally disengaged and opposed to the initiative because of the incumbent minister. When that minister left, the new minister was enthusiastic for DCP. All clergy I spoke to were enthusiasts for community action, and it is natural that they will 'get on' with others of similar persuasion. However, as Cuthbertson pointed out, his neighbour who operates in the same deprived Easterhouse context, has no interest in community activism or incarnational theology, favouring a rigid, conservative evangelical view of Church, leading to poor relations between the two churches. Community engagement, then, is highly reliant upon the personal moral geographies of those communities adopted by the clergy.

## 6E3.2 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes

Moving to the intermediate level of 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes which are more general than their 3<sup>rd</sup> order counterparts, there are a number of key cross-cutting themes for the community scale:

### 6E3.2.1 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of negotiation (co-operation and contestation)

#### (a) Denominational co-operation and contestation

Intra- and inter-denominational contestations have created difficulties for church strategies of social justice. Whilst Bob Holman's FARE and Martin Forrest's / John Matthews' strategies in their congregations seem to have met with little opposition, the norm for most others interviewed has been theological disputation and confrontation with their congregations. Cuthbertson and Hamilton have both experienced extremely difficult periods with their congregations in pursuing their community visions, as have Fraser, Lawlor and the Drumchapel group. Cuthbertson, Hamilton and Fraser have each experienced direct walkouts by key members as a result of their policies. Most contestation seems to arise from the incarnational and community-focused theology of the clergy clashing with the 'respectable' or 'escapist' mentalities of their church memberships. Again, the politics of personality is central. It is therefore possible to have situations where the church is more of a 'home' for the 'secular' community than for its sacred members. Whilst there are clearly difficulties *between* church congregations (as illustrated by the prior disunity in Drumchapel and Cuthbertson's inability to see eye to eye with his neighbouring Church of Scotland counterpart), these difficulties are not so much along the denominational lines expected. Tensions over strategy seem much more likely *within* denominations (the

Cuthbertson case) and indeed within congregations (Hamilton, Fraser). It is thus possible for alliances to be constructed that cut *across* denominations (Drumchapel and Fraser's work in Calton) but yet divide inside those denominations. These processes of co-operation and contestation are related to theological understandings of community and the nature of the Church's mission; and hence are highly reliant upon the personalities of individual clergy and leaders.

(b) Sacred-secular co-operation and contestation

The incarnational view of seeing the Godly amongst the community points to a key finding. The distinctions between sacred and secular held in an orthodox model of Church are blurred and confused by these local moral geographies. Holding out the secular as meaningful and important and 'sanctifying' it represents a positive view of secular society, and yet at the same time the secular can also be something to be opposed or 'prayed for', depending upon its nature. Certain types of secularity seem 'good', whilst others are 'bad'. This again points to the complexity of local context in determining thickened moral geographies. Similarly the secularisation of sectarianism away from its roots in the Church points to the continuing reality of a sacred-secular divide, and of the inability of the Church to connect with parts of the secular community. What seems unique about these processes of sacred-secular co-operation and contestation at the community scale is the extent to which alliance-building or fighting is more transient and fluid than at say the urban or national scales. At the community scale, whilst prejudices can become firmly entrenched (as evidenced by the stubborn persistence of sectarianism in the East End), they can also be more temporary (as shown by the change of heart in St. Mark's, Drumchapel). Similarly, sacred-secular alliances can be of a temporary nature in response to immediately pressing issues, as in the case of the housing issue in Possil. At the national and urban scales, alliance-building is unlikely to take place unless there is to be more long-term political benefit. Christian moral

geographies in communities, then, co-operate with the secular in some ways, and contest it in others. Whilst the picture is clearly *not* a traditional sacred-secular dichotomy as in the past, the continuing prevalence of issues such as sectarianism serves up a complex picture that will vary from community to community and congregation to congregation.

### **6E3.2.2 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of moral politics**

Whether it be a dominant moral geography of the rich and powerful, a dominant theological position, or a dominant secular agency such as the Glasgow Alliance, each of the pastiches is soaked in the politics surrounding moral power relations. The structures of the Church are a major source of moral conflict. For Cuthbertson, being threatened with expulsion by the CofS's Presbytery and National Mission; for Miller as the first 'poor' Moderator of the Church of Scotland; or Hamilton being 'rejected' by central Church structures – experience of their own relative 'powerlessness' is common. Whilst Miller turns things on their head somewhat, the general position seems to be that working in a poor community does not buy power and influence in the Church. Lawlor's and Savage's accounts point to similar difficulties in the Catholic Church. Similar to the Church, moral power is exercised in the agendas of agents such as Glasgow Alliance in Possil, or the City Council in Easterhouse, where individuals have the power to change peoples' lives according to their moral geographical reading of a community. Hence funding can be withdrawn and resources withheld in a complex moral politics of good and bad and right and wrong. The politics of the community scale seem peculiarly sensitive to such issues, and it is clear that the socio-spatial power of the moral is a core issue for all poor communities.



### 6E3.2.3 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of scaling (communitisation)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical process of scaling the community through 'communitisation' differs from its urbanisation counterpart. At the urban scale, the scaling of the urban is to see it as a key discursive and imagined nexus between global and local, the site at which theologies can begin to interact with socio-spatial relations and configurations. At the community scale, whilst community continues to be read through a theological lens as a fundamental scale within urban theology, scaling processes here are far more ostensibly political, and related to genuine struggles over power between scales, than the more abstract discussions at the urban scale. The 2<sup>nd</sup> order scaling process of communitisation, then, is inextricably linked to the 3<sup>rd</sup> order process of practising and living theologies, in the same way that the 2<sup>nd</sup> order scaling process of urbanisation is inextricably linked to the 3<sup>rd</sup> order process of imagining and reflection of theologies. In communities like Castlemilk and Pollok, because of the very nature of their poverty, and, by association, their powerlessness in structures, scale is not simply something that can be imagined or discussed, but is something that actively constrains or empowers the practical realities of community futures. Hence, communities such as Castlemilk have found themselves theologically empowered by the scalar juxtaposition of power relations enacted by Miller's up-scaling to the national scale, whilst at the same time a community such as Pollok has been disempowered (financially and discursively) by intransigence from the powerful at that same national scale.

Scale *can*, then, be used creatively in pursuit of social justice, as Harvey has argued, but at the same time, in spite of theological rhetoric that has advocated a community focus, the institutional and power architecture of the Church continues to inhibit such advances. This seems to suggest that the scalar fascination with the social justice at the urban scale is perhaps more sanitised and easy for the powerful to deal with, given its largely discursive nature. At the community scale,

where the pursuit of social justice is far more messy and prone to discord, powerful theological interests are far more resistant to the practical involvement that such a politics would entail.

## 6E4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to advance my theoretical understanding of moral geographies of social justice and the city by continuing to pursue the framework of processes and tensions that I developed in Chapter 3. In relation to the three key contributions that I wish to make in this thesis (see Chapter 3), I can make the following conclusions at this stage:

(i) Inserting a religious perspective into moral geographical enquiry: By making use of my own positionality as a Christian researcher living in Glasgow, I have been able to become first a project volunteer, and, later, a management committee member of a Church-based project seeking social justice for the deprived community of Pollok. In doing this, I have not only gained academic understanding of the moral geographical processes and tensions affecting poor communities in Glasgow, but firsthand experience of the complex processes of negotiation, scaling, practising and living that theology has to utilise in thickening itself in spatial contexts. In inserting a religious perspective into moral geographical theory, the community scale has given me perhaps the best opportunity to test out my contribution through actual practice, and experiencing for myself the difficulties and potentials which exist at this scale for moral geographical exchange.

(ii) A scalar approach to understanding moral geographies: analysis of processes and tensions in scaling at the community scale have advanced my comprehension of scaling more generally as at this scale, scaling is far more concerned with politics and power relations than about spatial imaginations. Advancing a more politicised conception of scale demonstrates the validity of Harvey's (2000) theory of a multi-scalar politics of social justice. To add the theological element

to this illustrates the manner in which theological principles are often mobilised in a political manner both in pursuit of social justice, and also to prevent it. The clash between powerful and powerless is fundamentally a scalar one where particular scales hold privileged positions in the institutional architectures of the Church. A failure to fully appreciate these politics of scale is to reduce scale simply to an imaginative construct, rather than the more active, contested role that it performs in these communities.

(iii) Constructing a framework of moral geographical processes and tensions: by focusing on new 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of practising and living, I have been able to move moral geographical argument beyond abstract debates about the good and bad, and demonstrate that moral geographies are not merely 'beliefs' which are 'held', but actions which are practised. By looking at tensions of power and politics and tensions of scaling, moral geographies at the community scale show themselves to be particularly dynamic and vibrant – more so than at the urban scale. By focusing on different tensions at the community scale to those at other scales, whilst maintaining the consistency of the scaling tensions at all scales, I have been able to build up a broad model of processes and tensions that cannot be accused of being overly-simplistic. The sheer variety of tensions encountered in these six communities demonstrates the validity of my approach.

The accounts from the six communities studied in Glasgow, whilst partial, paint a vivid picture of the nature of processes and tensions in moral geographies at the community scale. As highlighted above, some of the features and issues at this scale are unique. In other cases, various scales merge into one another and challenge each other in a complex set of scalar relations and politics of scale.

An overall conclusion should point out that theology has been translated into the community context in a variety of ways, and continues to be made and remade in multiple manners. All of the case studies actively ascribe moral meaning to their contexts, and draw heavily on theological universals for inspiration, whilst attempting to contribute back from the particular in a creative manner. Though no initiative analysed can claim to be hugely 'influential' or 'successful', it seems clear to me that whether it be in actively challenging major issues such as sectarianism or housing inequality, or simply helping people to tell stories and dream dreams, theology has shown itself perfectly capable of adapting to the difficult context of Glasgow's poorest communities, creating challenging, expressive and meaningful moral geographies for their residents.

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<sup>i</sup> Rev. Malcolm Cuthbertson; middle-aged; male; Church of Scotland; liberal theology; minister, Easterhouse.

<sup>ii</sup> Professor Bob Holman; older-aged; male; Baptist Church; liberal theology; project leader, Easterhouse.

<sup>iii</sup> Matt Hall; young-aged; male; Baptist Church; conservative theology; youth worker, Easterhouse.

<sup>iv</sup> Diane Hall; young-aged; female; Baptist Church; conservative theology; project worker, Easterhouse.

<sup>v</sup> Rev. Martin Forrest; middle-aged; male; Church of Scotland; liberal theology; minister, Possil.

<sup>vi</sup> Roddy Byers; middle-aged; male; project manager; Glasgow Alliance regeneration agency, Possil.

<sup>vii</sup> Rev. Jim Lawlor; middle-aged; male; Roman Catholic Church; liberal theology; priest, Dalmarnock.

<sup>viii</sup> Rev. Ian Fraser; middle-aged; male; Church of Scotland; liberal theology; minister, Calton.

<sup>ix</sup> Rev. John Purves; young-aged; male; Church of Scotland; liberal theology; minister, Drumchapel.

<sup>x</sup> Rev. Carolyn Smyth; middle-aged; female; United Reformed Church; liberal theology; minister, Drumchapel.

<sup>xi</sup> Rev. Michael Savage; middle-aged; male; Roman Catholic Church; liberal theology; priest, Drumchapel.

<sup>xii</sup> Rev. Helen Hamilton; older-aged; female; Church of Scotland; liberal theology; minister, Pollok.

<sup>xiii</sup> Rachel Smillie; middle-aged; female; project manager; *The Village* community project, Pollok.

<sup>xiv</sup> Rev. John Miller; middle-aged; male; Church of Scotland; liberal theology; minister, Castlemilk.

# CHAPTER 7

## BODY SCALE ANALYSIS

## SECTION 7A

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter shifts to the most micro-scale for this thesis: the body. Having analysed moral geographies of social justice and the city at urban and community scales, it has become clear that a fuller understanding of the lived experiences of individual bodies is required. It is therefore necessary to analyse these in more detail, and to do this via an encounter with the lived experiences of the *consumers* of theologies – the cadre of individual disciples. At this most intimate and personal of scales, my intention is to explore the processes by which the common tensions running throughout moral geographies of social justice and the city become embodied in the lives of individuals. This unique embodiment differs from that already examined in the lives of the cadres of urban imaginers and community executioners in that my group for analysis is not trained theologians, clergy or church leaders, but rather the ordinary lay members who make up the Church in Glasgow's poor and deprived communities. These are the individuals for whom ethics of social justice / personal transformation / meaning *must* have relevance for urban theologies to have been 'successful' in their transformative goals.

In this chapter I will focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of *transformation* (and its associated tensions of *theology and ethics, positionalities and differences, and geographies and imaginations*) (see Figure 7.1). This process of transformation represents the exclusive focus that I wish to make at this scale. In looking at this process, I am essentially moving beyond the *production* processes of imagination and reflection which I examined at the urban scale, and the *exchange* processes of practising and living that I examined at the community scale. At the body scale, my focus is on moral geographical *consumption*, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> order process associated with

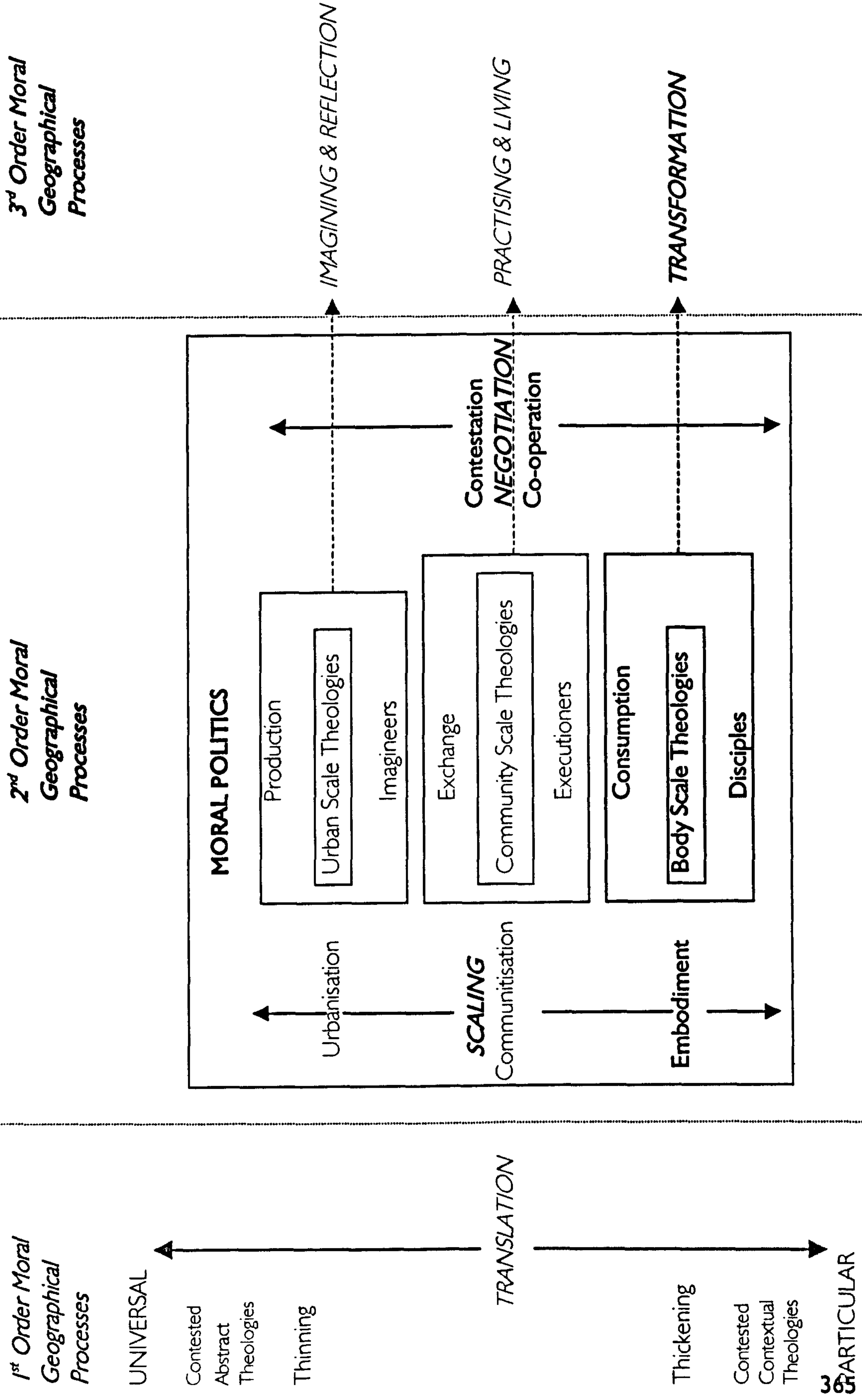


Figure 7.1 – Diagrammatic representation of moral geographical processes examined in thesis (Copy of Figure 3.2).

consumption has to be transformation. Either individuals are transformed by their consumption of theologies, or they are not. There is a continuum of transformation along which individuals sit, and can move at different stages in their life. Hence, religion may be a genuinely empowering, transformative experience, or it may be a disempowering burden that does little to change things for the better. For poor and socially excluded people, for whom life is often difficult enough, anything which can offer hope of transformation and empowerment is to be welcomed. This chapter, therefore, attempts to assess the processes and tensions by which this is made possible, or not.

| <b>Meta Tensions</b>                           | <b>Meso Tensions</b>                                | <b>Outcomes</b>                      |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>THEOLOGY &amp; ETHICS</b>                   | <i>Conceptions of theology and spirituality</i>     | <b>Contested theologies</b>          |
|  | <i>Conceptions of ethics</i>                        | <b>Contested ethics</b>              |
| POWER & POLITICS                               | Denominational tensions                             | Contested praxis                     |
|  | Sacred-Secular Tensions                             | Contested ideologies                 |
| <b>GEOGRAPHIES</b> &<br><b>IMAGINATIONS</b>    | <i>Scalar Imaginaries</i>                           | <i>Contested scalar imaginaries</i>  |
|  | <i>Multi-Scalar Utopian / Dystopian Imaginaries</i> | <b>Contested utopian imaginaries</b> |
| <b>POSITIONALITIES</b> &<br><b>DIFFERENCES</b> | <b>Moral positionalities</b>                        | <b>Contested experiences</b>         |

Table 7.1 – Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis, with body scale tensions highlighted in bold (Copy of Table 3.2).

As in the other chapters, and to provide continuity, this chapter is also concerned with the more meso-level 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of the moral politics of *scaling (embodiment)* and *negotiation (co-operation and contestation)*. The consumption of theologies is not



something that takes place in a vacuum, and 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes of transformation are only possible after theologies have been scaled and negotiated at the body level. As I have shown in Chapters 5 and 6, these 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes are riddled with moral geographical tensions which have a huge influence on processes such as transformation.

In this chapter, the unique set of tensions which I will analyse for the body scale are *tensions of positionalities and differences* (see Table 7.1). Since my analysis is now exclusively focused upon the body, the most obvious moral geographical tensions that can exist between individual bodies are those of difference and positionality themselves. As per the other empirical chapters, I also analyse tensions of *geographies and imaginations*, so as to maintain the consistency of exploring scalar tensions at each of the three scales. However, as processes at the body scale are far more concerned with *experiences* than with *imaginations*, the meso-tension of 'scalar imaginaries' (see Table 7.1) becomes 'scalar experiences', and is therefore more profitably dealt with as a tension of moral positionality, than of geographies and imaginations. Other than this change, analysis of tensions of geographies and imaginations follows the similar format of previous chapters. Finally, in this chapter, I also return to an analysis of tensions of *theology and ethics*. As these tensions characterised the production of moral geographies, it is also likely that they influence their consumption. The manner in which theologies are consumed, and the tensions surrounding this, then, will be a key focus for this chapter.

My chapter is again structured around the three sets of tensions that I am analysing. Hence in Section 7B I will firstly consider tensions of theology and ethics, followed in Section 7C by positionalities and differences, and finally in Section 7D by geographies and imaginations. As in previous chapters, my discussion of tensions will be broken down into analysis of sub-tensions within these sets. In Section 7E, I will conclude, again in a similar format, abstracting out the

contribution that the this chapter has made to advancing understanding of moral geographical tensions, 3<sup>rd</sup> order and 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes, and finally to moving forward the three theoretical contributions that I wish to make in this thesis.

Before proceeding to the empirical analysis, and as noted in Chapter 4, I do not pursue a biographical approach to scrutiny in this chapter. As with my urban scale interviewees, I have promised confidentiality to respondents at this scale. It is therefore not possible for me to disclose biographical details of individuals. This is made all the more difficult given the sensitive nature of discussions about personal poverty, and my unwillingness to ask such questions about income and employment with interviewees. Ultimately, a biographical approach to analysing tensions is simply not possible given the small number of individuals that I interviewed at this scale. There are not sufficient numbers of respondents to analyse biographical patterns in the tensions according to such cleavages as age or gender. Nevertheless, I will continue to give as much information as possible after quotation to afford the reader some insight into who has made particular remarks, in the hope that this may remedy the problem somewhat. However, with my focus on processes and tensions, it is really these issues which need to structure the data, and *not* who has made remarks. It is a fundamentally different approach to writing than a biographical one.

## SECTION 7B

# BODY SCALE MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CITY: TENSIONS OF THEOLOGIES AND ETHICS

## SECTION 7BI INTRODUCTION

The analysis that follows continues to investigate the range of tensions first outlined in Chapter 2. I will continue to study the seven sets of tensions in the same set of four 'meta' blocks. In this chapter, my focus is upon the consumption of theologies by the cadre of disciples. My unique focus in this chapter, then, is to introduce highly personal tensions relating to moral positionalities and differences. Alongside this, I will also examine tensions surrounding the consumption of theologies and ethics; and will examine the tensions surrounding the consumption of geographies and imaginations by the disciples. By focusing on these three sets of tensions (out of the four outlined in Chapter 2), there is a shift in emphasis away from geographical and power discussions, and a greater focus on theology/ethics and moral positionalities. Hence, some of the sub-tensions that were important in the urban and community chapters do not figure in the body scale interview accounts, whilst new sub-tensions arise. In so doing, it is clear that body scale moral geographies of social justice and the city are characterised by a greater emphasis on moral codes, and their application to *personal experience*, rather than place. As such, rather than examining 'body scale experiences' (c.f. 'urban scale imaginaries') as a 'geographies' tension, I have moved it to consideration as a tension of 'moral positionalities', reflecting more the embodied element which this entails.

## 7B2 CONCEPTIONS OF THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

Tensions relating to conceptions of Christian theology and spirituality were focused on one main area – that of the value of the basic Christian discipline of church attendance (and its associated Bible reading, prayer, and worship) in helping individuals to ‘encounter’ theologies. In trying to explore this issue of the bodily encounter with abstract theologies in the preaching, worship, praying, sacraments and readings of church services, I asked interviewees about issues such as the relevance of church to their lives, what they learned in church, or what motivates them to be part of the Church.

For the majority of people that I interviewed, church attendance, and the opportunities that it presents for theological encounter, is a highly positive experience that is integral to their everyday lives. That is not to say, however, that it is easy, nor that there have been times when the Church has been forgotten or abandoned (see section (iv), below). As a woman in Pollok commented:

I'll tell you one thing. See if I come, if I don't go on a Sunday, oh, it feels as if my week's no right. It's the truth, and as you can see and you hear me, I'm no a died in the wool Bible thumper or anything like that, but it really does, it's like, I don't know, it's just a funny feeling that week as if "there's something missing here", you know? Just something missing. But I go every week. I go and try'. (mid-50s female, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

Likewise for a woman in her 30s in Possil (CofS) 'Sundays aren't Sundays without going to church' whilst for a woman in her 50s in Pollok (RC) 'I don't know why, but it never felt right if I

wasn't at Mass on a Sunday. I just didn't feel right. It had to be a really good reason for me not to go'. For these individuals, the experience of church-going and the theological encounter that it provides is a deep source of *feeling*, and meaning that it is 'missed' if not fulfilled.

