
Curating Spaces of Hope: Exploring the Potential for Intra-Communities' Dialogue (ICD) and Faith-Based Organisations, in a Post-COVID Society

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Abstract: During this paper I will consider the role of Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) in connecting and resourcing communities through partnerships with the public sector, and the potential for partnerships of these kinds to inform curation of new spaces of hope, engagement, and practice, in a post-COVID society, using intra-communities dialogue. First, I will explore intra-communities dialogue (ICD). I will present ICD as the process of mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices that emerge from secular and religious actants who share and shape the same postsecular public spaces. Second, I will argue that to use ICD a new understanding of FBOs is required. Therefore, I will consider the deficit of understanding of FBOs within the literatures and propose a synthesis of different typologies of FBOs through the production of a new paradigm of FBOs, called Spaces of Hope. Third, I will use Spaces of Hope to open up the socio-material nuances of space within three FBOs, Mustard Seed, Beacon Community and Old Town Church (OTC) and address four matters of concern for FBOs: different practices, different spheres, different scales and different beliefs. This will show how Spaces of Hope can resource and support ICD within and between FBOs. Finally, in light of the capacity of Spaces of Hope to engage in ICD and map postsecular spaces, I will conclude by questioning how Spaces of Hope might support postsecular partnerships through ICD within a post-COVID society.

Keywords: Dialogue, Intra-communities dialogue (ICD), Postsecular, Spaces of hope, Faith-based organisations, FBOs, Post-COVID society, COVID-19, Assemblage, Affect, Difference

Introduction

Through this paper, I explore the concept of ICD. I propose ICD be understood in the following terms: mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices that emerge from secular and religious actants who share and shape the same postsecular public spaces. To justify this perspective, I open up the

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‘socio-material nuances of spaces’ of partnership between local authorities (LAs) and FBOs using the Spaces of Hope paradigm. I conclude the paper by considering how this might be relevant for post-covid society. First, I set out ICD using the conceptual lens of the postsecular (Habermas 2008), to open up the difference and creative potential between religious and secular actants. Whilst the postsecular is contested, I see that it offers a helpful lens to develop understanding of ICD. Second, I turn to FBOs, as key proponents of ICD. I set out the deficit of understanding of FBOs in public policy and practice (Johnsen 2014). I identify multiple typologies of FBO in terms of 1) scales (Cnaan et al. 1999, 2) beliefs (Smith 2002, 3) practices (Herman et al. 2012); and 4) spheres (Cloke and Pears 2016). I then offer synthesis of these different typologies using the Spaces of Hope paradigm, exhibiting a new means of engagement between FBOs and LAs. Using case studies from three FBOs, Mustard Seed, Beacon Community and OTC, I show how the ‘socio-material nuances of space’ enable mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices that emerge from secular and religious actants who share and shape the same postsecular public spaces. Finally, I consider the potential for ICD and FBOs for post-COVID society.

ICD

I will explore ICD as the process of mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices emerging from secular and religious actants who share and shape the same postsecular public spaces. ICD addresses the difference and creative potential that secular and religious affect can have on FBOs and LAs. To develop my argument, I will turn to the postsecular.

The postsecular is contested. Parmaksiz (2018) dispassionately notes ‘the concept cannot be much more than an eloquent way to disguise a sophisticated religious revivalism’ (p.111) Beckford (2012) finds six definitions, arguing the postsecular is discussed widely but lacks meaningful definition or application (pp.2-13). Others argue the postsecular either describes swaths of history recognised in other literature or ignores existing literatures regarding religion. See, Kong (2010); Ley (2011); Wilford (2010) Calhoun et al (2011).

Whilst contested, I see that the postsecular provides a contextually appropriate lens to view and differences between religious and secular actants. Olson et al (2013) notes: ‘Postsecular theory is concerned with understanding the coproduction of the religious and the secular in modern societies and the discourses, practices, and moral and political projects associated with this coproduction’ (pp.1423-1424). I will argue the postsecular aids understanding of ICD between FBOs.

I begin here by defining the religious and secular for a discussion of the postsecular. Religion and Secular are not binaries in postsecular spaces.

Religion: the conditions of being and cultural systems of belief and faith practice that seek imperfectly to interconnect humanity with the spiritual and transcendental

Secular; a political project to deny religion a place in the affairs of state; an imperfect social structure designed to limit conflict by privileging universal human rights above any religious demands (Clope, et al. 2019, 1).

Jurgen Habermas adopted and popularised the term postsecular. Habermas (2005) stated 'a postsecular self-understanding of society as a whole in which the vigorous continuation of religion in a continually secularising environment must be reckoned with' (p.26). Habermas (2008) sets out three concepts that shape the postsecular. The first is 'Sonderweg' (special path) that the western world has embarked upon. Habermas argued this was being disrupted by ruptures of religious content spilling out into the public space². The pertinence to ICD is captured in the following:

Rather than just condemning what he didn't like, Habermas struggled to articulate a theoretical account that would make sense of sharing citizenship with those who offer reasons rooted more in faith than reason and who sometimes reach troubling, literally terrifying conclusions (Calhoun, Mendieta and VanAntwerpen 2013, 3).

