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Orangeism in Scotland: Unionism, Politics, Identity, and Football

For almost two hundred years the Orange Institution has been a feature of the religious, social, and cultural life of West Central Scotland. Although a matter of some contention, the Order has developed a powerful political meaning in Scotland, affecting the political allegiances and identities of a wide variety of constituencies. Despite an Irish birth, the Orange Institution has at its core a uniquely Ulster-Scottish perception of both its own constitution and its function to British identity.

The data much of this study is based upon derives from an attitudinal survey designed to elicit the background and attitudes of a sample of members of the Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland. Over the course of 1990, I surveyed one hundred and eleven members from the four defined Orange counties of Scotland: Ayrshire, Glasgow, Central Scotland, and the East of Scotland. The survey and subsequent interviews took place at Orange meetings and social clubs. For comparative purposes, I surveyed members of the Church of Scotland and other prominent and relevant Scottish groups such as Catholic Church attenders and football fans.

The initial sections of this paper briefly look at the historical evolution, social structures and demographic characteristics of Scottish Orangeism. Because anti-Catholicism is so central to Orange ideology and practice in Scotland, I will proceed to examine Orange perceptions of Catholicism and the way these notions shape political attitudes. To extend the exploration of unionist culture in Scotland

beyond the realm of formal and informal politics, the data also references the attitudes and identities of the supporters of the Glasgow Rangers Football Club. The essay concludes with a discussion of the political, cultural, and social parameters of Orange identity and its place in modern Scotland.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Originating in the north of Ireland in the 1790s as a response to the rise of Catholic popular politics, the Orange Order was a pan-Protestant institution designed to protect Protestant privilege in Ireland and Britain. It was first brought to Scotland by soldiers returning to south Ayrshire from their duties in Ireland. The Order spread quickly; by 1807 there were Orange lodges in Maybole, Tarbolton, Wigtown, Girvan, Stranraer and Argyle, and by 1813 one in Glasgow. In 1821 the first ceremonial parade took place in Glasgow. The following year police and military had to intervene as Irish Catholics confronted the marchers; 1824 witnessed the first Twelfth of July demonstration to take place in Lanarkshire in the town of Airdrie. Due to the violence that Orange marches produced, it was not until the 1840s that such parades were allowed to return.

Scotland had its own long and potent tradition of anti-Catholicism. Its “equivalent” of the early institution in Ireland was the Protestant Association, an “ill-defined amalgam of extra-religious and extra parliamentary forces,” whose sole intention was to block any movement toward Catholic relief.¹ The power and significance of the anti-Catholic tradition in Scotland can be seen by looking at the demographic make-up of late eighteenth-century Glasgow. As two separate studies have noted, in the 1790s there were actually more anti-Catholic societies in Glasgow than Catholics!²

Despite these common religious and cultural ties, the Orange Order struggled to attach itself to the potent forces of Scottish anti-Catholicism. Unlike its Irish counterpart, Scottish Orangeism never became

1. E. Black, “The Tumultuous Petitioners: The Protestant Association in Scotland,” *Review of Politics* (1963), 183–211.

2. B. Murray, *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport and Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984), 93; T.M. Devine and R. Mitchison, *People and Society in Scotland: Vol. 1, 1760–1830* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988), 154.

the primary mechanism for respectable Protestant politics, a fact that helps to explain the Order's relative weakness in modern Scotland. As Elaine McFarland explains:

By the early 1860s Orangeism in Scotland had gained a high public profile, but largely in terms of a "party" or fighting society and certainly not as a credible organisational mechanism for propagating militant Protestantism. For, despite apparently favourable developments in the socio-economic structures and ideological climate of Scotland, the Institution did not attract significant bourgeois or gentry support or even mobilise effectively the anti-Irish sentiments of the Scottish working class. Behind this lay a further failure to anchor itself in the specifically Scottish tradition of anti-Catholicism and appear anything other than a misgrowth and "unwelcome import."³

Of course, Orangeism's failure to develop a more respectable reputation does not mean that it did not make a significant impact on Scottish society. Much of the Order's growth was directly tied to the rise of Irish Home Rule politics in the 1880s and 1890s. The growth of Scottish Orangeism was not simply a reflection of the rising prominence of this constitutional issue in Ireland and in Britain generally. As always, local political struggles are key to understanding the Order's late nineteenth century growth in Scotland. For this era saw a forceful increase in Irish (mainly Catholic) political activity in the west of Scotland, triggering an Orange response. By the late nineteenth century, it was common to have thirty thousand people at the Order's larger Scottish demonstrations. As the institution entered the new century, official membership stood at around twenty-five thousand—with eight thousand of these in Glasgow. Even though official institutional relations with the main Protestant churches in Scotland remained weak, an official Church of Scotland Report in 1923 stated that there was no "complaint of the presence of an Orange population in Scotland."⁴

3. E.W. McFarland, "The Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland, 1799 to 1900," (Glasgow University: Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1986), 108–10.

4. *Report of the Committee to Consider the Overtures on Irish Immigration and the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918*, 750–61. From 1923 the Church of Scotland's Annual Assembly began to feature strongly worded attacks on the country's Irish Catholic population, by then mainly second and third generation Irish. In that year the Church of Scotland's influential Church and Nation Committee formally approved a report enti-

This statement (in reality more of a reference to Ulster Scots Protestants than specifically to the institution) also indicates an attitude toward the institution that has characterized many Protestants in Scotland. Since the early days, Orange marches were strongly associated with petty violence and drunkenness. Given the strength of this belief and the predictability and repetitiveness of such performances, marches tended to generate a great deal of bad press. For many Scots, the Order was perceived negatively as an institution bound up with “Irish issues and quarrels.” Many Protestants thus greeted the Order with suspicion and hostility because they regarded Protestant respectability as important. Although the 1923 Church of Scotland Report empathizes with the institution, there always remained scope for it to distance itself from less respectable aspects of lodge activity. Today there are few links between the Church of Scotland and the Orange Institution, although most Orangemen claim to be informal members of the Church (73 percent Church of Scotland, and 26 percent other Protestant churches).