In exploring *why* this experience is so important to some people, for most, it is a sense that the theological encounter in church gives relevance and meaning to personal biographies, and chimes with the realities of everyday living:

RL. 'Why do you feel it is important to go to church?'

'It's the time in reflection – it's setting that time away from what you would normally do, spending some time with people, looking at God's Word in a different way and sharing that with other people, I think'.

RL. 'Uhu, and what kind of things do you get to think about or reflect on in church?'

'Maybe something that has happened during the week and it hasn't registered, or an encounter at the office and I've maybe said something or done something that ... you know, and sometimes it'll come up in a service and put it in to perspective. Sometimes you don't realise it until later, and you're like 'goodness, he was right!' Sometimes in a sermon you think "oh yes, he's talking to *me* this morning" but again it's nothing that you can pin point what he says, it's the way he says it, there are just things, I couldn't really say what it is.' (mid-30s female, Church of Scotland, Possil).

RL. 'Why do you feel it is important to go to mass often?'

'I don't know. It's just something, you know. It helps, and it helps others. Some people come to you when you go in and start telling you about something that has happened and we'll pray for that person and we pray for everything. We do a Rosary every morning. They come to us, even your own faith, come over and say "Mrs so and so is ill, will you say a wee prayer in the morning for us?" '. (late-50s female, Roman Catholic Church, Pollok).

'X's not a hell fire preacher. He gives you ideas and then you take from that what you want. There've been things that I have thought "is he talking directly to me?" There have been things that have been for *me*, but it's not! It's uncanny that sometimes there are issues in your mind that he can talk about that week. Very often I can be like that.' (late-30s female, Church of Scotland, Possil).

RL. 'Do you think that what you learn about or think about in church or in the Bible makes a difference in your life?'

'Yeh, uhu, it does. Well, it does, to know that he does care for you. It doesn't matter how you fall by the wayside, you know, God loves you. And he loves *everybody*. You know, you sit there and you think that you know he loves me, and then the most horrible person in the world, and he loves them too, and that's the wonder of it, you know. And another thing I learnt which I thought was really good was "hate the sin and love the sinner". You know I used to think "how can God love somebody that did that", and then it's, he loves the sinner but he hates the sin, you know. I like *that* (mid-50s female, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

In various ways, each of these accounts points to encounters with theology (either through prayer, Bible reading, or clergy preaching) as giving the individual ideas, inspiration, perspective, personal value, and a rationale for explaining difficult situations such as how (not) to judge others. Beyond this, there is the 'unknown' or 'uncanny' element of 'I couldn't really say what it is', or 'It's, it's just something, you know' – that strange sense of the presence of the Divine in corporeal experience – which points to the highly internalised moral geographies of the body, which for many respondents are simply 'inexplicable' or non-representational.

For a smaller minority, church attendance, and disciplines such as preaching, bible reading and prayer, were less than effective, and viewed in more negative terms. Some spoke of a difficulty in

concentrating, when in a church service, and hence of a failure to take much from their participation in it. A common complaint was for sermons to be too long or 'boring', and for services to lack inclusion for the congregation, with the majority of activities being undertaken by ordained clergy. As an older man in Easterhouse complained about his church:

'I'm not trying to get at X (the minister). I'm just trying to be truthful about what I'm saying. I said to him one Sunday, "I don't get anything out of your sermon". He said "why?", and I said that when I go to church on a Sunday I want to feel that when I come out of the church that I've gained something you know, I said "sorry X if I've hurt your feelings" but I said, "I don't really get anything out your sermon" ' (late-70s male, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

This comment underlines the fact that lay members are looking for a bodily religious experience – they expect to 'get something out' of church attendance. A woman that I interviewed in Easterhouse was more generally critical of the relevance of church attendance in her, and others', faith experiences:

'I don't think it (church) helps as much as we would like to *think* it helps. I think it's something that comes which can help more someone who has *discovered* their faith, to help the faith to *grow*, but in finding faith, or in expressing faith, I don't think it's as important as we like to think it is.' (early-60s female, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

This sense that the church may not be especially good at serving the needs of those *without* faith, and not especially wonderful in helping those *with* faith either, demonstrates that for some, an encounter with theology is not possible in a church context. For these people theological encounter may *never* take place, or at least it does not take place within a church. This type of

moral geography, which 'misses out' the Church as a filter between universals and particular bodily experiences, suggests that a personal encounter with the Divine is possible (and perhaps even desirable) outwith the confines of 'church'. Tensions of theology and spirituality, then, have markedly differing impacts upon peoples' bodily religious experiences.

## **7B3 CONCEPTIONS OF ETHICS**

In interviewing, I became aware of two key tensions in interviewees' conceptions of ethics: 1). *tensions in the nature and sources of ethics* and 2). *tensions in the application of ethics*. In general terms, the first tension relates to issues such as the role of Scripture as a source of ethical codes, and debates about whether or not Christian morals are absolute, or change through time. The second tension is a highly personalised one, where respondents discuss notions of what it means to be a Christian, a good Christian, and where they feel they fit into these categories.

### **7B3.1 Tensions in the nature and sources of ethics**

There are two main areas which I asked interviewees about in relation to the nature and sources of ethics. The first looks at their understanding of the Bible; and the second at what they think about Christian rules and principles, and whether or not they are absolute.

In terms of encountering the Bible on a regular basis, there was a tension between those who read the Bible personally and regularly at home, and those for whom the Bible was a book that they rarely encountered, except in a church context. Hence there is quite a contrast between the likes of the young man in Pollok who said 'Yes, I read it often, almost every night. I find it a great story for a start – it's fantastic', and the man in his 70s from Easterhouse who said 'No, I'm



no a great reader of the Bible. I did years and years ago try to read the Bible right through, but it's a difficult read', or the lady in her late 30s from Possil who commented that, 'I wouldn't say that I read my Bible enough when it comes to having to do things ... .. I find it difficult'. Hence for some, the Bible is central to their Christian faith experience, as a source of inspiration, guidance and wisdom, whereas for others it is a text with which they either struggle, or give up on reading in a personal capacity.

As a source of Christian principles, I have already shown that the Bible is a contested and debated text, with widely differing interpretations from amongst the theological community. When it comes to understanding Christian principles, for lay Christians, there is a greater consensus about the nature of those principles. Within the academic theological community, whilst there are those conservatives who continue to hold to absolute notions of Christian ethics which are universally applicable to all places and at all times, amongst the lay Christians that I interviewed, there is a far more liberal interpretation of those ethics. This either suggests something of an ethical gulf between clergy and their congregations, or that the majority of those whom I interviewed attend churches where their ministers are 'liberal' (as would be the case in the congregations in Drumchapel, Easterhouse, Pollok and Possil at least). A number of quotations illustrate the general ethical consensus amongst interviewees:

RL. 'What do you think about Christian rules and principles? Are they important or absolute?

Do you think things have changed over the years?'

'They are important, but I believe with most religious things you have to do what you believe. They can't get someone turning round and say "do this, this, this and this" and "don't do that, that, that and that or you'll be condemned". However, the commandments are important.'

RL. 'Do you think that it is important to have rules for life?'

'It is important to have rules, but under religion it should be more 'guidelines'. People should learn from mistakes – not be told "do not do that." (early-20s male, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

RL. 'Christianity is obviously something which has strong rules, principles, guidelines, commandments – such as "love the poor", "share the Good News", or the 10 Commandments. What do you think about these?'

'These are very hard things to *live by*, in a modern world, I would have my doubts that very few Christians live within the Ten Commandments. I mean the modern world, just can't live within the structures that the Scriptures lay down – it's just not feasible.' (mid-50s male, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

RL. 'What do you think about Christian rules and principles?'

'It's all very well and good, but practically it falls down, because you can't help everybody, and you know you've got the choice to do it, but I'll choose who I want to help and I know that is a failing in me because you should, if you're living by your faith, you should be helping everybody. I can be very choosy!' (late-30s female, Church of Scotland, Possil).

RL. 'What do you think about Christian rules and principles? Do you think they are important, are they absolute?'

'They are important because it is written in the Scripture, but we have moved on a bit and there are things we have to be flexible on, but there are some which are not and they should never be changed. We should not steal, we should not commit adultery. These things will never change, as Christians we cannot do these things. But I think that there are some things we do have to adapt and change to present situations.'

(... ...)

RL. 'Would you say then that the morality that goes with Christianity has had to change a bit?'

'I think we do have to accept that the world is changing but I think the principles have to remain the same. I think it's the way that we work round the principles – the teaching will never change.' (early-40s female, Church of Scotland, Drumchapel).

These quotations point to the difficulties which lay Christians have in negotiating between ethical universals and the particularities of their own life experience. For most people, there is a general respect for the moral *principles* of Scripture, but not for the *absolute* specifics when applied to particular situations. For some people, the need for flexibility comes from a feeling that they themselves are unable to 'keep' the rules or principles, whereas for others it is a sense that they are dated, and hence impractical for contemporary situations. A way around these difficulties seems to be provided by the interviewee from Drumchapel. In a manner, she is creating something of a 'hierarchy' of morality, between absolutes and negotiables. Others gave a similar response to some of the moral impasses created if universal principles were abandoned. However, the notion of having a 'principle', which individuals can use as a 'yardstick' against which to judge their moral conduct, leaves a lot more room open for personal difference, and for 'transgression', in a manner that would not be possible if rules were rigidly absolute. This suggests that for lay Christians, there is a complex internalised politics of moral negotiation which attempts to reconcile principle, experience, practice and law in the challenges of everyday living.

In questioning people further on why they thought morals or ethics did not have to be absolute, but rather be guiding principles, it became clear that moral change is perceived very much in generational terms. This moral tension of age, between an 'absolute' morality of the past, and a 'flexible' morality of the present, is as much to do with intra-family or intra-community generational issues, as it is to do with biblical reflection. Hence, ethical change seems to be far more socially- or situationally-driven than it is driven by ethical consideration. In a very personal

account, an older lady from Easterhouse talked of how her own bodily`moral geography was re-drawn by the life experience of her daughter:

'We talk about unchanging God, and I keep insisting that it's not that *God* is unchanging, his *love* is unchanging – he continues to love – the way that love is *expressed*, and the methods that he uses to express that love over the centuries has changed, and will continue to change, and in 20, 30 years' time there will be *other* changes, socially, that we would think of – I mean I can't think of an example at the moment – but you know there *will* be things later in life. (... ..) I don't think there's anything that is *absolute*'. (... ..) And I think again though experience, your life experience influences this too. And again I would have said, what 15, 20 years ago, marriage for life, and no children outside marriage and all the rest of it. My younger daughter became pregnant when she was 16, and suddenly, what's happening. And, but then your concern and love for her *overrides* any kind of judgement on it, you know, you're there for her and you love the baby just the same. She eventually married the baby's dad, who turned out to be abusive, and so she divorced, which again, you know is a no no for a lot of strict fundamental Christians. She then had another partner whom she *didn't* marry, was with him for about 7 years and has just split up, and that's why they're back staying with *us* just now. My eldest daughter married, and was married for four years and divorced, and is now living with someone else, outwith marriage. And so I've had to sort of stand back and come now to the understanding of faithful relationships, rather than marriage ceremonies. There are so many marriages that neither couple, neither of the two partners are faithful to each other, and so to me that makes a mockery of the whole relationship, if you're in a faithful, long term relationship, then it's the faithfulness to each other that's important. It's a relationship that's important, and if there's children, it's the love for that child that's important.' (early-60s female, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

In this fascinating quote, this lady points to the manner in which her own previous convictions about Biblical absolutes have had to be completely rejected to a point that she can say 'there is nothing that is *absolute*'. However, as can be seen from her comments about her daughters' relationships, whilst having lost faith in marriage as an absolute, she continues to hold to a universal *principle* of 'faithfulness'. Hence, whilst the different morality of her daughters' generation has in many ways caused her to abandon her previous sense of absolutes, and an embrace of this 'younger' morality, it is done so within the context of a rationalisation that continues to attempt to apply a sense of 'principle' to what is happening. This need to rationalise and order complex (im)moralities, suggests that even in positions where universals are abandoned, people continually seek some sort of higher organising principle to explain moral behaviours. As a surface of moral inscription, then, the body seems perfectly capable of challenging authoritarian ethics to the point of abandonment, but yet still requires some sort of 'universal' or 'principle' to replace that absolute, perhaps in a more personalised or internal fashion.

### **7B3.2 Tensions in the application of ethics**

In this section of the interviews, I wanted to explore the logic of the embodiment of religious ethics in its fullest sense, not just in terms of specific Christian ethics, but the 'whole package' – i.e. being a Christian itself. I asked respondents questions about whether or not they would call themselves a Christian, and what that meant. I also asked what they thought it was to be a 'good' Christian, and if they felt that they were one. The range of answers given is interesting in that it illustrates the 'universal' ethical model which individuals aspire to, or attempt to follow. In the answers given, there is a tension between accounts which define the application of Christian ethics in terms of *belief*, and those which see Christian ethics as relating to *practice*.

'I believe in Christ and I believe he died for me, and so if that's a Christian I'm a Christian.'  
(early-60s, female, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

RL. 'What kind of things make you a Christian?'

'For me, that I know Jesus as my personal saviour, it's as simple as that.'

RL. 'How do you articulate that? What does it mean to have a personal saviour?'

'For me it means there is nothing I can do without Jesus being part of it, and there is nothing that's too big that he can't sort out for me.' (early-40s female, Church of Scotland Drumchapel,

These examples from the first group of respondents view Christian embodiment very much in terms of belief and faith, even to the point of referring to it as 'salvation'. This ethic of belief contrasts strongly with those who define their Christian ethics in practical terms:

'Someone who would be thinking of others – putting others before themselves, that's my perception of a good Christian' (mid-50s male, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

'Oh, somebody that never does anything wrong. Somebody that looks after everybody and never says anything out of place' (early-60s female, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

'I like someone with an open mind... someone who doesn't care what or who you are'.  
(early-60s female, Roman Catholic Church, Pollok)

'It means to love yourself, follow the path set before you, be kind to others, and try in everything you do to do your best' (early-20s male, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

For these respondents, it is the practical ethics of putting others first, looking after others, being caring, and doing one's best which are the definitions of a 'good' Christian. These embodied moral geographies are also extremely *relational*, espousing ethics which are very much concerned with the treatment of others. From this, it is clear that ethics of care, servanthood and 'love your neighbour' are those which hold greatest embodied meaning for individual Christians. In this sense, social justice is seen very much as concerning the practical, everyday relations with others in need.

In spite of this strong belief in practical ethics, interviewees were far more sceptical about their own ability to put those ethics into practice:

'But, I'm not, I also don't think I'm that terribly *good*, you know what I mean, I'm not.'

RL.. 'uhu'

LM. 'Well, I've got a bad *temper*, and I sometimes talk about people (laughs), which isn't very Christian, and well things like that. I wouldn't do anybody a *bad* turn, you know what I mean. I wouldn't say anything about them that wasn't *true*. So that's bearing false witness, isn't it, when you do that. So I'm not *that* bad'. (early-60s female, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

RL. 'Would you call yourself a good Christian?'

'No! Definitely not! I'm forever falling by the way side. It's something that you try to aspire to.' (mid-30s female, Church of Scotland, Possil).

'I feel that I lead a double life – how people perceive me in this church puzzles me. They obviously think I'm a really good Christian, but I don't think I am! It's the guilt thing as well. I just don't feel I am a good Christian! (late-30s female, Church of Scotland, Possil).

From these comments, it is possible to detect either an element of modesty on the part of people who did not wish to appear arrogant, or perhaps rather a dose of realism from individuals who recognise that ethical models (even practical ones) are always being transgressed. The comments from the first lady from Pollok illustrate the dilemma that individual Christian bodies experience in terms of internalising moral codes. Whilst willing to concede that 'I'm not good', she does not by the same token want to appear to be 'bad'. Hence, individuals operate with a clear sense of 'good' and 'bad' in their everyday embodied moral geographies. This need to 'justify' one's (im)moral conduct is a common feature of the emphasis on 'guilt' in the quote from the woman in Possil, and indeed 'Catholic guilt' and 'Protestant guilt' are recognised as common euphemisms in Scotland. Hence, even in circumstances where individuals feel themselves freed from an absolute ethics, and follow a more 'practical' approach, they are still governed by an absolutist sense of 'thou shalt not', even if this is no longer taken literally. These internalised exercises of conscience illustrate that the application of ethics remains a source of internal struggle for many.



## SECTION 7C

# BODY SCALE MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CITY: TENSIONS OF GEOGRAPHIES AND IMAGINATIONS

### 7C1 BODY SCALE EXPERIENCES

As I have already noted, tensions relating to body scale experiences, whilst geographies in their truest sense, are, in my opinion, best discussed under the context of tensions relating to moral positionalities and differences. In terms of the issues discussed under that section, relating to faith, it's meaning, value, and application in the lives of individuals, I feel that 'body experiences' are more appropriately dealt with at that point. This reserves discussion in this section for tensions in multi-scalar utopian/dystopian imaginaries.

### 7C2 MULTI-SCALAR UTOPIAN/DYSTOPIAN IMAGINARIES

Just as at the urban and community scales, multi-scalar utopian and dystopian imaginaries are central to embodied moral geographies of social justice and the city. The body does not exist in isolation from other scales, but rather actively consumes and produces those other scales through multi-scalar utopian and dystopian imaginaries. In the urban chapter, imaginaries were 'up-scaled' towards the national scale of 'society' and 'down-scaled' towards the community scale of dystopian neighbourhoods such as Castlemilk or Pollok. In this chapter, scaling beyond the body cannot profitably be 'down-scaled' (aside from discussions of genetics, which are *not* the interest

of this thesis!), and hence multi-scalar imaginaries are 'up-scaled'. In questioning, my main concern was to explore imaginaries of the community scale, to see to what extent local residents felt that their neighbourhoods conformed to the dystopian painting given them in the urban chapter. In so doing, I am attempting to test the extent to which the poor and socially-excluded can conceptualise social problems, or resist dominant social norms in pursuit of a politics of social justice. This is naturally influenced by their consumption of urban theologies. I could have focused on other scales such as the city or the nation, but felt that this is the scale to which respondents would ascribe most meaning, as the *political* scale closest to their bodily experience (scales such as the household or the street can be equally as political, but not so much in the social justice sense that I am exploring in this thesis).

In general terms, poor communities in Glasgow such as the peripheral housing schemes of Castlemilk, Drumchapel, Easterhouse and Pollok seem to have undergone a three stage process commencing with their initial utopian construction during the 1950s and 1960s, moving into their degeneration into dystopias in the 1970s and 1980s, and finally beginning again to plot more optimistic 'utopian' futures during the 1990s and 2000s. Whether it be residents discussing their life experiences in Easterhouse or Pollok, it is a common picture. An older gentleman, in his mid-80s, who remains actively involved in Easterhouse's community politics, spoke about what it was like to move to Easterhouse in 1958 from the slums of inner-city Gorbals:

RL. 'What did it feel like to move to Easterhouse?'

'It felt marvellous! We had a bath, a garden, our own toilet! Our own *house*! The first thing that I noticed in the first summer was the rosey cheeks on the weans – and they were brown as well because they actually got out to play in green fields and fresh air' (mid-80s male, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

This utopian vision of the newly-constructed Easterhouse with its gleaming new tenements, spacious apartments, inside toilets and wide open spaces is very much the utopian dream that urban planners were trying to create for Glasgow's impoverished slum dwellers. Yet, these new, egalitarian, socially-just environments, quickly changed reality for their residents, as a woman in her early 60s comments:

RL. 'You've lived in Easterhouse since the mid-1960s. What has life been like in the housing schemes during that period until now?'

'I think by the time I came into Easterhouse, there was a lot of disillusionment around. People had moved into these areas with great *hopes*, you know, coming out of the slums, the tenements, into these brand new houses, these big new housing schemes, with all sorts of expectations of what life was going to be like – life was going to be wonderful. And then suddenly it *wasn't* so rosy. The houses were damp, the cost of travelling in and out to work, of travelling to visit other relatives, was high. Unemployment was starting to bite and there was a kind of, there were no other facilities. There was no shopping centre, so you had to travel to do your shopping...'

RL. 'When was the shopping centre built?'

'The shopping centre wasn't built until about the early Seventies, I think'

RL. 'So you basically had 15 years without anywhere to do shopping?'

'You had...except small corner shops, you know, you didn't have a shopping centre. You had some small corner shops, but that was about all. You had no... there was no – there's *still* no cinemas, no recreation, no sports centres, nothing. There was a huge area of which is still there opposite the church of em football pitches attached to the school, but it was a nightmare, and then there was, *because* it was so huge, people didn't really identify with *Easterhouse* – they began to identify with neighbourhoods, the *part* of Easterhouse that they belonged to – Rogerfield, Blairtummock. I mean Cranhill, the people in Cranhill still get uptight if they're called Easterhouse. The same with Barlanark, you know, they want their

own as I say *within* that, and certainly within Easterhouse you had the Rogerfields, the Blairtummocks, the Provanhalls, and so they became territorial, and that's where the *gang fights* came in in that because there was this sort of territorial thing. And that has carried on and you *still* get a reluctance to leave, go out of their own area. So there was a lot of disillusionment, the unemployment started to bite, the poverty started, and then of course because of the gang fights there was the perception from those *outside* of Easterhouse that the whole of Easterhouse was a no no. So even if there *was* employment going, and if people went for jobs, there was this prejudice against them, so there was that.' (early-60s woman, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse)

This account represents a 'classic' tale of the failure of modernist planning experiments to provide a utopian future for the poor. Early utopian hopes were dashed by the poor quality of the housing, costs of travel, lack of facilities, and inter-neighbourhood rivalries. Added to this was the fact that outsiders formed a bad perception of the peripheral schemes and their residents, and so 'the media gave it a bad name – they gave it a bad name right from the start' (mid-80s male, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse). The combination of these internal and external pressures created the contemporary synonymy of 'Easterhouse' and 'Drumchapel' with poverty, social exclusion, and dystopia.

However, these up-scaled moral geographies of dystopia are beginning to change, and be challenged by groups of bodies in communities such as Easterhouse that have found a new sense of hope, optimism, and meaning for the future of their communities. By engaging in a moral politics of scaling, individuals who have struggled in isolation to envision a better future for their community, have begun to come together and re-formulate a utopian politics of social justice.

RL. 'It must be sad for people who first moved to Easterhouse to see what it is like now, being demolished?'

'I think it's sad for the folk who came into Easterhouse to begin with and saw it as it was then, to come back to it now and see the likes of that, it's devastating, because when they left, it was still you know, it was not too bad. For the people who've actually come *into* Easterhouse later, and stayed on and seen it going downhill so much, I think there's a *hope* in Easterhouse now that there wasn't, even ten years ago, and I think there's, the basic reason for that is that people have, for one reason or another, begun to believe in themselves... they they've got some kind of self-esteem back, they've, they've really pulled themselves up by the bootstrings. Now, they've gone so far down, and then said 'we're not going any further. And if nobody else is going to help us well, we'll do it ourselves'. Because all sorts of community groups have sprung up, and it's from those, the the *small* beginnings of that, that the regeneration of Easterhouse is coming.'

RL. 'And are *you* hopeful about it?'

'I am hopeful about the *community*. I think there's a self belief, there is a belief that things will get better, and *are* getting better – new houses, there is some cynicism about the new housing and saying, well, they're just putting the same people back in, and they'll make a mess of them, just the same. So far that doesn't seem to have been happening. People are taking a pride in their houses, and you see it in the gardens, you know, that they're looking after the the houses because they've not got the dampness and the mess that they were in before, you know, it's a brand new house, warm, it's easily heated, it's damp-free, and they can take a *pride* in that, and they're taking a pride in themselves as well, em, and doing that, and working in that.'

