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Mapping intergenerationalities: the formation of youthful religiosities

Recent geographical work has pointed to the complex and negotiated nature, and spatiality, of intergenerational relations. In this paper, we draw on research with young Scottish Christians and their guardians to explore the influence of intergenerationality on their religious identities, beliefs and practices. Our interest is to ask what these recent developments in the way we approach geographies of youth and age can inform us about the changing geographies of religion and vice versa. Much previous research has assumed a process of simple transmission, a static notion which is countered by interview data we present here. The diverse influences on the religiosity of young people – from institutions, religious leaders, culture, peers as well as the family – mean that intergenerational relations involve multiple and complex subject positions. We explore some of these positions, characterising them as correspondent, compliant, challenging and conflicting. We argue that intergenerational relations need to be understood as part of the site-based practices that are central to the development and experience of young people's religious identities.

Keywords: intergenerationality, young people, Christianity, religion, Scotland

Introduction: Intergenerational geographies and religious identities

Intergenerationality has become an important subject in recent geographical research. A number of scholars have argued for a conceptual and practical shift, from simply examining the experiences of different age groups, to more holistic and relational analyses which excavate geographies of age (Hopkins and Pain 2007; Maxey 2009; Vanderbeck 2007), and generational changes and relations have figured highly in this. The interactions between generations – themselves produced within particular times, spaces and cultures – have significant effects on a whole range of social issues, from wealth to health, from experiences of public space to meanings of the home (see for example, Antonucci et al 2007; Biggs 2007; Costanzo and Hoy 2007; Walker 1996). Pain (2005) was one of the first geographers to draw attention to the spatialities of discourses, experiences and interactions involving younger and people of similar or other generations. A focus upon intergenerationality differs from other work which has drawn attention to the spatialities of individual lifecourse journeys (Katz and Monk 1993). The recent explosion of work on youth and childhood – and the paucity of work on adult geographies, or the ‘missing middle years’ (see Maxey 2009) – may be counter-balanced by attention to intergenerationality; exploring the connections between different age groups or generations and the contingency they have for each others’ social, political, economic and spatial lives (Vanderbeck 2007). Vanderbeck (2007) discusses some of the ways in which space facilitates or limits intergenerational contact, knowledge, conflict and cohesion. For Hopkins and Pain (2007, 287),

intergenerationality offers one way of redressing the separation of geographers' work on different age groups, a tendency they describe as 'fetishising the margins and ignoring the centre'.

A number of empirical studies now provide illustration of the importance of intergenerationality to more nuanced understandings of everyday spatial processes. Examples include research on grandparenting (Ross et al 2005), drinking cultures (Valentine et al 2007), fashion practices (Rawlins 2006), conflict over young people's use of urban spaces (Skelton 2000; Pain 2003; Tucker 2003) and other family and parenting practices (Hopkins 2006; Valentine and Holloway 2001). Many of these debates meld closely with current social policy concerns: Pain (2005) has pointed to the transformative potential of intergenerational practice in the social policy arena, and the potential for geographers to incorporate lessons from the associated methodologies into their own research and praxis around age, working with and through difference and similarity (Pain and Hopkins 2009). This body of work points to the complex and negotiated nature, as well as the spatiality, of intergenerational relations.

The aim of this paper is to examine how different intergenerationalities function and are performed variably by both younger and older people in different settings. More specifically, we are interested in challenging both academic and popular assumptions about the ways that ideas and practices are shared, or not, between and across generations. Our analysis focuses on the intergenerational experience of religion amongst young Christians in Glasgow, Scotland. By exploring the various influences of family and friends upon their religious identity,

belief, and practice, we propose a new conceptual framework for better understanding the complex interplay between intergenerationality and religious beliefs.

The complex intersections of religion with intergenerational relations

In general, in the literatures on intergenerationality in the social sciences, the nature of the relations and processes involved has tended to be construed in rather simplistic and polarized ways (Pain 2005). This is also largely true of the social study of religion in 'western' cultures, where intergenerationality often becomes subsumed within broader questions related to the growth or demise of institutionalized religions. Though there are many different approaches to the social study of religion, much of the literature that exists has pursued one of two models of intergenerational relations. The first model conceptualises intergenerationality as being about the unidirectional transmission from parents to children of religious practices, beliefs or affiliations. Such an approach, influenced by traditional constructs in developmental psychology, identifies parents as possessing religious agency and locates young people as passive recipients of religion and the behavioural characteristics associated with particular kinds of faith affiliation. Cnaan et al (2004, 194) found that the attendance of parents at worship services was a key factor in influencing their offspring's engagement with religion: parents are clearly one of the many important influences on young people's religiosity. However, in research conducted in two American Protestant churches, Gallagher (2007) finds that

children serve as a 'religious resource' in worship, practice and church identity, suggesting that young people can also influence adults' religiosity. An additional problem can result when researchers assume parent-to-child transmission as being central to understanding the formation of youth identity and practices. This approach can therefore be problematic as it obscures other intergenerational processes. As Costanzo and Hoy (2007, 886) note:

... much scholarship bearing the rubric of intergenerational research is involved with examining the processes by which parents transmit values, beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews to their children ... Generations beyond the young or middle adult parent and the developing child seldom enter into these studies of intergenerational transmission. Further, these developmental studies are almost universally concerned with the elder-to-younger direction of relationship effects as the sole object of study.