This sense of how the postsecular steps into difference and creative potential is speaking in response to religious inspired terrorism. This is the 'dark side' of the postsecular³ (Clope et al. 2019, 2). As I will show, ICD can express the more hopeful affective flows of postsecular partnerships.

The second concept Habermas (2008) offered was '*kulturkampf*' (cultural struggle). This comprised a duality of complementary considerations. 'The opening up of the

² Habermas tracked this departure and the subsequent ruptures through public dialogues. Habermas chose an October 2001 lecture, following the 09/11 terrorist attacks, to discuss Faith and Knowledge and new interest in faith and public life.

³ There are many pertinent examples of religiously inspired terrorism, which can be drawn on that sustain the case for the emergence of the postsecular. Elaine Graham, in her 2017 keynote lecture at the Spaces of Hope symposium at Chester Cathedral introduced her lecture on 'An Apologetics of Presence' in the context of postsecular partnerships, by referring to attacks on Westminster Bridge (April 2017) and at Manchester Arena (May 2017).

political community to a difference-sensitive inclusion of ... minorities [and] the reciprocal opening of these subcultures to a state where they encourage their individual members to participate in the political life at large' (Habermas 2008, 18). This struggle, symptomatic of *Sonderweg*, wrestles with difference beyond binary choices seeking greater integration of different views. This was a movement beyond a politics of identity (Habermas 2008, 27). Its pertinence for ICD is that going beyond binaries opens up our differences in potentially new and creative ways.

The third concept is 'translation'. Translation addresses how sources of motivation and inspiration from religious and secular sources are made accessible prior to and during use in public spaces. The postsecular is characterised by embracing these differences and creative potentials as part of a functioning civil society (Habermas 2010, 6).

In this section, I have set out concepts underpinning the postsecular: *Sonderweg*, *kulturkampf* and *translation*, and their role of framing differences and opening them up to ICD. To understand how dialogue in these basic terms relates to the potential for FBOs and LAs within a post-COVID society, I will turn to the discussion of FBOs.

What's the 'F' (?): The crisis of understanding of Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs)

Beaumont and Cloke (2012) define an FBO as an 'organisation [embodying] some form of religious belief in the mission statement of staff and volunteers' (p.10). They note FBO literatures offer multiple definitions and typologies for FBOs, with as many offered as there are studies conducted. Beaumont and Cloke point to a rationale for this being FBOs possess multiple differences, with the multiplicity of potential meaning leading to FBOs 'defy[ing] straightforward definition' (p.11).

Johnsen (2014) sets out this issue for understanding FBOs within a UK study into homelessness provision. Johnsen's central observation is that it is not clear what 'F' in FBO stands for. Without a clear understanding of 'F', it becomes difficult to understand the purpose behind FBOs, and therefore discern between them and secular equivalents. This encourages uncritical homogenisation of FBOs and non-FBOs, whilst different discernible characteristics are there to be identified. Nonetheless Johnsen argues, on the one hand 'F' should neither be used to seek nor oppose inclusion of FBOs, and on the other, he suggests different understandings of 'F' of FBOs should be sought. This deficit of understanding of FBOs creates a barrier to sustained and distinctive engagement with them.

To begin to reach a new understanding of FBOs, there are four typologies I will draw on. First Cnaan et al. (1999) identifies FBOs by scale, ranging from local congregation to religiously affiliated international organisations. This study does not consider faith dimensions. Smith (2002) identifies faith-related groups by role of belief, ranging from faith-saturated groups through to completely secular groups. Smith (2002) offers a clearer basis for understanding the 'F' of FBOs. Cnaan et al. and Smith's typologies offer a spectrum of categories for FBOs, but do not identify a spatial dimension where their differences can be examined in any detail. Herman et al. (2012) provides suggested styles or practices of FBOs, recognising that spaces are created by the nature of the engagement within them. This introduces the idea of spatial analysis. These are spaces of community, sanctuary, faith, care, learning, market interaction and so on (Herman et al. 2012, 63-65). Cloke and Pears (2016) provide a fourth typology, locating faith-based engagements in the economic, political, and social spheres, in order to engage interdisciplinary considerations of FBOs. The context for their analysis is that too often ideas and innovations from the 'outside' are dropped into marginal contexts, without understanding the interdisciplinary interplays, locally understood (70). These four typologies offer separate perspectives on differences that make up FBOs: different scales (Cnaan et al. 1999), different beliefs (Smith 2002), different practices (Herman et al. 2012) and different spheres (Cloke and Pears 2016).