RL. 'So you're hopeful then?'

'I'm hopeful that things will go... there's a bit of caution in it, because I think an awful lot depends upon the powers that be, *letting* them do things, and giving them the *funding* for it. I think that's where the stumbling block could come, is that and we've got evidence of it in St. George's and St. Peter's, that if you in any way cross any of the councillors, then you're

your you become persona non grata, funding stops, and you're left struggling'. (early-60s woman, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

Again, from the above commentary, it is clear to see the way in which personal, embodied moral geographies of hope can be the driving force for social justice at wider scales. The self-belief of individuals in their *own* value, contributes to a wider-scale belief in the value of their community, and of the need to pursue social justice. As I have already shown, this is the driving force for much of the Church's engagement in community politics, as it fights for social justice. Yet even within this optimism, it is easy to detect tensions between different groups of 'respectable' and 'unrespectable' bodies, as shown by the lady's comments relating to 'putting the same people back in'. These intra-community divisions are often the barrier to achieving real social progress. However, the (highly moral) notion that 'people are taking a pride in themselves' suggests that moral geographies of the body can be transformed for the 'good', when utopian vision, self-belief, and socially-just material circumstances take hold. Although an urban theological or faith basis for these moral geographies of hope is not referred to specifically in these quotations, in the wider interview context from which they are taken, it is clear that theological ethics of justice and hope inform much of their scalar vision. Therefore, it would appear that dystopia can indeed produce seedbeds of hope for a new utopia (c.f. Baeten, 2001 for a discussion of the dialectics of utopia and dystopia), and that the utopian/dystopian tension in Glasgow's poor communities may finally be swinging back in favour of the former.

## SECTION 7D

### MORAL POSITIONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES

#### 7D1 INTRODUCTION

Tensions of moral positionalities and differences are most prevalent at the body scale. This reflects the fact that moral positionalities are most often assumed on a personal level, rather than in terms of say, the morality of a city. The third order moral geographical process of transformation (or lack of it) is crucial to these tensions in that the adoption of a Christian morality at a personal scale is the basic prerequisite for wider enactments of that morality to take place. Hence, the creation of a cadre of disciples is central to the 'success' of Christian moral geographical projects such as urban theology. However, as evidence from the previous chapters has shown, Christian religious experiences and ethics are characterised more by their variety than by their homogeneity, and in terms of embodied moralities, this is no exception. Hence, within this section, there remain a number of key sub-tensions that characterise moral positionalities and differences: *1). body scalar experiences of the value of faith, 2). embodied experiences of faith struggles, 3). incremental moral change vs. moral conversions, and 4. tensions of multiple moralities.*

#### 7D2 BODY SCALAR EXPERIENCES OF THE VALUE OF FAITH

When I asked individuals about what faith meant to them, and why they had faith, there were a variety of responses given. The most common response given when people tried to describe their faith was their sense of a deep knowledge that God exists. A number of different ways of expressing this were given:

RL. 'What is faith to you then?'

'To reassure faith, I've always *known*. It's not that I've believed, but it's just I've always *known* there is something bigger there. I don't know, I've just always known, I've heard all the theories – Big Bang etc but who issues them? Evolution has to come from somewhere, you know, I always feel something has to initiate something, I learnt that through chemistry – a chemical reaction doesn't just happen in a lab it has to be initiated by the chemist"

RL. 'Do you think that faith is more complicated than people think then?'

'I think that we are already in Heaven but you have to strive to stay here. It's like you don't go to heaven – you are there, but you have to stay – have to try to make sure that you are going to get there. I like to think that this is heaven and everything around is heaven and things are put on this world to test us and to see if we will be tempted, and to see if we will stay here and once we go we're taken and placed, assured a place in heaven – once they take out all temptation.' (early 20s male, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

RL. 'What is faith to you?'

'I always feel that, and this is just really stupid and simple, but it's the only way I can think to say it, ... I always feel that now there is somebody there or something there, that I can, if I'm bothered about something I can talk to someone. I always feel that religion makes sure you're not thought of as a nut when talking to yourself! I just feel that no matter what's in my life at the moment, like I can panic about my children, but then I can 'chat' to God about my worries and instantly feel better – not necessarily feel that at that instant everything is going to be better but feel a real calming. And that's the only way I can think to explain it. That's why I feel that God's there.' (late-30s female, Church of Scotland, Possil).

RL. 'What would you say faith is to you?'



'Well, I wouldn't say going to church makes you a Christian. I think what you *do* in your life is more about your Christian faith – it's how you treat other people. I try and carry my faith through the things I do, by example, by helping people. Church is not the be all and end all!' (mid-80s male, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

RL. What does faith mean to you?

CM. 'Oh gosh! In some ways its just, it's just a knowledge, a something there that a belief that God, God *is*, you know. I don't have many great ideas of who God is or what God is, but God *is*, and in everything, even when I'm not thinking about him, he is there and in some way that influences everything I do, you know. It's not "I prayed to God and he told me *this*", but it's just there, it's just part of me'. (mid-60s female, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

From these different accounts, it is clear that for three of the respondents, faith is expressed in terms of a 'knowledge' that 'God is', that God exists, and 'is *there*'. These senses of the Divine appear to be deep-seated and almost intuitive to some respondents. For the man in his 80s, faith is far more about *actions*, and about something that is to be demonstrated, rather than simply something that is held to oneself. A less conventional interpretation is the thought that people are 'already in Heaven', and though unorthodox, points to the diversity of human imaginaries of the Divine. In terms of the value of Christian faith, the lady from Possil points to the sense of faith as a source of strength and comfort in times of difficulty and struggle. This was a common theme that ran through many interviewees accounts, as they spoke of the manner in which faith had helped them to deal with difficult situations, and it is to these that I now turn.

### 7D3 EMBODIED EXPERIENCES OF FAITH STRUGGLES

For most people that I interviewed, faith was not a uniform, even experience running through their life. Faith is very much intertwined into the ups and downs of the individual biography. When I asked people about their life experience and their faith experience, and the good times and bad times in both, it was *personal issues* such as bereavement, illness, or marital difficulties which were spoken of in relation to faith, more than material issues such as poverty or unemployment. This connection of the spiritual with those moments of acute difficulty in human relationships during life's journey, is a common feature of Scottish life, even in secular society (according to clergy interviewed in Chapter 4).

A number of different stories illustrate the varied struggles that individuals have experienced with faith. For a man now in his fifties in Pollok, his teens brought a great deal of struggle and difficulty. When he was fourteen, his mum died after struggling from cancer. Six months after this he contracted tuberculosis and was hospitalised for six months, at which point he had to give up school, and also the place at college that he had hoped to take up during that summer. As an adult, he has been a foster parent to nine different children at various points, and spoke of the struggle when they had to leave. When I asked him about whether or not it was easy to have faith at these difficult times in life, his response was:

'Well, I can't really answer that. At the difficult times in my life, or when my mother died, I think I was 14, positive I was 14, and I was at the time I was hospitalised, I had no faith at that time – I thought I was going to die. When I started my *working* life, I had no faith at *all*, because I was away from the Church at that time. It wasn't until I got married that I started getting involved with my wife again, so it's hard to define that'.

RL. 'So there were times obviously when faith was absent?'

'Well at times of difficulty, you know, crisis in the family, you'll tend to pray more, for whatever'.

RL. 'And you said it was also difficult for you with fostering?'

BM. 'Well, we've just went through an emotional time. We had a little boy placed with us and he moved on to new adopted parents and we were at adoption hearing. When these children move on from us it's like a death in the family. There's a grieving period. You pray that have you made the right decision.'

RL. 'Did you sense God in that?'

'Yes, he comforts you, you get over it.'

RL. 'Is it different for people without faith?'

BM. 'I think so, yes, because it will take them longer to recover back to normality. If they've not got any faith, or anyone *giving* them any faith, it will take them hard to get over that crisis'. (mid-50s male, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

In this account, the intertwining of biography with a narrative of faith demonstrates the times when the struggles of life reach such a point that faith becomes completely absent (as in when the man thought he was going to die from TB). What it also illustrates is the way in which for many respondents, the time when faith was absent (and church-going in particular was absent), tends to be during teenage years and the 20s, when young people want to 'have a good time', only to return to church (and faith) when they are in more settled, stable, mature stage of life. Hence, as a young man, this interviewee was not able to use faith as a tool to help him cope with the difficult situations in his life, whereas as an older man, 'God comforts you' in times of crisis, and prayer becomes important. Whilst a cynic could say that this is just a natural part of human psychology that as you grow older you have the experience and strength to deal with situations in

a way that a child cannot, and though this is true, it seems clear that people read this strength very much in 'faith' terms.

For a Roman Catholic woman that I interviewed, having strong faith allowed her to cope with the trauma and bereavement of her 29 year old son being killed in a car crash. For her, this testing experience hardened her resolve and strengthened her faith, (although I did detect a hint of bitterness in her voice that *perhaps* she was covering up by saying 'the right thing' about faith helping her):

RL. 'How was your faith affected by these difficult times?'

'Oh, it was definitely made stronger by it.'

RL. 'And so, were there any times when you said "where's God in this?"'

'No, there wasn't. Somebody said to me, "I'm surprised you don't say 'why me?' ", and I said, "but why somebody else – why another mother and her son?" I said, "*somebody* had to die that day. Why not my son?" But don't get me wrong I've shed many a tear over him. Many a tear (voice breaks)... Somebody says to me if you go through life saying "that shouldn't have happened to me", then you're going to be very bitter and she says that it doesn't help within because you're going to go through life with a grudge.

RL. 'Did God help you then?'

'That's where prayer comes into it. You don't really pray, you talk. At one time you were taught to pray certain prayers, but as you got older you get to the stage that you would kneel down and just say "I've had enough", and you hand it all over to God and say "you guide me, show me what you want me to do". That was through going to St James the Great. You talk to God. If you're fed up you tell him. If things get you down you say "come off it". I just tell him straight. People'll say to me "remember where you are" but the man on the cross is God and he knows my every thought – he knows *everything* so who's kidding him!'

RL. 'You've obviously always had a strong faith, and a strong devotion, but would you say it's changed over the years?'

'My faith is stronger – as you get a lot of blows in life you've got to be stronger, and you've got to be strong for the family. To sit and cry on a chair would be great but what good would it do? We've got a hymn that says "don't waste time on needless crying – pray" '.

(early-60s female, Roman Catholic Church, Pollok).

In reading this account, it is tempting to see faith in this woman's life as simply a coping mechanism, as something that has helped her to explain the tragedies that have befallen her family, and given her an almost fatalistic sense that 'somebody had to die', and 'there's no use crying about it'. Read in this way, faith is disempowering, is a barrier to proper grieving and imposes an authoritarian view of how a person should cope during times of distress, in a kind of sense of 'deal with it' or 'get on with it'. However, in spite of these remarks, and my reservations about this woman perhaps covering up some bitterness, it is her remarks on prayer which show that faith has real, helpful value in her life. Rather than subscribing to an authoritarian model of rigid and 'proper' prayer, this woman has 'discovered' a type of prayer that allows a genuine 'conversation' with God, where doubts, fears, anxieties, and anger are expressed in straightforward manner. Viewed in this sense, prayer can be seen as a cathartic 'handing over' of troubles to a higher authority who can take care of them or give guidance. This type of faith is genuinely transformative in that it allows individual 'release' from day-to-day struggle in a manner that remains grounded and not 'other-worldly'.

A final account of struggling in faith comes from a woman in her early 40s from Drumchapel, who is from a conservative evangelical Church of Scotland background:

RL. 'How has your faith changed? Have ups and downs mirrored those of life?'

'Yes, we've been married for 12 yrs and in those 12 yrs we've had a lot happen to us that has tested my faith, but I'm glad to say we've always come through at the other end. The 1<sup>st</sup> thing was that after we were just married, my father died. That was a big event for me. He was very much my Christian anchor, and things didn't seem as clear as they had before. Not long after that I fell pregnant and we were delighted, but I miscarried. Now that was a very difficult time, and I did ask a whole load of questions. I was very angry with God – extremely angry. I spent a lot of time with my minister, just asking him a whole lot of questions, like I wanted to be sure that the baby was in Heaven. I was fortunate at the time that I was part of an adult fellowship with a very strong group. They were all very strong Christians and they helped me through that time.

A couple of years later was probably the worst time when I had a crisis where my faith did waiver. Our daughter, Sarah, was ill and we thought she had meningitis. As it turned out, she didn't but eh it took a while for diagnosis. During that time X's (husband's) work was not going well and he was made redundant, and something snapped, X couldn't cope and he attempted suicide. I just *couldn't understand* why God was allowing this to happen. He could have stopped these situations, and yet he was allowing this to happen. I just kept thinking of *Footprints* – that poem, I just kept thinking "he hadn't forsaken me, he wasn't going to let me go" and I just had to hang on to that. Eventually we came through it – but when we were living in the middle of it, it was a very hard time, but I did come through it at the other end much stronger and much deeper in my faith.'

RL. 'Do you think your life now would be a different life if you didn't have faith?'

'Absolutely. I dread to think where my life would be, when I look at the girls (at the family project where she works) and they don't have faith and I watch them struggle everyday – struggle through things that are happening in their lives, I ache for them and I ache because the reason they are struggling is because they don't have faith. I look at me and yeah I've had situations to go through but always, *a/ways* there has been a loving God waiting to put his arms around me and that has made all the difference. If I didn't have my faith I just can't imagine what my life would be like. It's very very important to me.'

RL. 'And it's obviously seen you through some very difficult times?'

'Yeah, it has and no doubt will see us through some more, and it's the one thing I wish with all my heart is that the girls would know Jesus and allow him into their lives, so that their lives too could be changed' (early-40s female, Drumchapel, Church of Scotland).

Experiencing a major bereavement, a miscarriage, suspected meningitis, unemployment and an attempted suicide is a great deal for anyone to have to cope with during twelve years of marriage. For this woman, who had grown up in a strong Christian home, and who had always had a Christian faith (even during her teens and 20s), these four incidents created a sense of crisis that reduced faith to a sensation of 'hanging on'. Though the woman can now look back and say that it has deepened her faith, and made her stronger as a person, during the actual crisis itself, it seems that faith generated more questions than it did helpful answers. However, in spite of this, she is able to allude to a sense that for her, life would have always been far more of a struggle if she did not have faith at all. Her sense of God's presence has 'made all the difference', and again a sense of a Protector, or a person to talk to about troubles, is a cathartic and liberating dynamic that may not be available to those without faith.

Hence, in these accounts, although the majority have referred to *personal* experiences of struggles such as bereavements or illness, and have said little about *material* difficulties (the unemployment case above, aside), it seems clear that faith can act as a source of strength and assistance in times of trouble, especially when viewed retrospectively. If this can apply to issues such as bereavement, then it is likely that it will be similarly employed in times of personal economic crisis such as poverty or unemployment, and therefore illustrates the sense in which embodied moral geographies of social justice are rooted in a personal faith dynamic.

## 7D4 INCREMENTAL MORAL CHANGE VS. MORAL CONVERSIONS

As I have already noted in the theoretical section of this thesis, moral positionality is not fixed across space and time, but is open to considerable adaptation, negotiation, and change. There is a key sub-tension in the manner in which this change occurs: between an incremental moral change where morality slowly evolves alongside life experience, and the more dramatic 'conversion' experience, where embodied morality undergoes a swift change of nature in a short space of time.

In the majority of cases, interviewees' morality changed incrementally across their lifetime. The first case that I note below is an example of such moral change. However, for one or two individuals, there were more 'dramatic' experiences, two of which I recount below – one where a Roman Catholic woman became a Protestant, and another where a man in his fifties had a dramatic re-conversion to Christianity.

RL. 'Would you say that your faith has changed over the years?'

'I think the way I would express it and the way it affects me has changed, and my perceptions of other *people* have changed, because at the Tom Allan rallies and so on at that point I would have almost described my self, would still describe myself in many ways as *evangelical*, but in the kind of the sense of if you didn't read your bible every day and if you didn't say your prayers every morning, and if you didn't do this and you didn't do that and you didn't do the next thing you couldn't be a *Christian*, you know. So there was all that, and that actually when I think back on it now, I know I didn't realise it at the time, there was a great burden of *guilt* attached to it, and there was a kind of unreality attached to it, because if you weren't doing all these things, you didn't want to *admit* it to anybody and you couldn't



possibly be a Christian. And you couldn't possibly let anybody else, any other of your friends in the youth group know that you, you know, any of your "Christian" friends know that you weren't reading your Bible every day, and things like that that em always niggled and I felt that there was something lacking. And then I started to get *irritated* by the the jargon of it.

(... ...)

RL. 'Has change come because of life experience and the need to re-negotiate stuff, or did you encounter things that made having absolute beliefs difficult?'

'I think it was *partly* that, and I think it was also, I mean it's, although there had been a, I'd had a thing about it when I was round about 20, it was maybe only about 15 years ago, we had a study group on a Sunday night with Malcolm and Rena his wife was then a member of the congregation and *she* questioned very much this need to , you know reading your bible every day sort of thing, and she was questioning, doing a lot of questioning, and at first I was "How can you do that. You've *got* to do it". But *she* made me think about things, a lot you know and she's very much concerned with you know social justice, and she made us think about it quite a lot then into that. So it was partly just my experience of *meeting* people and *realising* the number of people who are, don't make any profession of faith, who wouldn't call themselves Christian, but who – don't go to church either – and who in so many ways are more *Christ-like* than people that I've known that *do* go to church. So you know that whole kind of thing. And there have certainly been two of the you know kind of em *critical* times in your life when you know folk die, and things. The last few years in particular we've had a pretty rotten time with em and John's been ill. One daughter lost a baby two years ago. -The other daughter lost one *last* year, em so there's been you know all these kind of things too that make you sort of say '*why*', and why does God allow this, and having to question again just what you believe about God, and how these things happen, why these things happen, you know, is God still there when it happens. And realising that it's alright to get *angry* with God (laughs), you know "For *God's* sake, what are you *up to*!", you know. But just the whole sort of experience of life'. (early-60s female, Church of Scotland, Easterhouse).

In this first example, the woman that I interviewed has seen her faith change from a very strongly conservative notion of moral absolutes and certainty, towards a far more liberal faith that sees morality as more provisional and open to change. What started off as a personal irritation with some of the strictures of her view of faith, combined with a need to defend it against criticism, began to give way to more open questioning, a reformulation of ideas, and an eventual abandonment of moral principles (e.g. on marriage) that would previously have been sacrosanct. This incremental moral change has come about firstly through an inner doubting and questioning of those principles, but secondly (and more importantly), through the direct challenges of life experience – through meeting others and dealing firsthand with awkward moral situations. The moral revisionism that has taken place is a genuine adaptation of principles to fit practice, and a series of subtle changes that have ultimately created a morality that is drastically different between the start and finished products, and which *continues* to develop.

For those people whose embodied moral change has been more dramatic, a particularly interesting case (that also uncovers denominational tensions between Catholic and Protestant) is that of a Roman Catholic woman who 'converted' to Protestantism:

RL. 'Was your mum and dad's religion / faith important to them?'

'My mum was a practising Catholic, and still is. My dad isn't. We were brought up as practising Catholics, where we made our holy communion, made our first confirmation and went to mass on Sundays, though not all the time. We went when there was something happening and religion was important, but my mum wasn't religious in the house.'

RL. 'What did you think about all that when you were younger?'

'Oh, I hated it, and so did my brothers and sisters – normal children I suppose!'

RL. 'And did you feel quite strongly that you were a Catholic?'

'Yes, I think so. I mean I used to do things that Catholics did, and I don't ever feel that mum was like force force force!! We went when we had to and that was accepted.'

RL. 'OK, so now you're in Possilpark *Church of Scotland*, so what happened to make such a dramatic change?'

'I had stopped practising by the time I met X (my husband), and he was Protestant. Then when I was pregnant I felt it wasn't fair to bring my children up with me being a Catholic, and him Protestant although he's not practising. When we got married there were no real problems. I mean there was the odd jibe about "ooh, marrying to the other side are you?", but not much. So I thought, if I'm marrying in a Protestant church then I'll just practice a Protestant faith, but that wasn't how it came about, because I got married, and then did nothing about it for years.'

RL. 'So you obviously made a choice to go or not to go to church, both as a Catholic and as a Protestant. I mean, did you stop just because you thought "I don't believe in this God stuff?" '

'No, not at all. I've always had a faith, although it hasn't always been strong, but it worked for a while!'

RL. 'So what changed?'

'Well, (my son) joined the BB's and I brought him there one day, you know, I used to drop him off, and what happened was they had a service which I went to, and then like the next Sunday I found myself up and *ready*, and I said to my husband "I'm going to that church". I don't know why, I don't know whether you would call it a calling or what! Something just made me get up that Sunday morning and go to Church. I think it was God, I mean I don't know, but I struggled the first few times I came here though, with the people. They weren't that friendly'

RL. 'So did coming back to a different church help your faith? Or did that change it?'

'Oh! I don't regret doing the Catholic stuff – that was *me*, that was my family and that was part of me at that time. I think there is a lot of guilt attached to the Catholic faith – I mean I miss the theatrics of the Catholic faith, you know where you're made to feel guilty for

enjoying yourself. As far as I'm concerned now, we all worship the same God, but we all do it differently!'

RL. 'So how did your mum react!'

'Well, she was not very happy about it at first. She went through a real horrible divorce with my dad, and since then she has really taken to her faith again, and as I say to her it's better to do it than not do it at all. She's ok about it now.'

RL. 'And was there ever a time you felt guilty about changing church?'

'No. I chose to do what I chose to do, and I mean I wasn't practising anyway! I began to lose faith anyway, you know and... but well I don't know what, I was young and got married and had a family all really quickly and it didn't seem to matter then.'

RL. 'Everyone has highs and lows in faith, I mean do you think then it was because of more things occupying you that it took a back burner or..?'

'Possibly, possibly I was just disillusioned anyway, you know yourself when you get to a certain age there are other things you want to do.'

RL. 'What kind of things made you disillusioned?'

'I don't know. Maybe I just didn't like the rigmarole of it all? I don't know, it's hard to explain.

Umm!' (late-30s female, Church of Scotland, Possil).

Reading the woman's remarks, it was not so much that she made a dramatic decision to become a Protestant directly from being a Catholic (given the fact that she had not been a church attendee for years), but rather the manner in which she could speak of an inner awareness of a 'calling' to start attending the local Church of Scotland, and ultimately become a member (and indeed, now an elder). This sense of a 'calling' to return to the Church or to a Christian faith is something alluded to by a number of interviewees, and points to a mysterious inner dynamic between the body and the Divine that is difficult for people to represent. As a source of tension, the Catholic-Protestant issue seems minor. Although there were some difficulties with her mum and with people talking about a mixed marriage, the fact that she continues to see her Catholic

upbringing as important and meaningful illustrates the way in which the literal embodiment of the Catholic-Protestant divide can be viewed positively, rather than as a source of tension and anxiety.

A final conversion story comes from a man who I interviewed from Castlemilk, who is in his late fifties. As a young man he was brought up in a strict Brethren Christian home in the East End of Glasgow, and 'more or less dragged to 3 or 4 church services every Sunday until I was 15 or 16'. This strict upbringing was very much of the 'thou shalt not' variety, where attendance at the cinema was forbidden, listening to rock music was forbidden, alcohol was forbidden, and so were relationships with the opposite sex. By age 17, this man was totally cynical about what he saw as the 'hypocrisy' of the church's leaders and members, and after a public row with a church leader decided that 'I had no time for religion'. From then on, life was 'full of mistakes' as he married, got divorced, and then re-married in a 'disastrous' relationship where he became unemployed, had a heart attack, and where his wife attempted to murder him. Following his second divorce and a period of voluntary work in an older persons' charity, a weeks' holiday brought about a dramatic change:

'I went on a wee holiday to Oban and as part of that holiday I went to Mull and Iona. When I got to Iona I experienced the most wonderful feeling of peace, I'd never experienced anything like the serenity that there is on Iona. I was wandering around the abbey and I thought "this is all I've been missing in my life". I'd known for sometime that I would have to go back to God and quite simply I went into the abbey and eh got on to my knees and eh asked God to forgive me. Shortly thereafter I was invited to come to this church, because a number of friends were coming here, and on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> last year, 4 of us were baptised'.