Although anti-Catholicism underpinned every aspect of the institution’s identity, it was embedded in a political identity that also stressed “Unionism, Crown and Constitution.” In cultural terms, Orangemen still view themselves as defenders of British identity. For many, Scottish Orangeism’s confrontational nature and its ability to consistently attract large crowds to demonstrations have become its trademark in Scottish society today. Orange ideology revolves around a matrix of strident “No Surrender” Scottish Protestantism, Northern Ireland Unionism, and a particularly Scottish manifestation of Britishness.

In celebrating the Battle of the Boyne and taking the name “Orange” we recognise with thanksgiving to Almighty God, the services rendered to this nation’s people by the Prince of Orange in answering this country’s call in a time of great need. . . . The people being predominantly Protes-

tled, “The Menace of the Irish Race to our Scottish Nationality.” It was published in pamphlet form to ensure wider circulation. The report speculated about whether Scotland might not be on the verge of committing “race suicide” and demanded that means be devised to “preserve Scotland and the Scottish race” and “to secure to future generations the traditions, ideals, and faith of a great people unspoiled and inviolate.” These attacks lasted until the outbreak of World War II, manifesting themselves in several successful populist political campaigns.

tant, secured a Constitutional Monarchy which would recognise the right of its subjects, and the authority of Parliament ensured that the throne, by law, would never again be occupied by a Roman Catholic. It is this first principle of our Constitution that Orangemen and women wholeheartedly support. . . . Our twin pillars are the Protestant faith and loyalty to our Queen and country . . . [and members] must be both Christian and Patriotic.⁵

ORGANIZATION AND NUMBERS

In the early nineteenth century the institution only had a few hundred members. By the turn of the century it claimed approximately twenty-five thousand members and was one of the largest socio-political groupings within Scotland. Today, the Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland is made up of four Orange-defined county areas: Ayrshire, Glasgow, Central Scotland and the East of Scotland. These counties are, in turn, divided into sixty-two districts, the vast majority of which are located in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, and Ayrshire. A district is a collection of lodges in a specific geographical area. The size of a district and the size of the lodges can vary. Within a district there exist men's, women's, and juvenile lodges. There are approximately one thousand lodges throughout the country, and their members constitute the Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland. In addition to the Orange membership, other Protestants participate in the traditional bands that contribute color and sound to Orange demonstrations. Only half of the young men and women who partake in this aspect of Orangeism are members of lodges; the rest identify themselves with the movement via this involvement. Some bands can be distinguished by their musical artistry while others, sometimes described as "blood and thunder bands," are often characterized by their aggression and occasional overt support for loyalist paramilitaries.

Orangeism also encapsulates membership in the Imperial Black Chapter of the British Commonwealth and the Royal Black Perceptory. This part of the movement is more secret than the main, or more popular, body and it places greater emphasis on ceremony and ritual. Its members tend to look at themselves as a more respectable arm of the

5. *The Orange Torch*, July/Aug. 1984.

organization. The status of Orangemen and members of the Royal Black Perceptory (forthwith also referred to as Orangemen) is marked in relation to a system of degrees. Color is the most notable symbol of a person's standing within the Order, and essentially a higher color is achieved via a ritual involving a degree of knowledge and elaborate interpretation of the scriptures. In theory, Orangeism adheres to the principles of the Protestant Reformation, while it also views itself as being above the differences that have characterized Protestant churches in Scotland.

There is also the smaller Independent Orange Order, often viewed as a more militant arm of Orangeism. By the 1990s it had developed a structure and organization in Scotland based upon its parent body in Northern Ireland. The most prominent member of the independent order is the Northern Ireland and Euro MP, the Rev. Ian Paisley.

To the population at large, the Orange Order's most noteworthy features are its frequent parades and demonstrations. Orange processions play a prominent role in Scottish public life. There are approximately fifteen hundred parades in Strathclyde each year, and about half that number in West Lothian and the Central region. While the Order, as well as the media and the police, provides estimates of the size of these demonstrations, a variety of factors make it difficult to assess exact levels of participation. Part of this is due to the nature of the "walks" themselves, for both members and non-members play widely varying roles in putting on celebrations like the Twelfth of July.

Many Orange demonstrators will begin their day by marching around their own locality. These demonstrators will include Orange supporters who are not formal members. Orange marchers will often proceed from a central meeting place to their local lodge hall or a bus pick-up point. Full regalia will be worn by the marchers and frequently a lodge will be headed by an Orange band that has been hired for the day's events. These bands include both sexes and all age groups, but are typically composed of young men in the sixteen to thirty age group (the institution itself includes both sexes and all age groups).

Demonstrators will march or be bussed to a meeting point, where the institution begins to congregate for the major "walk" of the day to a hired ground or park. Here the Orange hierarchy will make political speeches, say prayers (often with political content) and propose reso-

lutions. It is quite normal for a sitting unionist member of Parliament from Northern Ireland, who himself will more than likely be a member of the Northern Irish side of the Order, to be invited to Scotland to make the appropriate speeches. Unionist MPs such as John Taylor, the Rev. Robert McCrea, and the Rev. Martin Smyth have been frequent visitors since the 1980s.

The main Boyne demonstrations in Scotland take place on the Saturday prior to the Twelfth of July celebrations in Northern Ireland. Approximately eight to ten thousand demonstrators walk in Glasgow with the same amount of followers and active onlookers. The numbers marching in Glasgow therefore are usually about twenty thousand strong. The County Grand Lodge of Central Scotland typically holds its demonstration on the same day in Lanarkshire. The numbers attending are as large as those in Glasgow. At the same time, around five thousand marchers and five thousand supporters are usually on parade in Ayrshire.