Through my doctoral work I have achieved a synthesis of these four typologies of FBOs to produce a new paradigm of FBO, which enables the different scales, beliefs, practices, and spheres associated with FBOs to become constituent parts of shared emergent affects and relationships that are locally understood, which produce hopeful affective flows from FBO into communities. I will turn now to setting out the new paradigm, before exploring the potential it offers for ICD.

Spaces of Hope is a new paradigm of FBO, defined by the following terms of reference: 1) liminality (Turner 1967; 1969, 2) difference and creative potential (Deleuze 2014 [1968]); 3) rhizomatic or non-linear forms⁴ (Deleuze and Guattari 2016 [1988]); and 4) the coproduction of shared values. Thomas Kuhn notes that paradigm shifts take place through anomalies begetting crises, begetting revolutions within existing fields (2012 [1962], 6). This encourages new approaches to emerge in that field which are otherwise incommensurate with the old (2012, 103). These approaches should be sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for newly engaged practitioners to solve (Kuhn 2012, 10). So, in this way, Spaces of Hope as a

⁴ Rhizomes are guided by the following 6 principles: 1) connection, 2) heterogeneity, 3) multiplicity, 4) asignifying ruptures, 5) cartography, 6) decalcomania (Deleuze and Guattari 2016, 1-27).

paradigm is being tested through its application within this paper, to questions relating to dialogue studies.

I have set out how ICD can engage with differences through discussion of the post-secular. Here I turn to ICD as mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices expressed through the affective flows of difference between FBOs and non-FBOs alike. To set out the pertinence of Spaces of Hope to the development of ICD in this way, I will briefly explore the title terms 'space' and 'hope'.

The spatial dynamics within Spaces of Hope have initially been articulated using spatial grammar from assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari 2016) and Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour 2007). One may look further back to Henri Lefebvre's work connecting space and everyday life (Lefebvre, 1991 [1947]) or the Production of Space (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]); however, thus far in developing Spaces of Hope I have not. Buchanan (2005) notes that the fit between Deleuze and Lefebvre's lineage is 'never an easy one' and that Deleuze and Guattari 'stand apart from the majority of theorists interested in the nexus between the everyday and the built environment' (p.16)⁵.

Deleuzian grammar offers a means of analysing the spatial in terms of production of emergent practices and values and their relationship with policy and practice (McFarlane 2011, 206-207). Assemblage is a central term within this grammar, briefly defined as 'a multiplicity constituted by heterogeneous terms which establishes [relations] between them' (Deleuze and Parnet 2007 [1977]). Assemblages are developed in terms of territories, continually passing through one another, and articulating the relationships between affective flows of difference within them. These differences adhere to principles of rhizome in that they express many different socio-material affects simultaneously and in a non-linear fashion (Deleuze and Guattari 2016, 24-25). In this sense assemblages are articulated in terms of their content and expression (Deleuze and Guattari 2016, 82-84) and also in terms of their deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 2016, 376-380). In addition, ANT 'trails of association between heterogeneous elements' (Latour 2007, 5) offers additional 'finesse' (McFarlane 2011, 207) to assemblage theory. ANT does this by opening up the effects of human and non-human actors through 'matters of concern' as opposed to taken for granted matters of fact (Latour 2007, 87-120) such that the socio-material affective flows of the human and non-human are used to open up new

⁵ I acknowledge that this point could also be an example of the open-ended nature of new paradigms that Kuhn (2012) refers to, where emergent problems can be addressed. I am open to exploring this question regarding lineages and contexts for understanding the spatial within Spaces of Hope, elsewhere.

understandings of the world, as opposed to *'deciding in advance what the furniture of the world should look like'* (Latour 2007, 115). In this way, I will show later how the socio-material nuances of space can be used to open up new understanding of FBOs, with respect to specific matters of concern, through ICD.

Before this, a conception of hope is needed. For this, Massumi's (2015) discussion of affect is informative. Affect is a continuation of the journey through and between territories, the presence of and opening up of potential (Massumi 2015, 5), and synonymous with potential sources of and expressions of hope (p.1). So, where the affective flows of different socio-material nuances of space are deterritorialising and reterritorialising, be that in terms of what are deemed to be either positive or negative accounts, there is always hope. In fact, within *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2016) place greater emphasis on the deterritorialisation, as the affective flows away from assemblages offer greater potential, and therefore, following Massumi (2015) offer greater potential for hope. So, within Spaces of Hope, hope is not conceived as a positive emotion or as singularly held view by a specific religious tradition. Rather hope is conceived as an ontological becoming of the content expressed as affect within and between the socio-material nuances of spaces, understood through the lens of Spaces of Hope.

