'UNTIL THE LAST REBEL'

A STUDY OF THE GREEN BRIGADE AS A POLITICISED FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' 'SUBCULTURE'

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Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the

MA in Community Education, Equality and Social Activism

Departments of Adult and Community Education and Sociology

National University of Ireland Maynooth

2014

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My thanks are due to many people who have helped me along this path, particularly my supervisor, and friend, Dr Fergal Finnegan. Your patience and honesty has been essential, and hopefully I have not been a cause of too much stress. My parents, Fiona and Stephen: without your love and support I would not be where I am today. Thank you. To all of my friends who have offered their advice and help, it is incredibly appreciated. Lastly, to all of the members of the Green Brigade, and especially to the participants in my research I owe a great debt to all of you for your hospitality, your openness and your trust.

Abstract

This is a qualitative exploratory study of the Green Brigade ultras of Celtic Football Club. Using mixed methods of semi-structured interviews, participant observation and desk-based research, it examines the group's activities, political culture, and experiences of policing. This study aims to provide a broad overview of the group, while also exploring areas such as policing and political culture in more detail. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed to uncover a variety of themes, amongst them key activities, policing, political education, anti-fascism, attitudes to sexism, and the influence of Irish Republicanism. The thesis draws upon theories of culture, subculture, social movements, radical pedagogy, ethnographies and studies of ultras, gender and football research, as well as studies of the Irish immigrant experience in Scotland, and specifically the role of Celtic as an expression of Irish identity.

The Findings show a group with diverse political positions, but united under a common banner of anti-discrimination politics, and a broad commitment to Irish Republicanism. Within stadia, the highly visual elements of ultra culture are used to express these politics. Outside the stadia, the group undertakes various political activities, with an emphasis on inclusivity and grassroots organising. Criminalisation and policing feature prominently, with the group's activities with their collective culture being affected as a result.

The implications of this study are several. It shows how a highly visible section of the Irish community in Scotland expresses a contentious sense of Irishness, and the consequences of this, both in terms of policing, and upon the group's culture. Questions of political organising, learning, discussion and outreach offer lessons to other groups and individuals involved in social activism. It is also offers an in-depth study of an ultra group, and contributes to the literature on this fascinating, and often highly political**,** subculture.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis is an in-depth study of the Green Brigade of Glasgow Celtic Football Club, an independent fan-group with a broadly left-wing and Irish Republican identity. It uses participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and desk-based research to examine the central activities and political culture of the group, and group experiences of policing. Football has long provided a space for dissident politics to be expressed, and the link between football and radical politics is well established (Kuhn, 2011). In Scotland, football is an important forum where issues of ethnic, religious and political identity are played out.

The Green Brigade are a group of Celtic-supporting ultras. Ultras are groups of football supporters who support their teams in passionate, colourful, loud and coordinated ways, making use of banners, pyrotechnics, songs and chants, and other expressions of die-hard support. In addition to their support for Celtic, the group is also left-wing, and perhaps most contentiously in Scotland, openly Irish Republican.

This is the first time the group have cooperated in academic research at such an intimate level. This thesis is unique in that it seeks to explore the way an under-researched group, the Green Brigade, gives expression to a type of politics which is radical, predominantly working-class, and situated within a Celtic/Irish context which provides a rich social, cultural and political base. As well as the highly visual aspects of ultra culture such as banners and displays carried out inside football stadia, what is interesting is the way in which the highly visible aspects of the group are combined with a political culture which often goes unseen and unreported, and which only a qualitative study of the group could uncover. Using interviews with Green Brigade members, and other sources, this thesis

will explore attitudes to politics, the Left, education, the police and the state, Irish Republicanism, sexism and homophobia, amongst other themes.

Firstly, the Literature Review will place this study in context, by briefly sketching the history of the Green Brigade; the history and context of the Irish in Scotland and the importance of Celtic; studies on other left-wing ultra groups; subcultural theory; and theories of social movements.

The Methodology and Methods chapter will outline the philosophical, political and sociological motivations for conducting qualitative research; the processes and methods used to collect and analyse the data; and the ethical considerations of conducting research with a marginalised group facing police and state repression.

The Findings will be divided into two chapters, and will present the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The first chapter will explore the activities of the group and the political culture, while the second chapter will examine participants' experiences of policing.

The Discussion chapter will use the relevant literature to build upon and critically examine the Findings, relating them to previous work, and suggesting possible directions of future work, while acknowledging the limitations of this study.

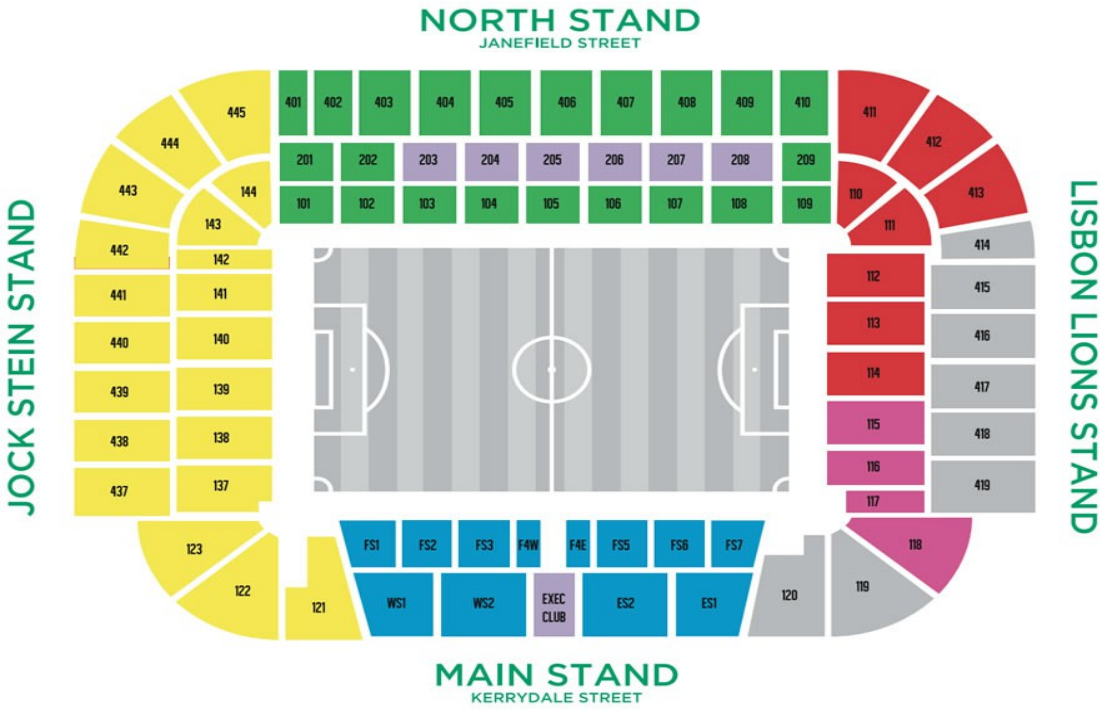
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following literature review seeks to place this study of Celtic's Green Brigade ultras into a wider context. Firstly, it will look at the context of the Irish in Scotland and the role of Celtic Football Club as an expression of Irishness; an introduction to some common characteristics of ultra culture; an examination of some key ideas of subcultural theory, particularly as they relate to the demonisation of subcultures,

An introduction to the Green Brigade

The Green Brigade were founded in the summer of 2006, after a break with another group of Celtic supporters, the Jungle Bhoys. Unlike the Jungle Bhoys, who were an apolitical grouping who shunned the ultra label, the Green Brigade was envisioned as an explicitly anti-sectarian, anti-racist and anti-fascist group of ultras, who would celebrate Irish Republicanism (Celtic Wiki, 2014a).



Plan of Celtic Park, with the Green Brigade's Section 111

in the lower tier of the North East corner of the stadium (Celtic FC, 2014)

From the outset the group created a distinctive set of symbols, with the 'rebel' identity of the group expressed in their slogan, 'Until The Last Rebel', sometimes written as 'UTLR'. The group badge is a skull, resembling a football, with an Irish tricolour scarf around its neck.

The Green Brigade badge (Green Brigade, 2014)

The group sees the 'continuation, in some cases resurrection, of Celtic and traditional Irish songs' (Green Brigade, 2014a) as being a key aim, and takes aim at the management of Celtic who seek to 'market games as more of a family day out'. This is blamed for a 'rapid decrease in the level of noise and atmosphere' (Green Brigade, 2014a) compared to the previous standing areas of Celtic Park which were abolished with stadium redevelopment in the 1990s. The group 'advocates standing and vocal support throughout the duration of the game', and has used choreographed singing, chanting, movement (YouTube, 2014a), tifos, and pyrotechnics ('pyro'/flares), though the latter has become increasingly difficult and heavily punished by the authorities.

The group is openly Irish Republican, and states its solidarity with 'Irish republican politicians and activists in their efforts to reunite the six occupied counties [of the north of Ireland] with the republic' (Green Brigade, 2014a). They criticise the 'suppression and criminalisation of Irish republican songs' by the Scottish government, in reference to the Offensive Behaviour at Football Act (Scottish Parliament, 2012). They argue that the equation of politicised expressions of Irish identity with religious hatred has resulted in 'the black shadow of sectarianism being cast over our Irish heritage and culture' (Green Brigade, 2014a), a criticism shared by Irish community activists in Scotland (Slaven, 2011).

A note on the Bill

The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 (hereafter simply the Bill), was introduced by the Scottish Government following a wave of serious attacks upon Celtic manager Neil Lennon. Lennon, a Catholic from Lurgan in the North of Ireland and former Celtic player, was forced to quit the Northern Ireland football squad in 2002 after receiving death threats, allegedly from loyalist paramilitaries (Kruper, 2007). This legislation, while focusing on behaviour expressing 'hatred', also included a section which made it a criminal offence,

punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment, to engage in 'other behaviour that a reasonable person would be likely to consider offensive' (Scottish Parliament, 2012). The legislation has been condemned by legal professionals, academics, politicians and activists (Index on Censorship, 2011; Irish Voice, 2014; Leech, 2011; Liberty, 2011; Macwhirter, 2011; McConville, 2013; Scottish Law Reporter, 2011; Slaven, 2011) due to the subjective nature of what is offensive, the fact that legislation already exists to cover hate speech and incitement to violence, and that it curtails freedom of expression.

Irishness, Celtic and Politics

Any study of the Green Brigade must be placed in the context of the multigenerational, immigrant Irish community in Scotland. This section seeks to give the reader a sense of some of the complexities and tensions of the Irish immigrant experience in Scotland in order to understand why Celtic holds such importance for this community. Additionally, it seeks to show that the Irish immigrant experience is fraught with racism, marginalisation, and silencing, and argues that Celtic has provided a space for immigrant Irish to express a politicised Irishness that is taboo, and increasingly criminalised, in Scotland.

The Irish are the largest ethnic minority group in Scotland, constituting the 'largest multi-generational immigrant grouping' (Bradley, 2006: 1189). Irish Catholic immigrants settled predominantly in west central Scotland, in particular Glasgow and Lanarkshire, though with other significant communities in Edinburgh and Dundee, with immigration dramatically increasing as a result of the Famine from 1845-1852 (Coogan, 2012). Despite such large numbers of immigrants and now descendants, the Irish experience in Scotland is one which has been the subject of

surprisingly little academic scholarship, and it took until the last decade of the twentieth century for the emergence of the first serious piece of academic work (Tom Devine, 1991: V). Bradley states that the Irish have been 'largely ignored in academic, popular and public literature and representations' (2006: 1189) in Scotland. Bradley speaks of the way in which a focus

> mainly or solely on non-white immigrants creates a silence around the Irish in Scotland and delineates their history and experience within a banner of white homogeneity (or as Scots or British), (2006:1192)

Interestingly, when Irishness is referenced in the mainstream of Scottish society, it is almost always by using Celtic as an implicitly recognised stand in for Irishness. Football- focussed comedy is one way in which stereotypes and an 'Othering' of the Irish in Scotland are reinforced, while deflecting any serious (satirical) engagement with deeper historical, social and political contexts (Reid, 2013).

Such anti-Irish racism is most often expressed by using the 'Catholic religion as a key marker of an alien Irish identity within a predominantly Protestant Scotland' (Walls and Williams, 2003: 634). This finds manifestation not only in institutionalised racism against Irish people, but in the effects upon the descendants of Irish immigrants. One way in which this imposed 'silence' is resisted is through the use of Celtic Football Club 'as a conduit for the confirmation of cultural identity' (Hayes, 2006: 6).

Celtic plays an important role in the cultural, social and political lives of the Irish diaspora in Scotland, and to understand where the Green Brigade fits into this culture, it is necessary to examine the inescapable ties the Club has not only to Ireland, but to Irish nationalism and Republicanism. Celtic's links to the Irish struggle are not a recent phenomenon, but go back to its

founding in 1887, with supporters, players and staff being involved in diverse political campaigns (Bradley, 1995: 35, quoted in Hayes, 2006: 7). The wider Irish community in Scotland offered key support in the Irish struggle, providing 'more money, guns and explosives than any other segment of the Irish diaspora' (Coogan, 2002: 242) and even mustering a full IRA battalion of 3,000 volunteers in Glasgow in 1919 (Gallagher, 1987).

This is a striking period in Scottish and Irish history, and left-wing and Irish Republican politics are still a feature of much of the symbolism and identity of a large number of Celtic supporters. Such manifestations of these politics will be explored through the words of the participants in this thesis.

Though the extent that Celtic fans identify as Irish is by no means universal, this is an important theme for ongoing research into Irishness in Scotland. Indeed, Hibs are an example of a club which has in many respects abandoned its Irish identity, but which, as Kelly (2007) argues, is renegotiating its relationship with Ireland. For many of the respondents to Bradley's study of second- and third-generation Irish immigrants in Scotland, which many Green Brigade members would also be, Celtic has acted as a 'safe space' for the expression of an otherwise contested or denied Irish identity.

> 'It was the only place you were allowed to express … a sort of an Irish identity. You were allowed to go see Celtic matches and express your irish identity. […] You know you can express an Irish identity and there's safety at Celtic Park, whereas you wouldn't be able to express it outside [of the Celtic environment]' (quoting interview with Francis Daly as part of the *Irish 2 Project*, Bradley, 2006: 1194).

Such a characterisation of Celtic as a space where normally suppressed identities can be expressed is also reaffirmed by Hayes (2006) in his study of the Tiocfaidh Ar La [sic] (TAL) fanzine.

> […] the importance of Celtic as a 'safe' setting for the expression of certain socio-political aspirations should not be under-stated. (Hayes, 2006: 11)

Hayes views TAL, and wider politicised expressions of a Celtic identity, as 'a form of resistance against the hegemony of British, and even Scottish, cultural values' (2006: 15). Founded in 1991, printing 40 issues, and lasting for 13 years in printed form before moving online (Hayes, 2006; TAL Fanzine, 2011; TAL blog, 2014), the TAL fanzine was in many respects the most sharply political expression of a particular left-wing, Irish Republican politics based around Celtic. The political stance is strikingly similar to the Green Brigades: 'we are pro-Celtic, pro-Republican, anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-sectarian, but most of all, anti-Rangers!' (Hayes, 2006: 12). TAL was highly critical of the ' 'sectarianism industry'; groups and campaigns set up to challenge 'sectarianism', but which they saw as a 'a pretext to dilute the Republican preferences' of many Celtic fans (Hayes, 2006: 14). The parallels with current government legislation, and the Green Brigade's criticism of it, are obvious.

'Celtic Fans Against Fascism', a group of Celtic fans committed to challenging racism and fascism amongst the Celtic support and beyond (Kuhn, 2011), also emerged partly from TAL, and there are still strong links between TAL and Anti Fascist Action and Red Action. The Independent Working Class Association (IWCA), founded in 1995, sprung from these groups (Red Action, 1996), and vociferously rejects 'the left who have failed the working class', instead advocating 'working class rule in working class areas' (IWCA, 2014). The links between militant anti fascists, Irish Republicans and the IWCA remains (O'Shea, 2014).

Hayes (2006: 12) defines the TAL fanzine as 'the sharpest remaining fragment of a long-standing political tradition amongst the Celtic support', and goes on to ponder whether the 'demise [of the

fanzine] may indeed be indicative of deeper trends in football culture'. The extent to which the Green Brigade have maintained a similar politics to TAL will be explored. It is worth noting that both Hayes and Bradley were writing in 2006, the year of the formation of the Green Brigade. It is now debatable whether Celtic Park still provides such a 'safe' environment for expressions of a politicised Irish identity.

As mentioned above, diaspora immigrant identities are by no means fixed and homogenous, and Hall (1990) speaks of a 'hybridity' of diaspora identity, which 'lives with and through, not despite, difference' (235). He argues that diaspora identities are 'constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference' (235).

As in the case of the Irish in Scotland, diaspora identities are particularly contentious when the immigrant group has also suffered colonisation, and now resides in the colonising country. The psychological trauma of colonisation, and the abusive relationship between the colonised and the coloniser, is spoken of extensively by Franz Fanon.

> Colonisation is not satisfied with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.'

This could be applied to the situation which the most vocal sections of the Irish in Scotland find themselves in. Not only has Ireland been colonised and subjugated by Britain, but discussions of this experience, and resistance to it, is either sanitised to the point of meaninglessness, or is criminalised.

Rangers and the 'Other'

Bradley, in his *Irish 2 Project*, notes that

> […] no interviewee mentioned Glasgow Rangers in their articulation of Celtic as the club of their community. This is in sharp contrast to the stereotypical view that Celtic and Glasgow Rangers require to be seen 'together' in popular commentary or in analytical terms. (2006: 1196)

Such an observation is important in the context of collective identity formation, and challenges the theory of a 'Bedouin Syndrome' whereby groups identify themselves in opposition to an 'Other'. As Giulianotti and Gerrard (2001) argue, for many Irish/Catholics/Celtic fans, Glasgow Rangers are seen as

> […] exemplifying and characterising important expressions and manifestations of the racism and sectarianism faced by the Irish diaspora in Scotland (referenced by Bradley, 2006: 1196)

The absence of Rangers from Bradley's interviewee's words is of real interest. He argues that Rangers are seen by many Celtic supporters as representing 'only the biggest and most obvious dominant discourses' (2006: 1197), and this shows that there is an awareness of wider historical, political, social and cultural contexts at play. In a different subcultural context, Stuart Hall's (1976), study on the mod and rocker subcultures questions whether 'the mod/rocker dichotomy was ever really essential to the self-definition of either group' (88).

Ultra culture: a definition

While themes of Celtic, Irishness and Republicanism are important to understand the Green Brigade, it is also necessary to examine what is meant by the term 'ultra'. The simplest definition of ultra is to support a football team in an exuberant, over-the-top, noisy and colourful way; to go beyond the norm of the 'average' supporter, and to be *ultra*-passionate about your team. Common to all ultra groups is an emphasis on choreographed displays ('tifos') within the stadium, involving a combination of some (or all) of the following: banners, flags, ticker tape, flares and fireworks (pyrotechnics/ 'pyro'), drumming and use of megaphones to synchronise chanting, singing and movement, remaining standing throughout the game, continuing to sing whether winning or losing, and staying until the very end of a match.

> These ritualistic performances build atmosphere and help delineate members from other fans. (Doidge, 2013: 248)

Ultra culture is most often associated with the Italian football scene, and for many, has connotations of right-wing political violence. Testa and Armstrong's (2010) account of the neofascist 'UltraS'[1] of Lazio and Roma is the most detailed study of this specifically right-wing aspect of a wider ultra scene. While it is true that right-wing, fascist ultra groups are extremely prominent throughout Europe, and in Italy dominate the scene, ultra is a (sub)cultural scene which has been adopted by both right and left-wing football fans and activists. Comparable examples of subcultures being spaces of direct contestation between fascist and anti-fascist activists would be the skinhead and punk scenes, where the venues and identities of the scenes are often literal battle grounds between ideologically opposed sides who recognise the political importance of predominantly youth

1 Testa and Armstrong (2010: 2) make a distinction between 'ultrá' and 'UltraS', with the former putting the football team first, while the latter see their group as important above all else, including the team. In this thesis I use 'ultra(s)' , as this is the terminology used by the participants, and is free of the right-wing connotations of 'UltraS'.

subcultures (Vysotsky, 2013).

With two exception (Testa, 2009; Testa and Armstrong, 2010), all the literature on political (ultra) fan culture which I have examined has focussed on left-wing groups, in Spain (Spaaij and Viñas, 2013), Italy (Doidge, 2013) and Egypt (Jerzak, 2013). As the Green Brigade explicitly identifies as a left-wing, anti-fascist ultra group, this literature has been particularly useful in exploring themes common to left-wing ultras in diverse social, cultural and political contexts. Below I will identify some common themes which emerge in the literature, and which are directly relevant to research findings.

Police as a radicalising factor,

Both Testa (2009) and Doidge (2013) refer to a 'militarization' of football stadia, and point to this as being an important factor in reinforcing group identity.

> The stadium has been militarized and this has helped to reinforce the identity of the ultras as the police become the symbol of oppression. (Doidge, 2013: 256)

Increasingly repressive policing of football fans, and ultra groups specifically, not only solidifies a collective group identity in opposition to the police and the state, but can also lead to a wider and increased politicisation.

> Contrary to police intentions, however, this intensifying harassment further politicized Ultras organizations, which began to identify resistance against the police as a key component of Ultra character. (Jerzak, 2013:246)

When opposition to the police becomes a 'key component of Ultra character', expressions of this increasing antagonism between ultra groups and the police take different forms depending on the context, but one slogan stands out as being common to all ultra groups, left and right-wing: 'A.C.A.B', sometimes written numerically as '1.3.1.2', stands for 'All Cops Are Bastards', and is a slogan which is global in its reach, being used as a concise and clear statement of opposition to the forces of the state by many different political actors, whether football fans or not. (Jerzak, 2013: 256; Doidge, 2013: 256).

This oppositional stance towards the police has resulted in deaths of fans and police alike, resulting in serious and intense confrontations. In Italy (right-wing) ultra groups have carried out violent attacks on police stations and officers, occasionally killing police officers (Testa, 2009: 57). The anti-police violence of right-wing ultra groups in Italy, as documented by Testa, must be understood in the context of an extremely violent Fascist movement which places violence as a central pillar of a collective identity.

In Egypt, as in the case studies on Livorno (Doidge: 2013), far-left supporters in Spain (Spaaij and Viñas, 2013), attitudes to the use of violence (invariably against fascists and racists), are varied, with its use (or not) being assessed against a number of different criteria, such as effectiveness and perception by a wider public. This shows that while violence is accepted as an often necessary tactic within a larger repertoire of actions, and that much of the symbolism and self-image of left-wing ultra groups has a very militant aesthetic, violence is not seen as an end in itself.

In the Egyptian Revolution 'Ultra groups became a surprisingly central protagonist', contributing their 'organizational unity, fighting experience, and rebellious ethos' to the wider movement (Jerzak,

2013: 247). Such prominence led to brutal repression by the Mubarak regime, most visibly demonstrated in the Port Said massacre (Kingsley, 2014; Dorsey, 2014). In the recent uprisings in Turkey, ultras from Istanbul clubs Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray, usually bitter rivals, united in clashes against police, again bringing to the barricades their extremely valuable experience of street fighting with the police, and a willingness to engage in direct and violent clashes with the state (Istanbul Uprising, 2014).