These figures suggest that around fifty thousand people actively celebrate the annual Boyne commemorations in Central and West Scotland. However, this does not accurately reflect the number of participants who share in an Orange identity. Many bands and lodges will depart from and return to crowds of well wishers and celebrants whose involvement in the day's celebrations is limited to contributing numerically to these and other stages of the occasion. Often a village, a housing development, or a part of a town will have its own symbolic focal point where people will congregate to enjoy a short period of the spectacle and where a degree of solidarity is expressed with the main marchers. Many of these people will join the marchers on their return in the social atmosphere of an Orange social club. For these reasons the figure of fifty thousand Orange Lodge members and ardent followers can reasonably be doubled if we count those who make a minimal, though significant, contribution to the day's events. All this suggests that the frequently self-quoted "formal" Orange Lodge membership figures of eighty-thousand includes active and passive supporters. Even if this figure intentionally inflates the formal membership, such sympathizers clearly share important aspects of Orange identity.

Despite the Order's relative weakness in Scotland, the Twelfth of July celebration is consistently the largest public demonstration of the

year. By way of comparison, 1989 and 1990 witnessed the anti-Poll Tax demonstrations in Scotland, a highly contentious political issue that affected millions of families and individuals and provided a key talking point across class lines. Various demonstrations that year attracted thousands of marchers. However, the largest demonstration in mid-1990 attracted thirty thousand marchers, roughly the same number as the combined strength of the annual Orange demonstrations in Glasgow and Ayrshire. Although popular Orangeism is steeped in a “walk” culture, a fact that contributes to the popularity of its annual occasion, it remains one of the greatest public manifestations of cultural, religious, and political demonstration in modern Scotland.

The institution’s greatest strength is its capacity to provide a key focus of identity through its strong social organization. The numbers involved in membership, parades and Orange social clubs bear testament to the importance of this social component. The Orange Order acts as a social center for working-class Scottish Protestants in much of the west-central belt. A number of lodges collectively own social clubs that provide an Orange environment for drinking and other activities. In an area no more than fifty kilometers wide, there are around thirty of these clubs in which not only Orange members but also people who have sympathy for or feel comfortable in such surroundings spend much of their free time. The Bellshill Club in Lanarkshire, for example, has a membership of six hundred people. However, this number clearly underestimates the club’s influence, for it is regularly visited by many others who, while not formal members, are associated with both the attitudes that the Orange Institution represents and its broader social network and culture. Numerous other such clubs exist, for example, in Airdrie, New Stevenston, Motherwell and Wishaw, all within a few kilometers of the Bellshill club. All of these clubs have a significantly enthusiastic membership. The Orange Order’s capacity to be a focus of social activity is clearly one of the reasons it remains central to contemporary Scottish society. The development of a network of social clubs has helped the institution maintain a role and influence in the lives of many thousands of people attracted to Orange identity.

Given the importance the Orange Order in Scotland has continually accorded to its Irish concerns, it is not surprising to find Scottish Orange members almost unanimous in their belief that Northern Ireland should remain within the United Kingdom. This principle remains at the core of Scottish Orangeism's unionist identity. On the issue of British troop withdrawal, 87 percent state they would oppose a troop withdrawal from Northern Ireland. The results confirm that the national and political condition of Northern Ireland remains a central aspect of Orange Protestant identity in Scottish society. Any move perceived as threatening the integrity of the Northern Ireland state, and as a consequence the position of the Protestant-unionist population, is firmly rejected by Scottish Orangemen. The importance of this issue to Orangemen is further underlined by the knowledge that 42 percent of Church of Scotland Protestants concur (although also the most popular expression among Church of Scotland attenders, it is a significantly lower than for Orangemen), while only one quarter of Church of Scotland attenders are opposed to a British troop withdrawal.

Taking a cue from their Northern Irish brethren, Orangemen in Scotland protested against the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement by forming a political movement to stand in some constituencies in the 1987 General Election. However, Northern Ireland's continuing weakness as an "election issue" in Britain proved to be an insurmountable barrier for this grouping. This strategy was fraught with further risk since the majority of Scottish Orangemen live in industrial districts with high concentrations of Catholic voters that tend toward Labour at the best of times. The new organization's weak political leadership, a perfunctory pre-election performance, an underlying general fear of the violence in Northern Ireland spreading to Scotland, and a well established lack of credibility with the press (as well as with many in the wider community) meant that despite Orangeism's popular appeal, this initiative had little real political impact.⁶

Orange leaders in Scotland did nevertheless advise Orange voters to turn away from the Conservative Party in the election to protest the

6. The Order claimed that over one thousand people left the Conservative Party as a result of the agreement. See T. Gallagher, *Glasgow: The Uneasy Peace* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 299.

agreement. It is difficult to measure the impact this call had on the 1987 election. While the Conservatives won their third consecutive term that year, their party's electoral support continued to fall. Of course, Margaret Thatcher was popularly seen in Scotland as being unconcerned with the economic "plight" of the Scottish people during much of her premiership (indeed, she was popularly perceived as having added to it!), and this was clearly a major factor affecting the fall in her party's Scottish support. However, a reduction in the working-class "Orange vote" for the Conservatives may have made a marginal impact in some constituencies. Four years later Mrs. Thatcher conceded that she believed this to be true: "The Anglo-Irish Agreement had alienated some pro-Ulster supporters in crucial constituencies."⁷ This impression had almost certainly been observed during pre-election campaigning. Many, if not most, of these "pro-Ulster" or unionist supporters would almost certainly have been members and supporters of the Orange Institution in Scotland.

