

## **IDENTITY, POLITICS AND CULTURE: ORANGEISM IN SCOTLAND**

*Joseph Bradley*

### **INTRODUCTION**

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 also had an undoubted political meaning, affecting allegiances and identities. Despite an Irish birth, the Institution has at its core a uniquely Ulster-Scottish perception of both its own constitution and its role in maintaining British identity.

This study comments on Orangeism in Scotland in the light of its continuing attraction for a large number of people. It considers elements of Orange ideology, attitudes and behaviour in Scotland as well as the nationalist and patriotic framework of Orange identity. Some information is gleaned from looking at the Order's responses to a number of questions conducted via an attitudinal survey. In addition, an element of comparative work is reported on Protestants who are Church of Scotland attenders. This material is expanded upon via oral interviews and a review of Orange literature. Previous studies on historical aspects of the Institution in Scotland (McFarland 1986 and Walker 1992) provide important background work for this paper.

The data (see appendix) is derived from an attitudinal survey designed to elicit the background and attitudes of a sample of members of the Orange Institution of Scotland, and for comparative purposes, those of members of the Church of Scotland. Various religious and political questions were asked.

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Over the course of 1990, I surveyed 111 Orange members. The survey and subsequent interviews took place at Orange meetings as well as in Orange social clubs.

653 people who attended Church of Scotland services during the period March-September 1990 also took part. Twenty-seven parishes of the Church of Scotland were chosen at random in an effort to gain a degree of geographical representativeness. However, the majority of parishes were to be found in the central belt (see appendix). Approximately two dozen people in each parish were randomly asked to complete a questionnaire as they left their respective Sunday services. Although this approach had its academic limitations - for example, tending to over-represent parishioners who are regular church-goers - the demographic and employment rankings corresponded satisfactorily with that of other such studies of the Church of Scotland (for example see Church of Scotland Lifestyle Survey 1987). Likewise, the Orange section of the survey was constrained in that those who responded to the questionnaire were the most active members in the organisation. Neither of these surveys should be viewed as being representative of Protestants in general. Nonetheless, the results do represent important aspects of Protestant identity in Scotland, insofar as that is disproportionately influenced by the most active members.

The initial sections of this paper looks at Orange history in Scotland and the structures and numbers involved in Orangeism. Subsequently, Orange perceptions of Catholicism and the way it views politics is assessed. Finally, a view is forwarded of the Order regarding its political, social and cultural identity in modern Scotland.

## **IDENTITY**

Identity is an important concept in social science. Identities can be based upon a variety of factors, notably class, ethnicity, race and religion. Such factors or classifications stimulate or promote individual and collective emotions, ideas and practices. A concept of identity assists the interpretative framework for a social, cultural and political picture of Orangeism and its relationship to the wider society in modern Scotland.

Rokkan and Urwin write:

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On the issue of 'who, what, and where am I', the individual tends to look no further than his own accumulation of attitudes and prejudices which themselves are determined by his own cultural environment. These patterns of orientation provide the individual with an identity and offer him a standard by which he may interpret the world and to which he may adjust his reactions. Collectively, they impose upon a society a set of cultural contours that are enduring configurations. (1983, p.67).

John Turner (chap. 1 in Tajfel 1981) uses the social identification model, arguing:

a common social identification is shared and there is more often than not self-perception in being a member, or simply a number, in a particular social category. This definition stresses that members of these social categories seem often to share 'a sort of collective perception' of their own social unity 'and of their difference' - often hostility - from those who are not of the same kind.

In this paper, I am emphasising the concept of identity and its relationship to 'certain limited aspects of social behaviour,' (Tajfel 1981, p.255), and also to certain limited aspects of political behaviour.

The term identity should not be seen as a rigid one, one that absolutely categorises people into one group or the other. It is simply used to 'identify' common attributes or beliefs which mark out a group of people as having something quite significant in common with one another and, equally, as being different from others.

For Rokkan and Urwin (1983, p.67):

Identity can be broken down into at least four component parts: myth, symbol, history, and institutional....[T]he mythical aspects of identity may be defined as a set of beliefs [feeling, emotions, aspirations and actions] that creates an instrumental pattern for behaviour in the sense that these beliefs provide aims for their followers....[T]he most significant myth historically has been religion, whilst since the nineteenth century, nationalism as a myth can be regarded almost as a civil religion....[T]he symbolic element represents the enduring expressive aspect of culture, transmitting its values from individual to individual, and from generation to generation.