While the intensity and violence of the Egyptian context is not readily applicable to (Western) European societies, this conflict with the state is common to most politicised ultra groups, and effects the way that ultra groups organise and mobilise, both inside the stadia, and in political activism outside the stadia. The result is that "vigilance on state repression underlies the activities of many left-wing football fans [...]"(Spaaij and Viñas, 2013: 190; Doidge, 2013).

Police repression is clearly a very real part of the lived reality and collective identity of many, if not all, ultra groups, whether left or right-wing. Some of the reasons for this will be explained throughout this thesis, but essentially the threat lies in the fact that ultra groups are often large, well-organised networks of predominantly young (working-class) men, with varying degrees of politicisation, who are willing to engage in a politics which directly challenges the legitimacy of the state, whether inside football stadia or on the streets and in communities.

> Ultras asserted group autonomy in public space, a fact that challenged the control of the state in these spaces. [...] to them [the Egyptian police] it was the youth, in big numbers – very smart people - who could mobilize themselves quickly (Monatgue 2012c). (Jerzak, 2013: 245)

Ideological diversity and group unity

> A captain who looked back with surprise on the self-organization of the prisoners remarked that the seamen were ‘‘of that class . . . who are not easily controlled, and usually not the most ardent supporters of good order.’’ But the sailors drew on the tradition of hydrarchy as they implemented the order of the day: they governed themselves.
>
> (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 242)

Another common feature of left-wing ultra groups is a diversity of beliefs and ideologies, which are generally accepted and tolerated in the pursuit of unity and a common goal to support the club and operate effectively as a group, in the stadium and in political activism. In some respects left-wing ultra groups are similar to the 'motley crews' of sailors described by Linebaugh and Rediker (2000), in that they are firstly organised 'gangs', 'performing either similar tasks or different ones contributing to a single goal', but that they are also rebellious 'agglomerations of various crews and gangs [who possess] their own mobility and [are] often independent of leadership from above' (222). While questions of leadership will be explored using interview data, left-wing ultra groups certainly possess similarities with the motley crews of the Revolutionary Atlantic.

While Linebaugh and Rediker (2000) emphasis the linguistic and ethnic diversity of motley crews, we are more interested in the ideological diversity of ultra groups, and how diverse beliefs are negotiated in service of a common goal. Doidge (2013: 248), speaking about left-wing ultras in Livorno, cautions against thinking of 'fan groups, in this case ultras' as being 'homogenous'.

That ultra groups are not homogenous should not come as a surprise. The complexity and diversity of society does not suddenly cease to exist once someone steps inside a football stadium. For

anyone familiar with left-wing politics and attempts at coalitions between diverse left-wing groups and individuals who often 'share', at best, mutual suspicions, and at worst, outright hostility, the political unity *and* diversity of left-wing ultra groups is an important subject. Political differences are put aside in the interests of common goals, most obviously support for a particular football team. In an explicitly political sense, certain other broad platforms can be adopted which act as umbrellas under which the group coalesces and acts. The most obvious of these is anti-fascism, which has a history of attracting often ideologically opposed sections of the left to cooperate for a common cause. In the context of Spanish anti-fascism, Gemie and Schrafstetter describe it as

> a point of concentration, with which members of diverse political and cultural movements could identify (Gemie and Schrafstetter, 'Reassessing Anti-fascism', 417, quoted in Spaaij and Viñas, 2013: 191).

This balancing of diverse beliefs is done, however, in a way which builds

> those forms of solidarity and identification which make common struggle and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and interests [Stuart Hall, New Ethnicities, 445, quoted in Spaaij and Viñas, 2013: 188].

This political commitment to a goal and strategy which transcends (though doesn't silence) different individual beliefs is but one way in which competing political narratives are mitigated against, with the organisational structure of ultra groups being another way.

> […] Ultra leaders advocate for horizontal structures that further limit the influence of any single ideology, balancing groups' central attitudes and members' diverse beliefs. (Jerzak,

2013: 244)

This adherence to horizontal structures is not merely motivated by practical concerns, but also comes from a desire to reject the authoritarianism and undemocratic nature of fascism and the right generally (interview in Spaaij and Viñas, 2013: 191).

It should be noted, however, that many left-wing ultra groups are not entirely horizontal in every aspect of their activity, as is hinted at by the phrase 'Ultras leaders' above. For example, Jerzak describes the 'anti-authoritarian' ultras of Cairo's Al-Ahly and Zamalek football clubs as combining 'elements of centralized and decentralized leadership' (Jerzak, 2013: 244). In the context of the Egyptian Revolution, and also the context of physical force anti-fascism elsewhere, a combination of 'partly centralized, partly decentralized structures' has the benefit of allowing for both 'group unity and strategic flexibility during clashes' or other forms of action (Jerzak, 2013: 248).

Community and identities

Ideas of communities and identities are important amongst ultra groups as ways of maintaining unity and constructing common narratives, but also because ultra groups, and football clubs more generally, act as ways of expressing such ideas (Doidge, 2013: 247). This physical space is most visibly the football stadium, which for ultra groups is the primary space where they present themselves to others, and where 'symbolic struggles' are enacted, representing 'pre-existing football rivalries and identities' (Spaaij and Viñas, 2013: 185).

These 'pre-existing […] rivalries and identities' are of course completely dependent on the particular context of each group, and the historical, cultural and political space and time in which they are

situated. The context of the Green Brigade will be discussed later, and it will become clear how important ideas of identity are to the formation of the group's culture and action. Castells explains that in contexts where actors are, or perceive themselves to be, 'devalued and/ or stigmatized by the logic of domination', 'resistance identities' will be collectively constructed as a way to oppose the hegemonic principles and values of society. (Castells, in Spaaij and Viñas, 2013:184)

Doidge discusses the way in which dress and other visual aspects of ultra culture reinforce identity and solidarity.

> The rituals surrounding football create other symbols of local identity. The paraphernalia surrounding ultras spectacles help generate the collective effervescence and emotional energy which reinforce symbols of solidarity. The banners and flags incorporated into the spectacles take on additional meaning to the participants. (Doidge, 2013: 250)

A resistance to the commercialisation of football is also a common theme for all ultra groups (Jerzak, 2013: 242), though faces a tension in that

> […] Ultra members resent the commercialization of profit-seeking soccer clubs even as they simultaneously remain committed to an idealized identity of their teams. (Jerzak, 2013: 242)

'Bedouin syndrome': alliances and rivalries, often extending transnationally

Many discussions of Celtic, especially in the Scottish media and in Scottish society generally, tend to situate Celtic and its supporters in opposition to their bitter rivals, Rangers. Such rivalries are discussed in the literature on ultra groups, and in discussion of identities generally, and are worth

taking a moment to look at. The theory of the orientalist-sounding 'Bedouin Syndrome' aims to explain the alliances and rivalries as

> developed between those who share your views and those who support your rivals. (Doidge, 2013: 258)

In conclusion, ultra culture is diverse, though there exist certain common features of the majority of groups, whether left-wing or right-wing. In this thesis, however, it is left-wing groups which we are most interested in. Attitudes towards the police, notions of (and performance of) community and identity, group cultures, rivalries and alliances, and neoliberal capitalism are all themes which recur in the literature on ultra groups.

Subcultures

Definitions of 'culture'

To speak of the 'culture' of a group necessarily means spending time defining what is meant by the term in this particular context. Dick Hebdige and Raymond Williams both give a sense of the difficulty in giving an exact definition of culture; Hebidge states that culture is a 'notoriously ambiguous concept' (1979: 5), while Williams declares culture to be 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams, 1976:76).

Such difficulty should be acknowledged, but we must push on and attempt a working definition if we are to examine what we mean by 'group/ultra/rebel' cultures in the specific context of this thesis. Hebdige (1979: 7), quoting Williams (1958) offers a useful overview of some of the contention around the meaning of the term 'culture', and simplifies it to a battle over whether the term should

refer to

> 'culture as a standard of excellence, [versus] culture as a 'whole way of life'.

This idea of culture as a 'standard of excellence' has connotations of 'high culture', of 'civilised' cultivation, of formal education, and a well-developed sense of aesthetics. Raymond William's theory of culture as a 'whole way of life' was challenged by E.P. Thompson, who offered

> his own more rigorously Marxist formulation: 'the study of relationships in a whole way of *conflict*'. (Hebdige, 1979: 10)

This idea of culture as being a result of, and actor in, a wider social, economic or political *struggle* and *conflict* is useful for any student of 'rebellious' cultures/subcultures, and of social movements more generally. The applicability of E.P. Thompson's idea of culture as a 'whole way of conflict' will be of particular use to this study, exploring as it does often very visual expressions of a 'rebel' culture and identity.

Hegemony

Gramsci's theory of hegemony is vital to understand the relationship between culture and power. Cohen gives the following definition of the term

> Hegemony denotes the moment when the ruling class is able not merely to coerce its subordinates to conform, but to exercise the sort of power which wins and shapes consent, which frames alternatives and structures agendas in ways which appear natural. (Cohen,

1987: xxiv)

Thus power functions in a more subtle, less coercive manner, crafting narratives that appear 'common sense', that pervade every area of life, and set the parameters for discussion and public (and private) discourse, in a way which serves the dominant political, economic and social order. It is this setting of parameters that is one of the more subtle operations of a hegemonic order. Dissent is allowed *up until* a certain point. The total hegemony of the dominant order allows for diversity of opinion, but only in so far as opinions do not *fundamentally* question that order.

> A hegemonic order prescribes, not the specific content of ideas, but the *limits* within which ideas and conflicts are to be resolved. (Hall, 1976: 39)

Hall, quoting Gramsci, also refers to a '"total social authority" over subordinate classes' (Hall, 1976: 38). One of the issues to be explored for this thesis is the various ways that the Irish in Scotland, particularly as politicised, working class football fans, have been constructed as a 'subordinate class'. Hebdige refers to Howard Becker's 1963 book The Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance, and offers one way in which this process of 'Othering', of making a group 'Outsiders', can function.

> [Outsiders] as one of the best example of the transactional method in which the construction of deviant groups is interpreted as the result of a dynamic process whereby those in power define the limits of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour through *labelling.* (Hebdige, 1979: 179)

The Irish in Scotland have been labelled as 'Outsiders' and 'Others', and such marginalisation has particular relevance for this study of a group which fights against the imposed 'silencing' of their

community in ways which seek to challenge the hegemonic discourse in Scotland.

And so, when talking of hegemony in the context of the Irish community in Scotland, one has to ask whether or not the narrative of Scottish (and British) society really was or is hegemonic amongst the Irish community in Scotland. The continued links between the Irish diaspora in Scotland and the 'mother country' of Ireland show no signs of weakening, and undoubtedly a countering of Scottish and British narratives, especially as they relate to the place of the Irish in Scotland and the colonisation of Ireland, still form an important part of the collective culture of this community, expressed most visibly through support for Celtic. The 'Celtic Minded' collection of essays on 'Religion, Politics, Society, Identity... and Football' (Bradley, 2004) offers a diverse range of voices and describes the central role Celtic has played as an expression and reaffirmation of Irish identity in Scotland.

Parent culture of the subculture

Having explored various conceptions of what 'culture' means, we should now turn our attention to ideas of 'subculture', that term which can be tinged with an air of clandestinity, subversion, marginalisation and conflict. Perhaps a good starting point is to ask, 'sub' to what? Stuart Hall uses the term 'parent culture' to refer to the culture from which a subculture emerges.

> We must, first, see sub-cultures in terms of the relation to the wider class-cultural networks of which they form a distinctive part. When we examine this relationship between a sub-culture and the 'culture' of which it is a part, we call the latter the 'parent' culture. (Hall, 1976: 13)

The relationship between a parent culture and a subculture is a complex one, and is, I would argue, of use in examining the Green Brigade. Cohen explains some of the complexities of subcultures as they relate to the parent culture, seeing the subculture as trying to resolve the tension between being a distinct way of being and doing, yet taking influence from, and being situated to an extent within (or on the margins of), a wider and more established culture.

> [subculture as a] 'compromise solution between two contradictory needs: the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents … and the need to maintain the parental identifications' (Cohen, 1972a, [Sub-cultural conflict …]). (Hebdige, 1979: 77)

The culture(s) which form the parent(s) to the Green Brigade's particular collective identity and culture are several: ultra culture, working class Scottish (specifically Glaswegian), general Celtic support, Irish Republicanism, the working-class (casual) football scene, anti-fascist networks, and (transnational) left-wing ultra culture to name some of the most obvious. Another important question will be the extent to which the Green Brigade has created its own distinct (sub)culture within or apart from the parent cultures mentioned above, and whether or not it is even possible to make clear distinctions between these different parent cultures.

Hall (1976: 13) urges that as well as relating subcultures to their parent cultures, they must also be related to the dominant, hegemonic culture. He gives the example of different subcultures within the working class parent culture, for example the criminal or 'respectable' subcultures. Although they are differing subcultures within the parent culture, they all share the fact that they are formed within a working class parent culture which is itself subordinate to the dominant bourgeois culture. Hebdige (1979) warns against not oversimplifying the links between the subculture and the parent culture, and such a warning is useful given the multiplicity of cultural reference points which a

subculture can draw from.

> We should be careful when attempting to tie back subcultural style to its generative context not to overstress the fit between respectable working-class culture and the altogether more marginal forms with which we are concerned here. (Hebdige, 1979: 78)

So what are the characteristics of a subculture? They must 'exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their 'parent' culture (Hall, 1976:13), and are 'focussed around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces etc.' (Hall, 1976: 14). Examples of these 'focal concerns' could be attending football matches and performing in a certain way, a commitment to certain political beliefs and values, the use of flags, banners and other symbolism, and confluence in football stadia or certain geographical areas of a city. While a subculture must stand apart from the parent culture in order to be considered separate, it must also be bound in significant ways to the parent culture, for example by reinterpreting certain activities, symbols, rituals etc.

Hebdige (1979: 113) also states that subcultures, 'contrary to popular myth', are 'characterized by an extreme orderliness. Hebdige in particular examines style as an important expression and activity of subcultures, and speaks of 'the idea of style as a form of Refusal' (1979: 2). Thornton (2012) uses the near-obsession with sartorial one-upmanship as a way to explore the football 'casual' scene, arguing convincingly that such a phenomenon, though most readily associated with the 'moral panics' of violence, should be considered a subculture in its own right, and shows that the scene extended well beyond 'the scrap'. The casual scene is an important precursor not only to the Green Brigade, but to the whole ultra scene. Emerging in England in the 1970s, the casual scene followed in the wake of the skinhead, suedehead and punk subcultures (Thornton, 2012). Casual was a

merging of football rivalries, violence, music, and expensive designer clothes, and the popularity of the scene over the last decades has had a substantial influence on mainstream fashion, music, and of course, football (Thornton, 2012).

In the study of subcultures, Hall states that

> 'Class' does not simply *replace* sub-culture in a reductive way. Nor is class taken as a set of given, 'background', sociological variables. (Hall, 1976: 35)

Hall (1976) argues that we must recognise the importance of class when discussing subculture, as for class to cease being a critical site of examination, the economic conditions of society, in particular the productive relations of capitalism, would have to be destroyed.

> Class conflict, then, is rooted and embodied in this culture: it cannot 'disappear' - contrary to the ideology of affluence – until the productive relations which produce and sustain it disappear. (Hall, 1976: 41)

He writes that although subcultures have various ways of setting themselves apart from their parent culture, and class, they are never the less bound by the same socio-economic relation to the dominant, bourgeois culture and class, and that 'their subculture remains like elements in their class culture – subordinate and subordinated' (Hall, 1976: 15). The importance of class, both as a socio-economic explanation for the existence of the Green Brigade, and in terms of the collective identity of the group, will be explored later in this thesis.

> The registering of group identity, situation and trajectory in a visible style both consolidates the group from a loosely-focussed to a tightly-bounded entity: and sets the group off,

> distinctively, from other similar and dissimilar groups. (Hall, 1976: 56)

Hall (1990) argues, however, that identity is not an 'accomplished fact' which culture then gives expression to, but that instead perhaps we might think of

> identity as 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation (Hall, 1990: 220).

This begs the question of the how the Green Brigade 'produces' its identity, and shows the complexity of notions of identity, or identities, and the organic and ever changing nature not only of identity itself, but in the ways in which it influences, and is influenced by, culture.

Folk devils: the demonisation of subcultures

Any discussion of the Green Brigade will inevitably be faced by the issue which has defined them, not only in the public consciousness, but within the group itself: the issue of the conflict between them and the authorities, whether the Scottish Government, the police, or Celtic Plc. In particular this thesis will examine the policing of the group, its effects, and the possible motivations for repression. Several useful theoretical frameworks are provided by now-legendary studies of subcultures, and particularly the demonisation of certain groups by the powerful in society.

The theory which most interests us speaks of the way in which groups are constructed as 'deviant', and we will continue to use this term as well as 'deviance', not as a moral judgement, but in the sociological context in which it was intended. Becker (1963: 9) argues that certain groups are constructed as deviants through a process of 'labelling' them as 'Outsiders' who have transgressed

particular rules and mores created *by* society. He argues that 'deviance is created by society', in that such deviancy only exists in so far as it violates these rules. This is known as the Transactional Approach to Deviance.

> deviance is created by society […] *social groups deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance* and by applying those tiles to particular persons and labelling them as outsiders. […] deviance is *not* a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'.
>
> (Becker, 1963: 9)

Cohen (1972) describes Lemert's (1967) writings which make a distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary deviation'. Primary deviation is the initial act of deviance, which doesn't necessarily have an effect outside of the immediate act. Secondary deviance, however, is when

> the individual employs his deviance, or a role based upon it, as a means of defence, attack or adjustment to the problems created by the societal reaction to it. (Cohen, 1972: 14)

We will return to such an idea in discussing the way in which the Green Brigade has responded to its criminalisation and police repression, and examine how, if at all, the group has employed its 'deviance' in a defensive or combative manner to address the 'societal reaction' to their perceived deviance.

Lemert (quoted in Cohen, 1972: 15) explicitly states his belief that the hypothesis 'social control leads to deviance' is a perfectly sound starting point for a study of deviance. The 'deviants' self-identification as such is not guaranteed, and on occasion does not stick.

> […] the link between the reaction and the individual's incorporation of this into his self-identity is by no means inevitable; the deviant label, in other words, does not always 'take'. (Cohen, 1972: 15)

Cohen (1972) discusses the role of the mass media in the demonisation of certain groups/subcultures. Whether the Mods and Rockers fighting in Brighton or Margate, or the 'Mugging crisis' of Hall (1978), the mass media plays an important role in amplifying societal fears, and in reinforcing the labelling of certain groups, such as urban black youth, or football fans, as deviants. This is particularly the case in 'troubling times'; times of social unrest, uncertainty or conflict.

> 'Troubling times', when social anxiety is widespread but fails to find an organised public or political expression, give rise to the displacement of social anxiety on to convenient scapegoat groups. (Hall, 1976: 72)

Though this study can only hypothesise the state's motivations for criminalising the Green Brigade, such a process echoes the view of 'working-class youth groups […] as symptomatic of deeper civil unrest' (Hall, 1976:72). There can be multiple scapegoats, and historically the Irish in Britain have played this role, though propaganda against immigrants, particularly Muslims, is perhaps the most striking example of the demonisation of certain groups as scapegoats, though under the austerity of the Tory-Lib Dem UK government the most vulnerable in society (the disabled, the poor, welfare recipients) have been demonised in order to justify severe cuts to social welfare provision.

> […] it is difficult to estimate firmly whether the more overt 'attack' on youth was of greater or lesser significance than the tendency […] of the dominant culture to seek and find, in

> 'youth', the folk-devils to people its nightmare: the nightmare of a society which, in some fundamental way, had lost its way and authority over its young, which had failed to win their hearts, minds and consent […] (Hall, 1976:74)

Use of social movement theory to make sense of these structures

As Hall (1976) repeatedly stresses, class does not replace subculture, but equally, subcultures are not capable on their own of radical social change which challenges, and ideally vanquishes, capitalism and the system of class privilege.

> There is no 'sub-cultural solution' to working-class youth unemployment, educational disadvantage, compulsory miseducation, dead-end jobs, the routinisation and specialisation of labour, low pay and loss of skills. Sub-cultural strategies cannot match, meet or answer the structuring dimensions emerging in this period for the class as a whole. (Hall, 1976: 47)

This suggests the limitations of subcultures alone as vehicles for radical social change. What is needed, however, is some other framework to view groups with subcultural features which are also politicised and politically engaged. Piotrowski's (2013) examination of European alterglobalists poses questions about the links between subcultural groups and social movements, and the next section will examine previous work on social movements.

Social movement theory: Some perspectives

Diani (Diani and McAdam 2003: 6), sketches some of the different conceptual frameworks used to make sense of politicised, collective actions. A common theme of all of these definitions is an element of conflict, opposition, breaking of limits, and challenge to the direction of the historical process, the system, society, and power holders. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) term such oppositional positioning as 'contentious politics', but go on to argue, however, that 'not all episodes of contentious politics are social movements' (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007: 132), and caution against the labelling of all types of contentious, collective political actions as 'social movements'. The danger, they argue, is that the use of 'social movement' as an umbrella term obfuscates the complexities and peculiarities of different types of oppositional politics (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007: 114-115) .

Della Porta and Diani offer the following four features which differentiate social movements from other types of political activism and organisation.

> We will consider social movements – and, in particular, their political component – as (1) informal networks, based (2) on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilise about (3) conflictual issues, through (4) the frequent use of varied forms of protest. (1998: 16)

Another perspective on social movements is Diani's (1992), which refers to social movements as networks

> 'of informal interactions, between a plurality of individuals, groups and associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared cultural identity' (Diani

1992:13, quoted in Diani and McAdam, 2003: 301).

This definition would further point to the importance of the relationship between (political) culture, and identity formation, as key components of social movements, an importance which Tilly also affirms

> By a social movement we often mean a group of people identified by their attachment to some particular set of beliefs […] (Tilly, 1978: 9).

Social movements hold such importance in the study of human society not merely for their cultural and sociological richness and significance, but because they hold the potential for collective action. Johnston (2014), offers the following attempt to condense previous writings about social movements, in order to give a broad definition which we may then build upon. For him, the

> […] broad social change goals and the unique repertoire of marches, demonstrations, and protests – set the defining boundaries of what a social movement is. (Johnston, 2014: 25)

Any attempt to succinctly define what a social movement is risks losing the complexity and richness of social movement studies, and in the process risks excluding important conceptual tools which we may employ in our own studies and activism. The above definitions are useful in order to guide us in the task of making sense of, and learning from, attempts at collective action and the groups and networks from which give birth to such attempts. In the spirit of this 'practical' application of social movement theory, I think it useful to point to

> Charles Tilly's observation (1978: 8-9) that the field's basic analytical dimensions are: (1) the groups and organizations that make up a collective action; (2) the events that are part of

> the action repertoire; and (3) the ideas that unify the groups and guide their protests. (Johnston, 2014: 3)

This thesis will explore, though not necessarily in this order, (1) the group itself and its relations with other groups/individuals/networks; (2) the action repertoires of the group, either solely as a group, or in collaboration with others; and (3) the ideas, culture and identity which unifies the group and influence, and are influenced by, the group's actions.