Secondly, some studies have focused upon intergenerational conflict, which may arise where there are differences between the religious values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of young people and their parents. While according young people more agency, this literature adds to a binary model of 'cohesion or conflict' (Pain 2005), and few studies have strayed outside this to explore more complex relations and subject positions. For example, some research on young Asians speaks of a 'culture clash' (Brah, 1996), wherein they experience stress and identity conflicts as a result of having to negotiate and manage a number of contradictory, confrontational and competing identities (Anwar 1998, Knott and Khokher 1993, Watson 1977). These include continuity or change; alienation or

assimilation; tradition or modernity; fundamentalist or secular; parental culture or wider society (Brah 1996). Brah (1996) has critiqued the simplistic ways in which Asian youth are often regarded as having to manage a conflict between their parents' generation and that of their peer group, arguing that such portrayals are not supported by evidence. Ramji (2008) shows how young people may critique and transform the faith of their parents becoming *more* religious not less, and Bracke (2008: 331) interrupts the standard narrative of familial transmission by showing how young Muslim women in Kazan construct a narrative 'of origins' wherein it is grandmothers, rather than parents who plant 'the *seeds of Islam* in their lives' (Bracke, 1998, 332, emphasis in original). Both Ramji and Bracke, however, insist that the young participants in their studies consider their religiosity to be more authentic than that of previous generations.

Despite the popularity of these two models, the diverse influences on the religiosity of young people – from institutions, religious leaders, culture, peers, as well as the family – support the contention that intergenerational relations in relation to religion involve multiple relationships and directions, and complex subject positions (see Hopkins 2006, Vanderbeck, 2007). As suggested by some of the work mentioned above, research on religion can tend to relegate the passive role of 'religious recipient' to young people, rather than affirming their importance as independent religious actors, or what we might refer to as their religious agency. For example, Smith and Denton's large-scale study of young people and religion in the United States (2005) first emphasises that young people themselves construct a narrative of 'autonomous, individual self direction'

(143), including their faith 'choices', yet much of their book aims to show how young people are instead passively shaped by external influences. At the same time, other scholars in the sociology of religion have emphasised the way in which young people develop a faith *in relation* (see especially, Flory & Miller 2008), suggesting that individualised spiritual development is mediated by a strong commitment to community and community action - a finding which emphasises the agency of young actors. Indeed, according to Leming (2007), where 'religious agency is operative, religion is performed as well as practiced; it is consciously, rather than repetitively, enacted' (74). As we shall show below, the conscious formation and performance of religion was a key component in the religiosity of our young research participants, which was played out within the context of relationality. That is, young people affirmed their religious agency whilst at the same time acknowledging the importance of relationality in helping to shape their religiosity. What we would especially like to draw attention to are the complex ways that relationality can shape religiosity in the lives of young people.

Work on childhood and youth in geography has also offered valuable insights about the importance of space and place in the everyday lives of young people, in the development of their identities and in their relationships with others, and young people's agency is a key concept and guiding paradigm in childhood and youth geographies (Holloway and Valentine, 2001, Skelton and Valentine, 1998). However, it has recently been subject to critical debate; both Ansell (2009) and Vanderbeck (2008) have critiqued the 'liberal concept of

agency' which geographers and the new social studies of childhood literature have employed, suggesting it has led to a diversion of attention away from other important issues of power that structure children's lives and spaces. In this paper, we join Kesby et al (2006) who suggest there is no reductionist choice between seeing children as social becomings and competent agents in their own right – instead, like adults, children can be seen as both at the same time.

How, then, might we reconceptualise intergenerationality and religion in such a way that young people's religious agency is both acknowledged and situated as central to knowledge about religion more broadly? In terms of its wider social relevance, the issue of intergenerational relations is central to concerns about declining levels of religiosity voiced across political, policy and ecumenical circles. As Crockett and Voas (2006: 567) have observed in relation to Christianity, there has been 'an erosion in religious belief over the past several decades' with persistent declines in affiliation, church attendance and belief. They discuss 'generations of decline' arguing that 'both believing and belonging have declined in equal measure' (Crockett and Voas, 2006: 582). Although young people are generally more likely to have a religious affiliation if one or both of their parents do, Crockett and Voas (2006) found that young British adults were only a little more than half as religious as their parents in terms of affiliation (59%), attendance (54%) and belief (56%).

Debates about the impacts of this supposed secularization of western societies have been a key focus within the sociology of religion over the last twenty years (Berger, 2001). There is a popular sense that young people are

growing up in a secular society, where religion plays a relatively unimportant role in their lives. In Britain, the decline of Christian affiliation amongst younger generations is thus seen as an affirmation that there is indeed a 'death' of Christianity (Brown 2001). However, scholars such as Davie (2002) have demonstrated that the situation is more complex than this with there being low levels of attendance yet high levels of affiliation in Northern Europe and high levels of attendance accompanied by high levels of affiliation with atheism in southern Europe (Davie, 2002). In addition, some writers have recently suggested that the simple fact that the majority of people in the UK do not attend church, does not mean that they do not still have faith and belief. Grace Davie suggests that we may think of this phenomenon as 'believing without belonging' (2002). Others point to the rise in alternative spiritualities in the West (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005) and the emergence of a new era of postsecular societies (Taylor 2006). As processes of social differentiation and exclusion of religion from the public realm are being actively and covertly breached, scholars are increasingly accounting for the formation of new places which emerge out of the bringing together of sacred and profane. Kim Knott's (2010) analysis of the use of church spaces for state-sponsored multi-faith events indicates the kinds of contradictory spaces that emerge from these processes through which even a distinctly religious space can become enmeshed in the politics of the modern state.