History is an almost natural occurrence alongside these, juxtaposing itself as part of a collective experience and psyche, whilst the institutional aspect of this breakdown can be seen as the concrete enactment of the so-called myth and the symbol. By focusing on Orange identity, we can see that religious identities and labels are generally part of the complexity of social identity in Scotland, and which have an importance for many in the wider society that goes beyond the realms of simple religious practice.

## **HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Originating among the Protestant plantation communities (mainly of Scottish origin) of the north of Ireland in the late 18th century, Orangeism can be viewed as a response to Irish nationalist and Catholic political and agrarian disturbances. It was a movement which sought to defend Protestant land holdings as well as the political and symbolic gains of colonisation. Orangeism was first brought to Scotland by soldiers returning to south Ayrshire, having completed their period of service as part of the British army in Ireland. Orangeism was built upon an anti-Catholic and pro-colonist ideology, which gave a strong backing for all things Protestant (even standing against a number of divisions between the Churches) within Ireland and Britain.

Scotland also had its own powerful, and longer, 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 progress to Catholic relief (Black 1963).

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 12th July demonstration in Lanarkshire in the town of Airdrie. As a result of violence at these marches, it was the 1840s before they restarted.

Despite similar allegiances, there were problems for Orangeism in attaching itself to Scottish anti-Catholicism. For Scotland, the specific characteristics of Ulster-Scots and indigenous Scots anti-Catholicism are crucial to an

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understanding of the Order's relative weakness despite its strengths. As McFarland says (1986, pp.108-110):

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'.

Although failing to have any significant impact upon the Highlands, Edinburgh and the east, by late in the century it was common to have 30,000 people at larger Orange demonstrations in the west of the country.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Irish Home Rule agitation grew in both Ireland and Britain. In response, Orange numbers and activity further developed. As the Institution entered the new century, official membership stood at around 25,000, with 8,000 of these in Glasgow. Even though official institutional relations with the main Protestant churches in Scotland were weak, a Church of Scotland Report of 1923 was moved to comment, that there was no 'complaint of the presence of an Orange population in Scotland; they are of the same race as ourselves and are readily assimilated to the Scottish population'.

However, since its early days, Orange marches had become strongly associated with petty violence and drunkenness. Given this and its predictability and repetitiveness, marches were poorly reported. For many Scots, the Order was negatively perceived as an institution bound up with 'Irish issues and quarrels', and Irish people had often been portrayed in racist terms by many institutions in Britain (see Curtis 1988). Many Protestants thus greeted the Order with suspicion and hostility because they regarded Protestant respectability as important. Although the 1923 Church of Scotland Report contains no hostility to 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. Lack of contact and interaction between these bodies has proved to be a most important factor in the Institution's marginalisation in many areas of Scottish life.

Although anti-Catholicism underpins every aspect of the Institution's identity, it is embedded in a political identity which stresses 'Unionism, Crown and Constitution'. Orangemen view themselves as defenders of British identity. Scottish Orangeism's confrontational nature and its ability to consistently attract large crowds to demonstrations have become for many its trademark in Scottish society today. Orange thinking 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 Protestant, 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.

(Rev Gordon McCracken, **The Orange Torch**, July/Aug 1984)

Orangeism in Scotland consists of a particular kind of patriotism. Often nationalism is based on various levels of hate for a foreigner, and Catholics in Scotland (in the main originating from Ireland) fulfil this role for Scottish Orangemen. For Orangemen, religious perspectives intertwine and co-exist at many junctures with political and social ones. The organisation's own literature and the survey evidence show that Orangemen are more concerned with issues that have a purely Protestant-British dimension than that of Church of Scotland attenders. A review of **The Orange Torch**, official monthly organ of the Lodge in Scotland, reveals that little more than one quarter of its contents could be considered religious. Indeed, the largest proportion of this highlights the believed 'degeneracy' of Roman Catholicism. Orange social news and outright political testimonials and articles, whether historical or contemporary (an appropriate interpretation of history is of vital

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importance to Orangemen in general), form the rest of the monthly's content. For Orangemen, while threats from Catholicism and Irish nationalism are persistent and immutable, religion, society and politics cannot be separated. The Reformation was not simply a religious affair, but a social and political revolution. Orangeism sees Catholicism as being alien, disloyal and militantly against the Reformed Order. It also condemns what it views as the lack of civil and religious liberty associated with Roman Catholicism, and exemplified in countries with Roman Catholic political influence and 'domination'.