This third point is particularly important when exploring the Green Brigade. As the data will show, the group is a dynamic and vibrant mixture and expression of several different identities (ultra, Irish Republican, socialist, anti-fascist, community activist, working-class etc.), where different historical, political and cultural traditions give expression to new identities and repertoires of action. Eyerman and Jamison and their study of cognitive praxis within social movements (1991) explores social movements 'as processes in formation [and as] forms of activity by which individuals create new kinds of social identities.' (1991: 2)

In examining the importance of group culture and its influence on the actions of the group, consciousness and politicisation are key themes, and Eyerman and Jamison (1991: 164) point to the way that consciousness is 'formed' in the context of a social movement', as a form of identity. Eyerman and Jamison and their study of cognitive praxis within social movements (1991) explores social movements 'as processes in formation [and as] forms of activity by which individuals create new kinds of social identities.' (1991: 2)

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This leads one to think of Gramsci's (1971) concept of the organic intellectual, the intellectual formed from within a movement or class, as opposed to the intellectual who writes and thinks professionally as a career choice. The emergence and development of organic intellectuals, or of knowledge influenced -identities, within groups and movements is relevant to this study of the political culture of the Green Brigade. As Eyerman and Jamison write

> Social movements not only create spaces in which established intellectuals and established practices are reinterpreted, they also provide opportunities for new intellectual types to emerge. (1991: 119)

Just why and how these 'new intellectual' types emerge, and how individuals within the group view and relate to this concept of knowledge/consciousness/politicisation, is a question which will partly be explored by looking at the interview data.

Freire's (1972) theories of radical pedagogy offer some insightful ways to approach themes of learning and political discussion. Rejecting the 'banking' method of education, he proposes a 'problem-posing' approach which emphasises critical thinking, in which the unequal relationship between teacher and student is deconstructed, and each share in a mutual processes of examination and dialogue. This is partly achieved through the use of 'generative themes': topics, ideas, experiences etc. which speak directly to the learner, and which can be used to generate discussion and dialogue with the aim of exploring other themes.

Freire advocates 'praxis', the mutual act of reflecting *and* acting upon the world, in order to change

it. He states that action without reflection is mere 'activism', or 'action for action's sake', while the 'sacrifice of action' becomes 'verbalism', 'an alienated and alienating 'blah' '(1972: 60). He views 'liberating education' as consisting of 'acts of cognition, not transferrals of information' (53), which 'rejects communiqués and embodies communication' (52). Freire's Freire's approach to learning will prove a useful framework to examine the aspects of the Green Brigade which deal with themes of learning, politicisation and discussion.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Methods

Very little serious work has been written on the Green Brigade and this is the first academic study which has been conducted with the participation and cooperation of the group. I have drawn upon external sources, such as academic, activist and journalistic articles, material produced by the group itself, but have used semi-structured interviews as the principal source of data.

The primary focus of the thesis has been the attitudes, experiences and thoughts of the participants themselves, foregrounding their voices as a way to explore and critique specific aspects of the Green Brigade, in particular their political culture, activities and experiences of policing.
The Green Brigade as a topic of investigation deeply resonates with my own experiences as a second-generation Irish Scot, with expressions of a politicised Irish identity linked to other struggles transnationally. Croteau et al. (2004) argue that social movement research is too often disconnected from the movements which are studied, and I am mindful of Cox and Fominaya's (2009: 10) warning of the dangers of producing 'one kind of work for the “simple” in our own movements and one for the elite in the universities.' This work was never intended solely as the fulfilment of an academic requirement, and from the outset was conceived of as a project which could be used and adapted by the group themselves to aid their self-reflection, and to capture a broad, yet detailed, picture of the group.

Beyond just the specific context of the Green Brigade, this research seeks to add to the literature on (left-wing) ultra groups, and to show the connections between this particular style of football support, and contentious politics. I view this as a radical form of research which produces 'knowledge that serves the purposes of radical politics' (Becker and Horowitz, 1972: 54). Of course,

intention is not enough, and 'a radical rhetoric or ideological posture does not inevitably result in politically useful sociological work' (Becker and Horowitz, 1972: 64). While acknowledging my own closeness to the Green Brigade in terms of friendships, politics and biographies, I have sought to move beyond rhetoric and postures, but instead to engage critically but sympathetically with the group.

Having decided that my research would focus on the Green Brigade, it was clear from the start that a form of qualitative research would be the most fruitful for a number of reasons, both political and practical. This has been accompanied by constant re-evaluating and questioning of my own role within this project, taking my own subjectivities into account and placing these within the specific context of the research.

Free and Hughson (2003: 152) recognise the difficulty for researchers of addressing 'provocative themes', such as sexism, homophobia and racism amongst those they study, and the risks of 'jeopardizing rapport', or writing-up findings in such a way that would 'leave the researcher feeling that he or she has the betrayed the group's trust.' Despite these difficulties, they argue that the 'potentially larger problems' of ignoring such issues can lead to

> Over-identification with the group and involving the researcher in a self-deceptive form of underdog sympathy, fuelled by selective readings of concepts such as “carnival”, which tend to celebrate the subversive potential of supporter behaviour and overlook potentially disturbing or contradictory aspects of the data. (152)

I do not subscribe to a positivist approach (Fielding and Thomas, 2001) to the study of reality, and do not believe there is an objective 'truth' which we can uncover and arrive at by way of a

scientifically-grounded approach to research, detached from what we study. This, of course, is not to deny the need for academic and intellectual rigour, but is a rejection of the philosophical, and especially the political, implications of assuming that there is an objectively-verifiable truth; a reality which stands alone and is the 'natural' state of things, and a reality which exists independently of human experiences and perceptions. .

I believe instead that 'individuals and groups construct their own version of reality', and that 'the social world consists of multiple, subjective realities (Clarke, 2001: 32). The social world is not a fixed, immutable entity, but instead is crafted and shaped by complex social, economic and political forces. The political implication for this is that the world, society, can be changed by our own efforts, and that we are not powerless, agency-less beings under the microscope of detached, emotionless (social) scientists.

Quantitative research was not suitable or feasible for a study of the Green Brigade. This is partly because quantitative research methods are based upon a largely 'numerical approach to collection and analysis of data', which typically 'involves large-scale empirical studies using social survey techniques to collect data from representative samples of the population drawn from a wide geographical area' (Clarke, 2001: 34).

As the Green Brigade have a small 'official' membership, I focused on a micro-level examination of the experiences and perceptions of a small sample of group members, allowing me to explore 'the meaning that events and situations have for participants' (Clarke, in Gilbert, p 34), for example exploring participants' political development and the moments which held most importance for them.

I initially planned to undertake Participatory Action Research (PAR) with the group (Kindon et al. 2007). PAR has many definitions, but in its essence it is a type of action research in which researchers and participants work cooperatively on a project in order to affect some form of change. The intention is to break down, or at least consciously challenge, the hierarchical boundaries and power imbalances which come with a researcher entering a situation with the purpose of carrying out a study (Skeggs, 1994). In the context I wished to use it, it would have been a collaborative effort to firstly identity an important or areas which the Green Brigade wished to examine, and then to carry out a collaborative project with the aim of effecting a tangible change for the better.

It soon became apparent that this would be unfeasible for a number of reasons. Firstly, the group is close-knit and I have been on the fringes up until now, attending events, occasional football matches, and socialising with a few of the members. Secondly, the group is understandably suspicious of those who wish to document the group, for fear of being infiltrated by journalists, or worse, undercover police. Thirdly, due to police and state repression the majority of members' time has been spent on combatting these effects, resulting in many things being 'put on the back burner', or being dismissed as too time consuming or not worth the energy.

This study is informed by a case study design (Bryman, 2001), in that it has focussed intensively upon a single group, to examine in detail the activity, culture and experiences of group members. The main method used was semi-structured interviews. Mason (2002: 62) refers to an 'interactional exchange of dialogue' within qualitative interviewing, where interviews can be conducted in a variety of ways, for example as focus groups and group interviews, telephone or internet exchanges, or as one-to-one interviews. I decided to use semi-structured interviews as my primary tool data collection, though I also made use of more informal email and internet communication to organise and clarify the process of conducting these interviews.

The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they allow the researcher and the participant to have 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess 1984: 102, quoted in Mason). This means that the interview can create a more informal, relaxed environment where pre-set questions are not stuck to in a rigid manner, but instead themes can be explored in more depth when necessary, questions added, or questions left out. This approach recognises that some participants will talk more openly about certain themes, and acknowledges the importance and significance of silences as much as verbalisations.

> Qualitative interviewing […] tends to be seen as involving the construction and reconstruction of knowledge more than the excavation of it. (Mason, 2002)

Silverman (2005: 34) recognises the researcher's own subjectivities can be further deepened by a sense of loyalty to the group they are conducting research with. This is something I have been aware of throughout the process, though I feel I have struck a balance between being honest in my intentions, loyal to the purpose and general beliefs of the group, while seeing a critical perspective as being in their best interests. Primarily, this was achieved through self-reflection, as well as through conversations with participants and close friends, in which I was conscious of the risk of romanticising or glamourising the group, and thus losing the richness of contradictions and complexities.

Negotiating access with the 'sponsors/gatekeepers'

The process by which I gained initial access to the group is very similar to the way in which Giulianotti (1995) went about conducting his ethnographic research into Aberdeen and Hibernian (Hibs) football 'casuals'. He was close friends with three Aberdeen casuals, had gone to school with

many of them, and shared a common 'age, attire, and argot' with this group. These biographical details and personal relationships gave him initial access to this group, and he gradually built on this by attending social events and home and away matches.

It is important to make a note of my own background. I am of Irish-Scottish descent, brought up in Scotland, and have been a Celtic fan my whole life. I am of a similar age to the participants, would share many of the same views and interests, and have many of the same cultural and political reference points, especially Irish Republicanism. I have been involved in Palestine solidarity activism for many years, and this was where I first made contact with some members. Additionally, the initial contact in the group knew I was not a member of certain left-wing groups who are, at best, viewed with suspicion, as the data will show. My argot would be pretty much the same as most members,. One definite marker for me is the fact that my accent is neither west coast Scottish nor east coast Scottish, but is a mixture of Irish and Scottish, depending on where I am, who I'm with, and the effort I make to have one accent more prominent. I could be considered as a 'marginal native' (Armstrong 1998) or a 'relative insider' (Gianlianotti 1991, 1993, 1995a, 1995b) (Hughson 1998, 49-50) (quoted in Free and Hughson, 2003:138), in that I have been on the peripheries of the group, know some key members and have met many others through this project.

The process of the group's decision to participate in the study is also instructive of the way decisions are made within the group. Initially I proposed to my contact the idea of doing some kind of study of the Green Brigade. This member can be considered as somewhere in between a 'sponsor' and a 'gatekeeper' (Bryman, 2001: 295), in that they not only vouched for my activist credentials as well as my 'soundness', but also had important roles within the group and were well respected and trusted. At first he was sceptical that others would consent to this, but suggested I contact another member. Following contact with this other member I began a dialogue with them about the

possibility of this project and the possible direction it could take. This participant can also be considered as a 'sponsor' and 'gatekeeper', and these two members were crucial facilitating this research.

I submitted a proposal to the these two members outlining in very broad terms the kinds of themes I would like to explore, and suggesting some possible ways of doing this, for example using semi-structured interviews and group interviews. The response was that my ideas were far too broad and that I was essentially wasting their time. The reason for this was I was keen to have the input of the group as to the best way I could be of use to them. My attitude was that PAR should be of direct use to the group, and for this to happen I must allow them to direct the areas of study which they thought would be most relevant to their needs and circumstances.

I subsequently responded with a more detailed proposal, specifying the areas I wanted to look at, giving a plan and structure, and suggesting ways the research could be conducted. This proposal received a much more positive response, and I won the support of two members within the group who were influential, largely due to the active roles they have played in the more political activities, particularly in organising political education nights. Next, the proposal was put to the group for discussion, as far as I know on the private online forum where much of the group's non face-to-face discussions occur.

Several weeks later, I received a message informing me that consensus wasn't reached on the proposal, so it went to a vote with the agreement that the decision would be respected by all, but that the resultant work, interviews and participation would be at the discretion of individual members, and as long as the project did not impact upon the essential activities of the group, it would be respected. After some to-ing and fro-ing, it transpired that the first vote had been taken

without all of the members participating. After the vote, six members, who had not been online at the time of the vote, cast their decisions in support of participating in the project, and these votes swung the decision in the project's favour. The consensus now was that participation in the research would be of use to the group, provided it did not interfere with more pressing matters.

When the project had been agreed, I continued to correspond with these two members, and on my return to Scotland (from Ireland) I met up with them both. We discussed, informally, how they felt the study could be of use to the group. Essentially, they felt that it was worthwhile to document the Green Brigade in a more systematic and serious way than had been done before, and that there is a wealth of history and culture which deserves to be put down in writing. While this was conceived of as an act of preserving their history, it was also spoken of as a way for the group to set the record straight, and to show that they were not the 'folk devils' the media and some in Scottish society made them out to be, but that instead they did positive work for their communities and were 'merely' a bunch of socially-conscious football fans. A third motivation for participation in the study was to use the findings as a resource for younger or potential members to read as a way to understand the fundamentals of the group, its history, culture and activities. Such research would usually involve a lot of time spent trawling through hundreds, if not thousands, of pages of internet forums, and instead a written record, direct from members, could be created.

Participants

I undertook a convenience sampling (Bryman, 2001), interviewing participants on the basis that they were members of the Green Brigade, and my sample of participants was primarily the result of the sponsors/gatekeepers' own suggestions. I interviewed five participants, four men, and one women. The ethnic backgrounds were varied, but any more detailed information could identify

participants. All participants knew each other, and I knew two of the participants before starting the interviews. Although individual participants' biographies were discussed in the interviews, due to ethical and legal consideration I had to exclude details that would identify individual voices and participants. This was done for obvious reasons, for example because the group is relatively small, and all members are known to the police to some degree. I did, however, consciously seek out one of the few women members of the group as a participant, and feel that I have given voice not only to her own personal experiences as a member, but have examined the male members' attitudes to sexism and gender through specific questions addressing these themes.

All of the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, one-to-one, and using a digital dictaphone, while also talking notes. I provided an information sheet (Appendix 1) sheet with the questions if the participant wanted clarification. For all but one participant, this was the first time we had discussed the themes I was looking to explore. Having allowed sufficient time for participants to read the information sheet and ask questions, I asked them to sign a consent form [Appendix 2].

I approached each interview with a set of approximately fifteen questions (Appendix 3), not necessarily asking them in the same order, and sometimes omitting or adding questions depending on what the participant was speaking about. I made sure to follow up particularly interesting or unusual information, and to clarify any ambiguous points, for example, whether or not a participant was speaking figuratively. At the end of each interview I asked for feedback about how the interview could be improved, and also if there was anything further the participant would like to talk about. This then informed the next interview, for example by focussing on a particular theme such as sexism. For the one woman participant, I made sure to tailor some of my questions to explore her experiences of the group as a woman, though I also asked her the same questions I had

asked the other participants.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, during and before the research project I attended many events with the Green Brigade, including numerous Celtic matches, group-organised social events, and a fundraiser, I took part in the anti-discrimination football tournament in 2013 and 2014. I have participated in Palestine demonstrations with members, and was also invited to an all-members meeting, with around 70-80 in attendance, which is normally completely closed to non-members.

As well as semi-structured interviews and an examination of relevant literature, I have included material produced by the Green Brigade, particularly images of group banners, corteos and stickers, as well as information from their website (Green Brigade, 2014) and online forum (Green Brigade forum, 2014). While Bryman (2001) discusses some of the difficulties in using photographs as research, particularly due to the subjective nature of representation, the majority of the photographs document the group's banners and other visual material, or the corteos. Therefore, it is the banners themselves which are most open to interpretation, and a discussion on active or passive audience interpretation of them (Bryman, 2001). For practical reasons, however, I have been unable to provide a detailed analyses of the group's banners, though even a cursory look shows a myriad of cultural, political and social reference points and reinterpretations.

Analysis

I transcribed all five interviews myself, directly from the dictaphone to my laptop, without the use of software. I decided to transcribe all interviews in their totality, leaving nothing out, and remaining completely faithful to the participants' words, tones and any unusual mannerisms, for example gestures with hands, laughter etc. From tape to laptop, however, I immediately censored

anything which would identify or incriminate participants or others, such as personal names, places, or exact details of things like group structure. I assigned 'Participant 1, 2, 3 etc.' in place of real names, and took notes as I transcribed. I took the decision not to assign pseudonyms. As names are important cultural, ethnic and religious markers, to assign names which accurately reflected these details would reduce anonymity, while using completely standardised 'John Smith' type names would be an act of cultural imposition.

From the outset, it became clear that individual members had very distinctive voices, with one participant swearing a lot more than others, and another using more Scots words and vernacular than others. Both of these features, swearing and Scots vernacular, provide a richness and intimacy which I was careful to accurately record. There is no universal way to transcribe Scots words Education Scotland (2014), so I relied on my own use of written Scots and based my transcription on this. There are no words used which are so particular that their meaning is unobtainable through context.

I used a form of 'open coding' to break down, examine, compare, categorise and conceptualise the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 61), thus yielding 'concepts, which are later to be grouped and turned into categories' (Bryman, 2001: 392). I read and re-read the transcripts and, using different coloured pens, highlighted words, phrases or sentences that seemed to represent participants' views, experiences and descriptions of their activities. This initial coding allowed me to gain an overall sense of participants' views and experiences. I then grouped similar codes into themes and cross-checked across the transcripts to ensure these themes were representative of the group.

Ethics

Ethics have been of primary concern throughout my contact with the participants, and the subsequent analysis of the data. Gilbert (2001: 46) states that an ethical commitment to research prioritises the dignity and safety of participants above everything else, and that while an accurate and full investigation of a topic is the ideal, this does not trump the rights of participants, and at times a researcher must sacrifice aspects of a study in order to maintain an ethical stance.

Diener and Crandall (1978) summarise the main ethical issues in social research as whether there is: harm to participants; a lack of informed consent; an invasion of privacy; or deception. Bryman (2001) outlines some of the different ethical stances and debates surrounding these issues. For example, he makes a distinction between a 'universalism' which forbids all breaching of these ethical principles, and a 'situation ethics' or 'principled relativism' which considers cases on their individual merits (Bryman, 2001: 478).

Given the group experience of policing, members were understandably cautious when debating whether or not to allow me access. I of course offered numerous assurance as to my intentions, and the ways I would keep the data secure, for example by immediately anonymising data, storing it on a password protected computer, and maintaining confidentiality, all of which are standard ethical practices. Consent forms were signed by all participants [see Appendix 2], informing them of their rights and especially of their rights to withdraw at any time, and to review transcripts of their interviews.

Use of research

In the follow up to this research, I will maintain contact with the participants, and will discuss with them various options. A key motivator for participants was to dispel myths around the group, and to set out their own thoughts and experiences, on their own terms. As such, the idea of producing some kind of guide or pamphlet on the group has been discussed. While mindful of maintaing contact with the participants in an academic sense, Murphy and Dingwall (2001: 344) caution that sometimes such contact can be unwanted by and, a burden upon, participants, and can arise more from the researcher's 'need for affirmation than from any need or desire amongst the participants themselves'. As I knew some participants from beforehand, however, such contact will be relatively informal and without academic pressure.

Chapter 4

Findings: Organisation, visual culture and public activities

Member with pyro and group clothing at a Palestine solidarity demo

outside BBC Scotland, Glasgow, 2014[2]

This section will examine some of the fundamental components of the group, such as structure and organisation, visual culture, particularly as it relates to match days, and some of the most prominent activities of the group.

2 Taken from a friend's personal Facebook account [Accessed 22 October 2014]

Organisation and structure of the group

Discussions of the group structure and inner workings was conducted in confidentiality, so I am limited in what I can reveal. The group dynamics and the general approach to decision making was discussed, however, and indicates an attempt at a non-hierarchical structure, though there is a group which is more influential and 'make more of the important decisions'.

> Everybody is … the way the group is seen is basically everyone is equal. There's no one higher than anyone. Em, there are a group, basically, who've been involved for longer who'd make more of the important decisions, but it's not one person [...] [there are people] who've been in the group longer and have been more active, and they kind of then take everyone's views on board and they discuss it and they kind of come out with an overall view of what's wanted. (Participant 4: 26)

Trust and being known to other members is an important criteria for potential recruits, and has become all the more important due to the group's ongoing experience of police repression.

> you have to be known for a good while to be … to actually become a member, because of the fact that … especially nowadays, because of the fact that we're such a target for the police. Em, that you don't want to be giving, you don't want to be letting someone into the close-knit group that we are. (Participant 4: 6)

Online forum as a space for organising and discussion

The internet is now a key part of the ways in which ultra groups communicate and keep up to date with groups from across the world, with some websites and forums being particularly popular, for example ultras-tifo.net, which has sections on football, politics, humour, ultra style, and even links to buy flares and smoke bombs.

The Green Brigade has a website, ultras-celtic.com (Green Brigade, 2014), but it is the Green Brigade forum which gives the best idea of the politics, foci, debates, and ethos of the group (Green Brigade forum, 2014). Non-members, such as myself, can register and post on the forum, but there is also a private members section which I have not accessed. The Green Brigade also has a You Tube channel with original videos produced by the group, document activities within stadia, such as displays, chants and songs, corteos, and instances of police harassment.

The public forum contains four main sections, with subsections. I will focus on the Politics section to show the breadth of topics and ideas being discussed (Green Brigade forum, 2014). The Politics page contains 209 pages, over 8,000 separate threads. Examples of themes covered are racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-fascism, Palestine, Irish Republicanism, asylum seeker and refugee solidarity; music; films; Policing; Austerity; and literally thousands of others. The Sexism thread gives a good overview of the debates amongst Green Brigade members as how to tackle sexist, patriarchal attitudes within football, and within the group itself. A 'hot thread', i.e. popular and well-read, is the 'GB Forum Flying Column's Reading List' (Green Brigade forum, 2014), a 12 page thread with reading suggestions covering similar topics as well as fiction. It is considered a 'working document', and there is a lengthy discussion and suggestions of books which members and forum users have found influential.

Banners

Banners are a central tool for expressing the group's beliefs and identity, with banner-making also providing a social space for members to meet with non-members, and is one of the main ways for interested people to get their faces known and to get involved in group activities (Twists n Turns, 2014). The group has also consistently used a distinctive font ('Zero Hour') in the majority of its tifo (banner) displays (dafont.com, 2014)[3]. Displays have included protests about Bloody Sunday, displays of friendship with other ultra groups, mocking Rangers, the Great Hunger, anti-Irish racism, Palestine, the Offensive Behaviour Bill, and celebrations of Celtic's history (Green Brigade, 2014).

A banner making session (Green Brigade, 2014)

3 A SAMPLE SENTENCE OF THE GREEN BRIGADE FONT, CALLED "ZERO HOUR"

'Your deeds would shame all the devils in hell.

Ireland. Iraq. Afghanistan.