If these are indeed trends in new ways of 'doing' religion and new ways that religion is being incorporated into society, then religious spaces of meaning

are becoming increasingly diversified. Geographers have already begun to explore the role of space and place across a spectrum of religious identities for young people in the context of changing religious landscapes (Dwyer 1999; Hopkins 2007; Olson et al 2009). For young people growing up today, this diversity of religious practice provides even greater opportunities for legitimizing worship in what previous generations would consider distinctly non-religious places. Indeed, amongst the young participants in the present study, the church building is only one – and often not the most important – site for pursuing faith. Skate parks, pubs, classrooms, and youth festivals all emerge as sites of revelation and transformation (Vincett et al, 2010). Some of these places remain integrated into ‘official’ or institutional religious structures, supported by adults who are concerned about the growing distance between young people and Christian institutions. Others emerge from the collective or individual efforts of young people to experience their faith in more authentic ways and in sites such as the University or clubs.

There are also new contradictory spaces of religion emerging less from an embrace of faith in public spaces than from the conflicts which surround religious identities. In contexts where sectarianism has historically played a central role in the organization of public and private space, for instance, young peoples’ desires to bring faith and religion into traditionally non-religious sites might be rebuked in the workplace, the classroom, or on the street (see Leonard 2007, Olson et. al 2009). As Doreen Massey (2005) reminds us, these kinds of places that emerge, in part, through the defense or assertion of identity, can be symbolically and

materially ambiguous, and the new religious places of young people appear to often reflect this ambiguity (Olson et al 2009). It is clear that both the deliberate generation of new spaces of youthful religious practice, and the new ways in which religious identity becomes negotiated by young people across different spaces, suggest that young people's religiosity is bound up in processes of place-making. What is less certain is the influence that intergenerational relations are having on the construction of youthful places of faith.

In the remainder of this paper, we explore the implications that alternative ways of thinking about intergenerationality have for the site-based practices that are increasingly important in the development of religiosity among young Christians. If religious and spiritual identities have undergone something of a seachange in terms of when, where and how they are constituted, this is likely to be most significant for younger generations. Nonetheless, it also affects religiosity among other generations in interesting ways, through and beyond contact with young people. With this paper, we aim to propose a more complex approach for understanding the two dominant discourses outlined above. Though we view this as a rather modest intervention, not capable of capturing the range of complexity that characterises these processes, we contend that our approach here offers greater sensitivity for examining the religious agency of young people and the importance of intergenerational relations in the formulation of contemporary youthful religiosity. We do not view them as singular or straightforward, either conceptually or operationally, but we characterise a number of subject positions for the purposes of analysis as correspondent,

compliant, challenging and conflicting. We show that intergenerational relations need to be understood as situated in relation to the site-based practices that are now central to the development and experience of young people's religious identities. In doing so, we ask how recent developments in geographies of youth and age inform us about the changing geographies of religion and belief (Kong 2001). We also seek to highlight the wider relevance of these issues to human geography, as 'religious practices, in terms both of institutional organization and of personal experience, are central not only to the spiritual life of society but also to the constitution and reconstitution of ... society' (Brace et al, 2006, 29).

The study

In this paper, we draw upon data collected as part of an AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society funded project which sought to explore the contemporary meanings and significance of religion from the perspectives of young Scottish Christians. A key intention of the project was to analyse how understandings of religion differ between young people and their guardians, and how religious meanings are shaped by intergenerational relations. The project also sought to examine the places in which religious beliefs, practices and identities are formed. Young Scottish Christians from a range of denominations were accessed for the research in 2008. A diverse range of Christian groups and organisations were contacted in order to reflect the diversity of Christianity (see Heelas and Woodhead, 2005). The final sample was drawn from university groups, Boys Brigade companies and various church youth groups (Roman Catholic, Church of

Scotland, Pentecostal Protestant, mixed Protestant including Anglican). Initially, six group discussions with young people were conducted. Fifteen young people were then recruited from these discussion groups to participate further, firstly in joint interviews with a guardian, and then in an interview on their own. The young people involved were aged between 16 and 27. All of the group discussions and interviews were taped with consent, transcribed, coded using NVivo and analysed thematically. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Scotland is dominated by the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) at 45% of the general population, followed by Roman Catholicism at 17% (Voas 2006, 107). Between them, these two churches account for 'roughly 90 percent of Christians in Scotland' (Voas, 2006, 107). Although the Scottish context is crucial for our study, the focus upon Glasgow in the west of Scotland draws our attention to a city with a strong history of sectarian divisions and tensions between Catholics and Protestants. These divisions have their origins in the Irish migration to the west of Scotland in the nineteenth century, which influenced the economic circumstances and housing situations of many Glaswegians (Miles and Dunlop, 1987), and have been bolstered by separate schools and the strong connections between religion and the support of either Rangers or Celtic football teams. So, despite decreases in levels of religious practice and attendance, with only 11.2% of the Scottish population attending church on a Sunday (Brierley, 2002), the young people we worked with have been brought up, and continue to

live in, a society which bears the persistent marks of religious associations, affiliations and connections (see Olson et al 2009).