RL. 'I want to ask you about your conversion back, this peace that you talked about. Was it a sense in which God called you? Had you been thinking about God?'

'I had been thinking for quite a while, and part of the reason was the thought of going into a church where I didn't know anyone and that worried me, and that was part of it. But I also knew exactly what was missing – it was an emptiness that was there inside me. So that day just happened to be the day. And I mean obviously with my background I knew exactly what I was doing, I knew what was happening.'

RL. 'And what was the experience like? Was it deeply emotional?'

'Yes it was. I just felt this calm and I knew that it was right. I didn't know what church etc. to go to, and my thoughts did not run to what sort of church I would be going to. But when I was invited to come here, the welcome I got was so different to what I had imagined.'

RL. 'Uhu, and was there a part that you said "yeah I'm a Christian now?" A kind of conversion experience?'

'Umm I wouldn't say a conversion experience. That would be unfair to suggest that suddenly I had a Holy Spirit experience. It was more like I felt I had come *home*. I feel like the way of the Prodigal son coming back to his home. And coming here was like the door closing on me coming home, you know, this is where I belong.'

RL. 'OK, and has life changed, you know what are the differences?'

'Well, I feel very much that God is back in my life, and working here (in a Christian project helping asylum seekers) has filled my time. I've had better relationships with people in my life. The home group has given me the Christian fellowship, and I enjoy very much their company.'

RL. 'And do you feel a better person?'

'I feel more able to judge myself, and not others. I have more of a knowledge of what is right and wrong, although there are many things I had to learn over again.'

RL. 'So do you find it a humbling experience?'

'Sometimes it has been hard, to say sorry or admit I was wrong, but God's forgiven me for the things that I have done' (late-50s male, Baptist Church, Castlemilk).

Speaking of the 'emptiness that was there inside me', moral conversion is seen in terms of 'coming home', of a return to following God's way. In the interview, it was clear to me that here was a man deeply disappointed about his life, his mistakes, humbled through a deep feeling of failure, who had somehow managed to reach a turning point. For many people such turning points are put very much in terms of 'coming to one's senses and changing', whereas for this man, and for people who claim a faith dynamic in moral conversions, it is put in terms of the Divine having instigated the change. For this man, his Christian upbringing made the change easier to instigate, given that 'I knew exactly what I was doing, I knew what was happening'. However this did nothing to diminish the importance of this particular experience on Iona in bringing about the change. The dramatic change in morality can be seen by the man's new 'knowledge' of 'right' and 'wrong', and the re-learning of moral codes. As a member of a Baptist Church, the particular type of morality will be a conservative theology where 'right' and 'wrong' are very clearly defined, in a manner which some Christians may find unappealing. Indeed conversion experiences are more common (and frequently encouraged) in conservative evangelical churches where salvation is made central to preaching. These dramatic moral changes stand in tension with their more incremental counterparts, but are strong evidence of the varied and shifting nature of moral positionalities.

## **7D5 TENSIONS OF MULTIPLE MORALITIES**

The final sub tension characterising tensions of embodied moral positionalities and differences is the issue of persons holding not one, but multiple moralities. In the urban interviews, clergy often held different moral positions on different issues, in a tension that often provoked anxiety

and discomfort. In interviewing lay Church members, tensions of multiple morality were common, but frequently implied throughout the interview, rather than made explicit. However, in one case, a man that I interviewed from Pollok spoke of the difficulty of on the one hand wanting to be seen as a Christian, and claiming respect for that (as a church elder), but in another context, not wanting to be seen to be proselytising, nor compromising a 'normal' conduct in the workplace, in order to retain that respectability. Hence, a particular 'respectable' morality is adopted in a church situation that is avoided in the secular situation of the workplace:

RL. 'Would you call yourself a Christian?'

'I would certainly call myself a Christian. My work colleagues certainly know I'm an *elder*, and I can curse and swear with the best of them, but I don't ram my religion down them, and they can respect mine and tolerate it'.

RL. 'So is it hard to express faith to others?'

'It is, it is *difficult*, because with me being here, we were involved in one of the committees, we were looking at mission, and that involved all the other churches within the area, and we couldn't agree, the churches couldn't agree what the mission was, so we had good-going debates, some of it was good, and some of it I'm afraid I've stood up and said this is a waste of time, we're getting nowhere, and we ain't talking to anybody yet other than ourselves. And if we can't agree among ourselves then we can't project ourselves, which is the hardest thing to do.' (mid-50s male, Church of Scotland, Pollok).

In this account, there is clearly a different morality for a different context, that varies between the sacred and the secular. In situations where the sacred has to encounter the secular, the moral geographies constructed are very different, and a Christian morality is either subdued or hidden (as in the workplace), or hidden, through lack of agreement of how to express it in 'mission' to the secular world. Whilst this is not perhaps the most illustrative example, the tension of multiple



moralties between sacred and secular is particularly important, given the manner in which people feel that they have to 'perform' in certain ways in specific contexts. In this way, it is the *acting out* of morality that is a source of tensions, where there are contexts in which Christian morality is seen as highly appropriate to disclose, and others where it is actively hidden. Throughout the interviews, people continually talked about not wanting to appear like 'Bible bashers' or to be seen to be 'ramming' Christianity down peoples' throats. This sense of anxiety (and pride) seems to prevent many embodied moral geographies from being able to reach out in to secular contexts in a more engaged manner, largely through fear of persecution/loss of face. This way in which morality can be 'compartmentalised' in 'respectable' and 'unrespectable' or sacred and secular manners is a key feature of the moral geographies of lay persons. For clergy and church leaders, being transparent about their Christian faith is seen as an integral part of their job, and hence disclosure of their moral positionality is almost expected by sacred and secular spheres. For the lay Christian, transparency is not a prerequisite, and positionality can more easily be 'hidden' or manipulated in different contexts. Hence the multiple moral postionalities that people can adopt in large part determine the nature by which they live, act out, and embody their moral geographies in different contexts.

## SECTION 7E

# CONCLUSION: THEORISING THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF EMBODIED MORAL GEOGRAPHIES

## 7E1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I have attempted to map out and illuminate the way in which the micro-scale thickening of abstract theologies into corporeal milieus is characterised by moral geographical tensions within the 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of transformation. As in previous chapters, my contention is that the *nature* in which these processes and tensions are manifested, and their *salience*, is unique to this scale, in spite of the fact that these tensions are present at all scales, and that 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes such as scaling and negotiation are also present at all scales. In analysing embodied moral geographies through a focus on a *cadre of disciples* I have continued to pursue a tension-by-tension approach to attempting to understand the way in which theologies are thickened in the realm of embodied experience. The extent to which individual bodies have undergone moral geographical processes of transformation is central to the 'success' of urban theologies in pursuing their objectives of social justice.

In concluding, I will firstly outline the unique nature of moral geographical tensions of *theology and ethics*, *moral positionalities*, and *geographies and imaginations* at the body scale. I will then examine the uniqueness of the 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical process of *transformation*, followed by a discussion of the distinctive nature of 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of *scaling* and *negotiation* at the body scale. To conclude, I will outline the advances that this chapter has made in developing the three principal theoretical contentions of this thesis.

## 7E2 MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL TENSIONS AT THE BODY SCALE

In this chapter, I have looked at a distinctive set of moral geographical tensions of *positionalities and differences* alongside those tensions which I have analysed at other scales: *theology and ethics*, and *geographies and imaginations*. I re-iterate Table 7.1 to remind the reader of where these tensions fit into my overall framework outlined in Chapter 3.

| <b>Meta Tensions</b>                     | <b>Meso Tensions</b>                                | <b>Outcomes</b>                      |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>THEOLOGY &amp; ETHICS</b>             | <i>Conceptions of theology and spirituality</i>     | <b>Contested theologies</b>          |
|  | <i>Conceptions of ethics</i>                        | <b>Contested ethics</b>              |
| <b>POWER &amp; POLITICS</b>              | Denominational tensions                             | Contested praxis                     |
|  | Sacred-Secular Tensions                             | Contested ideologies                 |
| <b>GEOGRAPHIES &amp; IMAGINATIONS</b>    | <i>Scalar Imaginaries</i>                           | <i>Contested scalar imaginaries</i>  |
|  | <i>Multi-Scalar Utopian / Dystopian Imaginaries</i> | <b>Contested utopian imaginaries</b> |
| <b>POSITIONALITIES &amp; DIFFERENCES</b> | <b>Moral positionalities</b>                        | <b>Contested experiences</b>         |

Table 7.1 – Moral geographical tensions examined in this thesis, with body scale tensions highlighted in bold (Copy of Table 3.2).

## 7E2.1 Tensions of theology and ethics

### 7E2.1.1 Conceptions of theology and spirituality

Conceptions of theology and spirituality remain central to moral geographies of social justice and the city. At the body scale, tensions have occurred around individuals' understandings of Christian disciplines such as Church attendance, Bible reading and prayer. As the primary methods by which lay Christians can 'encounter' theologies, they are a source of tension between those people who place great value upon such disciplines, and those for whom they are a source of frustration or even boredom. Hence for some, church attendance was literally something 'not to be missed', whilst for others it was a source of agitation or conflict with others. For those for whom these disciplines are an essential part of their theological and spiritual understanding, there is a strong element of the inexplicable in their accounts of corporeal experience. A sense of a 'personal encounter' with the Divine is what is implied in these embodied moral geographies, but rarely articulated in an explicit manner.

The unique nature of these moral geographical tensions of theology and spirituality at the body scale centres on the fact that here, individuals encounter and *consume* theologies that have been formulated by the cadre of urban imaginers (or indeed those at greater scales of abstraction). For some, this is a negative experience, whereas for others it is central to their understanding of life. Whilst church attendance and Bible reading would be seen as traditionally the principal means for the translation of theological rationales, the embodied experiences that I have analysed move beyond simply the 'theological', and towards a personal 'encounter' with the *Divine* itself. This highly personalised corporeal experience of 'being with God' appears to be non-representational, or inexplicable, as respondents struggled to find words to express their feelings. In this manner, viewing the body as the scale 'closest in' (Valentine, 2001), these moral geographies are so

internalised that they are beyond textual representation, and significantly different to the imaginaries of theology at the urban scale, or the practices of theology at the community scale – they are inexplicably intimate personal experiences, not simply of theology, but of God.

### **7E2.1.2 Conceptions of ethics**

Tensions concerning the nature, sources and applications of ethics are as strong a feature at the body scale as they are at the urban scale. However, the tension is not so much between a liberal and a conservative ethics (as most interviewees subscribed to a more liberal view anyway), but rather a tension in conceiving what ethics *are* (are they principles or absolutes), and how they should be applied in personal life behaviour. The Bible was not seen as the only, or indeed the major source of Christian ethics, with interviewees preferring to draw on more peripheral biblical knowledge, Church teaching, or Christian tradition, when formulating their ethics. The privileged position accorded to the Scripture by conservatives was not supported by these Christians (although this is likely to be because they come from churches with liberal clergy). Respondents had respect for general ethical *guiding principles*, but little time for ethical absolutes. Ethics were seen as far more flexible and open to change, particularly in generational terms. This ethical change was far more socially or situationally driven than by a reformulation of the ethics themselves. Hence, when applying those ethics, they were far more open to negotiation and re-interpretation according to different situations. However, in spite of being 'freed' from an absolute sense of ethics, peoples' sense of 'being a Christian' is still governed by a clear sense of 'good' and 'bad'. Thus, an absolutist sense of ethics continues to govern those who take a liberal approach to ethical nature and application. The complex internalised politics of moral negotiation which this generates often results in the creation of personalised moral hierarchies, where moral

principles are ordered, not in an absolutist sense, but to give a sufficient sense of 'control' to allow ethical judgements to be made.

Such embodied moral geographical tensions surrounding ethics are unique in that the thickening/consumption of ethics in personal experience is far more open to negotiation and change than it would seem to be at the urban and community scales, where ethical contestation is *between* different persons, rather than internalised. At the body scale, absolutes give way to general *principles*, but yet not at the expense of a continued moral sense of right and wrong. As such, body scale ethics represent a complex inner moral struggle of negotiation over what ethics *are*, and how they should be practised. It is this element of application that removes ethics from abstract imaginary discussion, and into the realm of a corporeal existence where ethical decision-making is equally real and painful.

## **7E2.2 Tensions of moral positionalities and differences**

The creation of a cadre of disciples who consume theologies and have their lives transformed as a result of such consumption, is central to the success of Christian moral geographical projects such as urban theologies. For the believers that I interviewed, faith is viewed as a source of strength in times of difficulty and struggle, and as a deeply intuitive sense of the Divine. The sense simply that 'God is', and does not need to be proved or felt, is again something that is beyond textual representation, and something that interviewees struggled to express. When looking at individual life histories, it is apparent that there is a strong intertwining of personal and faith biographies, and times when faith is absent and present, good times and bad. What is particularly interesting about these accounts of changing moral positionality with biography is the extent to which they focus on personal (relational) rather than material issues, and the way in which for many people faith is

absent during youth, but returns in middle age. For most people, faith changes incrementally, and morality with it, gradually re-forming and re-shaping over time. However, for some, faith (and moral change) comes about as the result of a dramatic conversion experience where an individual decides to follow a Christian faith. For virtually all whom I interviewed, whether change was incremental or dramatic, faith was seen as a genuinely transformative element in their lives, and particularly at times of difficulty and struggle could provide a liberating dynamic that would help a person overcome pain and distress.

Those that I interviewed struggle with the tensions of multiple moralities, holding together different sets of moral behaviour in different contexts, though this did not prevent faith from engaging outwards beyond the personal. Tensions of moral positionality are unique at the body scale because they are so highly personal and individual. They are more tensions which are felt and experienced in a non-representational manner, than the abstract imaginaries or practices of the urban and community scales. Hence, over and above the common shared beliefs, ethics and values, there is something totally unique about faith, and the way in which is embodied, which lies beyond the representation of a discursive, textual realm.

## **7E2.3 Tensions of geographies and imaginations**

### **7E2.3.1 Multi-scalar utopian/dystopian imaginaries**

Starting at effectively the most micro-scale political level, embodied moral geographies of social justice are bound to be up-scaled when adopting a multi-scalar approach. The scale at which this occurs most naturally for those people that I interviewed, is the community scale. This is the scale at which, politically speaking, embodied moral geographies can most tangibly connect with a

wider politics of social justice. For those individuals that I interviewed, most had spent the whole course of their life trajectories living in some of Glasgow's poorest communities. Many had indeed lived through the descent of post-war utopian planned housing schemes into contemporary dystopian 'sink estates'. Having been through such difficult life experiences, it is particularly surprising to hear so many voices of hope for the community scale, and a genuine belief in a better future for areas such as Easterhouse. These embodied moral geographies of hope lie at the heart of a multi-scalar politics of social justice, and form the bedrock upon which such a progressive politics can be constructed. Though not expressed in ostensibly 'Christian' terms, it is clear from the discussions that Christian visions of justice inform these moral geographies of hope.

What marks out the uniqueness of the multi-scalar imaginaries at the body scale is the fact that they represent a *personal* imaginary of hope – not simply an imaginary that will help *others*, but one that will also see a genuine improvement in life experience for the 'believer' themselves. Such a hope is a genuinely transformative one. Such a moral geography of hope is clearly based upon people having lived through, or in, poverty in a way that the majority of the cadre of urban imaginers have not. However, again (as with tensions of power and politics), there is a discursive silence around the issue of poverty. Whilst not wishing to press this issue with interviewees, it is (or has been) clearly a real experience for many. This silence on poverty is not something that occurs at urban and community scales, where poverty is de-personalised, and therefore easier to discuss. For the individual, it is either a sense of pride or embarrassment that prevents such discussion and ensures that the embodied moral geographies of the poor are kept very much private when it comes to discussing this issue. Finally, the unique nature of such multi-scalar imaginaries is the fact that they are hopes which are not necessarily theological, but represent a



deeply embedded, inner spirit of hope for a socially just future. It is this internal seed that is the strength undergirding a multi-scalar politics of social justice.

### **7E3 MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL PROCESSES AT THE BODY SCALE**

Looking at Figure 7.1, in this chapter I have given a unique focus to 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of *transformation*. However, in order to maintain consistency with the other scales of analysis, I also wish to make some comments about how this chapter has contributed to understanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes of *scaling (embodiment)* and *negotiation (co-operation and contestation)*.

#### **7E3.1 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of transformation**

As I have argued strongly throughout this chapter, moral geographical processes at the body scale have to contain a transformative dynamic if they are to genuinely achieve social justice. The Christian faith and theology need to be able to give a sense of meaning, hope and value in the corporeal milieu if peoples' lives are going to be positively impacted as a result. The research in this chapter indicates that to quote genuine transformation as a result of theological embodiment is perhaps to move things on too far. There are examples of individuals such as the man from Castlemilk, whose lives have changed dramatically through an encounter with the religious (and even, as some would suggest, the Divine). However, for most bodies, living out their existence in socially-excluded environments such as Easterhouse, faith and theology are not necessarily transformative in the sense of being dramatic, life-changing experiences, but they are not either a source of disempowerment and angst. Yes, faith for some is difficult and a struggle to negotiate a complex internalised moral geography of good and bad, right and wrong. However, there seems

to be an overwhelming testimony that faith is a source of meaning, which gives value and understanding to life, and which gives hope for the future. It is therefore possible to see the type of embodied transformation that takes place as being a process of 'quietly hoping' or 'quietly trusting' as personal biography and faith experience intertwine, creating the ups and downs of day-to-day living. This process of transformation is unique to the body scale precisely because it is internalised and personal. Yes, communities and cities can be transformed, and yes, they each have their own 'biographies' and intertwinings with faith/theology, but there is something about this highly personal, internal dynamic that makes these embodied processes of transformation so exclusive.

### **7E3.2 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes**

There are a number of key cross-cutting themes for the more general 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes at the community scale:

#### **7E3.2.1 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of negotiation (co-operation and contestation)**

Moral geographical processes of co-operation and contestation at the urban and community scales are very well-defined. There are clear examples of conflict between sacred and secular and between different theologies and different denominations. There are also excellent examples of co-operation between different denominations and between sacred and secular. At both these scales the moral politics is clear and easily understood. At the body scale, 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes of negotiation differ strongly from this pattern. There seems to be little evidence

amongst the interviewees of inter-personal contestation amongst poor people at this scale. This is not to say that this type of contestation does not exist, as poor communities are sometimes notoriously fractious and divisive (as seen in some of the Easterhouse disputes for example). However, co-operation and working together in a supportive manner seems to be more of the strategy preferred by those individuals whom I interviewed. This sense of solidarity is encouraging for the prospects of social justice. Where contestation does exist at the body scale, it seems to be against other bodies in *power* or *authority*, such as secular agents and (particularly) the clergy. There is a sense of frustration amongst some interviewees with the part played by their minister or priest, and a sense of strong inter-personal disagreement or open conflict at different times. What this conflict boils down to, however, concerns the most important process of negotiation at this scale – the negotiation of theological principles.

It is in attempting to negotiate theological principles that the interviewees come into most conflict with their clergy, through differences of opinion or understanding. At times, interviewees are frustrated with clergy's intransigence in supporting a particular principle (such as non-inter-marriage in the case of the Catholic woman from Pollok), or simply resigned to their 'fate' / sense of being 'not good enough' to partake in a certain principle or act. But deeper than this contestation with clergy, the most unique aspect of 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of negotiation at the body scale is that the negotiation process is *personal*, and *internalised*. The body represents the most micro-scale at which either assent or dissent is given to theological principles. It is the place at which theological principles ultimately come to rest in the minds of individuals, either empowering or disempowering them as they wrestle with their implications. In this way the abstract and the particular become internalised in a manner which is symptomatic of *all* moral geographies. Ultimately the most universal of principles begins with the most particular of persons and has to be approved or contested by such an individual person, internally, before it

can ever become truly universal. Therefore, principles must be capable of being simultaneously universal and particular if they are ever to achieve success. This is a key conclusion for 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical processes that I will expand upon in Chapter 8.

people don't seem to contest one another at this scale. Cooperation amongst the poor. Contestation seems to be against clergy or secular agents and theological *principles*. Negotiation is ultimately therefore *personal*.

### **7E3.2.2 2<sup>nd</sup> order moral geographical processes of scaling (embodiment)**

At the urban scale, processes of scaling have been concerned with the imagination, and at the community scale, they are concerned with practice. At both scales, they are full of open contestations between different imaginaries, power relations and politics. At the body scale, scaling processes are different. Rather than being imagined, or practised, as at the urban and community scales, at the body scale, theologies are *internalised*. It is this highly personal internalisation which makes processes of embodiment so unique. When talking to interviewees, there was a sense that their encounter with theology went beyond a sense of principles and 'morality' to a far deeper encounter with the Divine or God itself. For respondents, the internalisation of this encounter was not simply a principle, but an *experience*, and something that is ultimately non-representational – interviewees simply cannot describe what having faith means to them. In scaling moral geographies of social justice and the city to the body scale, then, interviewees' sense of social justice and its linkage to their faith in a God of justice becomes so 'close in', that it is almost non-definable. There is a deeply internalised sense of justice that comes from the intertwining of personal biography with faith experience. Fully understanding this embodiment of principles and (more deeply) of faith, may never be completely possible, but this

again highlights the manner in which moral geographies are highly particular embodiments of the universal, and that universal and particular are combined through a scaling of the universal-particular dialectic into the corporeal milieu. Indeed, the universal-particular tension, then, is held just as much *within* an individual person, as it is *between* that person and other people at other scales.

However, in emphasising the particularity of embodied moral geographies, this is not to detract from multi-scalar relations, as I have already noted in my conclusions on tensions, above. Body scale moral geographies are capable of linkage with those at other scales, and indeed do link with such scales. What I am arguing, instead, is that moral geographical embodiment and the consumption of moral geographies is always a highly particularised experience. Accepting that at each spatial scale, whether urban, community, national or global, these scales are made up of individual bodies, who in spite of any collective associations, similarities or solidarity, each have to give personal consent or dissent to moral geographical principles. It is this manner in which any universal principle or broader scale movement must have this personal, embodied component, which makes understanding embodied moral geographies so critical for understanding wider moral geographies of social justice, and indeed moral geographies more generally.

## **7E4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have attempted to advance my theoretical understanding of moral geographies of social justice and the city through a final empirical investigation of moral geographical processes and tensions at the body scale. More widely, in relation to the three key contributions that I wish to make in this thesis, I can make the following conclusions at this stage:

#### **7E4.1 Inserting a religious perspective into moral geographical enquiry:**

By inserting a religious perspective into moral geographical enquiry, I have been able to accomplish a considerable level of new understanding of moral geographies that is currently absent from the literature. In analysing a religious perspective (as opposed to e.g. a class perspective or feminist perspective) the unique nature of religion, and its belief in the Divine, and something 'beyond' human existence has opened up a whole new realm of moral geographical insight. In analysing the religious perspectives given by Christianity and theology at the body scale, there is a genuine sense of *faith* not simply in moral principles, but in something else, which lies beyond ethics, and enters the realm of spirituality. Whilst non-religious organisations such as political parties have 'faith' in ideologies or principles such as Marxism, and can show all the elements of a 'religion' as a result, these remain *atheistic* ideologies. Christianity, on the other hand, is a *theistic* religion, where there is a belief in a God and a spiritual realm outside of, but connected with, human experience. In having analysed religion, then, and the fact that at the body scale it is so personalised and goes beyond moral principles to internalising faith and an experience of the Divine, I have been able to open up a whole new realm of the non-representational for moral geographies. This is a realm that is definitely moral geographical, as it is concerned with moral principles, but it introduces this new element of the non-representational because of the dynamic way in which spirituality is inserted into the nexus of negotiation with moral geographical principles that are internalised in corporeal experience. This sense of the 'non-representational moral geographical', though hard to conceptualise, is something which can profitably be explored further, but which may not have been 'discovered' without the insertion of a religious perspective in moral geographical enquiry.