### **ORGANISATION AND NUMBERS**

Today, the Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland is made up of four Orange self-defined County areas - Ayrshire, Glasgow, Central Scotland and the East of Scotland. These Counties are, in turn, made up of 62 Orange Districts, the vast majority of which are 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 1,000 lodges throughout the country, and their members comprise the Loyal Orange Institution of Scotland. The Institution includes both sexes, and all age groups. However, according to my survey in 1990, 65% of its formal membership are aged over 45 (compared to 37% in the general Scottish population at the 1991 census: see **Scottish Abstract of Statistics**, 1995, table 1.2). In addition to their formal membership, other Protestants participate in the traditional bands which contribute much of the colour and sound to Orange demonstrations. According to former secretary of the Order, David Bryce, only half of the young men and women who participate in this aspect of Orangeism are members of lodges; the rest identify themselves with the movement through this involvement.

Orangeism also encapsulates membership of 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 popular body, and it concerns itself to a greater extent with ceremony and ritual. Its members tend to look at themselves as a more respectable arm of the organisation. The status of Orangemen and members of the Royal Black Perceptory (&orthwith also referred to as Orangemen) is marked in relation to a system of degrees. Colour is the most notable symbol of a person's standing within the Order,

and essentially a higher colour is achieved via a ritual involving a knowledge and elaborate interpretation of the scriptures. Orangeism adheres to the principles of the Protestant Reformation, whilst it also views itself as being above the differences which have characterised 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 organisation in Scotland based upon its parent body in Northern Ireland. The most prominent member of the independent order in Northern Ireland is the Euro MP, Ian Paisley.

To the population at large, the most outstanding features of Orangeism are the frequent parades and demonstrations. There are approximately 1,500 parades in Strathclyde every year. Around half of all police-escorted parades in Strathclyde are Orange (as reported on BBC Scotland's TV programme **Focal Point**, 20 November 1990). West Lothian and Central region experience around half this number of marches. Various estimates of the size of these demonstrations are disseminated by the Institution, as well as by the media and police. Numbers are difficult to judge because of the nature of the 'Walks' themselves. On the Saturday before 12th July each year, the most significant of all the demonstrations takes place. Many people will be varyingly involved in these celebrations.

Many Orange demonstrators will begin their day at around 6.00am or 7.00am by marching around their own locality. Orange members will often march 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 who have been hired for the day's events. These bands include both sexes and all age groups, though the organisation itself characterises them as being typically composed of young men aged 16-35.

Demonstrators will march or be bussed to a meeting point. Here the Institution begins to congregate for the major 'Walk' of the day to a hired ground or park. Subsequently, the Orange hierarchy will make political speeches, say prayers (often with a political content) and propose resolutions. It is quite normal for a sitting Member of Parliament from Northern Ireland, as well as fellow Orangeman, to be invited to Scotland to make the appropriate speeches. John Taylor, Rev Robert McCrea and Rev Martin Smyth have been frequent visitors in the 1980s and 1990s.

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In 1990, the main Boyne demonstrations in Scotland took place on the 7th July. Apart from the inclement weather (which inevitably depressed crowd numbers), it was a typical 'Big Walk' occasion. Approximately 8,000-10,000 demonstrators marched in Glasgow on the day concerned, with the same amount of followers and active onlookers. The numbers marching in Glasgow were thus almost 20,000. The County Grand Lodge of Central Scotland held its demonstration on the same day in the village of Shotts in Lanarkshire. The numbers attending were as large as those in Glasgow. At the same time, around 5,000 marchers and 5,000 supporters were on parade in Renfrew.

These figures suggest that at least 45,000 people in the west and central Scotland areas were actively celebrating the annual Boyne commemorations in 1990. However, this does not accurately reflect the number of participants who share in Orange identity. Many bands and lodges will depart from and return to well wishers and celebrants whose involvement in the day 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 or in a pub or club frequented by Orange followers. For these reasons the figure of 45,000 Orange Lodge members and ardent followers could be significantly increased, if we count those who make a minimal, though important, contribution to the day's events. All this suggests that the frequently self-quoted 'formal' Orange Lodge membership figure of 80,000 includes active and passive sympathisers. Even if this figure intentionally inflates the formal membership, such sympathisers clearly share important elements of Orange identity or identify in some significant way with Orangeism. These important elements include a negative view of Catholics, being pro-Unionist (especially in terms of Northern Ireland), and having strong feelings on the importance of Protestantism in Britain.