As feminist scholars interested in the complex inequalities that inflect both young people's geographies and sociologies of religion, we are conscious of the ways in which our own identities may have an important role in shaping the outcomes of the research. Like Mohammad (2001), we are aware of the ways in which researchers are often simultaneously constructed as insiders and outsiders in research encounters, and the ways in which these constructions are constantly being negotiated, resisted and contested during the research process. At the same time however, we would contend that the different positionalities of the research team were influential in ensuring the validity and reliability of the data collected for this study, comprised as we were of three women and one man from a variety of national backgrounds (Canadian, American, English and Scottish), all brought up within a broadly Christian context and each with different senses of being inside and outside of the project context. Although only one member of the team professes an explicit religious faith (and non-Christian at that), our commitment to the research can be articulated as having 'faith in people of faith' (Olson, 2008) and we are each intrigued by the multiple geographies and sociologies of youth, religion and inequality.

Correspondence and compliance in intergenerational religiosity

From the young people we have worked with, it is clear that their religious identities are informed and shaped by a range of influences, including popular

culture and peers as well as formal institutions and religious leaders. What we are questioning in this paper is the notion of transmission; we seek a more complex account that offers greater sensitivity to young people's agency. From our research, we found that the relationships between young people's religiosity and that of their parents fall broadly into four categories: correspondence, compliance, challenge and conflict. In this section, we examine correspondence and compliance, though we should state here that all four are fluid categories which young people may move between at different times and in different places.

Correspondence

With regard to *correspondence*, some young Scottish Christians' religious beliefs are shared with those of their elders who have influenced them (often, but not always, their parents). Their religious identities, while clearly never identical, are often very similar. This correspondence – or what in the past might have been considered an uncomplicated transmission of religion from a previous generation to the next - involved a range of different relationships and pathways, as parents, grandparents, religious leaders and supervisors within youth organisations influenced their religious identities and practices. For some young people, their religiosity can be seen as a form of compliance whereby they are 'going along' with religious activities led by their parents, appearing to have very similar religious identities but actually accompanied by doubt or difference which they hide from some or all of the adults in their lives.

The clearest example of correspondence was between Maddy (age 19, Catholic) and her mother Brigid (age 40, Catholic). Both attended mass daily, prayed together as a family at home every morning and in the interview constantly finished each other's sentences. Though Maddy considered her parents to be central to the development of her own religiosity, thus mirroring a more traditional framework of parent-to-child transmission, there was also some evidence that some of Maddy's practices had been adopted by other members in the family. For instance, Brigid confessed that it was Maddy who introduced her to Christian rock music, and listening and dancing at home to Christian music had become an important family activity. Here we see that although intergenerational relations have clearly influenced Maddy's religiosity, her engagement with her faith has also influenced the nature of her relations with her mother.

In the same way, there was a strong sense in which Isabella (aged 17, Catholic) had been shaped and influenced in her religious identity by her family (mother Rachel, aged 48, Catholic). She noted that:

Isabella: there was definitely a big influence in religion, and in fact not just my parents, even my aunts and uncles, you know, they were all a big influence as well... and, you know, I had an uncle that was a missionary priest.

Isabella also described attending church with her parents, with other family members or with her friends, so that peer group as well as family settings played an important role in the formation of her religious practice. That being said, it was

clear that Isabella's father was especially important in influencing her early encounters with religion:

Rachel: your Dad has been more of an influence...

Isabella: Yeah, he's...

Rachel: ...had more time...

Isabella: ...yeah, he's like... whenever like we'd be driving in the car when I was young he'd used to tell me like the Saints stories and things like that...stories of Jesus and things, so... yeah.

Similarly, Amy suggested that one parent played a key role in her religiosity:

Amy: that's probably my mum's influence though... like taking me along to church and stuff.

These processes of transmission were situated in particular sites; the home, obviously, but also less obvious places where young people and their parents interacted, such as journeys in the car, on the route to church, walks in the countryside or other family occasions where conversations about the significance of religion took place. These alternative sites of transmission also indicate that conventional measurements of religiosity and transmission (such as church attendance, prayer, Bible study and so forth) often miss these everyday encounters, which young people found equally formative. As such, the transmission of religion in such cases was not a simple and linear process and was instead something that ebbed and flowed throughout young people's lives and in different official religious places and informal contexts.

For other young people, parents played a less important role and it was grandparents who they felt had had the strongest influence over their sense of connection with religion. In the context of the changing geographies and sociologies of religion, it could be argued that it is older people who are more likely to have active religious faiths, and some of the young people described their grandparents having taken on the role of attempting to transmit their religious beliefs, values and practices to their grandchildren. Maia (aged, 16, Church of Scotland) referred to the strong presence of “religious grannies” emphasising that the process of transmission may be shaped by regular interaction with grandparents rather than through official religious institutions or the nuclear family. Furthermore, Rachel (aged 48, Catholic) observed the likelihood of grandparents having an influence in the intergenerational transmission of religion:

Rachel: some children are not getting that much and some children are not getting any and some children are getting it more from their grandparents...