In his study of inter-war Scottish Orangeism, Graham Walker notes the links between the Conservative Party and the Orange Order in Scotland during the 1920s and 1930s, thus emphasizing the working class nature of much of the Conservative support in the west-central belt.⁸ Although confined mainly to the formal membership of the institution, the survey evidence presented here takes Walker's assessment a step further.

Table 1

SOCIAL STATUS: ORANGE EMPLOYMENT

Skilled manual	42%
Semi or unskilled manual	43%
Professional or technical	5%
Management or administration	6%
Clerical	1%
Sales	2%
Never had a job	1%

SOURCE: Bradley Survey, 1990.

Affinity between the Conservative Party and the Orange Order (in the present day, more accurately originating with the Orange Order and

7. *The Scottish Daily Express*, 25 April 1990.

8. *Ibid.*

moving itself toward the Conservative Party) may seem contrary to the largely working-class make-up of Orange membership and identifiers. My survey shows that almost three-quarters of Orangemen are in skilled manual or semi or unskilled manual employment (Table 1), while slightly more indicate their father as having a similar kind of job for most of his life.

Table 2

ORANGE POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORT

Labour	17%
Conservatives	52%
Liberal Democrats	1%
S.N.P.	15%
Other	3%
None	13%

SOURCE: Bradley Survey, 1990.

Orange Lodge members indicated a strong degree of support for the Conservative Party (Table 2). These statistics are substantially above both the Scottish and British ones for Conservative support. Furthermore, they can also be viewed as a partial rejection of the Scottish Nationalist Party, whose goal of an independent Scotland conflicts with both the Britishness and unionism at the heart of Orange identity.

Although it is undoubtedly the case that a Protestant identity is an important component in the matrix of factors involved in being a Conservative supporter in Scotland, again the Orange figure is much higher than that for Church of Scotland attenders included in the survey.

Table 3

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORT

Labour	22%
Conservatives	34%
Liberal Democrats	11%
S.N.P.	11%
Other	2%
None	19%

SOURCE: Bradley Survey, 1990.

This Orange affinity with Conservatism was succinctly summarized by one leading Orangeman in Scotland during the Thatcher era:

One of the many things the Tories fail to appreciate is that thousands of Scottish Orangemen and women vote Conservative, not because of any political or economic policy, but because they see that as representing the sovereignty of the Queen and the unity of the United Kingdom.⁹

It is more difficult to determine the wider Orange movement's ties to the Conservative Party and its degree of alienation from Labour, although the above material certainly provides a partial indicator of these sentiments. Dislike for Labour Party beliefs and actions exists at both national and local levels. For example, some Labour MPs' support for Catholic schools within the state system and "unorthodox" political views on Northern Ireland (i.e., they support Irish "reunification" and "Troops Out") are constantly condemned in official Orange literature in Scotland.

Despite vitriolic criticism of Labour on the part of both the Orange establishment and the rank and file, many proletarian elements of the movement often recognize Labour as being best suited to their economic circumstances and support the party, disregarding the cultural and religious factors normally viewed as vital.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the precariousness of this attachment was exemplified in the mid-1994 bye-election in Monklands East, which took place against a backdrop of local Protestant accusations that local Catholic Labour politicians had favored "Catholic" Coatbridge over "Protestant" Airdrie. Amid local tensions, the town of Airdrie, which has a strong Orange presence, saw a majority of its Protestant voters support the SNP while others voted Conservative (this also showed that Orangemen are capable of voting SNP if that is the party which has the best chance of marginalizing a Catholic-tainted Labour Party).

Notwithstanding some Orange support for Labour, it is at a Scottish level that Orange vitriol and distaste is generally reserved for the Party. Certainly the religious cleavage is a key feature of "local party politics" in parts of Scotland. But it is more than that, for criticism and derision of Labour becomes conspicuous within an ethno-religious frame of reference. Again, this was evidenced most clearly in the 1994 Monklands East election. The following piece from *The Orange Torch*, Scot-

9. Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, *The Orange Torch*, June 1986.

10. Graham Walker, "The Orange Order in Scotland between the Wars," *International Review of Social History* 37 (1992), 177–206.

tish Orangeism's official monthly magazine, is quoted at length to give an indication of some of the thinking behind such criticism:

Study the [Irish-Catholic] names of some of the "Labour" candidates elected. . . . What do Glasgow's Protestant clergymen think of this situation? What do the genuine patriots, in the SNP's rank-and-file, think about it? There are thousands of men and women of distinction in Glasgow, in medicine, financial expertise, commerce, industrial management, technology, etc., etc., not forgetting the teaching staffs at the universities, and how do they relish the thought of their city—the birthplace too of so many famous Scots—being run by a bunch of Roman Catholics of immigrant Eirish stock (that's "nationalism" not "racialism") hardly outstanding for their talents, culture, or general education? Some Glasgow Roman Catholics may claim to be "lapsed" Roman Catholics (who never criticise their Church), but they are never "lapsed" Eirishmen! There isn't a Scoto-Eirishman in Scotland, a Lally, a Murphy, or a Gaffney, who is not Eirish under his skin. Scratch them and their Eirish bit comes out. That is why their priests are so committed to segregated schooling. To teach them "history" with a Roman Catholic and Eirish slant. To pump into them whatever politics suits at the time and place. The children leave the Roman Catholic schools in this country semi-prepared or conditioned to vote Labour. Just as something new, Cromwell's "Model Army", had to be brought into being to beat Charles I's army, something new—a new instrument, a new method or technique, must be created to overcome Catholic action in Scotland, and the place to start is in Glasgow, and in the municipal struggle in Glasgow.¹¹

The framework of identity that derives from an emphasis upon these historical and contemporary foci helps to construct both a core of contempt and a background for making anti-Catholicism an "everyday" issue. An absolute line is drawn between the identity of the native Scot and that of the immigrant Catholic Irish or "Eirish." The political intention clearly is to portray the Labour Party as dominated by Catholics—with origins in the Republic of Ireland. As such, this view sees Protestants wasting their vote on the Labour Party at the expense of fellow Protestants in the Conservative Party. A dominant view within Scottish Orangeism is that it is a Protestant's patriotic duty to vote for the party that best guarantees the national identity. Such a

11. *The Orange Torch*, June 1984.

wasted vote also allows the immigrants to make their way in Scottish society.