No bloo[d]stained poppy on our hoops'

Celtic vs Aberdeen, Celtic Park, 6th November 2010 (Green Brigade, 2014)

'Fighting Anti-Irish Racism.

In support of Aiden McGeady, Neil Lennon and James McCarthy'

Celtic vs Hamilton, 2008/2009 season (Green Brigade, 2014)

Four horsemen of the Apocalypse display mocking the impending liquidation of Rangers

Celtic vs Rangers, 2011/2012 Season (Green Brigade, 2014)

'Scottish Government and Police guilty of the criminalisation of the Celtic support'

Celtic vs Inverness, 2011/2012 Season (Green Brigade, 2014)

'These croppies won't lie down.

Repression will provoke rebellion. Let the people sing. Kill the Bill'

2011/2012 Celtic vs St Mirren (Green Brigade, 2014)

'The Usual Suspects. Strathclyde Police. FOCUS. Celtic Plc. SNP. Alex Salmond.

Ban. Jail. Destroy'

Celtic vs Dundee United, 2012/2013 (Green Brigade, 2014)

125th Anniversary Display

Celtic vs Barcelona, 7th November 2012 (Talk Celtic, 2012)

'Fuck UEFA'

Celtic vs Udinese, Udine, Italy (Green Brigade, 2014)

Two large displays have caused an incredible amount of controversy, and both have dealt with the perceived hypocrisy of criminalising songs and symbols of the Irish struggle, yet celebrating Scottish rebellion. The first, a large white letter H on a black background, with banners reading "They fought and died for their wee bit hill and glen", the chorus of O Flower of Scotland. The display was a reference to the 1981 Hunger Strikes tin the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, resulting in the deaths of ten IRA and INLA volunteers, amongst them Bobby Sands, with the text from the chorus of O Flower of Scotland. The display was raised at the 10th minute, to commemorate the ten men who died, and at the 81st minute, the year of the hunger strike. While the display was raised The Roll Of Honour was sung (YouTube, 2013), a song about the hunger strike and a particular focus for the police, with many Celtic fans and Green Brigade members being arrested for singing this song, though without a single successful prosecution. The Scottish Professional Football League subsequently ruled that the display breached their regulations relating to support for a "group proscribed in terms of the Terrorism Act 2000" (SPFL, 2014). However, Celtic were not fined.

'H - They fought and died for their wee bit hill and glen'

Celtic vs Aberdeen, 23rd November 2013 (Sky Sports, 2014)

Wallace and Sands display,

Celtic vs AC Milan, 26th November 2013 (Green Brigade, 2014)

Three days later, during a Champions League match against AC Milan at Celtic Park, the Green Brigade yet again choreographed a huge display to protest the Bill. The centre pieces were two banners of William Wallace and Bobby Sands, and the banners above and below read “The terrorist or the dreamer. The savage or the brave? Depends whose vote you're trying to catch and whose face you're trying to save”. The display was a continuation of the H display, and
the Green Brigade, argued that:

> it is both hypocritical and discriminatory to celebrate the Scottish nationalist struggle while criminalising the Irish nationalist struggle. Ultimately, due to the subjective nature of what anyone may deem ‘offensive’, it is both dangerous and absurd to create a law based upon

offensiveness (Celtic Journal, 2013).

The statement went on to criticise Celtic for not defending the criminalisation of large numbers of fans, and for the 'desecrating of our Club's proud history and values with the firm objection to implementing the 'living wage', in reference to the club's decision to refuse to pay staff the living wage of £7.45 an hour, despite Celtic making almost £10 million before tax, and paying the Chief Executive a £999, 591 yearly salary (McKenna, 2013). Celtic subsequently received a £42,000 fine for this "illicit" banner (Sky Sports, 2014).

Two-sticks

Two-sticks are also common in the Green Brigade section, and are easily produced at home. A common theme is that they subvert some element of popular culture and 'Celtifiy' or 'ultrafy' it, in a similar way to banners. References are made to Joy Division, Public Enemy ('PLC Enemy'), Scooby-Doo, Father Ted, The Simpsons, the Red Army Faction, Che Guevara Lynch, Rastafarianism and weed culture, Guinness, and clothing brands associated with ultra culture, such as Adidas ('Antifas'), as well as anti-fascist and anti-racist symbols and slogans ('Love Football. Hate Racism') (Green Brigade, 2014).

'Glasgow Celtic – Unknown Pleasures' (Green Brigade, 2014)

Various two-sticks (Green Brigade, 2014)

Various two-sticks (Green Brigade, 2014)

Corteos

Outside of football stadia, corteos are perhaps the most visible collective manifestation of the group and are sometimes heavily policed. Typically with the group banner at the front and led by a drummer, corteos start from a prearranged meeting place and march to the stadia. Attendance has often reached several hundred, with chanting and singing for the whole route. Corteos are a visible, colourful and noisy assertion of the group's control of public space, and as such result in varying responses from the police. Sometimes officers have 'facilitated' these processions in a more hands-off manner, but mounted police, riot vans and a police helicopter are common.

Drum, megaphone and group banner on the way to Hampden (Green Brigade, 2014)

Tricolour, group banner, and police 'escort' (Green Brigade, 2014)

On the way to Hampden (Green Brigade, 2014)

Police move in after pyro is lit (Green Brigade, 2014)

The most contentious of these corteos occurred on 16th March 2013, when the Green Brigade attempted to stage a demonstration against police harassment, but were kettled and attacked with batons and mounted police, and thirteen people were arrested (Haggerty, 2013). The attack on the Green Brigade was widely reported in the mainstream media and alternative sources (GDC, 2013 McFadyen, 2013a and 2013b; STV, 2013; Thousand Flowers, 2013). The wider context of this police attack is discussed in detail by participants.

Police kettle anti-police harassment demo

Gallowgate, 16th March 2013 (Green Brigade, 2014)

Mounted police grabbing a Celtic supporter,

Gallowgate, 16th March 2013 (Green Brigade, 2014)

Police draw their batons and strike at Green Brigade members,

Gallowgate, 16th March 2013 (Green Brigade, 2014)

The SMV

The Style Mile Vandals, or SMV, are an ultra group connected to the Green Brigade, who focus on street art, graffiti, stickering and other ways of marking out 'Celtic' territory. They are predominantly teenagers and young men. The name originates from the stickering of every lamppost on Buchanan Street in the lead up to Christmas, in which they were dubbed the Style Mile Vandals by a newspaper, after the area of city centre gentrification which they 'vandalised'. Videos of their exploits, give a flavour of their activities and general attitude, such as graffiti, jumping ticket barriers, letting off flares in the street etc.

Stickering

Common to all ultra groups internationally is the use of stickers to advertise a group, mark out territory, deface the territory of rivals, and to swap with friendly groups and comrades. The Green Brigade (and SMV) have produced many original designs, with stickers adorning street furniture throughout Scotland and beyond. Stickers often echo the themes and symbols of banners and two-sticks, with the group skull and tricolour being prominent.

A recent batch of Green Brigade stickers (Ultras Tifo, 2014)

A selection of Green Brigade stickers (Ultras Tifo, 2014)

As well as stickers, the Green Brigade also produces merchandise, or merch, which it sells to raise funds, gifts and swaps with other ultra groups, and wears itself to matches and social events. Merch varies from silk-printed scarves featuring various designs, to items of clothing such as t-shirts, hoodies, shorts, rainproof jackets and cagoules, baseball caps and bucket hats, and enamel pins (Ultras Tifo 2014).

Green Brigade scarves (Green Brigade, 2014)

Clothing/dress/tattoos

Clothing and dress are an important part of the 'look' of the Green Brigade, and take a lot of influence from the Casual scene, of which the Ultra scene can be considered a descendant of sorts. Thornton (2012) extensively details what he calls the 'sartorial one-upmanship' of the casual scene, where an obsession with labels and style was arguably as important as victories over rivals, on the

pitch and on the streets. Certain brands feature prominently, and some, such as Adidas, even feature on stickers and two-sticks. There is a certain 'look' which Thornton (2012) details, giving the style a socio-cultural context. Doidge (2013) also talks about the common look of Livorno ultras, with green/khaki ex-army jackets being almost like a uniform. Images of group corteos also attest to there being a distinct look which marks members and supporters out from 'normal' fans[4]. Some group members also have tattoos with the group logo of the skull with tricolour scarf, the lettering 'UTLR' (Until The Last Rebel), and some with the numbers '1312', which stands for 'ACAB', 'All Cops Are Bastards (Green Brigade, 2014).

Activities

'It's still changing someone in Glasgow':
Small victories through fitba

The anti-discrimination football tournament has seen teams play from the Basque, Nigerian, Cameroonian, Scottish Pakistani, Irish, refugee and asylum seeker, and LGBTQ communities, as well as teams from Celtic Supporters Clubs (CSCs), and other progressive groups. The idea that 'if you can help kinda five, six young lads in a situation, we're doing something right' is repeated in a slightly different context when discussing the tournament.

4 The original casual look was intended as a way for football hooligans to dress 'respectably', in brands associated with more middle-class pursuits such as golf (Pringle) and tennis (Fred Perry), in order to avoid the attention of police. With time certain looks became well known, so had to change to maintain their effectiveness as a disguise. Stone Island jackets are so associated with the casual scene that they come with a detachable logo badge for those wishing to avoid attention from the police, rivals, or bouncers.

Advertisement for the 2014 Anti-Discrimination

Football Tournament in the Garngad area of Glasgow (Green Brigade, 2014)

This participant discusses a non-member who was pulled up for using racist language during a match, and several group members subsequently explained to him why his language was offensive. As a result

> […] the guy came up the following year, and just apologised, and said 'Thanks very much. I've completely changed my …' Apparently he'd been saying 'paki shops' and 'chinkies' and … and apparently he's kind of bit more aware of what he's saying. (Participant 4: 4)

And such seemingly small changes in one person's attitudes or behaviour are not taken lightly by group members, who point to the "mammoth task" (Participant 3) [7] of not only challenging

discrimination within Celtic Park and the Celtic support, but of encouraging people to challenge their own prejudices within wider society. As Participant 4 illustrates, the challenge is all the greater when undertaken in some of the most deprived communities in Western Europe in the East End of Glasgow

> […] this is our sixth year now doing the tournament, if you're only hitting one person a year, it's still changing someone in Glasgow, and the East End of Glasgow isn't somewhere you're going to change a lot of people's opinions. (Participant 4: 4)

'A bad sign of our times':

Food banks and food drives

As well as this tournament, the group is also involved in combatting, or at the least trying to alleviate, some of the poverty that is such a prevalent feature of many housing schemes and communities in Scotland.

> […] whether that falls under 'radical politics' to push for equality, and make sure that people aren't hungry, and have shelter, and that the community has things to do, whether that falls under 'radical politics', I don't know. It probably does in some people's viewpoint, […]
>
> (Participant 3: 16)

The use of food banks has dramatically increased in the last few years as a direct result of Tory austerity measures (Cooper, 2013), and the desperation of this situation is being felt acutely in many areas of Scotland, not least in Celtic's, and the group's, hinterland of the historically-Irish East End

of Glasgow.

> […] in the last three, four months, there's now one that's just opened across the railway line there, and there's another one up there. So it's a bad sign of our times. (Participant 2: 15)

In response to the increasing dependency of a large section of society on food banks the Green Brigade have organised a series of food drives, usually outside Celtic Park on match days, or at other Green Brigade organised events such as the annual anti-discrimination football tournament. The collected food and money is then donated to charitable organisations.

> […] we donated basically about 5.75 tons of food, which was a humungous amount. We also gave a total of £465 to the Glasgow and Northeast Foodbank […] I remember putting it in the church, and it was just "what the fuck man? This is just far too much food we've raised!" And like, even the fucking priest and the people like that were panicking, the people organising the fucking hing. (Participant 1: 7)

'So that they had a starting point for their politics':

Political education nights

As will be explored later, learning and discussion is conducted in a number of different ways: education, formal and informal, internal to the group and its members, outreach to the wider Celtic support, and community activism, particularly in north and east Glasgow. Perhaps the most formalised way that learning functions within the group is through political education nights, covering a wide range of topics including anti-fascism, women in the struggle, miscarriages of justice, legal rights, Irish Republican prisoners, refugee and asylum seeker rights, and Palestine.

These events are free and are open to other sympathetic people as well as members.

> […] we've done things on refugees and asylum seekers […] we invited ex Anti Fascist Action members, senior members of Red Action/Anti Fascist Action to talk to the younger members of the group and certain members of the Celtic support, talk to them, "what does it mean to be an anti-fascist?" So that they had a starting point for their politics. Brought in Paddy Hill fae the Birmingham Six to talk about his experiences, and to talk about the criminal justice system. (Participant 1: 8)

Boxing/martial arts

An activity which is not open to the public, but instead is for members and invited non-members, like myself, is boxing and martial arts training which occurs in a community-run space in Glasgow. This is in the spirit of anti-fascist gyms and boxing clubs which have gained in popularity in other countries, especially in Italy, where there is a thriving anti-fascist sports scene in social centres, squats and occupied buildings (Struggles in Italy, 2013).

Perception and misrecognition of the group

> I've got a lot ae kinda newspaper clippings and stuff like that, and some ae the stuff is … unbelievable, you know. I mean, for a group of what are fairly daft boys, to be in every paper in the country, in the front-page, back-page, you know, everything, it's pretty bizarre. (Participant 2: 6)

> […] one of the issues that we've faced for a number of years is that … is that what people know about us is what they see in the Daily Record or what they see in the fucking Sun, you

> know what I mean. They don't see … they don't know us, and if you actually meet guys, and you speak to them, you hear a record of who we are, you get an understanding that, you know what, we're not angels, and we're not devils. We're not what people perceive. We're just who we are. Em, we're ultras who've got a, like I said, individually, got a social conscience, and when you put lots of people with a social conscience together they move in a certain way. (Participant 1: 32)

The above quotes sum up one of the central motivations for the members' participation in this project. The above participants note the ways in which tabloid newspapers in Scotland have played an important part in selling an image of the group which is usually negative. It was to challenge this dominant media and establishment narrative of the group as dangerous and negative that participants agreed to this project; to dispel myths, to set the record straight, but also to have a written record of what the group has achieved, its failures and challenges, and the general ethos of this collection of people. In particular this thesis focuses on the political activity and culture of the group, and seeks to present the thoughts and experiences of the group, largely through their own words, as a way to critically engage with the Green Brigade, and to dispel some of the myths and mischaracterisation of them. The rejection of the dichotomy of angel/devil is instructive, as participants did not seek to portray themselves as being politically superior or more important than others, yet were frustrated by the public perception of them.

By **Rod Mills**
Chief Reporter

Real IRA's Scottish recruitment drive

HIGH-RANKING figures within the Real IRA are actively recruiting in Scotland, it has emerged.

The dissidents routinely cross the channel from Ireland under the guise of watching Celtic football matches.

The trips, which are monitored closely by MI5, are believed to be a cover to build support in working-class communities.

The disclosure follows the arrest of three men in connection with the murder of Ronan Kerr, the Catholic policeman killed by a car bomb last weekend in Northern Ireland.

On Wednesday, a 26-year-old man from the Dungannon area in Tyrone was seized in Renton, Dunbartonshire, by Strathclyde Police.

The arrest was said to be triggered by the discovery of a huge weapons haul in County Tyrone, including four Kalashnikov rifles, Semtex and rocket launchers.

Surveillance

On Thursday, a 40-year-old man was detained outside Omagh. Both men are being held at Antrim police station. Another individual, aged 33, was seized in Omagh on Friday night.

Security sources have revealed an increase in visits to Scotland recently by senior Real IRA (RIRA) figures.

The men, who have not been convicted of terrorism offences, are free to travel but are under covert surveillance by the intelligence services.

The political wing of the RIRA, the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, is also expanding in Scotland.

The body, which aims to raise awareness of "the denial of Irish national sovereignty, which former Republicans failed to secure in their pursuit for power and a seat at Westminster," claims to have many members in cities such as Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Detectives hunting Kerr's killers said a new dissident IRA faction is believed to be behind his murder.

Many dissidents have been critical of Sinn Fein, accusing the party of failing to uphold Republican values.

Among the "independents" are experienced gunmen and bomb-makers, but senior police officers claim there are possibly hundreds of sympathisers providing passive support.

Senior police sources said that since PC Kerr's death, there have been further attempts to kill police officers in Northern Ireland.

They said the public outcry following his murder had had no influence on violent extremists, who remain focused on killing members of the security forces.

It is thought PC Kerr was targeted by someone from his local community after he joined the Police Service of Northern Ireland last year.

Real IRA terrorists mingle with crowds at Celtic games, using the matches as cover for recruiting activities

SAVINGS

The above image is from an article (Daily Express, 2011) which suggests that the Real IRA have been actively recruiting amongst Celtic fans. The caption reads: 'Real IRA terrorists mingle with crowds at Celtic games, using the matches as cover for recruiting activities', and implies that the Green Brigade are actually 'Real IRA terrorists'. This is but one example of the kinds of associations the media makes between the Green Brigade and other 'folk devils'.

While the perception of the group as rebellious, left-wing and Irish Republican may be distasteful to some people in Scottish society, it is exactly these characteristics that make for rich areas of study. It is important, however, for any approach to be grounded in reality and to not fall prey to romanticisation, for example by reading participants' words uncritically and failing to challenge them on any perceived shortcomings or contradictions. All participants were insistent on the need to view the group in a down to earth and unglamorous way, to the point of at times downplaying the

more political nature of the group.

> I think it's always important to understand the context of where the group's coming … what the group is, you know. It's not a political revolutionary front, you know what I mean. We're not the vanguard of the working class. I've had good, activist pals of mine who did talk about how “the Green Brigade are going to be the vanguard of the revolution”, be at the forefront of the storming of the Scottish Parliament, and yer like that, “mate, shut the fuck up.” (Participant 1: 28)

Members underscore the fact the Green Brigade are, 'first and foremost', Celtic-supporting football fans and ultras, and that the politics are almost an incidental part of the group's identity; a result of the fact that Celtic has always attracted political people, and the fact that ultra groups are often political. Such claims to be

> […] we're a group of pals, first and foremost, who support Sellik, and we're ultras, and that's that, you know what I mean. […] We want to go and support the team and jump aroond and have a laugh, and, you know, at the same time we've got a social conscience, that we want to make things different, make the world a better … you know what I mean, like, the world that your kids are gonnae grow up in, you want them to grow up in a better world than you grew up in. (Participant 1: 28)

Another participant also reiterates this point, emphasising the very social nature of the group and its members.

> […] it's been spoke about, that some people see the group as this, em, a political party, […]

> that it's not, it's a glorified drinking club, that people share certain beliefs. (Participant 3:19)

Yet another member stresses that the Green Brigade is 'not a political group', but is instead a 'politicised group of people'. The distinction is an interesting one.

> So people would see it, “Yeah, we as a group should be doing something”. Some people saying “Well, why should we?” We're not a political group, in that aspect. We are a politicised group of people, but we're not an actual political group. So it just depends then who wants to do what, and it goes to a vote basically. (Participant 4: 5)

Having summarised some of the common perceptions and misconceptions which surround the group, we will now look at members' experiences of policing. This often negative view of the Green Brigade, outside specifically sympathetic sections of society, is important as it helps to explain a process which generally goes hand in hand with demonisation: that of criminalisation. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5

Findings: The Political Culture of the Green Brigade

This chapter explores the elements of the Green Brigade which are not viewed by the public or those outside of the immediate group circles. It will explore themes such as politicisation, the development of individual politics within the group, attitudes towards political learning, engagement and outreach, attitudes towards the left, theory and dogma, the balancing of diverse opinions within the group,

'Joining the dots'

Irish Republicanism as an important influence

All participants mentioned Irish Republican politics as a formative part of their politicisation, with the influence of Republican politics being seen as an important foundation for discussing other political struggles and ideas, amongst group members but also in terms of outreach.

> You're just, em, … almost connecting the dots. Because people coming from a Republican background, especially republican socialists, will have a great viewpoint without even knowing it, and I think that's what I kind of discovered. Em, you have these things in the background, that kind of tell you what's right and wrong, and what's fair and what's not, em, without having to go down the theoretical view. (Participant 3: 13)

Republicanism was spoken about in varying level of detail by all participants, with Participant 1 speaking at length about the different manifestations of Republicanism, and was critical of particular right-wing, religiously conservative tendencies within the Republican tradition, for example Éamon De Valera and Sean South, the latter an IRA volunteer with fascist leanings

(Douglas, 2009) who has been immortalised in a popular rebel ballad (Participant 1: 22). He speaks about the figures such as James Connolly, Brendan Hughes and John Maclean as embodying a socialist republicanism which he considers to be more influential and representative of the Republicanism of Celtic fans.

> James Connolly. What he spoke about was … not just about changing the fucking flag, it's about changing the whole culture, the whole community, the whole economic system, and it's about economic liberty, not just about national liberty. (Participant 1: 21)

Participant 2 also sees the relative ease with which the Green Brigade were accepted by other Celtic fans as being connected to a celebration of 'rebel' politics within the Celtic support.

> I think the kinda mindset of Celtic's support has allowed it tae take off a bit, and that there is a certain kinda reb … well, there is quite a *big* rebel element, you know, and that ultras in general is kinda a fairly rebellious, kinda, state of supporting, […] (Participant 2: 5)

Republicanism was not the only politicising event or political tradition mentioned, but it was the most common and the most widely spoken about. Other influences were the invasion and occupation of Iraq, experiences of loyalist violence, immigrant family histories, the South African anti-apartheid movement, the Palestinian struggle, and exposure to anarchism and William Morris's News from Nowhere, amongst others. While some of these experiences were prior to the group and individualised, it is also clear that for those participants who were less politicised before becoming members of the Green Brigade, the group has provided a rich space for political learning.

'You can evolve':

Evolution of politics within the group

Participants talk about the way in which their own individual politics have evolved as a result of being in the group.

> And being in the group as well, you can evolve, because you're meeting all these sorts of people and discussion and things like that. (Participant 3: 5)

> I'd be the first to admit I still don't know enough about politics. Em, I'm learning all the time, and I have to say the group is fantastic for doing that. (Participant 4: 1)

> **Q**: **How did you become politically aware?**
> **A**: [laughing] Em, it was through the group. That's mainly it. (Participant 5: 4)

A recurring theme is that on becoming more deeply involved with the activities of the Green Brigade, eventually as fully fledged members, participants found that the group become the focal point of their political education.

> […] one of my main … not one of my *main* education points, but *recently* my main education point in politics has been the group. (Participant 4: 4)

> I've always just been a Celtic fan … just 'IRA', and … I was never … I would never ever read about it or … I knew bits and bobs. I'd like to hink I knew a wee bit, but nothing compared to when I joined the group. That was basically … learning about Palestine, and

> Basque, and em, different kind ae hings. Even … went through a stage ae Subcomandante Marcos and EZLN and hings. Just different hings like that. Hugo Chavez and everyhing. Basically aw through the group. Going tae different marches and, em, started going to Cairde [na hÉireann] marches. (Participant 5: 5)

It is clear that some participants read more than others, and that some members of the group have read extensively, as can be seen from the reading list on the forum. One participant recounts a conversation with a founding member of the group, who is from a working class scheme in Glasgow, in which he detailed the way he educated himself by 're-appropriating' books from his local library.