R: hmm

Rachel: ...than from their parents, but a lot of it I think is to do with the fact that... well two things I think... a) because their parents aren't around because they're so busy working... and they're with their grandparents maybe a bit more often, and b) because the grandparents know more about the religion than what their parents do.

Alongside the influence of parents and grandparents, the religious identities of young Scottish Christians were also shaped, sometimes profoundly, by youth leaders or religious leaders in Churches or other organisations. Callum, a 27 year old young Catholic, was strongly influenced by and had a very compassionate relationship with his priest, Father Paul, and asked to be interviewed with him rather than with one of his parents. This example demonstrates the multiple ways in which intergenerational relations shape young people's religiosity as Callum's father did not respect his religiosity at all and instead he found that he could develop his religiosity through his close relationship with a religious leader. This points to the complexities of these sets of relationships and the ways in which young people may have multiple experiences of correspondence, compliance, challenge and conflict all happening at the same time. Keiran (aged 21, Church of Scotland) also talked about the religious influence of "some of the leaders from those organisations...like the BB [Boys' Brigade] officers." Sites beyond the home and family are therefore important in consolidating religious identity.

Compliance

For others it was more a case of what we characterise as *compliance*. For example, although she did not indicate this in the joint interview conducted with her mother and herself, during the individual interview, Isabella (aged 17, Catholic) revealed her interest in Eastern religions:

Isabella: I think I'm verging on Christianity/Hinduism at the moment. I like the idea of the kind of reincarnation and the karma and things like that of Hinduism... yet, I still seem to not be able to tear away from the Christianity I've been brought up with...

She likes the Hindu idea of a 'consciousness of God' and was very influenced by Callum's (her friend, mentioned above) Buddhist readings. Isabella's views fall under the themes of correspondence and compliance, highlighting the malleable nature of religious identities and the multiple ways in which young people construct their religiosity in different places and times. Isabella tends to hide her questions about and criticisms of Christianity from her family: a significant influence, our research found, is the pressures to conform to parental versions of religion which are still strong. Here then, although Isabella's religiosity has been influenced by intergenerational relations, her differing views on religion have also shaped how she now engages with her family.

Isabella: I think... yeah, I think... I do give the impression that I am a lot more Christian than I am, but I change a lot. So sometimes I really am sincere and...eh... sometimes I really do feel a connection with the Christian faith. And I do feel like I am Christian. However, I am very doubtful with things like that and I think... I don't... I don't want to... especially even the older...eh... people in my family like my gran, even

my mum...I try not to let them see that side of me too much because... it does quite hurt and offend them to be honest.

However, compliance does not mean that young people necessarily mirror or imitate older generations, but might instead forge their own path within a particular religious tradition. Thus, Willow (age 17, Church of Scotland) moves between compliance and challenge by going along with her parents Christianity, whilst also openly questioning their beliefs and encouraging them to become more engaged in their religious knowledge. During an interview with Willow and her parents, Amy and Ross, it was clear that her mum's dedicated Christianity had influenced her own views of religion, yet Willow knew more about certain aspects of her religion and so would often educate her mother or clarify religious issues and matters. Here we see that the process of transmission, whilst partly based on family, also relies on actors outside the home resulting in young people having a broader religious knowledge than their parents:

Willow: On Sunday, me and mum took Sunday School...it's like a Summer Sunday School rota and it was my turn to take it and...

Amy: Willow called me...

Willow: ...mum was my helper..I was like the organiser, but mum would be there...as my helper. And mum does the like door duty and a tea rota, so she'll like bring me on and... that sort of thing...

Amy: Just for fellowship after church.

Willow and Amy view their roles within the church as both essential but quite different, with Amy being a church member who will go to 'for a cup of tea' and Willow being a church member who argues that people should attend 'if you want to know something about the bible'. Whilst Willow respects the strong sense of church community which she has gained through attendance with her mum, she understands her work with the church as an extension of her own biblical study which she carries over into other, non-parish based activities. Amy's 'fellowship' places a contrasting emphasis on the importance of belonging to the immediate parish community, and described a period of time when she was living abroad and chose not to attend a church. Indeed, Amy's faith seems based primarily upon fellowship in Christ in the church community, whereas Willow places a strong emphasis on Biblical and theological knowledge; areas in which Amy deferred to Willow during the interview. Willow explains that it was at a youth rally that she 'was brought to Christ' rather than through attendance of church with her family, and does not list her parents as sources of knowledge about her religion.

Alongside indicators of compliance with parental religious practices and values, there is also evidence in this study of young people going along with their friends in forming their religious identities thus emphasising the important role that *intragenerational* relations play in young people's religious lives. Peter (age 22, Pentecostal and Baptist), one of the most active young people of our sample, noted that it was a group of friends who brought him in to one of the churches he attends in Glasgow. Callum (aged 27) and Isabella (aged 17), who are both Catholics, observed that their strong friendship, has played a major role in their

religious identities, practices and beliefs, as did Willow (age 17, Church of Scotland) and Maia (aged 16, Church of Scotland). Indeed Maia credits Willow with taking her to church and says,

Maia: When I first met Willow... I just didn't give a toss [about religion]. I just went to [the Scripture Union youth club] for the sheer fun of it...but then Willow started talking to me and... it sort of... I started believing a bit more... and then I met Val [a youth leader] on my first SU camp. And everything just... when she was talking everything just went together and clicked... and it was like, 'I do believe this.'