Methodological considerations

I have offered definitional clarity for the term Spaces of Hope. Regarding the production of the Spaces of Hope paradigm, this was achieved through testing for the four terms of reference; liminality, difference and creative potential, rhizomatic or non-linear flows, and shared values, using a transformative methodology that utilised assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari 2016), ANT (Latour 2007) and ethnographic methods, across three sites in northwest England. These sites were a town-centre church (OTC), a faith-based café (Mustard Seed), and an estate church in an area of significant multiple deprivation (Beacon Community). I conducted 27 interviews, 114 surveys and 90 hours of participant observations including document analysis, across the three sites and other aspects of my professional practice in the area. Research participants were provided with pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, so data presented here does not contain the real names of participants. This research was produced with reference to Christian, and non-religious ethnographic sites. Therefore, the discussion to follow will only exhibit Christian and non-religious perspectives. This being said, the Spaces of Hope paradigm can be applied and should be tested further in environments that include other religious and secular beliefs, values, and worldviews. I was testing for terms of reference, by considering what forms of power, leadership, assets, and alliances might be present or are formed. Following Thematic Network Analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001), a set

of six global themes and 18 organising themes, or modalities and supplementary characteristics, emerged. The emergence of these themes was indicative of the potential for one conceptual framework, to map the relationships between different content and expressions across multiple spaces and put these spaces in dialogue with one another with respect to shared matters of concern pertinent to FBOs. The data shows how each modality provided a distinct vantage point on the complex gatherings of overlapping contents and expressions of each of the FBOs. These modalities are set out in table 1. I summarise these modalities and characteristics as the ‘socio-material nuances of space’. The socio-material nuances of space are the heart of the paradigm. A plain reading of each of the characteristics will present in much the same way as existing paradigms of FBO (see Putnam 2000). When read with respect to spatial grammar set out above, each are distinct and simultaneously interdependent characteristics that map the different and creative potential affects expressed within spaces of postsecular partnership. The rhizomatic or non-linear structure of the paradigm means that any of the six modalities can emerge as a guiding influence on the others. For example, dialogue as a facet of modality 4 – the interface with the public space – informs and is informed by the other socio-material nuances of space.

Having set out the socio-material nuances of space and having briefly summarised the affective relationship between them, I will now turn to the data. I will show how different matters of concern in FBOs; scale, belief, practices, and spheres, can be synthesised, by mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices that emerge from secular and religious actants who share and shape the same postsecular public spaces.

Modalities	Characteristics
1. Types of Relationships	1.1 Relationship with Place 1.2 Relational Service 1.3 Transformative Potential
2. Leadership, Roles and Responsibilities	2.1 Incarnational ⁶ and Negotiated 2.2 Roles and Responsibilities
3. Sources of Motivation	3.1 Emergent Beliefs, Values and Worldviews 3.2 The Significance of Context 3.3 Foundations 3.4 Formation:
4. The Interface between FBOs and the Public Space	4.1 Communication: Prayer ⁷ and Dialogue 4.2 Welcome and Caring for Others 4.3 Professionalising

Modalities	Characteristics
5. Stories: Prophecy and Authenticity	5.1 Stories 5.2 Prophecy ⁸ : 5.3 Authenticity
6. Administrative and Relational Flows	6.1 Changing Expressions of FBO: Finding the Flow 6.2 Alliances; Partnerships, Networks and Movements 6.3 Counting the Cost and Embracing Change

Table 1: The Socio-Material Nuances of space expressed as sets of modalities and characteristics that make each up.

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- ⁶ The term 'Incarnational' does possess potentially religious connotations, which might offer a barrier to non-religious actants. However within the socio-material nuances of space, 'incarnational' possesses a more general and applicable definition, not limited to religious actants. The definition that is being used is incarnation as the virtual multiplicity, or potential, within a gathering or assemblage, becoming actual or concrete (Bonta and Pretovi, 2006, p.49) In this sense, incarnational leadership refers to the affective flows of potential within the socio-material nuances of space becoming real through the production of concrete expressions of leadership.
- ⁷ The term 'prayer' could reasonably be considered an explicitly religious term. In terms of the act of prayer, this might be conducted using specific practices associated with a particular religion and may preclude those who do not share a given worldview from practicing in that way. However, in terms of the socio-material nuances of space, the operant capacities of prayer are characterised within communications alongside dialogue. This characterisation holds open the potential for the concrete practices of prayer that affect the socio-material nuances of space to be included as a means of communicating with other potential and concrete actants within the gathering or assemblage, without privileging or excluding either religious or secular actants.
- ⁸ The term 'prophecy' is associated with religious traditions of different kinds. In order to understand the use of this term within the context of a paradigm of FBOs open to non-religious or secular partners, I have used Walter Brueggemann's understanding of the role of prophecy as follows: 1) recognising and hearing cries of pain and loss, 2) drawing through the different sources of available within a community to energise a response, 3) offering hope for the future (Hankins, 2018, p.94). This terminology affords space for the potential for religious sources and religious actants, but does not limit access to the prophetic or exclude non-religious or secular actants.