Despite Orange polemics, between 1920 and 1974, “only 16 per cent of [Glasgow’s] councillors were Catholics, with no tendency for the number to increase towards the end of the period.”¹² However, by the late 1980s half of Glasgow’s councilors described their religion as Catholic, a number approximately 20 percent above the city’s proportion of Catholics and therefore well calculated to draw vitriolic abuse from the Orangemen. As far as Orangemen were concerned this was compounded by the fact that until 2004 the previous nine of Glasgow’s Lord Provosts were also Catholics (elected by the council).

There is no apparent evidence that the city’s Catholic population received favorable treatment. Indeed, the council hosted a civic reception for the Orange Order to commemorate their tercentenary celebrations of the Boyne victory (as did other councils—Motherwell and Monklands, for example). This seems to suggest that many councilors were apprehensive about being seen as having a Catholic “label.” The view that Labour is a Catholic-dominated party also can be seen in Orange rhetoric about the field of employment: again an area that gains the institution’s vigilance:

Two top positions for officials in Strathclyde Region are expected to come up soon and even before the advertising starts Roman Catholics are being tipped for the posts. . . . In the field of education there is a vacant post created by the retirement of Dan Burns from the position of Senior Depute [sic] Director of Education but even before the post was advertised, four names were being mentioned, three of them Roman Catholics. Interesting in a region where overall RCs are probably less than 25% of the population.¹³

The tribal dimension of Orange ideology (us and them) which invokes an image of watchfulness against Catholic and Irish transgressions and progress is clearly in evidence in various social and political features of

12. M. Keating, R. Levy, J. Geekie, and J. Brand, “Glasgow Labour Councillors: An Ideological Profile,” in D. McCrone, S. Kendrick, and P. Straw, *Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics* 61 (1989), 1–25.

13. *The Orange Torch*, April 1989.

west central Scottish life.¹⁴ To an extent this is again evident in the survey answers. When asked the question whether the respondent socialized in a pub that had either a Protestant or a Catholic label, Orangemen were by far the most likely to be found in a pub with a Protestant label. In fact, it might be concluded that Scottish Orangeism continues to be a movement that inspires and reinforces social as well as political polarization.

Another significant element in the Orange fabric is a strong identification with traditional “defenders of the faith.” Of course, support for the queen and the royal family is a powerful indicator of a broader unionist identity. But the defense of the Protestant monarchy and the constitution traditionally have been important overarching principles for the Orange Order. For Orangemen, the royal family symbolizes the Protestantism that was instituted with the rule of King William during the “Glorious Revolution.” It is contemporary evidence of the victory over historic Catholic enemies and an everlasting representation of Protestant hegemony in Britain. Not surprisingly, therefore, we find an almost complete feeling among the members of the institution that the royal family is very important. Such a view is largely shared by Church of Scotland attenders (71 percent) as well as by football fans (61 percent) surveyed (excluding Celtic football fans). This data indicates the extent to which the royal family remains a popular Protestant and national, even patriotic, symbol in Scotland and Britain generally.

Respondents were also surveyed about the constitutional question over the future of Scotland.

Table 4
SCOTLAND'S FUTURE CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS?

	ORANGEMEN	CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
Stay same	16%	11%
Better understood	44%	44%
Assembly	31%	36%
Independence	7%	8%
Don't know	1%	1%

SOURCE: Bradley Survey, 1990.

14. Walker refers to this Orange view of Catholic progress as one of “peaceful penetration.”

These two groups clearly share a marked uniformity with regard to the constitutional question. Few church-going Protestants (the survey also showed that Orange “members” are regular church attenders) showed any support for Scottish independence. In the wider survey, support for this came mainly from non-religious identifiers, unchurched Protestants within the sample of Scottish football supporters, and from the small numbers of Catholics attached to Irish cultural and political bodies, though not from other Catholics surveyed. Although opinions will continually shift, these figures are at variance with those recorded in a number of opinion polls. For example, a System Three poll in 1995 showed approximately one-third of people in Scotland supported independence, with almost half backing devolution. Clearly, active Church of Scotland members and Scottish Orangemen are strong supporters of the union, a fact that reinforces the notion that Scottish Protestantism acts as the bulwark of union in Scotland.¹⁵

THE FOOTBALL CONNECTION: GLASGOW RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Some academics have argued that Scottish football allows supporters to express a sense of Scottishness (even a kind of Scottish nationalism) through a nationalist or unionist paradigm. G.P.T. Finn, for example, believes that for many decades football matches between England and Scotland have allowed for both Scottish and English expressions of identity within a British unionist perspective. Scotland versus England encounters have long been treated with great relish and seriousness (particularly in Scotland). Even during the 1950s and 1960s, when these matches frequently attracted crowds of well over one hundred thousand every time they were played in Glasgow, Scotland still emphasized its unionism with strong support for the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party. In 1955, the party won 50.1 percent of the Scottish vote, “becoming the only political party in Scotland in the twentieth century to gain a simple majority of the general election vote.”¹⁶

15. S. Kendrick, “Scotland, Social Change and Politics,” in D. McCrone, S. Kendrick, and P. Straw, eds., *The Making of Scotland: Nation, Culture and Social Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 86.