Related to this, Isabella's mother, Rachel (age 48, Catholic), who teaches Religious Studies at the primary school, noted the significance of school in shaping young people, this emphasising the importance of different sites in shaping young people's religiosity:

Rachel: for some children... I would think that a lot of religion that they get has come from school, whereas others... there's definitely... you can see the ones that have definitely got an influence from home as well...

Alongside friends, several young men mentioned the importance of Boys' Brigade leaders thereby highlighting that the process of transmission can take place in formal youth organisations and structures related to these. For example, Jack (age 17, Church of Scotland) said,

Jack: I think one of the major things for me was the officers were such a big influence because they had faith, but they were having a laugh at the same time. And as a youngster, going to church it was just full of serious faces...And seeing these sort of... young officers having fun...eh... you know, having a social life...and still believing and having faith it was just a sort of reality check that... that's just what I want.

As suggested by these brief examples, many of the young people consulted in this research were influenced in varying ways by their families in terms of their religious beliefs, values and practices. This influence sometimes came from parents or grandparents. However, there is also evidence of young people's religiosities being shaped by youth leaders and other significant adults in their lives, with parents or grandparents providing an introduction to a particular religion but often with very different conceptions of the spaces in which religious community, worship, or fellowship might take place. Overall, our data suggest that, rather than 'transmission', correspondence and compliance are more appropriate terms for the intergenerational circulation of religious identity, practice and belief. These terms acknowledge the (at least partial) independence of young people's religious identities, beliefs and practices, even where these mirror those of the significant adults around them, and the fact that religion for young people is a result of active reflection. We next go on to explore two further forms of intergenerational religiosity, challenge and conflict. As such, our research demonstrates that, even for those young people whose religious views

appeared to be correspondent to those of their parents, the intergenerational transmission of religion is not simply a one-way process. Instead, young people display considerable agency in thinking through religious affiliation themselves, and this is quite heavily influenced by their experiences and interactions in different places (e.g. school) and through different social processes (e.g. friendship). Thus, more traditional intergenerational relations intersect with other sites of identity constitution to shape their religious identities, and in some cases, even influence the religious practices of their parents.

Challenge and conflict in intergenerational religiosity

The micro-geographies of the young people's lives inform us about the multiple and spatialised ways in which they develop and articulate their religiosities. As we have indicated, many young people exercised agency in how, where and when they affiliated with, practiced and articulated their religious identities, beliefs and practices. Continuing with this theme, our research participants also demonstrated that the formation of religious identities, beliefs and practices often involve processes of negotiation and resistance, as young people engaged with, modified and sometimes rejected the perspectives of adults about religion. Some young people actively challenged the ways in which their parents had or had not attempted to transmit particular views or perspectives about religion to their children and for some, this was a source of conflict and disagreement.

Challenge

Jack (aged 17, Church of Scotland) discussed openly debating religious issues with his grandmother

Jack: Well even though it's important to question faith...em... people don't... not do it, but they don't like to do it... in case they think they're being a bad Christian. I used to do it. I used to say to my gran... 'do you know, I think it's time you sort of thought like, you know, the theory of evolution and just sort of question other ways how we got here.' And she said, 'that's why you've got to have faith.'

R: Do you think that's just... is that a generational thing? Do you think that's a different way...

Jack: Yeah, and even when she said that to me, I said to her, 'how can you just have faith without no proof.' And she said, 'that is what faith is.' ... so, I just thought... well, I've got to believe or disagree ... and like even being honest now, I still don't fully agree, but I want to, if you know what I mean?

Here, it is clear that Jack is not simply following the wishes of his grandmother and is instead openly questioning, negotiating and challenging the attitudes and values she is proposing to him about religion. Like other young people, Jack actively has to negotiate his way through adult based views about religion in order to articulate his own views about his religious beliefs, identity and practices.

Corey (aged 25, Pentecostal) also clearly articulates the importance of the individual choices he has made with regards to his views on religion, and the ways in which he has had to work through and negotiate the ways in which adults construct and manage religion:

Corey: Hmm. So how does that difference... that choice... play out... for an individual? I mean what kind of difference does it make to an individual to have chosen...? Well I think it helps them... make choices over their own life...em... in that they... we're... we're a product of our own choices somewhere down the line. And I think...em... young people can often say that...em... if their parents have brought them through church then...eh... they've made the choices for them. Whereas, you allow them to make... like for me... making the choice to go play cricket although it seemed like... or football... it seemed like a good... what seemed to me a good choice at that time because church was boring to me... not something I was too interested in, but looking back on it I realise, actually, I kind of missed... because faith is so important to me now...and my Christian journey is so important to me now, I actually missed crucial years... but it was a choice I made in that season... of my life... And I think...em... I think that... that the reason that parents possibly now are allowing their young people to make those choices is because they were forced

to make those choices when they were younger. And we had a lot... there was a huge drop in Christianity as a result of people being forced to go to church. And...em... and so the other way is... actually you don't force them. You let them make their own decisions and their own choices within that... and pray that... God will have His way on their life, you know, and will still have His hand upon their life.