The July march is the major annual demonstration of any type, every year in Scotland. As a comparison, 1989/90 witnessed the most notable points of anti-Poll Tax demonstrations in Scotland, a highly contentious political issue which affected millions of families and individuals. It was also an issue which provided a key talking point amongst all classes of people. Various demonstrations attracted thousands of marchers. However, the largest demonstration in mid-1990 attracted 30,000. Similarly, only between 3,000

and 6,000 congregated on the streets of Glasgow to march for peace on the eve of the threatened war in the Gulf. Orangeism is steeped in a 'Walk' culture and this probably contributes to the popularity of its annual occasion. Nonetheless, in Scotland, it remains one of the most popular manifestations of cultural, religious and political demonstration. It has the capacity to be all of these at the same time, while attracting the largest numbers on a consistent basis.

One aspect of the Institution's strength is its capacity as a social organisation to provide a key focus for identity. The numbers involved in membership, parades and in the context of using Orange social facilities bear testament to this. It caters as a social centre in many parts of the West-Central belt. A number of lodges collectively own social clubs which provide an Orange environment for drinking and other activities. There are around 30 of these clubs in which not only Orange members but people who have a sympathy for or feel comfortable in such surroundings spend part of their free time (though some Orange identifiers are also infrequent attenders, preferring other outlets instead). An obvious empathy, solidarity and identity is expressed by a social life which either revolves around, or frequently experiences, such a setting. Although there are a few non-Orange people who socialise in these centres, they are almost totally a domain for Orange identity. The Bellshill club in Lanarkshire, for example, has a membership of 600 people. It is also regularly visited by many others who are associated with the attitudes the Institution embraces and are seen as part of its social network and culture. For the Lodge, the development of a social club culture presents a pragmatic manoeuvre for the maintenance of modern Orange identity.

## **POLITICAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY**

Our attention now turns to the survey material. Given that the Orange Institution has throughout its Scottish history continually referred to its Irish concerns, it is not surprising to find Scottish Orangemen firmly believing that Northern Ireland should remain within the UK. On the issue of British troop withdrawal, 87% of the sample of Orangemen stated they would oppose such a withdrawal from Northern Ireland. The results confirm that a strong correlation of attitudes and beliefs concerning the national and political condition of Northern Ireland is a central aspect of Orange Protestant identity in Scottish society. Any move which is perceived as threatening the integrity of Northern Ireland, and as a consequence the position of the Protestant-

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unionist population, is firmly rejected by Scottish Orangemen. The importance of this issue to Orangemen is further underlined by the knowledge that 42% of Church of Scotland Protestants in the sample concur; although the most popular expression among Church of Scotland attenders in the sample, it is a significantly smaller than the figure for Orangemen. Only 25% of Church of Scotland Protestants are opposed to a British troop withdrawal.

Objecting to the signing of the British-Irish Agreement, Orangemen in Scotland attempted to take a cue from their Northern Ireland brethren by forming a political movement to stand in some constituencies in the 1987 General Election. However, the continual weakness of, and lack of focus upon, Northern Ireland as an election issue in Britain proved an insurmountable barrier for this grouping. It was also a venture fraught with risk because most Orange support was located in the Labour-held seats of industrial Scotland (which are also the areas of high concentrations of Catholic voters). The new organisation lacked political leadership and had a perfunctory pre-election performance. In addition, an underlying fear of 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 no impact (the Order did claim that over 1,000 people left the Conservative Party as a result of the Agreement. See Gallagher 1987, p.299).

Walker notes the ties between the Conservative Party and the Orange Order in Scotland during the 1920s and 1930s (though Gallagher also mentions traditional tensions between Tory leaders and plebeian Orangemen (1987, p.28)). Walker nevertheless emphasises the working class nature of much of the Party's support in the west-central belt. Although mainly confined to the formal membership of the Institution, the survey evidence presented here takes Walker's assessment further.

A positive relationship between the Conservative Party and the Orange Order may appear contrary to the largely working class make-up of Orange membership and identifiers. 85% of Orangemen are in skilled manual or semi-skilled or unskilled manual employment (table 1), while slightly more indicate their father as having a similar kind of job for most of his life. There are also few members of the Institution who are unemployed.

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**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          |
| <i>sample size</i>           | <i>111</i> |

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The 1991 Census Report (1993) showed that approximately 40% of the workforce in Scotland were involved in skilled manual and semi-skilled manual occupations. With over four in five Orangemen being similarly occupied, these figures reflect the Institution's overwhelming working class character.