FBOs, the socio-material nuances of space and ICD

In this section, I address each typology of FBO: practices, spheres, scales, and belief. In doing so, I will centre discussion around these shared matters of concern. I will use the differences mapped by the socio-material nuances of space to show how each concern can be considered differently in different FBOs. I will use case studies from Beacon Community, Mustard Seed and OTC. I will discuss each in turn to show that the understandings of different matters of concern can be synthesised to offer a polyphonic synthesis of each FBO and can be set in dialogue with one another.

Different practices

Within the Spaces of Hope paradigm, different practices begin to be addressed by considering modality 4, the interface with the public space. Within the data many examples were provided, from running a Drop In or a café or a foodbank, to working in partnership to run an allotment club. I do not intend to enumerate long lists of different practices of FBOs here. What I will show through the following case studies is that whilst the content of different practices is initially expressed through characteristics of modality 4, they necessarily relate to the other modalities too, opening up, not linear relationship, but new rhizomatic understandings of affective flows of difference within the socio-material nuances of space which form FBOs.

Mustard Seed Café

This was run by two café managers and volunteers. Volunteers were drawn from a wide variety of places including a local social care provider called Local Values. Jane, one of the managers, and Annie, a volunteer, had developed a close working relationship. Annie had learning difficulties and struggled to work. Through talking with Annie, Jane learned that Annie liked show tunes. Jane sang show tunes with Annie whilst they mopped the floor, swept up, and cleared tables. Over time, Annie became a productive member of the team. Jane reflected.

It's a form of encouragement that we can sing whilst we're working. And so sometimes she'll actually take direction if we can sing together. And she responded really well to that. And so, yes, I see sort of an increase in and her doing a job... But it also builds rapport. She's in a place where she feels comfortable enough to just burst out into song and that really makes me smile. (Interview with Jane)

Jane was a prominent presence throughout the data at Mustard Seed Café. Jane's approach to leadership practice went beyond the training offered as part of the café

model. Towards the end of the research, Jane announced her resignation from her role. This sent shockwaves through the Mustard Seed. I will use the below discussion of different spheres, scale, and beliefs, to open up the reasons behind this, including a lack of awareness of difference.

OTC

This was in a period of interregnum (a time within Anglican churches where one vicar has left and another is being sought). OTC were exploring how best to serve the town they worked in, through public dialogue. The area bishop supported this process, and seconded a priest (John Wright) from another parish to be a positive and disruptive influence and scope potential for the new rector to take forward with them. As part of the public dialogue, the area bishop opened up the vision for how OTC might develop its relationship with the town and other partners. The bishop said:

the uninvited perhaps rather, unexpected maybe even disruptive people who just wandered in... they forced us to, to stop our thing in itself and make space for them. To be present and to be heard and to participate albeit in a transitory way, that may prove to be the [most] important space of hope. (Fieldnotes – Conference Proceedings)

The challenge that emerged for OTC and the other partners present was to be oriented towards the 'uninvited and the unexpected' in terms of the way they practise their faith in the place they live. This emic emerged out of a reflection on the presence of a homeless man who attended the public dialogue and showed up elsewhere in the life of OTC. How different people responded to the uninvited and unexpected came to characterise a prophetic story for OTC and their partners. I will pick this up in discussion of spheres, scale, and belief, below.

In this section I have given examples of modality 4 characteristics, dialogue at OTC, welcome and care at Beacon Community and professionalising at Mustard Seed. These examples show that the socio-material nuances of space map the relationship between different affects within FBOs. I will now turn to different spheres to show how the socio-material nuances of space can open up affective flows of differences not named within the modalities and characteristics.

Different spheres

The subtle influences of the social economic, and political spheres are not named as a characteristic or modality, but nonetheless are found within the data. Here I show both that different spheres can be mapped by the socio-material nuances of space,

but also evidence their capacity to map and synthesise conceptual considerations shaping FBOs, developing the capacity to identify named practices as per the last section. Here each sphere is taken in turn. The social sphere is evidenced at Beacon Community, the economic sphere is evidenced at Mustard Seed and the political sphere is evidenced at OTC.

Beacon community and the social sphere

In addition to the foodbank and the Drop In Café, there is a ‘Place Pastors’ Network run by Beacon Community. Place Pastors befriend people in the community and visit them wherever is convenient for them. One example was of a woman who was agoraphobic. The Place Pastor approach to befriending was to meet the woman where she was and to care for her by sharing in the journey with her. Roxy (Beacon Community Leader) reflected,

[First] we got to the front doorstep, then gradually over a year and a half, we manage to get her to go to the post office ... it’s not long ... you don’t even think about it, but for her that was our major thing. And then now I just get updates off her ... she had gone out on the bus to town and gone and sat in Costa and had a brew. She was so happy. She texted me saying ‘I have done it. I have gone to Costa!’, because she knows that I love coffee.