> He's admitted tae … that basically aw his education came fae stealing books oot the lib… he used tae steal them oot the library. Never had any money or that. And he's got a bookcase just full wi aw different kinds ae stuff, and that's … he just basically bumped [stole] it aw and learnt himsel. (Participant 5: 8)

'People hate boring stuff':

Accessibility of politics

Participants speak of a way of talking about politics which stresses accessibility and a simplicity of message which, instead of alienating people, leads to a 'laid back environment' in which to learn from others.

> It's not that the group forces their politics on people. It's not, say, one of the lads up in front of you going 'This is what you have to think, then this is what you have to do.'

(Participant 4: 4)

Participant 3, who has been involved in organising and presenting some of the free political education nights, describes the way these work, and his own attitude towards them.

> Just to get people involved and a good wee chat after it, in an environment where you don't feel dwarfed by people's big words, and eh, and theory. It's a general discussion, basically the way we saw Republicanism talked by fathers and grandfathers and so things. It was a 'what is right and wrong' discussion, as opposed to what someone else believed. So it's a nice kind of laid back environment to discuss politics. (Participant 3: 12)

This ' 'what is right and wrong' discussion' is repeated in different words by participants, and shows that the group articulates its politics in a way which is as inclusive as possible, and which does not require a grounding in political or economic theory. The Discussion will look at the possible limitations of this approach. Participant 3 outlines his approach to these political education nights.

> … in terms of the education nights, I usually go with the perception that people hate, em, boring stuff. So I just try and make it as fun, and as enjoyable as possible, so that's it's not two hours of boring question and answers. It's, eh, it's something good and punchy, and I think that way it stays fresh and things like that. (Participant 3: 14)

'If you can quote from Das Kapital, who gies a fuck?'

Dogma and theory

Participants spoke of a rejection of political dogma, and an overemphasis on theory, and instead

emphasised broad principles, or an 'umbrella', which encompassed the group's left-wing politics.

> The fact that you've read Das Kapital doesn't mean that you're one of us. I mean, if you can quote from Das Kapital, who gies a fuck? You know what I mean. I like to read, a lot of the other guys like to read, other guys don't. You know, I don't give a fuck. But as long as you're not a fucking, like, raging homophobic-racist-Nazi-prick. You know what I mean. If you're like not wanting to screw over everybody, you know, like economically. I mean you've got to have a certain degree of social justice in you. So that's the politics of it. (Participant 1: 9)

> There's no … there's no dogma. You know how you can approach certain groups, you know, particularly political groups, you can say 'what do you believe in?' And they'll be able to say 'This, this and this.' With us, it's not exactly there. There's not real, official group beliefs. (Participant 1: 10)

Another member recalls a conversation he had with a founding member of the group, where he explained that he didn't understand a lot of the references people were making in discussions. This member assured him that an understanding of complicated political theory was not a prerequisite for membership of the group.

> […] he [a prominent member] turned roond and said 'Look, naebody wants you to fucking quote Marx or quote Stalin or anyhing like that. As long as yer anti-discrimination, anti-homophobic, anti-'... just everyhing basically. Yer … everyhing decent kind ae hing. Like that … that's it. (Participant 5: 8)

Participant 3 repeatedly refers to this broad commitment to anti-discrimination as being like an

'umbrella', under which the different political persuasions of members can be encompassed.

> […] we fall under a big umbrella basically. Em, where there's every shade of political belief as long as it's under anti-racism and anti-discrimination. Em, those kind of things are probably the easiest to describe a lot of people's viewpoints. As I said, we have all sorts of, em, political beliefs, and some aspects people will push more than others […]
>
> (Participant 3: 5)

This idea of some members 'pushing', or advocating, certain politics is worth noting and will be returned to. A recurring theme is the emphasis on political themes being discussed in an intelligible and accessible way, avoiding pretentiousness or over-complication, and in a way which appeals to people's sense of empathy and compassion.

> There's nothing pretentious or long-winded or theoretical about it. It's just what feels natural, basically. How you'd want to be treated, and that kind of falls under that umbrella [of anti-discrimination]. (Participant 3: 5)

Within this non-dogmatic political culture, it is true that some members do not prioritise what they may see as 'political activism'.

> So you'll find that a lot of … not 'a lot', but a proportion of the members aren't dramatically political, but they fall under that umbrella [of anti-discrimination], and that's … that's phenomenal, because you want to appeal to the masses and be that kinda approachable way of politics because … it's a nice comfort level. You're being politically sound without having to be too in your face and 'radical', as quoted later in the question. [laughter]

(Participant 3: 5)

Being 'cool' as also a political tactic

Clothing choices of some group members are read by others in quite different ways, and form part of a public image of the group which has important political consequences, and historical precedents. One participant talks about his memories of going to Celtic Park as a child and seeing left-wing and Irish Republican activists outside the ground selling papers and agitating.

> And whenever you went to the ground you had guys who were talking, and you know, they looked different, and you were like 'that's what I want to be'. It was the cool fuckers. A lot of the time the cool fuckers were republicans, anti-fascists, you know, they were political people […] (Participant 1: 4)

Participants see the way a person presents themselves, in demeanour as well as dress, as being important to the way the group is perceived, and how others interact with them. This is referred to in different ways, whether 'that kinda suave-as-fuck look' (Participant 1: 9), 'nice wee clobber' [clothing] (Participant 3: 7), " the 'casual'-style ae dress' (Participant 2: 26), but all referring to a certain style of dress which is associated with the 'casual' style which combines smart casual clothing with elements of sports wear, for example shirts with designer jeans and certain styles of Adidas trainers. Participants speak of their own enjoyment of the 'scene', and how this goes along with their politics.

> […] for me, it's just really easy going, but it's cool, and it's now part of the scene. Eh, you've got your nice wee clobber, dressed-well, that kind of thing, you enjoy a beer, but at the same

> time you've got that kind of … under that umbrella of […] just treating people that way that you'd want to be treated. (Participant 3: 7)

Speaking specifically about the link between a smart style of dress and engaging working class youth politically, Participant 3 echoes the personal experiences of Participant 1 when he was impressed and aspired to be like the 'cool fuckers' he saw agitating outside Celtic Park. In particular he makes reference to the tactics of the Independent Working Class Association (IWCA), a political party which emerged from the militant anti-fascist movement in Britain.

> […] the dressing part was established by some other political parties, like the I.W.C.A., who were involved in, eh, Govanhill, and a lot of their kinda tactics were dressing smart and looking quite cool for the youth, because if you're a young guy, or a young lady for that matter, you're looking up to someone, em … making it cool, and something that they can … they can identify with, em. The benefit is that because of the noise that we create and the kinda fun atmosphere, a lot of younger fans do think it is quite cool, and it is a cool thing to be in the group. Em, as a bystander [byproduct] of that, you're also making it cool to be anti-racist, em, anti-homophobic, and em, anti-sexist. (Participant 3: 7)

When asked what he felt was one of the main successes of the Green Brigade, this same participant responded

> The main success for me is that it's become cool now to be against any form of racism, sexism, homophobia, in our section, and, without going too far, a good proportion of younger fans. It's not tolerated, but it's also done in a way that you're not forcing it down people's beliefs, but it's become cool, and I hink that's one ae the best things.

(Participant 3: 6)

The effect of making their politics 'cool', and of not tolerating racism, sexism or homophobia, but of equally 'not forcing' their politics on others, has had effects which this participant is clearly extremely proud of.

> You'll see people pull each other up. Wee, kinda, ten year old wee guys saying 'No, don't say 'poof' '. And things like that. And it's … it's … For me, that's the coolest thing, because I want people to have political beliefs, but not in a way that it's patronising […]
>
> (Participant 3: 6)

Attitudes to the left

The rejection of political dogma and theory mentioned above is particularly interesting when read in conjunction with some participants' attitudes and experiences of left-wing activists and political groups, and suggest that there exists an attitude to 'the left' which is worthy of examination. One incident which was repeated by a number of participants relates to a counter-mobilisation against a fascist group in Glasgow, and illustrates well the tension between some members of the Green Brigade and other left-wing activists. Several group members were not on the 'official' anti-fascist demonstration as

> in general our guys wouldnae go and join the main marches. They'd probably have a more radical approach tae that. (Participant 2: 20)

As this group was moving through the city centre on hearing of the location of a group of fascists,

they had the following experience

> We've ran roond the corner then aw of a sudden aw ae these folk turnt roond and started shouting 'They're there!', and they aw started running over and surrounded us, 'Nazi scum!' and hings like that. [Participant responded:] 'Look at yous, ya fucking dafties! What are yous daeing?!' (Participant 5: 11)

Another participant explains that the assumption on the part of these other anti-fascists that the group members were fascists was based solely on the way that they were dressed, with the Green Brigade members' choice of footwear, Adidas trainers, seeming to be a particular source of confusion.

> there'd been a group of, I think, they were anarchists as well, who believed that *we* were the SDL, because of the dress sense again, and the suggestion that was put tae oor guys was 'Why don't yees wear Converse [trainers] or something? And that then we would know that yous arenae [fascists].' [Both of us laughing] And some ae the guys initially were kinda like 'What!? Ya topper! Why don't you go and dress as a football casual or whatever then?' You know. And, I hink, somebody then had made a suggestion that people should wear ribbons or something like that, tae like, identify you as an anti-fascist. (Participant 2: 20)

> […] a lassie who's involved in the protest or something. She says 'next time yous are coming, try no and wear designer clothes or Adidas trainers.' Something like that […] it was along those lines. [both laughing]. 'Tell your boys, eh, no tae wear Adidas trainers and such and such, whatever, cus we get confused.' (Participant 5: 11)

One participant describes attending a demonstration around 2006/2007 in solidarity with the people of Lebanon during the Israeli attack on their country, where he found himself

> […] being quite … feeling quite out of place, you know, just simply because … I don't know. Is 'crusty lefties' the term that's used? Where it's people who look like hippies and stuff like that, and it kinda … in general I'd say the Green Brigade guys are fairly well dressed and em … no necessarily 'casual' style, but, you know, they're not kicking about in dreadlocks and stuff like that. (Participant 2: 19)

Members have faced other disheartening responses when they have, as a group, publicly shown their support for other left-organised events, one example being the annual Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) anti-racism march in Glasgow. After meeting in the morning,

> a group of fifty or sixty ae us went across tae join the march, and it caused some [laughs] … issues, and the police immediately made a move for us, believing that we were about tae attack the march, and that simply because we were dressed differently and that. So, I mean it became … and some of the people around were very paranoid and that, and that they just didn't believe that we were anti-fascists, you know, simply because they believed that anti-fascism … anti-fascists dressed in a certain way. (Participant 2: 20)

Clothing, hairstyles and other aspects of dress and style can be seen as markers of other aspects of one's identity, most obviously class, and it seems there is something deeper than a sartorial preference in the Adidas/Converse debate.

Explicit mentions of class only occur 11 times in the all five interviews. One such instance is when

a participant is discussing language used in the 'activist community' and its suitability in 'working class communities'. This is a continuation of a discussion about how to challenge sexism and homophobia in the particular context of football and its environs, but contains other interesting implications.

> I feel like the activist community has a lot of buzzwords that I don't want to creep into the football side of the things. As much as I see their point, it's too … overly-structured, and I think you're trying to create this utopian group of people to then … employ that on the world, and I think … It's like 'safe space' spaces, and 'trigger warnings' have their purpose, but within your working class communities it's too much to just throw that in and force that. Go with 'treat people how you'd like to be treated'. Nice and slow, simple.
>
> (Participant 3: 17)

There is a questioning of attempts to create a 'utopian group of people' and the worry that certain activist practices, such as a commitment to safe spaces and the use of trigger warnings, will in fact be 'too much' to 'force' upon working class communities, and that it better to use the recurring phrase of 'treat people how you'd like to be treated', which is 'nice and slow, simple', in its message.

Diverse opinions, group unity, and the 'pushing' of political positions

Underneath the “umbrella” of anti-discrimination, it is clear there is a broad mix of different political persuasions, from “communists and anarchists” arguing with other members about the links between fascism and the Catholic Church (Participant 5: 8), to supporters of different Irish Republican groups, such as the Sinn Féin-linked Cairde na hÉirreann and éirígí.

> They can support Sinn Féin if they want, they can support éirígí if they like, or the Thirty

> Twos [32 County Sovereignty Movement]. It's not a specific thing. (Participant 3: 5)

In response to the question “How does political discussion work?”, Participant 4 answered

> Usually as arguments. Usually as long debates and arguments. We have meetings. We've got, eh … within the groups there's all different little groups, so, like, I'm part of the political sub-group. (Participant 4: 24)

These different subgroups then take on responsibility for certain events. Participant 3 seems initially to contradict other participants' descriptions of the amount of political debate and discussion within the group, and states

> Well, again, a big array of viewpoints. Politically, some push it more than others. There isn't a great deal of political discussion. Em, a lot of people might think there is more, but, em, we … if there is something involved, that's kinda close to the group's heart, we will talk about it, em, for instance things like Operation Pillar of Cloud, things like these. Em, Marion Price. If something is brought up we'll discuss it, em, people will argue their points of why we should be showing support, or why we shouldn't. Em, things like that. So, that's kind of one dimension to like how we discuss things. (Participant 3: 12)

This account is slightly hard to decipher, as it starts by downplaying the level of political discussion, but then describes the various instances where it occurs. This could be due to the nature of an interview-situation, where participants can change their opinions or framing of an event as they speak, or perhaps points to a different conception of what constitutes political discussion. The idea that “Politically, some push it more than others”, also speaks to a way in which individual

members 'push', or advocate, their own political opinions or ideas for activities, which then leads to discussion, and then possibly to an implementation of an action. Participant 3, who was involved in Palestine solidarity activism before joining the Green Brigade, discusses how he was initially put off from becoming a member because of the group's handling of the match between Celtic and Hapoel Tel Aviv in 2009, in which the Israeli Ambassador to the UK was present. As another participant unsurprisingly confirms

> [...] we would be a pro-Palestinian … or support, in general, the Palestinian cause. But they [Hapoel Tel Aviv] had pictures on Israeli tanks with like their [ultra group] flags and stuff like that, […] (Participant 2: 23)

The ultras of Hapoel are also members of the international Alerta anti-fascist network, consider themselves left-wing, and have links with other left-wing groups. The Green Brigade decided not to do a display in solidarity with Palestine or to publicise the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which includes a sporting boycott of Israel. The STUC, however, had called for boycott actions, and there were pro-Palestine demonstrators inside and outside the stadium. Participant 3 explains that the decision about how to deal with that match

> had not been a majority decision, and that it was basically a route taken that not everybody wanted. (Participant 3: 19)

He explains, however, that part of the reason for this lack of solidarity on the part of the group was down to the political experiences and focuses of individual members.

> I don't think at the point anyone was involved specifically in campaigning for Palestinians,

> so I think that was a factor […] (Participant 3: 19)

This member, who states that part of the reason he was noticed by the group was because of his involvement in Palestine campaigns (2), eventually decided to join the group with the rationale that he could influence the direction future events take, specifically in terms of Palestine solidarity.

> I can fight a certain corner of why things should be done, and I think since I've been there, not specifically because of me, but the … certain other new members that have joined, we've now been expanding the kind of political section within the group. So slowly but surely, but I wouldn't like to see that [Hapoel] happen again. (Participant 3: 19)

It is now inconceivable that the Green Brigade would allow Celtic to play any Israeli team without a major effort at some form of pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS action. The group has been extremely active over the last few years with Palestine solidarity activism, inside and outside the stadium, with a Green Brigade blog even being written from Palestine. The most recent Israeli massacres in Gaza during the summer of 2014 saw displays during Celtic Champions League games, as well as groups of at least 50 members attending demonstrations in Glasgow, where the ultra flair of the group was literally illuminated by pyrotechnic flares.

This one participant's experience of joining the group and injecting his own politics, and subsequently contributing to a sense of others' politicisation around a particular issue (Palestine), is a clear example of the way in which individual members 'push' their own politics and bring their experiences and passions into the group. While there are no official policies, individual efforts do lead to commitment to certain political principles, for example the Green Brigade's support of the Palestinian call for BDS.

> […] the group is happy to support BDS because of certain group members pushing for it and explaining, fighting the corner. So it helps in the aspect, that some people are fighting for those kinds of things. (Participant 3: 20)

As a sign of this engagement with the Palestinian cause, during May 2014 the Green Brigade website posted a five part blog written by a member who was volunteering in Palestine (Green Brigade, 2014).

Solidarity with Palestine during Israel's attack on Gaza

Celtic vs KR Reykjavik, 22nd July 2014, Murrayfield, Edinburgh (Green Brigade, 2014)

"Free Palestine"

Celtic vs Hearts, 2012/2013 Season (Green Brigade, 2014)

Successes and difficulties

When asked what were the biggest successes of the group, and the biggest difficulties they faced, participants had slightly different responses[5]. The continuation of the group, influencing wider Scottish (football) culture, friendships, a politicisation of younger people, having a dedicated section of Celtic Park, the anti-discrimination tournament, and the 125th anniversary display were all seen as major successes.

Participants 1 and 4 see the longevity of the group as a primary success, and creating a vibrant ultra scene which is now known and respected globally by other ultras and football fans. Participant 1

5 Note: Participant 5's responses are not listed as there was a problem with the recording of the interview at this stage, with the tape running out.

speaks at length about the way in which he feels the group has changed Scottish football, and particularly the youth culture around football.

> Scottish football's fucking changed. And I think a lot of that is to do with us. [...] developing a culture's been a big success for me. Maintaining the group has been a massive thing.
>
> (Participant 1: 14)

> Successes, I suppose, is lasting. 2006, em. Educating people. Getting the word out there basically … what it is … bringing … We're the most successful ultra group within Britain, as far as I'm aware. (Participant 4: 13)

Participant 1 also speak of the strong friendships that exist as a result of group membership.

> In a more personal view some of the successes is like, is to do with the friendships you develop. […] the big success is that I've got, fucking, seventy boys, I can phone any one ae them, I can phone three hundred boys up, and you've got pals […] (Participant 1: 14)

Participant 2 thinks that the success of the group, and its subsequent growth, both in membership and popularity, has been a mixed blessing saying:

> we're a victim of our own success in some ways. Probably having our own section would be the number one success, I would say. It became like a focal point of the stadium and young people were attracted tae go there, it made the group grow to the extent that it did.
>
> (Participant 2: 6)

Participants 2 and 4 both cite the 125th anniversary of Celtic display as being one of the proudest

moments of the group, and both spoke of it in relation to the commercialisation of the club. Participant 2 muses on the fact that Celtic profited from the group's time, energy and financial commitment, even selling a 'twenty feet long photo which is on the wall [of the Celtic Superstore]', while condemning other group displays such as the Poppy protest (Participant 2: 6). Participant 4 is proud that the display was 'solely done by the fans. It wasn't Celtic, in any way, shape or form' (Participant 4: 14), but stresses that the group would never have accepted money from the club.

> We didn't want modern football and corporate football. We didn't want the club to pay for it. That's not what ultra groups are about. (Participant 4: 14)

The changing of the political culture amongst other section of the Celtic support is an important success for Participants 3 and 4. Participant 3 points to the way that it is now 'cool […] to be against any form of racism, sexism, homophobia in our section', and how this attitude is particularly prevalent amongst younger fans (Participant 3: 7). Participant 4 sees the six years of anti-discrimination tournaments as being a major success, in that it has improved 'people's perceptions and people's way of using certain [offensive/prejudiced] words (Participant 4: 15).

In assessing the biggest difficulties for the Green Brigade, all participants were resounding in their agreement that the police's implementation of the Scottish Government's Offensive Behaviour Bill was the most serious difficulty for the group, with Participant 4 explaining one of the ways it has forced the group to adapt.

> The biggest is fucking police. They're just scum, man, for a lot of us. (Participant 1: 15)

> I would say number one would be police, or government (Participant 2: 6)

Additionally, participants all agreed that perception and misunderstanding, media coverage, and dealings with the club were persistent problems. Participant 1 says

> I don't think we've been very effective in promoting who we are, you know. We've just kind of got on wi shit. So people don't really know or understand us, so because they don't understand us, I think a lot of it is like either dismissive of who we are, or just ignored, or treated like we're idiots. (Participant 1: 16)

Participant 3 talks of the 'difficulty [of] convincing fans that we were doing something beneficial for the team', and of a 'stigma' associated with the exuberant and politicised nature of the Green Brigade as ultras. He thinks that a depoliticisation of an older generation is the result of 'the kind of modernisation' of Celtic and football generally (Participant 3: 7). Additionally, while he feels many 'older guys' often are 'absolutely loving' the activities of the group, they 'get scared when the club talk about fines form UEFA' as a result of what they refer to as 'that IRA stuff' (Participant 3: 8). This suggests that financial penalties from football institutions can have tangible effects on the expression of politics within football.

Participant 2, who has maintained an archive of newspaper reports on the group, sees the media as being a difficulty for the group, and thinks that 'the media have a massive, massive thing for us', and seem to report on the group in a way which is sensationalist and disproportionate to their activities (Participant 2: 7). Participant 2 feels the relationship between the group and the club is 'aw aboot losing face and saving face', with the club acting differently in private than in public statements. He sees it as 'just the way that PR and marketing, or whatever else, work' (Participant 2: 7). Participant 4 describes it as 'sad to say your own club are one of your main difficulties', and describes 'not

being able to bring banners into grounds' as part of a 'bureaucracy' which unnecessarily constraints the group, often in conjunction with the police (Participant 4: 17).

Sexism and the Green Brigade

The response to the question: 'Do you think left-wing ultra culture does enough to challenge sexism or homophobic attitudes and behaviour?' elicited interesting responses from participants. Participant 1 found this to be a 'difficult question', but responded that

> […] as a group, we do challenge sexism, but we're a very male dominated, orientated group. And a lot of that's more to do with the football culture and society in Scotland. You know, men go to football more than girls. And also, if you're fucking standing there with seventy bodies, three hundred men, there's no a lot of girls who are gonnae walk up to ye and start talking ye. There's no a lot of *guys* who'll walk up and talk to you, do you know what I mean. (Participant 1: 23)

This participant acknowledges that the group could have 'a more proactive recruitment policy' of women, but argues that this is 'a broader football thing [issue], a broader ultra thing of actively recruiting women.' They then ask the question

> Is that not just tokenistic? You're looking for women simply to tick a fucking box. If they're no going … if … if women aren't going to games as much as men, and aren't as active in the fan scene, then obviously they're not going to be part of the most active element of the fan scene. (Participant 1: 24)

Participant 3 responded that 'the group specifically, no, probably [doesn't do enough to challenge sexism]' (16), but echoed this aversion to 'ticking boxes', instead seeing the tackling of sexism as part of a wider movement against discrimination. They spoke about it in simple terms of 'treating people how you'd like to be treated', a phrase and sentiment that is repeated in the interviews when discussing the group's 'umbrella' of anti-discrimination principles (Participant 3 :16)

Participants make direct reference to the deeper societal problems of sexism and the objectification of women, but wonder to what extent such attitudes and behaviours can be challenged by football fans in an isolated manner.