Despite their employment distribution, Orange Lodge members indicate a strong degree of support for the Conservative Party. Table 2 considers Orange and Church of Scotland party allegiances and contrasts them with the findings of the Scottish System Three polls conducted for the **Glasgow Herald** throughout 1990 (see **Scottish Government Yearbook 1991**: this is an estimated average over 1990). The level of Conservative support among Orangemen is substantially above the Scottish figures for Conservative support. In addition, the figures can also be viewed as evidence of a partial rejection of the Scottish National Party and its aim of an independent Scotland. Fifteen per cent is a lower figure for SNP support than their more favourable poll and election results of recent years, including 22% in the 1992 General Election. The aspiration for independence conflicts, to a degree, with the British and Unionist identities of Orangeism. Such figures are evidence of the accent on cultural and religious factors referred to by Rokkan and Urwin (1983, p.67), as well as a divergent perception of relevant

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political matters important to Orangemen, but which tend not to affect the wider population.

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**Table 2**

**Orange/Church of Scotland/Scottish poll: political party support  
(% in columns)**

|                    | Orangemen  | Church of Scotland | Scottish polls * |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Conservatives      | 52         | 34                 | 20               |
| Labour             | 17         | 22                 | 50               |
| Liberal Democrats  | 1          | 11                 | 8                |
| S.N.P              | 15         | 11                 | 20               |
| Other              | 3          | 2                  | 10               |
| None               | 13         | 19                 |                  |
| <i>sample size</i> | <i>111</i> | <i>653</i>         | -                |

\* *The Scottish figures are an estimated average for the whole of 1990, from the Scottish Government Yearbook 1991.*

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Although Protestant identity is important in the matrix of factors involved in being a Conservative supporter in Scotland (see Curtice and Seawright 1995), the figure for the Protestant Orange Institution is much higher than that for Protestant Church of Scotland attenders. This emphasises the importance to Orangeism of certain cultural and religious values and indicates how the Institution views the Conservatives as the strongest political advocates or defenders of these values. The Church of Scotland figure of Conservative support is also high compared to the Scottish average.

Part of the explanation for Orange affinity with Conservatism was succinctly summarised by one leading Orangemen 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.  
(Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland).

Though these figures and attitudes can be considered to be a partial indicator of Orange and Conservative voting links, it is more difficult to determine the depth of the wider Orange community's ties to the Conservative Party as well as alienation from Labour. Nonetheless, table 2 also indicates traditional Orange antipathy towards the Labour Party based on its dislike for Labour beliefs and actions, as well as the Party's strong links with the Catholic community in west central Scotland. Table 2 also suggests that being Protestant is much less a factor in being a Labour identifier than it is for Catholics in identifying with that Party (for Catholic figures, see Bradley 1995 and 1996).

Despite vitriolic criticisms of Labour on the part of Orange people (in the academic literature, and also evidenced in the interviews with the present author), as Walker notes (1992) many working class Orange supporters frequently recognise supporting Labour as being best suited to their economic circumstances. Nonetheless, the precariousness of this attachment was exemplified in the mid-1994 by-election in Monklands East (involving Airdrie and a part of Coatbridge) when an ethno-religious dimension became a prominent factor (Orangemen being at the forefront of accusations towards the local 'Catholic' council in previous years).

Polls surveying constituents on the eve of the election indicated that many of Airdrie's Protestant voters (also a town with a significant Orange presence) would support the SNP whilst the constituency's Catholics would support Labour (**The Scotsman** 28 June 1994). Orange support for the nationalist candidate, evident during the election campaign (and evident also in a degree of Orange canvassing for the SNP as reported in an interview with a prominent Orange activist on BBC Radio Five, 24 December 1995), showed that otherwise Conservative Orangemen, as well as those who sometimes vote Labour, can align themselves with the SNP if that is perceived as the way to marginalise a too strongly Catholic tainted Labour Party, especially when there is a general increase in the salience of ethno-religious factors (See **Scotland on Sunday**, 26 June 1994, **The Scotsman**, 28 June 1994; also interviews with Airdrie Orange members by the present author). In addition, in this election (see table 3), the anti-Labour vote increased by around 11%, the Conservatives vote was down to around one seventh of its General Election figure and the SNP share of the vote more than doubled. These results reflect the rise in the electoral strength of the SNP in the area since the

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election of Labour's John Smith in 1992 when he won the seat with a 15,712 majority. With this majority being reduced to 1,640 in mid-1994, along with the underlying indications from the pre-election surveys, this suggests that a significant number of otherwise Protestant Labour and Conservative voters (including Orangemen) on this occasion supported the SNP.