This sort of personal transformation was noticed by Local Authority Officers who partnered with Beacon Community. The Local Authority Officers recognised the authentic way that Beacon Community built relationships in the social sphere and how that was reflected in their wider story. One Local Authority officer reflected,

I think we feel really comfortable [referring] people into their services, because we know they just look after them, they befriend them, they support them, they have cups of coffee with them, they invite them round the house for a meal and actually gifts this extra support which [Local Authorities] can’t provide (Interview with Olga).

This sense of authenticity observed by Olga took a number of years to establish as Beacon Community found the flow and embraced changes that were required to be effective at serving that community, but once it was, trust had formed and that became a central part of Beacon Communities story. Below I will turn to different scales and see that in contrast to Beacon Community’s authenticity forged in the social sphere, other organisations are not as trustworthy as they claim.

The Mustard Seed Café and the economic sphere

There were two cafes on the same street that used the name 'Seed', inspired by the story of a community member, Margery 'Seeds' Bennett. Seeds was well known for serving others across her community). When Seeds passed away, she was memorialised by the Seeds project. The Mustard Seed Café, the initial fruit of this, opened after a local entrepreneur offered to fund the development of the Seeds vision. The Mustard Seed Café was planted, but before they opened their doors, the entrepreneur, now patron of the café, said she would only hand over the keys if a faith-based franchise model she supported (National Church Social Action Network or NCSAN) became a key partner. This meant adding their name to the project and installing two trustees with veto powers to protect NCSAN's reputation. NCSAN governance and operating practices were adopted, placing a premium on professionalism and high-quality aesthetic. This ultimatum, leveraged by the financial power and self-interest of the patron, was reluctantly accepted by the local volunteers. The introduction of the franchise approach and the leveraging of financial resource against control of the FBO meant that the reality was not an authentic emulation of Seeds vision. This led to another manifestation of Seeds' legacy being produced. The Seeds Café opened in 2015. One volunteer said,

I realised that I could take [people to Mustard Seed] for a coffee but then when we'd drunk our coffee that's it, it's over with. You have to move on. Whereas here, people can come and sometimes are here at 10 o'clock and [leave] at 4 o'clock. If they come from a cold home and they're lonely and obviously they can take advantage of a warm place and a free coffee and plenty of company and support. And so, we've developed this, The Seed Café, branching out from the original Seed concept. (Fieldnotes – Interview with Janice)

The Seed Project and the Mustard Seed Café now exist at opposite ends of the same street. The coercive influence of the economic sphere created division and a breaking down of relationships with local people. The concerns arising from prioritising the installation of the NCSAN franchise model over good relationships with the community is developed next through considering different scales.

OTC and the political sphere

OTC was the civic church. It supported the Borough Council meetings with prayer before each session. The public dialogue (M4.1) and the introduction of the seconded vicar (John Wright) in 2017 were followed in 2018 by the emergence of House Church and Assemble Network, seeking the renewal of the town, and the Cultivate Gathering, which was centred on prayer. House Church was sanctioned by

OTC but run by The Planting Network, a prominent free church network. House Church was led by Senior Leader Dwayne Johnson and his mentor Boris Nixon⁹. John Wright reflected,

My future for [OTC would be] very much as part of a network of largely evangelical (but not exclusively) churches, in the centre of town, seeking renewal and actually we do have people from House Church working in that area, and we are praying and hoping that's what's going to happen. (Interview with John)

The political sphere is understood through the effect that everything can have on everything else. So, within Spaces of Hope the political sphere is expressed by the affective flows of relationship between all the socio-material nuances of space. At OTC the recognition of all the different affective flows became a critical and costly considerations. The establishment of House Church and its emergence along with Assemble and Cultivate led by Boris, in partnership with OTC could have been understood as a fruitful next step following the public dialogue in 2017; however, this was not the case. I will pick this up through discussion of different scales below.

In this section, I have contextualised the socio-material nuances of space within each FBO as part of the wider concern of FBOs in different spheres. Within the social sphere, I have shown that the different practices at Beacon Community were recognised as authentic by the Local Authority officer. In the economic sphere, the socio-material nuances of space evidence that the self-interest of the patron was prioritised over good relationships and catalysed the departure of project members and the establishment of a similar venture down the road. At OTC, the nuances of the political sphere are opened up through, on the one hand, recognition of relationships with a Borough Councillor and the establishment of partnership and prayer networks, and, on the other, seeing potential for dialogue to inform affective partnerships.

Different Scales

Here I will show the different scales typology can become more than simply noting the local, regional, or national status of the FBO as per Canaan et al. (1999). Rather, the different scales can be considered not as binary categories, but as part of co-terminous and critical considerations of differences.

⁹ Boris was an Independent Councillor and instigator of Assemble Network and Cultivate Gathering. As a Borough Councillor, Boris was one of three who brokered power in the Council. The three independent councillors joined whichever group won the election to offer a slim working majority.