> […] is it the responsibility of football fans to challenge that aspect [sexism]? […] yeah, to a degree it probably is. But then to a degree we can't fucking challenge every evil under the sun, […]What ye gonnae do, you know? You gonnae beat up everyone who says 'burd'? You know. What … what the fuck. [laughs]. (Participant 1: 25)

Participant 3 speaks about sexism in the 'working class community', of which football plays an important role as a leisure and social activity. They point to the prevalence of a 'lad culture', and the way in which sexism and the objectification of women has been socialised in men (Participant 3: 17).

While Participant 1 was being slightly flippant in their suggestion to 'beat up everyone who says 'burd' ', they then speak of the option of doing an anti-sexism tifo within the ground, but are sceptical of the impact this will have. Instead, they suggest that challenging sexism within their own networks, and within the Green Brigade, is a more realistic option.

> Is changing people's mindsets more effective through discussion? So you're sitting on the buses, yer talking tae people. Is it more effective to have things online, where there's discussions, you're challenging sexism online, and, you know, on the forums and stuff like that, you know? Is it more effective to challenge it in the group, among your membership, you know? That's … my position at the moment, personal position is that's more effective than having a massive banner wi a burd, in a Sellik tap […] is that really gonnae encourage more women to come tae the game cus I've got a lady on a fucking two-stick? Probably not. It's probably gonnae look a lot worse. (Participant 1: 25)

The participants who I spoke with, and who expressed firm opinions on the subject, seemed to be of the opinion that anti-sexism and anti-homophobia displays by the group would not be worthwhile if done in isolation from a wider event, campaign or strategy, otherwise the group fears being 'seen as a bit plastic' (Participant 5: 9). Participant 3 makes a particularly interesting observation about the different ways in which sexism and homophobia are dealt with by the group, stating that the group has a very clear policy of zero-tolerance for homophobia, but implying that sexism is seen as a more complicated issue to challenge.

> [...] homophobic attitudes aren't tolerated what so ever. I think that's because it's a little bit easier to tackle, because it is more clear cut. Anyone that says 'poof', or 'gay' in a derogatory term, will not be allowed to stay where they are. They'll be removed, if that's in the ground or in our company. Em, whether that's forcibly or whatever. (Participant 3: 16)

In quite stark contrast to the self-critical tone of the male participants, Participant 4, the only woman interviewee, and one of the few women in the Green Brigade, reported overwhelmingly positive experiences as a woman in the group.

> I've never felt I was intimidated or anything by being in the group, by being a woman. Em, I'm treated like [...] anyone else. […] I've not had anything [negative], literally nothing in the group. They've not been in any way different with me or awkward or anything.
>
> (Participant 4: 17)

One way that participants demonstrate the way in which men and women members are treated equally, is in the way that humour and banter is used in the group. A clear pride is taken in the fact that women in the group can hold their own and even surpass the men in the 'abuse' and banter stakes.

> […] a lot of the girls in the section give it out better than any of the guys […]
>
> (Participant 3: 17)

> I mean we have our board [internet forum] that we all post on about group things, and I get the same abuse that anyone else gets. I give the same abuse that anyone else gives.
>
> (Participant 4: 17)

Participant 3 speaks about humour as being an important site for challenging 'lad culture', but recognises that sexism is often joked about between men and women, and can have a positive effect in that this contributes to a less theoretical discussion which does not 'make situations more uncomfortable than they need to be'.

> In terms of sexism, it's … it's trying to combat that kinda 'lad culture', em, while still having a laugh. Because, whether you like it or not, men and women have a laugh about these

> things and joke about it, and I think that's … it's a positive, in a way, that we're not too theoretical and, I think you can make situations more uncomfortable than they need to be. (Participant 3: 16)

While one of the few women members of the Green Brigade is positive in her appraisal of the Green Brigade as a space for women members to feel comfortable and respected, she also recognises, as Participant 1 (23) does, that there is an image problem for the group in terms of attracting women to get involved, due to the group being male-dominated and often raucous. This participant speaks of some men not realising she is a member and assuming that she is 'just there with one of the lads' (19). Interestingly, when asked how the group could be more welcoming for women, Participant 4 responded

> I don't think there's anything **they** [my emphasis] could do to make it more welcoming for girls. (Participant 4: 19)

The use of 'they', and not 'we', is noticeable, and raises questions about where this woman participant feels any hypothetical responsibility lies in terms of changing this masculine environment. Participants 3 and 4 are both of the opinion that the Section (of Celtic Park where the Green Brigade were until recently situated) will 'automatically' become more welcoming as the group expands, and as more women join.

> I think the expansion of women in the group will make it … will automatically make it more welcoming. […] I do think maybe just seeing that fact that there are girls in the group, more girls then might try and get involved. (Participant 4: 20)

> Take your time, and tackle it [sexism] wherever it kind of crops it's head up, […] the future when you find that the section is expanding, by proxy more females would be involved in the section, em, you'd need to keep a kinda tight rein on it, but how that's done, we're not really thinking that far ahead, I'd say. (Participant 3: 17)

Tellingly, Participant 3 concedes that the group is 'not really thinking that far ahead', and it appears that members, both men and women, do not see sexism as being particularly prevalent within the membership of the group, but recognise that more should be done to attract women members. How this will be done, however, is unclear, and as demonstrated by the interviews, the group's priorities have been very much focussed on defending the group from the state, police, and at times, the management of Celtic. Interestingly, Participant 1 (30) actively encouraged me to ask more probing and critical questions regarding sexism and homophobia in the group, saying

> I think you should be critical of the group […] We're not gonnae keep shit secret […] we do make mistakes.

'Zombies aren't real'

Little negative mention of Protestant symbols and identity

Interesting to note is the very sparse mention of the following terms, which could all be used to refer to Rangers supporters/loyalists/orangemen. Out of a total of 57,324 words in the interview transcripts (including a relatively small number of my own used in questions), there were 20 mentions of 'Rangers'; only one mention of 'hun(s)'; six mentions of 'zombie(s)'; four mentions of 'Protestant(s)'; and only one mention of 'loyalist(s)'. There was no mention at all of 'Orange', 'Orange Order', 'Orange Lodge', 'orangemen', 'Orange walk/march', or any other mention of the

Orange Order, either disparagingly or otherwise.

The mention of Protestants was used in the context of why the Green Brigade consciously do not sing particular songs, for example Roaming in the Gloaming. This song is explicitly pro-Catholic, and anti-Protestant, and is deemed sectarian by the Green Brigade.

> Roaming in the Gloaming is completely dropped because … and was never sung by the group, because it's proclaiming about Catholic pride, which isn't applicable to a multicultural fanbase, that we've always been. (Participant 3: 8)

> I mean, the only times I've ever actually seen sectarianism challenged, like, properly challenged in a stadium, has been by the Green Brigade, […] there's lines 'Soon there'll be no Protestants at all' in one ae the songs […] I've seen people […] Green Brigade boys tell people, like, 'shut up', you know, 'chase yersel', kindae hing, when stuff like that's been mentioned. (Participant 2: 3)

> We're no singing songs about murdering Protestants because they're Protestants. It's not part of who we are, you know what I mean. It's not our identity […] (Participant 1: 17)

The term zombie(s) is used mainly by Celtic fans, but also by other non-Rangers fans, to refer to the liquidation of Rangers Football Club, and their 'coming back from the dead' under a variety of different names, including Sevco 5088. In four of the five mentions of 'zombie(s)', it refers to a specific banner displayed by the Green Brigade, which mocked the club formerly known as Rangers by depicting

> […] a kind of de-evolution of humanity, coming down from the Rangers strip, right down to the monkey, em, down into the grave, resurrecting as a zombie, and then, em, a silhouette rifleman shooting a zombie. For a lot of people that was seen as harmless, and couldn't be considered a crime because zombies aren't real. (Participant 3: 9)

"Zombie" banner

Celtic vs Norwich (Green Brigade, 2014)

There was also a positive mention of Rangers fans who have played in the anti-discrimination tournament.

> Even recent years, there's been a few guys come wi Rangers tops on, like, playing the other teams. It's interesting, [laughs] but eh, naw, there was no issues wi that. (Participant 2: 14)

Additionally, Catholicism as marker of Irish identity was not spoken about by participants, and only one mention was made of a formal religious event, specifically going to a celebration mass for the 125th anniversary of Celtic, in the church where the club was founded (Participant 4: 13).

Few explicit mentions of class

Interestingly, throughout all five interviews (57,324 words), "class" is only mentioned twice, both times by the same participant, separated by two words and a pause, and in the opening sentence of a direct response to a question which had class as its final word.

> **Q**: [...] **Is it age, or class?**
>
> **A**: Class, I think … class I think probably has become more of a thing now […] "
>
> (Participant 2: 8)

There were only 9 mentions of working class in all of the interviews, three times each by Participants 1, 2 and 3. Incidentally, all three of them have university degrees and are now in paid employment. This is not an insinuation of a class position, and a university degree, especially in Scotland where there are no tuition fees, is not the concrete marker of class that it once was. Given that class is rarely explicitly mentioned, we must look elsewhere for articulations of such an identity, for example in culture and social activities. Football, despite the best attempts of those seeking to introduce a neoliberal model, is still seen as a working class leisure activity in Scotland.

A note on militant anti-fascism

Anti-fascism is a central tenet of the Green Brigade, and left-wing ultras generally, though discussions of violence in the interviews were fairly sparse, and only occurred in reference to specific anti-fascist mobilisations; in the context of challenging Scottish/British racist and fascist demonstrations, and of challenging fascists ultras from European clubs. Participants stated that there

had been violent confrontations between Green Brigade members and fascists, but that this was the exception rather than the norm. Participant 1 describes the group's view on anti-fascism:

> [...] our views on anti-fascism are seen more like, like I said, because we're looking at it more a cultural and a community based thing, it's less about attending demos […]
>
> (Participant 1: 27)

Participant 3 echoes this sentiment, and thinks that it has 'become quite cool to be fighting fascists on the streets', though he would rather such energy was focused

> in the community [rather] than running about chasing people. So yeah, I would focus energy elsewhere. (18)

He goes on to say that there is an element of the group that emphasises militant anti-fascism more than others, and explains this as being a result of older members witnessing the heyday of groups like the National Front (NF), who explicitly tried to recruit football fans, seeing them as an 'easy fanbase' . He understated this position of older members and thinks it necessary, and is aware that fascists will continue to 'target football fans' because football is an 'outlet for working class people to go and have fun in a social environment' (18).

Participant 4 spoke most openly about his experience of violent confrontations, and admitted that he has 'never hid the fact that I dae like the sort ae boxing [fighting] side ae it as well' (Participant 4: 18). He says that some Celtic fans actively sought to find and 'batter' some fascist Moscow ultras when they visited Glasgow, but explains the context.

> The first time when we played Moscow, em … It was just before that, in their sta … in their

> section, they had a fucking… it was like a black doll, and one ae them was holding it on a stick wi a fucking noose roond its neck, […] (19)

That said, he is insistent that being an ultra is

> different fae hooliganism […] even the Celtic support were like, 'ultras are just folk who run aboot fighting' and aw that. Whereas it's nothing like that. It's a rare … it's a rare occurrence. The only time we've actually went looking for a fight at Celtic … like, here, is if it's been a fascist mob that's come over. Moscow, em, Athletico, eh … (Participant 4: 18)

Comparing the Green Brigade to other friendly ultra groups, he says

> I've never met an ultra group that actively go oot looking for a box. Like, any ae the ones I've met anyway. There is groups that dae dae it, but they'll only dae it if it's a rival group, if there's been a history wi them, like, if they're boxing. It's totally different. (Participant 4: 19)

He contrasts the motivations for the group's experiences of violence with those of some Celtic casuals, who are motivated by the search for the adrenalin 'buzz'.

> I've ran aboot wi Celtic [casual firm] boys as well, kind ae hing. That's literally … they happily admit they get the buzz oot the violence and that's it. It doesnae matter. They just … they want a fight. Whereas wi us, we could go tae … we could go through a full season just going tae the game and whatever, but no having any fights, and that would suit us, cus it's fucking … obviously naebody's getting jailed for boxing. Naebody's getting a tanking [beaten up]. (Participant 4: 19)

While he distances the group from such 'casual' attitudes to violence, he is unrepentant in the fact that group members will actively seek to confront and 'batter' right-wing fans of other teams, knowing that the same violence will be dished out when Celtic play abroad.

> But, em, if a team like Moscow, or, fucking, a well known political … if their group's political, kind ae hing … if they're right-wing, we'll always try and maybe get some ae them, and … Cus we know they're going tae dae it tae us over there. (Participant 4: 20)

It is clear from the interviews that while the group recognises the need for militant, physical opposition to fascists, this is not the priority, and they are more interested in challenging the conditions which allow for fascism within their own communities. The anti-discrimination football tournament, the political education nights, and the food drives can all be seen as part of this broader strategy of positive, active engagement with working class communities which are most susceptible to racist and fascist infiltrations.

Chapter 6

Findings: Criminalisation and Policing

This chapter will examine participants' experiences of, and attitudes towards, the Offensive Behaviour at Football Act, police harassment and repression, and the effect these have had upon the group's activities.

"It's changed the ball game":
The Offensive Behaviour at Football Act

Whenever members discuss the activities of the Green Brigade, or their own individual experiences, the one thing that looms large is the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Communication Act.

> It's changed the ball game for a lot of guys you know I mean. At one point all our tifos [displays] were to do with the Bill. All our actions were to do with the Bill, the legislation, the Act. Because it's affecting so many people, you know what I mean, And it's so draconian. The concept that two police officers … if two police officers go to the fucking game, and they hear you say something that offends them, they can arrest you, and three days later you're gonnae get a fucking court case. Seven boys were dawn raided for singing the Roll of Honour. (Participant 1: 8)

The introduction of the Bill has been used to target Celtic supporters who express political opinions which do not fit into an accepted Scottish narrative, specifically as it relates to the Irish struggle against British colonialism.

> […] the Offensive Behaviour thing is, for me, very, very, very dangerous thing for any government or politician to be supporting. Em, I mean, for me that borders on fascism, racism in itself, you know, in that, you know, they're saying, "no, you can't have a political opinion", or you can't *express* your political opinion. (Participant 2: 10)

Participants were all unanimous in their agreement that the Bill, and the associated police repression, were one of the single biggest challenges faced by the group

> 'The biggest [difficulty] is fucking police. They're just scum, man, for a lot of us.
>
> (Participant 1: 15)

It is clear from all of the interviews that the group's resistance to this piece of legislation has taken centre stage was on the condition that it would not divert time and energy from the task of challenging the criminalisation of the Green Brigade.

Some examples of police tactics

Members' experiences of policing vary from low level but persistent harassment, both on match days and in non-football situations, to dawn raids, arrests, imprisonment on remand, intensive surveillance, baton charges, use of Anti-Terrorism legislation, involvement of Special Branch and allegedly MI5, attempts at recruiting informers, and being followed and spied on while abroad. Below are examples of some of the tactics used by the police to try to disrupt the activities of the Green Brigade.

Arrests of group members have occurred within the immediate vicinity of football matches, but also out with this environment. As one participant recounts, a member was arrested for being filmed touching the now infamous 'Zombie' banner [see photograph]. What is unusual is the location and context of this arrest.

> […] the person that was filmed with his fingertips on the edge of the banner was, em, arrested coming home from Portugal with his girlfriend's family, after a family holiday, arrested at passport control in front of the full plane, eh, coming off and going through passport control. Em, they tried to push for remand, but the judge laughed, as they usually do. (Participant 3: 10)

That a member was arrested at the airport, on his return from a family holiday in Portugal, speaks to the premeditation of the police, and a level of planning and intelligence gathering which seems disproportionate to the circumstances of the alleged offence. Members have also been arrested in their homes, in coordinated dawn raids. The raids referred to by this participant related to the singing of the Roll Of Honour, a song that has become emblematic of the struggle between the Scottish establishment, and those who wish to celebrate a sense of Irish identity which is politicised and Republican.

> [several members were] arrested in a swoop at six thirty in the morning, and they did that , em, at six or seven different houses around Glasgow, em, in a coordinated swoop.
>
> (Participant 3: 10)

As well as the more direct forms of policing such as raids and arrests, participants all discussed forms of low-level harassment by police officers, whether in a football context or not.

> They can harass constantly. And that's what this is all about. It's been difficult, you know. It's soul destroying getting fucking jailed because you're on a fucking protest. Or dae something and you get your fucking cunt kicked in aff a polis. And getting dragged oot a fucking cell. Fucking polis coming up tae yer fucking door, annoying your neighbours, when they're no even meant to be at your fucking flat. They're no meant to be here! And then fucking coming up and trying to embarrass you. (Participant 1: 15)

It is clear that these experiences range from the very public, such as being stopped and searched while entering a football stadium, to the very intimate and intrusive, such as police appearing at a home, place of work, or stopping someone as they are walking in the street.

> You'll find that police will mention your name when you walk past, which is a tactic used in a lot of places, but to be going to a social aspect such as going to the football, without any pretence, not at a demonstration, is some form of intimidation anyway, though it doesn't faze a lot of us. (Participant 3: 9)

This defiance ('it doesn't faze a lot of us') is balanced with an awareness of the tactics used by the police are part of a wider strategy, which participants say includes spreading fear amongst members and potential members, and to discourage people from supporting Green Brigade actions for fear of the pressure and consequences of police actions.

> […] the methods they're using are a way of spreading fear and clamping down on something. […] they are trying to spread a little bit of fear, so that people think “do you know what, that isn't for me, and I don't want that at my workplace, my home. I can't be

going through court. I can't take days off for intermediates [diets/court dates]. I can't pay for lawyers em, to fight my case to be proven not guilty after two years." (Participant 3: 11)

As well as the 'human' interaction between police and group members, from stop and searches to baton charges, there is also a more detached, yet equally as intrusive, form of police harassment in, namely the use of surveillance. This most often takes the form of using video camera surveillance, either with hand-held video cameras, with cameras mounted to officers' stab vests, or the use of fixed CCTV.

Police video-record Green Brigade members (Green Brigade, 2014)

[…] the intimidation with the cameras is just ridiculous. Standing a couple of feet in front of you, standing with a video camera, filming you directly into your face. (Participant 4: 22)

The majority of participants have been arrested for alleged offences committed while attending or travelling to and from Celtic matches with the Green Brigade. Lawyer of other defendants from the Green Brigade insisted that their clients leave all mobile phones outside of rooms where they were meeting, fearing that phones were tapped and that even the confidential conversation between lawyers and clients were being monitored by the police and/or other intelligence agencies.

> [...] boys were saying that they'd be going tae meet the lawyer and were having tae leave their phones ootside and everyhing cus they were … the lawyer was suspecting phone's tapped […] (Participant 5) [21]

Such accounts of police intelligence gathering are numerous. This same participant speaks of another friend who was summoned for a meeting at Celtic Park, when Celtic security revealed detailed information about this person's movements and activities while in Udine, Italy for a Celtic game.

> […] he went tae Celtic Park for a meeting, and they pulled oot a fucking folder aboot that thick, and they were able tae … they were able tae basically say what he had for dinner when Celtic played Udinese, over in Udinese. They knew he had pizza on the second night and everyhing. (Participant 5:23)

I asked this participant to confirm whether or not they were exaggerating, or speaking figuratively, but they confirmed that the surveillance of this person detailed the meal eaten on the second night in Udine. This is a quite astonishing level of detail for a football supporter to be under, let alone one who is travelling abroad to watch their team play a match. I went on to ask if it was Scottish police

who were carrying out the surveillance, and was told that yes, Scottish police regularly follow the Green Brigade to matches outside Scotland. There is a specially formed group of police officers who make up the Football Co-ordination Unit in Scotland (FoCUS), and are responsible for harassing football fans in Scotland and abroad. They act independently from normal police officers at football matches, and are akin to FIT (Forward Intelligence Teams). Several of their officers have been involved in unprofessional conduct towards Celtic supporters, and they are particularly resented (TAL, 2013).

The unit commonly referred to as Special Branch has also been involved in trying to turn informers, approaching at least one individual at their place of work and offering them money in return for information about the group. This person refused their offer.

> one day, just before Christmas, he was pulled outside his work off ae Special Branch […] One ae … an intelligence, fucking, … one ae they mobs. They're outside his work […] they gave him an offer ae … they would pay for his Christmas. He would get a credit card with an unlimited limit on it or something […] He was basically offered money tae gie up any information on the group. On the Green Brigade. It wasnae even anyhing … it was nothing tae dae wi Ireland. (Participant 5: 22)

While police attention is not a new phenomenon, either for the Green Brigade or for football fans more broadly, the harassment faced by the group is felt by participants to be disproportionate to the actual activities of the group. The question, then, is why are the group the target of so much police attention?

> **What is it about the group that makes them put so many cops on the streets?**
>
> There's theories people have of why this is, but I wouldn't like to go into it just because of

fear of sounding absolutely nuts. (Participant 3: 11)

When asked if he wanted to elaborate on these theories, they made it clear that the did not want to say anything while the tape was running, instead wishing to speak after the interview.

Probably not. [whisper] I'll speak to ye after. [Both laughing] (Participant 3: 11)

This conversation did not happen, but other participants did offer their own theories as to why the group has been targeted by the state. The following two participants state that the Green Brigade have found out the police's opinion of the group, and that the police see them as being “a threat” for different reasons. I do not know how they got this information, but the way in which they are policed would corroborate this hypotheses. One participant points to the connections the group, or more appropriately, its individual members, have with various ultra, left-wing, anti-fascist, and anti-imperialist groups and individuals throughout Europe, and in Palestine.

[…] we've been telt that they see us as eh … we're a big threat basically, because eh, obviously we've got different kinds ae links tae different left-wing groups aw roond Europe, ultras groups, but then also through different hings, like Anti Fascist Action, and then Irish Republicanism, and even like Palestine, and fucking, different hings like that. And they see us as being a bit extreme, […] (Participant 5: 21)

This view of the group as 'extreme' by the state and police is one possible reason for such policing, but there is another factor which makes the group a threat to the forces of law and order, and that comes partly in response to their activity within their own section of Celtic Park, Section 111.

> A few years ago […] we were able to find out what the police thought about us. And one of the things they said was that [Section] 111 was a no-go area for police. And they didn't like the fact that they couldn't control us. And they couldn't. I mean, we're not, fucking, we're not organised crime, we're not drug dealers, we're not gangsters, we're not terrorists, we're not any of this. So you can't police us like that. We're not political activists, so you can't treat us like that. They just can't control it, you know what I mean. (Participant 1: 15)

The police's fears of the Green Brigade being uncontrollable is perhaps a combination of the group's explicitly anti-establishment politics, and in particular their Irish Republicanism, but it must surely also be a result of the historically fraught relationship between working class football fans and the authorities, most often summarised by the image of the 'casual', or football hooligan (Thornton, 2012). The group's politics, combined with their perceived 'casual' nature, make them seen as a group who are willing to physically resist the police, and are thus seen as a threat.