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**Table 3**

**Monklands East Elections: 1992 and 1994**  
(% in columns)

|                   | 1992 | 1994 |
|-------------------|------|------|
| Conservatives     | 16   | 2    |
| Labour            | 61   | 50   |
| Liberal Democrats | 5    | 3    |
| SNP               | 18   | 45   |
| Turn out          | 75   | 70   |

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Even before the 1994 by-election campaign, several Orange members and one Church of Scotland attender from Airdrie in the 1990 survey expressed to the researcher their disquiet regarding various local political, religious and cultural matters. In this context, it was individuals' and communities' ethnic and religious identities which were viewed as important determinants. Disagreements with local manifestations of ecumenicism between Catholic and Protestant Churches, opposition to the existence of Catholic schools, and the fact that people in nearby Coatbridge were mainly of Irish origin were the issues which pre-occupied the expressions of the interviewees. The presense in Monklands District Council of a majority of Labour Party members who were Catholic was viewed as an example of the pernicious effects of Catholicism and a culmination of the undue influence of Irish Catholics in the area. Such antagonism suggests that it is the perceived make-up of the Labour Party as well as other historical and cultural factors relating to Irish immigration into Scotland which prohibits some Protestants from voting Labour, especially when the relevant ethno-religious factors become more salient.

Despite some degree of Orange support for Labour (indeed some Orangemen's membership of the Party), 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. It is also within an ethno-religious frame of reference that much of the criticism and derision becomes conspicuous. The following piece from **The Orange Torch** 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?....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....

The framework of identity that derives from an emphasis upon these historical and contemporary foci helps 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 is clearly to portray the Labour Party as dominated by Catholics. As such, this view sees Protestants wasting their vote on the Labour Party, at the expense of fellow Protestants in the Conservatives. The Orange view is that it is a Protestant's patriotic duty to vote for the party which best guarantees Protestantism in the Scottish national identity. Such a wasted vote also allows the immigrants to make their way in Scottish society.

Despite Orange polemics, between 1920 and 1974,

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only 16 per cent of [Glasgow's] councillors were Catholics, with no tendency for the number to increase towards the end of the period (Keating, Levy, Geekie, Brand 1989).

However, by the late 1980s half of Glasgow's councillors described their religion as Catholic, a number approximately 20% above the city's proportion of Catholics and therefore calculated to draw criticism from Orangemen. As far as the Institution was concerned this was compounded by the fact that until early 1995 the previous six of Glasgow's Lord Provosts (elected by the council) were also Catholics.

There is no evidence indicating favourable treatment to the city's Catholic as against its Protestant population; indeed, the council hosted a civic reception for the Institution to commemorate their Tercentenary celebrations of the Boyne victory (as did other councils - Motherwell and Monklands for example). This seems to suggest that many councillors were apprehensive about being labelled Catholic. Nevertheless, perceptions are often more important than reality and the view of Labour being over influenced by Catholics is also demonstrated in the field of employment, again an area which 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 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.  
(**Orange Torch** April 1989)

The ever-present tribal dimension of the Orange mindset (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 west-central Scottish life. (Walker 1992, refers to this Orange view of Catholic progress as one of 'peaceful penetration'.)

The following quotations, taken from a Scottish Television documentary as well as from personal interviews, reflect some of the opinions of Orange-people of Catholics:

The Orange Walk is the mass anniversary of what we can do against Catholics.

We're anti-Catholic, and that's it. We don't like them.

I'm sure God would quite enjoy it (talking of the Orange Walk).

He's not God to Catholics; he's only God to Protestants.

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.

Separate schools are all wrong, they lead to bigotry. As well as that, there should be more of the Protestant religion in our schools.

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.

Strikingly, these answers are specific to Scotland. Although vital to Orange identity, none of these interviewees mentioned Northern Ireland. Although certain events in British-Irish history are crucial to the expression of Orange identity, to the rank and file Orangeman it can also be said that it is the everyday and experienced perceptions 'in Scotland' which are most important.

Thus far, the indications (Conservative Party support and championing the cause of Union with Northern Ireland) are that Orangemen have a stronger British identity than other Protestant groups in Scotland. Further questions build upon this suggestion.

A significant element in the Orange fabric is their strong identification with the 'defenders of the faith' - the Queen, and the Royal Family. The defence of the Protestant monarchy and constitution are overarching principles of Orangeism. For Orangemen, the Royal Family symbolises the Protestantism that was instituted with the rule of King William during the 'Glorious Revolution'. It is contemporary evidence of the victory over Popery and an everlasting representation of Protestant hegemony in Britain. Therefore, we almost find unity amongst the members of the Institution in that the Royal Family are considered very important. Such a view is largely shared by

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Church of Scotland attenders (71%). This indicates the extent to which the Royal Family are a popular Protestant and national, even patriotic, symbol.

Respondents were also asked to consider the constitutional and national position of Scotland (table 4): 'If you had to choose a future for Scotland, which one of the following comes closest to your own views'? Again the results are contrasted with McCrone's analysis of relevant Scottish polls, this time considering MORI's for February 1990.