Beacon Community

Within the same geographic community as Beacon, there is an umbrella organisation called the Brighter Futures Fund (BFF). BFF provided £1 million over 10 years to transform the place. BFF was brokered (M2.2) by a 'Local Trusted Organisation' (LTO) in the region and was described as being run by community members. As the reputation of Beacon Community became authenticated within the place, they received funding from BFF. During the research, the partnership between the regional LTO and BFF became significant. The LTO received and rejected a funding bid for a two-year social prescription programme competitively costed at approximately £80,000, which had support from a wide range of community partners including the local GP. The LTO claimed in writing to the applicant that the decision to reject the application had been made by the committee of community members. In reality, the committee had not been presented with the bid at all and the decision to reject it was taken via dishonest and unaccountable means, by the LTO themselves¹⁰.

I encountered some of the [Brighter Futures Fund] committee members [and] asked them about the decision not to move forward with project... [they] had no knowledge of the project being discussed at all... I was shocked [especially as one of the committee members I spoke to had] chaired the meeting in question. [Another] long-standing committee member detailed what she would have expected to see, had she been pitched a project, and she had not seen any of it, so could not have made a decision. (Fieldnotes)

When the organisations working at different scales were tested, their authenticity and trustworthiness became clear. Beacon Community was tested through opening up the differences seen through their engagement with people in different spheres. The veracity of the LTO was tested by identifying the disconnect between the values they claimed to represent, i.e., trust, and the reality of that locally understood and expressed through their processes and procedures. The significance of different beliefs will be considered in the next section.

¹⁰ I made the content of these observations known to a member of the Brighter Futures Fund, but they returned to me saying that the critical points were not acknowledged by the Brighter Futures Fund or the LTO. Since then, however, there have been structural changes to the Brighter Futures Fund, with staff removed and new members of staff put in place. It is unclear whether these changes were directly due to the dishonest brokerage of public funds that was highlighted or simply a coincidence.

Mustard Seed

The pertinence of different scales and the partnerships in the local community were evident in the interface between NCSAN and Mustard Seed. NCSAN governance and processes were implemented in a way that provided a fixed approach for roles and responsibilities. This came at the cost of relational service to staff and volunteers. Losing Jane's leadership, discussed above, laid bare the deficit of welcome and care within the NCSAN franchise approach. Jackie reflected on Jane's departure,

[This] is going to leave an enormous... an absolutely massive hole to fill... we're all praying very hard contacting lots and lots of church contacts and we've put things upon the Christian job website. We're doing everything in our power but mostly we're sort of giving it to God and from prayer chains and things trying to get the right person not just for the staff but the customers; the whole future of the café is in this post really. (Jackie, Interview)

It is significant that this unexpected change to one staff member was deemed to have implications for the existence of the FBO. This highlights the way in which counting the cost of changes locally understood implicates the wider story of the FBO such that sensitivity to difference at scale is a necessity.

OTC

The relationship between FBOs at different scales was prominent at OTC too. Leadership by the area bishop used dialogue to inspire local action with an accompanying vision for relational service to the uninvited and unexpected. Action had developed within the political sphere suggesting a possible future for OTC, who were working through a period of change. However, the vision for OTC was not simply about the establishment of partnership and leveraging influence. Rather it was set out in terms of the welcome and care for the uninvited and unexpected; embodied by a homeless man who had been present at the dialogue. The area bishop reflected,

It was really valuable to have the attention drawn to the spaces between things, which helps to kind of see the things themselves, more clearly ... that's a way of saying I think, perhaps the most hopeful space are those spaces that we are ordinarily inattentive to, that we disregard [or] are blind to ... [Our] 'hubris' means that we become blind to [these] more creative spaces. (Fieldnotes, Conference Proceedings)

Later, the homeless man appeared at a House Church worship service. They were treated as an inconvenience, required to conform to the established mannerisms of attendance, and at one point engaged in physical confrontation. When the homeless man had become subdued, Dwayne noted that the 'presence of God' had returned. Following this service, the homeless man did not return. In 2019, I was made aware by the church warden at OTC that House Church had closed in order to reassess its vision following dwindling attendance and members of the leadership team leaving. OTC employed a new rector and changed their parish boundaries to include a community that is within the top 0.1% of depression statistics nationally. The vision for the uninvited and the unexpected was easy to become blind to at the expense of larger scale influence, networks, and partnerships. However, in turning a blind eye, the vision was lost, bringing the different beliefs of OTC into question.

Different beliefs

The concern of different beliefs is where the 'F' of FBOs is made sense of. As is clear from this paper, there are a multiplicity of differences that can be expressed through the socio-material nuances of space. This concluding section will consider the different beliefs. Whereas Smith (2002) developed a typology that acknowledges FBOs have different beliefs, here I open up the difference and creative potential and operant capacities that affect and are affected by the different beliefs held by the FBOs.

Beacon Community

Mark, the pastor of Beacon, said in clear terms that it was Jesus that inspired his leadership, which was expressed through welcome and care of the man at the food-bank and café, discussed earlier.