> […] we're almost seen as a hooligan outfit, so the police act in a certain way because … for me, I think we're seen as a group that will fight back, and eh, will kind of battle against police, if that's the way they want to treat us. Em, even though we haven't given them the reason to feel that way, I think that's how they're debriefed [sic] before our demos, if any. (Participant 3: 9)

Participant 1 is not alone in their opinion that "we're not political activists" (15), but it would certainly seem that the policing of the group would indicate that the police view them as a political, as well as a public order, threat. Surveillance in Scotland and throughout Europe, attempts by Special Branch to recruit informers, members being stopped under Anti-Terrorism legislation while travelling between Scotland and the north of Ireland, dawn raids, massive shows of force by police

at marches; all of these would suggest that the policing of the group is viewed to a large degree as policing a politically subversive group. This participant, who had been involved in activism before becoming a group member, says the following

> I can only compare the policing of the group, as a member, compared to political activism. Em, and the treatment you get at something that is associated with the group is completely disproportionate to what should, and is done, elsewhere. (Participant 3: 9)

This observation is continued.

> they're fear tactics, but if you read, they've used these tactics across the board. Em, environmental groups, eh, animal welfare groups. It's the same tactics that they've used. Why they're putting it on to a football group that essentially does a little bit of community work here and there, and is a social club for drinking and football, is a bit strange. But, eh, I'm sure it will come out at some point. (Participant 3: 1)

As will become clear, however, the group, despite some protestations that they are not political activists per se, does participate in varying forms of political activism, particularly at a grassroots level within working class communities.

“On the back burner at the moment”:

Impact upon the group's activities

The impact of policing upon the group's activities goes beyond the content of displays within Celtic Park and other grounds, but effects many other areas. Participant 4 shows how the political education nights have suffered as a result of police and state repression, while Participant 3 suggests that the very way that the group operates has had to change to deal with this new challenge.

> They [the political education nights] have been kind of on the back burner at the moment … been on the back burner at the moment cus of all the political stuff with the group, with the police and the Bill.
>
> (Participant 4: 4)

> […] probably most recently, em, Offensive [Behaviour] at Football Act, so that's, em, kinda the biggest struggle that we've had, because yer basically changing from protesting inside a ground, to a political campaign, and lobbying group almost. You're having to lobby the SNP to pull for an early review. So that is basically where FAC came about, so it was a kind of extension of the group, to be able to push on that front, but in a more orderly manner. [laughs quietly] (Participant 3: 8)

The political education nights have also suffered as a result of the group prioritising their opposition to the Bill and its policing, with a night focussed exclusively on education members and other Celtic supporters on their rights when being confronted by the police, whether being detained, stopped and searched, or arrested, or just being harassed.

> […] having an education night to educate people on their rights when they're being arrested […] we got the bust cards made up and handed out to them. (Participant 4: 4)

Chapter 7

Discussion and Conclusion

The group has a lively and evolving political culture, which is influenced by anti-fascism, left-wing ultra culture, individual members' own political passions, and of course a sense of Irish identity which forms such a central part of the group's, and Celtic supporters', collective identity.

Through interviews and examination and involvement in some of the activities organised by the group, it is clear that the group has an approach to politics which fuses ultra culture with the 'parent' culture of Celtic, the Green Brigade has created a unique 'rebel' identity which goes beyond mere symbolic displays of rebellion, but instead manifests in grassroots activism and political agitation around a range of issues, from anti-poverty and anti-discrimination activism, to anti-fascism and expressions of solidarity with Palestine.

Irishness forms a part of this collective identity and culture situated within a Scottish context, where expressions of Irish identity are still contentious. The Green Brigade can be seen as a re-imagining of a tradition of political radicalism within the milieu of Celtic, which does not accept the silencing and invisibility of the Irish in Scotland, but instead unleashes a coordinated, infectious, and often very politicised, roar. But the group is not merely a group of 'social misfits' as one participant described them. Much of their activity occurs away from the view of other Celtic fan, and far from the gaze of mainstream society.

In the anti-discrimination football tournament each year, in their support for food banks, in free political education nights, in support of the Palestinian call for BDS, and in anti-racist and anti-fascist activism, there is a highly organised, committed and thoughtful group of people for whom their passion for Celtic and the ultra way of life fits naturally with their politics.

Diverse opinions and group unity

An important characteristic of the Green Brigade, and one shared by other left-wing ultra groups, is the multiplicity of political identities and persuasions within the group, but which are brought together under an 'umbrella' of unifying principles: in this case a love of Celtic and its history, an embracing of ultra culture, and a general 'soundness' of politics. As Doidge (2013: 248) cautions though, it is important to acknowledge that fan-groups, in this case ultras, are not homogenous, and that we should be cautious when 'discussing overarching identities when analysing the influence of politics on fan groups.'

While some participants admit that they themselves still 'don't know enough about politics' [Participant 4: 1], and state that 'a proportion of the [Green Brigade] members aren't dramatically political' [Participant 3: 5], it is clear that politics is a fundamental part of the group's culture and activities. Participant 3 describes there as being 'every shade of political belief as long as it's under anti-racism and anti-discrimination' (5). This 'umbrella' of anti-discrimination and broadly left-wing politics acts as a 'point of concentration' (Gemie and Schrafstetter, 417), much like the way in which Spanish anti-fascist ultras 'of diverse political and cultural movements' unite under the banner of anti-fascism. By using this 'umbrella' of left-wing, anti-discrimination politics, and through a commitment to Irish Republicanism in a broad sense, the Green Brigade goes some way towards answering Stuart Hall, in that they have been able to build

> those forms of solidarity and identification which make common struggle and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and identities (Stuart Hall, New Ethnicities, 445, quoted in Spaaij and Viñas, 2013: 188).

Approaches to political discussion

As the account of one of the founding members of the group educating himself through a collection of books stolen from his local library shows, there are organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971) within the group who have educated themselves, sometimes in a non academic manner, within their own class-specific context, and often before becoming group members. While members came to the group with varying degrees of informal or formal political educations, the group has also created a space for 'new intellectual types to emerge' (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991: 119).

While the group, in their political discussion, rejects an approach to learning which Freire would term 'banking' education which deposits 'propaganda, slogans' (Freire, 1972: 52) in passive receptacles, it does not automatically follow that they adopt a 'problem-solving' approach to learning. The Green Brigade, like problem-posing education, certainly does not accept a ' 'well-behaved' present (Freire, 1972: 57), and dialogue, discussion, debate and argument seem to be important features of the group's political culture. As Freire states, 'Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education' (Freire, 1972: 65). There is dialogue and communication in abundance in the Green Brigade, as the online forum in particular attests to, but it is the political education nights which provide the most formalised example of the group's approach to learning, and allows us to explore which aspects, if any, of Freire's theories of problem-posing education the group uses.

Participant 3 describes a 'laid back environment' (12) which aims to be inclusive, encouraging of participation, intelligible to people, without the use of alienating language, and which draws upon participants' personal experiences of political discussion of Republicanism. Irish Republicanism has long acted as a starting point for many Celtic fans, myself included, in processes of politicisation. In

this specific context of the political education nights, and the political culture of the group more generally, we can view discussions and experiences of Republicanism as being a 'generative theme', which allows for people to 'join the dots' (Participant 3: 13) to other struggles and themes.

While the group does not consciously approach political discussion from a Freirian perspective, many of their methods are Freirian in nature. The rejection of a dogmatic approach to politics, a culture of debate and dialogue, intelligibility and accessibility, the use of generative themes such as Republicanism to 'join the dots' with other struggles, enjoyment and fun; all of these are elements of a problem-posing approach to education, and it is evident from the interviews that the political culture of the group has been conducive to learning and a deeper politicisation amongst members: 'I'm learning all the time, and I have to say the group is fantastic for doing that' (Participant 4: 1).

Some participants are clearly acquainted with political theory, and the online forum shows political discussion which covers diverse and sophisticated themes, amongst them political theory. Indeed, the participant who most ardently spoke against theory ('Who gies a fuck if you've read Das Kapital?!'), also spoke eloquently about political theory, and clearly has a deep understanding of left-wing politics, and was also the one who posted the first suggestions for the reading list on the forum. It is likely that this was a rhetorical way of underscoring the aversion the group has to a perceived obsession some on the left have with political theory, at the expense of engagement with working class people.

It is interesting that theory is consciously flagged up as a potentially alienating barrier to political engagement, and is perhaps an example of the group desire for a 'praxis' (Freire, 1996) which does not relegate action at the expense of theory. This attitude to theory, however, can be problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it can create distance between the political ideals which the Green

Brigade identifies with, for example anti-fascism, Irish Republicanism and socialism, and their theoretical, intellectual underpinnings. Without some degree of discussion and debate about theoretical assumptions, ideas are not placed fully in their historical or intellectual context. A second problem is that some influential members have read and value theory as individuals, and that this has helped their own political development. This runs the risk that these members, while sincerely disavowing an overly theoretical approach to political discussion, allow their own theoretical knowledge to influence discussions, with them become part of a hierarchy of knowledge and in effect the arbitrators of certain ideas. I am not suggesting this is the case, but it is an obvious query to make.

The group's attitude to theory can, I think, be seen not as a dismissal of political theory per se, because it is clear that many members have read extensively, but instead as an emphasis on the need for political discussion which is accessible to all, whether well-read or not. It would seem from the interviews that this approach has been successful, with Participants 4 and 5 in particular describing membership of the group as the central factor in their politicisation.

Attitudes to the Left

Such attitudes towards an overemphasis on political theory, and the stressing of an accessible way of discussing politics, can also be interpreted as a rejection of a perceived left-wing dogmatism. Participants' attitudes to the Scottish left indicated at best an aloofness, and at worst a hostility. Accounts of the encounter with other anti-fascist activists suggest that this is partly that elements of the left are thought of as being middle class and out of touch with the experiences of the group. The turbulence of the Scottish left over the last decade has also surely played a part, with the group not wanting to be drawn into sectarian infighting.

The ideological diversity of the group must also a factor, with the act of balancing many political persuasions, amongst them anarchists, socialists, and republicans, means that alliances or networking is usually done with broad groups and campaigns (e.g. Palestine solidarity activists, asylum seeker and refugee solidarity), as opposed to political parties or ideologically rigid, and often discredited, groups. For example, my initial contact with group members was through involvement in Palestine solidarity activism, and members were relieved to learn that I was not a member of any vanguardist, or other, left wing parties. I would say there is a certain ideological flexibility for the group as a whole. This fits with an 'anti-politics' attitude which is clear from discussion of the IWCA tactics of dressing 'cool', and from the commitment to accessible political discussion which does not leave people 'dwarfed by [others'] big words' (Participant 3: 12). A founding member of Anti Fascist Action argues that 'the Left continues to regard *itself,* and not the working class, as the true agent of change' (O'Shea, 2014). In a sense the group sees the working class as 'detached from their traditional parties' (Gramsci, 1971: 210), with the organised left does not represent them.

While the group claims not to want to 'win the people over' to their specific way of doing things, and are happy working at the grassroots or within their own circles, nor do they see themselves as 'revolutionary leaders' (Freire. 1972: 67). While participants rejected terms such as 'radical' or 'social movement', it is clear that they are an influential group amongst sections of overwhelmingly male and working class young people. Accounts of young boys 'pulling each other up' for using homophobic language suggests not only that younger people, especially boys and teenagers, aspire to be a part of the Green Brigade, attracted by the style, atmosphere and excitement which the group provides, but that the politics of the group also filters through, with young, non-members emulating members not only in dress, but in a public expression of left-wing politics and a mutual 'checking' of discriminatory language and behaviour.

While a principled distancing from associations with the more overtly negative aspects of the Scottish left is surely a positive thing, there is also a risk that, as well as downplaying the importance of political theory, lessons and alternative strategies for organising from different networks and traditions could be overlooked. One example of this is the way 'safe spaces' and 'trigger warnings', while their purpose is understood, are seen as being impracticable and 'utopian' in the context of the group (Participant 3: 17). While I agree that it is foolish to 'just throw that in and force' such concepts upon people who have no experiences of the particular vocabulary of left wing activism, never the less there is a need to recognise that such ideas and organising tools can be extremely positive. In the context of more women joining the group, for example, a serious examination of the ways in which other political groupings have dealt with such scenarios could prove insightful, whether the terminology is the used or not.

Structure/leadership

The current organisational structure of the group is still slightly unclear, but it does appears that there are 'elements of centralized and decentralized leadership' (Jerzak, 2013: 244), with a core at the centre of the group who take on more responsibility. In relation to Jerzak's (2013: 244) observation that Egyptian ultra's preferred a horizontal structure in order to 'limit the influence of any single ideology, balancing groups' central attitudes and members' diverse beliefs', it seems that this is partly the case for the Green Brigade. The emphasis on discussion within the group seems to echo Spaaij and Viñas's (2013: 191) interview with a left-wing Spanish ultra who stated that the participatory and democratic structure of the group was partly motivated by a desire to oppose authoritarian tendencies which would be against the principles of this left-wing group.

Silences and shortfalls: Gender, Class and Zombies

Themes of gender, class and rivalries all present interesting, and somewhat unexpected, findings, which deserve to be examined. One participant actively encouraged me to be more critical in my questioning during interviews (Participant 1: 30), and to explore more issues of sexism and homophobia. From the start, the 'sponsors/gatekeepers' of the project were encouraging and facilitating of my desire to speak to women members. In the end, although, I only interviewed one woman, she is one of only a few women, so I have gone some way to representing the voices of women in the group.

In a challenge to Free and Hughson's (2003: 141 and 145) suggestion that care and sensitivity often go 'unarticulated' amongst male football supporters other than during the 'collective orgasmic episode[s]' of passionate support for a football team, participants were all comfortable speaking of the caring and affectionate relationships they have with other group members, and frequently spoke of the group as being like a 'family'.

Participants also spoke of the way in which humour is used by both men and women members to poke fun at sexism, and see this as being a way to speak of sexism without making 'situations more uncomfortable than they need to be' (Participant 3: 16). As Free and Hughson argue though, the use of irony does not cancel out the 'literal meaning [of sexism] with the contradictory “truth” (parody)' (2003: 144). The extent to which such joking about sexism (or other 'provocative themes') reinforces patriarchal attitudes will, however, have to be addressed in more detail elsewhere.

It is clear that challenging sexism and hegemonic masculinity are not central to the political practice and culture of the group, and that fears of appearing 'tokenisitc' likely obscure deeper patriarchal

attitudes. It is significant that homophobia is deemed as far easier to recognise and challenge than sexism, likely because men can empathise with gay men easier than with women, but also because there are prominent gay members of the group who have personally changed people's attitudes. Participant 3 speaks of the way in which sexism is so socialised in men that it seems an almost insurmountable challenge. There is no clear strategy for dealing with sexism within the group, though participants hope that the expansion of the group will result in more women members, and they hope that this will organically make the group a more welcoming space for women. There are obvious contradictions and tensions within the group, but much of this is the nature of a group which has no formal policies, which has a broad membership, and which is located within the overwhelmingly masculine environment of Scottish football.

Although explicit mentions of class are sparse, we should look elsewhere for articulations of such an identity, for example in culture and social activities. Football, despite the best attempts of those seeking to introduce a neoliberal model, is still seen as a working class leisure activity in Scotland. In talking about some activists on the Scottish left, for example, terms such as 'hippies' and 'crusty lefties' are used (Participant 2: 19), and suggest a distance from what can be perceived as a middle class lifestyle choice.

In the discussion of the 'confusion' during the anti-fascist action we can see the way that dress and look are clear, yet potentially superficial, markers of working class culture. It is certainly interesting that 'our lads' barely speak of class at all, much less their 'working class credentials' (Free and Hughson, 2003: 145). As Free and Hughson (2003) discuss, football can act as a way to express an (imagined) working class identity which deindustrialised workplaces and fragmented communities no longer can. While Free and Hughson (2003) critique the way in which young men in the selected ethnographies seemed to fetishise and act out a 'working classness', despite working in service

sector jobs and buying designer clothing, the lack of insistence on class by participants seems at odds with such a critique.

Bedouin Theory – Zombies

It can be deduced from participants' accounts that the 'Other' of Protestant Unionism/Loyalism does not feature prominently in participants' conceptions of their own Irish, Celtic, left-wing or Green Brigade identities. For anyone acquainted with the history and politics of Irish Republicanism, from where many group members can trace their initial politicisation, it should come as no surprise that these multiple identities do not rely on an 'Othering' of Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists for their affirmation. It is important not to overplay this point, however. It is clear that 'baming up' [taking the piss/mocking] Rangers has been a theme of many Green Brigade displays. There is a mocking dismissiveness when participants speak about Rangers, and this is reflected in the banners which the group has displayed. Throughout the interviews, however, it was clear that Rangers (and their demise) has played a relatively small role in the culture and activity of the group.

The Bedouin Syndrome theory (Doidge, 2013: 258) is interesting when examining the ways in which ultra groups, and specifically the Green Brigade, develop alliances with groups who are allied to their friends, and that relationships can be developed and initiated through these preexisting friendships, for example alliances between Celtic, Livorno, Athletic Bilbao, AEK Athens, St Pauli, Marseilles, Standard Liege, Omonia Nikosia etc.; Likewise, rivalries are often adopted in a similar manner, though I would suggest, and my data go someway to confirming this, that rivalries or oppositional attitudes are based upon more than merely a 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' mentality. When politics plays such a pivotal role in the ultra scene, ultra groups will generally orientate themselves in friendship with, or opposition to, a different group or team based

upon the associated politics, i.e. whether they are seen as fascist or anti-fascist. An 'apolitical' rival of a friend does not automatically become the enemy of the Green Brigade. Opposition to the Moscow ultras is an example of this.

The data from the interviews gives lie to the idea of 'both sides' of the supposedly 'sectarian divide' (Catholic/Protestant. Celtic/Rangers) being as bad as each other, a cliché which is often repeated to dismiss any calls for a more intellectually rigorous and historically and politically contextualised examination of the very real tensions which still exist between the immigrant Irish Catholic community and certain reactionary elements of Scottish society. It is clear that the Green Brigade, and likely Celtic fans generally, to do not define themselves in opposition to Rangers or loyalism, and that the demise of Rangers FC has played a very minor, and arguably positive, role in the group's activities.

Additionally, I have not observed or recorded the use of gendered language in the 'Othering' of opponents, unlike Free and Hughson's (2003: 140) article. There is already a historically, politically and culturally rich vocabulary ('huns', 'Gers', 'Brits', 'fash', 'boneheads') for describing footballing and political rivals, and perhaps for this reason there is less need to gender abuse. I would also argue, though, that even if hegemonic masculinity has not been challenged satisfactorily within the group, there is a commitment to anti-discrimination which makes verbalisation of explicitly gendered language rare.

A politicised subculture facing criminalisation

Having discussed aspects of the Green Brigade's activities, its sense of collective identity, and its relationship to, and demonisation by, aspects of Scottish society, particularly the media, the state

and the police, we now have a clearer idea of what the Green Brigade 'is'. It is a politicised group of people who identify with the ultra scene, though who have added their own Irish identity to create a unique 'rebel' identity, which influences both their sense of collective, group identity, and the political activities which they take part in.

The Green Brigade, like other ultra groups, have obvious subcultural characteristics. The group is clearly part of a wider 'parent' culture of Celtic supporters, though has created a unique and distinctive identity, 'shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their 'parent' culture' (Hall, 1976:13). The most obvious way of delineating their difference from the wider Celtic support has been through the adoption of much of the action repertoires of the wider ultra scene, most visibly the match-day 'performance'.

We can see that the Green Brigade has 'reasonably tight boundaries [and a] distinctive shape', and that the group is 'focussed around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces etc' (Hall, 1976: 14). Such boundaries are partly those which the group set in order to control the make-up of the group, such as criteria for membership (love of Celtic, 'decent/sound' politics, and a commitment to the ultra ethos), and an organisational structure which is not easily identifiable to outsiders (use of a private members section of the forum). Other boundaries are defined less explicitly; the shape of the group is physically asserted through their *comportement* within the wider milieu of Celtic supporters: by having their own section within Celtic Park (Section 111) where they remain standing, with their own chants and songs, distinctive banners, style of dress (in a distinctive 'casual' style or in their own group merchandise), organising corteos to the ground etc. Other activities outside of the immediate realm of match-day are events such as self-defence training, the anti-discrimination tournament, political education nights, food drives, anti-fascist activism, and attendance at public demonstrations, such as those for Palestine.

The 'material artefacts' of the group are the distinctive clothing worn, the use of megaphones and drums, banners, two-sticks and other atmospheric props, pyro, and stickering. Stickering, and to a degree the graffiti of the SMV, is the most obvious way that territorial spaces are claimed and marked out. The City Centre, the transport system and highly visible areas throughout the city are contested by footballing and political rivals, amongst them the Green Brigade.

The Green Brigade has a set of values which, though not rigid, are clear enough to broadly identify. Their *Weltanschauung* is based around a commitment to broadly left-wing politics: anti-discrimination; anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-sectarian. Most contentiously in Scotland, in their name, imagery and symbols, statements, songs, and activities, the group is also openly and proudly Irish Republican.

The group, like other subcultures, is well organised (Hebdige, 1979: 113), as can be seen through intricate, full-stadium displays, or activities out with stadia. The importance of style is another common theme of influential works on subcultures, and Hebdige in particular speaks of 'style as a form of Refusal' (1979: 2). The style of many, but by no means all, Green Brigade members, is influenced heavily by the casual scene, which Thornton (2012) documents with a focus on style and fashion, which can be seen as part of a 'ritualistic performance' which reinforces group identity (Doidge. 2013: 251). There is a clear tension, however, between identifying as a left-wing group, and an almost obsessive attitude to expensive designer labels, but this is nothing new. Working class subcultures like the Mods were also sharply dressed, and this can be seen to an extent as trying to subvert anti-working class prejudices, and finding a sense of pride in one area where an individual has a degree of control; that of appearance and dress.

The group can comfortably be called subcultural, and part of a wider ultra subculture, although

retaining certain non-negotiable elements of the parent cultures of Celtic and Ireland. The question of whether or not such subcultural groups are also social movements is one dealt with by Piotrowski (2013), and specifically relating to neofascist UltraS, by Testa (2009) and Testa and Armstrong (2010). The group demonstrates 'broad social change goals and [a] unique repertoire of marches, demonstrations, and protests', (Johnston, 2014: 25), though I would agree with Piotrowski (2013) conclusion in his study of alterglobalist subcultures, that the Green Brigade are more easily classified as a politicised subculture, rather than as a clear component of a broader ultra social movement. Unlike Italian neofascist UltraS, left-wing ultra groups do not have the same clearly defined sense of common purpose, and are not homogenous, either as individual groups or as a wider network of groups. The Green Brigade, and in particular individual members, are participants in a variety of other social movements, such as Palestine solidarity activism and anti-fascism, but it is far more difficult to classify the group itself, or left-wing ultras, as clearly part of a wider social movement. This conclusion, however, is not definitive, and requires a much deeper study of not only the Green Brigade, but of other left-wing ultra groups throughout Europe and beyond.

Relationship to 'parent' culture(s)

In identifying the subcultural characteristics of the Green Brigade, we must also look at the context from which they came. There can be no subculture without a 'parent' culture to define in opposition to, but also to draw influence from. The casual subculture is a clear influence, not only on the style of the Green Brigade, but on working class-influenced fashion more broadly (Thornton, 2012), while the ultra subculture provides much of the action repertoires which make the Green Brigade distinctive as an ultra group. It is two football-focussed subcultures which provide the aesthetic (casual) and visual (ultra) canvas for the group in their appearance and most visible displays, but both of these subcultures have their roots in wider working class culture, as amorphous as that is.