16. G.P.T. Finn, “Sporting Symbols, Sporting Identities: Soccer and Intergroup Conflict in Scotland and Northern Ireland,” in I.S. Wood, ed., *Scotland and Ulster* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1994), 45.

As numerous scholars have noted, sports can clearly play important roles in the expression of cultural and political ideologies. Hoberman states that, “sport has no intrinsic value structure, but it is a ready and flexible vehicle through which ideological associations can be reinforced.”¹⁷ Similarly, Hobsbawm believes that “the identity of a nation of millions, seems more real as a team of eleven named people.”¹⁸ Regarding Scotland, Blain and Boyle argue that, “the complex nature of collective identity formations associated with Scottish sport parallels the complexity of Scotland as a political [and cultural] entity.”¹⁹ All of these authors demonstrate the importance of the visual and textual discourses provided by sport, as well as how sporting mediums acquire their meaningfulness.

Since the early twentieth century, Glasgow Rangers has been viewed as the most powerful and successful club within Scotland. Indeed, because of its Protestant history and identity and its frequent dominant periods in Scottish football, Rangers can be viewed as the team of the establishment. The club has also been perceived as a bastion of Scottish Protestantism due to, among other things, the notable unionist popular identity that formed part of its early character and its historical refusal to sign players of the Roman Catholic faith. Although this “policy” changed in 1989, Rangers and their supporters retain the label of being a club of and for Protestants.²⁰ For many Rangers supporters, the chant that “we are the people,” is both an indication of the dominance that the club has periodically enjoyed as well as other cultural aspects that surround it.

Glasgow Rangers fan culture is characterized by many sentiments associated with Orangeism in Scotland. This is particularly evident in a common repertoire of songs, tunes, and emblems shared by both Orange supporters and Rangers fans. Among these are songs and tunes like “The Sash my Father wore” and “Derry’s Walls,” as well as

17. Hoberman, in J. Sugden and A. Bairner, *Sport, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993), 10.

18. E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.

19. N. Blain and R. Boyle, “Battling along the Boundaries: The Marking of Scottish Identity in Sports Journalism,” in G. Jarvie and G. Walker, eds., *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994), 125–41.

20. See R. Esplin, *Down the Copland Road* (Argyll: Argyll Publishing, 2000).

a common panoply of symbols that relate to the monarchy, Northern Ireland loyalism, and the union flag. During the 2002–3 season, the club adopted an Orange colored change outfit. This choice was much maligned in the Scottish press. However, as the choice of supporters at the beginning of the season and as one of the best selling outfits in the club's history, the Orange kit clearly demonstrated a significant resonance for many Glasgow Rangers supporters.

In recent decades, the Orange Institution has frequently conducted its annual religious service at Ibrox Stadium, the home of Glasgow Rangers. This occasion often attracts crowds of around fifteen thousand.²¹ Although former Grand Secretary David Bryce believes that “all Orangemen are not Rangers supporters and all Rangers supporters are not Orangemen,” the evidence provided by so many Rangers outfits at Orange demonstrations in both Scotland and Northern Ireland clearly shows close cultural links and associations.²² Orange respondents to the 1990 survey also indicated that the vast majority supported Glasgow Rangers, although some other Scottish football clubs also enjoyed minimal Orange support.

The identities reflected in Glasgow Rangers history and fan culture have been explored by several writers. Graham Walker states that in Scotland and beyond, the club has “stood for a powerful current of popular Protestantism.” Furthermore, Rangers has often been seen to encapsulate a “celebration of Scottishness that was underpinned by a strong unionism or loyalism.”²³ In the past, Glasgow Rangers historians Ferrier and McElroy have claimed that Rangers is the “flag carrier of what the majority of Scots would consider to be national virtues—Protestant, Monarchist tradition and Unionist.”²⁴ Esplin identifies the two most popular supporter fanzines of recent decades. He states that the editor of “The Number One” fanzine believes that “the overall thrust of the views in the “fanzine” would head in the direction of loyalist/unionist.” The best selling and longest running Rangers fanzine, “Follow Follow,” is reported to have a clear right-wing agenda con-

21. For one example, see *The Irish Post*, 11 April 1989.

22. Interview with David Bryce, 1991.

23. See Walker and Gallagher, eds., *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant Popular Culture in Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 137–59.

24. See R. Ferrier and R. McElroy, *Rangers: The Complete Record* (1966; reprint by Breedon Books, 1996), 6.

taining frequent statements of support for the unionist cause.²⁵ The fanzine itself claims Rangers as, “a symbol of unionism and Protestantism.”²⁶ Finally, well-known Scottish public figures, Rangers majority shareholder David Murray and former vice-chair Donald Findlay’s support for the Conservatives and the union is well known.²⁷

Although all Rangers supporters cannot be viewed to be Conservative Party supporters, the connections between Protestantism, Scottishness, Britishness, Northern Ireland politics, the monarchy as well as anti-Catholic and anti-Irish attitudes, can be seen to have varyingly characterized the core identities and projected attitudes of the club since its founding in the 1870s. However, as Scotland has moved toward being a more secular society, particularly since the 1960s, a realignment of these connections has partly taken place in Scottish society.²⁸ As Protestantism has become less of a defining feature of Scottishness, church attendance has declined and Scottishness has acquired a primacy over Britishness in cultural and political terms; Britishness and “Protestant” unionism have also declined in significance.²⁹ Nevertheless, Curtice and Seawright are right to stress the notion that unionism and political conservatism remain strong among those who esteem their Protestantism either in a religious or cultural sense (or both).³⁰ This is partly demonstrated in the figures reported here.