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**Table 4**

**Attitudes to Scotland's future constitutional status  
(% in columns)**

|                    | Orangemen  | Church of Scotland | Scottish Poll |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Stay same          | 16         | 11                 | 19            |
| Better understood  | 44         | 44                 | (not asked)   |
| Assembly           | 31         | 36                 | 44            |
| Independence       | 7          | 8                  | 35            |
| Don't know         | 1          | 1                  | 3             |
| <i>sample size</i> | <i>111</i> | <i>653</i>         | <i>1000</i>   |

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Although this question has the potential to produce complex or even simplistic answers, there are a number of inferences to be gained from the respective groups' responses. For example, a degree of similarity is evident within the two Protestant groups. Few Orangemen or members of the Church of Scotland show any support for Scottish independence, and they show only weak support for a Scottish assembly.

One of the most important studies of recent Scottish voting behaviour has emerged from the Scottish Election Survey carried out by Brand, Mitchell and Surridge. Mitchell (1992) reports that those designating themselves 'Protestant' are more likely to be unionist and, less likely to support independence. Although his work refers to Protestants generally, and not specifically to members of the Church of Scotland or the Orange Institution,

his observations are similar to those reported here. Such evidence stresses the traditional strength of Unionism within Scottish Protestantism (Kendrick 1989, p.86).

## **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 (1966, p.24), note that 'cultures are not all that simple or homogeneous...the best conceptual models of cultures can only state correctly the central tendencies of ranges of variation'. Despite undoubted internal differentiation and sub-cultural divergences among the larger Orange community, this does not detract from the fact 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 Irish-British relations mean that these are also British concerns). In large part, this explains its failure to put down roots in the northern and eastern parts of Scotland, areas that have long had their own specific tradition of anti-Catholicism (areas which also experienced relatively little Irish Catholic and Ulster Scots Protestant migration).

Nonetheless, a substantial number of Scots have also adopted Orangeism. As Catholic immigration from Ireland developed in the west-central belt in the 19th century, so too did Orangeism, an ideology and an identity seemingly more relevant as Protestant proximity to Catholics grew. Within many of the most populated areas of Scotland, the Orange Order provided an institutional setting for the expression of anti-Catholicism. Orange views of Catholics and Catholicism have been an important cultural and political factor in Scottish society. Indeed, they are important not only because they are significant in themselves, but also because these views link with many of the attitudes of other anti-Catholic Protestants in Scotland (see Bradley 1995). The number of people involved with the organisation bears testimony to its continuing relevance to many Protestants in the west-central belt. For many people, it is the only, or the most significant, political and religious statement that they make. In that sense, it is an important factor with regard to many people's political and social identity, regardless of its capacity to marginally affect only a few political constituencies.

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Although the Orange Institution in Scotland has a strong political dimension at its core, it is a dimension not strictly defined by uniformity at the ballot box. Apart from the most politically aware, it is an identity largely confined to the politics of street demonstrations and its related 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' (1971, p.720).

To many Orange people, politics is culture; that is, it is particularly relevant in terms of attitudinal and symbolic displays, rather than electoral expression. In this sense, both for the Orange community and for many Catholics who find themselves in close proximity to Orangeism, the visual and symbolic language of flags, banners, uniforms, football strips, songs, territory and street demonstrations are politically important. Such symbols are linked to perceptions of dominance and a low level (but nonetheless important) conflict with Catholics.

The troubles witnessed during the 'marching season' in Northern Ireland in mid-1995 (relating to Orange marches passing through Catholic areas) reflect how crucial such manifestations can be. Indeed, the marches are frequently perceived as being in the front line of defence of state and constitution, and can often be viewed by Orange people as the very essence of British Protestant identity. The perception of dominance - that is, of the symbols of Protestantism being socially, culturally and politically pre-eminent - is crucial for Orangeism. Although there is a degree of mixing amongst many Orangemen and Catholics in the workplace etc, the atmosphere engendered by Orangeism, often characterised by suspicion, favour, dis-favour, discrimination and sectarianism, has all the elements of an attitudinal political division. The literature of the Orange Institution, the interviews conducted for this work and for other research, as well as Orange activities during the Monklands by election of 1995 demonstrate this division.