#### **7E4.2 A scalar approach to understanding moral geographies:**

This chapter has advanced understanding of the contribution that scale makes to moral geographies by demonstrating that the scaling of moral geographies to the body is ultimately central to *all* moral geographies. This comes through the manner in which embodied moral geographies not only embody particular moral (theological) principles, but the fact that they embody the entire universal-particular dialectic in a micro fashion, with all its tensions and contestations, as it is internalised within corporeal experience. Hence, from this body scale analysis, it is possible to conclude that all moral geographies are ultimately embodied if they are to be given universal application or assent/contestation. Scales, insofar as they exist in imagination and political practice as 'community' or 'urban' or 'national' are ultimately made up of individual bodies, each of whom must negotiate the universal-particular dialectic when it comes to internalising moral and ethical principles. It is not sufficient, therefore, simply to explore scalar imaginations or scalar practices – the scalar embodiments and scalar internalisations of principles that I have demonstrated in this chapter open up the universal-particular dialectic and demonstrate the essential need for corporeal understanding in any discussion of scaling, and in moral geographical argument more generally.

#### **7E4.3 Constructing a framework of moral geographical processes and tensions:**

It is by analysing moral geographical tensions that in this chapter I have been able to uncover the tension between moral principles and negotiating them into personal life. The complex process of negotiation that goes on has revealed the nature of the internalisation of moral geographical principles and moral geographical struggles. The fact that ethical negotiation can become internalised demonstrates that it is not simply a political act, but also a personal one, and further

buttresses my claim that any understanding of moral geographies must incorporate an understanding of the body scale and the personal processes and outcomes of moral geographical negotiation. Without a process and tension-based approach, understanding this would not have been possible, and so this chapter has contributed a key plank of advancing my contribution to moral geographical theory.

Embodied moral geographies of social justice and the city sit at the most micro-scale political level of all the scales examined in this thesis. In other scales, the thickening of ethical universals, the negotiation between universal and particular, and the understanding of Christian spirituality can be dealt with in more abstract manners. At the body scale, moral geographies are not only imagined, or lived, or practised (as at the urban and community scales), but they are *internalised*. It is this deep rooting and embeddedness of Christian moral frameworks in the conscience, emotions and psyche of the cadre of disciples that forms the core basis for all of these other processes. Though for some individuals, the embodiment of Christian moralities is a difficult experience and a source of struggle, the faith dynamic, and the way in which it is internalised, seems to offer genuinely transformative potential in corporeal existence. Looking at people as sitting on different stages of a journey, for some faith may be a source of guilt or a burden, whilst for others it may be an escapist means of avoiding the difficulties of day-to-day material existence. However, for others, faith can be a genuinely empowering and transformative part of their life, which naturally varies with life's biography, but offers a means to engage with material reality in a dynamic, transformational manner. It is this personal transformative element (though often riddled with doubt, uncertainty or struggle) which is unique to embodied moral geographies, and which plays a crucial part in ensuring that moral geographies of hope remain central to a multi-scalar politics of social justice.



# **PART IV**

## **CONTRIBUTION OF THESIS**

# **CHAPTER 8**

## **CONCLUSION**

## SECTION 8A

### INTRODUCTION

It is the end of a long journey. Travelling through the complex and contested worlds of moral geographies of social justice and the city has been a genuine voyage of discovery, uncovering connections between theologies and geographies, sacred and secular, thick and thin, utopia and dystopia, universal and particular. 'Cutting into' these moral geographies at urban, community and body scales has revealed moral landscapes replete with processes and tensions, where moral geographies are produced, exchanged and consumed. At each scale agency has been undertaken by different cadres of individuals, performing different roles in relation to moral geographical processes. What has this journey contributed to an understanding of moral geographies, and where could future journeys lead?

In this final chapter of the thesis, I want to conclude my discussion by drawing together all of the empirical and theoretical material that I have outlined in previous chapters. Throughout this thesis, I have been attempting to illuminate the contested nature of moral geographies of social justice and the city, by analysing the theologies and praxis of the Church in Glasgow. I have attempted to develop a strong theoretical framework, derived from a comprehensive literature review, and what I hope is a robust methodological strategy that I have implemented in the gathering and analysis of information. I have written out the entire thesis around this theoretical scaffold, and 'bolted together' all of the different pieces of empirical research onto this central framework of moral geographical processes and tensions. In each empirical chapter (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), I have structured my material explicitly around the processes and tensions scaffold, and

have written out substantive conclusions that give my understanding of the nature of moral geographies of social justice and the city.

These conclusions, as I have indicated, deal with material that is of the category of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes and tensions, and which is exclusively focused on moral geographies which (a) concern specifically social justice and the city, and (b) are generated through Christian theologies and Christian religious praxis. In this conclusion, I wish to move beyond this focus on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes and tensions to look at the far more generic moral geographical framework of 1<sup>st</sup> order processes and tensions. In doing this, I also want to move beyond discussions that are focused specifically on social justice and the city, and to move beyond analysis of Christian theologies and religious praxis. In other words, this conclusion wishes to abstract back out from all that has gone before, a more general set of inferences on the nature of moral geographical theory more widely, and to therefore situate the microcosm of the thesis' material in a number of broader contexts.

I will structure this concluding discussion along three axes. Firstly, in Section 8B I will interrogate the status of the theoretical framework that I proposed in Chapter 3 and have been utilising throughout my narrative. In doing this, I want to test the extent to which the 'scaffold' that I proposed is *internally strong* in the light of empirical research. Secondly, in Section 8C I will demonstrate the manner in which I hope my thesis has contributed three areas of original knowledge that develop moral geographical theory, as I outlined in Chapter 3. In doing this, I want to consider the extent to which my 'scaffold' is *strong in relation to these three important 'voids'* in moral geographical theory. Thirdly, in Section 8D I will examine the situation of my research and theoretical development in the wider contexts which surround moral geographical theory, and suggest a number of connections that I see the thesis having made. In doing this, I

want to assess the extent to which my 'scaffold' is *strong in relation to the wider structures and contexts of moral geographies*. Finally, as a 'rounding off point', in Section 8E, I will give my assessment of how I hope to see moral geographical research developing in the light of my contribution.

In broadening out this conclusion beyond the specific confines of my research on the Church and its moral geographies of social justice and the city, I do not wish to 'disappoint' the reader by appearing to neglect a 'full' conclusion on the implications of my research for an understanding of the *Church* and moral geographies of *social justice and the city*, specifically. Aside from the fact that it is a function of a PhD conclusion to be deliberately abstract, in each of the preceding theoretical chapters, I have already written the more 'meso-level' conclusions that specifically concern an academic understanding of the Church and issues of social justice and the city. I therefore trust that the reader can glean from these discussions my conclusions on the *specifics* of the topics on which the thesis has focused, whilst at the same time recognising the essentially more abstract nature of this final chapter. I thus hope that the reader can appreciate my concern to paint my contribution not simply in the narrow empirical terms of an analysis of the Church and its moral geographies, but in a far broader theorisation of my contribution to the moral geographical enterprise more generally.

## SECTION 8B

### STATUS OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Chapter 3, I outlined my theoretical framework of moral geographical processes and tensions which I have been pursuing as my analytical scaffold throughout this thesis. Following on from my review of moral geographical literature, and the emphasis which David Smith has placed on processes such as 'translation' and tensions such as the universal-particular dialectic, it seemed logical to build upon this foundation and introduce a more sophisticated battery of concepts relating to processes and tensions. In Chapter 3, I outlined a framework of processes and tensions that I related specifically to my analysis of moral geographies of social justice and the city. In particular, Tables 3.1 and 3.2, and Figures 3.1 and 3.2 outline the manner in which I have conceptualised and then pursued these processes and tensions. Once again, in order to clarify this, and my shift to discussions around moral geographical processes and tensions of the 1<sup>st</sup> order in this chapter, I repeat Figure 3.2 as Figure 8.1, below. In attempting to subject this framework to rigorous empirical testing at three scales, in the context of Glasgow, I have been able to assess its *internal strength* and robustness in the face of empirical realities.

At the urban scale, the framework tested 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of *imagining and reflection*, 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes of *negotiation and scaling*, and tensions of *geographies and imaginations* and *theology and ethics*. In terms of moral geographies of social justice and the city, the urban scale takes on a unique nature as a site for discussion, imagination, strategic thinking and reflection, where a cadre of urban imaginers actively produce urban theologies which are both up-scaled and down-scaled for moral geographical exchange and consumption. The urban is hence an intermediate scale that stands at the nexus of the abstract and the real, the imagined and

the practised, a site at which ethics, ideas and morals make their initial connection with socio-spatial relations.

At the community scale, moral geographies of social justice and the city were investigated through 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes of *practising and living*, 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes of *negotiation* and *scaling*, and tensions of *power and politics* and *geographies and imaginations*. A huge variety of processes and tensions were encountered at this scale, which qualified the pursuit of a process- and tension-based approach. At this scale, moral geographies of social justice and the city take on a unique nature by being *practised* and *lived* out, so that they are no longer simply abstract positions and imaginaries debated out in relation *to* particular spatial formations, but they are actively lived and politicised *in* those spatial formations and relations. The politics of scale present at the community scale, as it challenges and is challenged by, other scales, is particularly vibrant and dynamic, and there is as much moral geographical understanding to be made, then, in analysing political *processes* than there is in simply the ethical beliefs held.

At the body scale, the framework was used to investigate 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes of *transformation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes of *negotiation* and *scaling*, and tensions of *geographies and imaginations*, *theology and ethics*, and *positionalities and differences*. At this scale moral geographies take on a particularly unique nature because they are *internalised* in the body and in corporeal experience. This deep rooting and embeddedness of moralities and ethics moves beyond simply the imagined or the practised, and into a realm of the felt, the experienced, and the intuitive. This opens up questions of a hidden, 'non-representational', spiritual realm that is somewhat different to that of the material. By pursuing a process- and tension-based approach, then, I have been able to uncover this, and also something of the importance of internal moral

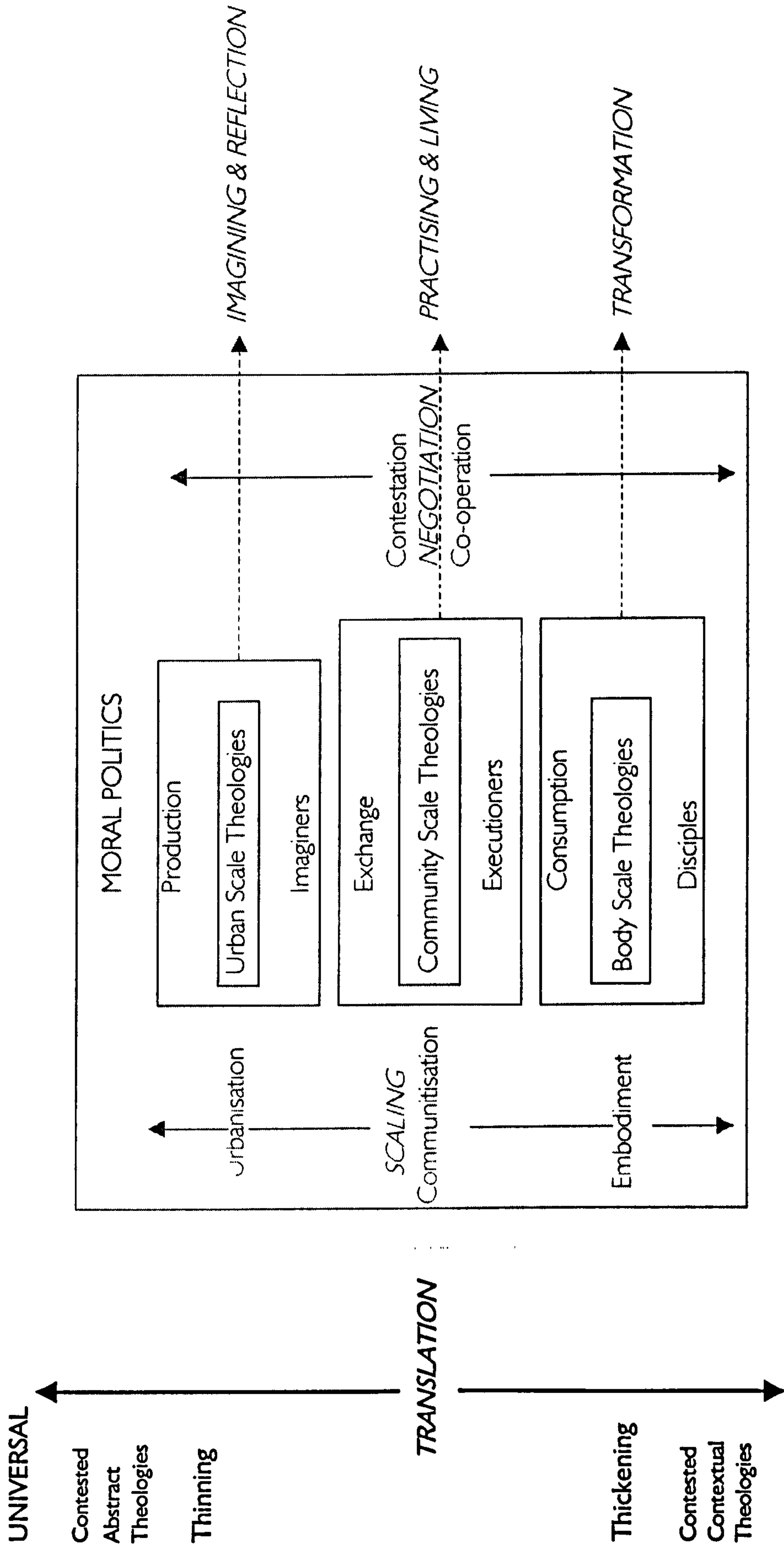
geographical negotiation, and the internalisation of the universal-particular dialectic in embodied experience.



1<sup>st</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

2<sup>nd</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes

3<sup>rd</sup> Order Moral  
Geographical  
Processes



PARTICULAR

Figure 8.1 - Diagrammatic representation of moral geographical processes examined in thesis (Copy of Figure 3.2).

Following this rigorous testing against a particular set of moral geographies of social justice and the city, there are a number of different strengths and weaknesses of the framework that have come to light in the course of this empirical engagement:

## **8B1 STRENGTHS**

1. In the theoretical framework, I moved away from the more general conception of moral geographical processes outlined by Smith, and de-limited and refined them into different *moral geographical orders* which were of relevance to different scales. In doing this, I was able to separate the meso- and micro- specifics of the particular types of moral geographies that I was examining (social justice and the city) into 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes, from the more macro-level processes such as translation, outlined by Smith. By making this distinction between 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes, I have tried to demonstrate the manner in which processes operate at different levels and are differentiated according to the issues being studied and the scales at which they operate. However, in pursuing this distinction, I have also attempted to show that moral geographical processes in the 1<sup>st</sup> order remain continuous under all circumstances.

2. In a similar manner to my development of a framework for moral geographical processes, I have also refined and delimited moral geographical tensions into four different sets which are relevant to different scales. By looking at tensions surrounding specific sets of issues such as ethics or power, I have again broken down Smith's more general sets of tensions between universal and particular and thick and thin into those which are specific to this thesis, and also specific to

particular spatial scales (e.g. positionality at the body scale). In doing this, I have endeavoured to demonstrate the way in which tensions are more myriad than the meta- categories of universal and particular, and that moral geographies are suffused with all manner of tensions. However, in maintaining a common approach to tensions of scaling throughout the thesis, I have sought to demonstrate the manner in which tensions cross-cut different scales, whilst at the same time holding a unique nature at those scales. The different manners in which the framework of processes and tensions operates, then, helps to show its robustness under the specifics of my empirical study, but also in relation to more general moral geographical concerns.

3. My focus on a scalar approach, framed around three empirical chapters at different spatial scales, has allowed the *uniqueness* of particular spatial scales, and hence of the scaling argument, to be explored, whilst simultaneously pursuing the common links and *connections* between scales. The different nature of moral geographical processes and tensions that I have tried to uncover at each scale has legitimated my pursuit of a scalar argument, and my argument that there is a scalar constitution to moral geographies.

4. The theoretical framework that I have used has introduced a battery of concepts which give clearer guidance on the theorising of the production, exchange and consumption of theologies, and which seek to illuminate an understanding of the moral geographical processes and tensions in operation within the Church. By pursuing a 'grounding theory' approach, I have been able to move backwards and forwards between theory and empirical material in crystallising these concepts. I believe that the different ways in which I have conceptualised issues such as theology, 'residualised sectarianism', and 'secularising the sacred' derives from my pursuit of a processes and tensions- based approach. These concepts are of relevance to theologians and theorisations

of the Church, and are both derived from, and have withstood, the rigours of this process-based approach.

## 8B2 WEAKNESSES

1. A casual glance at the theoretical framework, and its application in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 perhaps gives the impression of a framework which is too 'neat' or 'sanitised', and which fails to do justice to the complexity and richness of moral geographies. It is true that firstly because of space constraints in this thesis, and secondly, because of my desire to focus on the most *salient features* of the nature of processes and tensions at particular scales, I have perhaps omitted to discuss other processes and tensions at these scales. Hence, I have not examined tensions of theology and ethics at the community scale, nor processes of practising and living at the urban scale. In large part, this is because these processes and tensions *do not* have salience at these scales, and so I wanted to play up the unique defining features of each scale. However, this is not to say that such processes and tensions do not exist at such scales. They do, and are indeed cross-cutting as I have argued at different points. Hence, my finished write-up has been necessarily 'neat', to allow for clarity of argument, but this is not to deny the fact that pursuing a framework of processes and tensions in the manner that I have done, is perhaps too reductionist in its theorising of moral geographical complexity, in a way that another theoretical approach might not be.

2. Related to the above, my framework has focused on three geographical scales, and three groups of agents. This narrow focus has omitted to consider scales other than the urban, community and body, such as the street, household or nation, which might have been of relevance. This is again due simply to the space and time constraints which impinge upon the

research process. It is not, however, to say that the three scales which I have considered are somehow privileged, or essential in analysis of moral geographies of social justice and the city. Rather, they reflect my own particular scaling of the issues, and the scaling which has already been outlined in academic theologies on these topics.

3. Similarly, in focusing on issues of social justice and the city, my framework can be accused of being 'issue-specific', and therefore non-transferable. This final point is an issue which I will explore in greater depth below, but it is certainly the case that this framework *is* highly-specific to the issues which I am studying. In my opinion, the framework's strength lies in its relevance and robustness to the processes and tensions which I have analysed. I believe that it does possess an internal strength, which, in spite of shortcomings, has withstood the rigours of empirical testing, and produced conclusions on moral geographies of social justice and the city which are substantive and stimulating. The far bigger question of the extent to which it makes a wider contribution to moral geographical debates *beyond* social justice and the city, is an issue that requires greater exploration, and to which I now turn.

## SECTION 8C

### THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO MORAL GEOGRAPHY

In undertaking my research in this thesis, I have attempted to contribute original knowledge of moral geographies to the geographical discipline. As outlined in Chapter 3, this research has attempted to make three new contributions to furthering moral geographical knowledge and to aid in shaping the research agenda of moral geography. In making these contributions, I see each fulfilling a purpose of responding to a corresponding void in current moral geographical theory. Two of my contributions (those on processes/tensions and scale) address *theory* which is missing from moral geography, whilst the third (religion) addresses an *area* which is absent from it. In outlining the contribution that this thesis makes to wider moral geographical knowledge, I want to demonstrate the strength of my theoretical scaffold in relation to these three absences. Throughout this discussion, I am returning to the realm of 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical processes and tensions – to the universal-particular dialectic, and moral geographical translation (thickening / thinning). It is this more abstract order of moral geographical theory which is generalisable, applicable to all moral geographical investigation, and which any genuine contribution must address.

#### 8C1 CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK OF MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL PROCESSES AND TENSIONS

In the existing moral geographical literature, of which David Smith is the key contributor, the theorisation of moral geographical processes and tensions is at a formative stage. This early theoretical development has largely only recognised processes and tensions at the most abstract,

meta- level. Hence, Smith has essentially contributed an understanding of the basic fact that processes and tensions *exist*. This is, naturally, a highly important contribution upon which I have attempted to build. In first engaging with Smith's concepts of processes and tensions, it became clear to me that in order to understand moral geographies which had a theological constitution, it was important to 'dig deeper' and look at other processes and tensions which might be more peculiar to the context I was studying. The result of this thinking was to construe a set of processes and tensions that work at different scales and which attempt to capture more of the complexity of moral geographies.

Having now demonstrated my conviction that this framework functions and is internally strong in relation to moral geographies of social justice and the city (see previous section), I want to highlight the manner in which I see this framework as transferable to other moral geographical analyses, and the way in which it responds to the void of a fully developed theory of processes and tensions. I believe that the framework is transferable in the following ways:

(i) The sense of there being three orders of moral geographical processes, as I have proposed, is applicable to all moral geographies. The 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical processes of translation, thickening and thinning, take place in all moral geographies. Similarly, all moral geographies will be characterised by 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes concerning a moral politics of scaling and negotiation. Moral geographies have to be scaled and have to be negotiated through co-operation and contestation. This essentially political nature of 2<sup>nd</sup> order processes is a key feature that can be transferred to an analysis of other moral geographies. Finally, 3<sup>rd</sup> order moral geographical processes are more specific to the field which I have been analysing. The type of 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes requiring analysis depends upon the issue being studied, and the scale at which analysis takes place. Hence, global scale moral geographies may have different 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes

attached to them, and this may differ according to what issue is being discussed at the global scale. However, if the 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes which I have examined (imagining/reflection; practising/living; and transformation) are seen, respectively as concerned with 'thinking', 'politics', and 'outcomes', it becomes clear that even these three specific processes are more general to different contexts.

(ii) By following a framework of moral geographical production, exchange and consumption (reproduction), I have been able to chart through a logical moral geographical process by which ethics are translated into context and reproduced and exchanged back to the production level. This essentially Marxian mode of analysis is a simplistic way of unpacking some of the different stages of the 1<sup>st</sup> order process of 'translation', and aiding a fuller understanding. Employing such concepts, again scaled to the appropriate levels for production, consumption and exchange, will allow a fuller theorisation of the essential moral politics which takes place in all moral geographies, and is readily transferable to other contexts.

(iii) The four sets of tensions which I have utilised in this thesis correspond with different layers of analysis in a similar way to the production-consumption continuum outlined above. Tensions of theology and ethics essentially form the 'ethical' dimension of moral geographies; power and politics the 'political' dimension; positionality and difference the 'experience' dimension, and geographies and imaginations the 'geographical' dimension. It is my contention that in order to fully understand moral geographies (alongside the processes outlined above), it is necessary to have an understanding of the contestations surrounding ethics, politics, experiences and geographies. Seen another way, the 'ethical' represents sets of meta-level tensions at the production level; the 'political' represents sets of meso-level tensions at the exchange level; and the 'experience' represents sets of micro-level tensions at the consumption level. All of these are bound together by tensions of 'geographies' which are found in the scaling processes which



operate through all moral geographies. This conceptual apparatus is easily convertible to other moral geographical analyses.