Although the 1990 survey noted the fall in Conservative Party support in Scotland since the 1970s, support for “the” party of the union remained high among those who esteemed their Protestant identity by recognizing its role in the formation of their cultural and political ideals and identities. For example, Glasgow Rangers supporters contained the highest percentage of football adherents surveyed who

25. See Esplin, *Down the Copland Road*, 48–52.

26. *Follow Follow* 8 (1989).

27. Esplin, 52.

28. For secularization in Scotland, see C. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001); *The Social History of Religion in Scotland Since 1730* (London: Methuen, 1987).

29. See A. Brown, D. McCrone, L. Paterson, and P. Surridge, *The Scottish Electorate: The 1997 General Election and Beyond* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999); D. McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation* (London: Routledge, 2001).

30. See J. Curtice and D. Seawright, “The Decline of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, 1950–1992: Religion, Ideology or Economics?” *Journal of Contemporary British History* 9:2 (1995), 319–42.

opposed a British troop withdrawal from Northern Ireland (69 percent), wished Northern Ireland to remain in the Union (73 percent) and supported the British Conservative Party (32 percent). Although Rangers supporters indicated a similar figure for Labour support, their adherence to the Conservatives was the highest among all fans surveyed at a time of low electoral success for the party in Scotland—conversely, also a high point of support for Labour. In addition, outside the largely Catholic, Irish, and Labour-minded Celtic Football Club supporters, Rangers fans' support for the Scottish National Party was the lowest of all clubs. These figures are indicative of Rangers fans' affinity with unionist ideals as well as the Orange Institution with which they share a significant range of symbols, songs, and discourses.³¹

The 1990 survey was repeated on a smaller scale in 2001–2002. Rangers supporters' unionist identities can again be seen as evidence of the connections between unionism and Scottish Orangeism. Although only 8 percent of supporters of the top fifteen clubs in Scotland surveyed supported the Conservative Party, this contrasts with over 30 percent who identified themselves as Conservative supporters from among the Rangers fanbase. In addition, Rangers supporters were again highest in their interpretation of a solution to the Northern Ireland conflict, a large majority (70 percent) believing that Northern Ireland should remain a part of the United Kingdom.³²

The continuing connections and links between Rangers supporters and Orangeism in Scotland and Northern Ireland demonstrate some of the sources and locations for unionism. They also reflect the strength and populist nature of cultural as well as political unionism in Scotland.

ORANGEISM IN SCOTLAND: A PERSPECTIVE

Given its geographical, social and political limitations, Orange identity remains a strong cultural, religious, and patriotic facet of Scottish society. McCall and Simmons note that “cultures are, not all that simple or homogeneous . . . the best conceptual models of cultures can only state

31. See Bradley, *Ethnic and Religious Identity in Modern Scotland* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1995).

32. See Bradley, *Culture and Identities in Scottish Football* (forthcoming, 2005).

correctly the central tendencies of ranges of variation.”³³ Despite undoubted internal differentiation and sub-cultural divergences among the larger Orange community, there is little doubt that a “centrality” of common identity exists within Scottish Orangeism.

Even with significant Scottish religious origins, Scottish Orangeism is popularly perceived as being bound up with Irish issues (though they are consequently also British issues). In large part, this explains its failure to put down strong roots in the northern and eastern parts of the country, areas that have long had their own anti-Catholic traditions (areas that also experienced relatively little Irish Catholic and Ulster Scots Protestant migration).

Nonetheless, a substantial number of Scots have also adopted Orangeism as their own (which seems quite natural when one considers that as most early Protestant migrants from Ulster came to Ireland from Scotland, historically, Scottishness is an inherent aspect of Orangeism).³⁴ As Irish Catholic immigration developed in the west-central belt in the nineteenth century, so too did Orangeism, an ideology and an identity seemingly more relevant as Protestant proximity to Catholics grew. The Orange Order provided an institutional setting for the expression of anti-Catholicism within the most heavily populated area of Scotland. Orangeism has grown in Scotland in two related ways. It grew where Ulster Protestant migrants settled and, in a related sense, as a Scottish reaction (though clearly not the sole one) to Catholic immigration from Ireland.

The following answers, all taken from a Scottish Television documentary as well as from personal interviews, reflect the essential roles anti-Catholic sentiments play within Scottish Orangeism. Similar answers are frequently restated whenever Orange members and supporters voice their opinions and attitudes in television and radio.

- (1) The Orange Walk is the mass anniversary of what we can do against Catholics.
- (2) We’re anti-Catholic, and that’s it. We don’t like them.

33. G.J.S. McCall and J.L. Simmons, *Identities and Interactions* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 24.

34. See Walker, “The Orange Order in Scotland,” 201.

- (3) I'm sure God would quite enjoy it (talking of the Orange Walk).
- (4) He's not God to Catholics; he's only God to Protestants.
- (5) We are keeping the Protestant religion. If it wasn't for us and the likes of us you would have no Church of Scotland . . . in fact the Church of Scotland ministers have let us down. . . . People aren't going to Church because they are bringing Roman Catholic priests into our Churches.
- (6) Separate schools are all wrong, they lead to bigotry. As well as that, there should be more of the Protestant religion in our schools.
- (7) There is no democracy and fairness here anymore. Power is important in all this, and Catholics have it out of all proportion to their numbers in Scotland.³⁵

These answers are quite specific to Scotland. Although it remains vital to Orange identity, none of these interviewees mentioned Northern Ireland. To the rank and file Orangeman it is the everyday and experienced perceptions in Scotland that count most. A perception of British Protestant history is particularly relevant for Orangemen, providing a specific prism through which they view the present. Nonetheless, and sometimes contrary to much disparaging commentary, Scottish Orangeism remains focused on the present.