[Jesus] was much more focused on [disciples] understanding the Kingdom of God and being a part of that kingdom... [we became] more Kingdom-minded... saying, 'Well, we can reach them wherever they are, and we can give them Jesus wherever they are,' if they join church, that's great. God will bring the people he wants to join the church, but we will still be doing the good things that we need to do in the community and with the community. (Interview with Mark)

This underpinning source of motivation – Jesus as the stated foundation of the authentic and relational service – was observed by the LA. Anna, a Public Health officer, noted,

one of the things we need to be doing is working with that community asset a lot more on whether that's in a faith space or in the

community and people are thinking a lot more around that space there now, because what they offer under that roof is fantastic. (Interview with Anna)

Mustard Seed

The story of the two Seeds; the Mustard Seed and the Seed Project is offered greater nuance by the foundations of faith at Mustard Seed. There was a clear emphasis on 'unity'. Karen, a long-standing café manager reflected, 'When we dwell in unity there is great power in that. And so that was very much a message at the beginning when we reached out to all the local churches to take part in establishing the Mustard Seed Café' (Interview with Karen). This sense of unity was characterised by language of being 'non-denominational' and emphasis on 'one church' and 'all one in Christ'. The foundational motivation of unity was variously reinforced by narratives of obedience and unity bringing blessing. However, becoming united was seen in the hegemonic expression within the economic sphere by the patron of the Mustard Seed as she imposed NCSAN on the Seeds vision in exchange for the ownership of what had become the Mustard Seed. Unity had a homogenising affect and paradoxically created division. From these experiences emerged new expressions of belief made real in renewed relationships between people from Mustard Seed and Seed Project. Jackie from Mustard Seed noted,

Whilst it appeared [the Seed projects] were in competition with each other [and] weren't really [getting] on, God honoured both visions... [they] now bookend the high street, and I think that's really a wonderful thing ... We serve very diverse people by [having] different clientele. But we do support each other as well so it's just lovely how it all worked. (Interview with Jackie)

OTC

The search for a new vision during the interregnum led John Wright to question what the foundations of the beliefs at OTC really were. Partnering with House Church had not flourished, and Assemble Network faltered. There was a clear narrative, from John and the wardens at OTC, that OTC should be 'like Christ' in the way that they serve; however, there was a demonstrable disconnect between this stated aim and the expressions by the FBO at the interface with the public space. John reflected,

Our prime goal should be to serve our community like Christ... But we need to set our own agenda ... You could actually look at [the town] and say who is actually Christ to [the town]? You might sud-

denly very quickly come to the conclusion that it's not [OTC], on the contrary actually, other people, secular agencies [are] more Christ-like. (Interview with John)

Whilst this reflection captures a bleak outlook for OTC, the realistic assessment of the relationship between the foundations of the beliefs and the interface with the public space in the context of the wider story of OTC in the town offers opportunity for a dialogue between religious and secular partners to emerge, in the future.

In this section I used the socio-material nuances of space to map the affective flows of difference within 3 FBOs and engage them with respect to four different shared matters of concern. I have shown that this approach can be used to engage in ICD understood as mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices that emerge from secular and religious actants who share and shape the same postsecular public spaces. Now I will move on to briefly consider potential for ICD in a post-COVID society.

Keeping the Faith: The potential for ICD and postsecular partnerships in a post-COVID society

In this final section, I use the Keeping the Faith report to consider the potential for ICD and FBOs understood through Spaces of Hope in a post-COVID society. Keeping the Faith (2020) was commissioned in June 2020 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Faith and Society. The report analysed how LAs and FBOs across the UK worked together during the first lockdown of the pandemic. A key finding of the report was that LAs across the UK endorsed 'a commitment to build on their pandemic partnerships, supporting long-term policy interventions in ways that are different to the current practice and norms'. (Keeping the Faith 2020, 3). Sustaining and developing these partnerships needs a clear understanding of FBOs. As such, more resources are needed to realise the aspiration and commitment to sustaining and developing relationships between religious and secular partners in a post-COVID society.

During this paper I have set out how ICD might be understood, developing it in terms of the postsecular assemblage theory and the Spaces of Hope paradigm of FBOs. By recognising where ruptures and emergence of postsecular spaces between religious and secular actants are taking place, there is a greater preparedness to engage in ICD understood in terms of mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices that emerge from secular and religious actants.

The Spaces of Hope paradigm opens up the difference and creative potential of affective flows of the socio-material nuances of space within and between FBOs and

LAs. I have shown through case studies of the Mustard Seed, Beacon Community and OTC that ICD can be understood as the process of mapping and listening to shared matters of concern and socio-material practices that emerge from secular and religious actants who share and shape the same postsecular public spaces. In light of the responses by FBOs and LAs to the COVID-19 pandemic and the desire to build partnerships in ways that are different to the current practices and norms, this paper shows that there is potential for Spaces of Hope to address shared matters of concern within and between different partners using ICD.

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