Fraser (aged 17, Church of Scotland) notes how his religious views differ from those of his father, but also clarifies that these are intertwined with more general attitudes toward faith and reason:

R: ...would you ever talk with him about some of the Christian... message or lessons or...?

Fraser: I don't think it's anything that really interests him any more. I think he kind of... he's like taken more to the theory of evolution. I think because he works a lot with computers... and he's really quite smart... He just thinks that...He just doesn't believe it?

R: OK.

Fraser: I think there's some parts that he does believe and other parts, like the New Testament, like Jesus and everything... I think he believes in that, but like creating the world and everything, I think he just finds it a bit hard to believe.

R: Yeah. So it's something you wouldn't really talk with him about... at all? Yeah. OK. Do you think you guys would disagree then?

Fraser: I don't think disagree. I just... don't... I don't think he really has an opinion because I don't think he really properly thinks about it ...

Fraser describes himself as 'quite religious' but he considers Boys Brigade his 'church'. If he needs to talk about religious questions with someone, it is usually a team leader or another young man similarly interested in faith, rather than a parent. From this perspective, parental transmission is not an explicit factor in how Fraser articulates and practices his religion, and he is aware, if somewhat timidly, that there are differences in the ways that they understand their Christianity. Furthermore, the gatherings around which he has built his faith are not those of home and church, but of a network of older and younger men and boys, where conversations about belief and considerations of belonging emerge as a new religious place.

Conflict

Contrary to the experiences recollected by Fraser, there were also accounts of the transmission of religion resulting in *conflict* and struggle between young people and their parents. Callum, for example, specifically requested to be interviewed with the priest, Father John, rather than with his mother or father, who were divorced. From his interview, it was clear that his mother was resistant

to him being religious and his father did not really engage with him on any level about his religiosity. Callum – like Fraser - developed his religiosity largely of his own accord, given that he can recall very little religious influence throughout his life, yet there was also an element of struggle in his account. He preferred not to be interviewed with his parents, as he was concerned it would result in conflict, and chose instead to be interviewed with the priest. This suggests a strong disjuncture between his religiosity and that of his parents.

There were also accounts of explicit conflict between young people and their parents with regards to issues relating to religion. For example, though Corey (age 25, Pentecostal) comes from a family with a long history of Pentecostal ministry, both he and his father recalled periods of their lives when they drifted from the church. In particular, Corey's father Michael (late 50s, Pentecostal) talked about some of the challenging confrontations he had had with his own father and it was clear that some of these areas of conflict also existed in Michael's relationship with his son. This makes clear that for Corey, the formation of his religiosity has been about both challenge (as above) and conflict, highlighting the ways in which the categories we are employing here are malleable, changing over time and in different places.

Another issue that emerged from the research as causing conflict is the experiences of young people who choose to switch their affiliations, thereby demonstrating that transmission of specific religious beliefs, identities and/or practices are always open to change and transformation. For example, Luke (aged 27), who was brought up in the Church of England but was unsure about

his denominational affiliation when interviewed for the research, recollected the frustration of his parents when his brother switched from the Church of England to the Baptist Church:

Luke: I remember when I was growing up and... my brother actually, he...em... he grew up through the Church of England, but he actually moved over to the Baptist church...em... at the kind of age where I... you know, fourteen/fifteen, he kind of moved over to the Baptist church because he was saying he wasn't getting what he wanted...from the Church of England and there were a lot more young people his age going to the Baptist church. And mum and dad again were quite hostile, you know, 'you're not going over to the Baptist... blah... blah... blah... and it was seen as a real rivalry...

Another example of the potential conflict that can arise from switching denominational affiliation can be found in the experiences of Lara (aged 21, Pentecostal) and her mother, Catherine (aged 55, Pentecostal). They both switched from the Church of Scotland to join a Pentecostal Church yet experienced this transition in very different ways. For Catherine, the switch was life-giving. She felt spiritually dead in her old parish and she yearned for the experience of the spirit which her new church gives her. However, Catherine acknowledges that whilst the switch was positive for her, it was more difficult for Lara:

Catherine: I suppose it was kind of hard for Lara at that time because she was at an age where she was coming into a church where there had been lots of people that had grown up from when they were young. And...eh... so for her to come into... those relationships was quite a hard period of her life.

Though Lara has since made good friends in the church, she acknowledges that:

Lara: a lot of the group... had grown up together and they... were closer with each other than I was with any of them, so I found it really hard to feel a part of the group. And there was a kind of a little bit of... I don't know... I think I felt left out a lot of the time.

In another interview, Gareth (18, Church of Scotland) used the interview as an opportunity to confess that he would like to switch to Catholicism. Despite the fact that Gareth's family no longer attends church, his desire to switch denominations remains a fairly closely guarded secret:

Gareth: the whole Roman Catholic idea, I haven't really told...may people about that... close friends maybe, so... I'm just... I'm giving you that.