The primary focus on territory and symbolism by the wider Orange community means that there exist subtle differences between them and the main body of the Institution. Such things are also important to the formal and practising membership, but disciplined and studied Orangeism is also manifested in Church attendance and in supporting 'the' party of the Union, the Conservatives. For those members of the Institution whose lives revolve around the Orange social club and the ceremony of the organisation, their Orangeism is affirmed with more political and religious rigidity than that of

the wider Orange community's. Nonetheless, there are few significant differences from Church attenders in how Orange people in Scotland view the societies of Northern Ireland and Scotland, or in how they view the religious and political arrangements which characterise the whole country. The differences in Orange identity is in how it is expressed and practised. In that, Orangeism in Scotland probably finds itself with something in common with many other religious and political organisations. Despite significant church attendance on the part of many formal members of the Institution, Orangeism in Scotland is a prime manifestation of secular Protestant identity.

Although political Orangeism in Scotland can be difficult to define, with such significant numbers associated with it, and in the context of the identity it espouses, Orangeism provides the Scottish Conservatives with some working class support which they might otherwise not attract. Nonetheless, the nature and concerns of the British political system and how it is shaped by the mass media work against the overriding occupations of the Orange mind. They help to impart a negative as well as a perceived anachronistic image to many Orange enterprises and interests.

As McFarland has shown, many members of the Orange Institution regard themselves as being 'conditional voters' rather than as being tied to any one party. The Order is more adept at this kind of voting than at organising 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'. Clearly, though, the Labour Party, with its more 'liberal' views on Northern Ireland (at least at a grass roots level) and its proportionately large Catholic membership and voting base in west-central Scotland, would be difficult for Bryce and other Orange members to support.

Through their demonstrations, emphasis on British symbols, their conservative views on Scotland's constitutional status and significant support for the perceived party of the Union, Orange people view themselves as being a strong and faithful bastion of British Protestant identity in Scotland. 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 Orange people. Orangeism is a prime example of an identity which has a duality of Scottish and British manifestations.

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### **APPENDIX**

#### ***Survey***

Questions in the survey of Orange Order members and of Church of Scotland attenders dealt with respondents' demographic background, i.e. age, sex, class, religion, geographic area, occupation, education and ethnic identity. The questions also tapped attitudes to well known symbols of Scottish and Irish national identity, to religious observance, to discrimination, to the monarchy, to constitutional arrangements in Scotland, to Northern Ireland, and to ethnicity, and assessed support for football teams. Not all of the material has been used here. As the survey had to depend for volunteers on some occasions, this meant that it was often the most committed and active Orangepeople who participated. It also means that such people are over-represented. In addition, limited resources meant that the samples, while sizeable, were not large.

Throughout the survey, contact was made with either a minister of the Church or a high ranking Lodge official. These people subsequently informed their constituency of my visit and of the purposes of the survey. Approximately 5% of those approached to complete a questionnaire refused to.

Church of Scotland parishes included in the questionnaire were: Coatbridge Blairhill, Coatbridge Langloan Middle Church, Larkhall Trinity Parish, Edinburgh Murrayfield, Ayr Castlehill, Larkhall St Machin's, Dumbarton St Andrew's, Aberdeen St Mary's, Aberdeen Queens Cross, Airdrie Clarkston, Glasgow Ibrox, Broxburn, East Kilbride South, Bathgate St Davids High, Edinburgh Currie, Falkirk Irving Parish Camelon, Falkirk St Andrews, Dundee Balgay, Dundee Menzieshill, Kirkcaldy Viewforth, Edinburgh St Serf's, Edinburgh St Andrew's, Glasgow Old Church, Paisley St Marks, Glasgow Burnside, Kilwinning Abbey, Glasgow Drumchapel 'Old Parish'.

The survey of Orange members took place in Orange Halls and Social Clubs in the Lothians (Whitburn), Lanarkshire (Bellshill), and Paisley. Most Glasgow members were surveyed in the Glasgow Evangelical Church in Cathedral Square. This is a church used mainly by Orange members for meetings, seivices, etc.

#### ***Other sources***

**The Orange Torch.** Various celebration programmes from Orange parades in Scotland. Literature from the 'Young Cowdenbeath Volunteers'. **Glasgow Herald**, 23 December 1989, for report on celebratory Orange Carnival in Glasgow. Also for article on 'unauthorised collection for the Loyalist Prisoners Fund' 21 March 1990. **Irish Post** article on a row over Glasgow civic reception for the Orange Order to commemorate the 1690 Tercentenary, 17 February 1990. **Sunday Observer (Scotland)** 16 July 1989. **The European**, 13-15 July 1990. Scottish Television

documentary, 'The Blue and the Green', Nov-Dec 1989. Interviews with David Bryce, Scottish secretary of the Institution, Danny Houston, Junior secretary, and several number other senior and ordinary members. Interviewees were of both sexes and all age groups.

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