(iv) In this thesis I have analysed three specific cadres of individuals. In doing so, I have attempted to identify the three groups of agents most closely associated with particular moral geographical processes, tensions and scales. Hence, at the urban scale, where processes of production and tensions of ethics are prevalent, there is a particular group of agents who exercise leadership. Similarly, at the body scale, where processes of consumption and tensions of experience are prevalent, a group of agents exercise discipleship. Whilst not wanting to argue that processes, tensions and scales are exclusively the remit of particular agents, it is clear that in moral geographies, it is particular groups – cadres – who exercise specific close associations with certain sets of processes, tensions and scales. Applying such a framework to other moral geographies would assist in clarifying the nature of particular agents in the translation process in a more theorised manner than simply suggesting that 'x, y is involved in this process'.

## **8C2 A SCALAR APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING MORAL GEOGRAPHIES**

The geography of moral geographies is, naturally, crucial to their existence and understanding. In the current literature on moral geographies, the 'geographies' component has largely taken the form of highlighting the importance of geographical difference in shaping morality, and theorising the problem of constructing ethical universals in the face of geographical particularity. By theorising the geographical contribution to ethical understanding, then, as being to unpack and explore the tensions between universal and particular, Smith has essentially opened up a continuum which invites a scalar contribution. In responding to Smith's concepts, and with a

desire to move beyond some of the more simplistic spatial arguments contained within the moral geographical literature, I have argued for the foregrounding of scale as of integral importance to understanding moral geographical processes and tensions. In my analysis, I have adopted a scalar approach which has explicitly tested these notions of scaling processes and scaling tensions in moral geographical arguments. In filling this moral geographical void, I believe that my contribution is conveyable to other moral geographical analyses in the following ways:

(i) By viewing the core 1<sup>st</sup> order moral geographical process of translation (thickening and thinning) as essentially a scalar process, it is possible to conduct geographical analysis in a more sophisticated manner that can analyse more complex ideas, processes and tensions. Viewed this way, 'translation' is not simply about moving from universal to particular, but from whatever geographical scale is conceived of as 'universal' to whatever geographical scale is conceived of as 'particular', with a number of others in-between. By taking this multi-scalar approach (as I have done), it is possible to broaden out 'geographical difference' in many different ways, allowing for a far richer and more profitable theorisation of moral geographies than simply to talk about universal and particular. The differences and subtleties thrown up by each spatial scale are so complex (as demonstrated in my analyses), that they unpack moral geographies for what they are in a manner that a more simplistic analysis cannot. Introducing this concept of scaling the universal-particular dialectic to all moral geographical investigation, is not only possible, but desirable.

(ii) In this thesis, I have treated scale not as a 'given' in terms of 'the urban', 'the community' and 'the body', but rather as a dynamic *process*, which is replete with tensions. It is in the very *scaling* of moral geographies, that one can find the richness of ethical and geographical inter-relations. The type of scaling which takes place influences the nature of the processes and tensions that

operate. Hence urbanisation processes take on unique characteristics that differentiate them from embodiment processes and so on. Some processes and tensions may be intra-scalar, whilst others are inter-scalar. It is only through a full and proper theorisation and empirical analysis of these processes and tensions that a full picture of scalar relations can emerge. By engaging with such a framework, as I have done, moral geographical analysis can become increasingly sophisticated and capable of understanding the nuances and complexities which mark the moral landscape.

(iii) By adopting a scalar approach, moral geographical enquiry has a simultaneously rigorous, yet flexible battery of concepts and theorisations to fully grasp the spatial aspects of moral debates. Not wishing to be a slave to the current academic fascination with scale, this thesis has made a strong case that scaling is something that actively takes place in moral arguments. If this is true for an institution such as the Church, then I suspect that it will be equally true of other issues/relations/institutions under analysis. By taking the rigour of the scalar approach, spatial issues will be theorised in terms of a continuum that is easily grasped and applicable to all manner of contexts. This overcomes criticisms that moral geographies are perhaps too simplistic in talking about 'the relationship between ethical and geographical arguments'. However, the scalar approach is flexible enough, and open enough to complexity, that it can respond to other criticisms of being too rigid and dogmatic. The balance which this approach provides will enable moral geographical research to steer forward new research agendas.

(iv) A final point to make is that a scalar approach can overcome the classic structure-agency division that has so often plagued geographical research. By being able to analyse both structural and agency issues (as in my thesis' looking at structural concerns at the urban scale, and agency issues at the body scale) within a common framework, the structure-agency dialectic becomes a

case of 'both/and', rather than 'either/or', as a scalar structuration emerges. Further to this, the results of my research from the body scale have demonstrated the manner in which the universal and the particular can become internalised within an individual person, in much the same way as the universal-particular dialectic is embedded at all scales such as the urban and community. As universal and particular become internalised in the body, the essentially more 'structural' nature of the universal becomes embedded alongside the 'agency' nature of the particularity of personal experience. Embodied moral geographies are therefore good examples of scalar structuration. This embedding of the universal-particular dialectic at all scales and within the moral negotiations of all agents is a clear example of the way in which scalar analyses can profitably combine structural and agency arguments into one in future moral geographical analyses.

### **8C3 INSERTING A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE INTO MORAL GEOGRAPHICAL ENQUIRY**

In the existing moral geographical literature, consideration of an explicit and sustained religious analysis is absent. Smith's work has looked at issues surrounding Judaism, but this has been viewed far more in terms of the Jews as a socio-cultural grouping, than as a religious and theological community as such. Similarly, it has not been Smith's intention to theorise religion along moral geographical lines, but simply to use it to highlight some of his arguments. In this thesis I have tried to address this void by inserting a religious perspective into moral geographical enquiry. I have undertaken a sustained and explicit religious analysis, and looked specifically at a new religious sphere for moral geographies – Christianity. The insights from this analysis of religion can be profitably extended to other moral geographical enquiry in the following ways:

(i) My analysis has tried to show that religion performs an important role in socio-spatial relations at all of the different scales which I have considered. At the body scale, religion is a deep source of meaning and identity for individuals; at the community scale it plays an active political role in pursuing social justice; and at the urban scale, it undertakes important processes of critical thinking which attempt to apply an ethical understanding to social problems. This important role is not something that should be underestimated. As a neglected area of social relations, often shunned by an academy which would prefer to consider race, gender, sexuality, disability, age and ethnicity, religion has suffered from a lack of proper theorisation. By subjecting religious formations to the rigours of my theoretical framework, I hope that I have not only contributed to a greater understanding of the place of religion in moral geographies, but also to its place within wider socio-spatial relations. Hence, by analysing religion, I have been able to uncover a dynamic spiritual-material nexus whereby people have a sense of the spiritual or the Divine acting upon and through their material circumstances and social structures. Likewise, I have uncovered the complexity of sacred-secular relations and the continuing importance of residualised religious identities amongst the socially-excluded.

An analysis of religion, then, cannot be divorced from an analysis of the secular, but likewise, the insights on spirituality and sectarianism suggest that analysis of the secular should not always be apart from the religious, particularly given historical, religious and cultural associations. Taking a religious analysis further, then, at its most basic level, would be for it to be included on equal terms with cleavages such as gender or sexuality in moral geographical discussions. At a deeper level, a profitable engagement of moral geography with religion would use the insights drawn from religion into the non-representational nature of some ethical encounters/formations, and pursue them as a new line of enquiry (see below).

(ii) In my research I have deliberately and consciously inserted my own positionality as a Christian researcher. At all stages of the research process, I have attempted to be as honest and transparent as possible about this feature of my own identity and ethics. That I have my own brand of liberal Christianity further shapes my research and the conclusions that I draw. In inserting my own positionality into my research, however, I have attempted to move beyond simply writing and theory, into action-based research. By adopting a confessional, participative approach to research, which has resulted in my involvement in community projects and national scale committees of the Church pursuing social justice, I have tried to demonstrate that moral geographies can be put into action. This further buttresses my claim that moral geographies are processes and not simply sterile 'opinions'. By showing (in a small way) that religious moral geographies can be 'put into action', this thesis hopes to present a challenge and an opportunity for other moral geographies and moral geographers to do likewise. Had I not been researching the Christian religion, then this may not have been possible. In this thesis, then, religion has been mobilised by the researcher to allow engagement in a real, progressive moral geographical politics. That religion has been capable of providing such a vehicle for action, is proof that academics who dismiss it as irrelevant or prefer more 'sexy' issues such as gender or race are neglecting a sphere that is every bit as alive and vibrant as these more popular counterparts.

Through these three contributions of a framework of processes and tensions, scaling, and a religious perspective, I believe that I have addressed three key deficiencies that I detected in current moral geographical research. Through my own research, I have tried to demonstrate the manner in which these contributions can be applied, and stand up to the rigour of empirical examination. In encouraging other moral geographers to adopt these contributions I hope that I have not only addressed previous shortcomings, but opened up new avenues for theoretical engagement in different contexts.

## SECTION 8D

# SITUATING MORAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CITY

This thesis has been concerned exclusively with moral geographies of social justice and the city. However, in this conclusion, I am claiming that my theoretical contribution has the potential for far wider moral geographical application. Having now defended the internal strength of my theoretical scaffold, and its strength in responding to some of the voids in moral geographical research, I now want to situate my thesis, its theoretical framework, and analyses, in the much broader contexts which surround moral geographies and geographical research more generally. In doing so, I want to demonstrate the strength of the connections which my thesis makes to wider areas of interest, and the questions that these connections raise. I wish to make *eight* key points / qualifiers / connections which suggest ways in which the theoretical scaffold can be added to / qualified / defined:

### 8D1 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY AS A CHRISTIAN

In researching and writing this thesis, I have made disclosure of my own positionality as a Christian researcher, central. The theoretical framework which I have assembled and operationalised is naturally suffused with this positionality. It is impossible to deny that the whole thesis is very much my own, personal 'take' on moral geographies of social justice and the city, as I make representations of others' representations. The very shaping of my theoretical framework and ideas, prior to empirical testing, is proof that my positionality is not only in the data interpretation, but in its gathering and production. With issues such as this in mind, there is a clear qualifier that

rests upon any claims which I make for the transference of my theoretical framework to wider moral geographical contexts. If my positionality is so bound up in the whole research process, it is important to ask if someone else could write this thesis, using the framework and ideas which I have developed. More specifically, could someone without a Christian faith or intimate knowledge of the Christian churches use the framework to come to the same conclusions that I have? My answer to this question would have to be a qualified 'no'. 'No', because it is impossible for two different individuals to come up with exactly the same response to a set of questions. Another researcher may be perfectly happy with the theoretical framework, but may have chosen to apply it in different ways, by using a different methodology such as focus groups for instance, or through simply interviewing different people, arriving at a different set of conclusions. This is an inescapable fact of the limitations of the individual in the research process, in spite of all of the efforts at cross-checking and triangulation that are made.

However, in terms of being able to utilise the framework and write a thesis of a similar nature, more *generally*, I believe that this is perfectly possible. The range of concepts and ideas that I have used in this thesis are drawn from my grounding theory approach, and I am sure that other researchers reading actively in moral geography and urban theology would have come to similar conclusions about issues such as the scaling of the urban, and processes and tensions, and would have argued those as key issues to develop moral geography more widely. Likewise in analysing the Church, the types of tensions and processes that were encountered could easily be noted by an 'outsider', without a Christian faith. An obvious example of this is the recent 'outsider' evaluation of the Church of Scotland by the journalist, Harry Reid (Reid, 2002), who has been perfectly capable of coming to conclusions about an institution with which he is not personally familiar. In overall terms then, I think that as far as *broad* similarities are concerned, another



researcher could have written this thesis, but in terms of the specific methods or conclusions, this seems less likely.

## 8D2 SPATIO-TEMPORAL CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

A crucial feature that has determined the type of thesis which I have produced is the spatio-temporal context in which it is situated. The extent to which my theories and ideas can be transmitted beyond this context is of crucial importance if it is to have wider moral geographical relevance. As far as the spatial context is concerned, my focus on Glasgow as a de-industrialised city region in west central Scotland is very different to say analysing a prosperous city region like Edinburgh, within that same national context, or if I was analysing say Tokyo, Paris or Sao Paulo. The types of conclusions drawn would obviously be different in each of these cities. However, in spite of clear differences in wealth, culture, history and religious affiliation within these cities, I believe that my *general* framework would again be applicable. Whether moral geographies of social justice and the city take place in Tokyo or in Cairo, they are still replete with processes and tensions of the nature that I have outlined, and rooted in the universal-particular dialectic. In both these cities, Christianity would be seen as a minority religion, and the cultural contexts in which it was 'policed' by both the secular state and other religions would be vastly different to Scotland and Glasgow. Yet analysing the tensions created by these different features such as the state or other religions, would be both possible and desirable within the framework that I have created. Moral geographies will still be translated, negotiated and contested wherever they take place, and at whatever scale.

For the issue of temporality, a key moral geographical process that I outlined in Chapter three is that of historico-moral geographical development. In this thesis, I have taken what amounts to a

snapshot over a three year period in Glasgow. Future moral geographical analyses could profitably engage with far more long-term examinations of moral geographical change. In terms of the temporal specifics of the time frame of this thesis, the appalling terrorist atrocities visited upon New York and Washington in 2001, committed in the name of religion, have raised markedly the profile and importance of religion as a key feature of contemporary society. Before these events, in Western countries, religion could be dismissed as largely irrelevant or harmless by secular, atheist populations. The events and their fallout, has changed the world's religious landscape, and suddenly religion is again viewed by governments and their populations as a crucial sphere to understand and analyse. I believe that the heightened interest generated in religion since these events can only aid and assist the enterprise of more fully understanding the place of religion in the formation of moral geographies. Again, pursuing the type of framework that I have advocated, it would have been possible to apply the battery of concepts of processes and tensions to the particular 'evil' moral geographies constructed by terrorist organisations such as Al-Quaeda, looking at their ethical universals, how they were held in tension with particular spatial situations, and the processes by which they were operationalised, negotiated and scaled. I hope that from this, whilst my framework is clearly 'of its time', it can prove to have temporal durability, and I trust that its concepts can be long-lived.

### **8D3 RELEVANCE TO OTHER RELIGIONS**

Related to this latter point above, it is crucial that if my thesis is to speak to wider moral geographical debates, that it is relevant to other religions beyond Christianity. The resurgence of academic and popular interest in questions of religion since the events of September 2001, have demonstrated the importance of religious discourse in popular life, even in spite of its marginalisation within the academy. The close association of my personal beliefs (albeit very in

favour of multi-faith initiatives) and my research with Christianity raise problems for the applicability of my frameworks to other religions. At a time when religion continues to be in decline in the UK (Brown, 2001; Bruce and Glendinning, 2002), in other parts of the world, it is growing and in the ascendancy. In Western countries such as the UK, capitalism has grown on the back of inherited Christian traditions and customs, yet now remains strongly 'policed' and marginalized by that very capitalist system, relegated to a backwater behind the ascendance of materialism (discussion of growing interest in 'spirituality' aside). In other countries, however, religious belief systems such as Islam or Judaism are enshrined in the state system in a hegemonic manner. This raises questions about different religious regimes, and the Western-centric nature of my analysis. Hence in liberal moral geographical regimes such as the UK or France, different religious codes and beliefs are (officially, at least) allowed to exist alongside one another and be openly practised. In authoritarian moral geographical regimes such as Taliban Afghanistan, authoritarian cadres rigidly police religion, and protest or difference is suppressed. This in many ways is the liberal-conservative division writ large, in its most extreme forms, and raises important questions about the transference of my moral geographical concepts to non-liberal regimes.

In spite of these issues, however, I believe that in terms of understanding the processes and tensions which surround the moral-geographical relation, the framework remains useful. The universal-particular dialectic will not go away in ethical debate. Neither will issues of scaling or contestation. Indeed within authoritarian regimes, the way in which universals are translated, scaled and embodied by populations would be a natural moral geographical analysis. The nature of 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes such as imagining or transformation may be radically different, but it remains the case that there will be producers, exchangers (policers) and consumers of religious codes and ideals. This is the same for a Hindu system as for a Buddhist or Islamic regime as it is for a Christian one. The moral geographical task, then, would be to theorise the differences. By

looking at processes and tensions, this is possible, in a way which it would not be if moral geographies are taken simply as fixed constructs, rather than dynamic entities.

## **8D4 RELEVANCE TO NON-SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES**

In focusing on issues of social justice and the city, I have constructed my theoretical framework around the inferences which I have drawn from these very specific debates, alongside the more general moral geographical literature. Reading urban theology was a key part of the development of my ideas on scaling moral geographies. Had I not been involved in such debates, this may not have seemed so logical. This raises questions then about the potential for my thesis framework to be applied to debates beyond social justice. I have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which I believe that the framework can speak to different *spatial contexts*, different *temporal contexts*, and different *religious regimes*, but it is also important to clarify if this is also possible for different *issues*. In studying issues of social justice and the city as I have done for three years, it has become clear to me that there are many other discourses which are given greater voice within Church circles, such as those on gender equality issues, sexuality, war and violence, two-thirds world debt, race, finance, divorce, and personal morality. In all of these issues, religion is being mobilised in different ways to make sense of moral questions.

My framework is potentially applicable to all of these issues. Again, as I have tried to argue already, specific issues such as 3<sup>rd</sup> order processes, the scales at which analysis or processes take place, or the cadres of individuals participating, will vary according to the issue being studied. However, whether the issue is sexuality or war, there will be contested moral universals circulating on these issues, which will be translated and negotiated into different scalar contexts. Hence for the issue of homosexual marriage, for example, there will be a clear conservative vs.

liberal theological debate taking place at the thin, abstract scale, but which will have to be translated into practice. In clearest terms, such ethics will be scaled primarily to the body scale, or the household scale, where they must be consumed and either contested or consented to. The whole process will follow a production-exchange-consumption cycle, and will involve core cadres of individuals such as conservative clergy, liberal clergy, gay rights activists, gay clergy and homophobic elements of the press. There will be issues of sacred-secular contestation, and also those of inter-denominational contestation whereby Roman Catholic doctrines and teaching on the issue may not be so readily transformed as some of their Protestant counterparts. Throughout, political and power processes will be in the ascendancy, and geographical scalings will not simply be confined to the body or household, but will give moral geographical representations of the state of cities and nations and the status of homosexuals within these wider scalar frames. All of these issues are likely to be construed in utopian and dystopian terms, between the heterosexual utopia of moral conservatives and the multi-cultural utopia of liberals; and the homosexual dystopia of conservatives, and the homophobic dystopia of liberals. Looking simply at this issue, it is possible to see how transferring the general principles of my framework to different moral questions is feasible and workable.

## **8D5 THE NON-REPRESENTATIONAL REALM, PERFORMANCE AND INTERNALISING THE UNIVERSAL-PARTICULAR DIALECTIC**

Two key conclusions that I have drawn from my body scale analysis are, (a) that moral geographies can be *internalised* in such a manner that embodied experiences of faith become non-representational; and (b) that people hold multiple moralities that they perform in different ways in different contexts. I believe that these issues of the non-representational and performance are ripe for further exploration. It is precisely *because* of my analysis of a religious

perspective, and the internalisation of the universal-particular dynamic of Divine encounter within embodied experience, that I have been able to uncover these two important issues. The sense in which everybody carries around this awareness of the universal and the particular, of principles and experience, is something that requires further moral geographical exploration. I do not believe that it is merely confined to those individuals who hold religious convictions. Yes, it is the sense of personal encounter with the non-representational, indescribable, Divine, transcendent, which lies at the basis of my making of this point. Yet, I believe that in every person, whether religious or not, there is a sense of holding and ascribing to moral universals which cannot simply be explained in terms of 'classic' factors such as class, gender, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. From the religious accounts that I have analysed, the inexplicable sense of 'God is' is also present in the holding of moral convictions, where for some people there seems to be an in-built, non-representational sense that something 'is', that it is good, or bad, or right or wrong, *of itself*.

This sense of highly personalised moral intuition is something that can be explored through moral geographies engaging with emerging geographical research on the non-representational (though not necessarily via non-representational *theory* (e.g. Thrift, 2000a,b) (see below) ). Likewise, the extent to which morality is a performance, pursued in different manners in front of different peoples, is also something that could profitably be examined for body scale moral geographies, through engagement with emerging literatures on performance (e.g. Thrift, 2000b). It seems clear from my own discussions with clergy that they perform a different type of morality when standing in front of their congregations, to that which they may confide in private. Hence, in public, at the community or urban scales, a minister may declare moral geographies of hope in the future of the Church and of a utopian social justice, when, in private, at the body scale, their own internalised moral geographies are of despair for the future of the Church, and a dystopian

gloom about the prospects for social justice. This differential scaling of moral performance at community and body scales well illustrates the tensions of performances and the holding of multiple moralities for different contexts. These non-representational and performance concepts can move beyond the religious sphere, and also the body scale, and look at issues of the non-representationality of *any* morals, or the performance of morality at e.g. the community or national scales by cadres or institutions.

## 8D6 THE SPIRITUAL-MATERIAL NEXUS

Theorising the non-representational and performed nature of certain moral geographies opens up another important transferable issue drawn from my research. This concerns the nature of spirituality and the spiritual-material nexus that has been uncovered in preceding discussions. This moves beyond the simple binary of sacred-secular as *belief systems*, and into a more sophisticated dialectic of spiritual-material as *realms*. In this thesis, I have adopted a largely modernist moral geographical framework, utilising Enlightenment notions such as dialectics and Marxian analyses of production-exchange-consumption and utopia/dystopia. In imposing this rational, dialectical framework upon moral landscapes, with its logical structures of scales, cadres, processes and tensions, it is possible that I am in danger of employing reductionist measures that ignore the essentially *pre-modern* nature of many religious discourses. This residue of pre-modern concepts of spirituality, which often borrows on a language of signs and motifs which largely passed from common Western usage with the collapse of medieval Christianity after the Reformation, continues to play a role in the fixing of contemporary moral universals. Senses of Divine intuition, of prophecy, of seeing visions from God, of healing, of evil geographies, and spiritual warfare, borrow on the lexicon of medieval folklore and ancient Christian beliefs. The

return of such concepts may be seen as an essential reaction to the disenchantment which materialism's ascendance often brings. As with a nostalgia for a sanitised past, escapism into rural utopias, and heritage tourism, this dynamic can be seen as part of a general post-modern reaction against modernist rationality, materialism and certainty.

However, in focusing on the rational and the logical, my framework (and other moral geographical research), may have missed out on a deeper understanding of a spiritual realm which can have a strong influence on the particular moral positionalities adopted. This type of 'sixth sense' of another power or realm which is non-tangible is an equally valid realm for moral geographical exploration as that of the material world. As I have already noted, this chimes with geographical analyses of the non-representational. It also chimes with a whole host of spiritual, religious, mythical and folkloric concepts which people continue to utilise in their day-to-day existence. Therefore, outside of the religious realm, it would be possible to analyse the moral geographies that individuals create around (e.g.) notions of 'luck', as they look on certain places or spatial behaviours as creating 'bad' luck, or 'good' luck. In questioning why people hold to 'urban-myths' or 'old-wives' tales', it would be possible to analyse moral geographies of the housing market for example, as groups of people enact urban myths about 'bad' areas by avoiding them when purchasing a property. Working simply on a sense of intuition or hearsay, when visiting such areas, there is a sense of something inexplicable or non-representational which leads to moral geographical decisions being made by these home-buyers. This sense of having 'faith' in particular intuitions leads to the creation of moral geographical principles which the current moral geographical research framework may miss. My own framework has its limitations in this respect, as I have noted above. It is therefore important for the development of moral geographical theory that some of the concepts taken from pre-modern religious, mythical and folkloric discourses – and particularly those of a non-material, 'intuitive' or 'spiritual' realm – are more fully



explored and inserted into research agendas, if the sources and reference points of moral positionalities are to be properly understood in more than material terms.