Despite its territorial limitation to the west-central belt, Orangeism is a popular feature of Scottish life. The figures involved with the organization bear testimony to its continuing relevance for substantial numbers of Scottish Protestants. In that sense, it is an important component in many people's political and social identities, regardless of its comparatively weak political impact on a national level. Orangeism is an identity combining a strong emphasis on monarchy and a Protestant perspective on history. This identity is infused with an overriding affir-

35. These comments were recorded in a series of religious-cultural programs shown on Scottish Television in November and December 1989, entitled "The Blue and the Green," as well as those made to the author during interviews with Orange members from the town of Airdrie in 1990.

ity with Northern Ireland loyalists and, almost invariably, a political orientation that is defined against Roman Catholics. An Orangeman's political outlook in Scotland is defined by these perceptions on the one hand and the realities of British politics on the other.

In the west-central belt, Orangeism provides a cultural and political identity for many people. It is not a political identity that has major significance in national and local elections. Although the Orange Institution in Scotland has a strong political dimension at its core, it is a dimension that it is not strictly defined by uniformity at the ballot box. It is an identity that apart from the most politically aware of Orangemen, is largely confined to the politics of street demonstrations and cultural and political symbolism. Nonetheless, this remains important to self and group identity. Indeed, Elliott and Hickie refer to the importance of symbols in the Northern Irish conflict, stressing that "the demand is for the other side to give up its symbols or ideology."³⁶

Although Scottish Orangeism retains considerable Conservative ties, it is not an identity readily transferable to significant electoral support. To many Orange supporters outside the formal structures of the institution, politics can frequently be translated into attitudinal and symbolic displays, rather than obvious electoral expression. Flags, banners, uniforms, football regalia, songs, and street demonstrations have the potential to serve as cultural and political expressions, thus demonstrating that Orange political gestures cannot be defined or confined by notions of electoral politics. Although there is a degree of social mixing among many Orangemen and Catholics in the workplace and other public settings, the atmosphere of suspicion, favor, disfavor, discrimination, and sectarianism the institution engenders has all the elements of an attitudinal political division.

With such significant numbers, Orangeism provides the Scottish Conservatives with a degree of working class support that they might otherwise not attract. A Protestant identity is one of the main characteristics of the Scottish Conservative vote.³⁷ Nonetheless, the nature and concerns of the British political system and how it is shaped by the

36. R.S.P. Elliott and J. Hickie, *Ulster: A Case Study in Conflict Theory* (London: Longman, 1971), 720.

37. See J. Mitchell, *Conservatives and the Union: A Study of Conservative Party Attitudes to Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).

mass media work against the overriding occupations of Orange identity. They help to impart a negative and anachronistic image of many Orange enterprises and interests.

As Elaine McFarland has shown, members of the Orange Lodge regard themselves as being “conditional voters” rather than being tied to any one party. It is the case that the Order is more adept at this kind of voting than of organizing its members to vote en masse. Indeed, former Grand Secretary Bryce came close to this view when he described himself to the writer as an “issue voter.”³⁸ Clearly though, especially with its more “liberal” views on the Northern Ireland problem and its proportionately large Catholic membership and voting base in West-Central Scotland, the Labour Party would be difficult for Bryce and other Orange members to support, regardless of their class background.

Scottish Orangeism is assured of its place in the west-central belt’s social and cultural life because of the many social clubs the Institution supports. The pub or club provides a major social outlet for many people. For many working-class Protestants the Orange hall dominates much of their social lives. The Orange social network provides a setting for the transmission of both ideology and identity. Indeed, the existence of this social setting makes Protestantism “effortless” and ironically almost secular for many, replacing as it does church membership and attendance. Paradoxically, despite its religious roots and identity, popular Orangeism in Scotland also acts as a prime manifestation of a secular Protestant identity.

Orangeism in Scotland consists of a particular kind of patriotism. Often nationalism is based on various levels of opposition for a foreigner: Catholics in Scotland (in the main, of course, originating from Ireland) fulfil this role for Scottish Orangemen. For Orangemen, religious perspectives intertwine and coexist with political and social ones at many junctures. Religion is key to understanding Scottish Orangeism, but not in its simplest sense.³⁹ Although many members are church attending (mainly Church of Scotland), most Orange supporters are unchurched. In this sense, Scottish Orangeism remains an institution of popular Protestant politics. Indeed, much of the association’s religious

38. Elliott and Hickie, *Ulster*, 720.

39. See Walker, “The Orange Order in Scotland,” 177–206.

identity seems more focused on anti-Catholic beliefs than pro-Protestant ones.⁴⁰ This can be seen by reviewing the *Orange Torch*, the official monthly organ of Orangeism in Scotland. Only a little more than one-quarter of this journal's contents could be described as religious, and the vast majority of material highlighted the perceived degeneracy of Catholicism. Orange social news and outright political testimonials and articles, whether historical or contemporary (Orangeism's potent interpretation of history is of vital importance), form the rest of the monthly journal's content. For Scottish Orangemen, as for their Northern Irish brethren, religion, society, and politics cannot be separated, and an unhealthy synthesis of Catholicism and Irish nationalism remains a seemingly immutable threat.

Through their demonstrations, emphasis on British symbols, their conservative views on Scotland's constitutional status, their extraordinary support for the perceived party of the union, and through the critical medium of support for Glasgow Rangers Football Club, Orangemen view themselves as the most powerful and faithful bastion of British Protestant identity in Scotland. However, they are not British at the expense of being Scottish. The evidence shows that it is simply a question of emphasis and that Scottish identity sits comfortably with British identity for Orangemen, as it did for many Scots during much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Orangeism is thus a prime example of the complexity of British identity, a regional identity that allows for the expression of both Scottish and British manifestations.

40. See also D.A. Roberts, "The Orange Order in Ireland: A Religious Institution?" *British Journal of Sociology* 22 (1971), 269–83.