The thing that makes the Green Brigade unique, however, is the distinctive way they have fused elements of football subcultures, specifically ultra, with the politics and identity of the most dominant 'parent' influence: that of Celtic.

They have maintained 'the parental identifications' (Cohen, 1972a, in Hebdige, 1979: 77) of Celtic, Irishness, and Irish Republicanism, while drawing heavily upon a left-wing, anti-fascist and ultra culture. Subcultural theory helps us to see the Green Brigade as a fusion of the Irish/Celtic parent culture, and the ultra scene. Irish Republicanism, at least superficially, is a major influence, and is reflected in the name, symbols, songs, banners and political culture of the group. We can locate the group within a wider parent culture not only of Celtic, but more specifically of a politicised, anti-fascist and Republican socialist tradition which has long organised within Celtic spaces. These are the 'cool fuckers' of groups like Celtic Fans Against Fascism and members of the Tiocfaidh Ár Lá fanzine, and in many respects the group are a direct continuation of these traditions of radical organising, using Celtic and football as a space for working class politics, but with the flair (and flare) of ultras.

The demonisation, criminalisation and policing of the Green Brigade

I would argue that the group's explicit and defiant commitment to principles of Irish Republicanism and its symbolism has been the primary transgression which has led them to being labelled as 'deviant' (Becker, 1963: 9). They have challenged the hegemonic limits of Scottish and (British) society, in which it is acceptable to express a sanitised idea of Irishness, but only within the confines of Celtic Park, and only for 90 minutes.

This is not the only transgression, however. The group ticks many boxes which make the

establishment perceive them as a threat, whether they are or not. Like the ultras who proved central to the insurrection and revolution in Egypt (Jerzak, 2013), the Green Brigade are able to mobilise large numbers of people in the streets, in a challenge to the state's desire to control public space. They are by their nature rebellious, and corteos, use of pyro, stickering and graffiti, all 'breach the peace' of society. They are a predominantly working class subculture, with largely a young, male membership and support, and dress in a style which, to the untrained observer (or police officer), makes them look like football casuals, though they are not. They express left wing, anti-establishment politics, and celebrate militant challenges to established power, whether in Ireland, Scotland or Palestine. They organise at the grassroots level in working class communities, out with state control. They are part of a Europe-wide network of militant anti-fascists, and condone the use of violence to combat fascism. They are 'seen as willing to resist' the police in confrontations, clearly resent the police, and their Section in Celtic Park has been seen as uncontrollable by the authorities. They are 'cool' and appeal to many young people within the Celtic support, and are popular. They are well organised, and can pull off coordinated actions, whether a full stadium display of 60,000 people, or all day events like the tournament. For all of these reasons, the Green Brigade are seen as a threat, and are policed as such.

The Green Brigade, (like other ultra groups,) proudly identify as rebels, with a celebration of a rebellious Irish identity being a central theme of the collective identity of the group ('Until the last rebel'). The applicability of Lemert's (1967) theory of Secondary Deviance is less straightforward than expected. The group has certainly had to react to its demonisation and criminalisation, employing its 'deviance' as a means of 'defence, attack [and] adjustment' (Cohen, 1972: 14). Examples of using 'deviant' tools in reaction to criminalisation are corteos, stadium displays and stickering, all of which have been employed in resistance to the state and police. The label of 'deviant', or more specifically of 'rebel', predates the Bill, however. The group has, from the

beginning, celebrated a rebel identity, a very ultra 'fuck you', so it is not the label that is harmful in itself, but the way in which it is used to justify repression. It is clear, though, that this rebel identity, and in particular a hatred for the police, has been greatly deepened and widened by the logical consequence of demonisation; criminalisation. 'ACAB' and 'I312' adorns banners, stickers, and even members' skin.

Cohen (1972) and Hall's (1976) studies of the role of the media in the demonisation of subcultural and marginal groups such as Mods, Rockers and urban black youth, also speak to a more general way in which subcultures, and not necessarily Irish Republican ones, are susceptible to journalistic mischaracterisation, of labelling (Becker, 1963), as part of a process of demonisation. Participants were aware and highly critical of the role of the media in their demonisation, and part of the rationale for participating in this study was to dispel the media-peddled propaganda against the group.

The group has become a 'scapegoat' for Scottish 'social anxiety' over the existence of a politicised section of the immigrant Irish. The extent to which this deeply rooted, historical social anxiety has been exacerbated with the 'troubling times' (Hall, 1976: 72) of austerity, a right-wing, anti-immigrant discourse in the media and Westminster, and an increase in projections of British militarism and 'patriotism', is worthy of greater study. It does seem, though, that this predominantly 'working-class youth group' has been cast 'as symptomatic of deeper civil unrest' (Hall, 1976:72). In the language of the Scottish Government, pundits and others in the media, the narrative around the Green Brigade has had the effect of 'raising the wrong things into sensational focus, [and] hiding and mystifying the deeper causes (Hall, 1982: vii)' of what has been falsely labelled as 'sectarianism' in Scotland.

Within this context of demonisation and 'Othering', the Green Brigade have faced a high level of police repression as a result of the implementation the Bill. I would argue that rather than fundamentally challenge the taboo of anti-Irish racism in Scotland, the Bill has instead criminalised some of the most vocal members of the victim community. This criminalisation has taken different forms, with the physical space of the stadium being a key battleground. While Scottish stadia have not been 'militarized' in the same way that Doidge (2013) and Testa (2009) describe in the Italian context, we can instead speak of the spread of police surveillance, both overt and covert.

The effects of the criminalisation of the Green Brigade has changed the way the group operates, and the has influenced the collective culture. It is clear from speaking to members that the police are very much seen as the enemy now, as 'scum' who harass and intimidate their friends and families, with members now identifying 'resistance against the police as a key component' of the group's collective identity (Jerzak, 2013: 246).

Within the group, attitudes towards the police are expressed in different ways. While most young, working class men in Scotland will not have much love for the 'polis' to start with (Deuchar, 2010), an oppositional attitude to the police is now another of the identifying characteristics of the Green Brigade. Tattoos on their website show the numbers '1.3.1.2', the numerical representation of the letters 'A.C.A.B.': 'All Cops Are Bastards', and one banner used these letters as an anagram for 'All Celts Against the Bill (Green Brigade, 2014). Such attitudes to the police are consistent with other research on left-wing (and right-wing) ultras groups elsewhere.

With the group feeling 'devalued and/ or stigmatized by the logic of domination', this feeds into a series of collective 'resistance identities' (Castells, in Spaaij and Viñas, 2013:184). The way these 'resistance identities' have manifested themselves most visibly have been through displays of

banners within the stadium criticising the police and the Bill's architects, the SNP. Public demonstrations and marches have also been used, with the Gallowgate corteo being an example. FAC has also provided a broader campaign which includes other Celtic supporters' groups, and has acted as a useful way to focus people's energies, whether through lobbying, organising discussions, or initiatives like getting the Roll of Honour in the charts.

The impact of repression upon group activities has been noted in the Findings chapter, with some activities being 'put on the back burner' (Participant 4: 4) in order to focus the group's resources on combatting their criminalisation. An example of this is the way in which the political education nights have reduced in frequency, and when they have run they have focussed on topics such as legal education and 'knowing your rights', with 'bust cards' being made up and distributed to other Celtic fans (Participant 4: 4).

The Bill has also effected other football fans, particularly Celtic fans. It seems no surprise that a high profile police campaign of repression against the most visible members of an already politicised football support would have the effect of politicising other non-members, and this appears to be happening. Young boys and men who happen to wear Green Brigade merchandise, for example hats or t-shirts, have been stopped and harassed in the street, and not even on match days (Participant 4: 10), leading to the adoption of a 'fuck you' attitude to the police.

I would argue that Celtic Park is no longer the 'safe space' which Bradley and Hayes referred to in 2006. The parameters of what are considered acceptable expressions of Irish identity have greatly narrowed, and expressions of support for Irish Republicanism can lead to arrest, imprisonment and/or a football banning order. That said, there is no other place in Scotland where Irish identity can be communally expressed on such a scale. For this reason, it is necessary to challenge the Bill,

but not in isolation. The Bill is a symptom of a deeper anti-Irish racism in Scottish society. Hayes (2006: 6) spoke of Celtic 'as a conduit for the confirmation of cultural identity', in the same year that the Green Brigade have been founded. While Celtic no longer provides the space for such confirmation that it once did, the Green Brigade can be seen as providing a new conduit within the much-restricted, wider conduit of Celtic. Their aim is to repoliticise, and defend already politicised, spaces, physical and psychological, within the Celtic support. In this, they face a Celtic management which seeks to depoliticise Celtic in order to maximise profit, and a Scottish Government and police which sees expressions of Irish Republicanism as a threat to their hegemony.

The criminalisation and control of football fans is not particularly new, but it has certainly increased rapidly over the last few years, with all football fans facing increasing contact with the police. naFans travelling to away games (in England and Wales at least) can now face the prospect of 'bubbling', a form of mobile kettling in which away fans must meet at one departure point (decided by the police), and then travel to and from the match on coaches (escorted by the police), with police searching coaches and fans, and fans exchanging pre-payed vouchers for the match tickets (controlled by the police) (Cloake and White, 2014).

Security is obviously an important issue for the Green Brigade given the context of police repression, continued surveillance and attempts to turn informers against them. As in other contexts in Spain, Italy or Egypt,

> vigilance on state repression underlies the activities of many left-wing football fans [...]”(Spaaij and Viñas, 2013: 190; and see Doidge, 2013: 256).

Despite the clear demonisation and criminalisation of the group, it is not helpful to paint the group as martyrs or 'angels'. There has been a polarisation of opinion around the group, and participants consistently stressed the ordinary nature of the Green Brigade as a social grouping of friends who, due to the context of Celtic and their own biographies, have been politicised and share common values. However, the group is clearly very political, with an influence which far exceeds their small numbers, and have become a central player in discussions about the way Scottish society engages with Irishness and have challenged the 'sectarianism' narrative. This modesty could be interpreted as a distancing from the tendency of some left-wing groups to overstate their importance and impact.

I consider the policing of the group as being of real importance for activists, given the levels of repression and the normalisation of police surveillance, the methods of crowd control, the contestation of public space, and the criminalisation of certain political positions which have been imposed upon the Green Brigade. All of these have consequences for wider society, but activist specifically. That certain marginal groups in society are used as a testing ground for authoritarian experiments in social control should come as no surprise. That this particular marginalised group are (Irish Republican) football fans, however, would suggest to me that some on the Scottish/British left will be slow to see the potential consequences for other activists. So far, solidarity with the group has been slow to come, other than from other ultra groups transnationally, and sympathetic sections of the Irish and Irish Scottish communities. Some participants alluded to the relationship between the policing of the group and the policing of other political activists, with Green Brigade members conscious that the tactics used against them now have been tried and tested against other activists groups in the past. It is not inconceivable that the tactics used against the Green Brigade, and in particular government legislation which criminalises 'offensive behaviour', will be turned against other activists and oppositional sections of society, with the Green Brigade, and football fans generally, being the new guinea pigs for a repression which seeks to control of one of the few

remaining places where crowds gather in their tens of thousands, week in, week out, united in a common purpose. While this footballing experience is increasingly commercialised and gentrified, in certain places, like Celtic Park, it manages to retain an explicitly political, and at times radical, edge. For these reasons, activists should pay more attention to the Green Brigade in particular, but to ultra culture and football more widely, as actual and potential sites of conflict and struggle.

Limitations

The limitations of this study have been numerous. The most obvious is the length of a Masters thesis, which necessarily limits the scope of any study. As the Green Brigade has never before been the subject of academic study, and what is written on them is either politically committed or journalistic, this study had to devote considerable space to explaining the context and broad nature of the group, and of ultra culture. Without this scene-setting, the reader would have been left adrift, or would not have appreciated the importance of the group as a topic of research. The problem this poses, however, is that it restricts the amount of space which can be dedicated to the particularities and nuances of the group. This thesis has largely been a balancing act between showing the breadth of the group's activities and culture, while also bringing to the fore particular areas of interest.

The sample size of five participants, while relatively small, provided a rich source of data which has only very partially been used in this thesis. That said, a larger sample would no doubt show an even more complex picture of a group which balances many different shades of left wing politics, and would no doubt have enhanced and changed this thesis considerably.

While my initial intention was to conduct Participatory Action Research, it soon became clear that this would not be possible, mainly due to the group's focus on resisting the Bill and its

consequences. This was exacerbated by the fact that I was physically based in Dublin, and it was impracticable to conduct PAR or an ethnography without spending considerable time in Glasgow.

Other limitations were of a legal and ethical nature. There are aspects of the group which would have provided a fascinating insight, for example, discussion of the tactics of militant anti-fascism; a greater engagement with questions of group structure and internal democracy; biographical details of participants' lives and their individual political trajectories; elements of the more clandestine and legally-dubious aspects of their activities; and connections with Irish Republican groups. While I have a personal knowledge of all of these areas, it would certainly put participants and other group members in considerable danger of police action.

Recommendations

The nature of a Masters thesis is to present original research, in a limited space, which builds upon and critiques previous work, and which suggests areas of future research. The strength and weakness of this study has been the incredible richness of the data. In analysing and writing, I had to constantly evaluate which areas I would focus on, and which would have to be marginal or not used at all. There is a wealth of material from transcripts which has not been used, and I have no doubt that another thesis could be written with this material alone. However, for the future researcher, I would like to highlight what I feel are the most pressing areas to explore.

Any future study of the group must look at the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is reproduced, and to interrogate in more detail the contradiction of being a group committed to the principles of anti-discrimination, while barely addressing the need for a more prominent opposition to sexism and patriarchy.

Additionally, while few explicit mentions of class were made, a more detailed examination of alternative ways of expressing class identities is necessary, with a specifically addressing of socio-economic details of participants' lives one way to approach this. Alternatively, this could be an examination of the economic context of deindustrialisation, neoliberalism and its effect not only upon football as this specific site of conflict, but upon the communities and cultures from which the group has emerged.

Questions of identities are also prime for further research. While Irish identity is clearly articulated as central to the collective identity of the Green Brigade, notions of Irishness, like class, are by no means fixed and homogenous, either in the group or amongst the rest of the diaspora Irish in Scotland. Evidence of Irish Catholic support for Scottish independence indicates a shift in a historically ambivalent attitude towards notions of Scottishness. The extent to which Celtic supporters, and the Irish in Scotland generally, negotiate these dual identities is an important question.

The theme of politicisation has an enormous potential for further research, given the multiplicity of political persuasions under the unifying 'umbrella' of the Green Brigade's broadly left wing, anti-discrimination politics. Irish Republicanism would be central to many member politicisations, but an examination of the political journeys of younger members, especially those in their teens and born after the Good Friday Agreement, could illuminate just how central this tradition is for younger third and fourth-generation Irish in Scotland.

Approaches to education and learning, political and otherwise, could provide fascinating findings. It is clear that the group has a specific approach to political discussion and learning, and it would be worthwhile tracing the roots and thinking behind this in more depth. Theories of radical education

would be important, and could help to explain why the group seems to have had such success in creating a non-threatening, accessible space for learning, for men at least.

Another area which was spoken about in interviews, but which has been addressed briefly in this thesis, is the importance of transnational networks and links between different anti-fascist ultra groups. Individual members have generally been the catalyst for the closest friendships between the Green Brigade and other clubs such as Toulon and Omonia Nikosia. The importance of such meetings of groups, both symbolically and literally, at meetings for matches, such as the one I attended in Livorno, will help to explore the social movement aspects of anti-fascist ultra culture. While Testa (2009) poses the hypotheses that right-wing ultras in Italy can be considered a social movement, a study of transnational anti-fascist ultras would be an incredibly rich and rewarding field of further research. Such research would also go some way to studying the broader social movement characteristics of the politicised subculture of left-wing, anti-fascist ultras.

The links made by participants between the way in which they are policed, and the policing of other dissident political movements, such as environment and animal rights activists, is worthy of much deeper study. These are some of the most obvious, and I would argue pertinent, themes for further research.

Conclusion

This has been a qualitative study of the Green Brigade, using semi-structured interviews with a small sample of five participants, participant observation, and desk based research, to explore the activities, politics and experiences of policing of the group.

It is clear that the Green Brigade is in many respects a distinct subculture of wider parent cultures, in particular Celtic, the Irish in Scotland, and left-wing ultra scene, with a common and visible style, a particular language of phrases, symbolism etc., an action repertoire which gives expression to its collective identity (inside and outside stadia), and clear territorial lines (Celtic Park, East End of Glasgow, certain social spaces). They draw on multiple reference points, fusing these distinct elements and creating a hybrid 'rebel' identity, with the political and cultural influence of Celtic/Irishness expressed through the vibrant, passionate and highly visual repertoires of ultra culture.

While sharing many characteristics with other left-wing ultra groups, their position within the context of the Irish diaspora in Scotland makes them a unique and rich point of departure for a study of some of Scotland's most contentious political and social issues, namely the existence of an Irish immigrant community who continue to face silencing and racism.

A subcultural analysis helps to explain some of the ways in which the Green Brigade, as one of the most vocal and politicised manifestations of Irishness in Scotland, have undergone a process of demonisation and criminalisation, primarily through government legislation. Beyond the most visible public displays of group identity, we find lively debate and political discussion. Experiences of repression reinforce a collective 'resistance identity', and reinforce the 'rebel' identity. I have discussed the group's awareness of their own demonisation, and others' perceptions of them, and have shown the group's experiences of police repression and the effects this has had on their activities and their collective culture.

The interviews show a deep level of political discussion, debate and an awareness of the successes

and shortcomings of the group, putting them in the context of wider left-wing politics. There is a deep level of political debate and discussion of diverse themes, for example sexism, education, Irish Republicanism and anti-fascism. The way the group has failed to seriously engage with questions of gender, however, is a clear problem given their anti-discrimination politics.

Many questions are left open to further research, however. This in-depth study of the Green Brigade has illuminated many areas of the group's political culture and activity, but with each illumination more shadows are cast, and further questions posed. Future research must engage with these new themes, investigating not only the Green Brigade, but similar groups transnationally. Only then will the true significance of the Green Brigade as part of a wider, militant politicised subculture become apparent. For now though, this thesis has gone some way to detailing a politicised subculture within its own specific context of the Irish diaspora in Scotland. It is my hope that this study has laid the foundations, however partial, for a more detailed and comprehensive examination of this fascinating group.

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Appendix 1 – Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET: Interview

Ultra culture, Irish identity, left wing politics and anti-fascism in Scotland. A study of the Green Brigade.

We would like to invite you to take part in this research. Before you decide, we would like to explain why the research is being done and what it involves for you. I will go through this information sheet with you and answer any questions you may have. This will probably take about five minutes.

What is this research for?

The aim of this research is to explore themes of Irish identity, left wing politics and anti-fascism in Scotland, and how they are manifested through ultra culture, with a specific focus on the Green Brigade.

This research will explore individual and collective experiences of the above themes, and will look at how the group and its members organise and operate on a practical level, as well as looking at the importance of identities and

political beliefs in such activities.

This research will form the basis of the thesis for Master of Arts (MA) in Community Education, Equality and Social Activism at the National University of Ireland Maynooth.

How will I be involved in the research?

To find this out, I would like to spend some time talking with you. I would like to talk with you about your experiences, with an initial audio-recorded interview, and the possibility of a follow-up interview if necessary.

Your participation is voluntary – if having read this information sheet, you decide you do not want to take part, you can just let me know. You are also free to leave at any time.

What will happen to the information I give?

On each occasion I meet you, we would like to audio-record our conversations, but will ask your consent to do this each time. If you would prefer not to be recorded, I will respect this and will ask to take notes instead. All the information I collect during our talks with you will be treated in

confidence, and seen only by myself, the sole researcher.

I will write a Masters thesis largely based on my findings and will likely quote you to illustrate the points I will make. I will ensure that no-one will be identified in any written report, and that all transcripts are anonymised fully.

Will the research benefit me?

Through a process of ongoing discussion, with yourself individually and with the group as a collective, I would like my research to be of practical use beyond the purely academic. There are many ways the research could be beneficial to yourself and the group, the most obvious of which is to provide a written document of the history and practice of the group. If there is a specific way you would like the research to be used apart from just academically, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Further information

If at any time you wish to make a complaint, you may do so by contacting Dr Fergal Finnegan: e-mail: fergal.finnegan@nuim.ie

Alternatively you may contact the NUIM Ethics Committee by email at research.support@nuim.ie or by telephone on (+353) 1 708 6682

If you would like to discuss the research further before you make a decision, please contact me:

Eoin Wilson eoin.wilson@btinternet.com or eoin.wilson.2014@nuim.ie

Or telephone on either (+44) 7710232484 or (+353) 892145451

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you are happy to take part in this research I will ask you to sign the attached consent form.

Eoin Wilson

Appendix 2- Interview consent form

Interview consent form

for thesis in

Master of Arts (MA)

Community Education, Equality and Social Activism

Ultra culture, Irish identity, left wing politics and anti-fascism in Scotland. A study of the Green Brigade.

I	1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for for the above research and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
I	2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to leave at any time without giving any reason.
	3. I understand that all information will be kept confidential, and that data will be encrypted and stored on a password protected laptop, and any hard copies securely stored in a locked box, accessible only by the researcher.
	4. I agree that the information can be used on condition that it is anonymised.
	5. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my interview and transcripts up to the final stage of the research (contact will be made in advance to notify participants).
	5. I understand that all information will be accessed only by the researcher and that audio recordings will be deleted upon completion of the study.

6. I give my permission for the interview to be audio-recorded.
7. I understand that I have the right to review, edit or censor the transcripts of my interview so that it accurately reflects my views.
8. I understand that data collected will be used as part of this thesis, and that the same data may be used for further work and research, including future publications.
9. I agree to take part in the above research.

Participant's name Signature Date

Researcher's name Signature Date

Eoin Wilson, Masters student, National University of Ireland Maynooth.

If you have any questions about ethical issues surrounding this work, and would prefer not to speak directly to the researcher, please feel free to contact Dr Fergal Finnegan, sole supervisor for this thesis, at fergal.finnegan@nuim.ie.

Appendix 3 – Interview questions

Open questions

1 How did you first become involved in the group?

2 How did you became politically aware?

3 Can you tell me a bit about yourself? How has your background influenced your political activism?

What the group ***does***

4 Can you explain a bit about what the group does, and it's activities?

5 What does the group believe?

6 What do you look for in members, and how does somebody become involved in the group?

7 What is ultra culture, and how does this work in a Celtic context?

8 What have been the main successes, and difficulties, for the group?

Specific questions

9 What have been your experiences of policing as a member of the group?

10 How does political discussion work both within the group, and in terms of outreach? Does the group organise talks, film showings, discussions amongst members?

11 Are there any books, films, particular ideas, political struggles or historical events that hold a particular importance for you?

12 Do you think there's a link between Irishness in Scotland and left-wing, radical politics?

13 Do you think left wing ultra culture does enough to challenge sexist or homophobic culture?

14 How does the group fit in to a wider anti-fascist movement?

Closing questions

15 Is there anything else you think is important to mention when discussing these themes?

16 Is there anything you think I could do better in the future?

16 Any questions about the purpose or motivations for the research?