## 8D5 / 8D6 REJOINDER

Before moving on with my discussion, I feel that both points 5 and 6 have raised important issues in relation to each other that need clarification. In pointing to issues of the spiritual, the non-representational and performance, I recognise that there appears to be a degree of incongruence between such issues and the essentially modernist, dialectical approach to understanding moral geographies that I have pursued and advocated in this thesis. I recognise that particularly in relation to the non-representational, there is a vast and growing field of literature on non-representational theory and performativity (see Thrift, 2000a,b; Pratt, 2000b) that I have not even touched upon here, nor of which do I claim to have anything more than a cursory knowledge. In advocating that moral geographical analysis should engage with the non-representational, I am not therefore claiming to meet or understand non-representational *theory*, but rather, a non-representational *realm*. *How* moral geographers choose to explore this realm, and the extent to which they use a framework such as I have advocated, or instead others such as non-representational theory, is entirely dependent upon the researcher. However, I believe that in pursuing such an understanding of the non-representational nature of the sources of some ethical beliefs, and how they are held in relation to any number of issues such as abortion, war, sectarianism or homosexuality, it is possible to continue to adopt the type of dialectical approach that I have been advocating.

At the heart of my moral geographical approach lies the universal-particular dialectic promoted by Smith. In relation to the issues and debates that I have been analysing, it is clear that this

universal-particular dialectic is a *representational* dialectic, based in the material realm. It is plain, however, through an acceptance of the spiritual-material nexus outlined above, that there is a connection between this representational dialectic, and the realm of the non-representational. Hence, though I have argued that there is a sense of the intangible, the spiritual, and the intuitive about the manner in which universal ethics can be internalised through notions such as 'faith', this is not to say that the spiritual is a realm that exists separately from the material. No matter how much an individual may claim that their particular stance on abortion or homosexuality or war or poverty is simply a case of a deep down, non-representational feeling that something is right or wrong, and no matter how much the *source* of this *is* beyond class, gender, age, race, sexuality, religion explanations, and the result of an internalised encounter with the spiritual and Divine, the *translation* of that ethic cannot escape the material realm.

Views, ethics, beliefs and moral positions, even if derived from the non-representational realm of the spiritual, are constantly confronted with real, material situations that require the constant negotiation and re-negotiation of those ethics, however much they may be sourced in the non-representational. Hence, when some Christians pray for the healing of someone who is sick, and that person is suddenly healed, those particular Christians may attest to an invisible spiritual dynamic that acted upon that person to make them better (i.e. a miracle or an act of God). However, this spiritual, non-representational dynamic has made contact with the material sphere. Similarly, when Christians in Glasgow are praying and fasting in 'spiritual warfare' against the evil geographies of the city, they are using the spiritual and the non-representational to impact upon the material and the representational. Hence, it is my argument that whilst the non-representational *can* be profitably studied on its own terms when looking at moral and ethical *sources*, it is simply not possible to divorce the spiritual from the material when looking at moral *translation* and application – ethics *have* to be tested against material realities. In the light of these

insights, it seems clear then that the spiritual-material nexus is in fact a non-representational-representational dialectic whereby the spiritual *has* to be related to the material in discussions of faith and beliefs. These insights confirm the validity of a dialectical approach, and demonstrate how the essentially modernist framework of this thesis retains important utility in these new openings presented by the non-representational realm and the spiritual-material nexus.

## **8D7 CONSERVATIVE-LIBERAL CLEAVAGES**

Throughout the theological moral geographies that I have been examining, there has been a clear conservative-liberal cleavage. This cleavage is related to the make-up of the cadres of individuals studied. In the case of my own study, the cadre of disciples that I interviewed was overwhelmingly liberal. In a different city or with a different set of interviewees, this cadre may have been far more conservative. The make-up of the cadres examined in moral geographies will have a clear influence on the type of moral geographies constructed. By continuing to seek a conservative-liberal division throughout all moral geographical research, it is possible to see a recurring continuum of moral beliefs along this basic axis. I would like to contend that whether the source of ethics is religious or secular, Marxist or feminist, humanist or nationalist, there will always be a spectrum of beliefs that ranges from the conservative and orthodox through to the liberal and radical. My research has demonstrated that this is a recurring theme not only in ethical contestation, but also in ethical application, in that conservatives pursue a particular top-down approach to ethical application, whilst liberals take a bottom-up view. By analysing these groups of ethical conservatives and liberals (and their various sub-shades) in all moral geographies, it will therefore be possible to better understand moral politics and moral power relations. By pursuing a conservative-liberal moral spectrum in all moral geographical research, it would then be possible to undertake comparative research between different moral geographical contexts, both

religious and non-religious, which could allow greater understanding of moral agents, positionalities, processes and tensions. Common processes and tensions could be established, and this would greatly enrich moral geographical theory.

## **8D8 UTOPIANISM, INCARNATIONALISM, AND SACRED-SECULAR RELATIONS**

In this thesis, there are a number of conceptual motifs which have run through all of my chapters, which I believe have wider applicability to moral geographical research. Firstly, the dialectics of utopia and dystopia have been (re)introduced into mainstream geographical research by authors such as Harvey (2000), and have been re-theorised in geographical forums (Baeten and Loveridge, 2002; Loveridge, 2002). The tension between utopian and dystopian moral geographies is clear throughout my research and deserves a wider application. Utopia and dystopia are inescapably moral constructs, which draw upon moral ideals, hopes and motifs for their inspiration. If utopia and dystopia represent the ultimate spatio-temporal realisations of all that is good and bad, respectively, then they are surely key concepts which can be more strongly used in theorising moral hopes and frustrations.

Secondly, a second recurring motif throughout my thesis is that of incarnational Christianity. Viewed as Christianity which is lived and practised in the image of Christ, as seeing Christ's presence in the lives of the poor and the marginal, it is a powerful concept that has attracted a strong theological following. I believe that this concept can be broadened out in other moral geographical research by using its sense of moral geographies being practised and lived, rather than simply imagined or held. Moral geographical research at the moment is perhaps guilty of looking more at moral geographical ideas and debates than at praxis. By looking at the way

people translate their moral beliefs into a *way of living*, it should be possible to uncover new understandings of moral behaviour.

Finally, as I have argued above when discussing the spiritual-material nexus, relations between sacred and secular are central to understanding religious moral geographies. Given the recent re-emergence of interest in the religious in popular and academic discourse, it seems necessary that moral geographies should look more widely at the place which sacred-secular relations have in contemporary social conflicts. The moral geographical framework is particularly well-placed to analyse this, and it is something that should be given greater precedence in geographical research agendas more generally, in the light of current global circumstances.

The eight key points / qualifiers / connections which I have made have suggested the ways in which my theoretical 'scaffold' can be added to, qualified and defined. I believe that in making these eight points, I have demonstrated a breadth of possible connections between my research and wider geographical and moral geographical interests. I have also attempted to qualify some of the potential difficulties in broadening out my research findings into similar areas. At the end of the day, my research can never provide a definitive account of the moral geographical enterprise, nor furnish it with a standard research framework. However, the connections that I have suggested and the research agendas that I have encouraged, should go some way to opening up new contributions to moral geographical knowledge.

## SECTION 8E

### CONCLUSION – TOWARDS FUTURE MORAL GEOGRAPHIES

The moral geographical research enterprise remains a small sub-field of the discipline of geography, still in its infancy, and in need of greater academic attention. The work of pioneering writers such as David Smith and James Proctor has done much to both establish, and then furnish, the geographical engagement with ethics. Lucid and compelling theoretical writings from both authors (especially their summary volumes – Proctor and Smith, 1999; Smith, 2000c) have established the basis of the moral geographical enterprise, and gifted it with some tentative empirical explorations. Other writers have followed on from these early steps and subjected the breadth of moral geographical ideas to an equally broad variety of research contexts.

In this thesis, I have attempted to contribute to this growing field of research in both theoretical and empirical terms – theoretically through introducing a new range of concepts and ideas that moral geographical theory can build up; and empirically through engagement with the new research context of religion and theologies as a source of ethical theory and praxis. My original thesis aim was to 'contribute to the development of moral geographical theory and praxis by illuminating the complex nature of Christian theological moral geographies of social justice and the city'. In a small, situated, partial and contingent manner, I have succeeded in achieving this aim. I have addressed my core thesis objectives of: understanding the contested nature of abstract theologies of social justice and the city; of characterising the moral geographical processes and tensions surrounding the translation and thickening of these abstract theologies into the particular spatial context of Glasgow; and comprehending the different ways in which these different

theologies are thickened at the three distinctive spatial scales of the urban, community and body, and to understand the relationships between these scales and others.

My thesis has attempted to make three original contributions to knowledge through: the engagement of moral geographical research with the new context of the Christian religion; theorising the importance of spatial scale in shaping moral geographies; and by conceptualising a framework of the processes and tensions present in moral geographies of social justice and the city, and in moral geographies more generally. In pursuing this framework of aims, objectives and outcomes, my research is 'tight' and does not wish to make claims beyond its bounds. I have studied a very specific set of moral geographical issues around social justice, religion and the city, and have written substantive conclusions throughout my thesis on these issues. However, in this conclusion, I have attempted to move beyond these thesis-specific conclusions and situate my research into a number of broader contexts, whilst demonstrating the internal strength of my approach.

The future of the moral geographical enterprise rests on the continuing interest and enthusiasm of geographers in engaging with ethics and moral philosophy. As a fledgling enterprise, there is much to be done, and, literally, a whole moral realm to be explored. Moral geographies will not evaporate even if fickle research agendas do. They will continue to exist, replete with tensions and processes, exercising profound influence at different scales, in the geographies of everyday living, and in spectacular one-off events. The resurgence of moral stances and political actions associated with a religious perspective, is generating, and will generate, moral geographies of profound global importance. Social justice and urban poverty continue to be burning issues at a multiplicity of scales across the globe, generating contested moral positionalities and political practises. I believe that the future of the moral geographical enterprise rests on its continued

willingness to explore issues that are of importance for the future of the world and its people. Moral geography needs to continue to ask big questions about justice, equality, meaning, fairness, nature and place. In doing this, it needs to broaden its remit beyond the material, and consider other non-representational realms such as the spiritual and the intuitive. Likewise, it must employ a broader lexicon of dialectical concepts such as utopia and dystopia in its search for moral geographical understanding. Finally, I believe that moral geographers must adopt more rigorous theorisations of fundamental concepts such as spatial scale and moral geographical processes and tensions, as I have proposed. If my research can contribute, in small part, to the furthering of these research agendas, and the addressing of these social concerns, then it will succeed in fulfilling my Christian desire to see a fairer, more just world.



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## **APPENDIX 4.1**

# **CONCEPTUALISING CHURCH ACTIVITY ADDRESSING SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN SCOTLAND**

## APPENDIX 4.1

### CONCEPTUALISING CHURCH ACTIVITY ADDRESSING SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN SCOTLAND

In this appendix I wish to highlight preparatory research that I undertook to establish a general 'profile' of Church activities addressing social exclusion in Scotland. This was to act as a basis for the research that I then undertook at the urban, community and body scales. I have already broadly outlined the methodology that I adopted for this in the main text of Chapter 4.

The Church in Scotland is not a uniform body. Following the Reformation in the 1560s, the Church of Scotland, as a Presbyterian Church, did not accept ecclesiastical hierarchies of bishops, archbishops, cardinals and the Pope, but rather a system based upon elders, Kirk sessions, presbyteries, and an annual General Assembly (comprised of ministers and Kirk session members) as its supreme decision-making body. In loose terms, then, the Presbyterian model is one of bottom-up ecclesial governance, whilst the Roman (and Scottish Episcopal Church [Anglican]) model is more top-down, from bishop to priest to laity. Since the Reformation, Scotland's Christian history has been turbulent, with massive splits in the Church of Scotland forming the Free Church in the Disruption of 1843, and a variety of other secessions from both the Church of Scotland and its Free counterpart. There have also been unions (The Church of Scotland and United Free Church of Scotland reuniting in 1929; the Scottish Congregational and United Reformed Churches in 2000) to further complicate the picture. Adding to the complexity, alongside the three major UK traditions in Scotland (Anglicanism, Catholicism and Presbyterianism), and the smaller denominations, there are a large number of 'para-Church' (Stott, 1999), non-denominational organisations such as Christian Aid, Tear Fund, Scripture

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Union, YMCA, which are not related to any one particular denomination, but work on a Church-wide basis. These organisations are particularly active in the field of social justice.

Measuring indices of Church activity and involvement is notoriously difficult. It is widely recognised (Brown, 1997; 2001; Bruce, 1995) that Church membership figures are largely nominal and do not reflect active involvement. Taking annual 'censuses' of attendance shows that for instance in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, only 33% of Scotland's (nominally) Catholic population attended Sunday mass in 1998 (234,000 out of 706,000). Other denominations are in a similar position. Overall, the picture is one of significant decline in religious association (though with some growth in primarily evangelical churches within the main Protestant denominations, and amongst smaller independent and Pentecostal churches). Alongside decline in Church membership, baptisms, Sunday school attendance, and confirmations, is the more serious decline in actual belief in a Christian God (Brown, 1997: 174).

These statistics all point to the difficulty for the Church in maintaining an active presence in the life of Scotland. However, it is probably correct to say that the Church continues to remain a significant (if now increasingly, minority) part of the social fabric, in particular through its physical presence in communities through maintenance of a territorially comprehensive parish structure.

In their evaluation of the Church Urban Fund, Lawless *et al* (1998), construct a typology of local Church projects, covering a number of categories (Table 4A.1).



|                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Housing                     | Clergy Support             |
| Poverty and Employment      | Community Work             |
| Urban Regeneration          | Social Care                |
| Inter-Faith                 | Health                     |
| Opening up Church Buildings | Other General Issues       |
| Order and Law               | Education and Young People |

**Table 4A.1 – Categories of Church Urban Fund projects (Source: Lawless *et al*, 1998: 163).**

This typology is useful in that it introduces the range and extent of Church work at the local scale, and shows the diversity of issues covered in a multiplicity of spheres. Their typology does not categorise the nature of Church activities at the national scale, nor does it cover rural issues. Also, it is a project-focused typology that does not consider non-project Church activities.

I will use some of these categories as a basis for providing summative information on Church activities at both national and local (urban, community and body) scales, as well as introducing some others that I believe to be relevant. This is based upon empirical 'profiling' research that I undertook from March to June of 2000 (for methodological outline, see below). The tabulated results of this exercise are contained in Tables 4A.2 and 4A.3. Table 4A.2 illustrates the nature of Church activity in Scotland at the national scale, with Table 4A.3 covering activities at the local scales of the urban, community and body that figure strongly in later chapters. At this point, my emphasis is on the activities taking place, and not on the moral discourses which they promote or contest.

## **Methodological issues**

This discussion supplements the material already outlined for this analysis in Chapter 4. Using this 'profiling' approach, in contrast to the interviewing and participant observation techniques employed in later chapters, means that there is less 'depth' to this material. There are a number of key features to this methodology:

1. It is 'episodic' rather than a 'running' account (*ibid.* 125), taking a snapshot at a particular moment in time, of the range of Church organisations addressing social exclusion, and of the nature of Scotland's geographies of social exclusion. This is not to preclude the importance of historical material, but is rather to make data analysis more manageable, and reflects the contemporaneous nature of this study.

2. Coverage is partial and selective, both in terms of spatial scope, and also in terms of access to data. As my intention is to present a 'broad brush' picture of geographies of social exclusion and Church responses to these, I have been unable to cover every possible type of activity or every organisation working in every area of the country. Problems are compounded by the different geographical structures of each denomination (some have parishes, some do not; parishes overlap with different congregations; dioceses and presbyteries do not match up; certain denominations will not acknowledge one another's ministry) and by the differential nature of data collected by each, making comparisons impossible. The most obvious restriction on spatial scope is my focus on urban Scotland, to the negation of its rural counterpart. This coverage in itself is related to –

3. Data accessibility. Access to data for this profiling is dependent on a number of factors. Whether data is either closed / restricted access / open archived / open published, or even collected at all, is dependent upon the policy of the organisation in question (Kitchin and Tate, 2000), and upon the attitudes of gatekeepers responsible for access (Hoggart *et al*, 2002). In accessing data on geographies of social exclusion, this is straightforward as the Census returns and Scottish Executive (2000) *Social Justice* strategy are open published documents. For accessing data on Church organisations addressing social exclusion, this is extremely difficult, as data

publishing and accessibility policies vary widely between different denominations and organisations. Existing research in this field (Pacione, 1991; Lawless *et al*, 1994, 1995, 1998) has benefited from examining merely one specific target group (the Church Urban Fund in England), and so consequently can more profitably cover all of the available data. This is not possible in a more general examination looking at diverse organisations with different data collection and publishing policies. For example, the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland is unwilling to disclose information relating to its expenditure in parishes (Loveridge, 1999), whereas the Church of Scotland can provide full details of such data as ministers' salaries, congregational giving, and social expenditures. This makes comparison between organisations at anything less than a superficial level, extremely difficult and 'messy'. Similarly, whilst information on organisations operating at national scale is readily available, short of contacting every single parish church or local organisation in Scotland, it is simply not possible to do this at local scale. Given my previous experience with sending postal questionnaires to parish ministers, and the low response rates involved, I do not consider this to be an effective remedy for securing the data. As such, data gathered in this chapter for the 'local' scales of urban, community and body, is *representative*, rather than *comprehensive*, but this is in keeping with the illuminatory approach of the thesis.

4. Data analysis is in the form of 'indexing' information (Hoggart *et al*, 2002: 148), which provides a 'surface level' (*ibid*) analysis of common themes between the organisations. Given the inaccessibility of data for some organisations, and the incompatibility of data sets (given the large numbers and varying sizes of *denominations*, let alone non-denominational *organisations*), the only element of 'common' information accessible for all are the basic descriptions of the aims, rationale and activities of the organisations in question. Again, whilst not comprehensive or in-depth (such as content or textual analysis), such data is sufficient to paint a picture of geographies of social exclusion, and Church responses.

5. Data validity. Assessing the authenticity, credibility and representativeness of secondary data is difficult, given that background information on who compiled the data, their circumstances, viewpoints, and reasons for doing so, is rarely available. This can lead to distortion in the validity of the data. However, in my analysis, it is unlikely that given that I am analysing basic, published descriptions of aims, rationale and activities, that these will be invalid. Organisations may easily be able to use secondary data such as reports to distort the extent of their *influence* and achievements, but it is unlikely that they will be able to overstate their actual *activities* or intentions.

With the above-noted difficulties in mind, and given denominational and organisational discrepancies in central Church archive facilities, I decided that my intention to focus on groups listed in the *UK Christian Handbook* was the best one. As outlined in Chapter 4, this method allows a reasonably comprehensive analysis (at least at the national scale), of the number of groups operating, and the types of activities that they are undertaking.

| Category                  | Organisation Name                                    | Denominational / Non-denominational (* denotes UK-wide activities). | Activities Undertaken  |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| Campaigning Organisations | Christian Socialist Movement                         | Non-denom*  | -political campaigning through membership of the Labour Party, fighting for social justice, peace, equality.   |
|                           | Christians for Social Justice                        | Non-denom*  | -political activism and campaigning for social justice.  |
|                           | Church Action on Poverty                             | Non-denom*  | -campaigning, publishing, education on UK poverty.<br>-policy work on welfare reform, unemployment.<br>-poverty 'hearings' connecting poor with the powerful.                        |
|                           | Evangelical Coalition for Urban Mission              | Non-denom*  | -creating a common network for Church action and political campaigning in urban areas.<br>-research, training, publicity, theological education, resourcing.                         |
|                           | Iona Community                                       | Non-denom*  | -rebuilding the common life through working for social and political change.<br>-political action, spiritual reflection, practical activism of individual members.                   |
|                           | Roman Catholic Church - Justice and Peace Commission | Denomination  | -local and national campaigns for social and environmental justice, and peace.<br>-focusing on structural action and need for structural change.                                     |
|                           | Key Change   | Non-denom*  | -campaigning for housing issues of homelessness and elderly care.<br>-providing residential care for elderly, and supported accommodation for young homeless people.                 |
|                           | Habitat for Humanity                                 | Non-denom*  | -building affordable housing for low income groups (75,000 since 1976).  |
|                           | Churches' National Housing Coalition                 | Non-denom*  | -Christian theologies of social justice and housing.<br>-Campaigning on housing policy.<br>-Participating in housing construction projects for the poor.                             |
|                           | Scottish Churches Housing Agency                     | Non-denom   | -information, education, advice, practical support for homelessness.<br>-local action to tackle homelessness.  |
| Housing Rehabilitation    | Scottish Christian Alliance                          | Non-denom   | -projects addressing homelessness, offending, family breakdown, and substance abuse.   |
|                           | Salvation Army                                       | Denomination*   | -provision of homeless hostels throughout the UK catering for single and family homeless.<br>-Supported accommodation and rehab activities for drug users, alcoholics and offenders. |
|                           | Church of Scotland – Board of Social                 | Denomination  | -supported accommodation projects for individuals with mental health difficulties,   |
|                           |  |   |  |

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|--|--|--|---------------|---|
|  | Responsibility                                       |  |               | alcohol and drug abuse, and homeless.<br>-variety of homelessness, mental health, substance abuse projects throughout Scotland.   |
|  | Roman Catholic Church – Social Care Commission       |  | Denomination  |   |
| Urban Regeneration / Community Development | Oasis Trust  |  | Non-denom*    | -community activism and funding for homeless initiatives.<br>-youth work across the UK in urban contexts.   |
|  | Urban Expression                                     |  | Non-denom*    | -church-planting and growth in areas of urban social exclusion.<br>-embodied evangelism amongst the poor.   |
|  | TEARFund Scotland                                    |  | Non-denom     | -financing of community development initiatives in deprived localities.   |
|  | Evangelical Alliance                                 |  | Non-denom*    | -development of <i>Christian Action Networks</i> to engage churches of all denominations locally in social activism.<br>-networking, co-ordinating role for strategic action in cities through partnership between churches and other agents. |
|  | Scottish Churches Community Trust                    |  | Non-denom     | -ecumenical grant-making body providing major capital and revenue grants for Church-based community development initiatives across Scotland.  |
|  | Salvation Army                                       |  | Denomination* | -community centres throughout the UK in all communities providing range of services of development nature.  |
|  | Roman Catholic Church – Jesuit Volunteer Community   |  | Denomination* | -volunteers working in inner city and peripheral housing areas of deprivation.<br>-providing assistance for a range of local community development initiatives.   |
|  | Roman Catholic Church – Catholic Worker Houses       |  | Denomination* | -providing accommodation for those seeking refuge: asylum seekers, homeless, etc.<br>-campaigning for social justice on local and national levels.  |
|  | Roman Catholic Church – Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods |  | Denomination* | -particular monastic orders (e.g. Dominicans, Jesuits, Jericho Benedictines) with especial emphasis on living and working in poor communities.<br>-range of social action and social justice activities.                                      |
|  | Church of Scotland – Department of National Mission  |  | Denomination  | -resourcing of churches in urban deprived areas.<br>-provision of extra staff resources (e.g. youth workers) for community development initiatives.   |
|  | Scottish Episcopal Church – Social Responsibility    |  | Denomination  | -resourcing churches in deprived urban areas.<br>-raising social awareness in the Church.   |
| Economic Development                       | Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility      |  | Non-denom*    | -promotion of corporate social responsibility, with focus on social and environmental justice, based in Church's industrial mission.  |

|                      |  |               |   |
|----------------------|--|---------------|---|
|                      | Seed   | Non-denom*    | -awareness raising of need for Christian social action to help the needy.<br>-project consultancy advice for new projects; and support for ongoing.                           |
|                      | Third Wave Group   | Non-denom*    | -social economy activities across the UK, using local economic and community development.   |
| Youth Work           | YMCA (Scotland)  | Non-denom     | -youth work with Christian emphasis, addressing spiritual, social, physical and economic needs (training, New Deal and care work).  |
|                      | Scripture Union Scotland                                       | Non-denom     | -employment of urban development co-ordinator working with young people.<br>-developing school youth ministries and urban missions, holiday activities.                       |
|                      | Salvation Army   | Denomination* | -residential community homes for children and adolescents in need of care and protection.   |
| Elderly Care         | Salvation Army   | Denomination* | -eventide homes providing care for elderly people.  |
|                      | Roman Catholic Church – Social Care Commission                 | Denomination  | -day care and residential facilities for the elderly throughout Scotland.   |
|                      | Church of Scotland – Board of Social Responsibility            | Denomination  | -day care, residential, sheltered housing, dementia and home help services throughout Scotland.   |
| Relief Organisations | Roman Catholic Church - St. Vincent de Paul (SVPD) Society.    | Denomination* | -practical assistance in local communities throughout the UK.<br>-Church volunteers give time and money to distribute food, clothing, furniture, friendship to those in need. |
|                      |  |               |   |
| Educational          | Urban Theology Unit  | Non-denom.*   | -theological education, resourcing for ministry and community work.<br>-campaigning for social justice for the urban poor.  |
|                      | William Temple Foundation                                      | Non-denom*    | -ecumenical theological institute providing critical analysis and practical training for issues of economics, work and urban communities.                                     |
|                      | Freire Institute for Economic, Social and Theological Analysis | Non-denom*    | -bottom-up social analysis based upon experience in grassroots contexts in two-thirds world.<br>-research, training and networking for social justice.                        |
|                      | Scottish Centre for Theology and Public Issues                 | Non-denom     | -research, training, theological understandings of social, economic, political and cultural issues in contemporary Scotland.  |