Gareth has been actively involved with the Boys' Brigade (Church of Scotland) for many years and this attraction to Catholicism appears, then, to have been self-directed but his continued involvement in Protestantism makes him reticent to talk about switching with anyone except his closest friends. In the Glaswegian context, where sectarianism between Catholics and Protestants remains an

issue, Gareth lacks Catholic contacts who might bring him into the church. Gareth points out that if he was asked by a stranger whether he was Christian, he would have no problem saying that he was, but if they asked 'what type of Christian are you?', Gareth admits that in Glasgow his answer to that would be 'complicated'.

Sectarianism is thus another factor complicating issues of transmission. Though Robin (age 16) attends a Church of Scotland youth group, neither she nor her mother attends church. Further, because she lives in the catchment area, she attends a Catholic highschool and her boyfriend is Catholic. Her father, however, is a member of the Protestant Orange Order, which Robin finds hard to understand:

Robin: Well... my dad's quite a bigot because...he doesn't know... he doesn't like... the Catholic faith, it's just because he's in the Orange Lodge and that stuff. He's like, 'I've got to do this. I've got to do that,' and...'I've got to believe in this,' and all that stuff.

R: ...Does that make you feel uncomfortable, or...?

Robin: A little bit, yeah. ... I know my dad isn't really a bad person, but... I just think it's what he believes... and it's because his father done and all his brothers have done it and he's done it. And now he's started getting some of my step... brothers and that... because we've got a step-brother and step-sisters who are all in it as well now, so...

Alongside accounts of the formation of young people's religiosities in relation to those of parents, grandparents and other significant adults, it is clear that young people's religiosities and their articulation of their religious identities can be a challenging and conflicting process for them to manage and negotiate. Key factors here include the agency young people have in forming religious identities or choosing to switch affiliations, and the complex responses that parents have to such decisions. The context of these processes is of central importance: they can be challenging to negotiate such decisions against the backdrop of sectarian divisions existing in Glasgow.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has explored the complexities of young Scottish Christians' senses of their religiosity and the complex ways that these may or may not be influenced by intergenerational relations. What has emerged is a far more complex picture than research about intergenerational transmission has tended to indicate to date (e.g. Cnaan 2004). Young people cultivate a range of different relationships which might influence the transmission of religion, or perspectives which inform their religiosity and spirituality. Some of these are intergenerational but others are informed by other significant people, places and practices in the young people's lives; for example the significance of *intragenerationality* emerging from this research. Rather than finding that intergenerational relationships are dominated by unidirectional handing down of religious ideas and practices from an older generation to a new one, we found a

much more fluid field of transmission among young people. In some instances, the direction of transmission was reversed, with young people introducing practices that were then adopted by parents. In other cases, tension existed between different generations which viewed the other as either being too outdated or too removed from the traditional trappings of 'church', or between very learned Christian youth and their less 'authentic' parents. Some of this complexity is highlighted by one of our participants:

Corey: Well I think... like... before where it would've been a family thing, nowadays what you could have is one parent going to church and the other parent not going to church. You can have the kids going to church and not the parents going to church. Or vice versa...and so... it's not...em... it's not a strict family tradition... It's the personal choice of the... person.

Although we have characterised the relationships involved here as correspondence, compliance, challenge and conflict, it must be emphasised that these are not fixed – that is, intergenerationalities change across space and across time and more than one of these sets of relationships may be being negotiated at any one time. By thinking about what kinds of relationships are being sustained at any given moment – whether they can be characterised by any of these four categories – we gain a more accurate idea of the dynamics of religious transmission and the role of young people's religious agency.

As we argued in the introduction, recent developments in the geographies of youth and age directly inform our understanding of how religion in society is

changing in the twenty-first century and vice versa (Hopkins and Pain 2007, Kong 2001, Vanderbeck 2007). In particular, recognition of the importance of intergenerationality, and the range of complex subject positions that it may entail for adults and young people, suggests that previous notions of either simple 'transmission' or rejection of adult religious beliefs and practices are insufficient.

The relationships between intergenerationality and religious places is such that the intersection between the two results in the places of intergenerational religious interaction being shifted away from the home and the church as exclusive areas of engagement. Instead, they now constitute other spaces which include non-familial engagement. As young people continue to assert their religious agency, and as more alternative religious places become available to them, they have the option to make choices about belief and belonging that might have been less available for previous generations. Thus, the decline of Church membership should not be thought of as a failure of previous generations to directly pass their practices onto the next generation, but might instead be thought of as a reconfiguration of the spaces and places of worship and meaning, often co-constituted by parents, young adults, and children.

The empirical evidence from our study demonstrates that these different sites of religious engagement are playing an increasingly prominent role for young people. The role of intergenerational relations for young Scottish Christians' articulations of their religious beliefs, values and practices point to the significance of the sites in which such relationships are negotiated. The traditional approaches to understanding the intergenerational transmission of

religion tend to focus upon social relations within the home, given their focus upon the role of parents in imparting religious values, beliefs and practices to their children (Costanzo and Hoy, 2007). However, our research suggests that the formation of young people's religious identities is influenced by a broad range of actors in different everyday sites, many of which are beyond the familial home. The accounts discussed in this paper have demonstrated the importance of sites such as grandparents' homes, the journey to and from church, experiences of schooling, youth group practices, peer group relationships and popular culture as having significant influences over young people's articulations of their religiosity. We contend that geographers of religion and youth might focus more closely on the diverse spatialities and articulations of youthful religiosities and the social relations inherent within these.

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