Table 4A.2 – Church organisations working on a national basis, addressing social exclusion.

| Category                           | Exemplary Organisation                              | Location   | Activities Undertaken  |   |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Unemployment / Training and Advice | <i>TEARFund (ND)</i>                                | Abbeyhill, Edinburgh   | -providing one-to-one counselling, help and support to the unemployed or those facing unemployment.<br>-encouraging clients to secure employment.  |   |
|                                    | <i>The Ripple Project (CofS)</i>                    | Lochend, Edinburgh   | - working in partnership with Citizens' Advice and Community Education to provide information and advice for local unemployed residents.   |   |
| Housing                            | <i>St. Clare's &amp; St. Benedict's Church (RC)</i> | Easterhouse, Glasgow   | - training local unemployed residents in community development issues and social care.<br>-encouraging local political and social action and employment for the community.   |   |
|                                    | <i>St. Mary's Cathedral (RC)</i>                    | City Centre, Edinburgh   | - soup kitchen and hostel accommodation provided within parish for local homeless community.<br>- providing relief and shelter for homeless.   |   |
|                                    | <i>St. Mary's (RC)</i>                              | Inverness  | - soup kitchen and night shelter staffed by ecumenical group of volunteers, assisting homeless community.  |   |
|                                    | <i>Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth (FC)</i>       | Edinburgh  | - homeless caravan and night shelter for homeless community in central Edinburgh.<br>- working in partnership with Bethany Christian Trust.  |   |
|                                    | <i>Bethany Christian Trust (ND) (BUS)</i>           | Edinburgh  | - non-denominational organisation arising from local Baptist church, employing 90 individuals addressing homelessness in partnership with Church and secular organisations.<br>- holistic approach addressing: street care; resettlement accommodation; specialist care units; supported flats; substance abuse advice service; home furnishings; charity shops; work creation; employment training. |   |
|                                    | <i>Glasgow City Mission (ND)</i>                    | City Centre, Govan, Glasgow                                      | - providing care for hungry, homeless, prostitutes, addicts and poor families in Glasgow.<br>- purpose-built centre providing food, clothing, shelter for excluded individuals.<br>- shops and resource centres for raising funds and awareness.   |   |
|                                    | <i>Lodging House Mission (CofS)</i>                 | Calton, Glasgow  | - day centre and church at heart of East End homeless community.<br>- drop in café offering meals, advice, health, sports facilities, education programme.   |   |
|                                    | <i>Hope House; William Hunter House (SA)</i>        | City Centre, Gorbals, Glasgow                                    | - multi-purpose centres providing accommodation, education, counselling, health facilities for homeless community in central Glasgow.<br>- holistic approach to resettlement and securing permanent accommodation for individuals.<br>- holistic approach to resettlement and securing permanent accommodation for individuals.  |   |
|                                    | Youth Work  | <i>Clement Park House; Strathmore Lodge (SA)</i>                 | Dundee   | - working on street level with deprived children and young people.                    |
|                                    |   | <i>Tillydrone Church (CofS)</i><br><i>Tonyglen Church (CofS)</i> | Aberdeen<br>Glasgow  | - youth work in schools, youth clubs, and on street employing full time youth worker. |



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|--|---|--|--|
|  | <i>Airdrie Baptist Church (BUS)</i>                                 | Airdrie, Lanarkshire                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- full time youth worker developing strategy for youth work in local communities and schools, in partnership with school chaplains and local authority.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <i>Ferguslie Park Church / Scripture Union Scotland (CofS) (ND)</i> | Ferguslie Park, Paisley                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- employment of two full time youth workers addressing multiple social problems facing young people in this extremely deprived community.</li> <li>- Christian advice and guidance on young persons' terms.</li> <li>- youth café, music, drama club, sports in partnership with SU Scotland, CofS and Community Educ.</li> <li>- full-time youth worker employed by local churches and community groups to develop different types of youth work in Govan, and overcome sectarian prejudices.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Elderly Care</b>                          | <i>East End Karers (MCS)</i>  | Govan, Glasgow                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providing daily lunches, benefits advice and clothing for elderly people in the East End of Glasgow.</li> <li>- working in partnership with local authority.</li> <li>- providing residential and day care services for deprived elderly people, focusing on health and well-being.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <i>Davidson House; Eagle Lodge (SA)</i>                             | Shettleston, Glasgow<br>Leith, Edinburgh |  |
| <b>Rehabilitation / Counselling</b>          | <i>Abigail Project (CofS)</i>                                       | Possil, Glasgow                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providing support, hospitality and friendship to local drug users and their families, with an aim of breaking drug dependency cycle.</li> <li>- free counselling service to those experiencing anxiety, depression through deprivation or family breakdown.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Learning Difficulties / Mental Health</b> | <i>Archdiocese of Glasgow Social Services (RC)</i>                  | Glasgow                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- numerous day care and residential facilities for children and adults with learning difficulties and mental health problems, often in poorest communities of the city (e.g. Springboig, Tollcross, Ibrox, Yoker, Pollok, Govanhill).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Child Care / Families</b>                 | <i>Chalmers-Ardler Church (CofS)</i>                                | Ardler, Dundee                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- developing parenting skills; assisting single parents; assisting trauma of marital breakdown.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <i>Emmaus Family Project (CofS, SEC, RC, URC)</i>                   | Drumchapel, Glasgow                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assisting women from broken homes, suffering domestic abuse, experiencing child behavioural difficulties, suffering poverty and lacking emotional and financial resources to cope: through re-building confidence, and practical skills and training.</li> <li>- after school club allowing local unemployed parents to return to work / employed parents to continue working.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <i>St. Luke's &amp; St. Andrew's Church (CofS)</i>                  | Calton, Glasgow                          |  |
|  | <i>Inverclyde Family Contact Centre (CofS, RC, SEC)</i>             | Wellpark, Greenock                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enabling separated couples to maintain relationships with their children through managed provision of space, incorporating counselling and arbitration services.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <i>Middlefield Church (CofS)</i>                                    | Middlefield, Aberdeen                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providing pre-school care for children to enable parents to work; in partnership with community enterprise.</li> </ul>  |

|  |  |                        |   |
|--|--|------------------------|---|
| <b>Community Facilities</b>                  | <i>St. Matthew's Centre (SEC)</i>                                  | Possil, Glasgow        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multi-purpose community centre based in local church, providing facilities for local groups to meet and undertake activities.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <i>St. George's &amp; St. Peter's Community Association (CofS)</i> | Easterhouse, Glasgow   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multi-purpose community centre based in church accommodation, providing child care, elderly day care, community café, credit union, unemployed training, advice, and recreational facilities.</li> <li>- working in partnership with local community to provide services of need.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <i>Uttheo, Orbiston (CofS)</i>                                     | Orbiston, Bellshill    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multi-purpose community centre in purpose-built accommodation, providing child care, elderly day care, community café, food co-op, credit union and family support for this deprived community.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <i>Richmond Craigmillar Church (CofS)</i>                          | Craigmillar, Edinburgh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community café meeting in local church to promote healthy eating and community spirit in this severely deprived part of Edinburgh.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <i>Cranhill Church (CofS, RC)</i>                                  | Cranhill, Glasgow      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- redevelopment of church site to provide community facility for meetings and activities.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Transport</b>                             | <i>St. George's &amp; St. Peter's Community Association (CofS)</i> | Easterhouse, Glasgow   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provision of community transport facilities for elderly and disabled residents; and allowing deprived young people holidays in the countryside.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Social Economy / Economic Development</b> | <i>Unity Enterprises (ND)</i>                                      | West Central Scotland  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- social economy initiative promoting local economic development, rooted in pioneering work of local churches in Paisley.</li> <li>- education, training, community development, community care, economic development activities undertaken in a variety of different projects, in partnership with local government, health boards, local enterprise companies, DSS, impacting 450 people per annum.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Community Arts</b>                        | <i>The Village (CofS)</i>  | Pollok, Glasgow        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community arts project based in converted area of local church, using storytelling, drama, crafts, music and art to work with local young people and the elderly, using reminiscence therapy.</li> <li>- creating a community meeting place for performance, exchange and ceilidhs to re-build community spirit in this deprived community.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <i>Colston Milton Church (CofS, MCS)</i>                           | Milton, Glasgow        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creative arts work for young people and children using drama, music, arts and crafts.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Poverty Relief Projects</b>               | <i>St. Paul's Church (RC)</i>                                      | Shettleston, Glasgow   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- St. Vincent de Paul society in local parish raising money and redistributing amongst the poor (SVDP working in poor parishes throughout Greater Glasgow).</li> </ul>   |
|  | <i>Grangemouth Enterprises (ND)</i>                                | Grangemouth            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providing furniture and finance to disadvantaged local people.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Food / Goods Co-operatives</b>            | <i>Castlemilk Baptist Church (BUS)</i>                             | Castlemilk, Glasgow    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- food, clothing and furniture co-operative and café to assist asylum seekers placed in Castlemilk, and to supplement low value vouchers.</li> </ul>   |

|                 |                      |         |  |  |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------|--|--|
| / Credit Unions |                      |         |  |  |
|                 | <i>Credit Unions</i> | Glasgow |  | - credit unions throughout the most deprived communities of Glasgow are frequently organised by church members or use church premises (e.g. Easterhouse, Baillieston, Cranhill, Castlemilk). |

**Table 4A.3 – Church organisations, working at the urban, community and body scales, addressing social exclusion – examples.** (RC – Roman Catholic; Cofs – Church of Scotland; FC – Free Church of Scotland; SEC – Scottish Episcopal Church; BUS – Baptist Union of Scotland; SA – Salvation Army; MCS – Methodist Church in Scotland; URC – United Reformed Church; ND – Non-denominational organisation).

## Conclusions

Taken together, Tables 4A.2 and 4A.3 cover a considerable number of different Church organisations and initiatives operating at national, urban, community and body scales. This diversity is the most important characteristic of Church interventions in pursuit of social justice. The breadth shows the wide-ranging nature of the Church's interest, and its ability to combat social exclusion at multiple scales and via multiple activities. In addition to this overall key feature, there are a number of other salient conclusions that can be drawn.

### 1. Differences in size and influence of organisations

The profile across the spatial scales does not take into account differences in the size and influence of organisations, nor the overall numbers of organisations active in that field. I am confident that Table 4A.2 gives a comprehensive account of all Church organisations addressing social exclusion, and therefore it is clear that in terms of numbers of *organisations*, the fields of urban regeneration/community development, housing/rehabilitation, and campaigning, are those in which the Church is most active. However, in terms of issues such as resources, staff, facilities, and spatial extent of operations, campaigning organisations such as the Iona Community (which has historically enjoyed a high profile in Scotland) pale into the shadow of the multi-million pound budgets and thousands of staff utilised by the elderly/social care arms of the Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic Church, and Salvation Army. This is not to suggest that campaigning organisations cannot wield an influence that is out of proportion to their size and resources, but it remains the case that whilst there are less *organisations* active in issues such as economic development, social care and relief, these are the organisations that in *resource* standards, are a more important part of Church work. Measuring levels of activity is therefore complex.

At the urban, community and body scales, Table 4A.3 is not a comprehensive account, and is simply exemplary. Owing to the sources used for data collection at this scale (published information such as reports, leaflets and brochures, sent by organisations), the picture is only a glimpse of the range of activities. I cannot say that (e.g.) 50% of all urban scale Church activity is youth work, as I plainly do not have such a comprehensive database from which to work. What I *have* done, is attempted to give examples of different activities in broad proportion to the numbers that I have been able to collate. Hence housing/homelessness organisations, youth work, family projects, and community facilities organisations are by far the most common types of Church initiative. As with national scale organisations, there is considerable difference in organisations when judged by resource standards. Hence, high-profile organisations such as The Lodging House Mission in Glasgow (which receives central Church of Scotland funding) are considerably better-off in resource terms than those arising out of local contexts within the same denomination (e.g. the *Abigail*, *Possil* and *Village*, Pollok, projects in local Church of Scotland parishes). However, it is wise to note at this point, that whilst these resource differences are crucial, the moral geographical nature of this enquiry means that it is the moral discourses that surround these organisations, and their influence, that are of greatest interest, and these cannot be measured in such quantifiable terms.

## **2. Nature of activities undertaken, and issues focused upon**

As noted above, Tables 4A.2 and 4A.3 illustrate the diversity of Church responses to social exclusion. At the national scale, and the more local scales of urban, community and body, issues such as housing/homelessness and community development/provision of community facilities are clearly 'strong' areas of involvement. Likewise, youth work, child care, and elderly/social care programmes also feature strongly at all scales. Campaigning and educational organisations work

largely at national scales, with little or no evidence of such work at local scales, though it obviously exists in local (moral) politics (see Chapter 6). Less emphasis is placed upon initiatives of a more *economic* nature at all scales, though the Church is recognised as a strong player in the credit union movement, nationally and locally (Fuller, 1998). Lawless *et al* (1998: 166-167) conclude that local scale Church organisations are overwhelmingly small-scale, limited in size and scope, community-based, dependent on volunteers, dependent on outside funding, and targeting very specific client groups. That analysis rings true for the majority of cases cited in Table 4A.3. The initiatives are overwhelmingly community-based, run by volunteers, working on specific issues, and dependent on outside funding for survival. There is a tension between those which originate *within* a particular community, and those which are local projects of national agencies (e.g. *St. George's & St. Peter's Community Association*, Easterhouse, for the former; *William Hunter House*, Gorbals, for the latter). Likewise, tensions also surround the sources of funding, volunteers, and partnership working. Some initiatives will only utilise Church funding (e.g. local SVDP Society projects) or Christian staff and volunteers (e.g. the CoFS Board of Social Responsibility), whilst others happily recruit any volunteers or staff, be they Christian or secular, and are quite happy to work in partnership with secular groups, and receive funding from (e.g.) local government.

Looking at wider issues covering all projects in Tables 4A.2 and 4A.3, it is tempting to say that the emphasis on particular types of work has as much to do with funding availability or 'sexy' public profile as with Christian initiative. Homelessness is a high profile social exclusion issue where government has made funding a priority (Scottish Executive, 2000). Similarly, there are large amounts of funding available for out of school and elderly care issues, and this may explain emphases in these areas. It is also the case that historically, the Church has had involvement in particular areas of social welfare provision, such as care of the elderly, and youth work, and so

this explains the continuing emphasis in these areas. Finally, it is important to note that in spite of their small-scale focus, rarely do initiatives centre wholly upon one issue. There are elements of strategic focus (e.g. *Utheo*, Orbiston, with its multi-activity approach) in some areas, and this perhaps in itself reflects the shifting of urban social exclusion policy towards a more strategic approach (Parkinson, 1996), and the effect this has had on funding applications.

### **3. Spatial scaling / Spatial concerns**

Looking at Tables 4A.2 and 4A.3, it is evident that Church social justice strategies to address social exclusion privilege the urban as a site for activity. National organisations such as the Christian Socialist Movement, Scripture Union, YMCA and the Scottish Churches Community Trust all operate a remit that includes rural communities and social exclusion in non-urban contexts. However, in spite of this, the overwhelmingly urban nature of social exclusion in Scotland ensures that Church action is naturally situated in large towns and cities. In Scotland, Glasgow and Edinburgh contain the lion's share of initiatives to address social exclusion, with significant concentrations in other cities such as Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness, and large towns in the West of Scotland such as Paisley, Greenock, Dumbarton, and Airdrie. There *are* rural initiatives (such as a community centre on the Isle of Harris, and a rural transport scheme for the elderly in Strathspey), but I have not included these as they fall outwith the urban remit of my moral geographical approach. In terms of action, then, Church organisations in Scotland are following (either explicitly or implicitly) the theological privileging of the urban as the site for pursuing social justice.

*Within* the emphasis on the urban, lies a further privileging – that of the *community scale*. Virtually all of the initiatives in Table 4A.3 have a community focus, often based around existing

church parishes. There are few city-wide urban initiatives of Church background. Glasgow City Mission has a city-wide remit, but remains spatially focused on the city centre and Govan homeless communities. Other projects such as Bethany Christian Trust, Edinburgh, have a city-wide *profile*, but continue to operate within distinct spatial or interest communities. The emphasis on community in part reflects the existing parish structure of many denominations, or simply the physical location of church buildings. It also reflects the fact that there is an element of 'manageability' at the community scale, where organisations are well-embedded in their communities, and have an identifiable client base. Finally, the privileging of the community scale reflects a moral geographical reading of the city through the lens of contextualised theology, where 'community' is held up as a Christian ideal to be embraced.

#### **4.Theologies and moral agendas**

A final conclusion that can be made from this profile of the Church's work in addressing social exclusion in Scotland relates to the objectives of the organisations. Lawless *et al* (1998: 171), note that Church projects addressing social exclusion often work towards idealistic objectives such as social justice, or individual transformation; in contrast to secular urban policy initiatives which have more measurable outcomes. As Chapter 2 has made clear, the Christian Church brings a unique set of moral agendas to problems of social exclusion, bound into theological readings of social justice and the city. Practical activities undertaken, however much they may appear as contextualised responses to particular problems, all contain (either implicitly or explicitly) Christian moral understandings of the good and the just. Analysis *must* take account of these moralities.



## **APPENDIX 4.2**

# **URBAN SCALE INTERVIEW THEMES**

## **APPENDIX 4.2**

### **URBAN SCALE INTERVIEW THEMES**

These are the loose interview themes and questions which I followed when questioning the clergy and church leaders during urban scale research. They served merely as a guide in my questioning and assisted in structuring conversations. Many interviews followed a very different pattern as new questions and issues emerged in an iterative manner between interviewees and myself.

#### **Introduction**

- Who I am and what I'm doing
- Looking at the role of religion in the lives of people in the West of Scotland and the difference that a Christian faith makes.

#### **Section I – Geographical Imagination**

- Can you tell me a bit about the area you are in?
- What do you see as your ministry/how does the Church minister, in this area?
- What are the important issues (socially) affecting this area?
- Can you think of similar areas (and similar issues) in the Glasgow / West of Scotland area to this?
- How did you come to be in this particular area? (choice, sent, etc).

## **Section 2 – Theology and Biblical View**

- Could you tell me a bit about your theological background/training – essentially, what are your beliefs and views on Scripture? What do you think about notions of biblical universals and their status, postmodernism?
- What do you see as your role in interpreting, preaching, translating Scripture?
- In what way are lay members of your church involved in this? / what should be their role?
- What issues do you preach on?
- What do you see as the role of theology in your spatial context?
- Context-specific theologies.

## **Section 3 – Urban Theology and Social Exclusion**

- How would you characterise the present condition of society from a Christian perspective?
- What do you think are the key social issues facing the Church?
- What are your thoughts about poverty / multiple deprivation / social exclusion? What causes it? What does the Bible have to say about it? Biblical truths/universals?
- What do you view as social justice? / what does the Bible say about social justice? What does the Bible have to say about it? Are there any biblical truths/universals? How can this be translated/effectuated?
- How do you perceive Glasgow, the West of Scotland, and how they have changed/changing?
- In what way are poverty/social exclusion issues in Glasgow and W. of Scotland?

- Where are they located? (good, bad areas)
- What can be done about it?
- Have you heard about urban theology?
- What do you know about it?
- How does your own denomination / congregation minister to these issues?
- What is special about 'the urban' scale for theology? Connections to other scales?
- What does the Bible have to say about the city?

#### **Section 4 – Responses to Urban Theology and Social Exclusion**

- Are you typical within your church in terms of beliefs/style of ministry/action?
- How does your church denomination's structure work in terms of addressing the above theological issues / practical responses?
- Your views on this?
- Would you say there are any dominant actors in church decision-making?
- How do they affect your ministry?
- How do they affect responses to urban social exclusion? (Are there any conflicts / differences of opinion over this?)
- What are your views on saving the soul? vs. helping / healing the body?
- How is your church's structure changing to address social change (if at all)?
- What role does the Christian faith play in helping people work through the daily struggles of their situations?
- What makes it different / special / unique (if at all) in the way it deals with social issues?
- What dreams and hopes do you have for the future of society, the issues we have talked about, | the role of the Christian faith in this?

## **APPENDIX 4.3**

# **BODY SCALE INTERVIEW THEMES**

## **APPENDIX 4.3**

### **BODY SCALE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

These are the loose interview themes and questions which I followed when questioning interviewees during body scale research. They served merely as a guide in my questioning and assisted in structuring conversations. Many interviews followed a very different pattern as new questions and issues emerged in an iterative manner between interviewees and myself.

#### **Introduction**

- I'm doing a research project looking at religion in the lives of people in Glasgow
- I'm wanting to speak to you a bit about your own religious experience and how it relates to your everyday life.

#### **Personal biography of life experience and place**

- Could you tell me a bit about your background?
  - where you were born?
  - what was school like?
  - jobs done?
  - marriage, friendships, family?
  - life in Pollok, Drumchapel, Castlemilk, Easterhouse, etc – how long lived here? good/bad points? what do you think of it? has it changed?

### **Issues of faith and personal biography**

- Could I ask you about your mum/dad's religion and faith? Is/was it an important part of their lives?
- How long have you been going to church / chapel?
- Do you *choose* to come, or do you feel you have to? Has this changed?
- How often do you go? Do you feel it's important to go to church/chapel? Why?
- Would you call yourself a Christian / Catholic / Protestant?

### **Church issues and personal biography**

- What kind of things do you think about in church / chapel?
- Do you read the Bible often, and what do you take from it?
- What do you think about Christian rules and principles?
- Are they important? Are they absolute? Are they different over time?
- Do you think that what you learn about in church / chapel or read in the Bible makes a difference in your life?
- What do you think it means to be a good Christian?
- Would you call yourself a good Christian? Do you have a strong faith? How has it changed?

OR

- Do you find it easy to have faith, or have there been hard times in life? What have been the highs and lows of faith with personal biography?

## **Community issues**

- Do you think the Church plays an important part in the life of Pollok, Castlemilk, etc? How?
- Any issues that the Church should be involved in now?
- Does the Church bring hope? What hopes do you have?